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**Artigos**

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**Brazil and the Prague Agenda:  
convergence and conflict between  
Brasilia and Washington's views on  
achieving nuclear disarmament and  
curbing nuclear proliferation.**

Renata H. Dalaqua

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CENTRO BRASILEIRO DE RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS

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3

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# 1. Introduction

The re-election of President Barack Obama, in November 2012, has prompted various political analysts and prominent international leaders to bring demands for the President's attention. On the foreign policy front, it was possible to see some renewed hopes that the Obama administration would find solutions to the huge challenges still facing it in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Syria and the Middle East. Understandably, these expectations were not stated as euphorically as four years before, but the sense that President Obama's second term would be less constrained by electoral considerations provided the basis for a moderate enthusiasm.

In addition to regional issues, many hope that President Obama's foreign policy agenda for the second term will give continuity to the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, outlined by the President in his landmark speech in Prague, in April 2009 (The White House, 2009a). Notably, during the first couple of years of his administration, President Obama expressed his commitment to the strengthening of the nuclear order and made the case for rapid and serious movements towards global nuclear disarmament.

However, in the past two years, the American President has lowered the tone of his abolitionist aspirations. It is possible to argue that the domestic battles his administration had to fight in the U.S. have forced him to put aside his enthusiasm for such matters. Additionally, the absence of strong support and, in fact, the resistance his ideas encountered, inside and outside the U.S., can

also be seen as factors that have discouraged President Obama from pursuing a more vigorous strategy towards nuclear disarmament.

When President Obama gave voice to his "vision of zero", during the so-called Prague Speech, the responses that he got from political leaders of Nuclear Weapon States (NWS)<sup>1</sup> were quite shy. While Russian President at that time, Dmitri Medvedev, had publicly acknowledged the importance of reducing the size of nuclear stockpiles (President of Russia, 2009), it was no secret that influential policy makers in Russia rejected the goal of nuclear disarmament on the grounds that, without nuclear weapons, Russia's military capability would be much weaker than that of the U.S. (Perkovich, 2010, p. 06).

Additionally, the reactions President Obama received from China and France were far from the consistent, high-profile support he needed. The UK, under the past Labour government, configured an exception among the NWSs, as it had, to a certain extent, embraced the project of nuclear disarmament (Perkovich, 2010, p.08). That, however, has certainly changed since the new coalition government, led by the Conservative Party, came to power, in 2010.

While the NWSs' support for such goal would definitely increase the weight of President Obama's declaration, it would be rather unrealistic to expect that from them, given the importance NWSs place on their nuclear arsenals. On the other hand, a head of state from a Non-Nuclear Weapon State (NNWS) that had been an

1 Nuclear Weapon States are here defined in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); that is, the countries which have manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January, 1967 - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. See The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968).

adamant advocate of nuclear disarmament could be a good partner for President Obama in this endeavour. Most likely, a country belonging to the New Agenda Coalition (NAC)<sup>2</sup> would have the political capital and will to do so.

Brazil, as an active member of the NAC, and its President at the time, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, could have stepped up to stand with President Obama and push for progress on a comprehensive agenda of reciprocal moves to advance non-proliferation and disarmament. While Brazil welcomed the renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament and participated in some initiatives launched by President Obama, there were tensions between the view from Washington and the view from Brasilia regarding the perceived threats of proliferation and the chosen manner to deal with those.

In order to understand the Brazil's attitude towards what can be labelled as the Prague Agenda for reducing nuclear dangers and pursuing the peace and security of a world free of nuclear weapons, this article will analyse the Brazilian foreign policy regarding nuclear matters in the recent past. That will be done after examining the main proposals for cooperative action on nuclear affairs made by President Obama and, subsequently, the Brazilian stance on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. At the end, conclusions will be drawn with the intention of explaining Brazil's response to the agenda set by President Obama in Prague.

## 2. The U.S. and the Prague Agenda

Already during his first presidential campaign, Mr. Obama had signalled that nuclear disarmament would be one of his foreign policy priorities. When interviewed by the Arms Control Association, in September 2008, Mr. Obama promised to make "the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide a central element of U.S. nuclear policy" (Arms Control Today, 2008). Such statement was in line with the proposal to move towards "reversing reliance on nuclear weapons globally" and "ultimately ending them as a threat to the world" that was presented in the previous year by former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of Defence William Perry and former Senator Sam Nunn (Schultz, et al., 2007).

This high-level support coming from the mainstream security establishment of the U.S. sparked a revival of interest in nuclear abolition, which had waned since the late 1990s. It was an encouraging time for the abolitionist movement, as important political figures incorporated the goal of nuclear disarmament in their rhetoric and an increasing number of newspaper articles and editorials, governmental publications and politicians' statements urged action towards the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world.<sup>3</sup>

After he came to office, in January 2009, President Obama put forward ideas that expressed a new positive attitude of the U.S. regarding multilateral arms control

2 The New Agenda Coalition (NAC) was established in 1998, in the aftermath of the NPT's indefinite extension, by states concerned with the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and the implications of India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests. It congregates the following countries: Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden.

