

MARINHA DO BRASIL : GEOPOLITICAL TOOL AND SYMBOL OF BRAZIL'S ECONOMIC RISE

“The defense strategy cannot be dissociated from the development strategy. The former represents the protection of the latter.” The ambitious development program of the Brazilian Navy can be understood through the lens of economics. The discovery of very important offshore oilfields in the high seas attracts the attention of the Brazilian civilian society to the sea. Acknowledgement of the importance of these fields for the economic development of the country crafts the maritime strategy of Brazil.

BLUE AMAZONIA

4.5 million km² sheltering 95% of the oil reserves of Brazil: this is Blue Amazonia. Admiral Guimaraes Carvalho (Chief of the Naval Staff from 2003 to 2007) created this concept which covers the waters and oceanic beds, including territorial waters, the adjacent zone, the exclusive economic zone and the extension of the continental shelf that Brazil claims its own.

Beyond this zone, the South Atlantic represents a tactical stake for Brazil. Like many other countries, for its trade, Brazil is almost exclusively linked to the world by the sea. Indeed, 95% of its foreign commerce comes and goes through the ocean. The main sea lines of communications run along its coasts but the flow to Africa, from Cape of Good Hope to Cape Verde, keeps on rising. Moreover, there are on the African continent some Portuguese-speaking countries (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde Islands) and the South-South relationships are increasing. In consequence, the protection of offshore deposits and secured sea lines are crucial for the Brazilian economy. Ocean-going military capacities are therefore essential.

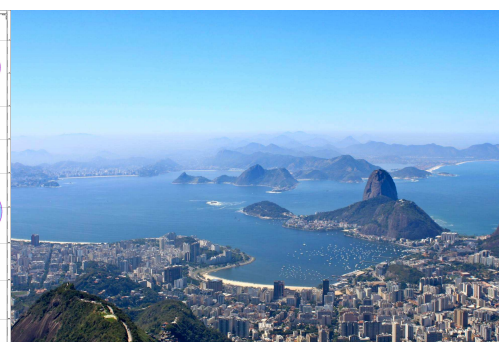
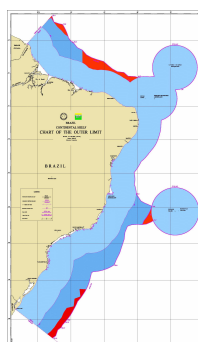
A DIPLOMATIC TOOL

Besides its historical relationships, Brazil is developing partnerships and cooperation with South Africa (BRICS) and Namibia (Navy staff training). As a new economic power whose growth rate has increased from 5.8% in 2008 to 7.3% in 2010, Brazil intends to weigh accordingly on the international scene, as shown by its determination to obtain a permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

The National Defense Strategy of December 2008 is justified by the development of the military-industrial sector for economic and diplomatic reasons, and not by a need to counter threats at the borders.

AN AMBITIOUS NAVAL PROGRAMME

This Strategy is detailed in the PEAMB (Organization and Equipment Plan for the Brazilian Navy) for 2010-2030. The main objectives are the defence of offshore oilrigs (very remote and thus quite vulnerable) and on a larger scale the defence of the waters within Brazilian jurisdiction, the ability to counter rapidly a threat targeting the commercial sea lines, and the participation in international peacekeeping operations.



Brazil is acquiring a modern and competitive shipyard industry. The purchase of four *Scorpene*-class submarines from DCNS (among which three of them will be built locally) reflects the ambition of the country. The development of an oceanic submarine force enables Brazil to build an anti-access strategy to its waters and to weigh in the South Atlantic. The PEAMB plans to build 15 conventional submarines by 2037 and 6 nuclear-powered submarines by 2047. By doing so, Brazil seeks to enter the exclusive club of the countries possessing nuclear attack submarines (SSN).

This equipment plan doesn't leave out the surface fleet as it plans to acquire 18 frigates, one auxiliary vessel and 62 offshore patrol vessels by 2030 in order to ensure the permanent watching, control and defence of the Blue Amazonia.

As for the naval aviation, the Brazilian Navy plans to acquire 288 aircraft including 48 shipborne aircraft by 2032 (Brazil currently owns the aircraft-carrier *Sao Paulo*, former French carrier *Foch*).

Furthermore, in order to increase the projection capability, the PEAMB plans to create a second unit of Marines.

Overall, between 2010 and 2030, 21 000 postings should be created, amounting to a 36% growth of Navy personnel. It represents a tremendous budgetary, human and technical challenge.

Former President Lula wanted this ambitious development to happen, but if it isn't challenged in its principle, it might be limited in its objectives by President Dilma Rousseff for budgetary reasons. The ambitious submarine part of the plan, however, should be preserved thanks to the allocation of receipts provided by the oil concessions.