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Foreign Policy and Regionalism: the governments
plans of Brazilian presidential candidates
in the 2022 elections

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FOREIGN POLICY AND REGIONALISM THE GOVERNMENTS PLANS OF BRAZILIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN THE 2022 ELECTIONS

Cairo Junqueira

O the Regionalism Observatory (ODR) is pleased to present the Dossier "Foreign Policy and Regionalism: the programs of the presidential candidates in the 2022 elections" through *Cadernos de Regionalismo ODR* (ISSN 2675-6390) continuing the first activity developed four years ago, when we were also debating presidential campaigns and elections in Brazil.

At that time, we attested an assertion of great value to scholars and interested people in the theme: "foreign policy does not win elections". If this expression remains endorsed, we can say that in fact the themes related to international relations, including the Brazilian foreign policy and the regional aspects, are not central on the eve of elections and in public opinion when compared to other agendas such as economy, public security, education and health. However, now in 2022 we can update this statement: "foreign policy does not win elections, but it can influence them".

And what has changed? Upon referring to 2018, Casarões (2019, p. 231, translated) stated that "[...] foreign policy came out of the kitchen and entered the living room. But instead of sitting politely with the other ones, generated inconvenience and astonishment by climbing on the table." Issues related to diplomacy and regionalism, that were previously secondary factors, produced heated debates in the presidential race due to political polarization and the new position of Jair Bolsonaro, the incoming president-elect.

Bolsonaro created a disruption in the historical legacy established by Brazilian foreign policy, in general, and by diplomacy, specifically. According to Cervo (2008), zealous,

universalist, pacifist, cooperative and development-oriented practices are central characteristics of Brazilian international relations. Principles established as self-determination, respect for international negotiations, multilateralism, international cooperation, peaceful settlement of controversies, pragmatism and cordiality with regional neighbors are our consecrated attributes. And it has changed in the last few years. Foreign policy climbed on the table and, more importantly, those who were seated just stood up, leaving Brazil even more alone.

We mention alone, but not isolated or necessarily solitaire, because some relationship circles continued to be established with countries such as the United States, Israel, Hungary, and Poland. The ideological bias of the "olavista" perspective (SARAIVA; SILVA, 2019) gripped Bolsonaro's foreign policy referring to the influence of Olavo de Carvalho in figures such as Filipe Martins, Advisor for International Affairs of the Presidency, Eduardo Bolsonaro, Congressman and Former Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, and Ernesto Araújo, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the words of the latter, it was better for Brazil to be even an international pariah or to be left outside the world order (FERNANDES, 2020).

Due to these recent transformations, the Dossier acquires even more importance by showing in direct and clear language, through the prospection of official documents and media news, how presidential candidates are guiding the themes of foreign policy and regionalism in their campaigns, speeches and, mainly, government plans.

We open the analysis with the candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, of the Workers Party (PT), which resumes several guidelines of the so-called active and proactive foreign policy implemented during his administrations between 2003 and 2011, besides evidencing that it is necessary for the country to resume its ties of friendship and international prestige, recovering the favorable image generated during that period. Thereafter, we examine the program of the current president, Jair Bolsonaro, of the Liberal Party (PL), whose international guidelines reaffirm neoliberal and conservative precepts, but compared to previous years we observe a more professional tone around the foreign policy agenda. The candidate reaffirms Itamaraty values and changes the tone in relation to the permanent criticism of the International Liberal Order. However, the regional arena remains unhighlighted, with virtually no mention of Latin America and South America.

The third review is about Ciro Gomes, of the Democratic Labor Party (PDT), which does not have coalitions and is running for the fourth time for the Presidency. Although with speech, tone and remarkably developmental proposals, his government program does not present foreign policy guidelines. Other sources show that the candidate reaffirms national principles as the defense of sovereignty, values multilateral relations and focuses on Latin American integration, emphasizing forums and regional blocs, such as BRICS and Mercosur.

Simone Tebet, of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), also underlines in her government plan the need to recover Brazil's international image in multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), but with one particularity: this would also be carried out mainly through trade and the attraction of private investments. For example, in the case of Mercosur, Tebet raises the necessity for liberalization of goods and products, reaffirming the free market policy view.

Finally, our last analysis brings a compilation of the eight candidates who have the lowest voting intentions in the 2022 Brazilian elections, as declared at the end of May (TUVUCA; RAMALHOSO, 2022). Along with visible political and ideological differences, as an overview, none of these candidatures presents a foreign policy agenda with novelties or innovations, reaffirming commitments with leftists' governments or ratifying the requirement for trade liberalization as a mainline for regional integration processes.

Alongside this brief introduction we hope that this Dossier, presented with open access, will contribute as a source of teaching materials, become academic analysis or even hold future public debates. We also wish a pleasant reading, expecting better times for our foreign policy and with greater significance to face our regional challenges.

Cairo Junqueira

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