

JAIR BOLSONARO

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Candidates

Jair Bolsonaro, Social Liberal Party (Partido Social Liberal. Acronym: PSL)

Hamilton Mourão, vice-president candidate, Brazilian Labor Renewal Party (Partido Renovador Trabalhista Brasileiro. Acronym: PRTB)

Political Coalitions

"Brazil Above Everything, God Above Everyone" - PSL / PRTB

Prior Political Enrollments

Alderman for Rio de Janeiro (1989-1991); Federal Deputy (1991-present)

Disputes in Presidential Elections

2018

International Relations Advisor

Unknown

Jair Messias Bolsonaro is a presidential candidate in the 2018 Brazilian elections. His vice president nominee, Antonio Hamilton Martins Mourão, of the Brazilian Labor Renewal Party (Partido Renovador Trabalhista Brasileiro - PRTB), was defined just ten days before the deadline for the registration of the candidacy with the Superior Electoral Court (TSE). Since the start of the election campaign, which marks the candidate's debut in presidential elections, Bolsonaro has figured as the highest-scoring candidate in the first round of the election¹. An expressive achievement, if we consider the existence of many candidates and parties that are recurrent in past elections and the low profile of his party in the national scenario.

This analysis is centered in Bolsonaro's government plan seeking to observe how themes of foreign policy and regionalism are included in it. The candidate's proposals are contained in the 81-page document named "O Caminho da Prosperidade - Proposta de Plano de Governo" or, in a free translation, "The Path of Prosperity: Proposal for a Government Plan" (2018), available on his official campaign site (*bolsonaro.com.br*). However, first of all, a brief contextualization about the party for which Bolsonaro is running for in the elections and its general propositions is presented.

Since its creation, the Partido Social Liberal - PSL - (acronym for Liberal Social Party, in English) has been a party aligned with social liberal ideals, but the affiliation and candidacy of Bolsonaro with the party has added conservatism into its bases. The "Livres" (Free, in English)² initiative previously controlled 12 of the 27 PSL's directories³, however, with Bolsonaro's candidacy for the party, "Livres" decided to leave the PSL, according to Paulo Gontijo, the leader of "Livres", Bolsonaro does not represent the liberal ideas that his group defends⁴.

Some fundamental pillars of the PSL are a common ground for the proposals of its candidates to the most diverse positions. These are: economic liberalism; private initiative, in a broad sense - according to which the individual must rely on their will and on organized groups, here seen as the

family and the companies, in order to prosper, only resorting to the state in the last case; Federalism; Limited Government; Rule of Law; Conservatism, understood as the permanence of institutions such as family, religious entities, the Judiciary and the police; Transparent and Plural Representative Democracy and Quality of Life with Social Inclusion⁵.

It should be noted that the candidate's party does not present a clear direction in terms of foreign policy. Regarding the 15 points that are part of the priority ideas that guide the party's commitments, and that are present in its digital platform, none of them mentions the external actions of Brazil. This trend remains the same through the eight principles on which the party is based: they are all focused on the essential elements and values of the country's domestic politics. In addition, the PSL does not have an institutional segment responsible for the constitution of a policy program in international relations, which would be analogous to a secretary of international relations in other parties. This is a fact that reinforces the fragility of the party's structure.

In his government plan, the candidate defends the private property, the (traditional) family, the reduction of the number of ministries and emphasizes the public security, with the proposal of measures as the reduction of the criminal majority and the valorization and protection of the Armed Forces. The last measure is one of the main points of controversy of Bolsonaro's campaign since his program offers references favorable to the military coup occurred in the country in 1964, called by him as "the 1964 Revolution". According to the candidate, in the event, the military fought against the "communism" in Brazil⁶. Finally, the government plan contains several attacks to leftists on cultural Marxism and its derivations, which in the last 30 years, according to the plan, have been undermining the values of the nation and family. The document deals with several topics superficially and there is no clarity about the execution of its propositions, besides it is controversial, which makes Bolsonaro a constant target for critics.

