The Paradox between Cooperation in Security Issues and National Security in Brazilian Policies for the Amazon Region

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Abstract

This article seeks to understand the dynamics of the Brazilian north border security aiming to understand the security policies for the region. This work draws attention to the need for collaborative solutions to the security problems of this area. Highlighting Brazil’s role in this region to the achievement of collaborative arrangements.

Key-words: Amazon; Cooperation; Defense

Introduction

As Amazon forest is a multinational forest what makes important to understand the borders dynamics’, because deal with Amazon It’s in a big part to deal with Brazilian north border – considering that this area establishes the limits with Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Guiana, French Guiana, Suriname. Thus it’s necessary to address how the border security is treated (Martins & Moreira 2011).

Initially, to discuss borders, we need to define what is meant by the concept of border. Currently, the most accepted definition of borders; it’s the division between two territorial entities, or the limit of a territorial entity. Boundaries can thus be considered as lines of separation and contact not only between human groups, but also between regions (Popescu 2013).

Nevertheless, it’s important to make the distinction between the terms limit and border, since these are often seen as synonymous. The etymology of the word border suggests what lies ahead (Machado 1998). To Salvador Raza (2014), borders are important not only for the construction of an internal national identity, but also can be used as an element of power projection.

On the other hand, limit refers to what keeps a cohesive political-territorial unit, in other words, an internal connection; this design is rooted in the concept of the modern state (Machado 1998).

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However, the increasing transnational flows have placed this definition of border in check, weakening the assumptions of the classical nation state, notably the rigid borders, considering that they have made themselves increasingly porous. This fact becomes evident when analyzing the problems of the South American security, especially in the Amazon region.

The context of Amazonian security is extremely complex, as it involves primarily threats related to drug traffickers, smugglers, illegal immigrants and guerrillas from neighboring countries.

Transnational threats have generated porous border from both horizontally (dilution of the idea of separation between internal and external affairs) and vertically (in relation to different levels of analysis: international security, national security and human security) (Medeiros Filho 2010). Thus, in this spaces materialize the relationship between two societies both in a sense of port for transnational crimes that threaten the stability of the national state, also as a point of contact between different societies promoting their integration.

The intensification of this process was also due to the neoliberal globalization that provided an environment for the proliferation of illegal and illicit networks of the economy, although such phenomena have long been present in history. Illegal circuits forward with great force during last decades (Haesbaert & Porto-Gonçalves 2006).

Thus arises as a challenge to modern societies the need to ensure mobility of the flows at the same time as it’s necessary to ensure the safety of its citizens. The first demand found expression in the discourse of "open borders" based on globalization and integration processes. While the second became known as "securitization of borders". All border regimes in the early twenty-first century are actively shaped by the encounter between these two discourses (Martin 1998; Popescu 2013).

Therefore, this article aims to analysis the border security in its Amazonian axis, seeking to understand the actions taken in the region and some considerations on the appropriate security policy for this zone, as well as highlighting that given the strong interdependency of security problems in the region collaborative actions are required and Brazil's role as a driver of cooperative arrangements.

A border policy
Border areas have a dual character both, as part of the national territory and this space transcends geographic boundaries. Thus, this is a region where the problems of internal and external security are confused, demanding a proper security framework to manage these regions. Within this logic, Salvador Raza argues that a policy of border security must take into account that this zone is characterized by the convergence of four major concerns for states: national security; homeland security; economic development and identity construction (Raza 2014).

A policy of border security must also take into account the patterns of interdependence of security problems affecting these areas, because the growth of international traffic and the expansion of global interdependence in the last decades of the twentieth century also brought a sense of insecurity for societies, especially regarding the porosity of borders.

In this sense, one can argue that the new security threats in an integration process, transcend national borders and, on occasion, it’s beyond the state’s ability to react individually, creating an environment of interdependence and create the need for collaborative actions. However, it is still prevalent in the framework of defense of the states, unilateral measures and preservation of the territory modeled on classical conceptions of defense.

According to Raza (2014), the presence of more actors in the geographical space, ranging from federal government, local communities and transnational groups, creates a different environment that demands an approach that isn’t necessarily based on military strength. Thus, considering the issue of interdependence that space would require a more comprehensive approach that takes into account not only the security context and the political reality of the relationship with neighboring countries.

