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**THE BRAZILIAN  
FOREIGN POLICY (BFP)  
ON THE 2010 NUCLEAR  
ISSUE OF IRAN AND ITS  
IMPACT ON THE WORLD  
SYSTEM**

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**Abstract:** The 2010 “Tehran Declaration”, the result of mediation by Brazil and Turkey seeking a diplomatic solution to the issue of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s nuclear program, incited an adverse reaction, mainly in the United States and some European countries. The declaration had the potential to be a powerful instrument for the promotion of international security and peace, but, unfortunately, it was not recognized as valid by the main players of the world system and, therefore, it did not have the desired effect. The alliance between Brazil and Turkey in 2010 that proposed a resolution to the deadlock on the Iranian nuclear issue demonstrated high skill in dealing with matters normally reserved for the great powers, breaking the paradigm that peripheral nations can only comment on themselves or, at most, about their regional environment, while central nations, notably the United States, are entitled to comment on global issues. It is perceived here a characteristic reaction of the mentality called “post-colonial”, insofar as there is the permanence of a colonizing logic, imprinting the subaltern mark to the so-called “global south”.

**Keywords:** Nuclear Issue of Iran. Brazilian Foreign Policy (BFP). Global south.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the international repercussions that the so-called “Tehran Declaration” of 17 May 2010 incited, mainly in the United States (US) and some European countries. The declaration was the result of a mediation of Brazilian foreign policy made in partnership with Turkey aimed at promoting a diplomatic and effective solution to an issue that is still very controversial: the question of the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In proposing the 2010 Tehran agreement, which required Iran to carry out the enrichment of uranium (less than 20%) in

some foreign country, under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Brazil and Turkey were aimed mainly, a pacification of relations between Iran and the United States, while respecting Iran’s right to be able to develop its nuclear program for peaceful purposes. In principle, the declaration could have been considered a consistent instrument for the promotion of international security and peace, but, unfortunately, the main players of the world system did not recognize it as valid and, therefore, it did not have the desired effect.

This episode revealed a remarkable role of the Brazilian Foreign Policy (BFP) in decades. In this way, the present study analyzes it seeking to identify its intrinsic qualities, that is, its ideological and pragmatic foundations. In addition, this study analyzes the impact that the Brazilian initiative unleashed in the world system in order to identify the reasons for the declaration has not had the desired effect and the subsequent historical developments.

## THE BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY (BFP) BETWEEN 2002 AND 2010.

Since 2002, Brazilian diplomacy begins to focus on the relations between Brazil and the geopolitical south, giving priority to countries in South America and Africa, particularly the West African and Portuguese-speaking (MD, 2002). In fact, the so-called South-South Cooperation (SSC), as a contesting and transforming movement of the international balance of power, in defending democracy, development and social justice, is not a phenomenon started in the 21st century. In the 1970s it was already expressed in coalitions of poor nations within multilateral organisms, projecting significant influence. These advances, however, generated a reaction from Northern countries which pressured politically and economically the nations of the so-called third world, exploiting their

vulnerabilities and dependencies. Such a conservative and neoliberal reaction, led by the United States of Ronald Reagan, focused on the commercial, investment and foreign aid sectors, weakening their economies mainly by rising interest rates on foreign debt. This caused the decline of South-South partnerships, which only started to grow again with the economic rise of countries like China, India and Brazil, starting in the 2000s (Pecequilo, 2015).

From 2002, focused on SSC, Brazil gradually increases its insertion in international decision-making. The main Brazilian movement in this direction is, certainly, the deepening of its participation in the Brics block, constituted by Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa. The BRICS formation process began in 2008 at the initiative of Russia, which sought to Brazil, China and India, from the perception of common interests in many topics discussed, both within the IMF and within the G20. Since then, finance ministers, central bank presidents and diplomats have been systematically meeting in order to coordinate on several agendas. Since 2009, presidents and prime ministers began to hold annual summits, the first of which took place in Russia. South Africa joined the group in 2010 after proposal of the South African government to act jointly (Graceffo, 2011). From 2011, by Brazilian initiative, the bloc's member countries also began to meet in parallel to the G-20 summits, resulting in the leaders of the five countries meeting twice a year.