3 For a list compiling the most relevant of these publications supporting the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, see Dalaqua (2011), Appendix 2

and disarmament measures and also a desire to improve relations with Russia. On the occasion of the G20 Summit of 2009, in London, President Obama met with Russian President Medvedev and they issued a joint statement in which the two leaders pledged to work together “to fulfil our obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)” and committed the two countries to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. The path chosen was a step-by-step process and the initial move would be to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty – which would expire in December 2009 - with a new, legally-binding treaty on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms (President of Russia, 2009).

Even though this statement contained important indications of this constructive American attitude towards arms control and disarmament, President Obama’s plans for nuclear foreign policy would become more evident a few days later, when he delivered a major speech in Prague.

## Defining and pursuing the Prague Agenda

It was in the capital of the Czech Republic, on 5 April 2009, that President Obama enunciated his belief on the feasibility of a world free of nuclear weapons and outlined the Prague Agenda. In this speech, President Obama defined the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons as “the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War” and affirmed that “the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up”. Faced with this context, the President declared: “So today, I state clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” (The White House, 2009a).

President Obama’s vision of zero included practical steps that could be taken by the U.S.; such as reducing the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategy and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Accordingly, the American President also pointed directions to strengthen the NPT regime (e.g., boosting resources, enhancing authority and strengthening international inspections) and defined initiatives to be conducted at the global level (e.g., a new treaty to end the production of weapons-grade fissile material and renewed efforts to break up black nuclear markets).

President Obama was also clear about the obstacles standing on the way of the outlined path to curb proliferation and advance disarmament. In this sense, he mentioned North Korea’s – formally known as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) – defiance and argued for a strong international response to it. Additionally, he stated that Iran’s nuclear and ballistic missile activity constituted a real menace and vowed to go forward with a “missile defense system that is cost-effective and proven” to tackle this threat (The White House, 2009a).

Within the international community and also inside the U.S., the proposals put forward by President Obama were seen as constructive but did not generate much enthusiasm. Only a few months later, President Obama’s views on nuclear arms control and disarmament were tested, as the DPRK conducted a second nuclear explosion, on 25 May 2009. As it was the case with the first North Korean nuclear blast, the test was severely condemned by major states and international organisations (Charbonneau, 2009; CNN, 2009). Notably, the Obama administration organised a stronger response than the Bush administration had managed after the DPRK’s first nuclear test, in October 2006. In addition to consulting with key partner states, such as Japan and South Korea, Washington also pushed for tighter arms embargos against North Korea and increased financial

restrictions imposed on Pyongyang. These multilateral measures were formalised in the Resolution 1874, adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in June 2009 (UN Security Council, 2009a).

Reversing the unilateralism that marked the U.S. foreign policy under President George W. Bush, President Obama expressed his commitment to a multilateral approach to arms control and disarmament by presiding over a high-level meeting of the UNSC aimed at fostering progress on these two fronts. This was the first time a U.S. President led a UNSC Summit-level meeting and, under the leadership of President Obama, the heads of states

sent an official of such high stature. On that occasion, Secretary Clinton stated

*Mr. Chairman, after a ten year absence from this conference, America stands ready to renew its leadership role in the non-proliferation regime (...) We come to this conference with an optimistic spirit that all parties can make a contribution towards a world without nuclear weapons. That is the promise of the CTBT, and it is why we are rededicating ourselves to this effort (The White House, 2009b).*

*Within the international community and also inside the U.S., the proposals put forward by President Obama were seen as constructive but did not generate much enthusiasm.*

of thirteen other countries approved unanimously the Resolution 1887. This Resolution reiterated the NWSs' obligation, stated in Article VI of the NPT, to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear arms reduction and disarmament (UN Security Council, 2009b). Following UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's pledge for a stronger role for the UNSC in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, this Resolution was the first comprehensive action on nuclear issues taken by the Council since the mid-1990s (UN Security Council, 2009c).

On that same day, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton attended the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, known also as the CTBT Article XIV Conference. Washington had not sent a representative to this conference in nearly a decade and had never before

Despite Secretary Clinton's participation on the CTBT Article XIV Conference and the stated "rededication", the Obama administration is yet to achieve the ratification of the CTBT. In order to do so, it would be necessary to secure a two-thirds vote in the Senate – an unlikely scenario in the current Democrat-Republican divide in U.S. national politics. In spite of the difficult domestic setup, ratifying the CTBT remains of crucial importance, since it would configure a powerful demonstration of the American commitment to Article VI of the NPT and to the Prague Agenda (Kalionzes and McGrath, 2010).

Consistent with the Prague Speech, in which President Obama argued in favour of more resources to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime (The White House, 2009a), the U.S. pressed for an increase in the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) regular

budget. In the past few years, IAEA's Director General Mohamed ElBaradei had also advocated for a funding boost of the IAEA's zero-growth budget, warning that the budget limitations jeopardised nuclear safety and security (Kerr, 2007). In September 2009, the IAEA General Conference accepted a recommendation by the Board of Governors to raise the 2010 regular budget to \$453 million, a 5.4% increase. As Crail (2009) noted, adjusting for inflation, it represented a 2.7% increase from 2009. In addition to the Obama administration's role in pushing for an increase in the regular budget, Washington announced that it would increase its voluntary contribution by 20% – approximately \$10 million (Crail, 2009).

