BRAZIL’S MISSION TO HAITI: CONTINUITY OR DEPARTURE?

By

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My study analyzes the Brazilian mission to Haiti in the context of the history of Brazil’s foreign policy. It offers a brief account of Brazilian foreign policy over the last 200. It also provides an analysis of some of the trends that shaped Brazil’s government and how those trends influenced foreign policy. Using articles culled from Brazilian newspapers, I examined the challenges that Brazil’s UN forces met on the ground in Haiti during the mission’s first year. I tried to explain the rationale and significance of the mission, and attempted to evaluate the mission in light of Brazil’s foreign policy objectives. I argue that the Brazilian mission may seem anomalous to some readers because it was conducted by a developing South American nation. However, given Brazil’s longstanding goals, this mission represents more of an outgrowth of history than a break from tradition.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This study views Brazil’s stewardship of the United Nations mission to Haiti through the history of its foreign policy. In the international system following the Cold War and in the even more uncertain period after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, UN missions have taken on new significance as various states search for the proper anchor for their foreign policy. In the case of Brazil, that anchor always has been its brilliantly professionalized foreign policy corps, the Itamaraty. This thesis seeks to answer the following: How does the Haitian mission fit Brazil’s diplomatic traditions? Does this mission represent a departure for Brazil, or is it consistent with the nation’s rich diplomatic past? Depending on the outcome for Brazil, what could this mission bring? What could Brazil lose in the bargain?

In framing this thesis, it is important to bear in mind a few scholarly trends that have defined the study of political science in Latin America over the years. This thesis draws heavily from international relations literature originating in both the United States and Brazil.

Brazil over the years has moved through strains of international relations theories which at least to an extent serve to characterize the trends that dominated its diplomacy over the years. As Brazil became a republic, a broadly liberal foreign policy that stressed multilateralism and duty-free commercial relationships came to the fore during the Rio Branco era and afterward. Under the getuliató which began in 1930 and guided Brazil through the Second World War, Getúlio Vargas carefully steered Brazil between the
United States and Germany, putting Brazil on a course of developmentalist nationalism, a subject dealt with by Stanley Hilton in *Brazil and the Great Powers, 1930-39: The Politics of Trade Rivalry*. During the period following Vargas, Brazil turned to a leftist and activist policy under João Goulart, who continued in Vargas’ populist tradition that led to the military takeover that threw Brazil into two decades of authoritarianism, an act which could be articulated through various paradigms like rational choice and the "prisoner's dilemma," a subject explored in detail in Youseff Cohen’s *Radicals, Reformers and Reactionaries: The Prisoner’s Dilemma and the Collapse of Democracy in Latin America*. By the mid-nineteen seventies, several books published on Brazilian foreign policy dwelt on its potential as the next world power. The military brought Brazil under a variety of neorealism as it sought to neutralize its top rival, Argentina and root out political dissidents. ¹ This new attention produced Ronald Schneider’s *Brazil: Foreign Policy of a Future World Power* and Wayne Selcher’s *Brazil in the Global Power Systems*. Yet after the economic miracle vanished Brazil returned to being thought of as a developing nation, its “world power” status being relegated now to that of a “middle power,” as one can see from Selcher’s later work.

As democracy returned to Brazil, commercial relationships, individual rights and regional agreements came back to the fore as Mercosul knitted the Southern Cone

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¹ Rational choice refers to a theory in political science that analyzes behavior by looking at decisions as a logical evaluation of a set of alternatives. The prisoner’s dilemma is a table used to describe a series of negotiations between two opposite parties, modeled after two prisoners who have been arrested and held separately for questioning after the commission of the crime. If neither cooperate, they would both receive a light prison term. If one cooperates and the other stays quiet, the cooperating party goes free while the quiet party gets a stiff sentence. If both cooperate, each would receive a prison term slightly longer than what they would serve if they had both stayed silent. Neorealism is a concept that came into vogue in IR circles during the nineteen eighties. It borrows realist concepts, using the state as the basic unit of analysis, and denying the existence of human progress. It differs from traditional realism in that it accepts alliances between nations.
together in an imperfect customs union. Combined with monetary stabilization, the 
privatization of huge government concerns, participation in United Nations missions and 
the drastic reduction of duties under Fernando Henrique Cardoso, by the time Brazil 
entered the twenty-first century it was a model of the neoliberal Latin American country, 
and began to participate more vigorously in peacekeeping missions abroad. Now under 
the administration of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil appears to be returning to an 
activist role in international relations that seeks to build on Brazil's relationships with 
other developing nations in an effort to advance its international objectives, many of 
which I argue have been a longstanding part of Brazilian foreign policy. Perhaps the two 
best scholars tracing the foreign policy trends of the past fifteen years are Paulo Roberto 
de Almeida, whose work is sadly only available in Portuguese, and Thomaz Guedes da 
Costa, who wrote Brazil in the New Decade: Searching for a Future.

The first chapter of this thesis will provide the context necessary to evaluate the 
Brazilian mission in Haiti by offering up a history of its foreign policy and how it has 
everoved over the years. Through content analysis of Brazilian newspapers culled during 
the Haitian mission's first year, the second chapter follows the trajectory of the mission as 
it was viewed through the Brazilian press during this period. Finally, the third chapter 
will take stock of the Haitian mission through the lens of Brazil's foreign policy 
traditions, and try to evaluate its potential future implications.
CHAPTER 2

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF AN EMPIRE

Brazil occupies a preponderant position in South America. Ironically, the geographically and demographically dominant country in Latin America is in many ways atypical of any other Latin American country. It speaks a unique language, looks back to a unique history, and even built its independent national identity on the unlikely series of events that led a European monarch to eschew his Continental throne for control of a New World empire, because “the strength of the Portuguese Empire lay not in Europe but in the New World.”¹ For Brazil, the creation of a single state was hardly a foregone conclusion; with the benefit of hindsight it is easy to draw the conclusion that a huge independent republic was the long-term goal of every visionary who offered a proclamation during the nineteenth century. Certainly the amount of praise that Brazilians heap upon Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, is lasting proof of this. Better known as “o Tiradentes,” da Silva Xavier is the most eulogized conspirator of the 1788-9 stab at independence known as the Inconfidência Mineira. Often considered the father of an independent Brazil, Tiradentes died without ever knowing there would be such a thing and is revered because he had the dubious fortune of being the sole conspirator who met his end in the grip of a noose.² A single independent republic known as Brazil was a

¹ See Barman, pp. 11-12, and see note number 111 on p. 252. Also see Kenneth Maxwell, Conflicts and Conspiracies, Brazil and Portugal: 1752-1808 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

² For a good look at the transfer of the Brazilian court and the retention of Brazil’s national integrity, see Roderick Barman, Brazil, the Forging of a Nation: 1798-1852 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), esp. pp. 65-217. See p. 11 for the cited quotation.
distant and ephemeral concept for much of its history. Even when that national concept hardened into a cogent identity, the actual borders of that nation remained in dispute into the twentieth century.

In the face of such concepts of national identity a remarkable diplomatic corps has served Brazil well. The country has a long and storied tradition of activist diplomacy. This makes excellent sense given the country’s dimensions in terms of landmass and population. In South America, only Ecuador and Chile lack a border with Brazil, and the Brazilian Empire’s unique position among viceroyalties or newly-independent revolutionary republics underscored the need for Brazil to take an aggressive stance to several foreign policy issues. Several of these nascent republics rubbed up against Brazil in regions of the continent that were both fought over and valuable. From the time it was settled, Brazil was surrounded by potential enemies from cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from Brazil but similar among themselves. In short, Brazil shared borders with nation-states with which it shared little else. Brazil would need a professionalized diplomatic corps to deal with the numerous neighbors it had along its borders. In the nineteenth century, Brazil’s foreign policy focused primarily on a strategy of dividing the Spanish American nations that surrounded it, and this often meant foiling its largest and most populous neighbor, Argentina. Several of Brazil’s most daring feints of foreign policy during the early nineteenth century were geared toward gaining control of the Rio de la Plata commercial corridor and interrupting Argentina’s own ideas of manifest destiny – regaining the old viceroyalty organized around the river.3 It has also

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3 For an interesting example of Brazilian intrigue against Argentina see Jeffrey Needell, “Provincial Origins of the Brazilian State: Rio de Janeiro, the Monarchy, and National Political Organization, 1808-1853,” Latin American Research Review, vol. 36, no. 3 (2001) 132-53, esp. p. 145. As Needell demonstrates, this cabinet was directly responsible for the overthrow of the Juan Manuel de las Rosas dictatorship by the
meant that Brazil kept careful involvement in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and made sure that it remained on friendly diplomatic terms with Chile, all in an effort to keep those nations from forging an alliance with Argentina. Brazil sent troops to crush Paraguay during the War of the Triple Alliance (1865-70) and kept the Spanish American nations in the Southern Cone further divided. Busy enough with their own internecine conflicts, the Spanish American republics had little time or inclination to turn their weapons on Brazil in an effort to regain a Jesuit mission or a river valley. This policy of division and the process of border dispute resolution led to Brazil’s diplomatic corps creating a few rules of engagement as it dealt with different nations in the hemisphere. First, if possible avoid discussing treaties with more than one nation at a time. Second, secure a bilateral agreement before moving on to a multilateral pact. Third, try for a pan-American solution whenever it presents itself, as this tends to ensure peaceful conflicts resolution, and would stymie efforts to team up against Brazil.

Brazil’s isolation also extended to its unique political situation. As an empire among independent republics, Brazil already had a national mythology that fired the patriotic imagination. As the nineteenth century neared its end and a revolution finally cashiered Brazil’s monarchy and established a republic this imperial dream persisted. The green field and the gold diamond that framed the crest of the family Bragança still circled the globe of the new Brazilian state. The order and progress of the future would be
viewed through the *grandeza nacional* of the past. Although the young Brazil hardly had a cogent national identity during the much of the imperial period and at times was wracked with rebellions, among the Brazilian elite (from which the country’s diplomatic corps exclusively drew) this notion of *grandeza nacional* was no passing fancy. As the Brazilian elite began to move back and forth between the plantations and the city, a national identity emerged that envisioned a Brazil as a tropical metropole modeled after Paris. The slaveholding origins of Brazil’s elites had a lasting stamp on Brazilian diplomats. Almost all of the diplomats during the empire came from slaveholding and “heavily Africanized” regions of Brazil. Like in many elite government sectors located in Rio, in the realm of foreign policy the Brazilian diplomat could adapt a European domain to Brazilian realities, polishing Continental languages and English furniture while coming out of a rural and ethnically-mixed society.

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**The Rio Branco Era and the Beginning of the Itamaraty**

The Itamaraty Palace was built in Rio de Janeiro on what is now Avenida Marechal Floriano in 1854 by Francisco José da Rocha, son of the first Baron of Itamaraty. The neoclassical mansion is believed to be designed by a Portuguese architect heavily influenced by French designs of the time. The Imperial government agreed to buy the building in 1889, although it was the revolutionary republican government that actually

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7 McCann, p. 3.

ended up paying for it. The palace served as the presidential residence until 1898, and the Foreign Ministry started occupying it the next year. The ostentation of the building combined with the increased prestige of the ministry eventually led to its being known colloquially as “o Itamaraty.” Over time the name became more official. When the ministry moved to Brasília in 1970, both it and the modernist edifice it moved into retained the name Itamaraty.⁹

As Brazil became a republic, its foreign policy took on importance that matched the opulence of its environs. By 1902 the ministry only employed two dozen people under the durable but complacent supervision of the Viscount of Cabo Frio (1865-1902), who somehow avoided being replaced through the 1889 revolution.¹⁰ As the twentieth century began, the foreign policy of the Old Republic came under the purview of the most influential diplomat of Brazil’s history – José Maria da Silva Paranhos, the Baron of Rio Branco. Rio Branco urged the consolidation of Brazil’s borders, encouraged a stronger military and advocated spreading Brazil’s economic dependence among industrialized nations rather than have it become beholden to a single industrialized country.¹¹ The Baron enjoyed one of his first and undoubtedly gratifying victories in Washington in 1895, when he outfoxed his Argentine rival, Estanislau Zeballos, and coaxed U.S. president Grover Cleveland into awarding Brazil 13,680 square miles of mission territory along the Rio de la Plata. The young baron turned out to be quite good at shoring up


¹¹ See Joseph Smith, pp. 35-52. Also see McCann, p. 4.
Brazil’s borders. Five years later he convinced the Swiss president to award 101,000 square miles to Brazil that France claimed was part of French Guiana. “Rio-Branco successfully projected national interests into the international sphere. Brazil returned from two international tribunals vindicated, first with a victory over its archrival, Argentina, and then with an award over a major European nation, France.”¹²

Rio Branco modernized Brazilian foreign policy, and in so doing transformed the Itamaraty from a sleepy and neglected office into a professionalized and well-oiled machine. Interestingly enough, Rio Branco’s first major reform in the Itamaraty was to install a world-class bathroom. That cornerstone of a functioning office established, he then gracefully conducted more notable reforms. He gently put the older guard of the office out to pasture, created the Itamaraty library (with a section on cartography) and hired more staff. During the decade (1902-12) he spent in office, he cemented Brazil’s boundaries and resolved the myriad of border disputes that remained unsettled when he returned to Brazil. Under his watch Acre became indisputably Brazilian (it was claimed by Bolivia and Peru), the border with British Guiana was settled (although on terms slightly unfavorable to Brazil), and borders were decided with Colombia, Ecuador (then a border country) the Netherlands, Uruguay and Venezuela. He also made Brazil a more active participant in international congresses, improved Brazil’s diplomacy throughout Latin America, and cleverly positioned Brazil as a symbolic representative of Latin American diplomacy by welcoming the first Latin American cardinal in 1905.¹³ Rio Branco set the stage for what later ended up being recognized as foundational principles

¹² See Joseph Smith, pp. 35-52 and Burns, pp. 32-3 for geographic dimensions and quotation.