The Brics' importance has been increasingly recognized by the international community, being perceived as a counterpoint to the G7. Although the group is not yet an economic bloc or a formal trade association, the BRICS has sought to convert its economic power into greater geopolitical influence. In fact, the BRICS postulate a new distribution of power

at the international level, with emphasis on the reform of international economic institutions, underlining the inadequacy of regulatory institutions derived from Bretton Woods. The BRICS countercyclical policies offer alternatives for solving global problems that question the orthodox monetarist handbook, which reinforces the legitimacy of the group in its pursuit to transform global governance mechanisms (Acharya, 2014).

The countries that make up the BRICS have taken a number of common positions on the Middle East, in general severely criticizing NATO's interventions as security providers for the region. Specifically on Iran, the bloc's countries also rejected the threat of using military force against the country and criticized the imposition of economic sanctions by the United States and the European Union. It was stated the need for continued negotiations and dialogue, with praise for the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which found a negotiated way out to Yemen, as an example to be followed (MRE, 2013; Uziel, 2015).

During the period between 2002 and 2016, one of the factors that increased Brazil's projection as a valid interlocutor in international politics was its participation in actions for the maintenance of peace and collective security, being among the ten countries that have most contributed to UN International Missions. Opting for consented missions instead of coercive missions, Brazil went beyond the merely symbolic participations, even considering the high costs of more robust participations (Amorim, 2011).

The first government of President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, from 2002 to 2006, began, externally, under the impact of the attacks of September 11, 2001, which brought the fight against terrorism ahead of the international agenda. On this theme, keeping its traditional legalistic and pacifist

approach, Brazil defended the action of the UN inspectors in Iraq, to ensure the seizure of any weapons of mass destruction, without the invasion of the country and the war (MRE, 2003a). In broad terms, the BFP under Lula's presidency promoted an independent and non-subordinate stance, reinforcing national power sustained by a solid and complex international program, not only through regional and global exchanges, but also by strengthening the Brazilian position vis-à-vis the North (Pecequilo, 2015).

From 2003 onwards, Brazilian foreign policy - guided by its general principles of strategic multilateralism, formation of alliances and South-South cooperation - sought an approximation with the Middle East as an additional instrument that had four main objectives: increasing Brazil's presence in the world, reforming global governance, winning a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and expanding Brazil's international trade. Proof of the Brazilian government's interest in strengthening its relations with the entire Middle East, in December 2003 there was a presidential visit to five countries in the Arab world: Syria, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Libya (MRE, 2003b).

Celso Amorim, foreign minister between 2003 and 2010, reviewing President Lula's two terms, highlights the effort to strengthen relations between Brazil and the Middle East: "During President Lula's two mandates, Brazilian foreign policy made a genuine effort to engage countries of the Middle East on the bilateral and bi-regional (involving South America as a whole) levels" (Amorim, 2011). He also points that this effort would occur under parameters and motivations different from the traditional ones used by other Western powers, without depending on the oil extracted from the region, while being aware of its centrality to world peace:

Brazil's interests in coming closer to the Middle East are quite distinct from those of the traditional Western powers. We do not depend on the Middle East for oil. Although we fully grasp the centrality of the region for world peace, Brazil has no major direct national security concern at stake there. We are not a large arms exporter to the region. And of course, unlike other countries, we do not carry any colonial or Cold War baggage in the Middle East (or anywhere else, for that matter). (Amorim, 2011).

The two Lula governments (2002-2010) established the following guidelines in their foreign policy in the middle-eastern region: defend peace and human rights; encourage bridges between peoples, countries and regions; promote international humanitarian assistance; seek to create alternative political, diplomatic and economic arrangements. In an impromptu speech made in 2010 to Israeli businessmen, President Lula, alongside President Shimon Peres, stated that Brazil was a specialist in dialogue and that peace was in the country's DNA (Flint & Salek, 2010). The role of encouraging bridges in relation to the Arab countries, Iran and Israel, very present in official speeches, was justified by these arguments: Arab influence on the Iberian Peninsula; history of Arab and Jewish immigration to Brazil and, thus, an expressive number of Arab and Israeli descendants in the Brazilian population; and, due to the two factors mentioned, great contribution of Arab heritage to the formation of the Brazilian identity and to the economic development of the country (MRE, 2003a; 2003b; 2004a; 2005a; 2006b; 2007a; 2008a; 2008b; 2009a; 2009b; 2010a).