In view of President Obama's efforts to revive the ideas of arms control and advance the nuclear disarmament agenda, the Nobel Committee awarded him the Peace Prize. On that occasion, the Committee praised his work "to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples" and highlighted his leadership in the building of a world free from nuclear weapons (Norwegian Nobel Committee, 2009).

After such an important award, expectations grew bigger and there was pressure coming from nuclear abolitionists, who wanted to see more practical steps of President Obama's Prague Agenda become a reality. Trying to fulfil the Prague promise of putting an end to Cold War thinking and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in American national security strategy, President Obama

conducted a Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), which became public in April 2010. As analysts have observed, the NPR expressed, indeed, a significant change in U.S. nuclear weapons policy, as it limited the role of nuclear weapons to deterring nuclear-weapon attacks of other NWSs and attacks by states that are not in compliance with the NPT (Baker and Sanger, 2010; Hoffman 2010; Pollack, 2010).<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the NPR put preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism at the top of the U.S. agenda and renounced the development of any new nuclear weapons, such as the bunker-busters proposed by the Bush administration (U.S. Department of Defense, 2010).

On 8 April 2010, a year after his landmark speech, President Obama returned to Prague to sign the New START Treaty with Russia.<sup>5</sup> Even though this was an important achievement, there was no time for celebrations. In order to bring the Treaty into force it was still necessary to get the approval of the Senate and that would require major efforts and some concessions from the Obama administration. To foster bipartisan consensus so as to put the New START in place, he put forward a dual track approach; which favoured advancing a far-reaching non-proliferation agenda while sustaining the deterrent. Accordingly, when the administration submitted the Treaty to the Senate, it also submitted a 10-year plan to maintain U.S. nuclear warheads and modernise their infrastructure (Reif, 2010).<sup>6</sup>

4 In accordance with President George W. Bush's 2002 NPR, nuclear weapons could be used to deter "a wide range of threats", including Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and large-scale conventional military force. For more information on the 2002 NPR, see Bleek (2010).

5 The New START, which superseded the Treaty of Moscow (2002), cuts the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads and limits the deployed nuclear delivery vehicles per country. It also puts in place a verification regime similar to the one established by the START Treaty, including on-site inspections, data swap and notifications and exchange of missile telemetric information. For more information on the New START, see Woolf (2012).

Although the New START was a top priority for the Obama administration, its ratification became a contentious and lengthy debate. After months of negotiations, the American Senate ratified the New START on 22 December 2010. Shortly after, the Russian Duma did the same and the Treaty came into force on 5 February 2011. Due to the difficulties in finalising and adopting the Treaty, Russia and the U.S. had no bilateral verification procedures for over a year. The temporary absence of a verification agreement between the two countries clearly undermined President Obama's stated principles, since it represented a significant decrease in the degree of openness and transparency in nuclear matters.

The Prague Agenda also included hosting a Nuclear Security Summit, in Washington. This meeting took place in April 2010 and was attended by high-level representatives of more than forty states; including the heads of states of key countries in the nuclear order, such as: Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russia and South Africa. As the intention of the Summit was to strengthen nuclear security and reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism, it focused on how to better safeguard weapons-grade plutonium and uranium and break up nuclear black markets.

The summit was important for the Obama administration because it provided the President with the opportunity to persuade other political leaders that the risk of nuclear terrorism is a shared one and not just a menace to the U.S. Additionally, it was also a good occasion for President Obama to hold face to face meetings with state representatives to discuss Iran's refusal to comply with the IAEA and the possibility of imposing harsher sanctions on Iran (Sheridan and Wilson, 2010).

All these initiatives undertaken by the Obama administration contributed to boosting the level of goodwill among the NPT member states in the months prior to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which took place in May. Unlike the previous Review Conference, when countries failed to adopt a final document with concrete recommendations for preventing proliferation and moving toward nuclear disarmament, the NPT states succeeded in issuing a joint declaration in 2010. It contained a comprehensive action plan, which addressed the three main aspects of the NPT – disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy –, and it proposed steps for implementing the 1995 Resolution calling for a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East.

For the first time, the final document included specific and measurable actions that NWSs were asked to take and to report back by 2014; such as reducing the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons and diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. As Choubey (2010) observed, with these provisions, the 2010 NPT Review Conference started a process that can improve ways of measuring progress and also ensure accountability at future meetings.

An important and unprecedented measure was taken by the American delegation to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, as it declared the exact number of nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal (Mohammed and Stewart, 2010). In doing so, Washington took a significant step to further enhance transparency and increase mutual confidence, as it tried to show the U.S. was serious about

6 This proposal included a US\$80 billion budget to be spent in weapons activities by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) over the next ten years. Moreover, the plan outlined \$100 billion in spending over the next ten years to maintain and modernise U.S. nuclear delivery systems. For more details, see Reif (2010).

disarmament. Addressing the principle of nuclear non-proliferation in association with nuclear disarmament, President Obama attempted to “regain the moral high ground”, like Secretary Clinton (2007) had once suggested. By demonstrating the American adherence to the NPT and making significant strides towards disarmament, President Obama aimed at undermining the arguments of hypocrisy and double standards often used by Iran to challenge U.S. diplomacy (Landau and Malz-Ginzburg, 2011, p.08).