¹³ Joseph Smith, p. 52 for Latin American cardinal, also see Burns, pp. 38-51.
for the Itamaraty; he fit (or forged) the classic mold of the Brazilian diplomat better than anyone.

When he returned to Brazil at the end of 1902 to become Minister of Foreign Relations, he had lived most of his life in Europe and was initially uncomfortable with Brazilian domestic politics. However, Rio Branco differed from many of the conventional elite of his day in one salient respect – “he was realistic and understood that Brazil’s future was in the New World, not Europe… Joining the ranks of the new world republics in 1889, Brazil then had a closer political kinship with its neighbors than with distant, monarchical Europe. Hence, there were cogent reasons for the new emphasis.”

As control of the Itamaraty changed hands, the overarching themes of its foreign policy shifted as well. A stern policy of realism during the days of the empire that emphasized Brazil’s uniqueness from the rest of the hemisphere made way for a more liberal version of Americanism and especially embraced the United States.

Rio Branco initiated an epoch of cooperation with the United States centered around a lucrative commercial relationship based on Brazil’s burgeoning coffee exports. When the German ship *Panther* landed in Santa Catarina without Brazilian consent in 1905 to allegedly apprehend a German who fled to Brazil, Rio Branco implied the Monroe Doctrine in lodging strong opposition to a violation of Brazilian sovereignty.

Under Rio Branco Brazil could stand up to European powers as a hemispheric partner to

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14 Joseph Smith, pp. 39-43 for Acre dispute, and Burns, p. 35 for other border negotiations.

15 Joseph Smith, p. 4-5. Smith is careful to note that although French positivism (which often mingles with realism in IR terms) inspired the coup that exiled the monarchy, the ensuing constitution was modeled more after the United States. See p. 52 for further approximation to United States. Also see Maria Regina Soares de Lima, “Brazil’s Response to the ’New Regionalism,’” *Foreign Policy and Regionalism in the Americas*, Gordon Mace and Jean-Phillipe Thérien, eds. (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), pp. 137-158, esp. p. 139.
the United States, although some diplomats worried that Brazil’s position was completely contingent on U.S. support.\textsuperscript{16}

It was during the Rio Branco era that U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt invoked the “Roosevelt Corollary” of the Monroe Doctrine, in which he justified an intervention in the Cuba in 1906. “Unlike most of its Spanish-American neighbors, Brazil responded favorably to the corollary…. The consensus was that Brazil as a large, strong, and progressing country need fear no foreign intervention and should lend its moral support to quieting the turbulent smaller nations.”\textsuperscript{17} Rio Branco viewed Brazil’s situation with Uruguay, Paraguay and the other volatile Spanish American republics in exactly the same light as the United States viewed its relationship with the island nations of the Caribbean; he wanted a precedent established that would prevent bloodshed and violence when those smaller countries elected to act “irresponsibly.”\textsuperscript{18} In Rio Branco’s mind (and in the mind of quite a few Brazilians throughout history), that Brazil was in South America was a geographic coincidence. Brazil represented order and progress where its Spanish American neighbors wallowed in chaos “There is nothing more ridiculous and extravagant than the manifestations of dictators, the pronouncements, the revolutions of possession of power, the military demagoguery” he said about them once.\textsuperscript{19}

The attitude of partnership with the United States would be characterized by diffidence as Getúlio Vargas (1930-45, 1950-4) dominated the nation from Catete Palace.

\textsuperscript{16} Joseph Smith, p. 52-3 for close ties with United States, and p. 54 for the \textit{Panther} incident, also see Burns, pp. 100-9.

\textsuperscript{17} Joseph Smith, p. 40, Burns, pp. 150-1 for quotation.

\textsuperscript{18} See Joseph Smith, p. 40, see Burns, p. 152 for quotation.

Yet Rio Branco set the table that Brazilian diplomats in the Itamaraty would dine from for almost a century.20

The Vargas Era

When Rio Branco’s corpulent frame occupied the Itamaraty, the tradition that he brought with him was heavily influenced by ideals that were broadly liberal. The baron emphasized peaceful conflicts settlement, looked to international law to resolve the numerous border disputes that Brazil faced before he took office, improved important commercial relationships with the United States based on free trade agreements, and conducted his office with an eye toward multilateral solutions when they presented themselves.

This liberal philosophy of foreign policy that Rio Branco stamped into the Itamaraty changed a good deal when Getúlio Vargas rode a revolution into power in 1930. The gentleman’s agreement of café com leite that characterized Brazilian politics of the Old Republic and allowed for a rotating oligarchy between the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo had broken down. The military would not defend the Washington Luís government (1926-30), and into this void leapt Vargas, the single most influential Brazilian figure of the twentieth century.21

In contrast to the enlightened and idealistic baron of worldly refinements, Vargas was a no-frills positivist who took a personalist approach to domestic politics and opened Brazil’s foreign policy up to more populist influences. Especially where foreign policy was concerned, for Vargas rightness or wrongness were values that dreamers attached to

20 Burns, p. 38.

21 See Skidmore, pp. 3-8.
actions. What mattered most was that Brazil get the maximum benefit from its foreign policy stance, even if that meant embracing the National Socialists that were in power in Germany. Brazil had virtually no foreign policy relations with Germany until right after Hitler took power. As the globe was gearing up for another disastrous world war, Vargas carefully positioned Brazil between the United States and Germany in a gambit of playing two world powers off against each other, and gain Brazil the maximum possible advantage. One of Vargas’ early forays into this strategy involved negotiating with the Nazis for assistance in developing Brazil’s steel industry.

When Vargas cautiously steered Brazil toward the Second World War, he did so with a wary eye northward. Vargas could see that Brazil was in an ideal situation to exact maximum benefit from the powers of the world, as Brazil had no real stake in the war. Although the United States made a logical trading partner for Brazil, had a tradition of friendly relations started by Rio Branco and furnished a healthy thirst for Brazilian coffee, under Vargas’ calculating supervision Brazil was coy to U.S. advances toward a potential alliance. Vargas was careful to impress on the Itamaraty that the status quo in the commercial relationship between the United States and Brazil was fine – an overwhelming majority of Brazilian goods entered duty free, Brazil had a favorable trade balance, and closer ties would not produce any substantive benefit for Brazil. This new attitude toward the United States occurred to the utter dismay of Foreign Minister


Oswaldo Aranha (1938-44), who was previously the Brazilian ambassador to the United States and favored close ties to the United States in the Rio Branco tradition.24

Under the realistic attitude of the Vargas government, Brazil subtly stepped away from the “unwritten alliance” forged by Rio Branco to embrace a policy of playing one world power off against the other during a period of global war. On the economic front, it hoped that developing military strength would go hand in glove with industrial development. If it could not avoid becoming a debtor nation to the industrial powers, then at least it could avoid the dilemma of being beggared by a single country.25

However, in 1942 Vargas eventually sent troops to fight against the very fascists in Europe he took cues from in Brazil in running his own dictatorship. He did not, however, switch to the defense of the Allies without extracting a payoff. He secured financial guarantees from the Roosevelt administration for the development of Brazil’s steel industry by flirting with the Nazis for similar concessions. In a naked gambit of stoking national jealousies, he all but threatened to negotiate with the Krupp Armaments Firm to build a foundry at Volta Redonda if the United States did not show some sort of financial interest. Brazil got a loan of US$20 million in 1941.26 Not long after Brazil entered the war, Vargas announced that the country would engage in an intense industrialization drive since, he argued, a country could never be militarily self-sufficient if it did could not produce materiel within its own borders. He fomented an attitude of economic nationalism within Brazil while Brazil was supporting a foreign power in a European


25 See McCann, pp. 2-7.

26 Hilton, 217-9.
war. The token force Vargas sent to Italy nonetheless fought bravely and made important
contacts in the U.S. military which would be indispensable during the military coup
twenty years later. Yet the basis of Brazil’s involvement in the war amounted to a
subterfuge for a rapid and opportunistic push for development. At the same time that
Vargas was accepting U.S. economic assistance, he was strengthening Brazilian
nationalism. 27 Brazil still avoided economically throwing itself completely into the arms
of the United States. At the same time, it was not above cooperating with the Roosevelt
administration for military, strategic and industrial benefits.

Another effect of the “straddling” strategy under Vargas, especially during his
return as elected president in 1950, was forming solidarity with other developing
countries in the world for the purposes of opposing European hegemony in Africa.
During the early fifties Brazilian foreign policy promoted anticolonialism through the
United Nations. Their polemics were so strident that countries like Belgium attacked
Brazil for its poor record with its indigenous groups. Although Brazil would back away
from this anticolonial policy during the latter half of the fifties, it would not be the last
time that Brazil would act in favor of the independence of an African country from a
European colonizer. 28

The positivist and realist strategies of Vargas, coupled with the foundations laid
down by Rio Branco, supplied a durable framework for Brazilian foreign policy for the
rest of the century. By the latter half of the twentieth century, the Itamaraty eventually
formulated five basic policies as a model for future engagements that are adapted largely

27 Skidmore Politics in Brazil, pp. 44-5.

from the aggressive policies Rio Branco pursued during his decade as the principal foreign policy thinker of Brazil. According to Guilhon Albuquerque those five sacred tenets are: “(1) peaceful conflicts settlement, (2) self determination of nations, (3) nonintervention in the domestic affairs of third countries, (4) abiding to norms and principles of international law, and (5) multilateralism.”29 There are two other principles that eventually became unwritten rules of the game for the Itamaraty that have their origins in the getuliato: developing the domestic economy, avoiding integration into the U.S. economy, and eschewing any semblance of submissiveness to the United States or its allies.30

It is important to emphasize that Vargas was not content to make foreign policy the exclusive domain of elite diplomats. Vargas privately considered members of the Itamaraty pompous, effete, and out-of-touch with basic Brazilian concerns and the office suffered a considerable roll-back in importance during the getuliato as Vargas circumvented the orthodox channels of foreign policymaking, especially during the early days of the Estado Novo.31 This propensity to operate outside of the Itamaraty did not lower the rigors of the office’s training or the quality of its diplomats, but it did show that, especially among some populist politicians, the Itamaraty’s recommendations could be set aside at the pleasure of the executive. In a centralized government proper channels only exist to the extent that the president is willing to go through them.

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30 Guilhon Albuquerque, p. 268.

31 Hilton, p. 224.
As powerful as Vargas had become and as skillful a ruler as he was as both a dictator and a president, he was still completely unable to defy the will of Brazil’s military. After all, it was the military who forced Vargas out of office for the purposes of holding presidential elections. “The manner in which Vargas had departed was all-important… the dictator was sent from office not by the power of civilian opposition, but by decision of the Army command… it was an act of stewardship by the generals. As had been true in the critical moments in October 1930…it was the military, not the politicians, who were the immediate custodians of power.”32 It is also important to recognize the sorts of political trends that were happening near Brazil. In Argentina, Juan Perón (1946-55, 1973-4) had put military brass in Brazil on guard against the dangers of personalism and labor politics. Vargas’ own cult of personality unsettled not a few officers. Anyone following in his footsteps would have to watch not to run afoul of the military if he wanted to stay in power, especially if he became associated with “syndicalism” in an increasingly intense Cold War environment.33

After Vargas apparently shot himself in the wake of a 1954 scandal that erupted when one of his bodyguards attempted to assassinate longtime Vargas critic Carlos Lacerda, Brazilian democracy headed for a period marked by uncertainty.34 Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-61) restored optimism after embarking on the massive construction of

32 See Thomas Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 53. What is striking about both the 1967 book Skidmore wrote and this volume is his descriptions of the intricate workings of what must have been monolithic government machines. It is also striking to note that even without the benefit of substantial hindsight (he published both books only a few years after the periods with which they dealt) his books remain obligatory reading for Brazilianists. Also see Brian Loveman, *For la Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), pp. 55-6, for military patria doctrine.

33 See Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, pp. 130-6, for the origins of military friction against a getulismo that was becoming more associated with labor politics.

34 For a careful description of this controversy, see Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, pp. 136-42.
Brasília -- a lasting example of Keynesian political economic ideals in practice. A Vargas disciple from Minas Gerais, Kubitschek is also generally considered a more perfect version of Vargas – he possessed all of the political wizardry without suffering the divisive rhetoric which occasionally plagued Vargas. He was a consensus-builder, and after he served his presidential term Brazil lacked a politician with his skills to occupy the new presidential building he had constructed on Brazil’s flat interior plains.

