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## Security Policies of India, Brazil and South Africa – Regional Security Contexts as Constraints for a Common Agenda

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GIGA Research Programme:  
Violence and Security

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Daniel Flemes and Alcides Costa Vaz

No 160

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## **Security Policies of India, Brazil and South Africa – Regional Security Contexts as Constraints for a Common Agenda**

### **Abstract**

In the course of the last decade, the IBSA states (India, Brazil, South Africa) have increased their weight in the shifting global order, particularly in economic affairs. Can the same be said about the IBSA states' position in the international security hierarchy? After locating the IBSA coalition in the shifting world order, we analyze its member states' willingness and capacity to coordinate their security policies and build a common global security agenda. In addition, we explore the state of and perspectives on bi- and trilateral collaboration initiatives on defense and armaments between India, Brazil and South Africa. A key reason for the mostly modest results of global security agenda coordination and cross-regional defense collaboration is that the prevailing security concerns of each country are located at the regional level. Therefore, the starting point of an assessment of the prospects of IBSA's security cooperation and its potential impact on the strategic global landscape has to be a comparative evaluation of the regional security environments, focusing on overlaps and potential synergies between the national security policies of the three state actors.

Keywords: India, Brazil, South Africa, IBSA Dialogue Forum, security policies, security context, military power

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## **Zusammenfassung**

### **Die globale Sicherheitspolitik Indiens, Brasiliens und Südafrikas – Regionale Sicherheitsordnungen als Hindernis für eine gemeinsame globale Agenda**

Im Verlauf der letzten Dekade konnten die IBSA-Staaten (Indien, Brasilien, Südafrika) ihre Position in der sich verschiebenden Weltordnung erheblich verbessern; das gilt insbesondere für ihren Einfluss auf globale Handelsfragen. Lässt sich ein ähnlicher Aufstieg der IBSA-Staaten in der internationalen Sicherheitsordnung konstatieren? Die Autoren verorten die IBSA-Koalition in der sich verschiebenden Weltordnung und analysieren die Bereitschaft und Fähigkeit der drei Staaten, ihre Sicherheitsstrategien zu koordinieren und eine gemeinsame Sicherheitsagenda zu entwerfen. Ferner werden die Bedingungen und Perspektiven bi- und trilateraler Verteidigungs- und Rüstungszusammenarbeit untersucht. Im Ergebnis zeichnen sich bisher allenfalls anfängliche Bemühungen bei der Zusammenarbeit im Verteidigungssektor und bei der Entwicklung einer globalen Sicherheitsagenda ab. Ausschlaggebend dafür sind die primär auf der regionalen Ebene liegenden Sicherheitsprioritäten der IBSA-Staaten. Die perspektivische Bewertung des potenziellen Einflusses der Staatenkoalition auf globale Sicherheitsfragen erfolgt demnach vor dem Hintergrund der regionalen Sicherheitsstrategien Indiens, Brasiliens und Südafrikas. Dabei stehen mögliche Überschneidungen und Synergien zwischen den regionalen Sicherheitsstrategien im Zentrum des Interesses.

# Security Policies of India, Brazil and South Africa – Regional Security Contexts as Constraints for a Common Agenda\*

Daniel Flemes and Alcides Costa Vaz

## Article Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 IBSA in the Context of a Shifting World Order
- 3 IBSA's Security Agenda and Cooperation Scheme
- 4 The Regional Dimension: Hard-Balancing or Securing Stability?
- 5 Concluding Remarks

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## 1 Introduction

Different scenarios of the future world order have been suggested: the systemic transformation can open out into a concert or cartel of powers (cf. Kagan 2008), a “non-polar world” (cf. Haass 2008), “unstable multipolarity” (cf. Humphrey et al. 2006) or “multi-multipolarity” (cf. Friedberg 1994; Nolte 2008) or into a “multiregional world order” (cf. Hurrell 2007; Flemes 2009a). The point of departure is the current global order, which reflects a mixture of a concert of great powers and multiregional structures. It consists, on the one hand, of the EU

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as a relatively functional region and, on the other hand, of many great powers without functional regions around them, such as the U.S., China, Russia and India. Brazil and South Africa are now at a crossroads and can actively pursue global strategies with or without their regions. The strategies of Brazilian and South African foreign policy can affect the balance between the above-mentioned conceptions of global order.

Recently, many studies have pointed to global power shifts in favor of the BRICs and other rising powers (cf. Goldman Sachs 2007; Cooper et al. 2008; Mahbubani 2008). Existing power poles in Europe and North America are expected to lose relative economic power, and even whether Western culture and values will continue to be dominant is contested (cf. Cox 2007; Ikenberry 2008; Zakaria 2008). But can we observe similar power shifts in the international security hierarchy? The India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA Dialogue Forum) was not founded as a security alliance. Nevertheless, Section 3 will show that India, Brazil and South Africa coordinate their positions with regard to several global security issues and engage in bilateral and trilateral defense collaboration. Section 4 will tackle the key question of this study: How do the regional security contexts as well as the political and strategic assets of the three states condition their ability to build a common global security agenda? Before testing these preconditions for an influential role of the IBSA states in international security, Section 2 will briefly introduce the origins and evolution of the IBSA Dialogue Forum over the last decade, and analyze its role as a “soft-balancing coalition” in the shifting global order.