The promotion of humanitarian assistance in the Middle East region, much more than rhetoric, was expressed in several actions. Brazil's active involvement in international humanitarian assistance began in the Lula government with the creation, in 2004, of the General Coordination of International Actions

to Combat Hunger (CGFOME) within the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE), whose mission was execute projects and international humanitarian missions, coordinating BFP in the area of food and nutrition security. The Lebanon crisis, in 2006, can be considered a milestone in the provision of humanitarian assistance by the Brazilian government, expressed in operations to send medicines, food and, mainly, to withdraw almost three thousand Brazilians from the regions of the armed conflict (MRE, 2006b). However, most of the humanitarian assistance provided by the Brazilian government to the Middle East was given by donating money, food and medicines to the regions of Palestine and the Gaza Strip, corroborating one of the main flags of the Lula government's BFP, the creation of an independent, democratic and economically viable Palestinian state, living in peace with Israel (MRE, 2010b).

The effort to create new political, diplomatic and economic arrangements - or, in other words, to be an anti-status quo agent - during Lula's administration for the Middle East can be exemplified by the Brazilian action to launch the South America and Countries Summit and by encouraging a series of trade agreements between Mercosur and Middle East countries, seeking to counterbalance the power of traditional powers. ASPA was conceived as an interregional cooperation mechanism and forum for political and diplomatic coordination, with the aim of strengthening relations between the two regions in the political, economic and cultural spheres (Cervo, 2005). Regarding the fruits of the I and II Summit, which took place in 2005 (Brasilia) and 2009 (Doha), it can be mentioned: the 170% increase in trade between both regions since the first summit, with the creation of new chambers of commerce; establishment of new air connections between South America and the Middle East; development

of technical cooperation projects to combat desertification; and creation of the South American Research Institute in Morocco. The increase in the volume of trade between Brazil and the Middle East grew with the deepening of partnerships, reaching the 300% level in a decade (MDIC, 2015).

The fourth summit was held in Riyadh in November 2015, when it was celebrated ten years of activity of the mechanism and produced the Riyadh Declaration and the Riyadh Action Plan, which expanded the scope of inte-regional cooperation to legal and media areas (Gray & Gills, 2016). Anyway, ASPA was yet another institution whose purpose converged on the BFP's major project for reforming global governance, with the creation of new economic and political arrangements alternative to the status quo.

Brazilian action as a conflict mediator and consensus builder in the Middle East, particularly in relation to the Palestinian issue and the Iranian nuclear issue, had enormous repercussions in the international system. On the Palestinian issue, it was listed three reasons the Brazilian legitimacy to engage in the subject: significant Jewish and Arab community in Brazil; the fact that the conflict has a direct impact on a large number of Brazilian citizens; the realization that what happens in the Middle East, does not refer only to Arabs, Palestinians and Israelis, but in reality, has repercussions on the all humankindy (MRE, 2009b). On the Palestinian issue, Brazil argued that the creation of a Palestinian State and the maintenance of the State of Israel are both necessary for peace in the region. More specifically, the BFP condemned Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, demanding respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law (MRE, 2005a; 2005b; 2006b; 2007b; 2008a; 2009a; 2009b). Regarding Iran, Brazil maintained a strong position in favor of Iran's

right to be able to develop its peaceful nuclear program, since the rapid recognition of the results of the presidential elections in May 2009, in addition to the abstention vote at the UN level on the occasion condemning human rights violations in Iran (Brun, 2011).

## **IRAN AND ITS STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE**

Located in the Asian portion of the Middle East, the Islamic Republic of Iran borders on Iraq, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as having extensive maritime connections, both to the north by the Caspian Sea and to the south by the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, where the Strait of Hormuz is. As a founding member of the UN and OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Producing Countries), Iran's international importance, in addition to being an impressive regional power, arises initially from its political positions, as a symbol of the struggle for the right of self-determination of peoples and the primacy of the law to govern international relations.

