

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
JCSP 42 – PCEMI 42  
2015 – 2016

SOLO FLIGHT

**GOOD SAMARITAN OR JUST INTERNATIONAL PROJECTION: WHY DID  
BRAZIL INCREASE ITS PARTICIPATION IN PEACE OPERATIONS?**

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Word Count: 3211

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Compte de mots: 3211

## INTRODUCTION

*To broaden the country's projection in the World concert and to reassure its commitment to the defence of peace and cooperation between nations, Brazil must prepare its Armed Forces for more responsibilities in humanitarian operations and in peace operations under the mandate of multilateral organizations, in accordance with national interests.*

–Brazil, National Defence Policy, 2012, translated by the author

Brazil has been participating in peace operations since their inception, in 1947, when the United Nations (UN) created its first mission (although not yet a peacekeeping operation), the UN Special Commission on the Balkans (UNSCOB). Later, in 1956, Brazil sent an Infantry Battalion to the UN Emergency Force (UNEF I), considered the first armed peacekeeping operation. Since then, the country has participated in 46 missions around the world. After the end of the Cold War (1947-1991), Brazil focused its efforts on peacekeeping missions in Portuguese speaking countries. It contributed with troops and leadership roles at UNOMOZ (Mozambique), UNAVEM (Angola) and UNTAET (East Timor). But the participation was only restricted to Chapter VI type missions, when the use of force is limited to self-defence. The turning point for the Brazilian contribution in UN peace operations was in 2004, when the country took a military leadership role and employed a large number of Army and Navy troops in a more robust operation, MINUSTAH, created to enforce and keep the peace in Haiti.

This paper will argue that Brazil uses its participation in UN peace operations as a tool for projection and leadership in the international arena, and that in the long run it will be able to reach these objectives. This essay will develop from Brazilian norms and regulations issued since the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution and the analysis elaborated by subject matter experts in this topic, making the correlation between theory, facts, and the country's behaviour in the international system.

Each country providing peacekeepers has its own motivations. According to Bellamy and Williams, known scholars in peace operations, there are five motivating rationales: institutional, normative, political, economic, and security reasons.<sup>1</sup> Kai Michael Kenkel, a reputed Brazilian scholar of international relations and security studies, states that “UN compensation payments reimburse no more than 40 per cent of the country’s total expenditures in contributing to peace operations”<sup>2</sup>, bringing no economic motivation to Brazil. Moreover, it does not feel threatened by conflicts far from its borders, so its participation in peace operations is not security motivated. Therefore, this paper will be divided in three parts, analyzing the remaining rationales: institutional, political, and normative.

## **INSTITUTIONAL RATIONALE**

Bellamy and Williams define the institutional rationale as being related to providing a country’s armed forces with prestige and overseas training.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, in some countries, they are able to justify their size and budget participating in operations under the UN mandate. Although being the fifth largest country in the world with long borders and a large coast, Brazil has no disputed borders with its neighbouring countries. Furthermore, it has peaceful traditions, not having been involved in wars or crises in South America since the end of the Paraguayan War (1864-1870). After that, it has only participated in conflicts during the First (1914-1918) and Second (1939-1945) World

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<sup>1</sup> Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, "Introduction: The Politics and Challenges of Providing Peacekeepers," in *Providing Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges, and Future of United Nations Peacekeeping Contributions*, eds. Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams (GB: Oxford University Press - Special, 2013), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Kai Michael Kenkel, "Brazil," in *Providing Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges, and Future of United Nations Peacekeeping Contributions*, eds. Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams (GB: Oxford University Press - Special, 2013), 345.

<sup>3</sup> Bellamy and Williams, *Introduction: The Politics and Challenges of Providing Peacekeepers*, 20.