## 2 IBSA in the Context of a Shifting World Order

The IBSA Dialogue Forum is a coalition of emerging powers determined to benefit from the global power shifts. It was launched in June 2003 in Brasilia. After several ministerial meetings between President Lula da Silva, President Thabo Mbeki and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (elected 2004), the first IBSA Summit was held in Brasilia in September 2006. Since then, IBSA has held regular ministerial meetings and further summits in Pretoria (2007), New Delhi (2008) and Brasilia (2010).

A cursory glance at IBSA’s schedule highlights the strengthening of diplomatic ties between the three emerging Southern powers over the last few years. Together, India, Brazil and South Africa are lobbying for a reform of the United Nations that allows for a stronger role for developing countries, who make up the majority of U.N. member states. Nevertheless, the troika is not envisaging an alternative world order that privileges the developing world. Its initiative is instead firmly located in the existing international order, as the Brasilia Declaration<sup>1</sup> suggests:

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<sup>1</sup> For the text of the declaration following the meeting of the foreign ministers of Brazil, South Africa and India in Brasilia on June 6, 2003, see: <[http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2005/ibsa\\_brasilia.htm](http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2005/ibsa_brasilia.htm)>.

[We aim to respect] the rule of international law, [strengthen] the United Nations and the Security Council and [prioritize] the exercise of diplomacy as means to maintain international peace and security.

While the IBSA initiative may thus be seen as an effort to increase the bargaining power of developing nations, the cooperation between South Africa, India and Brazil focuses just as much on concrete collaboration areas. Defense, trade, energy security, health and transportation are only the most prominent issues of IBSA's sector collaboration. IBSA can therefore be characterized as both a strategic coalition for the pursuit of common interests of developing countries in global institutions and a platform for bilateral, trilateral and interregional South-South cooperation. The sector cooperation will form the sound base for the coalition's soft-balancing strategy (cf. Flemes 2010) in world affairs.

Soft-balancing does not directly challenge U.S. military preponderance, but rather uses non-military tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine the superpower's unilateral policies (Pape 2005: 10). Soft-balancing involves institutional strategies such as the formation of limited diplomatic coalitions or ententes, such as IBSA, the G3 and the G21, to constrain the power of the U.S. and other established great powers. This institutional strategy is also referred to as "buffering" and aims to extend the room to maneuver of weaker states vis-à-vis stronger states (cf. Greenfield Partem 1983; Gries 2005). It also involves strengthening economic ties between emerging powers through sector-related collaboration. This could possibly shift the balance of economic power in the medium term. Binding strategies aim to restrain stronger states through institutional agreements (cf. Ikenberry 2003). And indeed, Brazil, India and South Africa maintain linkages with the U.S. on a variety of issues and to different degrees of institutionalization. In June 2005 the U.S. and India entered into a ten-year defense pact followed by a "Strategic Partnership" in March 2006, including cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and U.S. arms supplies. Agreements on civilian nuclear cooperation with Brazil and South Africa (both NPT signatory states) were concluded in the 1990s. Presidents Bush and da Silva signed a cooperation agreement on bio-fuels in March 2007. Moreover, the Organization of American States (OAS) connects Washington and Brasília in several ways, and the two states were the principle negotiators in the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) process. A similar dynamic can be noted in the negotiations of the US-SACU<sup>2</sup> Free Trade Area that began operating in June 2003 and in which South Africa is a dominant player.

India, Brazil and South Africa have demonstrated their ability to advance their goals—particularly economic goals—within the existing order. In comparison, the gains to be expected from violently overturning the current international order are rather limited (cf. Ikenberry et al. 2008). Therefore, institutional strategies seem to be the most promising for im-

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<sup>2</sup> The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) includes South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia.



pacting the international hierarchy of states. But how does—and how will—the emerging alliance’s diplomacy impact the global security order?

The IBSA states’ strategic approaches are forced to take into account the continuing superiority of established (U.S.) and emerging (China) global actors in terms of material, particularly military, power. A crucial reason for U.S. hegemony in international relations is the country’s military supremacy. Washington accounts for more than the half of global defense expenditure (cf. SIPRI 2009) and 60 percent of the world’s research and development spending (cf. BICC 2008). In conventional military terms, the U.S. will remain the dominant global power for a long time. Therefore, hard-balancing based on countervailing military alliances (external balancing) and arms build-ups (internal balancing) does not seem to be a viable option in the medium term.

Nevertheless, the governments of India and Brazil have considerably increased their military spending in recent years in order to modernize their armed forces and to adapt them to the requirements of new defense strategies (cf. Dördrechter et al. 2010). Whether these arms build-ups are mere reactions to regional developments or if they also have global strategic implications remains questionable. Samuel Huntington (1999: 37) used the concept of unimultipolarity to describe the current structure of the international system. From a realist perspective, a multipolar system can only be achieved by the emergence of regional unipolarities that build coalitions to balance the superpower (Wohlfort 1999: 30). In the following section, we will focus on the IBSA states’ efforts to coordinate their security agendas and to collaborate in defense policies, which might have direct impacts on the coalition’s position within the global security hierarchy.