Regarding the strategic importance of Iran, it is necessary to mention, in the first place, its role in the energy security of the world and, therefore, in the global economy due to its strong oil industry. Iran's natural gas reserve is the second largest in the world, and its oil reserve is the fourth largest in the world, with more than 13% of the world's oil reserves, according to OPEC 2018 estimates (OPEC, 2019).

The relative importance is further increased by considering the need for the United States to exercise almost complete control over the price of gas and oil in world trade. In this context, the dominance of nuclear technology by a country as decisive in terms of oil as Iran is, makes it very threatening to the most sensitive strategic interests of the United States. In other words, the issue is not just

Iran's nuclear nuclear, because, even other countries, like China, has many more nuclear weapons that would bother the United States. The problem is the discomfort of having an Iran with technological capabilities that includes nuclear dominance (Baranchik, 2012).

Moreover, its geographical position places it in a privileged point of maritime access to the cargo routes, in particular by the control of the Strait of Hormuz, with immense potential to integrate the web of communications necessary to Eurasian economic development (Iene, 2018). The Strait of Hormuz is one of the most important routes of world trade, because by the channel, which connects the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, is drained daily, around 30% of world oil production. In other words, all maritime traffic from the Gulf countries converges in the strait, including exports of oil and liquefied natural gas from Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Thus, blocking trade in this way, which has been mooted by the Iranian government, would generate an automatic increase in the price of oil (Baffa, 2020).

Besides the energy importance and privileged location, Iranian hegemony in the region is also due to two other elements: the Shiite leadership, since the country has the largest Shia population in the region, being the only democratically Islamic state in the Middle East, since the popular Islamic Revolution of 1979, when the people asked for political-religious representation; and its position contrary to Western influence in the region, establishing alliances that challenge the strong influence of Saudi Arabia and Israel in the region.

## **HISTORY OF IRAN'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Iran's recent history, in particular of its

relations with the United States, can be divided into two parts: before 1979 and after 1979. Between 1925 and 1979, Iran lived under a secularized and westernized monarchy, the so-called Dynasty of the Shah. The main socio-political characteristics of that period were: a strong approach and alignment with the West, including the cultural dimension at the expense of the ancient Persian national identity; secularization of the state, despite the fact that the majority of the population is Islamic and Shia; an authoritarian regime, with repression to the press and the increase of the secret police (Sakav) against citizens critical of the regime; increase in oil revenues by western incentive. Here it is necessary to remember that the origins of the current Iranian nuclear program counted on US financial aid and technological assistance in the 1950s, in the scope of President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" project, which aimed to contribute to the development of nuclear technology in countries allies (Axworthy, 2016).

However, in 1979, with the Islamic popular revolution - which deposed the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlevi, replacing him with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini - the Iranian situation underwent a radical transformation, mainly in asserting its national identity and independence from the West. It should be noted that Shah Pahlevi's regime was accused of exhausting the country's wealth through a luxurious reign and an ambitious militarization project in the country, generating enormous popular dissatisfaction. As of the 1979 revolution, with the government of Ayatollah Khomeini, there was the adoption of an Islamic (Shiite) theocratic state, from the officialization of a supreme religious leader, but with components of a representative democracy regime; there is also an acute process of alienation from Western culture (Ehteshami, 1995; Axworthy, 2016).

Obviously, the new political orientation of

the Iranian revolutionary government began to frustrate totally the US interests in the Persian Gulf. It must be borne in mind that since 1945 the United States had maintained control of Middle Eastern oil as a prodigious source of political and economic power. This control occurred by adopting of a geopolitics that consisted of the establishment of an American protectorate in Saudi Arabia and a permanent military presence in the Persian Gulf, since during World War II, American troops had already landed in the Gulf with the objective of protecting the line of Allied supplies. In addition, alliances with Saudi Arabia and the Shah dynasty ensured the massive penetration of Western oil companies known as the Seven Sisters: Standard Oil of New Jersey (Exxon), Standard Oil of New York (Mobil), Standard Oil of California (Chevron), Gulf, Texaco, BP and Shell. Thus, the control of trade in the world's oil-rich region was in charge of the oil giants.