Another significant decision taken by the Obama administration was to send, for the first time, a delegation to Japan to attend the Hiroshima A-Bomb ceremony, marking the 65th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima, on 6 August 2010. It was a symbolic gesture, appreciated by the Hibakusha – the survivors of the atomic bombings – and the nuclear abolitionist movement.

## **Appraisal of the first two years of the Prague Agenda**

In the first two years of his administration, President Obama negotiated the New START with Russia and won Senate approval of the pact, helped secure an action plan to strengthen the NPT, accelerated global efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism, completed a top-to-bottom review of the U.S. nuclear weapons posture, and took steps to engage Iran in negotiations and build international pressure on Tehran to meet its non-proliferation commitments. Taking these actions into consideration, it is clear that he tried to make nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament a top priority of American foreign policy.

While his words and deeds contributed to the re-emergence of disarmament as a mainstream topic for

debate and the creation of goodwill within the nuclear non-proliferation regime, President Obama’s plan for cooperative nuclear diplomacy were complicated by Iran’s refusal to comply with the IAEA demands. Likewise, the resistance the Prague Agenda encountered among American allies (e.g.: Japan, South Korea, Poland, Czech Republic, Baltic states) constituted a major challenge for President Obama. Such countries, who believe they need the U.S. nuclear umbrella, reprimanded the American leader for considering the possibility of weakening and even dissolving this shared mechanism of deterrence (Perkovich, 2010 p. 08).

At the domestic level, political opposition became a big problem to President Obama; whose Democratic Party lost seats in the Senate and the majority of the House of Representatives after the 2010 elections. In part, the delay in the implementation of the 2010 NPR, the persistence of modernisation programmes and the pending ratification of the CTBT were a reflection of the complicated political scenario facing President Obama inside the country. Additionally, the battle over health care in the U.S., which was already a hot topic of debate in 2010, would become a major domestic controversy and mobilise public opinion over the next two years.

As it could have been anticipated, in face of the weakening of the Democratic Party, dissenting voices became louder inside the U.S. It also became evident that there was no consensus among President Obama’s party on the cause of nuclear disarmament. As Perkovich (2010) has noted, the cause seems to have failed to conquer the hearts and minds of the majority of President Obama’s team. In fact, there were times in which it appeared as if the President and the Vice-President, Joe Biden, were its only advocates (p. 12).

Given the lack of internal and external support and the domestic political adversities, President Obama’s project

for American leadership for a world free of nuclear weapons was put in second place. Considering that American leadership is crucial to make real progress towards nuclear disarmament, the decreasing importance of the Prague Agenda in the U.S. foreign policy can be a reason for frustration among the NNWSs.

For many, American leadership in this issue is considered not only as a normative responsibility but also as a legal obligation deriving from Article VI of the NPT (Santoro, 2010, p. 24). It is from this perspective that nuclear disarmament supporters are watching the Obama administration and still waiting for it to promote further reductions in nuclear stockpiles and ensure the ratification of the CTBT; with some hoping that this waning of the promises of Prague is only temporary and, after President Obama's re-election, the Agenda will be revived (Cirincione, 2012; Hurlburt; 2013; Kimball 2013).

### 3. Brazil and the Prague Agenda

As it was demonstrated in the previous section, President Obama's intention was to drive forward a nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. However, as he made clear in his Prague speech, President Obama did not plan to do it on his own. The aim was to mobilise and gather other states in a shared enterprise. Despite being a major power, the U.S. needs high-level international support to promote the Prague Agenda – not only because the country may lack some of the diplomatic, political and technical skills that NNWSs have developed in their continuous struggle to ban nuclear weapons, but also because the backing from other countries can add legitimacy to this U.S.-led nuclear disarmament effort.

There are a number of reasons to assume that Brazil would be a good partner for Obama in this enterprise aimed at reducing nuclear dangers and moving towards nuclear disarmament. Since its adhesion to the NPT, in 1998, Brazil has been an important actor within the non-proliferation regime and it has consistently maintained an assertive position regarding nuclear disarmament. Additionally, as a nuclear threshold state – a state that, despite having significant nuclear capabilities, has chosen not to develop nuclear weapons –, Brazil could speak from experience about the benefits of giving up a nuclear weapons programme and pursuing regional and global status without military nuclear capability (Ruble, 2010, p. 53). In this sense, some might suggest that Brazil could lead by example and actually embody the ideal candidate for outreach to tough proliferation cases (Ruble, 2010, p. 52). If those were true, Brazil could be a matching partner for the U.S. in this endeavour.

At the same time, there are features of Brazilian foreign policy that prevent the country from taking a prominent position inside the NPT regime; such as: past reluctance to join the regime and current resistance to additional non-proliferation measures; atypical stance on nuclear safeguards; uranium enrichment programme; plans for nuclear-powered submarines; emphasis on overcoming the current imbalance of power and resources among North and South while strengthening the latter.