### **3 IBSA’s Security Agenda and Cooperation Scheme**

The IBSA initiative echoes previous experiences of South–South cooperation in the 1970s and 1980s, demonstrating more willingness to draft an economic agenda than to compromise on security issues. One explanation for this is that the security concerns of most states today are almost entirely regional, and regions are an increasingly salient unit of security analysis (cf. Lake et al. 1997; Lemke 2002; Buzan et al. 2003). Particularly South Asia’s situation of strategic parity makes a common IBSA approach unlikely as Brazil and South Africa pursue cooperative security policies in their regions (cf. Fledes et al. 2010).

The differences in strategic parity notwithstanding, India, Brazil and South Africa took common standpoints on a series of global security problems. For instance, with regard to the Middle East conflict, the excessive use of force during the Lebanon War (2006), which resulted in the death of a large number of civilians and the destruction of Lebanon’s infrastructure, was condemned in the Brasília Summit Declaration. Israel was indirectly accused of violating the principles of International Humanitarian Law. Furthermore, concerning the Israel–Palestine conflict, da Silva, Singh and Mbeki criticized collective punishment and at-

tacks against civilians. They stressed the increasing deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian population and pledged their readiness to look into technical cooperation projects in Gaza and the West Bank. At their most recent meeting in September 2009 in Brasília, the foreign ministers of IBSA called for an end to the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories. Terrorism is another global security issue that has been focused on; the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and the one perpetrated in Pune in February 2010 helped to increase the relative importance of transnational terrorism on IBSA's agenda. The three countries have been supportive of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism approved in the United Nations.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, IBSA's heads of government underscored their commitment to the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation in the Joint Summit Declaration, expressing their concern over the lack of progress in the Conference on Disarmament. They emphasized that the objective of non-proliferation would be best served by systematic and progressive elimination of nuclear weapons in a non-discriminatory and verifiable manner. At the same time, the three leaders reaffirmed the right of all states to a peaceful application of nuclear energy and called for a diplomatic resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue within the context of the IAEA. These issues and positions were reaffirmed in the 2010 Joint Summit Declaration, in which they also expressed the support for an International Convention Prohibiting the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Nuclear Weapons.

In fact, Brazil and South Africa have common standpoints regarding non-proliferation and disarmament, and both countries have renounced their respective nuclear weapons programs. South Africa was instrumental in brokering an agreement between the so-called "minimalist" and "maximalist" groupings during the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995. Pretoria succeeded in getting the conference to adopt an indefinite extension of the NPT and made two other decisions concerning the strengthening of the review process and a set of objectives and principles (non-binding) on non-proliferation and disarmament. Brazil's bilateral renunciation (with Argentina) led to the Quadripartite Agreement on Nuclear Restrictions in 1990.<sup>4</sup> At the 2010 NPT Review Conference, Brazil and Argentina worked together to help consolidate recommendations on nuclear disarmament (Johnson 2010: 4). Quite to the contrary, India (not an NPT signatory state) decided to "go nuclear." This places India and the other two IBSA countries on opposite sites of the nuclear divide (Sahni 2006: 102).

The nuclear deal reached between the U.S. and India in March 2006 led to the de facto recognition of India's nuclear deterrent and opened the channels for commerce in civilian

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<sup>3</sup> IV IBSA Summit Declaration, Brasília, April 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Argentina–Brazil nuclear negotiations initiated in the mid-1980s led to a cumulative process of non-proliferation negotiations nowadays considered an archetype for nuclear weapon-free zones. In November 1990 both countries signed the Quadripartite Agreement together with the IAEA and ABACC (Agencia Brasileña Argentina de Contabilidad y Control). Today Brazil and Argentina are at the center of southern Latin America's security community (Flemes 2006).

nuclear technologies, for instance with France in 2008 and Russia in 2009. In particular, South Africa is among the most influential members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). The NSG had to legitimize the U.S.–Indian nuclear deal, and the decisions of Brazil and South Africa were seen to be critical to the viability of IBSA from the Indian perspective (ibid). When Prime Minister Singh visited Pretoria only two weeks after the 2006 IBSA Summit in Brasília, President Mbeki announced that South Africa would back India's bid in the NSG to be given access to international technology for a civilian nuclear energy program (*Business Day*, October 3, 2006). Supporting the deal between the U.S. and India, which, again, has *not* signed the NPT, indicates a major shift in Pretoria's proliferation policy from a rule- and principle-based one to a more pragmatic one.

The most important areas of cooperation in the sector of defense, listed below, were recognized in IBSA's New Delhi Plan of Action (2004) as being of particular interest to trilateral cooperation:

- conducting joint peacekeeping training and military personnel exchange
- promoting maritime and air safety, including combating illegal weapons and narcotics traffic and maritime transit of toxic chemicals across the Indian and Atlantic Oceans
- cooperating in armaments industries, R&D, trade and marketing

Joint naval military exercises have been the most salient area of trilateral security cooperation. The first such exercise, called IBSAMAR I, took place in 2008 in South African waters. It allowed the respective naval forces to exchange knowledge and practices related to surface, anti-submarine and anti-air operations. The second IBSA naval military exercise, IBSAMAR II, took place in September 2010, again in South Africa, with India as the lead country for planning. It was a more complex exercise encompassing anti-air, anti-submarine, and visit-board-search-seize operations, along with other naval warfare maneuvers such as fuelling in mid-sea.