However, events such as the oil crisis (1973), the Iranian revolution (1979), the kidnapping of American diplomats at the Tehran embassy (between 1979 and 1981) and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (late 1979) reshaped American foreign policy to the Middle East. In response to these changes in the geopolitics of the region, in January 1980, President Jimmy Carter (1977-81) emphasized that the United States would use force to guarantee the flow of oil in the Persian Gulf region: so, the Carter doctrine was born (Visentini, 2014).

A US presence in the Middle East, through its immense military power, represents an almost complete control over the price of gas and oil. In addition to the economic advantages of this control, such a presence would also result in a political-economic domain over the regional powers of Eurasia, that is, over China, India and Russia, affecting the global strategic balance (Ehteshami, 1995).

Regarding this claim to occupy the Middle

East, it should be noted that the two main American political parties hold identical positions, both being warmongers and occupationists in relation to the region. This is because there are influential conservative groups, both Democratic and Republican, who oppose any kind of agreement with Iran, advocating any solution other than the one through military means. The mere fact that there is a technological-capable Iran including dominance of the nuclear energy sector is perceived as a political defeat for the United States in the balance of world power. This would result in the loss of US control over the oil market and, as a consequence, loss of international oil price control.

During the presidency of George W Bush, bilateral negotiations between the US and Iran, which had begun in the Khatami / Bill Clinton era between 1993 and 2001, did not progress. The 11/09 terrorist attacks worked to boost the Bush Doctrine started in 2002, which explicitly stated the preemptive wars, announcing that the United States would attack your enemies before being attacked. Among these enemies were members of the so-called “axis of evil”, which included Iraq and North Korea, as well as, of course, Iran.

The Bush doctrine, coupled with the invasion of Iraq in 2003, stressed the Iranian feeling of being the “next target”, favoring conservatives and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad election in 2005. Supported by an anti-Western speech and in defense of sovereignty, Ahmadinejad deepened the nuclear program, due to the need to increase deterrence in the face of the risk of preemptive attacks that were being carried out by the Bush administration. This action by the Iranian regime increased its bargaining power with the United States (Pecequilo, 2015). Increasing the deterrent power is not understood here as the manufacture of atomic bombs, but as a domain of the knowledge of nuclear energy;

especially because Iran has been a signatory to the NPT since 1968 and its nuclear agenda is for peaceful use.

In 2006, Iran’s increased production of enriched uranium led to an increase in Western indisposition, triggering Israeli and American cyber attacks, threats of Israeli air bombing aimed at destroying nuclear facilities (which would repeat the attacks of the decade 1980), inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, unilateral sanctions by the United States and the European Union, and sanctions by the UNSC. In response, the Ahmadinejad government, concurrently with the Brazilian movement, resumed alternative external partnerships, especially with Russia and Venezuela, both in the nuclear and energy fields (Pecequilo, 2015).

In that period of increasing tensions, Brazil sought to mediate conflicts related to the peace process not only in Iran, but in the entire Middle East region. But the culmination of these efforts came with the 2010 Tripartite Agreement, signed among Brazil, Turkey and Iran. On May 17, 2010, the leaders of Brazil and Turkey announced in Tehran that they had reached the principles of an agreement that would end the nuclear standoff between Iran and the international community. This agreement was called “Joint Declaration of Iran, Turkey and Brazil” or “Declaration of Tehran”. Under the agreement, Iran would entrust its enriched uranium to Turkish government supervision (Sotero, 2012). Among other things, the Agreement provided that Iran agreed to deposit 1200 kilograms of Lightly Enriched Uranium (LEU) in Turkey, while the uranium custody in Turkey could be monitored by IAEA officials. This agreement meant an attempt to unlock the process of understanding, being seen as a gateway to establish mutual trust, paving the way for broader negotiations in the future (Amorim, 2011).



The Turkish and Brazilian success factors in this negotiation in which great powers - specifically those that make up the UN Security Council (US, UK, France, Russia and China) plus Germany - had failed can be listed by the following: first, the fact that Brazil and Turkey have good relations with Iran, both diplomatic and commercial, leading a respectful dialogue; second, the fact that Brazil and Turkey are not nuclearized states, therefore, with greater legitimacy to negotiate on Iran's nuclear stockpile; third, there was no pre-judgment on the part of the two countries that the Iranian nuclear program was for other purposes than the peaceful ones, which was a valuable bargaining chip in the negotiation; finally, Brazil and Turkey have always recognized Iran's right to a peaceful nuclear program, to which all NPT members are entitled, as long as the treaty provisions and IAEA regulations are respected (Amorim, 2011).