It is true that nuclear disarmament has been an enduring demand of the Brazilian foreign policy rhetoric. In this sense, the Brazilian official discourse highlights the fact that, already in the 1960s, Brazil had signed and ratified the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (1967). Known as the Tlatelolco Treaty, this instrument prohibits the testing, use, manufacture, production or acquisition of nuclear weapons, but it permits peaceful nuclear explosions

for the purpose of technological development. Thus, its content was consistent with the Brazilian nuclear policy during the military dictatorship (1964-1985) – which did not consider PNEs as proliferation, rejected the NPT and, in fact, carried out a clandestine nuclear programme in parallel with the civilian one (Barletta, 1997).

However, after the re-democratisation process that took place in the end of the 1980s, Brazil's position regarding nuclear affairs has changed. The country has put an end to its covert nuclear activities, included a clause in its constitution restricting nuclear activities to the pursuit of peaceful purposes, setup a joint nuclear verification agency with Argentina – the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) –, adhered to the NPT and also ratified the CTBT.

*[...] in the recent past, conflict between Brazil and the U.S. in this area was exacerbated and outweighed convergence, as Brazil stepped up to play a more important role in the regime, trying to avoid sanctions and brokering a deal with Iran regarding the Tehran Research Reactor.*

Although the described events allow Brazil the credentials to push for nuclear disarmament, there are specific features of Brazilian foreign policy that conflict with the view from Washington on nuclear matters; especially regarding perceived threats of proliferation. In order to understand the view from Brasilia on the Prague Agenda, the analysis that will unfold will focus on an established feature of Brazilian foreign policy – the longstanding critical stance Brazil has held on the nuclear non-proliferation regime and its main pillar, the NPT. Additionally, it will examine a novelty aspect,

introduced during the Lula years (2003-2011): the goal of strengthening Brazil's role as a leader of the Global South as well as a "bridge" between the North and South.

The underlying assumption is that these two major aspects can represent the main sources of convergence, as well as conflict, between Brasilia and Washington's views on achieving nuclear disarmament and curbing nuclear proliferation. Nonetheless, as it will be demonstrated below, in the recent past, conflict between Brazil and the U.S. in this area was exacerbated and outweighed convergence, as Brazil stepped up to play a more important role in the regime, trying to avoid sanctions and brokering a deal with Iran regarding the Tehran Research Reactor.

### **Brazil's critical stance on the NPT regime**

Among the Brazilian political establishment, there is a widespread perception of the NPT regime as being unfair. This is not a unique feature of Brazilian political thinking; in fact, in many NNWSs the regime is considered in this light, since the NPT establishes different obligations for two different sets of countries – nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states. Brazil, as several other NNWSs, demands balance between the obligation of

non-proliferation and the obligation of disarmament and stresses the need to fulfil Article VI of the Treaty.

Article VI of the NPT, also known as the “disarmament clause”, is of great importance to the regime. Many consider that this article has the principle of justice in it, the potential to put an end to the discriminatory order of nuclear “haves” and “have-nots”. Indeed, Article VI states that

*Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control (The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1968).*

Since it calls for negotiations that would ban nuclear weapons, Article VI outlines a path to disarmament and also to fairness. In this sense, the lack of NWSs’ serious efforts to eliminate their own nuclear arsenals is seen as perpetuating an unequal order. The slow pace of disarmament has been a source of frustration for Brazil and many other NNWSs. As Müller (2010) points out, this general feeling of injustice is aggravated by the fact that the five NWSs are the permanent members of the UNSC and, thus, act simultaneously as the judges and prosecutors of breaches of the NPT by NNWSs (p. 196).

The quest for a more balanced world order has been at the forefront of Brazilian foreign policy, which is also evident in the country’s lasting ambition of obtaining a permanent seat in the UNSC. This has been an enduring demand that already occupied a prominent position in Brazilian foreign policy during the presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002).

It was also during the Cardoso administration that the political process that led to the Brazilian adhesion to the NPT regime occurred. The decision to adhere to the NPT was the subject of criticisms that stressed the discriminatory order of the regime, but these were outweighed by the large majority of parliamentarians that supported the view that the adhesion to the NPT would bring international prestige and credibility to Brazil. Notwithstanding, the legislative decree that formalised the Brazilian adhesion to the NPT linked this decision to the understanding that Article VI of the Treaty would be fulfilled (Senado Federal, 1998).

In the following years, the slow pace of disarmament measures adopted by the NWSs together with the Bush administration’s disregard for multilateral arms control mechanisms and the resurgence of plans to design new nuclear weapons in the U.S. fuelled discontent with the global nuclear order in Brazil. Celso Amorim, then-Foreign Minister of Brazil, also made public his disappointment with the fact that the Bush administration withdrew its support for the ratification of the CTBT (Amorim, et al., 2004). In the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the Brazilian Ambassador Ronaldo Sardenberg made clear that modernisation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery was against the “unequivocal commitment” to complete nuclear disarmament, as it was stated in the previous NPT review process (NPT Review Conference, 2005).

Throughout the years, Brazil has linked the discriminatory nuclear order to the absence of democracy in international relations (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2010b). From this perspective, Brasília has maintained that fairness in the NPT regime – and, thus, progress towards democracy among states – would be accomplished through the fulfilment of Article VI, the complete eliminations of the nuclear arsenals of China, France, Russia, U.K. and U.S. A recognition of Brazil’s

role as a vocal supporter of nuclear disarmament came in July 2007, when United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of the Brazilian diplomat, Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, as the first UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. The choice of Ambassador Duarte for such an important position can be seen as a significant victory of the Brazilian Foreign Service that came during President Lula's term.