Yet, most of the ambitious agenda for defense cooperation has not been put into action so far. Increasing military personnel exchange and joint naval exercises have been the most visible outcomes of defense cooperation. Initial contacts and the first steps in the area of armaments industries have been taken, but so far with few tangible outcomes. These initiatives remain largely confined to military cooperation and political dialogue on security issues. They have not led to more effective steps in coordinating positions and actions on the more sensitive issues of the global security agenda. Their political appeal and impact on the global stage will also be limited.

As originally conceived, IBSA's security agenda reflects a pragmatic stance on the nature and feasibility of its objectives and initiatives, leading to sector collaboration with a largely depoliticized approach. The exception is cooperation in armaments industries and in joint R&D, which is certainly prone to produce more significant political and strategic impacts in the medium and long terms if initiatives are consistently pursued. Once action is taken, the

trilateral defense cooperation would contribute to global security. At present, however, it is foremost about sector cooperation and less about a common approach to global security governance issues that represents a political restraint.

Nevertheless, this does not imply that the possibility for the three countries to influence global security dynamics is undisputedly attached to the width and scope that trilateral security and defense cooperation might achieve. Defense cooperation is expected to enhance that possibility but it is far from being a determinant of it. Therefore, in assessing the prospects of IBSA becoming an influent force in international security, we must also take into consideration the political and strategic assets of the three countries; their policy perspectives regarding power asymmetries; global and regional stability; and their willingness to engage in a cooperative endeavor to enhance their relative position in the international security system.

In this regard, unilateral arms build-ups as well as military and armament alliances reflect hard-balancing behavior of the emergent powers to different degrees. First of all, the IBSA states' aggregation of military power impacts their regions and/or spheres of influence, where extant power asymmetries are reinforced. From a global perspective, the regional unipolarities gain military weight and become more dominant players in regional security affairs, interacting directly with global security. India, Brazil and South Africa can engage in mediation or peacekeeping in order to secure regional stability or they can be a dominant conflict party and intervene militarily in their spheres of influence, putting regional stability at risk. Regionally superior military capabilities are a precondition for both kinds of behavior, and either role—regional stabilizer or violent hegemon—is prone to enhance a nation's status as a regional power in the global security system and thus their global-counterbalancing potential. Therefore, it is important to take into account the patterns and the impacts of military build-up carried out by individual IBSA states in their respective regional strategic contexts and how that affects their global-counterbalancing potential.

#### **4 The Regional Dimension: Hard-Balancing or Securing Stability?**

The increase of military capabilities usually brings about competing interpretations as to a country's motivations and the consequences for the region and, eventually, the world. From the perspective of hard-balancing, the primary justification for building up military capabilities is the existence of an actual or perceived threat posed by the military power and the intents of another state or group of states (Nicholson 1992: 164). Such a threat, according to this reasoning, must be countered and deterred by defensive and offensive means. There is a direct association between the pursuit of military power and the attainment of strategic balance, which is, in turn, expected to translate into a stable environment. In this sense, stability is associated both with the ability to narrow military gaps and with deterrence.

On the other hand, strengthening military capabilities in the absence of an explicit or identifiable enemy can be associated with

- 1) hegemonic aspirations,
- 2) concerns about instability derived from either structural power imbalances and asymmetries at the global level or the spillover of domestic conflicts and/or
- 3) a state's endeavor to enhance its political and strategic international profile and become able to influence processes and behaviors at the international level without necessarily aspiring to hegemony (Scheeling 1966: 131).

These three situations require the increase of both defensive and offensive military capabilities. Ultimately, a state's decision to develop a predominantly defensive or offensive approach to its defense policy reflects its own perceptions and assessment of its strategic environment, the nature of existing threats, and the suitability of the means necessary to counter them.

As the regional strategic environments of each of the three IBSA countries greatly differ, their security and military policies will also reflect different priorities. Thus, the present concern of each of the IBSA states about the pursuit of military capabilities is a consequence of the different political projects of the three actors and their different strategic settings. The roles that India, Brazil and South Africa play regionally are bound to be different, as is their ability to conduct global-balancing. It is then necessary to consider the prevailing concerns and the profile of each country in its own region in order to assess the prospects and the possible outcomes of security cooperation in the framework of IBSA and its impact on, and significance for, global security.

#### **4.1 Brazil: Regional Cooperation and External Armament Alliance**

Brazil is actively engaged in an unprecedented process of forging and revising its security policy, consolidating the defense institutional framework and strengthening its armed forces. The restoration of democracy in the mid-1980s, the end of the Cold War, and the absence of immediate conventional threats to its security from within the region brought about an acute questioning of the *raison d'être* of its armed forces and provided no incentives for defense spending. Actually, until very recently, defense was not regarded as a priority at all when considering the more immediate needs in areas such as public health, education, energy and infrastructure. Military expenditure was very low (9.9 billion USD in 2005, according to SIPRI), leading the armed forces to an acute state of obsolescence. The institutional framework of security policies remained unchanged for decades, despite the dramatic political and economic transformations of the country itself and of the international system at large.