Wars. Therefore, the Armed Forces are used mainly for deterrence in their constitutional mission, the defence of the country.<sup>4</sup>

A state that wants to project itself in the international arena as a major power needs to have strong elements of national power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic). While, until 2004, Brazil had been developing the other three elements, it was lacking demonstration of military power in real deployments. With a strong presence, an increasing role and leadership in peace operations, Brazil has since then been able to use its military power in real and important operations under the UN mandate. This 'soft use' of hard power would give Brazil more international projection as a state with robust and experienced military presence.

One of the guidelines written in the National Defence Strategy is "to prepare the Armed Forces to perform growing responsibilities in peacekeeping operations."<sup>5</sup> This important document guides the Ministry of Defence to prepare the forces for peace operations. It demonstrates how the country deems important having military power able to deploy under the UN mandate. Monica Hirst and Reginaldo Nasser, in their work for NOREF<sup>6</sup>, declare that, since 2004, the country has increased its involvement in UN missions, describing MINUSTAH, UNIFIL and MONUSCO as examples of international projection of the Brazilian military.<sup>7</sup> Hirst goes on in another paper expressing that the

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<sup>4</sup> *Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988, Article 42* (Brasília, DF: 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Estratégia Nacional de Defesa* (Brasília, DF: MD, 2012), 17.

<sup>6</sup> Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre is an important foundation that integrates knowledge, experience, and critical reflection to strengthen peacebuilding policy and practice.

<sup>7</sup> Mônica Hirst and Reginaldo Mattar Nasser, "Brazil's Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations: The New Defence-Security-Foreign Policy nexus," Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (September 2014): 3-5.

presence of Brazilian military in UN headquarters strengthen the country's involvement in global security.<sup>8</sup>

Since Brazil assumed command of the military forces of MINUSTAH, in Haiti, the country has increased its participation in other UN missions. In 2015, Brazil was involved in nine peace operations.<sup>9</sup> Among them, the most important were those three where Brazil had a leadership role: first, MINUSTAH, whose military Force Commander has been a Brazilian General since its creation in 2004, which is very unique in terms of UN missions, where this role usually rotates among the participating countries. Second, since 2011, a Brazilian Admiral has been commanding the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force (MTF-UNIFIL), with the mission of assisting “the Lebanese Navy to help prevent the unauthorized entry of arms or related materiel by sea into Lebanon.”<sup>10</sup> Moreover, a Brazilian Navy ship has been deployed in Lebanon to serve as the admiral's flagship. MTF-UNIFIL is the first naval force to be part of a UN peacekeeping mission, and it is the first time it has been commanded by a non-NATO officer. Lastly, in 2013, a Brazilian General assumed command of the most robust and with the largest budget UN peace mission, MONUSCO, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which became another “source of pride and international projection.”<sup>11</sup> Although many experts in this subject affirm that these deployments are giving the Brazilian military prestige in the international arena, on the other hand there are scholars that describe the institutional

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<sup>8</sup> Monica Hirst, "Emerging Brazil: The Challenges of Liberal Peace and Global Governance," *Global Society* 29, no. 3 (2015): 367.

<sup>9</sup> Providing for Peacekeeping, "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Brazil," accessed 6 April 2016, <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-brazil/>.

<sup>10</sup> “New Commander for UNIFIL Maritime Task Force”, National News Agency Bulletin, 24 February 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Mônica Hirst and Reginaldo Mattar Nasser, *Brazil's Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations: The New Defence-Security-Foreign Policy nexus*, 5.

reason simply as a way of gaining “live-combat training”<sup>12</sup>, not elaborating on the advantage this opportunity gives the country to expose its military power overseas.

Brazil has been advocating a stronger leadership in the global security forum for itself, trying to represent the developing world and to counter balance the structure of power present in International Organizations, such as the UN. While on the one hand the country had been projecting itself in the international system with its growing economy, its diplomatic traditions and values, on the other hand the lack of robust deployment of its military power in expeditionary forces since World War II was not giving it credibility as a country that deserves projection in meetings and talks about global security. Therefore, this increase in participation in UN missions and in leadership positions has been giving the country a boost in the military element of national power. Examples were given where Brazil has led Latin American countries in the stabilization in Haiti, a leadership role in a Maritime Force in the Mediterranean Sea, assigned previously just to NATO countries, and the command of the largest UN mission, in the DRC. Although undeniable that these peace operations give the country more experience in real deployments, the prestige these leadership roles and participations bring to the country are invaluable when Brazil wants to have something to offer to the global security arena, permeated mainly by developed powers with strong military.