Common to the rhetoric of the Brazilian political establishment is the portrayal of Brazil as "the most active country regarding the nuclear disarmament cause" (Brazilian Ministry of Defense, 2010). Indeed, that affirmation appears in Brazil's National Defence Strategy (NDS), announced in December 2008. Based on this opinion, Brazilian technocrats and policy-makers

have justified their resistance to additional nuclear non-proliferation measures. Correspondingly, the NDS affirms that

*Brazil will not adhere to amendments to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons extending the restrictions of the Treaty, until the nuclear weapon states advance in the central premise of the Treaty: their own nuclear disarmament (Ibid.).*

Behind this statement is the Brazilian rejection of the Additional Protocol (AP) – a voluntary, legal instrument that complements comprehensive safeguards agreements and provides the IAEA broader rights of access to sites in the country. Despite the pressures coming from the IAEA

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and some NWSs that consider the AP a fundamental instrument of the verification regime, Brazil has strongly opposed it.

Together with Argentina, Brazil has developed a bilateral safeguards regime and it demands that this regime be recognised as equivalent to the AP. Brazil and Argentina's atypical stance on safeguards is regulated by the 1994 Quadripartite Agreement, established between Brazil, Argentina, the IAEA and the ABACC. In this sense, Brazil maintains that signing and ratifying the AP would be disregarding the work conducted by the ABACC. Additionally, Brazil wants to make the point that the AP and enhanced inspections are voluntary and not mandatory.

This reluctance in adhering to supplementary non-proliferation instruments has generated suspicions that Brazil might be hiding part of its nuclear programme (Palmer and Milhollin, 2004). This perception grew stronger in the Lula administration, when the Brazilian nuclear program was revamped and new investments were made to achieve industrial-scale uranium enrichment capacity and revive the project of a nuclear-propelled submarine.

In 2003, disagreements between Brazil and the IAEA regarding the inspection procedures delayed the full start of operations at the country's Nuclear Fuel Factory; a commercial-scale uranium enrichment facility located in Resende. On that occasion, Brazil was unwilling to grant IAEA inspectors full visual access to its centrifuges, which were hidden by 2-meter (6.6-foot) high panels, arguing that it needed to "protect its commercial secrets and preserve national security in relation to its own nuclear program" (Jesus, 2010, p. 552). After months of impasse, Brazil agreed to allow increased – but not full

– visual access to the machinery by reducing the size of the panels (Carneiro, 2004).

The 2003 episode was one situation in which Brazil's dissatisfaction with the regime became patent. Years before, in June 1998, the country had joined like-minded states and launched the New Agenda Coalition (NAC); a group that sought to propose actions that could advance the goal of disarmament. Since it was created, the NAC has played a relevant role inside relevant international fora, like the UN General Assembly and the institutional bodies of the NPT review process.

In the build-up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, together with other NAC countries, Brazil established priority issues that should be examined in the review process; such as the entry in force of the CTBT, negotiations for a robust treaty on fissile material and enhanced transparency in the form of accounting of nuclear weapons. Progress regarding these issues was seen as fundamental because they could be considered a reassurance from the NWSs to the NNWSs that measures for effective disarmament were being taken (Jesus, 2010, p. 564).

Although not as prominently as in 2000, the NAC countries played a significant role in the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In his speech during the meeting, Foreign Minister Amorim approached the link between justice and security, stating that "the world will only be a safe place when all countries feel that they are being treated with fairness and respect" (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2010a). He listed poverty and discrimination as causes of conflict and affirmed that the presence of nuclear weapons only aggravates those problems. Foreign Minister Amorim stressed the importance of commitments towards disarmament and affirmed that "nuclear weapons breed instability and insecurity (...) they deepen the sense of injustice" (Ibid.).

Similarly to other NAC countries, Brazil has welcomed the entry into force of U.S.-Russian bilateral agreements, such as the New START, while consistently stating that reductions in deployments and in operational status must be accompanied by the irreversible destruction of weapons (Amorim, et al. 2004). In the Brazilian perspective, it is important not to lose track of the final goal; that is, nuclear disarmament and effective democratisation of international relations (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2010b). In this light, the discriminatory order of nuclear “haves” and “have nots” is seen as a perpetuation of power asymmetries and a major challenge to equality in international affairs.

It is notable that, while the Brazilian enduring critical position on the NPT represents convergence with the Prague Agenda as it includes a strong demand for disarmament, it also represents conflict since it strongly advocates that all NPT state parties – including countries identified by the U.S. as aspiring proliferators – have the right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. As it will be demonstrated below, during the Lula administration, Brazil promoted an emphatic defence of the right of Iran, as a state party to the NPT, to enrich uranium while making the broader argument of the right of the developing countries to acquire technology considered important for their national development (Patti, 2010, p. 190).

## **Brazil as a leader of the Global South**

Throughout the presidency of Lula, Brazil has sought to play a more important part in international relations. With this goal in mind, President Lula envisaged a role for Brazil as a bridge between North and South, between the Western interests and insistent non-aligned states. This

conceptualisation of Brazilian foreign policy was based on the thought that diplomacy conducted by emerging powers may achieve success where traditional Western powers had usually failed (Fujii and Diehl, 2010).