This picture started to change in 1996 when, for the first time, a National Defense Policy was crafted to pave the way for the creation of the Ministry of Defense three years later. In 2005, a second and more elaborate version of the National Defense Policy was put forth, with two main priorities: the defense of the Brazilian Amazon and of the huge sea territory under Brazilian jurisdiction. Each of those areas comprises over 1.7 million square miles of territory,

and the state lacked even the most basic capabilities to protect them from any conventional or non-conventional threat. Particular attention was paid to the over 10,000 miles of land borders with ten countries, seven of them (Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, French Guiana and Suriname) in the Amazon. That large continental territory and the long borders have been regarded as increasingly vulnerable to both foreign states and non-state actors, so those areas thus represent a primary security concern for Brazil. In consonance with these priorities, the 2005 National Defense Policy introduced the concept of the "Brazilian security environment," a territory extending from the Pacific coast of South America to the African coast in the Atlantic (Ministry of Defense 2005). In its continental dimension, it comprises the whole of South America, thus bringing the region to the core of Brazilian security and defense concerns. In order to provide security to its vast territory, Brazil set up a sophisticated air surveillance system for the Amazon and transferred troops to border regions, but the lack of equipment and material and technological resources for air and water operations remained a bottleneck for the defense of its Amazon territory. Such deficiencies were greater still for naval defense, especially in light of the fact that 75 percent of Brazil's oil- and gas-drilling facilities are located along its coast, and that the huge extent of its jurisdictional sea territory made the protection of existing mineral and biodiversity resources a very difficult task. When the US-SOUTHCOM announced the re-establishment of its 4<sup>th</sup> Fleet after 58 years off-duty, (and this shortly after Brazil had discovered large petroleum reserves along its coastline), the Brazilian armed forces reacted with "Operation Atlantic," simulating a war between Brazil and the U.S. over the oil resources (cf. Flemes et al. 2010).

All these challenges demanded a more focused defense policy. Therefore, in 2008 a National Defense Strategy (NDS) was set forth and became the cornerstone of Brazilian policy in the defense realm (Ministry of Defense 2008). The NDS reasserts the priorities established in the 2005 National Defense Policy but gives them a clearer perspective as to military planning. It envisages a comprehensive reconfiguration of the Brazilian Armed Forces, the revitalization of the national defense industry, and technological development in three sectors regarded as being of utmost importance for defense: nuclear, aerospace and cybernetics. It also asserts the quest for strategic independence as a core policy objective to be pursued over the next three decades. For that purpose, the NDS reaffirms the need for strategic alliances that enable the country to acquire the technologies needed to provide for the most immediate defense needs and for the achievement of strategic independence (Ministry of Defense 2008). With that intention, Brazil engaged in a strategic armaments partnership with France in 2008 and ordered submarines, helicopters and other advanced weapons systems and technology for nearly 10 billion USD (cf. Flemes et al. 2010). Military expenditure nearly tripled in comparison to 2005, rising to 27.1 billion USD in 2010.

Brazil's security concerns and its current efforts to strengthen its military capabilities reflect, therefore, two main considerations. The first has to do with the intent to enhance its international profile by seeking to engage in regional and global security affairs and become

more independent strategically (Soares de Lima 2010: 408; Cardoso 2010: 427). The aim is to become a more influential actor in the process of building global governance in core realms like politics, economics and security. The second consideration is related to the interest in regional stability as a necessary and favorable condition for the pursuit of political, economic and security interests and objectives. As previously mentioned, this implies a strong motivation on the part of Brazil to forge cooperative arrangements and an associated regional institutional framework in order to maintain these arrangements (cf. Vaz 2009). The decisive engagement of Brazil in the South American Union (UNASUR), and more particularly in forging the South American Defense Council within it, are quite in line with that purpose. At the same time, South America becomes a privileged space for Brazilian interests in the arms industry in terms of the opportunity for strategic partnerships and due to the potential of the region as a market for defense products and services.

Therefore, Brazil's initiatives are not part of an arms race in the region; rather, they can be understood as aiming to strengthen the region's own defense capabilities and to gradually reduce reliance on external provision of military material. This also allows Brazil to fortify its regional power status in South America in military terms (cf. Fledes 2008). It is true that countries like Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Ecuador are also committed to expanding and modernizing their military capabilities often in partnerships with external powers from opposite ideological and political camps (U.S. and Colombia, Venezuela and Russia) (cf. Fledes et al. 2010), and some of these South American states are motivated by competitive or even hostile attitudes towards each other. But there is no sound evidence of Brazilian participation in any regional arms race. With one of the lowest regional military expenditures in the world, and despite the fact that there are a few bilaterally contentious territorial issues that might lead to an armed conflict, South America does not host strategic rivalries that can trigger or even justify an encompassing regional arms race.