## **POLITICAL RATIONALE**

Another reason why some states participate in peace operations is to help them achieve some political objectives.<sup>13</sup> Brazil’s demand for a permanent seat on the United

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<sup>12</sup> W. Sánchez Nieto, "Brazil's Grand Design for Combining Global South Solidarity and National Interests: A Discussion of Peacekeeping Operations in Haiti and Timor," *Globalizations* 9, no. 1 (2012): 168.

<sup>13</sup> Bellamy and Williams, *Introduction: The Politics and Challenges of Providing Peacekeepers*, 18.

Nations Security Council (UNSC) dates back to the UN creation, in 1945, blocked by opposition from the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. Later, the country distanced itself from the United Nations between 1968 and 1988, when the World was focused on the Cold War and the Brazilian military government on the country's internal problems. It was after the military stepped down from the government (1985) and the promulgation of a new constitution (1988) that Brazil went back to the international arena and to the UNSC, being a non-permanent member during 10 years in the period from 1988 to 2011. At the end of the twentieth century, Brazil was a fledgling democracy, reducing inflation, stabilizing and growing its economy. Therefore, the country started to seek a more prominent role in the international arena and a quest for a permanent seat at the UNSC, and considered peace operations as a form of increasing its influence in the United Nations.

Brazil describes as national defence objectives its contribution for international peace and security and its greater projection in the concert of nations with more insertion into the international decision-making process.<sup>14</sup> The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been the main advocate of the need to reform the UN where Brazil, as a major player in the international security arena and in peace operations, would have an important role. It considers Brazil to have considerable elements of national power, including military, with its presence and leadership in UN operations, which justifies the increasing role of Brazil in a reformed Security Council, so it could have a stronger voice in global security issues:

The role that has been played by Brazil in the international scenario has consolidated the image of a country not only willing, but also able to perform greater responsibilities in the field of international peace and

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Política Nacional de Defesa* (Brasília: MD, 2012).

security. Such a role - along with other factors such as economic capacity, democratic stability, large population and geographical size - makes it natural that Brazil is considered when the decision-making bodies of the United Nations be reformed, particularly its Security Council.<sup>15</sup>

Some scholars relate Brazil's participation in peace operations to its political objectives. For instance, Felipe Nasser describes Brazil's participation in peace operations as a calculation of foreign policy and power projection.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Hoelscher explains that the 2004 change of Brazil's participation into more robust peace operations is aligned with a shift of foreign policy to bring the country's increasing economic power to a new level at the international stage.<sup>17</sup>

There have been many discussions about the reasons why Brazil agreed to participate in Chapter VII missions, where the use of force is authorized by the UNSC. As a background to this discussion, before 2004, Brazil had only accepted participation in peacekeeping operations with mandates under the Chapter VI of the UN Charter, where the use of force is authorized just in self-defence. This doctrine is aligned with the constitutional principles of non-intervention, defence of peace and pacific solution of conflicts. In 2004, the rhetoric used by the Brazilian government to participate in MINUSTAH was that it was a Chapter VI mission with authorization to act under Chapter VII only in respect to security provisions, as it interprets that Resolution 1542<sup>18</sup>, which authorizes the deployment of MINUSTAH, only mentions Chapter VII in

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<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Brazil and UNSC Reform," accessed 18 April 2016, <http://csnu.itamaraty.gov.br/en/brazil-and-unscc-reform>.