Democracy Breaks Down

Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter wrote that in the tremendous democratic breakdown that occurred in Latin America some forty years ago, none of the upheavals were an absolute certainty to occur. In the minds of both men, they were the product of decisions made by key political actors at crucial junctures who had the ability to save their administrations. The military viewed the accession to power of João Goulart (1961-4) broadly as an issue of national security. Goulart was dismissed while serving as labor minister during Vargas’ last presidential term after conservative sectors of Brazil voiced fears that Goulart was secretly a Marxist. When Goulart assumed the presidency, he did so by a total fluke, the eccentric Jânio Quadros (1961) stepped down, apparently in a ploy to return amid public outcry as Charles de Gaulle did in France. Goulart, Quadros’ vice president, was then positioned to take office without being elected, which substantially reduced his credibility. He was viewed by the military as a threat to national security because of the close ties he had to organized labor.

35 Skidmore, Politics in Brazil, pp. 163-74.
37 Skidmore, Politics in Brazil, pp. 122-7.
Brazilian military viewed Goulart as an extension of the personalism that had made Vargas (and Perón) so notorious.\textsuperscript{38} It was precisely this worry, held chiefly by military hard-liners, that caused a short-lived parliamentary experiment. This was the first and only time that a parliament had been tried in a Latin American nation, and it only lasted for a year in Brazil. As a counterpoint, the Brazilian military’s misgivings about Goulart’s politics and his personalist style were so great, and their national security doctrine was so steeled against what happened with Peronism in Argentina, that they actually demanded a change in the governmental format to fit the constitution.\textsuperscript{39} Its vision of Brazil would not allow for populism, personalism, or communism, but it did demand an adherence to the legitimacy of the democratic system. That demand for legitimacy did not end when the military decided to overthrow the government. The softer line of the military still needed a justification for suspending the democratic process, and they found that justification in Goulart’s actions. After finding a quick end-around the parliamentary experiment, Goulart then used his extended presidential powers to completely violate the military’s extension of the national security doctrine by issuing statements that it construed as a sign Goulart would steer the government further leftward.

Was Goulart bound to be overthrown because he was at odds with entrenched economic interests in the Brazilian congress at the time? Did he actually have a chance to save his presidential term and avoid the obligatory trip to Uruguay that is so often the endnote to failed South American democracies? Youssef Cohen argued that Goulart failed to make the right choices. Cohen explained Goulart’s downfall through the

\textsuperscript{38} Skidmore, \textit{Politics in Brazil}, p. 208.

\textsuperscript{39} Skidmore, \textit{Politics in Brazil}, p. 205.
prisoner’s dilemma paradigm – and invited his overthrow by swinging leftward. 40

Undoubtedly, Goulart inflamed military sentiments against him. However, it was the military brass’ decision to take him out of the picture. Loveman stands in small company in striking the balance between Goulart’s role and the military’s role in Brazil’s democratic meltdown. He also describes the effects that Goulart’s domestic stances had on Brazilian foreign policy at that time:

[When] Goulart flirted with China, Cuba, and “nonalignment” while decreeing agrarian and social reforms at home, the United States unambiguously favored, encouraged, and even assisted the coup that toppled his government and installed a military president… this coup was an important benchmark in Latin American military politics. Professional officers decided to put an end to populist demagoguery, repress revolutionary movements, and achieve Brazil’s manifest destiny through direct military rule.41

Goulart could have made decisions that may have spared his term. He was partially the victim of outside forces beyond his control, such as the United States’s support of the military. Yet ultimately the arbiter of his downfall was the Brazilian military brass, who felt that Goulart had flaunted their vision of the national security doctrine. “The fact was that in 1964 the initiative lay with the soldiers, and the politicians knew it.”42 In the minds of those soldiers, they were not destroying the institutions of democracy so much as they were protecting those same institutions from a recognized threat, “authoritarian

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40 Youssef Cohen, Radicals, Reformers and Reactionaries: The Prisoner’s Dilemma and the Collapse of Democracy in Latin America (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 78, 87-90. It is important to note that Cohen barely allots any agency whatsoever to Brazil’s military, which had the final say in Brazilian politics during this period as previous paragraphs have noted.

41 See Loveman, p. 186.

42 Skidmore, Politics in Brazil, p. 306.
practices could be reconciled with the ‘democratic ideals’ of the 1964 revolution, according to military thinking.”

The Military Era

After Goulart’s overthrow in 1964, the military built a new regime on top of the old Brazilian democracy. The post-Vargas presidents were the first to be taken out of the picture – Goulart, Kubitschek, and Quadros all lost their political rights, a stunning blow for Kubitschek since he was hoping to return to the Planalto Palace as president to the capital city he so famously built. The military also swept aside the party system that Vargas had nurtured as part of his corporatist state, and replaced those parties with a government party and an official opposition a party (which Brazilians quickly took to calling sim and sim senhor). Elections were still held, but in a neutered sort of way, civilian politicians leftover from the Goulart days were eventually “purged,” and the little opposition that existed to the military’s policies during the sixties was fragmented and disorganized.

As the Brazilian military consolidated its dictatorship during the sixties it made two foreign policy objectives top priorities for the new regime: national security and economic development. These goals were not anything new in Brazil. Brazilians always looked with a wary eye across the Rio de la Plata as the Argentines harbored hegemonic designs of their own, and grandiose city-construction programs and industrial


44 Skidmore Politics in Brazil, p. 309.

45 Skidmore Politics in Brazil, p. 320.
development drives had been elements of previous administrations. Yet under the military dictatorship they took on a different emphasis and headed in new directions. In the first place, both of these principles fed directly into Brazilian nationalism and the long-held vision of *grandeza nacional*, which was expedient for the military in consolidating its regime. For the military, economic development and national security intertwined. Not only was it necessary in the eyes of Brazilian policymakers, but it provided the government with an expedient justification for the regime. The sixties and seventies witnessed a professional public relations campaign emphasizing nationalism as the military established the Special Advisory Staff on Public Relations (AERP).

The AERP tried to maneuver the government into a positive light in Brazil despite the repressive activities of the most brutal of the military dictators, Emílio Garrastazu Médici (1969-74). The Médici years saw the exile of such luminaries as Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, and other prominent musicians and artists. The regime saw it fit to censor both the film and newspaper industries. Political messages in newspapers ended up being encrypted in recipes that ran on the front pages of major metropolitan dailies. Médici also crushed the activities of guerrilla revolutionaries, who had organized into cells but were plagued by in-fighting, often became distracted by short-term gains, and were esoteric to the point of completely mystifying the public they were trying to woo to their cause. The Brazilian public largely ignored the kidnapping of a U.S. ambassador.

For the initial popularity of the military, it also did not hurt that the economy was taking off. The so-called “Brazilian miracle” that occurred from 1969 to 1973 was a

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period of rapid economic growth made Brazil one of the ten largest economies in the world and fired the long-smoldering elite dream of international greatness. This period also stoked the jealousies of Brazil’s neighbors in the Southern Cone (most notably Argentina) who saw Brazilian imperialism as surging threat. Economically speaking, Brazil was leaving Argentina in the dust. By 1980, Brazil’s gross domestic product was US$229 billion versus US$62.6 in Argentina (although Brazil’s per capita domestic product lagged behind Argentina by a small margin), and its exports almost doubled Argentine exports. To the glee of Brazilian diplomats and the dismay of their Argentine counterparts, the United States began looking at Brazil as its de facto representative of South America.

Yet the Brazilian military resorted to the Vargas example during the Second World War as a template for dealing with its neighbor to the north during the height of the Cold War. The Brazilian military’s recognition of an independent Angola, for example, was a gesture of autonomy. It represented a cunning effort to build upon cultural and linguistic similarities to solve an economic crisis: Angola is a country rich in oil and as an independent government could be shopping for giant countries of Brazil’s size to whom they could sell that oil. Brazil had cautiously courted Angola for its Cabinda oil even during the time when it was still a Portuguese colony. There were political realities that Brazil chose to ignore in recognizing Angolan independence; just because it recognized a Marxist government did not mean that it embraced by any means a Marxist program.


However, it did mean that when given the opportunity, Brazilian foreign policymakers were capable of setting the country on a path of its own. In recognizing an independent Angola, they were making a diplomatic statement of their own autonomy.50

As the eighties approached, this autonomy from the United States became more pronounced in Brazilian foreign policy. During the Jimmy Carter administration (1976-80), the government of Ernesto Geisel (1974-9) cancelled a 25-year-old military assistance agreement after the United States placed human rights conditions on its assistance. Brazil considered the move an “audit” of their political system and backed out in order underscore its autonomy in the Americas.51 Along the same lines, Brazil also endured attacks by the United States when it cast a vote against Israel in the United Nations in 1974 in order to court oil-rich Arab countries, and also defied the U.S. in deciding not to sign the nuclear non-proliferation agreement.

As its economic miracle came to a close, Brazil looked to foreign policy options that still satisfied a psychological desire for autonomy without being reckless or inviting U.S. military intervention. It looked to straddle a fine line between being independent and responsible. Brazil’s foreign policy stance also went from being characterized as “Brazil the great power” as it was under Médici, to “Brazil the emerging power” under Geisel. In mapping out its role in the Americas, Brazilian policymakers adopted a diplomatic strategy characterized as “responsible pragmatism.”52


52 Miyamoto, p. 442.
This responsible pragmatism gradually characterized a new focus in Brazilian foreign policy that reluctantly recognized the limitations of Brazilian designs on being a great power. Policymakers arrived at this strategy by default more than anything else. When Brazil had the capability to make itself an important player on the world stage (acquire nuclear technology, secure oil reserves, industrialize) then it would, but if Brazil was at a disadvantage in the game of international prestige, then it would make the best deal that it could at the time in the hopes to improve its position sometime in the indeterminate future. Tomaz Guedes da Costa described this as a strategy of “pacing and hedging” — acting deliberately and carefully to obtain long-term policy objectives, and in one form or another it governed Brazilian foreign policy into the present:

Brazil prefers to move gradually and with caution in expanding regional cooperation in order to gain time to establish a general sense of unity and direction for the country and its neighbors in the international arena. At the same time, Brazil must hedge its strategy against possible negative effects in the future. All this while the nation copes with difficult adjustments in its internal politics, tries to increase its capacity to promote its interests abroad, and works to improve its relations abroad and to secure cooperation that is lasting and stable within the turbulent process of globalization.53

At the end of the military dictatorship in an uncertain economic climate and an uncertain political sphere with the Cold War nearing its end, Brazil looked to a future that would emphasize multilateralism. If Brazil’s dream of great power status could not be realized by going it alone, then perhaps a return to the Rio Branco tradition could offer a better alternative. If Brazil could not be in a position for maximum gain, then at least it could buttress its future from maximum loss.

Argentina, Civilian Foreign Policy, and Mercosul

Of the countries of the Southern Cone, Brazil had the longest transition from military rule. Consensus between the civilian and military sectors has been easier to reach in Brazil, and foreign policy decisions since the mid-seventies have been less prone to extremism than in Argentina. One can understand a good deal about the eventual fortunes of each country in the inter-American system by looking at how each country’s military made the transition to democracy. In the case of Brazil, the last military president, João Batista de Oliveira Figuereido (1979-85) was grateful to leave office. Even though the poor health of president-elect Tancredo Neves ensured that he would never sit in the Planalto Palace, Brazil’s transition to civilian democracy was a soft landing by comparison to the other countries of the Southern Cone. If the military in Brazil lost prestige after the dictatorship, it was not owing to recklessness on their part. With the obvious exception of brutal repression performed mostly during the Médici government, Brazilian military objectives, especially in the area of foreign policy, were still basically Brazilian objectives – increase national prestige and develop the economy.

In contrast, the military in Argentina found themselves in need of a serious jolt in public relations when they embarked on the ill-advised Falklands-Malvinas War (1982). If the Argentine military had set its sights on outdoing Brazil and realizing its own dreams of manifest destiny, those aspirations sank with the General Belgrano. The disastrous Falklands-Malvinas War meant that the Argentine military was completely


discredited at home and indefinitely pushed back any Argentine hegemonic designs. For many Brazilian policymakers, the fact that the military would resort to such recklessness initially fired several age-old stereotypes that the Brazilian elite had about the turbulent, disorganized, and volatile nature of Spanish American governments. Any cooperative ideas were further belayed on the economic front by a wave of protectionism as a result of the debt crisis of 1982. Yet the Brazilian military eventually realized the comparative advantage it now had over its closest and oldest rival: the war had damaged Argentina’s military capability badly enough that in the foreseeable future, no matter how irresponsible the government became Argentina could do little to threaten Brazil. The war’s outcome also meant that Argentina realized that if it could not beat its closest rival, it could join it. Cooperation would be a wiser alternative than competition. Conspiracy theories that the two rival countries shared about one another cooled. The Itamaraty played an important role during the transition from military rule in Brazil as a mediator between domestic nationalism (led by the military) and international pressure. In Argentina the Raúl Alfonsin (1983-9) administration and the José Sarney administration (1985-90) in Brazil co-authored a new period of bilateralism between the two countries where fierce rivalry once existed.