In this sense, Brazil is closer to the profile of a regional stabilizer than that of a hegemon. The Amazon country's mediation activities in interstate conflicts (Colombia vs. Venezuela) and domestic crises (Paraguay 1996, 1999; Venezuela 2002) as well as its regional cooperation initiatives also emphasize its role as stabilizer and cooperative regional power in South America (cf. Fledes 2009a). The strategic and military profile envisaged in its NDS highlights the possession of military capabilities that grant the country the effective condition to deny, when necessary, access by third parties to its territory and to prevent and dissuade aggressions to its territory and population.

In this regard, there is no emphasis on power projection towards its own region. Brazilian strategic posture is essentially a defensive one. However, the land and sea territory under Brazil's jurisdiction comprises nearly 3,668,000 square miles, which requires power projection capabilities, especially regarding sea waters. The South Atlantic Ocean is of particular relevance for Brazil's defense interests, and it has also become a source of concern due to some recent developments such as the higher importance recently granted to it by countries

like the U.S., the U.K., Germany, France, Russia, China and Japan; the increase of the U.S. and U.K. military presence in the area; sovereignty disputes (U.K. and Argentina on the Falklands/Malvinas Islands; desires (including its own) to extend the limits of sea territory; disputes over resources in international waters; and the need to protect sea trade routes, fight illegal activities and monitor dangerous shipments. Maritime power projection thus becomes a necessary feature for both an effective defense posture and an active engagement and presence in the major issues and processes that make up the South Atlantic strategic context (Moura Neto 2010: 452).

This is precisely the area in which IBSA might become relevant for Brazil's security interests and for an eventual balancing exercise. By intensifying naval cooperation, sharing experiences, and bringing some naval capabilities together, India, Brazil and South Africa may consolidate a maritime cooperative axis connecting the South Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, an arrangement to which South African commitment and resources would be essential. The two naval exercises (IBSAMAR I and II) carried out by the three IBSA states are important and hold the prospect of becoming the cradle for more regular initiatives along those lines. However, this prospect is curtailed by the difficulties the three countries face in committing resources for that purpose, as will be shown in the forthcoming paragraphs.

#### **4.2 South Africa: African Peace Missions and Mediation**

South Africa's security concerns, particularly in the post-Apartheid era, have brought the country closer than ever to an engagement in continental and regional security affairs (Shelton 2006: 132). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and its Organ on Politics, Defense and Security (OPDS) are the privileged theaters for Pretoria's defense and security cooperation. Africa's strategic context has been marked by intra-state conflicts, which have become much more important than inter-state ones. It is precisely for this reason that the OPDS, at least on the discursive level, directly associates the promotion of peace and security in the region with the protection of the people against instability arising from the breakdown of law and order. In practice, security matters in Southern Africa are still based on the principle of state security.

Therefore, the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and peace operations in particular have become issues at the forefront of South Africa's security agenda (Neethling 2004:136). The other regional pillar of utmost relevance for South Africa's security cooperation is the African Union and its Peace and Security Council, which aims to respond timely and efficiently to conflict and crisis on the African continent and to develop a common defense policy for the long term. The African Standby Force (ASF) has been established to be rapidly deployed to intervene in crisis situations and provide a capacity for both peacekeeping and "robust" peace enforcement, but the ASF is far from overcoming the technical and political barriers that hinder its application.



South Africa's security policies have reflected the same trend and reasserted the strategic importance of participating in peacekeeping operations as a central means to contribute to peace and stability in Africa and to avoid spillover effects from domestic conflicts (Department of Defense 1998: 6). However, it has adopted a more conditioned and broader approach to its peacekeeping engagement: It favors early warning, consent, and diplomatic negotiation mechanisms over conventional capabilities to establish a cease-fire and monitor the enforcement of peace agreements (Shelton 2006: 147).

South Africa, like Brazil, does not face any military threat to its territory, people and institutions. But Pretoria is concerned about political instability in its neighborhood. But differently from its South American partner, inter-state and intra-state conflicts are actual components of South Africa's strategic regional landscape. It must, therefore, consider the prospect of having to deal with huge flows of immigrants, refugees, and the spread of famine and disease that follows crises and conflicts associated with ethnic clashes and the breakdown of states and governments. This leads South Africa to prioritize conflict mediation as a core component of its approach to regional security (Soko 2007: 9). A third and decisive feature of South Africa's stance on regional security has to do with the paradox of, on one hand, being by far the richest, most powerful (in military terms) country in Africa, and also the only country on the continent with indigenous capabilities to develop arms, and on the other hand, sustaining a profile marked by political and strategic self-restraint in its own unstable sub-region (Hammerstad 2006: 262).

The persistence of important political grievances with some of its neighbors (Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Angola) and the intent to not get involved in any political or strategic entanglement in its immediate context has led South Africa to favor consensus-building and persuasion when dealing with regional security issues. This leaves little room for military issues and arms build-up to become core elements of its regional security approach. Actually, South Africa's military expenditure has been stagnated in the range of 3.5 billion USD from 2005 on (SIPRI, 2010). Despite this, South Africa remains sub-Saharan Africa's most powerful state in terms of military spending. On the continental level, only the military spending rates of Algeria, Egypt and Morocco are comparable to South Africa's (cf. International Institute for Strategic Studies 2009).