<sup>16</sup> Felipe Nasser, "Pax Brasiliensis: Projeção de Poder e Solidariedade na Estratégia Diplomática de Participação Brasileira em Operações de Paz da Organização das Nações Unidas," in *O Brasil e as Operações de Paz em um Mundo Globalizado: Entre a Tradição e a Inovação*, ed. Kai Michael Kenkel and Rodrigo Fracalossi de Moraes (Brasília: IPEA, 2012), 223-224.

<sup>17</sup> Kristian Hoelscher, and Per M. Norheim-Martinsen, "Urban Violence and the Militarisation of Security: Brazilian 'Peacekeeping' in Rio de Janeiro and Port-Au-Prince," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 5 (2014): 962-963.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations, "Security Council Establishes UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti for Initial Six-Month Period," accessed 18 April 2016, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2004/sc8083.doc.htm>.



paragraph 7.

To maintain its foreign policy commitment to repudiating Chapter VII, Brazil's representatives have long insisted MINUSTAH does not have a peace enforcement mandate and is not a Chapter VII mission. According to this interpretation, Resolution 1542 only mentions Chapter VII in operative paragraph 7, placing only that paragraph under a peace enforcement mandate, thus allowing Brazil to participate in the mission without all of it qualifying as a Chapter VII mission.<sup>19</sup>

Eugenio Diniz, a Brazilian scholar, argues that Brazil's participation in MINUSTAH would represent its leadership in South America to respond to a crisis in its area of influence. He states that had Brazil not participated nor led MINUSTAH, it would have destroyed its arguments to obtain a permanent seat on the UNSC.<sup>20</sup> Cavalcante, on the other hand, argues that "Brazilian foreign policy has been unable to define exactly what to expect from its participation in UN peacekeeping, ..." <sup>21</sup> He adds that "[t]he lack of a clear direction regarding the participation in such operations may consequently hinder the country's broader foreign policy goal of playing a more active role in international peace and security issues."<sup>22</sup> He argues that Brazil shifts its discourses and positions in relation to the non-intervention policy and peacekeeping operations between national interests and humanitarian reasons and social justice.

Brazil's change of direction in its participation in more robust peace operations is clearly connected with its foreign policy objectives of more involvement in global security decisions as representative of the developing countries and its claims for a

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<sup>19</sup> Providing for Peacekeeping, "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Brazil," accessed 6 April 2016, <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-brazil/>.

<sup>20</sup> Eugenio Diniz, "Brazil: Peacekeeping and the Evolution of Foreign Policy," in *Capacity Building for Peacekeeping: The Case of Haiti*, ed. John T. Fishel and Andrés Sáenz (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc; National Defense University Press, 2007), 100-101.

<sup>21</sup> Fernando Cavalcante, "Rendering Peacekeeping Instrumental? The Brazilian Approach to United Nations Peacekeeping during the Lula da Silva Years (2003-2010)," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 53, no. 2 (2010): 143.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

reform of the UN, including its Security Council, where Brazil would have a permanent seat. In 2004, soon after its initial deployment to Haiti to lead the mission, Brazil joined Germany, Japan and India in the Group of Four, pledging seats in a reformed Security Council.<sup>23</sup> While each country had its own motives for this pledge, in Brazil's case its involvement with global security under the UN mandate was an important rationale, adding to its increasing economy, large territory and large population. The deployment of large armed forces under the UN umbrella is considered by Brazil the best way to demonstrate its commitment to global security affairs in alignment with its constitutional principles and peaceful tradition. As Brazil does not participate in military alliances nor coalitions, this is the only way Brazil can expose its military power in a 'benevolent' way.

Despite Cavalcante's argument that the Brazilian Foreign Policy is not clear with respect to its objectives, this paper argues that it is possible for a country like Brazil to combine political goals with its normative goals, since more projection in the international arena would allow Brazil to have a greater voice expressing its ideals of promotion of human security and development of the countries in the Global South affected by internal conflicts. The Brazilian normative goals will be explained in the next section of this paper.