On the domestic front, the military in Brazil gradually gave up power to make way for the new civilian government, in contrast with the Argentine military, which ended up getting unceremoniously drummed out of office. Under the short Fernando Collor de

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59 Miyamoto, p. 449.
Mello (1990-2) administration three changes occurred to ensure military subordination to civilian authority in Brazil – civilian oversight of military technology programs, adherence to non-proliferation agreements, and consolidation of the military branches into the oversight of a single civilian defense ministry.60

With the Cold War finished, and the entire region becoming more democratic, like many Latin American countries in the Southern Cone Brazil began participating in UN peacekeeping missions. During the period following the Cold War and Latin American military dictatorships many Latin American governments turned to peacekeeping missions as a way to accomplish two basic goals – first, give a shrinking military that was once in power something important and tactical to do away from the home country, and second, keep it sharp should the need for its services arise sometime in a future that was uncertain, being no longer defined by superpowers.61 Brazil would be much more active during the decade that followed the Mozambique deployment, as it began to see a potential scenario for reform of the UN Security Council and a possible addition of Brazil as a permanent member. This is an idea that had been dormant ever since it was vetoed from the council following the Second World War.

Even during this period, in which Brazil became active in peacekeeping efforts, there were still critics within important diplomatic circles that worried about their implications. Ominously enough, in 1993, when Brazil was debating the logistics of UN peacekeeping missions in the United Nations, Brazilian Foreign Minister Adhemar G.

60 Hirst, p. 107.

Bahadian warned that “bad budgeting and bad cost estimates usually accompany bad planning. Unhappily, with great frequency, bad planning also brings with it political and military disasters.”

The same time that Brazil was sending troops off to peacekeeping missions (largely in former Portuguese colonies) Mercosul, which the military government ushered into existence, was now enjoying an era of cooperation and economic proximity with Argentina. Some Brazilian scholars recently have gone so far to compare Mercosul’s future role with that of the European Union: “As in the case of the European Union, the first and most important motivation for the creation of Mercosul has been economic, but its political consequences have already become notable. Most importantly, Brazil and Argentina, who saw each other as rivals, have developed a closer political dialogue…. [And] closer cooperation is developing between Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, along with the associate members, Bolivia and Chile.” Brazilian officials have already spoken about Mercosul taking on this new sort of strategic role. Former Foreign Minister Geraldo Quintão in 2000 noted that “the idea is to set up bilateral defense agreements between the Mercosul nations, then the Andean Community nations, and then the rest of the South American countries, in such a way that Brazil would act as a bridge between the northern and southern areas of the continent, and make it eventually possible for us to find, as South Americans, a common ground in the area of defense.”

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64 Almino, p. 44, translation mine.
Part of Brazil’s rationale for this new strategic role for Mercosul is to ensure security and stability along its own borders, stability that was severely strained for example when Argentina elected to invade a part of what was officially part of the United Kingdom. There are already precedents for actions within Mercosul member nations in the resolution of disputes and the promotion of democracy within the region – it effectively stopped a *coup d’etat* and possibly a civil war in Paraguay, for example.\(^{65}\) Among its most idealistic supporters, in Mercosul Brazil had the potential to dominate a regional bloc that could one day resemble the European Union in both economic and strategic style.\(^{66}\) Nonetheless, there are still some critics who note that the economic and strategic elements of the union will be distinct for the foreseeable future. Brazil and Argentina still have different military objectives, and “consequently, the processes of economic integration and defense cooperation each proceed at their own pace, without reciprocal commitments.”\(^{67}\)

**Fernando Henrique Cardoso**

Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-2002) is the Brazilian president with the most longevity in the era of the “New Republic.” Considered before his election as a mild dependency theorist, Cardoso served as finance minister from 1993-4 and embraced the neoliberal wave that swept over Latin America during the early nineteen nineties. He instituted a new currency through the Real Plan that put inflation in check while at the same time exposed Brazil’s industries to the international market. He liberalized the

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\(^{65}\) Almino, p. 45, translation mine.


\(^{67}\) Da Costa, “Role of Armed Forces,” p. 231.
entire Brazilian economy, privatized several concerns that were once the domain of the public sector (such as Embraer, the Brazilian aircraft manufacturer and a crucial component of the military’s industrial might), and sought to adhere to the rules of international organizations such as the United Nations.

During the Cardoso administration, the military also abandoned completely its participation in the domestic political sphere. In sizing up its past when it was in power, the military appeared to concede that “we took the lead and we got burned. So, let the civilian politicians take over.” Starting in 1996, Brazil took a much more active role under Cardoso than it had before in participating in UN missions in former Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia.

Cardoso’s administration may have heavily contributed to the current thinking behind heading up a UN mission to Haiti. It combined an idealistic and economically liberal outlook with long-term pragmatism. As Guedes da Costa wrote in 1998:

These international and domestic changes provide a new context for Brazil’s regional policies. Perhaps the most outstanding feature of Brazil’s outlook is the aspiration to mold the country into a consequential actor on the international scene. This is reflected in the country’s desire to participate in the international political game, globally and in its various regional areas, and in cultural images of the greatness of the country. As such, Brazilian grand strategy does not reflect the automatic subordination to hegemonic power, the passive acceptance of international regimes, or a willingness to sacrifice future options in exchange for short-term benefits. These attitudes are seen in the continuing development of Brazil’s national capacity combined with respect for international rules.

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The Lula Administration

In support of his presidential campaign, the foreign policy of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-present) differed from that of its predecessors in that it was an activist foreign policy not unlike that of such populist Latin American presidents as Luis Echeverría (1976-82) in Mexico. Although it continues the Cardoso tradition of participation in UN missions, there is an unmistakable tone of Third World solidarity that comes across in speeches given by Lula and Celso Amorim, his Foreign Minister. Some analysts, such as Riordan Roett, view Lula’s message of solidarity with the Third World as a signal that Brazil is ready to lead the challenge to U.S. hegemony in Latin America and beyond. Roett put this attitude in context in a January 2006 edition of The Latin America Advisor:

…the Brazilian government sees its role in Haiti as part of a larger effort to expand Brazil’s role in the international system. The strong interest – now on hold – to occupy a Latin American Security Council seat at the United Nations is another indication of Brazil’s interest in playing a great role in world diplomacy. There are other indications of course, one of which is highly contentious with the US – Brazil’s role as spokesman for the G-20 group of advanced developing countries on trade and investment issues. The group has become a major player in the WTO Doha Round. Lula will host Presidents Chavez and Kirchner this week in Brasília, which is another indication of Brazil’s increased interest in South American affairs… Thus the Haiti assignment is one that the foreign policy leaders have welcomed…

Just before he was scheduled to take office Lula made a speech at the National Press Club that outlined some of his plans for Brazil’s future. Much of his speech


72 Also see Candido Mendes, Lula: entre a impaciência e a esperança (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Garamond, 2004), pp. 158-160.

concentrated on issues of foreign policy he would confront during his term, and he made sure to speak about the potential reform of the UN Security Council. “The UN Security Council, especially, should be reformed to maintain and augment its legitimacy. It makes no sense that among its permanent members, there are no representatives from South America or Africa. You can be sure that, in the case of a reform, Brazil will be ready to assume new responsibilities.”74 Another speech given in Brasília by Amorim as Lula was inaugurated echoed those sentiments on the Security Council, adding that Brazil was ready to forge alliances with similarly large nations of the developing world, including Mexico, India, and China. Amorim also stressed the close ties that Brazil had built with Argentina in Mercosul, and emphasized Lula’s continued support for the economic union.75 Both of these public figures used language that could have been lifted from Guilhon Albuquerque’s work on Brazilian foreign policy. They both took special care to mention the importance of peaceful conflicts settlement, sovereignty (self determination of nations), non-intervention, abiding to international law, and depicted Brazil as a multilateral country.

Given this tradition of internationalism, it is easy to see Brazil’s interest in ongoing activities with the United Nations Security Council. The Haitian mission represents one of Brazil’s boldest foreign policy moves in trying to secure greater international prestige within the framework of the United Nations.


CHAPTER 3
THE MISSION IN ITS FIRST YEAR

Since the Brazilian mission to Haiti is a relatively new phenomenon, and the cycle of scholarly work tends to allow for objective distance to gather before analyzing an issue, I elected to sift through periodicals to produce the empirical portion of this thesis. The documents read for the passage below came from the newspaper clippings section of the library attached to the Senate in Brasília. The librarians working that section read about a dozen Brazilian newspapers daily, and file clippings based on thematic relevance. So for this section of the paper, I will draw on the pasta that I acquired in that library starting with articles written in May 2004 and working forward until July 2005. Those dates roughly correspond to the first year that Brazil headed up the mission to Haiti.

Although the mission is going on as I write this thesis, separating and viewing a single block of time makes analyzing the mission a manageable enterprise. Also, July 2005 is a logical cut-off point for the mission to Haiti. The original general who started off commanding the mission had tendered his resignation by that point, and the third wave of troops had shown up to relieve the second wave (soldiers rotate in six-month shifts).

In writing what the Brazilian periodicals wrote at the time, I want to provide the reader with an accurate, complete and concise picture of what happened during the mission. For the most part, the articles I read for this study are described chronologically. There were times, however, where it made more sense for them to be grouped thematically as different streams of events unfolded. In terms of citations, I listed the full name of the newspaper first, then the page number if it appeared on the document, then
the date. For subsequent citations after that I simply listed the abbreviated name of the newspaper. All of the translations as they appear below are mine.

The Mission to Haiti: The Honeymoon

On 12th May 2004, the Folha de São Paulo reported that seven-hundred and fifty Brazilian soldiers were set to ship out for Haiti from Rio with a caravan of fifty-eight jeeps and twelve tanks. Most of the men were members of Rio Grande do Sul’s 19th Battalion, an army battalion originally formed to combat insurgents during Brazil’s Revolução Farroupilha, or Revolution of the Ragamuffins that took place in the region from 1835-1845. Internationally, the same battalion saw action in 2002 during a UN mission in East Timor. Lt. Col. Ezequiel Izaias de Macedo told Folha in an interview that “I bring in my suitcase the hope of establishing order in this country.”

Correio Braziliense asked Brig. Gen. Américo Salvador de Oliveira if Brazil would be better received in Haiti, since the Americans are poorly received almost everywhere they go. “Our contact with the Haitians couldn’t be better,” Salvador de Oliveira told the newspaper. In a subsequent edition of Folha, an article appeared that included the following description of the Haitian capital: “[it’s a] capital typical of a poor country, with streets that are dangerous and dirty, with improvised alleys and one or two nice houses. The avenues are dominated by vendors who sell a little of everything: fruits, vegetables, old tires, etc. Transportation is disorganized; the services, slow.”

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1 Folha de São Paulo, p. A11, 12th May, 04.

2 Correio Braziliense, p. 20, 21st May, 04
population, it continued, is predominantly “black, young, and unemployed: young people are all over the place, loitering on street corners.”

On 1st June, 2004, the Brazilian military arrived in Haiti to take over for the U.S. soldiers who were there already. Three weeks later, UN soldiers assumed total control of peacekeeping operations in Haiti in the midst of unrest. Supporters of the ousted Aristide government were committing robberies and burning cars. Ominously, Brazilian troops encountered Dr. Gilson Girotto of São Paolo state, who worked in Haiti as a medic. He told them “You have no idea the kind of poverty that you’re going to encounter here.” Yet reaction to the arrival of Brazilian troops was initially positive. Haitian Prime Minister Gerard Latortue said at a news conference that “for us, Brazil is a brother country, we don’t want the Americans or the French [troops].”

During the summer of 2004, the Brazilian newspapers concentrated on statements made by politicians and a soccer game involving the Haitian national team and the seleção nacional. Much of the initial press on the mission concentrated on three basic themes: 1) the implications that it would have on the possible permanent seat on the UN Security Council, 2) the worry that Brazil could be walking into a role as a pawn of the

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3 Folha, p. A12, 29th May, 04.


5 Folha, p. A10: 31st May, 05.

6 Correio, p. 23, 30th May, 04).
United States, 3) Brazil’s responsibility as a hemispheric peacekeeper. Whether those ideas were planted by Brazilian politicians and given undue attention by the Brazilian press or whether they were actually operative concepts in play during the mission is arguable. Regardless of the reasons why, it is interesting to note that those time-honored concepts still found play in the public eye during the run-up to the mission. “If someone wants to use Brazil as a pawn, they are making a big mistake,” Amorim said in a news conference. Brazil, he noted, had demonstrated independence from the United States, and “our idea in participating [in the mission] always was conditioned, from the point of view of foreign policy, by the conviction that active participation by Brazil would give us more moral authority to influence the UN.”

“Peace and democracy are conquests that Latin American governments should take pride in,” Lula said in a news conference in Brazil.

The Haitian mission got an uptick in international attention when a decidedly different section of the press descended on Haiti to witness the so-called “Game of Peace” that the Brazilian national soccer team played against a Haitian squad that was lucky to still exist in the first place. This was a strange aspect of the mission; Brazil’s most famous export is its fine soccer team, its squad has won more World Cup championships than any other national team (five) and Brazil’s brightest stars lead a jet-set life playing in premierships across Europe. However, in Latin America soccer tends to be a sport that takes on an almost religious fervor. Brazil would almost certainly crush a ragtag Haitian side, and that would breed questionable sentiments for a country that was

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7 Gazeta Mercantil, 13th May, 04.

8 Valor Econômico, 1st June, 04.
hoping to keep the peace in Latin America’s poorest country. A more important element of the soccer game was an arms-for-tickets ploy, one that could yield serious benefits if successful. Haitians would trade guns for entry into Sylvio Cator Stadium to watch the game.\(^9\) However, that idea instantly ran aground just a few days before the game was set to take place in August. For one thing, officials quickly realized that in essence they were penalizing the most innocent elements of Haitian society – the ones who did not happen to own firearms. They also realized that they were inviting a potentially violent element to the game that would almost certainly cause trouble after being crammed in a 15,000-person soccer stadium.\(^10\) The game eventually came off as planned (although without reaping the desired load of firearms that organizers had hoped for) and Ronaldo and Co. won easily.