However, despite the success of diplomatic negotiations between the three countries and the consequent signing of the Declaration of Tehran, the UNSC member countries did not recognize the validity of the agreement, nor the legitimacy of Brazil and Turkey in doing so (Oskan, 2011). After its release, the agreement was condemned by the P5 + 1 block, composed of the five member countries of the UNSC (US, UK, France, China and Russia) plus Germany; in sequence the sentence was extended to the IAEA. The bloc that had previously been negotiating with Iran, more or less in the same terms, now rejected the newly signed text, a text that it itself had helped to shape (Pecequilo, 2015).

Unfortunately, this victory of Brazilian diplomacy, viewed with enormous skepticism by the P5 + 1, was also accompanied by the Israeli government and the European Union, which announced that suspicion about the Iran's nuclear program remained (Folha,

2010). Thus, even though the UNSC was officially informed about the closing of the agreement, already in the following month, on June 9, 2010, the sanctions against Iran contained in Resolution no. 1929 were approved. The sanctions were: the submission of its nuclear activities to monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); the suspension of its ballistic missile activities; the signing of the comprehensive treaty banning nuclear tests; as well as imposing a broad spectrum of economic sanctions and a complete arms embargo on Iran (Oskan, 2011; Clinton, 2014).

Despite the lack of support from P5 + 1 for a negotiation that was previously being sought sound contradictory, the explanation for this is the attempt of the central countries in delegitimize Brazil and Turkey as reliable negotiators. The negative reaction of the United States and allies to the SSC agendas reveals a predictable resistance to the loss of relative power in international politics. In any case, the signing of the Tehran Declaration can be considered a landmark of contemporary international politics, bringing a repositioning of the concept of medium power, unveiling a new activism for the emerging states and demonstrating that the nuclear security issue is not exclusively of interest of the great powers (Oskan, 2011; Kibaroglu, 2012).

In the years following the disregard of the Tehran declaration, between 2011 and 2015, Iran found itself coerced to submit its nuclear program to the analysis of the UN Security Council, mainly due to United States pressure. For the US government, the program would be suspected of developing nuclear technology for military purposes. In response, the Iranian government announced that its nuclear program was only for energy production and scientific purposes. Here it is necessary to remember what happened to Iraq a few years earlier with regard to the so-called "negative

evidence”. At that time, Iraq had no way to prove that it had no chemical and / or nuclear weapons, resulting in its invasion by the US in 2003. The understanding for the nuclear issue of Iran followed the same reasoning, that it would be impossible for this country to satisfy the requirement of international powers to prove that its nuclear program would not have military purposes.

In 2015, after years of debates and sanctions, Iran signed a nuclear agreement with the group of countries called P5 + 1. The 159-page agreement, called JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), defined a drastic reduction in Iran’s nuclear program in exchange for suspending the international sanctions that weighed on the country. The document set a ceiling for Iran’s enriched uranium stockpile for 15 years, causing it to eliminate 98% of its reserves and limited the number of centrifuges to enrich the material for 10 years. Tehran also pledged to modify a heavy water reactor so that it would not be able to produce plutonium, since it can replace the uranium used in bombs. All these measures, under the terms of the agreement, would be monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The agreement was reinforced by Security Council resolution 2231 and its implementation started in January 2016, after the IAEA certified that Iran fulfilled its main duties (UNSC, 2015).

The conditions imposed on Iran by the 2015 agreement have accentuated the imbalance in the distribution of power in the Middle East, because if on the one hand there is an Iran with a nuclear program monitored by IAEA inspectors, on the other hand there is Israel, with a growing nuclear potential, between 300 and 400 atomic warheads, which has never undergone any inspection and has never signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Furthermore, it is not credible that Iran will attack Israel

with atomic warheads, if it produces them. An attack of this nature would also massacre the Palestinian population, inside and outside Israel, and a large part of the population of Lebanon, killing not only Jews, but also killing Arabs, Christians and Muslims, including Shiites (Bandeira, 2019).