How expose Salvador Raza (2014), the consistent design of using force demand that threats in border are clearly identified and defined, because otherwise we can witness unnecessary expenditure of resources. What’s is grave in a country like Brazil taking into account it’s reality, where the defense spending should be clearly planned, since resources are scarce in a country in need of urgent welfare. Nevertheless, it is required an understanding of the attributes necessary for a political border, because otherwise it runs the risk of spending more money to keep doing the same thing, expecting better results.

However, we have to take into account that for a country of continental dimensions like Brazil such a task arises as a great challenge, considering the extent of the Brazilian
borderline, with 15,719 km, and it’s presents different realities in their arches, which are South Arch; Central Arch and North Arch, without considering the maritime border. The North Arch is the longest and poses challenges by their own geographical imperatives.

The portion of the Amazon region corresponds to areas drained by the basins of the rivers – Amazon, Araguaia-Tocantins, Orinoco, Essequibo, among other smaller rivers. Overall, the Amazon Forest is considered the region of South America predominantly covered by tropical forests. Geographically, it covers a slightly larger area than seven million kilometers, which represents 5% of the land surface of the globe. The continental Amazon occupies 50% of South America. Despite the extensive territorial dimension, in terms of population, the region corresponds only 0.3% of the world population, making it one of the least densely populated regions of the planet (Ishida 2009).

The Amazon region comprises nine countries: Bolivia; Brazil; Colombia; Ecuador; Guyana; French Guiana; Peru; Suriname and Venezuela. Of this total, the Brazilian portion of the Amazon territory corresponding to 65.72%.

The map below shows the extent of the Brazilian border their arches and different subregions. Thus, we can see the extent of the north border also treated by Salvador Raza (2014) as green barrier because the dense vegetation acts as a barrier for both security forces and for illegal agents.
By observing how the Brazilian government has addressed the issue of border security, we note that these do not appear today as a matter of national security, but as
homeland security, and when it is framed as a national security issue is treated inside old paradigms. This perception stems from the fact that the border is perceived as a problematic peripheral zone where enter illicit that brings homeland security problems for people close to coastal areas, as the majority of the Brazilian population lives in urban areas near the coast. (Dorfman 2013).

Regarding the north border, given its extension and topographic conditions, it can be said that this is an imaginary border, being practically impossible to determine the exact boundary between the countries since the whole area is composed of the Amazon biome. Thus, the policies of border security for this region try to control rivers and airfields. However, such actions are not enough to stem the flow of drugs and other illicit activities (Raza 2014).

In this sense, the Amazon region also happens to be perceived in a security context as a stronghold of diffusion of drug trafficking networks that permeate the Andean-Amazonian countries with the potential to affect Brazilian borders, since these are considered by the Brazilian State as areas demographic empty, unstable and easily co-opted by drug traffickers, given their vulnerabilities (Couto 2013).

Thus, we find that the traditional distinctions between security and defense coalesce in the borders, with a unifying impact that expands on their influence area geographically combined, creating a type of denial-deter of persuasion, which is based on the strategy to prevent and repel (denial) any unlawful activity or aggression suffered plus the deterrence (deter) any enemy or potential threat (Raza 2014).

In view of this intersection between public safety and international security, a strategy of denial-deter seems to hold coherent, since it includes military threats and unconventional targets such as drug traffickers, qualifying it as an invader (Raza 2014). This hypothesis would be inside of logic of border persuasion; this approach merges the concepts of deterrence by retaliation and deterrence by denial.

We must not forget that such a strategy demands an efficient surveillance system able to anticipate and overcome violations of borders.

In this sense, the Brazilian government sought to establish with SIVAM (Amazon Surveillance System) an efficient complex of surveillance in a context of heightened concern about the north border. However, in view of its performance and its low profile deterrent, we
can argue that this system suffers from several flaws, among which is the lack of a cooperative approach with other Amazon countries.