However, the prospects for a more stable scenario in the SADC region have been undermined by a military assistance act crafted by authoritarian-ruled Zimbabwe with Namibia, Angola and the DRC, principally to prop up the regimes in the latter two countries militarily, both of which are facing insurgencies (Fledes 2009b: 145). The military assistance act contributes to bringing military issues back to the sub-region's security agenda. However, this fact does not influence the essence of South Africa's approach to regional security. Rather, its policy focuses on multilateralism, institution-building, peace-making and conflict mediation and resolution, all of which bring the country clearly closer to the profile of a stabilizer rather than that of a hegemon (South African Defense Review 2008, Chapter 4).

The reason for South Africa's cooperative and civilian interpretation of its regional power role is not only the historical legacy of Apartheid, which limits the acceptance of potential followers even today. Policymakers are conscious that a pronounced claim to regional leadership or unilateral use of military force like in Nigeria (1995) and Lesotho (1998) would undermine its legitimacy on the African continent (cf. Flemes 2009b). Even though the issue is subject to political controversies, South Africa does not seem to be prone to hegemonic aspirations—not even in its immediate sub-regional context, where it has been committed to self-restraint, as mentioned above. South Africa's regional policies are driven foremost by ideas rather than by power and/or hegemonic aspirations (cf. Geldenhuys 2010). If South Africa were to have hegemonic intents, military considerations would certainly play a stronger role in its security approach.

Not even in its maritime projection do military considerations acquire greater significance. Despite its privileged position at the intersection of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, with nearly 2,000 miles of coastline and approximately 386,000 square miles of sea water under its jurisdiction (Siko 1996), South Africa has not developed a maritime policy, not to mention a naval strategy, which reflects that geopolitical condition. Its naval forces are limited, and defense priorities are defined around maritime routes, harbor facilities and military naval bases (Snyman 2006).

However, like in the Brazilian case, the high priority of the maritime security dimension grants IBSA one of its most promising opportunities for collaboration. Besides that, South Africa's experiences in peace missions are valuable sources of opportunities for cooperation. Moreover, the active engagement in peace operations under the auspices of the African Union has not brought about a direct alignment with U.S. policies on international intervention. On the contrary, like Brazil, South Africa was quite critical of the U.S. actions in Iraq, and the lessons provided by the U.S. experiences in Somalia and Sudan led South Africa to adopt a more cautious and broader policy approach to peace operations, one that favors the prospects for more intense cooperation on this issue with its IBSA partners.

In several senses, South Africa's roles and perspectives regarding its regional security context resemble those of Brazil. Both countries are interested in promoting regional stability and are prone to act as stabilizers. The military policies and priorities of both countries do not target any primary threat in their own respective neighborhoods; defense concerns are, therefore, supposed to be met through a strong commitment to institution-building and the pursuit of a condition in which they can achieve greater influence in decision-making and governance-building in global and regional security. For both states, IBSA has limited functionality in the pursuit of regional security, but their experiences in dealing with regional instability might be relevant when they come to deal with certain issues like peace operations and conflict mediation. Brazil and South Africa face similar challenges in regard to maritime issues, a fact that makes the increase of cooperation in this area foreseeable.

Undoubtedly, similarities and convergences in the “Brazil–South Africa axis” could underscore IBSA’s objectives in regard to international security. India, however, faces a quite different strategic regional environment, and its security policy differs to a great extent from those of the two other partners. However, that does not entirely preclude the possibility of exploring the limits and the possibilities of Indian security cooperation with Brazil and South Africa, as we will demonstrate below.

### **4.3 India: Conventional Arms Build-up and Nuclear Deterrence**

Differently from its two IBSA partners, India faces a regional security environment marked by the existence of long-standing rivalries associated with ethnic, religious and political grievances. Moreover, its broader strategic context is home to four nuclear powers (India, Pakistan, China and North Korea) and is an area of direct strategic concern for two major nuclear powers, the United States and Russia. Therefore, as a key actor, India is subject to not only conventional and nuclear threats, but also the interests and policies of the remaining superpower and great powers like China and Russia. By engaging with several great powers at the same time, India is not only diversifying its foreign policy options but also strategically hedging its bets in its search for influence and status in a dense environment (Bava 2010: 121).

In such a context, the expansion of military capabilities and the exercise of nuclear deterrence are subject to rather different policy and strategic objectives than in the cases of Brazil and South Africa. Likewise, India’s political ambitions regarding global and regional security differ greatly from those of Brazil and South Africa. India is supported by the United States and is increasingly involved in a process of power-balancing, with China on one side and Pakistan on the other (The National Bureau of Asian Research 2010: 7).

There is a clear divide in India’s strategic environment; it must perform two distinct roles. First, in its immediate strategic environment, South Asia, India acts like a hegemon and intends to consolidate itself as one, and it does so by sustaining a conventional arms build-up and nuclear deterrence against Pakistan (Mitra 2003: 401). In the broader Asian context, India is certainly a rising power politically, economically and strategically (Tharoor 2007), but it has to adjust itself to a rapidly changing strategic environment in which China has emerged as a global power with huge economic capabilities, but with less political and strategic willingness to act as a superpower. It also has had to deal with Russia’s reassertion of its status as a great power and may eventually be forced to deal with the rise of North Korea as a nuclear power. Finally, it has to deal carefully and pragmatically with the strategic interests of the United States in that region, particularly regarding balancing China’s strategic growth (The National Bureau of Asian Research 2010: 8), an issue of high political and strategic sensitivity to India.