Despite all the asymmetry of treatment given by the international community to the countries of the Middle East, the 2015 nuclear agreement seemed to be an appeasement in the strained relations between the United States and Iran that began with the 1979 Iranian regime change. However, it turned out to be a huge failure, materialized with the withdrawal of the U.S. from the agreement in May 2018, hereafter announcing a series of heavy sanctions aimed at toppling the Iranian economy (SPUTNIK, 2018).

At the time, Iran remained in the agreement, as the other countries also remained and the European Union stated that the current agreement was working and should be preserved. This was also the position of the IAEA, which, in the words of then president Yukiya Amano, said that the failure of the agreement would be a great loss to nuclear verification and to multilateralism. The IAEA said that the verification regime it was using at the time was the strictest in the world, declaring that, since 2016, its inspectors had certified all of the defendants’ locations and that they guaranteed that Iran was fulfilling its nuclear commitments under the JCPOA (UN, 2018).

The most current escalation of the conflict can be traced back to May 2018, with the assassination of Iranian general Qasem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force, perpetrated by the United States on January 3, 2020. In response, two days after the assassination, the Iranian government also announced its withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement, thus reserving the right

to enrich more uranium than is established in the agreement (Lemon, 2020).

## **ANALYSIS OF IRAN'S NUCLEAR ISSUE IN THE LIGHT OF AEROSPACE POWER**

John Boyd's cognitive theories significantly contribute to examine the Iran nuclear issue insofar as it includes the categories of political influence and informational warfare, elements present in what is currently recognized as hybrid warfare. As reported, these elements were widely used in the process of the desqualification and delegitimization of Brazil and Turkey as valid proponents of such an important international nuclear agreement.

The psychosocial dimension of hybrid warfare, whose main function is to affect the opponent's moral strength, seeking to nullify its will to fight, finds a strong reference in the formulation of Boyd's "OODA Loop", insofar as it is possible to understand it as a schema for explaining the functioning of human cognition (Boyd, 2012). Boyd's OODA Loop absorbed the concept of information processing developed in the 1950s and enhanced it by incorporating the theories of cyberneticists such as Gregory Bateson, who developed a systems theory-based model of mind (Osinga, 2005).

Boyd divided warfare into three distinct elements. In addition to the physical element (weapons, people and logistical assets), there is also the mental element, that is, the distortion of the enemy's perception of reality by disinformation and ambiguous posturing. Finally, there is the moral element, that is, the destruction of the enemy's will to win, disruption of alliances (or potential allies), the breaking down the mutual trust and induction of internal fragmentation (Coram, 2002).

Victory in the Hybrid War can be achieved by applying the four moments of the OODA Loop: observation, the collection of data

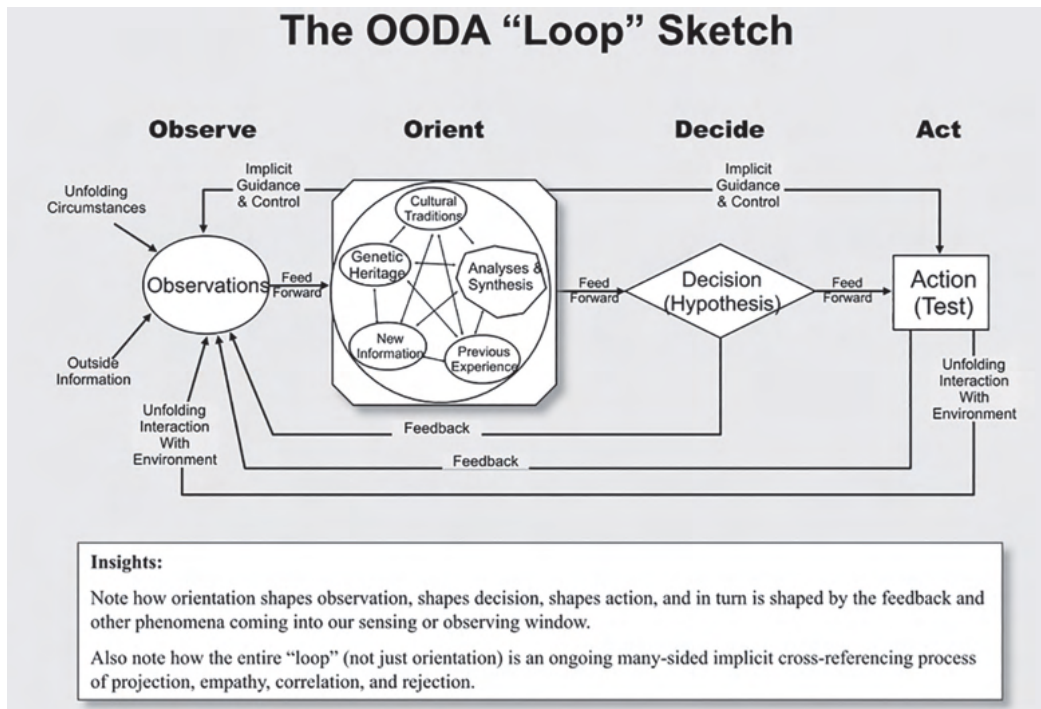
by means of the senses; orientation, the analysis and synthesis of data to form one's current mental perspective; decision, the determination of a course of action based on one's current mental perspective; and action: the physical playing-out of decisions (Ford, 2010).