Thus, Bolsonaro's government plan is divided into seven thematic areas. The last one of them refers specifically to Brazil's foreign policy, the focus of our analysis. However, it is noticeable that in general there is no systematization of the foreign policy's approach, but instead it presents a general strategy with means and ends to be employed. As an example, when we search the document for the terms "foreign policy" and even those related to the theme, such as "diplomacy" and "international projection", they all present zero results. "Foreign relations" and "foreign trade" are expressions that appear only once⁷.

Even within this panorama, the program does not lose its propositional character, although it presents low development of the ideas for foreign policy and disarticulation between them. Its propositions are arranged in 5 points in the item "The New Itamaraty"⁸, which is linked to the section "Economy and Infrastructure".

Regarding the Itamaraty, it is proposed to readjust the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the values of "the Brazilian people". There is also a proposal to promote foreign trade with countries that add economic and technological value to Brazil. Concerning the item "the fight against international dictatorships", the plan repudiates dictatorial regimes and the transfer of the national patrimony to these countries. In contrast, the text states that Brazil must align itself with the "important democracies", such as the United States, Israel and Italy.

The regional integration proposal is to deepen integration between Latin American countries - except for those under dictatorial rule – and to redirect the country's partnership axis. The program also states the necessity of reformulating partnerships and reconnecting with countries previously neglected for ideological reasons, with an emphasis on bilateralism⁹, which demonstrates a dual position when compared to the previous topic: an emphasis on integration while seeking bilateral relations.

Lately the candidate has been engaged abroad. Bolsonaro visited Israel, a country he sought a strategic partnership with and for which he sympathizes

with the official religiosity. Moreover, the candidate revealed confrontation with the Chinese regime during his visitation in Taiwan. However, it is likely that, if elected, the candidate will use commercial pragmatism and establish channels of dialogue with the Chinese government.

Finally, Bolsonaro visited the United States as a way of demonstrating alignment with economic liberalism. It's also necessary to highlight that the candidate's speech resembles Donald Trump's, with elements such as anti-globalization and anti-communism¹⁰. Global governance and cross-cutting issues, such as environmental and trade regimes, as well as an agenda with an emphasis on humanitarian policies, are not part of Bolsonaro's speech, another point in common with Donald Trump, in addition to advocating for the flexibilization of civilian arms.

A foreign policy without ideological bias is one of the principles frequently propagated in Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy program. Both the campaign documents and the speeches of the presidential candidate explore the duality of a foreign policy considered ideological versus a foreign policy considered pragmatic. The vice-presidential candidate Mourão illustrates this criticism by admitting the preference for a Brazilian alignment with the developed north as opposed to a south-south diplomacy "with all the *mulambada*"¹¹, in a clear disagreement with the African and South American partnerships carried out in previous administrations.

In early July, it was reported that Bolsonaro would implement the "Conservative Summit of the Americas" in reaction to the São Paulo Forum, a traditional forum of regional left-wing parties. According to Bolsonaro's son, the Summit would prevent Latin America to be influenced by authoritarian governments again. For that, a meeting would be held in the south of Brazil with the heads of state from Latin American countries that are conservative and aligned to right-wing politics. Although promised to be realized by the end of last July, the meeting has not occurred yet. This initiative sought to demonstrate that the defense of certain controversial policies of Bolsonaro in

the domestic arena, such as "Escola sem Partido" (or Schools with no Party, in a free translation), the reduction of the legal age for criminal responsibility, and the flexibility of the Disarmament Statute, was a common interest among governments in the region¹² - despite the lack of strengthening ties with any conservative president of the region.

From the commercial point of view, the idea of a broad economic liberalization and expansion of trade agreements with the developed north is defended. This proposal must be read in a way that is interconnected with the political-economical vision of the candidacy, translated into the defense of economic liberalism, the emphasis on private initiative and the reduction of the state's role in the economy. These topics are not only the main ones of the party, but they are also inclinations sustained by the economic advisory of Bolsonaro¹³, headed by the economist Paulo Guedes.