Looking at the early stages of the SIVAM Project, we note that this was not articulated within a cooperative logic. From 1990 to 1996, in the beginning of the project no Amazonian country was invited to participate in the project design, information collected by Isabel Cristina Rossi during interview with the Vice-President of the Commission for Coordination Project Amazon Surveillance System (CCSIVAM), Cel. . Albuquerque, when he still stressed that he went to present the SIVAM for the eight members of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty countries in 1999 and 2000. In this sense, Ab'Saber Aziz, in an interview with Rossi, argues:

The fact is that radar bases placed on the border had a chance to manage the Brazilian territory and the territory of the neighboring countries. And that we knew for a long time because the large deployment, for example, existing radars at Ezeiza airport in Argentina is almost near the border with Uruguay. So not only Argentina is managed so is the airspace of Uruguay as well. And of course this management can never descend to the level to check the problem of the passage of great features from Buenos Aires to Montevideo in terms of dollars. Is not this kind of mission management technology deployment. The same thing could we predict for Brazil's borders with Guyana, Brazil and Venezuela, Brazil to Colombia, Brazil and Peru and Brazil with Bolivia ... And interestingly, the leaders of the SIVAM Project inside Brazilian government did not want to understand this difficulty. And it could be better designed made with fewer deployments within the total Amazon area, but avoiding the boundaries in the sense that it had to be a collaboration more thoughtful, more well crafted between the governments of neighboring countries (ROSSI, 2003, p. 82).

Thus, given the patterns of Amazonian security problems we realize that they have a high degree of interdependence both in the processes of securitization and desecuritization as look to networks that permeate the region leading to low effectiveness of unilateral actions and the need for collaborative actions.

Therefore, a hypothesis of persuasion denial-deter is likely to explain the need for international collaboration in creating the conditions for effective border security. According to Raza (2014), unless the dimensions of persuasion denial-deter of the border could build credibility through affirmative willingness of States to act decisively and within the space of operating time required, border security will become a panacea

Within this logic is important to emphasize that surveillance systems provide an important tool for cooperation and also can establish bonds of trust between neighbors, because electromagnetic waves can invariably violate their territory, considering that these
extend throughout the environment until to be reflected back, besides the fact that an efficient radar must detect threats beyond the border (Raza 2014).

Cross-border Cooperation in the Amazon region and Brazil role in collaborative arrangements

With the growing importance and participation of Brazil in the region, the Brazilian government began to open possibilities for sharing of information obtained by the SIVAM. However, such initiatives have been more concentrated in the sphere of speech than affective actions.

The most significant advance in sharing data generated by the SIVAM was the signing in 2003 of a memorandum of understanding between the presidents of Peru and Brazil for the sharing information captured by the system in the region of Tabatinga-AM, creating the Peruvian Amazon and Proteccion Amazonico and National System (SIPAN SIVAN-Peru).

Thus, it is important to note that the increasing securitization of border territories also expands opportunities for regional cooperation initiatives.

In this sense, the policy regarding border security we can see that the National Defense Strategy of 2008 put as a goal to create a National System SysC that would cover the whole range of land and sea border with Integrated Monitoring System Frontier (SISFRON) Army attached to the Air Force Brazilian Aerospace Defense System (SISDABRA), and the Management System of the Blue Amazon (SisGAAz) Navy attached. Such actions would lead to increased surveillance and modernization of Brazil's borders, creating increased opportunities for cooperation with neighboring countries (Raza 2014).

However, while such projects are in their embryonic stages, one realizes that these are framed within the logic of closed borders, since these have not entered in the agenda of discussion with neighboring countries.

The fact that security designed in the form of state and defense as concrete acts, derived from the national security doctrine of Colleges of War (ESG) is still widely used in
defense policy. Thus, it is necessary, therefore, to rethink these concepts, considering transnational threats and the need for collaborative actions

Hence, when it comes to combating the transnational threats the government has adopted policies of closed borders, within logic of national introspection as demonstrated in the Border Strategic Plan.

The Border Strategic Plan was released in June 2011, having as main objective the prevention, control, surveillance and prosecution of cross-border crimes and offenses committed in Brazil borderline (Brasil 2011).

We can attribute the character of defense policies to the fact that the military as authors of their policies, tend to be resistant to shared security policies among neighboring countries and to innovations in the security and defense framework.