After the Tehran declaration, there was a deliberate action to attack the moral and cognitive aspects of the main players involved. First, attack on moral aspects as there was a great effort to discredit Brazil and Turkey as valid intermediaries to manage that crisis. At the same time, there was a huge effort to dissolve the established partnerships, by inciting distrust among the actors. In other words, real morale bombs. Finally, the ambiguous speech of affirming the will to achieve peace, while repelling it through actions and other discourses, generating disorientation and cognitive dissonance.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The alliance between Brazil and Turkey in 2010 that proposed a resolution to the deadlock on the Iranian nuclear issue demonstrated high skill in dealing with matters normally reserved for the great powers, breaking the paradigm that peripheral nations can only comment on themselves or, at most, about their regional environment, while central nations, notably the United States, are entitled to comment on global issues. The BFP's role in dealing with the nuclear issue of Iran in 2010 revealed not only its pacifist proposition, already traditional, but competent leadership, exercised on a thorny issue, potentially threatening the peace in the world system. This happened in a government that claimed a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, questioning the crystallization of power at the end of the Second World War and aiming to bring new airs of cooperation to the global system.

## The OODA “Loop” Sketch



Source: Boyd, 2012.

In this mediation, two positions were clearly supported by Brazil: that the dialogue is more effective than the isolation; and, mainly, in the recognition of the Iranian right to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, thus defending the compliance of multilateral demands (BRUN, 2011). Furthermore, in the Brazilian perception, it was clear that any attempt to build a lasting peace in the region would involve dialogue with Iran (Amorim, 2011).

However, the extreme distrust of world powers in relation to the agreement reached by Turkish, Brazilian and Iranian diplomacy made that it was disregarded, simply annulled, without being able to be used as a starting point for future negotiations to come. Even before the agreement, it should be noted that Brazilian positions on the Middle East suffered criticism systematically by interlocutors like the United States and Israel, among others, because, in their perception, the BFP would be “pro-Palestinian” or “anti-Semitic”. Such

perceptions were revived when the Brazil-Iran-Turkey partnership occurred (Pecequilo, 2015).

It is perceived here a characteristic reaction of the mentality called “post-colonial”, insofar as there is the permanence of a colonizing logic, imprinting the subaltern mark to the so-called “global south”. The projection of power, not only physical, military, but mainly symbolic, narrative remains as a support for the domination of central countries over peripherals. This logic of power, which permeates international relations, results in increased instability in the Middle East. For Waltz, the Israeli nuclear arsenal has generated instability in the region and the Iranian program would benefit stability. Not least because there has never been a large-scale war between two nuclear-weapons states, as the limits of action for each are clearly outlined, as well as their forces (Waltz, 2012).

Thus, despite the fact that a new agreement was signed in 2013 between Iran and P5+1

group, given the warmongering conception of its conduct, the Iranian nuclear issue remains deadlocked, potentially explosive and still unresolved by the international community.

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