**Early Setbacks**

As the summer wore on and the *craques* returned to posh clubs in various European clubs, articles in the Brazilian press began to focus less and less on goodwill gestures, handshaking, and comments made during news conferences, and focused more and more on the daunting prospect that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (Minustah) had before it. In the first place, reports were starting to cross Brazilian newswires that Minustah was suffering setbacks. More than a month after Brazil arrived in Haiti, *Folha* was reporting that police were demoralized, not one region controlled by rebels had been recovered and not one prisoner had been taken. Troops were becoming

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\(^9\) *Folha*, 10\(^{th}\) July, 04.

\(^10\) *Jornal* p. A9, 19\(^{th}\) Aug., 04.
frustrated because they had trouble adjusting to a poorly defined role that may or may not have included police powers.\footnote{Folha, 10th July, 04.} A July edition of \textit{Estado de São Paulo} noted that Brazilian troops were encountering “serious danger,” and noted that more than twenty-five thousand Haitians were armed. Rebels there were in abundance in Haiti, and they were dispersed all over the political spectrum – the right and left, supporters of Aristide and Aristide’s opponents.\footnote{Estado de São Paulo, p. A16, 11th July, 04.} A \textit{Folha} reporter opined a week later that “in Haiti, Brazil is embarking on one of the most delicate tasks of foreign policy: nation-building… The international community doesn’t have a good track record in tasks of this sort.”\footnote{Folha, p. A20, 18th July, 04.} The journalist noted that the Balkans still existed as a stark reminder of the pitfalls that international peacekeeping missions could encounter, but mentioned that Brazil’s recent activities in East Timor had been successful.

Brazilian newspapers remained relatively quiet on the mission to Haiti until early September, when ex-soldiers that Aristide cashiered during his second term began assaulting Haitian police. Aristide had disbanded the Haitian military as a hedge against another coup attempt. To his dismay he found in February 2004 that without an army to command he was virtually powerless to stop the rebellion that eventually overthrew him. Led by former Sgt. Ravix Rémissainthe, the soldiers that he cashiered were violently protesting in favor of reorganizing the military, already had occupied the city of Petit

\footnote{Folha, 10th July, 04.}
Goave for three days, and were attempting to capture the interior city of Grand Goave.\textsuperscript{14}

The problems in the interior of the country supplied a further distraction for a Brazilian military that already was spread too thin and had enough trouble keeping the peace in Port-au-Prince.

Another disaster swept over the country that no armed force of any size could do anything about. In late September, Tropical Storm Jeanne slammed into Haiti, dousing the northern half of the island with floods. Latortue declared a state of emergency and initial estimates surpassed five hundred dead. One of the three most important cities, Gonaïves, was destroyed almost completely. The damage was so bad that Brazilian soldiers had to airlift a metric ton of food and medicine to the submerged city by helicopter.\textsuperscript{15} Two days later, Brazilian military officials were estimating the death toll had climbed to more than 1,800 people. The damage caused by Jeanne had not only made a bad situation worse, but it woke the military and the press to the challenges that such a peacekeeping mission in a war-torn country like Haiti entailed. Gen. Augusto Heleno Ribeiro Pereira, the leader of Minustah at that time, lashed out at the UN. “After two or three weeks… we realized that we don’t have sufficient personnel to face this situation,” he told the \textit{Correio Braziliense} on 20\textsuperscript{th} September 2004. In the wake of the tropical storm, ex-soldiers under Aristide who were now rebels had taken control of several government buildings in the countryside. Ribeiro Pereira warned that the 2,800 soldiers under his command were insufficient to confront the insurgents, and were also a mere 40 percent of

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{O Globo}, p. 38, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Sept., 04.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Correio}, p. 18, 21\textsuperscript{st} Sept., 04.
what the UN had promised he would have. He also mentioned to Correio a facet of the
mission that would become a more pressing concern as time went on – overlap was
developing between Minustah soldiers and the National Haitian Police (PNH), which was
still functioning as a wing of the interim government. Each party felt obliged to perform
the functions of the other, and the line between them was becoming blurry.16

If the situation in Haiti had been uncomfortable for Brazilian soldiers during the
initial period of the mission, when soccer games and presidential visits dominated the
headlines of Brazilian newspapers, Jeanne had made the situation far worse. If the
Brazilian military brass was quiet about the problems that Minustah had experienced up
until the storm, then they were angrily vocal afterward. Jeanne either exposed or created
another debilitating problem for the mission that would become painfully apparent for the
Brazilian military in a few short weeks. The mission was already at a little more than
one-third strength to begin with, and Jeanne caused damage in the northern section of the
country – away from Port-Au-Prince. With soldiers having to attend to the effects of a
flood in Gonaïves, a “wave of violence” erupted in Port-Au-Prince on Sept. 30, 2004 that
immediately took the soldiers by surprise and lasted the better part of October. This
would be the first of a long string of violent insurgencies that gripped Haiti after the
Brazilians arrived. As roughly 3,000 pro-Aristide protesters gathered in Port-Au-Prince,
gunfire rang out as Brazilian troops exchanged shots with armed thugs who had mixed in
with the crowd.17

16 Correio, p. 18, 21st Sept., 04.
Not only were the Brazilian troops having difficulty differentiating their responsibilities from the PNH’s duties, but they were grappling with another uncertainty common in peacekeeping missions: they were having trouble figuring out who their enemies were. It is fair to say that some of the resistance the military encountered were simply Haitian civilians who supported Aristide, or Haitians who did not take a political position of any kind. As time wore on, however, newspapers began to pick up on a trend that continued as the scene in Haiti became more violent – the increasing notoriety of “irregulars.” Armed thugs began to mix with crowds of protesters. Some of them appeared to be simply gang members who had access to automatic weapons bought through the Colombian drug trade, a trade that made Haiti a transshipment point en route to the United States. There was another group that could have been linked to the drug trade, the Resistance Front led by Guy Phillipe which was responsible for Aristide’s exile. There was also the problem of the old Haitian Armed Forces. Estimated at around 2,000 men and led by Rávix Remissainthe and Joseph Jean-Baptiste, they were drawn largely from Aristide’s radical opposition. The deposed Haitian ruler disbanded the army upon his return in 1994 to stymie any further possibility of a coup attempt. Insurgents with possible links to both the drug trade and Aristide also reared their head – the chimères.\footnote{Folha, p. A16, 16th Oct., 04.} These were paramilitary soldiers estimated at around 4,000 men with ties to Lavalas who Aristide allegedly used while in power to crush his opposition, in a fashion
similar to how the Duvaliers employed the *tontons macoute.* All of these “irregulars” would test the mettle of the undermanned Brazilian peacekeeping force.

The violence that erupted in Haiti could have been calculated to coincide with the dramatic effects of a tropical storm. It also could have been orchestrated to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Aristide’s return to the Haitian presidency (the Clinton administration reinstalled him on Oct. 15, 1994). Brazilian newspapers were speculating that the newly invigorated Haitian resistance was responding to this date more than anything else. On Oct. 15, 2004, Aristide lashed out at France and the United States from his exiled secret home of Pretoria, South Africa, to tell the international press that both countries were complicit in forcing the former Haitian president into exile. In a different article on the same page of *Folha,* Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim told reporters that the UN needed to act with a greater sense of urgency in dealing with the Haitian mission. “It’s going to be difficult to improve this situation,” he said. Amorim was soliciting U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell’s help in expediting financial guarantees totaling US$1.2 billion earmarked for Haitian reconstruction. That money, which would come from UN members, was mired in the organization’s institutional bureaucracy, and it appeared that it would take two years to come through. One Brazilian official, sent to Paris to plead the case for expedited release of funds, was quoted as saying “In two years, there won’t be a Haiti!”

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19 *Folha,* p. A16, 14\(^{th}\) April, 05.


21 *Globo,* 17\(^{th}\) Nov., 04.
Disappointment in the Brazilian Press

As if on cue, it was right at this time that members of the Brazilian press began to ask stern questions about why exactly Brazil had elected to take on the mission in the first place. “What started out as an idea conceived to prove Brazil’s worthiness for a UN Security Council seat has already turned into a problem, and is now threatening to become a disaster,” columnist Dora Kramer wrote in Estado. Initially Brazil undertook the mission to promote nationalism at home while obtaining the necessary political capital abroad to improve its chances with the Security Council. The Security Council scenario, she noted, was a pie-in-the-sky affair that suffered tremendous setbacks when it became apparent that countries would be reticent to bring the mission up to full strength. “Translation: Brazil is practically alone in Haiti… and soldiers are dying in a conflict Brazil not only has nothing to do with, but little it can do about.”

Dour recent events in Haiti buttressed Kramer’s dire assessment. A week before her column ran, the Itamaraty secretly sent two diplomats to assess the situation and secure certain guarantees from Latortue concerning the activities of some armed groups in Haiti. Latortue told them he had no control over the situation. Problems were beginning to emerge that remained beneath the surface during an initial period of self-congratulations and cursory goodwill.

Brazil’s role in Haiti was also being questioned in terms of its relationship with the United States. Critics who persistently complained that Brazil’s participation in the mission played right into the hands of U.S. interests intensified their polemics. “Like it or

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not, Brazil has become in Haiti the defender of U.S. interests in the Caribbean,” an anonymous soldier told Estado. “We know about as much about the future of Haiti as the United States knows about the future of Iraq,” he said.24 Considering the negative attitudes in Brazil concerning the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the statement was hardly an endorsement of Brazilian actions in the Caribbean island nation. During a three-week stay in Haiti during late October, Foreign Minister Celso Amorim told reporters that the success of the mission in Haiti had become a “question of honor,” and added that Brazil would not allow the United States to take over reconstruction efforts. “We have to assume the problems of our region and ‘Latinamericanize’ Haiti,” he said. The reconstruction of Haiti, he noted, would not be a project that Brazil would leave for the United States to see through. It would be a Brazilian undertaking.

November would prove an even more difficult month for the Brazilian military than October. On Nov. 18th, Folha reported that thugs kidnapped the owner of Pétionville’s Hotel Montana, where Gen. Ribeiro Pereira was staying at the time. The hotel was located in what was supposedly the safest part of Haiti.25 Amid charges that Viegas, the defense minister, mismanaged the mission and could not coordinate the three branches of the military effectively, Lula replaced him with José Alencar on Nov. 4, 2004.26 Shortly afterward, Brazilian diplomats told reporters that Brazil could stay a year


25 Folha, 18th Nov., 04.

26 Globo p. 4, 5th Nov. 04.
longer than the six months it originally envisioned the mission taking. Ominously enough, a soldier told Estado that Haitians were beginning to view the Brazilians as just another occupying force. The once warm embrace that the Haitians gave the Brazilian soldiers had hardened into a cold shoulder.\textsuperscript{27}

The same day, O Globo wrote that the Brazilian mission found itself at a crossroads. Without expected financial resources and military commitments from the United Nations, “this could turn into a nightmare for the Itamaraty.”\textsuperscript{28} The benefits that the foreign policy corps hoped that it could reap from the mission were now being viewed as the main problem in securing full multilateral involvement: no country wants to endure the risks of a foreign mission, one soldier told the newspaper, if they are not confident that they can share in the benefits.\textsuperscript{29} Later that week, another wave of violence claimed the lives of twelve Haitians, and a Brazilian soldier had to be airlifted to Santo Domingo after contracting malaria.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{The Debate Heats Up}

As the mission wore into 2005, two strains of debate began to emerge from observers of the mission both in Haiti and Brazil. One side hit the São Paulo headlines in late January, when Haitian activist Camille Chalmers upbraided the mission’s troops for

\textsuperscript{27} Estado p. A28, 14\textsuperscript{th} Nov. 04.

\textsuperscript{28} Globo, p. 42, 14\textsuperscript{th} Nov., 04.

\textsuperscript{29} Globo, p. 42, 14\textsuperscript{th} Nov., 04.

\textsuperscript{30} Folha, p. A19, 20\textsuperscript{th} Nov., 04.
living in the lap of luxury compared with the miserably poor people around them, and being closed to the Haitian communities they were ostensibly trying to protect. The mission was becoming an obstacle to any sort of future nation-building in Haiti, and there were no communications between Haitians and soldiers at all, she said. The problems of security [in Haiti] aren’t global, they’re occurring in neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince.”\textsuperscript{31}

From Chalmers’ point of view, the Brazilian troops in Haiti amounted to little more than an occupation force. They were serving exactly the same function as the U.S. marines they succeeded and with little tangible benefit.