Regarding the treatment of the concept of border security to Brazil policy makers, Raza (2014) argues that this requires a reformulation seeking better understand of the implications of the challenge facing the country. Thus he argues:

Specifically, the Brazil border security must be understood as a dimension of self-regulated safety within the larger set of national security. The ambiguity of the concept of national security should be excised. Maintained during the last sixty years by the Superior School of War – it no longer fit the ambitions and national interests that are emerging in Brazil. The use of military force can be neither the only nor the main dimension: new elements must be constantly redefined and included in the dynamic organization of national security of Brazil (Raza 2014 p. 67).

However, although the Brazilian security policy is grounded in assumptions that value closed borders, increased concern about borders in Brazil has been linked to cooperation initiatives, as Brasilia has sought to cooperate with their Amazonian neighbors, these actions has occurred primarily in the form of joint actions to combat drug trafficking in border regions as examples of actions in this regard, we can mention among the Air Forces of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela, whose area of operation is limited to the region Amazon: BOLBRA, COLBRA, VENBRA and PERBRA. These are aimed to establishing greater surveillance and control of the adjacent border strips airspaces in order to curb the actions of criminal groups that use aircraft to transport drugs, weapons and ammunition.
These operations occur within a scope of cross-border cooperation. Carneiro Filho (2013) defines cross-border cooperation as a set of actions implemented through proposals of actors from two or more nation states, that these actions will have an impact on different sides of the international boundary of a given cross-border region.

The bilateral nature of border security cooperation is due in large part to the difficulty of developing a comprehensive border security policy, because it involves complex factors. Deal with border security involves not only address traditional concerns such as the protection of sovereignty, but should also include the broader implications of that region that are interconnected, or are even interdependent (Raza 2014).

About the Andean-Amazon region is important to emphasize that the political disagreements between these countries also stands as an obstacle to multilateral cooperation. Thus, we find that although there is consensus on the nature of the threats, among the countries of the region there is a conflict over the means to be employed in dealing with regional security problems.

Medeiros Filho (2010) poses as an obstacle to regional cooperation the deterrent nature of the current defense policies of countries in the region, because while the idea of cooperation lies in sincerity and reliability, deterrence rests on distrust and a fear of potential adversary (Medeiros Filho, 2010.). Thus, the military mentality continues largely rooted in traditional values of safety and defense of the territory oriented to traditional threats, where the neighbor remains a latent threat and is negative for the process of integration regional.

However, the perception that the existing problems of security on the north border of Brazil can’t be solved unilaterally is gradually changing the posture of the Brazilian military on regional integration. This change in perception allied with the signing of treaties of cooperation led the Air Force to invest in conducting bilateral operations designed to establish specific coordination procedures aimed at air defense of the Amazon (MARQUES, 2007).

Thus, given the degree of interaction in the Amazonian borders would be involved in deep processes of cross-border interaction , this process refers to a set process of uses and valorization of one border, territorial boundary separating two political, economic and also socio-cultural systems. So would refer to the transcendence of the inhabitants on both sides of the border and incorporating in their life strategies through multiple modalities (Carneiro Filho & Rückert 2013).
Within this logic, the direction given by the Minister of Defence takes largely the perception of a subregional dynamics of growing importance. The emphasis in ready, versatile and integrated forces reflects an arrangement that collective security can prove to be effective at any time. It is having the capacity of action in the context of a reciprocal arrangement for subregional assistance (Brigagão & Proença Jr. 2002).

This also means the responsibility for proper harmonization of the different demands of security compromises. This is how to balance the pond ration between the availability of forces, given by these arrangements; the need for self defense of the State and the resources they decide to allocate to defense. There is therefore a specific weighting of the Ministry of Defence in relation to the ready availability of certain levels of force, without which the security commitments of a State are empty of meaning.

In this perspective the Brazilian leadership to the creation of the Council of the South American Defense shows that for the first time Brazil could have a security project for the region, occupying the role traditionally occupied by the United States as it is away from the region in favor of other strategic priorities. That way, we can assess that Brazil could be a consensual regional hegemony by the United States. In this sense, the relative disengagement of the United States in the region may represent an opportunity to build a security regime in the region that observes the regional particularities. Put that way, Brazil would exert regional hegemony via institutionalization and aggregation for a process of regional integration.