## **NORMATIVE RATIONALE**

One last reason why states might participate in peace operations is because they believe this is the right thing to do and they are willing to help people in other countries that are suffering from the devastation of war. Bellamy and Williams exemplify cases of

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<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Brazil and UNSC Reform," accessed 18 April 2016, <http://csnu.itamaraty.gov.br/en/brazil-and-unscc-reform>.

states that contribute to these UN operations to act as ‘global Good Samaritans’, like Rwanda with its norm of genocide prevention. Others can see the UN as the only legitimate organization to keep peace and security in the world; therefore, they would be willing to support this organization as ‘good international citizens’.<sup>24</sup>

Brazil has a tradition of non-intervention and peaceful solution of conflicts embedded in its constitution.<sup>25</sup> In order to increase its participation in peace operations in the twenty-first century, mainly in MINUSTAH, in 2004, Brazil changed the interpretation of the mission assessing that the country would lead efforts to “face the causes of the Haitian conflict: hunger, poverty, and the fragility of democratic institutions.”<sup>26</sup> Brazil is a developing country with internal social problems, mainly poverty and lack of development in some regions. As it seeks to use its growing economy to solve internal disparities, Brazil sees itself as a ‘Good Samaritan’ that could lead the Global South in finding solutions to help bring international peace and stability to other countries suffering from social problems, while at the same time legitimizing the UN as an alternative to the hegemonic powers and their intervention agendas towards peace and security in the World. Therefore, the country would be aligning its normative values with a political agenda towards an increasing presence in the international security arena.

The Brazilian Foreign Policy Handbook outlines a 2006 Foreign Affairs Ministry press release describing the reasons why Brazil decided to join MINUSTAH:

On accepting the invitation of the United Nations to appoint a Commander of the Military Force and to provide troops, the Brazilian Government observed the constitutional principles expressed in Article 4 of the Federal Constitution – amongst which the prevalence of human rights, the defense of peace and cooperation between people for the progress of humanity.

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<sup>24</sup> Bellamy and Williams, *Introduction: The Politics and Challenges of Providing Peacekeepers*, 20.

<sup>25</sup> *Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988*, Article 4.

<sup>26</sup> Eugenio Diniz, *Brazil: Peacekeeping and the Evolution of Foreign Policy*, 101.

Furthermore, Brazil fulfilled its obligation as a founder member of the United Nations, whose Charter has as its fundamental principles the collective action to prevent threats to peace and the promotion of human rights. Added to these pillars of Brazilian foreign policy is the need to show solidarity towards a nation in the Americas that has suffered terrible tribulation and which, without international help, would suffer a worsening of its conflicts, with greater loss of innocent lives. ...<sup>27</sup>

Rita Santos and Teresa Almeida Cravo, researchers for NOREF, wrote a 2014 report aligned with the above press release, mentioning that this increase of Brazil's participation in peace operations can be explained "in terms of a normative commitment to the principles of respect for non-intervention and sovereignty, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, development and non-use of force."<sup>28</sup>

The great question Brazil faced when it started to join more robust peace operations, including those with the use of force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, was how to deconflict those robust mandates to reduce human suffering with the Brazilian non-intervention policy. When, in 2001, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) released the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) report, Brazil immediately criticized it. It was rejecting the R2P report because it could serve to fulfill the hegemonic states policy of intervention. When this concept started to gain more acceptance at the UN, endorsed at the 2005 General Assembly Resolution 60/1, Brazil started to consider the positive humanitarian effects it could bring and "began to identify spaces for participation in the R2P conversation."<sup>29</sup> In 2011, Brazilian diplomats proposed a new concept called 'Responsibility while Protecting' (RwP), trying

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<sup>27</sup> Ministério das Relações Exteriores, Secretaria de Planejamento Diplomático, *Brazilian Foreign Policy Handbook / Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, Bureau of Diplomatic Planning*, ed. Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation (Brasília: MRE, 2008), 214.