The other argument concerning the mission surfaced in the same newspaper about a month later when political scientist and erstwhile Brazilian envoy Ricardo Antônio Silva Seitenfus wrote an editorial that outlined the Brazilian justification for being in Haiti in the first place. “Haiti is – let’s be clear and direct – economically unviable and politically impossible, left to its own fortunes. We hope that the international community, under the inspiration of Latin America and leadership of Brazil, finds a way to reverse the Haitian picture.”\textsuperscript{32} This is the “Latin American Dream” argument. This line of reasoning basically stated that a) Haiti is a country that needs complete reconstruction from the ground up, and b) that a Latin American country is the perfect catalyst for that reconstruction because of cultural ties. For proponents of this idea, the Brazilian troops were engaged in an effort that represented something completely new. They were not merely retreading the efforts of U.S. marines, or serving U.S. interests in the Caribbean,

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Folha}, 27\textsuperscript{th} Jan., 05.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Folha}, 6\textsuperscript{th} March, 05.
they were engaged in a peacekeeping effort that was the organic product of a Latin American community of nations. Seitenfus refined the “Latin American Dream” into a slightly more cynical incarnation as the months wore on in Haiti. The situation in Haiti was “a complicated case, challenging the capacity of the international system to find solutions. But it also creates the possibility of constructing a new model of crisis resolution with the involvement of third-party states without any vested interests in the conflict,” he told Folha in April.33 Seitenfus predicted that there were three possible outcomes of the peacekeeping mission: 1) Haiti could erupt in civil war, 2) it could become a dictatorship again, 3) it could become a new sort of political construct – a UN protectorate that would essentially perform a caretaker role that would create just enough infrastructure for a democratic Haitian government to be created sometime in the future.34 It is important to note as well that underwriting the “Latin American dream” line of reasoning is the idea that Brazil would eventually attain a greater role within the United Nations, ostensibly a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

As these arguments surfaced in the Brazilian press, they appeared interspersed with dispatches that described a deteriorating situation in Haiti. In late February six armed men in a white truck stormed into Haiti’s largest prison and led a daring prison break. The assailants shot and killed a guard, and then immediately took aim at the wing of the prison that housed most of the Aristide supporters in the prison, including ex-premier Yvon Neptune and ex-interior minister Josèлемe Privert, both of whom were accused of

33 Folha, 19th April, 05.

34 Folha, 19th April, 05.
ordering the deaths of fifty people during a protest under Aristide’s administration. By
the end of the operation, some five-hundred men – 20 percent of the country’s prisoners -
- escaped from the National Penitentiary, which sat only 500 meters away from the
National Palace. Almost a week later, a large spread published in Folha lamented the
significance of the massive escape. “The country’s biggest prison is a symbol of the
institutional failings of the country. Of the 1,257 prisoners, just 14 have been convicted
of crimes.”

There were also indications that minors were in the prison, and parents had taken to the airwaves pleading with officials for word of their missing children. Neither
Neptune nor Privert had been brought to trial, and several analysts charged they were
simply political prisoners who had run afoul of interim President Gerard Latortue. The
jailbreak also revealed a deepening fissure between Minustah and the PNH. Gen. Ribeiro
Pereira blamed the escape on the collusion of the police guarding the prison. “You can
put the whole American army around the prison, and if the police conspire [with the
prisoners], prisoners will escape,” he said.

Insurgents were becoming more brazen as it became apparent that the prisoners
who escaped from the penitentiary would probably remain at large. Armed gangmembers
wounded three soldiers in a gunfight in the Port-au-Prince slum of Bel Air. Haitian

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35 Folha, 21st Feb., 05.

36 Folha, p. A24, 27th Feb., 05. Also see the Harvard Law School’s published report, “Keeping the Peace in
Haiti? An Assessment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti Using Compliance as with its
Prescribed Mandate as a Barometer for Success” (Boston: Harvard Law School, 2005), p. 41-2.

37 Folha, p. A24, 27th Feb., 05.
police killed three pro-Aristide protesters in the midst of a massive demonstration clamoring for his return on the one-year anniversary of his departure. 39

The first Minustah casualties died in a shootout on March 20 while attempting to retake Petit-Goave, which had been occupied by ex-members of the Haitian military that Aristide disbanded. A day later, ex-military leader Joseph Jean-Baptiste took to the airwaves and called upon former Haitian soldiers to become guerillas, mingle with the civilian populace, and “defend” Haitians from Minustah, which he described as an invasion force, not a peacekeeping effort. 40 With Aristide’s supporters taking to the streets to clamor for his return, Aristide’s enemies occupying parts of Haiti in his absence and a fifth of the nation’s prison population loose, the Brazilian mission seemed beset with enemies on all sides. “After eight months (of the mission), Haiti is more insecure now than ever,” an analyst from the non-profit activism group Global Justice told Jornal do Brasil. 41 The organization, along with the Harvard Law School, had just published a report on the mission that condemned it for doing virtually nothing to foment democracy, preserve human rights, or improve the situation in Haiti. 42 The report also went on to

38 Folha, 28th Feb., 05.

39 Folha, 1st March, 05.

40 Folha, p. A9, Correio, 22nd March, 05.

41 Jornal, 23rd March, 05.

42 Folha, p. A21, 20th March, 05.
accuse Minustah of either allowing the PNH to commit human rights abuses in Haiti, or committing those abuses directly, charges the military brass in Haiti vehemently denied. The last accusation led Brazilian officials to send a team to Haiti to investigate.\textsuperscript{43}

As the prospect of elections slowly neared, it also became apparent that the factions in Haiti were becoming murkier all the time. Two Aristide camps appeared – an “extremist” camp that would not participate in the democratic process at all unless Aristide was allowed to return from South Africa, and a more moderate camp that supported Aristide but was willing to participate whether he returned or not. Analysts like Seitenfus viewed this second Aristide group as a crucial ingredient for successful elections, as the exclusion of his Lavalas party would taint the whole process. Two other political factions had congealed that were opposed to Aristide. One of them was led by Remissainthe and Jean-Baptiste, insurgent leaders both tied to the old Haitian military. Haitian-American industrialist Andy Apaid led the other faction, the so-called Group of 184, a civilian coalition of anti-Aristide political groups and activist organizations.\textsuperscript{44}

There were few positive events for Brazilians during the beginning of 2005. Foreign Minister Celso Amorim reported that the promised US$1.2 billion promised for the mission was being expedited from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.\textsuperscript{45} Brazil also sent a team of military engineers to begin reconstructing roads and bridges, improving the water and sewer system, and rebuilding schools and hospitals.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Globo}, p. 26, 25\textsuperscript{th} March, 05.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Folha}, p. A24: 27\textsuperscript{th} Feb., 05.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Folha}, p. A10, 13\textsuperscript{th} Jan., 05.
one story, *Folha* also noted that the Brazilian presence in Haiti allowed certain daily routines to return to Haitian life. Schools opened again, other public services resumed, and some Haitians credited the Brazilian troops for these developments. Haitians occasionally noted that the Brazilians were noticeably better for the country than U.S. troops, and the story also reported that up until that time Minustah members had not killed any civilians.\(^47\)

Yet as the spring trod on in Haiti the outlook continued to deteriorate, especially in the court of public opinion. A family in the Port-au-Prince slum of Cité Soleil told reporters that stray bullets from a Minustah rifle killed their son, and that mission troops attempted to cover it up afterward by removing their son’s body from its plot. James Cavallaro, of Global Justice and the Harvard Law School, gave another damning interview to *Folha* in which he slammed Minustah efforts at peacekeeping. “Who’s in power in the country?” he said. “The armed wing of the government, which is the Haitian Police, and the ex-military.” Brazilian troops decided to become the ally with the PNH, Cavallaro said, and in doing so decided to take the path of least resistance.\(^48\) Considering the track record of violence, abuse, and corruption that the PNH had – after all, it either allowed or encouraged 20 percent of the country’s prisoners to escape from its largest prison in its capital city – these were stern charges to make. At frequent junctures the police seemed much more prone to violence than the soldiers were. They cornered and

\(^{46}\) *Correio*, p. 22, 13\(^{\text{th}}\) March, 05.

\(^{47}\) *Folha*, p. A24, 27\(^{\text{th}}\) Feb., 05.

\(^{48}\) *Folha*, p. A21, 20th March, 05.
killed Rémissainthe and three of his men in a gunfight in April. Only two weeks later they killed five Aristide supporters during a protest. Gen. Ribeiro Pereira immediately went on the defensive in the face of accusations that Minustah was backing up a thug police force, stressing that the mission had always acted “independent of any interest in Haiti.”

Accusations leveled against the mission got steadily worse. In mid-April advocacy group Haitian Women in Solidarity charged that UN troops were patronizing prostitution rings in Haiti. Most egregiously, they said that in February a group of Pakistani soldiers raped a mentally disabled 23-year-old woman in a Gonaives banana plantation. In a defense of dubious merit, the soldiers said that they had sex with the woman because she was a prostitute. The Brazilian commanders sent the soldiers back to Pakistan and said they would be tried there. Representatives of Haitian Women in Solidarity voiced deep concerns that the mission actually was endangering Haitian lives at this point. The soldiers on the mission “are looking at Haitians as if they were stray dogs,” an advocate told Folha. Further reports of abuses by soldiers persisted; an Argentine soldier was accused of rape in Gonaives, a Brazilian troop was accused of rape in Carrefour, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. In further examples of questionable public relations,

49 Folha, Tribuna do Brasil, 11th April, 05.

50 Folha, 29th April, 05.

51 Folha, 25th March, 05.

52 Folha, p. A16, 14th April, 05.
Minustah characterized both alleged victims as prostitutes. Interim Haitian president Boniface Alexandre said that rape allegations were being lodged by the enemies of the interim government.53

If rape accusations were not bad enough, a Haitian sociology professor at the University of Quebec, Franklin Midy, said that no foreign mission had any chance of ever reversing the situation in Haiti. “You would have to be ignorant of history to think that a foreign force could bring democratic stability to the population,” he told Folha, “the road to democracy will be long and hard.”54 Most ominously, the mission by springtime nearly was at full strength – there were 6,207 soldiers in May 2005. When Gen. Ribeiro Pereira requested a 12-month extension that month, representatives from Argentina, Chile and Uruguay pressured the UN to substitute him for another South American general. Ribeiro Pereira remained at his command on a tentative basis until a suitable replacement could be found.55

The Mission Turns a Year Old

As Brazil’s command of the mission hit its one-year anniversary another wave of violence surged over Port-au-Prince. The PNH revealed that between February and May 350 kidnappings wracked the Haitian capital. The city’s streets were peppered constantly with gunshots. The International Red Cross estimated that about 200 bodies had been left

53 Folha, p. A16, 14th April, 05.

54 Folha, p. A15, 11th May, 05.

55 Correio, p. 22, 31st May, 05.
abandoned in the city’s streets over the past year. The organization noted that Haitians were the dual victim of both political violence and common crime, but the line between the two was getting blurrier with every passing month. In contrast with the first six months of the mission, in which no soldier died, five died during the first half of 2005. The United States was becoming impatient with the mission, and had discussed sending in Marines again for the elections scheduled for November. In what could only have been demoralizing to the soldiers in Minustah, representatives of the Haitian government indicated they would welcome the Marines, and that they trusted the “blue-hats” less and less every day.\textsuperscript{56}

As violence piled up and a third contingent of Brazilian soldiers arrived in June for its six-month tour, Gen. Ribeiro Pereira asked to be relieved of his command. “I’ve been in Haiti a year now, that’s time enough,” he said. His replacement would take over after three months. With a wry twist of Brazilian humor, he added that there is no \textit{domingo} in Haiti, there is only \textit{primeira-feira}.\textsuperscript{57} Pressed by the media about his success in Haiti, Pereira told \textit{Folha} that the kidnappings in the capital had been a constant problem, but tried to put a positive spin on his legacy as the mission commander. “With the exception of Port-au-Prince, the whole country has been calm for the past five months.”\textsuperscript{58} Shortly after he tendered his resignation, the UN Security Council agreed to keep the mission in Haiti for at least another eight months.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Folha}, p. A30, 13\textsuperscript{th} June, 05.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Folha}, p. A16, 15\textsuperscript{th} of June, 05.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Folha}, p. A16, 15\textsuperscript{th} June, 05.
None of this augured well for the prospect of elections. By June most people familiar with the situation in Haiti strongly doubted that the elections would come off as scheduled. Only about 3 percent of the Haitian populous had even bothered to register to vote, and with an average of 125 people dying from violence every two months during Minustah, it was difficult to contemplate holding elections any time soon.\footnote{Folha, 22\textsuperscript{nd} June, 05.}

Conclusions

When the first Brazilian soldiers set foot on Haitian soil in June of 2004, they were bringing the hopes of Brazilian policymakers along with them that South America’s largest country was ready and able to carry off this sort of operation, and that it could act as a buffer, a third alternative, between conflict areas of Latin America and the United States. More than any other Latin country, Haiti was the most frequently visited by U.S. Marines on interventionist missions in the western hemisphere. If Brazil could succeed here, it might prove capable of taking on a brand new kind of importance in Latin America consistent with its geographic and demographic size. The problem, Brazil found, is that one country cannot simply decide to act multilaterally. It takes many nations to act in a multilateral mission, and although several countries eventually pitched in enough soldiers to bring the mission close to full strength at the end of its first year; only 20 percent of the US$1.2 billion promised to the mission was actually disbursed from the IMF and the World Bank.\footnote{Folha, p. A30, 12\textsuperscript{th} June, 05.} The challenges that a developing country faced in taking on
such an ambitious undertaking became apparent during the mission’s first year. As a soldier precisely noted in the text above, it does other developing countries little good to contribute forces to a foreign mission if they believe that the only country that will get the credit for being in the trenches in the nation heading it up.