The 2006 nuclear agreement contributed to strengthening India’s possible role as a deterrent to China. India’s roles then in the regional strategic framework are much more diversi-

fied than those performed by Brazil and South Africa in their respective regions. Hegemony is unrealistic on a broader level, but is more feasible within South Asia. Inserted into a Hobbesian context, India's role as stabilizer in South Asia is quite limited due to the absence of mechanisms for confidence-building through which a regional cooperative arrangement could evolve. As part of its Look East Policy, India—like China—was included in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in order to contribute to a “pluralistic and cooperative security order” in the Asia–Pacific region (ibid).

The achievement of strategic balance has been persistently approached by India by sustaining investment in defense capabilities. This has led India to develop more sophisticated conventional weapons systems for land, air and sea combat and to expand its nuclear capabilities. India's unprecedented armaments program led to yearly military spending growth rates between 13 and 25 percent over the last 20 years, reaching 36.6 billion USD in 2008 (cf. SIPRI 2009). In a broader sense, the modernization of India's armed forces (in particular its navy and air force) aims to support its status as an emerging power with military means. The most important goals are to increase the conventional and nuclear deterrence capacity, to bring about the conditions for network warfare, and to preserve its supremacy in the Indian Ocean (Dörderechter et al. 2010: 3-4).

Military build-up is then of critical relevance and fulfills some policy objectives that do not correspond to the cases of the other two IBSA partners, such as sustaining nuclear deterrence with Pakistan. However, this striking difference does not preclude the possibility of cooperation in the framework of IBSA, as India is interested in diversifying its arms suppliers and regularizing its nuclear status vis-à-vis the United States; the International Atomic Energy Agency might also facilitate cooperation in this domain (Oliveira 2006: 192). A nuclear agreement between India and Brazil was cogitated recently. Because for both countries strategic autonomy is a common interest, there might be some room for political dialogue on security matters and for some concrete development in the realm of IBSA, particularly concerning some critical technologies for defense and the purchase of military equipment.

However, the prospects of IBSA becoming a relevant dimension of India's security policy are dim. As Sahni puts it: “Unless IBSA ameliorates some of India's current security challenges directly, it will almost automatically slide down in priority in India's overcrowded policy agenda” (Sahni 2006: 131). If that is the case, IBSA loses a window of opportunity to become an influential factor in international security, as India and its security environment are much more entangled with current central global security dynamics than Brazil and South Africa are.

Likewise, India's military developments are of much more critical relevance for the regional—and to a lesser extent, the *global*—order because they respond to a concern for strategic balance and autonomy, thus touching upon critical security issues such as nuclear proliferation and the control of dual-use technologies that are also at the core of the security policies of the great powers. Actually, India is the country among the three IBSA members that is

best posed to actually realize strategic autonomy. In other words, if IBSA intends to become something more than a coalition of developing nations trying to make their voices heard internationally and to help shape global governance in some key areas, including security and defense, it will require a strong commitment from India. In this regard, India is certainly much more important to IBSA than IBSA may be to India's security interests.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

Despite IBSA's profile as an international coalition and its ambitious agenda, its possibility to affect the strategic global landscape is severely constrained by some factors: first, the existence of different approaches regarding key issues of the contemporary global security agenda; second, the limited strategic expression of Brazil and South Africa beyond their own regions; and third, to a lesser extent, the difficulty that the three countries face in bringing together their own regions into a cooperative endeavor aiming to shape a more stable and inclusive world security order.

In comparison with India and Brazil, South Africa lacks the ambition to become a great world power. One criterion characterizing a great power is the ability to compete with other dominant powers in a conventional war. Seen through that lens, the arms build-up of Brazil, and particularly that of India, do have an impact on the strategic global balance. But we did not find evidence for a major coordination of the global security strategies of both players. The same lack of coordination can be observed in

- 1) Brazil's efforts to construct its own Middle East policy (for instance, offering mediation in the Israeli–Palestine conflict and in the Brazilian–Turkish Iran initiative) and
- 2) India's role in the Middle East.

IBSA's present security agenda signals that the alliance's best prospects to have some meaningful impact on global security affairs are related to

- 1) cooperative institutional strategies, particularly within the U.N. system and
- 2) the exercise of soft-balancing behavior.

From the perspective of the regional dimensions, there is a very clear divide between the strong tendency of Brazil and South Africa to act as regional stabilizers and brokers, on one hand, and India's Hobbesian perspective that keeps it inevitably committed to sub-regional hegemony and regional deterrence, thus making it very difficult for the IBSA states to derive a common perspective from their regional experiences.

In spite of that, some opportunities for security cooperation associated with their respective regional contexts exist, namely those associated with maritime security and peace operations. In any case, it is clear that the condition of the three countries as regional powers does not translate easily into opportunities for IBSA to advance its security agenda. On the contrary, their diverse regional security contexts represent a serious constraint for building a common security agenda as well as for affecting and benefiting from global power shifts.

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