<sup>28</sup> Rita Santos and Teresa Almeida Cravo, "Brazil's Rising Profile in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations since the End of the Cold War," Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (March 2014): 5.

<sup>29</sup> Kai Michael Kenkel, "Brazil's Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Policies in Africa," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 3-4 (2013): 280.

to make military interventions more accountable and for solely humanitarian reasons, instead of hegemonic states political agendas, following the NATO operation in Libya.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, there are some authors arguing that Brazil has been stretching and bending its principle of non-intervention<sup>31</sup> and “behaving as a global power”<sup>32</sup> with the purpose of fulfilling its own political agenda using its tradition of being a Good Samaritan country.

Brazil deals with a difficult dilemma between its normative reasons to participate in robust UN missions and its non-intervention constitutional principle. The country sees itself as a developing state with a big economy, despite its internal social problems. While, on the one hand, Brazil works to reduce poverty and other social problems within its boundaries, on the other hand it considers itself as the Good Samaritan and the leader of the Global South in the quest for solutions to the common problems faced by these countries. Therefore, Brazil affirms that the UN is the only organization with powers to intervene in other states to reduce the suffering of their populations and is willing to be part of a joint effort to bring relief to other countries. Moreover, Brazil rejects any intention by other countries of using intervention to fulfill political agenda of the hegemonic states.

Although there are arguments stating that Brazil is bending its non-intervention traditions and using its Good Samaritan tradition to fulfill its global ambitions, Brazil has indeed a foreign policy towards human security and bringing prosperity to alleviate the suffering of the global periphery, helping the development of poor countries. The

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<sup>30</sup> Xenia Avezov, "Jan.13: 'Responsibility while Protecting': Are we Asking the Wrong Questions?" Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed 18 April 2016, [http://www.sipri.org/media/newsletter/essay/Avezov\\_Jan13](http://www.sipri.org/media/newsletter/essay/Avezov_Jan13).

<sup>31</sup> "Brazil and Peacekeeping. Policy, not altruism. How global ambitions are helping to modernise the Army," The Economist, accessed 18 April 2016, <http://www.economist.com/node/17095626>.

<sup>32</sup> W. Sánchez Nieto, "Brazil's Grand Design for Combining Global South Solidarity and National Interests: A Discussion of Peacekeeping Operations in Haiti and Timor," *Globalizations* 9, no. 1 (2012): 175.

question that must be posed is if it is possible to align political reasons and normative ones and if a Good Samaritan country can have a political agenda, trying to help others while at the same time seeking an international presence in the global security agenda. If there is a positive answer, and this paper considers that possible, then Brazil truly has been able to put together its ‘good country’ agenda with its political rationale of achieving more projection in the international security arena.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper presents factors that explain the country’s increasing participation in peace operations under the UN umbrella since 2004. First, Brazil uses peace operations as a chance of demonstrating military capabilities when deploying its forces in leadership roles and real combat situations, consequently projecting its military power internationally. Second, in participating more actively in UN robust operations, Brazil seeks greater presence in the international security arena and uses it as a tool to claim reform of the UN, including its Security Council, where it claims a permanent seat. Lastly, participating in peace operations fulfills Brazil’s rationale of trying to help other countries devastated by conflicts. Brazil not only wants to bring peace and security to these countries, but also it wants to share its experiences as a developing country working to reduce poverty, health and social problems within its own borders.

These three rationales explain how Brazil is able to put together its norms and values with political objectives of global projection in the World arena in a quest to find solutions to reduce the common problems of the Global South. Therefore, this paper was able to demonstrate how Brazil is capable of reaching its political objectives in the long term, as long as it keeps its rationales converging to the same purpose. Despite that, it is

important to stress that the military is just one element of national power and Brazil's objectives are dependant also on developing its economy and reducing the internal social problems, both of which still have a long road ahead. The country has already proved that once its economy improves and brings the country prosperity, its military will be capable not just of defending the country but will also be able to contribute to bringing more peace and security to the World under the United Nations guidance.

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