A country with grinding domestic poverty and hairy internal security also has a difficult time justifying such a mission to its own citizens. Several members of the Brazilian press attacked Lula’s decision to make Brazil the lead country in the mission. The mission was a problematic concept for many Brazilians who saw poverty and turmoil just outside their doorstep. Brazilian politicians and columnists were wondering aloud whether a country with security problems and street crime of its own should be devoting its resources to an international security concern. Referring to one of Rio’s largest and most notorious shantytowns, PFL deputy José Thomaz Nonô told *Correio* earlier that “troops that are heading to Haiti for police functions are that many fewer troops that we could have patrolling Rocinha.”62 Ironically, the problems that Brazilian troops were heading to Haiti to combat and the conditions that they were bracing to face were the same sorts of problems that exist in Brazil. Opposition from the PSDB, Brazil’s social democrat party, and the PFL, the liberal front party, criticized Lula in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies for worrying about the problems of another developing country when Brazil had security issues of its own. The same opposition also accused Lula of allowing Brazil to become the pawn of the United States and France in taking over the Haitian mission, and voiced their disdain for the executive ordering the army to paint its

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62 *Correio*, p. 24, 20th April, 04.
equipment UN blue before the Brazilian Senate approved the mission.\textsuperscript{63} The naysayer notwithstanding, the Chamber of Deputies approved the mission a day later, the Senate approved it after a week by a vote of 38-10.

Even after the famous “Game of Peace” that brought a constellation of soccer stars to Haiti did little to dispel Brazilian doubts as to what exactly Brazil was supposed to accomplish in Haiti. As Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva wrote in \textit{Política Externa}:

> The problem isn’t whether Haiti needs help or not. It obviously does. The problem is deciding, ahead of so many other similar situations in regions of South America, Portuguese Africa, and Brazil itself, if Brazil should spend part of its scarce material resources in Haiti and put thousands of soldiers’ and civilian lives at risk.\textsuperscript{64}

How could a country with slums, poverty, and violence of its own hope to straighten out the problems of Latin America’s perennial war zone? What exactly are we supposed to be doing here? they rhetorically asked. This attitude revealed an interesting facet of the mission that policymakers may not have considered. The United States may have acted with a more refined sense of purpose in Haiti perhaps because it had interests that were intertwined with Haitian interests. U.S. marines stepped onto Haitian shores during periods of turmoil for the simple reason that Washington did not want boat people landing on the Miami coastline. The more stable Haiti is, the less likely their people are to attempt to emigrate to the United States, the thinking goes.\textsuperscript{65} At times this put the

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Folha}, p. A15, 13\textsuperscript{th} May, 04.

\textsuperscript{64} Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, “Futebol, paz e riscos para o Brasil no Haiti,” \textit{Política Externa}, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Set./Out./Nov., 2004), pp. 75-85, esp. p. 78.

\textsuperscript{65} Peter H. Smith, pp. 309-312.
United States firmly on one side or another in Haiti, depending on the context. Chetan Kumar gave a telling account on the potential pitfalls of peacekeeping efforts in Haiti:

The Haitian experience offers some useful perspectives on peacebuilding activities conducted by the international community…. In any scenario involving international attempts to build internal peace, the concept of the international community’s neutrality is highly misleading…. They will make both enemies and friends…. The trick, therefore, it to ensure that the balance is altered in favor of progress and stability, and not renewed chaos and conflict.66

Although the United States was hardly an objective observer in the Haitian political milieu, it did signify that U.S. soldiers came to Haiti with a good idea of what they were supposed to accomplish. In contrast, Brazil appeared to have arrived at Haiti with the idea that its soldiers would keep opportunistic warlords from disrupting a democracy that needed peace to get back on track because it was a fellow Latin American nation. The problem with this thinking, however, is that it eventually became clear that violence was not the domain of a few armed thugs, and that democracy would have no chance in a climate of violence. As the mission wore on it became increasingly apparent that everything was politically motivated. The division between the interim government, warlords, and civilians became garbled and almost nonexistent. Brazil was finding out in Haiti that a well-intentioned principle of non-interference and neutrality had an extreme downside. To put it bluntly, a peacekeeping force that is not allied with anyone ends up being the enemy of everyone.

Brazil was also learning one of the Catch 22 problems often attributed to the situation in Haiti – the detrimental effects that the lack of any governmental infrastructure had on nation-building. When would the mission in Haiti be considered successful?

When it was safe enough to hold elections. When would it be safe enough to hold
elections? When the political situation stabilized. When would the political situation
stabilize? After democratic elections… The refrain about Haiti often echoes through the
words of scholars and diplomats on how difficult it is to rebuild a country that has
nothing to begin with. For Brazil to take on a mission of this difficulty is certainly a noble
goal; time will tell if it is a feasible one.
CHAPTER 4
MAKING SENSE OF THE MISSION

The first chapter of this thesis provided background on Brazilian foreign policy as it has evolved over the years, going from the Imperial era to the present day. The second chapter offered a synthesis of the Brazilian newspaper accounts of the UN mission during its first twelve months. This chapter will outline the challenges that Brazil has before it in terms of foreign policy in the new millennium. It will also go over the situation with the UN Security Council, and try to determine how to interpret the mission in light of Brazil’s traditions of foreign policy and recent developments with the United Nations. The mission is the most ambitious foreign mission Brazil has undertaken to date, the first UN mission Brazil has ever led and the first time Brazil has ever been so close to obtaining a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Given these facts, the mission could seem like an act of opportunism that represents a substantial departure in Brazil’s foreign policy traditions. Although I agree with several scholars familiar with the issue that opportunism was the motivating force that caused Brazil to lead the mission in Haiti, I argue that this mission is nonetheless largely consistent with longstanding tenets created and followed by the Itamaraty.

New Challenges for Brazil

As Brazil headed into the new millennium foreign policymakers took stock of the dilemmas that it faced in the future. First of all, in both a hemispheric and a global sense, it found itself in an asymmetrical scenario, where the United States was obviously the sole remaining superpower of the world. In such a situation, Brazilian policymakers
realized that one of the few feasible strategies left that could provide some form of strategic balance in the world was to strengthen the influence of the UN and push for reform of the Security Council with the objective of securing a place on it.¹ “These forums, due to the variable interplay of alliances made possible by a world of undefined polarities, are the best arena in which to generate power…”² Here was where Brazilians thought their rich traditions would serve extremely well. Ever since Rio Branco defined Brazil’s boundaries, Brazilians had always been adept at working through multilateral channels, and in an uncertain, asymmetrical climate, multilateralism seemed like reliable option for the future.

While pondering Brazil’s new role in the inter-American system, the traditions of its elite diplomatic corps and the role of its president, it is useful to consider whose decision it was to lead the mission and why exactly it was made. There is justification for the Itamaraty to support the Haitian mission, but there are elements of the ministry who are not so smitten by the dreams of grandeza nacional. There is a pragmatic element to the work of some important analysts of Brazilian diplomacy that bear consideration. Paulo Roberto de Almeida, for example, noted in a recent book that perhaps the Itamaraty could use a healthy dose of cynicism as it plans Brazil’s future. A diplomat himself, Almeida worried that there were too many “young idealists” who were in the ministry, and that those idealists were obsessed with responding to a call to a tradition whose greatness was blown out of proportion. In Almeida’s mind, the “Myth of the Baron” is a

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¹ For example, see Estado, p. A6, Oct. 17th, 04, Riordan Roett, “Featured Q & A” Inter-American Dialogue: Latin America Advisor, 18th Jan. 2006, and Lins da Silva, pp. 75-85. It is important to emphasize that few scholars sincerely believe Brazil has a serious chance to become a permanent member on the council, but the vast majority of them characterize the mission as a tit-for-tat attempt to do so.

² Lafer, pp. 68-9.
concept that has refused to die in diplomatic circles and should be supplanted by an outlook which better fits a developing nation.³

Yet there is still reason for optimism in the realm of Brazilian foreign policy, especially where the UN is concerned. The Itamaraty tends to look at the UN as a conduit through which Brazil can project and amplify its objectives upon the world stage. For a country that has a well-established history of relying on the excellent legalistic training of its diplomats, this makes perfect sense. The structure and pluralistic nature of the UN fit the Brazilian diplomatic style perfectly. “For Brazil the UN traditionally represents a privileged forum for affirming the two pillars of its foreign policy: the primacy of international law and multilateralism.”⁴ For many developing countries, the UN gained greater importance as a sort of diplomatic anchor in the uncertain period following the end of the Cold War. Countries began to view security not so much in terms of the placement of nuclear missiles or atomic submarines, but in terms of what some scholars have taken to calling “human security” – or the freedom from threats closer to home which could range from an AIDS epidemic to ethnic cleansing. These sorts of threats all had one thing in common – they were usually the domain of countries in the developing world, and Brazil usually found itself joining up with developing nations for the purposes of bettering this new challenges. Also during this post-Cold War period, the UN Security Council expanded its role to include these new problems.⁵

³ Almeida, Relações Internacionais, p. 185-6, translation mine.


⁵ See Campos Mello, p. 164-8.
Given the new challenges that the United States faces in other parts of the world after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Brazil sees an opening in the current political climate in which it can become a much more important player on the international stage. Where the United States could have been looked at as the arbiter of last resort in the Americas, perhaps this is a role that Brazil could assume. With the U.S. government looking eastward more and more, Brazil may be at the doorstep of a more important role in the western hemisphere.6

The UN Security Council

It is important to note that almost all of the scant literature written on Brazil’s UN mission to Haiti views it as a quid pro quo scenario. Brazil is taking over leadership of the mission for the express hope – realistic or not -- of securing a permanent seat on UN Security Council should reform come about sometime in the future. Few if any people currently analyzing the mission seem to believe that Brazil took the mission over for any other reason. A permanent seat on the UN Security Council would represent for Brazil the most tangible proof that it has arrived on the international stage as a global player. For the Itamaraty and Planalto Palace, it would represent a major coup. During the getuliato Brazil was on the cusp of reaching that long-stated goal and came up short. U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933-45) wanted one of the permanent seats to go to Brazil, but the ploy ultimately backfired after the United Kingdom and Russia intervened, arguing that the United States was simply trying to stock the council with its

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6 Campos Mello, p. 165.
own hemispheric puppets.\textsuperscript{7} This was exactly the sort of thing that was anathema to Brazil’s foreign policy – both to be denied a place among the greater nations of the world and to appear subservient to the United States.

In January 2004, Brazil assumed one of the temporary rotating Security Council Seats in the United Nations, a position that it held until December 2005. The Brazilian newspapers immediately pounced on the ambitious issues that Brazil hoped to have some influence over in the coming months: resolution of the conflict in Israel and Palestine, the reconstruction of Iraq, and the matter of reforming the UN Security Council to include new permanent members to sit alongside China, France, Great Britain, Russia and the United States. The Lula administration also voiced a desire for closer ties to its principal Mercosul partner, Argentina.\textsuperscript{8} The Brazilian press did not miss the symbolism that Brazil was taking Mexico’s place as a Latin American member of the Security Council.\textsuperscript{9} In the months that followed the Brazilian press offered a list of countries who supported Brazil’s candidacy for a permanent seat – giving coverage to the support of any country who supported Brazil’s membership for the council. “Lebanon Supports Brazil for the UN Security Council,” “Portugal Defends the Country for the Security Council Seat,” and “Ex-UN Secretary also Supports Brazil for the UN” are examples of some of the headlines that streaked above Brazilian news articles during 2004.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{7} See, for example, Diego Arria’s comments in the \textit{Inter-American Dialogue: Latin America Advisor}, 21st Sept. 2004, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Folha}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Jan., 04.

\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Tribuna}, 7\textsuperscript{th} Jan., 04.

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Gazeta}, 18\textsuperscript{th} Feb., 04; \textit{Valor}, 8\textsuperscript{th} Sept., 04; \textit{Estado}, 23\textsuperscript{rd} Nov., 04, translations mine.
One crucial issue to membership reform in the Security Council was what the United States thought of it. In September of 2004, the indications looked encouraging, but were characteristically non-committal. For the most part, U.S. officials said, they were in favor of reforming the Security Council as Brazilian and U.S. foreign policy objectives are mostly the same – fomenting democracy, economic integration, regional security and free markets. However, “the sympathy that the Americans have with Brazil in its new leadership role doesn’t translate into their support to the country’s greatest ambition, getting a permanent seat,” Estado wrote in September. Later statements made by U.S. officials emphasized a “wait and see” approach to the possibility of changing the permanent membership of the council. An anonymous U.S. official told Estado that UN reform would be a process that would take a long time, and that Brazil’s bid for permanent Security Council membership would die should American president George W. Bush win reelection. However, the anonymous source did give high marks to the mission: “Under Lula’s administration, Brazil has made some important strides in its foreign policy that can only be described as historic,” the source said. The decision to take a leadership role in Haiti represented an important change in thinking in Brazilian foreign policy. The reigning Brazilian school of thought for the past forty years, the source noted, was that to engage in peacekeeping missions within the hemisphere would violate two rules sacred to the Itamaraty: non-intervention in another nation’s affairs and non-alignment with the United States.\footnote{Estado, 27\textsuperscript{th} Sept., 04, translation mine.}

\footnote{Estado, 21\textsuperscript{st} Sept., 04, translation mine.}
This was another way to look at the current proposed efforts to keep the peace in Haiti: as a break from tradition. It also highlighted a possible conflict between the Itamaraty and the Planalto Palace. Even after the mission suffered some of its most debilitating setbacks during its first year, diplomats in the public eye continued to maintain that the mission to Haiti was a mission that was an organic product of the Itamaraty that the office presented to Lula and that Lula agreed to implement – the mission was a collaboration that had its genesis in the Foreign Ministry. Yet other diplomats began to privately complain from their wood-paneled offices in Brasília that the mission represented little more than a publicity stunt, a hastily-contrived effort to prove that it had a significant foreign policy program and was capable of implementing it.