Thus, we emphasize that the cross-border cooperation is important for the interests of local governments in promoting policies in a transboundary context, which leads to redefine the government's own articulation and national sovereignty. However, in South America there are no institutions to support this. Cross-border cooperation can substantially reduce the problems of these regions and also fosters regional integration, as it stimulates the construction of regional public goods, this process can contribute to respond to situations that have not found individual solution (Rhi-Sausi & ODONNE 2011).

Regarding the integration process in South America, although one can’t speak of military integration, one can speak of the existence of a climate of cooperation furthered by the institutionalization of South America Council of Defense. Therefore, the possibility fostered in the speeches of the Brazilian Army that South American countries come to "work together in the face of emerging threats" can be regarded as an indication that it is coming up a security community.
A final issue relates to the permanence of distrust of the countries of the region in relation to postures "imperialists" of its main leader. Recent events involving Brazil and neighboring countries (Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay) point in this direction and "show that the elites of these countries remain very sensitive to discourses and images of the past on the expansionist intentions of Brazil" (VILLA, 2005). Thus, one realizes that one of the main pillars for the construction of schemes and cooperation is the trust between the actors in the Amazon still have much space to advance collaborative strategies can be effective.

It is important to note that joint military actions as developed by the Brazilian Air Force in partnership with neighboring countries can play an important role in building ties between the armed forces of neighboring countries as well as in building trust.

In this sense, the cross-border cooperation stands as an important tool in promoting regional integration, since it fosters the creation of regional public goods and increased contact between people.

Within this logic, initiatives in matters of security and defense show up, even more valuable because they increase trust between the military of the countries involved in collaborative actions. However, we note that for the feasibility of such initiatives would need a larger Brazilian engagement at the early stages of establishing the scheme.

For this, the Brazilian government would have to bear the costs of a leadership position in the region, without it’s only been connected to the Foreign Ministry without this translates in defense policy.

In building a multilateral regime boundary is important to recognize as highlighted by Salvador Raza (2014) border policy should take into account specificities that define relations between the two states involved, so it is not possible for the formulation of strategies one-size-fits-all, since there are no areas at the border.

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However, although each border context has it’s particularities, there are general principles governing border security.

Conclusions

Observing Brazilian policies for areas of the Amazon border, we stress that these have been based primarily on classical views of defense which have the defense of the territory on the base. However, we argue that this approach would be misguided, since the threats affecting the region have a deterritorialized character.

Nevertheless, we noticed an ambiguity in Brazilian politics. If, on the one hand, the country undertakes initiatives to promote regional integration, which would reflect a project of Brasilia for the region, consolidating its leadership in South America On the other hand, Brazil's leadership still shows faltering, which partly due to lack of capacity, especially military, the country to consolidate itself as the guarantor of the integration process in the subcontinent, especially in areas of security and defense.

However, it is worth noting that the situation post-2008, with the crisis in the center of the capitalist system, opened new windows of opportunity for countries like Brazil. In the words of Salama (2012:308) "the world today is not the same as the past, in many respects, what was yesterday unimaginable is now held." Thus, regional powers gain space to create regional schemes

We need to recognize that despite the Brazilian political willingness to deepen relations with neighboring countries aimed at establishing mechanisms for cooperation in
security and defense in diplomatic actions. Initiatives for operational cooperation in defense have shown incipient without institutional framework and without contributions to the sustenance of these.

Thus, a security policy in a consistent boundary should seek to overcome the old distinctions between domestic and international security, seeking to understand how to deal with deterritorialized threats and how these require collaborative actions, since transcend national territories.

So an efficient border security policy as argued in this study that would take into account the specificity of this area as well as the issue of interdependence in security issues in these areas. However, past experiences as SIVAM should be taken into account in the construction of the Brazilian SysC system, which positions itself as the main operational means to ensure the safety of both land and sea borders, since these projects are in their seminal stages. In order not to repeat a situation of isolates within a large disaster benefits as observed in the case of SIVAM because of a misconception.

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