In order to strengthen Brazil’s role as a global player, President Lula joined several high-level initiatives, with lead emerging countries but also with consolidated major powers. Regarding the initiatives of the Prague Agenda, President Lula attended the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, in April 2010. On that occasion, Iran’s continued refusal to comply with the IAEA demands and to answer questions about its past record was a major topic of debate. In spite of the doubts surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme, Brazil considered that the existing evidence was not enough to prove Iran was cheating the regime (Spektor, 2010). Thus, Brazil joined forces with Turkey and argued against new sanctions (Diehl and Humphrey, 2010).

President Lula and Foreign Minister Amorim argued that better outcomes could come through engagement instead of sanctions and isolation. This was particularly true in the case of Iran, a country with which Brazil was developing a good relationship and conducting increased amounts of trade. Actually, just a few months prior to the Summit in Washington, Iranian President Ahmadinejad had visited Brazil, in November 2009.

According to reports of the Foreign Minister at that time, Celso Amorim, and to leaked diplomatic cables, since the visit of President Ahmadinejad to Brazil, the U.S. had been trying to impress on Brazil the need to convince Iran to come to an agreement with the IAEA regarding its nuclear programme (Amorim, 2011; Rozen, 2010). Encouraged by American requests, Brazilian diplomats, together with their Turkish counterparts, brokered an agreement with Iran; which became public in May 2010.

The deal was formalised in the Tehran Declaration – established between Brazil, Turkey and Iran – and it allowed Iran to send 1,200 kg of 3.5% enriched uranium to Turkey in exchange for 20% enriched nuclear fuel for a scientific reactor (Joint Declaration by Iran, Turkey and Brazil, 2010). It was clear that the deal did not provide a definite solution, but Brazil hoped this confidence-building measure could alleviate fears over Tehran's nuclear programme and create a more cooperative environment in which future negotiations could take place.

However, the initiative failed to win support of the P-5, the five permanent members of the UNSC. One of the reasons those countries did not support the Tehran Declaration was that, when this deal was reached, the quantity of 1,200kg was considered too low because it did not take into account Iran's accumulation of a larger amount of low-enriched uranium since the IAEA first proposed the agreement, in late 2009.

Additionally, the Tehran Declaration did not address Iran's production of 20%-enriched uranium. Thus, the United States and other Western powers worried that this agreement did not require Iran to curtail its enrichment programme or even resolve outstanding questions about the possible military purposes of its nuclear activities (Reuters, 2010; U.S. Department of State, 2010). Shortly after the deal was announced, Secretary Clinton declared that the P-5 had agreed on a draft text for a new set of sanctions on Iran.

The rejection of this joint venture with Iran and Turkey was a big source of frustration for the Brazilian diplomacy. Inside Brazil, there were people questioning the reasons behind Brazilian engagement and criticising the diplomacy for taking unnecessary risks (Azambuja, 2010) and jeopardising the relationship with the U.S.

in the name of obscure interests (Abreu, 2010). As Patti (2010) has noted, if Turkey was moved by regional reasons, Brazil played like a global actor in this episode (p. 192). As it happened, resistance to a bigger role for Brazil in international affairs became evident inside the country. It was hard for Brazilians to see the benefits of acting globally, as it could upset the traditional powers and bring political and economic costs.

Even though Brazil wanted to consolidate its prestige and reputation as a global player, this was not the only reason behind its engagement with Tehran. With bilateral trade around \$2 billion, Brazil has economic interests in Iran as the Iranian market has become important for the growing Brazilian economy. In this sense, it is plausible to assume that one reason why Brazil wanted to avoid sanctions against Iran was to protect new commercial opportunities for Brazilian companies, especially those who act in oil exploration and provision of ethanol.

Politically, President Lula had emphasised South-to-South cooperation and worked hard to strengthen relations with emerging countries. It is notable that during his presidency Brazil opened more than thirty new embassies in Africa and worked hard to maintain important relations with the main actors of the Global South; like China, India, Russia and South Africa. In this sense, one can see Brazil's engagement with Iran as an opportunity to strengthen Brazilian leadership among the developing world.

Nevertheless, identification and solidarity also appeared to have informed the actions taken by Brazil. Especially in the 1970s, Brazil was the target of American anti-proliferation policies, when Washington made strenuous efforts to halt international cooperation between Brasilia and other countries with an advanced nuclear

industry, like France and West Germany. In the Brazilian case, pressure and isolation created incentives for the pursuit of deterrent in the form of indigenous enrichment capacity (Spektor, 2010). Only a decade after mastering the nuclear cycle, Brazil signed the NPT. And, since then, Brazil has also been the target of pressures from the international community because it rejects the AP.

Despite being criticised for being naïve and granting extra time for a dubious regime, President Lula maintained that “engaging Iran – not isolating it – was the best way to push for peace and stability in the Middle East” (Jesus, 2010, p. 560). In the view of President Lula “the existence of weapons of mass destruction is what makes the world more dangerous, not agreements with Iran” (Ibid.).