Should the council reform its permanent membership, Brazil could present a better case than the other aspirant countries, given its preponderant size in an unrepresented region. Amorim, the foreign minister, assured the Brazilian press that if there were any reforms to the Security Council, Brazil would be the first in line for a permanent seat, but would have to shoulder more financial responsibilities as a result, something Amorim viewed as a “small price to pay for a say on world affairs.”\(^\text{13}\) That optimism faded a bit when the United States gave a stronger endorsement to Japan than any of the other possible candidates.

Political analyst Ricardo Seitenfus took a novel angle on the idea of a permanent seat. Brazil would represent a region that is absent from the Security Council, he noted, but should not be elected as a representative candidate of Latin America. There are too many political differences between Brazil and its Spanish American neighbors that would

\(^{13}\text{Folha, 25th Sept., 04, translation mine.}\)
prevent it from being able to represent all of Latin America, he wrote. Brazil belongs on the council more for its strategic position within Latin America, not as a flagship of Latin America. Those political differences became obvious when representatives of nineteen Latin American countries comprising the Group of Rio met in its namesake city that November. The meeting instantly revealed a smoldering rivalry between Brazil and Mexico, who wanted a permanent seat as well, but favored rotating membership, a concept that Brazil rejected. With the checkered history of the mission, however, and Brazil's own woes, it is difficult to image Brazil attaining the permanent seat on the council.

What it Could Mean

Seen through the history of Brazil’s foreign policy, the Haitian mission could have been something in which Brazil would have participated fifty years ago. First of all, multilateralism has been an important part of Brazilian diplomatic affairs ever since the Baron of Rio Branco occupied the Itamaraty. As a general rule, Brazil has successfully managed to trade on the professionalism and legalistic training of its diplomats to prosecute Brazil's international objectives -- whether those objectives were to neutralize a rival country or to fix gray national borders. Ever since the Second World War, Brazil has always been careful to position itself in gradual scenarios that avoid ostentation and exposure. Seldom do Brazilian diplomats put the country out on a limb for fear that it could lose the careful economic and strategic gains of the past. Participation in a UN

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15 *Estado*, 4th Nov., 04.
mission keeps Brazil in the company of multilateral nations without forcing the country to go in alone.

The mission could also be a test run for the military. The military noted continuously in the press that it was eager to take this mission on, and its credibility in the Brazilian popular conscience has not been restored since the end of the military dictatorship. Perhaps if it is successful in building democracy in Haiti, while participating in a multilateral mission and taking orders from civilian authority, the military could win itself back the credibility it once had.

It could appear that in Haiti Brazil appears to be conducting an intervention, but it is important to note the exact nature of the situation Brazil inherited in Haiti. Depending on how its actions are interpreted, the United States had already done the “intervening” in Haiti, and the Haitian democracy already was reeling from civil war. When Brazil took the mission over, it did so in part to protect the interim government long enough for stability to resume and elections to occur. That differs substantially from an intervention. The five overt tenets of Brazilian foreign policy are preserved in the mission. With interventionism already discussed, the mission is still a peacekeeping mission (peaceful conflicts resolution) its purpose is to allow Haitians to elect their future head of state (self determination), by definition it is enshrined within international law and is a multilateral mission.

It is true that historically Brazil may never have volunteered to lead a mission in Haiti. The mission may fly in the face of the pacing and hedging concept described in previous sections of this thesis which has characterized the ministry’s actions for so long. The dreams of grandeza nacional traditionally have been interpreted in such a way that
the Itamaraty has been willing to pursue them one step at a time. There is also the problem that by taking this mission over, Brazil has once again stoked the idea that it is actually doing the United States' dirty work for it.16

Would success in this mission mean that Brazil would get its coveted seat? Probably not. Political analysts continue to be pessimistic about Brazil's chances for getting on the UN Security Council. As Geoffrey Milton wrote in *The Latin American Advisor* Geoffrey Milton wrote “nice idea, however political capital should be spent on more realistic expectations such as international trade relation. Speculation on the benefits of permanent membership is just that, speculation,”17 After having to wait sixty years for the community of nations to consider the second-largest country of the Americas as a major player on the international stage, Brazil may have to wait longer still. The tongue-in-cheek joke often credited to Charles de Gaulle that it “is the nation of the future – and always will be” may still be more accurate than fanciful.

It remains to be seen what the outcomes of the mission will be. There is a growing body of non-governmental reports, magazine articles and newspaper dispatches that doubt Brazil's ability to restore Haiti to anything like what it was under Aristide, let alone to a democratic future that could be conceivably brighter. Even after elections occurred it still remains to be seen what Brazil’s future role will be in Haiti, and on what course that turbulent country will follow with or without Brazil's presence there.

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16 See Lins da Silva, p. 82.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Out of the Age of Uncertainty?

That Brazil elected to involve itself in a peacekeeping mission in a turbulent part of Latin America should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with its rich history of foreign relations. Whether its chances are realistic or not, by using the UN as a conduit, Brazil is working within a relatively cautious framework in a gambit to substantially increase its prestige. For the Itamaraty, gaining a Security Council seat would be one of the stops along the way in the long-term game of pacing and hedging.

Yet there have been several causes for pessimism in Haiti, as the second chapter of this thesis attests. The crux of Brazil’s most prominent problem in this sort of undertaking was perhaps best stated by columnist Gilberto Paim: “If we don’t have money for internal ‘peace missions’ that would reduce the alarming indices of urban violence [in Brazil], it wouldn’t make sense to assume additional external expenses just to fill some quota of national pride,” he wrote in Jornal do Brasil. For Paim, Brazilian ambitions for any sort of gain from the mission seemed “infantile, if not absolutely unrealistic.”

There is also the problem, articulated by several Brazilians, that in Haiti it could simply be a pawn of the United States. As Lins da Silva wrote, "the country is already being looked at, thanks to its presence in Haiti, as an instrument of American foreign

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1 Jornal: 6th June, 04.
policy." Several Brazilian analysts worry that rather than representing an arrival for Brazil, the mission may end up being the first of a line of new strategies by the United States. Perhaps the United States is simply using the Brazilian mission to mask its own objectives in Haiti, trading on the goodwill that Haitians have toward the Brazilians. Maybe in the future the United States will simply solicit other countries like Brazil as regional “gendarmes" who police trouble spots that were within the U.S. sphere of influence but are headaches with which the country is no longer willing to deal.²

After being regularly postponed, elections finally came off in Haiti in February 2006, and currently the President-elect of the country is previous president René Préval (1996-2001), who served as prime minister under Aristide from 1991-93 and who was the first president to leave office in Haiti because his term ended. In a comfortable election that was nonetheless disputed after observers found ballot boxes in a garbage dump around Port-Au-Prince, and Brazilian troops pressured the opposition to accept Préval's victory. With the UN mission inching toward its mandate of restoring democracy in the conflict-torn country, at this point it appears that there is meager progress, for both countries. The original turnover that swept Aristide out of office now seems like a “wasted” revolution, as Préval already has indicated that Aristide is welcome to return to Haiti if he wishes.³ After more than two years of violence in the wake of Aristide's departure, an equally violent situation marked by the return of one of his top lieutenants does not augur well for the future. For Brazil, the elections came at a lull during a large

² Lins da Silva, p. 82, quotation on same page, translation mine.

³ See The Associated Press, “Preval Says Aristide Can Return to Haiti,” 22nd Feb., 06.
period of violence and abuse that revealed some shocking tendencies in the peacekeeping force it led.⁴

These problems notwithstanding, what could happen should the situation in Haiti actually begin to improve? What sorts of benefits could Brazil offer countries like Haiti in the future, should the mission turn out to be considered a success? It could break a seemingly endless cycle of failed democracy in Haiti that automatically led to U.S. intervention. In taking on the mission to Haiti, Brazil has been true to the historical roots of its foreign policy traditions – the mission involves peaceful conflicts settlement and non-intervention. Brazil also has responded to a desire, long-dormant, of becoming a more important nation on the international stage. Because of its geographic position, the size of its population, and the lack of any meaningful conflict along its borders, observers of the United Nations have continued to throw Brazil’s name around when contemplating the Security Council seat.

Would that be such a bad thing? If Brazil became a regional alternative peacekeeper to the United States, it could pioneer a new way of settling disputes, especially in the Western Hemisphere. Brazil has enough political distance from its Latin American counterparts and enough cultural empathy with them that a Brazilian presence in trouble spots in the hemisphere could be a welcome change. Haiti, for example, does not typically send migrants to Brazilian shores; there is no lobby in Brasilia that makes a political issue out of Haitian interests. This is not a luxury policymakers in Washington enjoy. The history of U.S. intervention in Haiti is rife with domestic political concerns

⁴ See “Keeping the Peace in Haiti?” p. 48.
that border on racism and xenophobia. Brazil could be better positioned to act in Haiti and elsewhere because, to borrow a colloquial expression, it has no dog in that fight.

Certainly there are stern questions that future Brazilian policymakers must ask themselves as they evaluate future UN missions or other international military actions. The “Age of Uncertainty” descended into an even more chaotic morass in the period following 2001, when the United States was forced to address other threats to its national security. In this new hemispheric system, in prosecuting its UN mission Brazil will have to ponder the same questions that Carlos Lins da Silva wrote in Brazil’s foremost publication on foreign policy:

It's debatable if Brazil will receive something in exchange for its action in Haiti that is of any real benefit. Beyond the pleasure of doing a good deed (that perhaps doesn't even have long-term beneficial results for Haitians) what will Brazil gain? Support from the United States on becoming a permanent member to the UN Security Council in some indeterminate future? Act or be seen as a regional power, capable of intervening in international conflicts, and consequently, develop an improved role in the world order and obtain advantages in different areas of business? Get commercial advantages from the United States or preferential treatment in exchange for maintaining order in the western hemisphere? Position itself to become a geopolitical alternative to the United States in the Americas and possibly in the South Atlantic? Gain moral authority to better influence world affairs? Will some of these objectives be consistent with real necessities and material conditions of the country at the moment and consistent with Brazil's history? 5

The mere possibility that Brazil could secure a Security Council seat has already been successful enough to incite jealousy from Brazil’s largest Latin American rival. It is interesting to note that of the more than a dozen nations that sent troops to the UN mission, Mexico is not numbered among them. As former Mexican diplomat Andrés Rozental once fumed in the Inter-American Dialogue: “If Brazil succeeds in getting a permanent Security Council Seat, without a doubt it would be a loss for México for its

5 Lins da Silva, p. 81, translation mine.
leadership role in Latin America, and another example of how our current foreign policy objectives lack a place and a purpose.”6

There are other benefits that Brazil could garner should it be successful in Haiti. This could be the perfect way for a former military dictatorship to rehabilitate its military – by giving it something worthwhile to do away from domestic political scenarios, under the command of civilian authority and toward a democratic end. This could be the perfect intersection of purposes between the military and the civilian government.

One interesting example of a possible new epoch in civil-military relations in Brazil is the military’s current relationship with Lula. With an activist foreign policy tradition that aligns Brazil with other developing nations and a background as a union organizer, Lula shares a good deal with João Goulart. The principal difference between the two men, however, is that where the military removed Goulart from office in the mid-nineteen sixties, it has stayed in the barracks during the Lula administration, even in the midst of a major corruption scandal.

It also could be that Brazil could find itself easing back into the same role that it had during the days when it was an unequal partner with the United States. Rio Branco fancied Brazil as a country distant from the chaos and internecine conflicts of its Spanish American neighbors, and more closely aligned with the United States. Perhaps in the successful undertaking of this mission, Brazil can return to its status often articulated in the early nineteen eighties as a “middle power.”

If Brazil succeeds in Haiti, a nation which has spent an inordinate amount of its turbulent history either occupied by foreign troops or controlled by homegrown military strongmen, then it may find itself in a truly unique place in the inter-American system: it may become the first American nation to come out of the so-called “Age of Uncertainty” with clear objectives in the Western Hemisphere.

Perhaps Brazil, not the United States, will be considered as the new backstop for democracy in troubled nations in the hemisphere. It is, after all, a titanic country only twenty years removed from a military dictatorship whose citizens can understand the challenges present in developing nations. If Brazil somehow parlays the mission into permanent Security Council membership, then it will have gone a long way in finding a set of foreign policy objectives that Rozental lamented México (along with every other country in Latin America) had already lost -- a place and a purpose in the world.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Gilbert Shields Jr. was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1975, the son of Linda and William Gilbert Shields. Almost all of his experience in Latin America and the Caribbean he gained during a career as a newspaper reporter, working for publications such as The Guadalajara Colony Reporter, The Virgin Islands Daily News, and The Associated Press. In 2003 he was on a small team of reporters at the Daily News that won the Associated Press Managing Editors Award for Public Service after the newspaper exposed repeated examples of government largesse. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, in 1997.