In general, Bolsonaro's presidential campaign reinforces a general trend observed in this electoral process: there is a decrease in the number of incursions to foreign policy issues. In the specific case of this candidate, foreign policy is also largely absent from television debates and campaign advertisements.

NOTES

- 1 DATAFOLHA. Disputa presidencial 2018: intenção de voto para presidente. São Paulo, 2018. Available online: <http://datafolha.folha.uol.com.br/eleicoes/2018/08/1979559-39-votariam-em-lula-sem-petista-bolsonaro-lidera-disputa-presidencial.shtml>. Accessed: Sep. 10 2018.

IBOPE. Eleições 2018. Notícias e Pesquisas, São Paulo, 2018. Available online: <http://www.ibopeinteligencia.com/noticias-e-pesquisas/jair-bolsonaro-segue-liderando-a-corrida-presidencial/>. Accessed: Sep. 10 2018.
- 2 Livres was (a kind of) "startup" that aimed at the renewal of the PSL. Its logic was to garner support within the party in order to obtain more space within it. Livres is maintained with donations from people who share identification with their proposals. According to Paulo Gontijo, president of the supra-party group, Livres is liberal both in customs and economy (ABRANTES, 2018; PRESIDENTE..., 2018).
- 3 PRESIDENTE do Livres: "Ação política através de partidos se tornou limitada". El País,

- 18/05/2018. Available online:
https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/05/14/politica/1526314662_607912.html Accessed on:
 Sep. 18 2018.
- 4 ABRANTES, T. 7 perguntas para o Livres, que deixou o PSL após filiação de Bolsonaro, Exame, 15/04/2018. Available online: <https://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/7-perguntas-para-o-livres-que-deixou-o-psl-apos-filiacao-de-bolsonaro/> Accessed on: Sep. 10 2018.
- 5 PARTIDO SOCIAL LIBERAL. O caminho da prosperidade: proposta de plano de governo. Available online:
http://flaviobolsonaro.com/PLANO_DE_GOVERNO_JAIR_BOLSONARO_2018.pdf. Accessed on: Aug. 17 2018.
- 6 PARTIDO SOCIAL LIBERAL. O caminho da prosperidade: proposta de plano de governo. Available online:
http://flaviobolsonaro.com/PLANO_DE_GOVERNO_JAIR_BOLSONARO_2018.pdf. Accessed on: Aug. 17 2018.
- 7 PARTIDO SOCIAL LIBERAL. O caminho da prosperidade: proposta de plano de governo. Available online:
http://flaviobolsonaro.com/PLANO_DE_GOVERNO_JAIR_BOLSONARO_2018.pdf. Accessed on: Aug. 17 2018.
- 8 Itamaraty is the name of the Palace that hosts the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and therefore is used as a synonymous for the mentioned Ministry.
- 9 PARTIDO SOCIAL LIBERAL. O caminho da prosperidade: proposta de plano de governo. Available online:
http://flaviobolsonaro.com/PLANO_DE_GOVERNO_JAIR_BOLSONARO_2018.pdf. Accessed on: Aug. 17 2018.
- 10 AGRA, H. Política Externa e as eleições presidenciais de 2018 no Brasil. Mundorama, 16/05/2018. Available online: <https://www.mundorama.net/?p=24558> Accessed on: Aug. 20 2018.
- 11 Mulambada, in these terms, is an expression used in a pejorative way against poor people.
- 12 SPEKTOR, M. Bolsonaro lança sua mais ambiciosa iniciativa de política externa. Folha de São Paulo, Eleições 2018, 20/07/2018. Available online:
 <<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/matiasspektor/2018/07/bolsonaro-lanca-sua-mais-ambiciosa-iniciativa-de-politica-externa.shtml>> Accessed on: Aug. 20 2018.
- 13 PARTIDO SOCIAL LIBERAL. O caminho da prosperidade: proposta de plano de governo. Available online:
http://flaviobolsonaro.com/PLANO_DE_GOVERNO_JAIR_BOLSONARO_2018.pdf. Accessed on: Aug. 17 2018.