## 4. Conclusion

The Prague Agenda was a remarkable attempt to revitalise the efforts aimed at nuclear security and disarmament. This initiative undertaken by President Obama can be praised for contributing to the re-emergence of nuclear disarmament as topic for mainstream debate. On different occasions, the U.S. leader addressed the relation between the obligation not to proliferate nuclear technology for military purposes and the obligation to dismantle and destroy existing nuclear weapons. The emphatic acknowledgement of this link by an American President was also a source of goodwill among the NPT states, like Brazil.

As promised in his Prague Speech, President Obama took concrete steps at the international level to strengthen nuclear security; such as: boosting funds for the IAEA, reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the American security doctrine and achieving the New START with Russia. However, it was not possible to see his administration pushing for the ratification of the CTBT. Similarly, no tangible progress was made regarding the negotiations of an international treaty to regulate the production of weapons-grade fissile material, even though President Obama’s Prague speech did contribute to the improvement of the atmosphere in the Conference on Disarmament (CD).<sup>7</sup>

What it seemed like a “turning point” regarding nuclear disarmament in 2009 has proven rather disappointing. The standoff on the Iranian nuclear programme was not resolved and the political misfortunes of the Obama administration in domestic politics constituted obstacles to the advancement of the Prague Agenda. Furthermore, the absence of sound rejoinders to President Obama’s call to seek peace and security of a world free of nuclear weapons contributed to the loss of momentum of the Prague Agenda. The American President had demonstrated his willingness to lead a global effort aimed at reducing nuclear dangers, but he remained alone in this endeavour, with no co-leader and/or a relevant number of followers.

This paper has showed that Brazil has officially renounced to the ambition of building a nuclear bomb, joined the NPT regime and acted as a firm advocate of nuclear disarmament in the international arena. Additionally, it enjoys high political capital with important non-aligned

<sup>7</sup> After ten years of impasse, the CD was able to adopt a programme of work in 2009. However, the Conference failed to adopt a framework for implementation before the annual session ended. When it resumed its work in 2010, the programme of work had to be renegotiated among members, who failed to come to a consensus. Since then, the Conference has not been able to adopt any programme of work and it ended its 2010, 2011 and 2012 sessions without any progress on substantive issues.

states. In principle, these features could be elements of convergence between Brazil and the U.S., making the former a suitable match for this enterprise.

Throughout the article, however, it became clear that Brazil does not share the American determination to threaten with isolation and sanctions some countries considered to be aspiring proliferators. Underlying this position is the Brazilian disagreement with the criteria used by the U.S. to identify potential proliferators. Related to the critical stance Brazil has maintained on the NPT is the belief that fail to disarm and double standards employed by NWSs are, in fact, incentives to proliferation. Additionally, Brazil objects moves that consider as an attempt to convert U.S. top security concerns, like terrorism, into a global peril.

The case involving the nuclear fuel swap deal with Iran exacerbated the conflicting views between Washington and Brasilia. Arguing against sanctions on Iran, Brazil intended to call attention to the discriminatory nuclear order and the imbalances of the American nuclear diplomacy. Furthermore, President Lula's goal of strengthening Brazil's role as a leader of the Global South and its will to amplify the voices of weaker countries also led to disagreements with the Obama administration on the Tehran Declaration.

Taking these considerations into account, it is hard to see Brazil as a co-leader state of the Prague Agenda. This scenario is further complicated by Brazil's atypical stance on safeguards, its uranium enrichment programme, and its plan for nuclear-powered submarines. During the Lula administration, when President Obama setup the Prague Agenda, Brazil remained an energetic supporter of nuclear disarmament. However, due to the features of Brazilian foreign policy explored in this essay, the U.S. could not count on Brazil to be a partner for a reinvigorated drive toward nuclear zero; at least not in the terms of the Prague Agenda.

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## List of Acronyms

ABACC: Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials

AP: Additional Protocol

CD: Conference on Disarmament

CTBT: Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty

DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea

G20: Group of Twenty

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency's

NAC: New Agenda Coalition

NDS: National Defence Strategy

NNSA: National Nuclear Security Administration

NNWS: Non-Nuclear Weapon State

NPR: Nuclear Posture Review

NPT: Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

NWS: Nuclear Weapon State

PNE: Peaceful Nuclear Explosions

START Treaty: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

US: United States of America

WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction



## **Instructions to authors**

Articles submitted for consideration must contain from 15 to 30 pages and be drafted in Times New Roman, size 12, spacing 1,5, as well as include abstract, introduction and bibliography.

The contributions must be forwarded by email to [cebri@cebri.org.br](mailto:cebri@cebri.org.br)

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Para a Vale, o desenvolvimento só acontece quando a empresa e a sociedade crescem juntas. Um exemplo disso é o projeto Ferro Carajás S11D, no Pará. Quando for entregue, esse projeto será o maior e melhor complexo produtor de minério de ferro no mundo, trazendo mais recursos e desenvolvimento ao nosso país. O projeto utiliza tecnologia a serviço da sustentabilidade, com novos processos que reduzem o consumo de água, de combustível e a emissão de CO<sub>2</sub>. A Vale acredita que é com transparência, respeito às pessoas e ao meio ambiente que se constrói um futuro melhor para as próximas gerações de brasileiros.





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