

SPECIAL  
ELECTIONS ISSUE

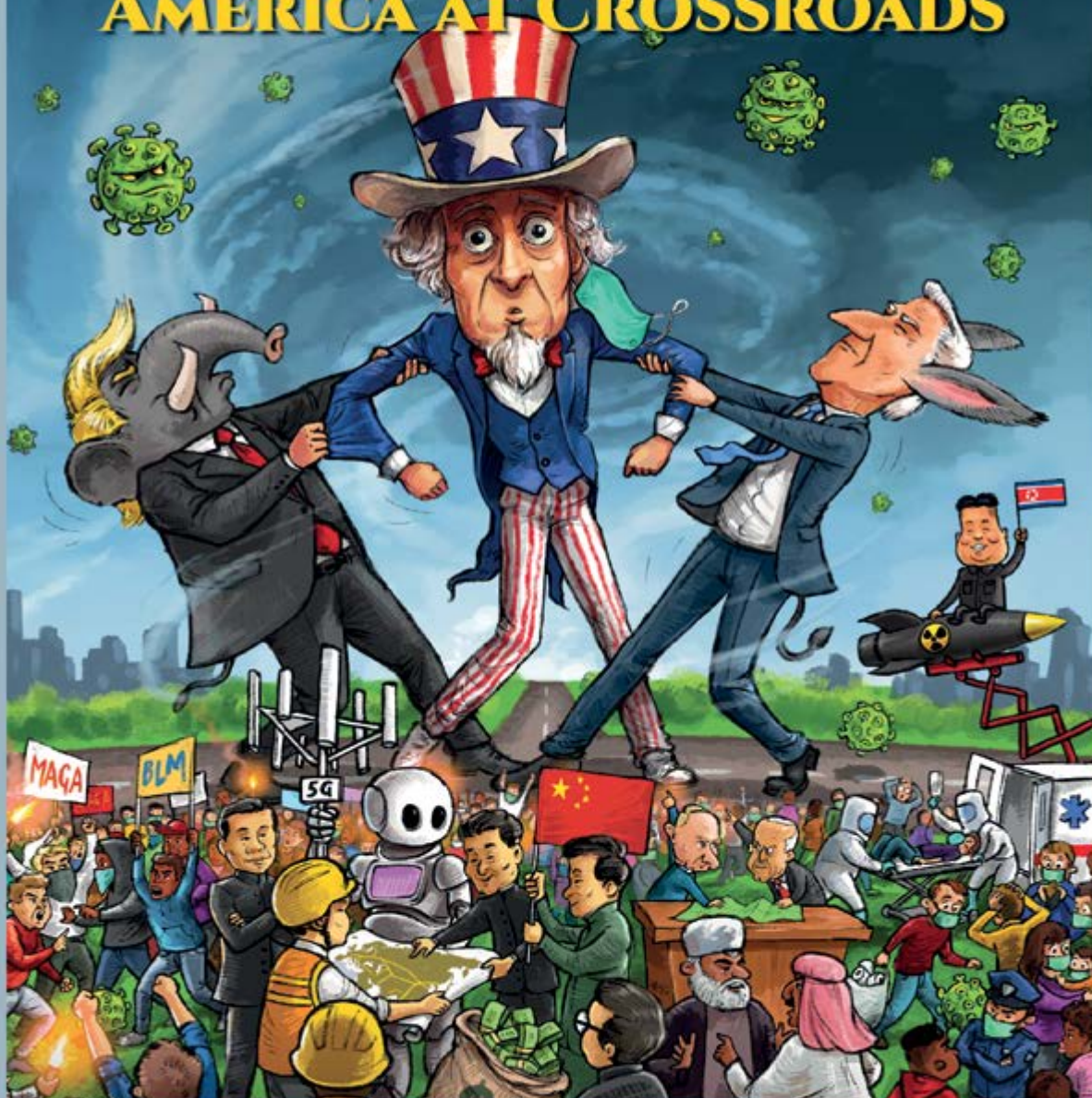
AUTUMN 2020 / ISSUE NO.17

\$ 15.00 | € 10.00 | 1500 RSD

# HORIZONS

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## AMERICA AT CROSSROADS



ARAÚJO • BLECUA • CASTAÑEDA • GOWAN • GREENBLATT • HUANG  
HUIZINGA • ISCHINGER • KARABELL • KERIM • KESSLER • LOURY  
MAHBUBANI • MCADAM • MUNTER • NORQUIST • OLLIVANT  
PLETKA • ROACH • STEPHENS • TANDEN • TRENIN • WANG • ZHAO

# DEMOCRACY AND THE AMERICAS

*Ernesto Araújo*

**T**HROUGH its efforts to increase economic openness, further a strategy of competitive international insertion, and work to foster a fully democratic American continent, President Jair Bolsonaro's administration aims to contribute—in the medium and long term—to building a stable, free, economically robust, and united America. This arduous and complex demanded, at the outset, that we rescue and consolidate Americanism in Brazilian foreign policy, something that, regrettably, had been abandoned in the past few decades.

The Americas are democratic. It is their fate, it is our fate. I refer to the American continent as one whole, comprising what is known as North, Central, and South America. The American nations, since the onset of their respective independence movements, were built on shared constitutional precepts that sought to guarantee to their peoples the observance of the founding

principles of human dignity, such as the right to life and liberty. Those principles would become, with the passage of time, pillars of democratic regimes on the American continent, as well as in other parts of the world.

**H**owever, successive decades brought about numerous civil conflicts that were not rarely followed by the establishment of politically authoritarian, economically centralized, and overall restrictive regimes. These circumstances prevented—despite the influence exerted by the North American example of development and prosperity—the full consolidation and practice of democratic principles in most of the countries of the American continent south of the United States. The results were nefarious in terms of political instability and economic impoverishment that seemed to feed off each other, condemning the countries of the continent—except those in North America—to a seemingly eternally-unfulfilled promise.

*Ernesto Araújo is Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federative Republic of Brazil. You may follow him on Twitter @ernestofaraujo.*



Photo: The Brazilian Report

*Brazil's president and foreign minister work together hand in glove*

Some nations in our region succeeded in resuscitating the fundamental ideas that served as the underlying foundation of their political independence, and, by consequence, became more promising countries by consolidating the legal certainty and openness to the world that is necessary for sustainable development in the long run. Others insisted on following paths that proved, sooner or later, to be doomed to failure and that, frequently, resulted in new political cycles characterized by victimhood and resentment.

Auspicious political developments in recent years came about, unfortunately,

in parallel to an unprecedented example of socioeconomic and institutional self-destruction on the American continent. And yet, this singular configuration of circumstances represents an opportunity—perhaps a unique one—for continental convergence through the consolidation of a fully democratic, free, and peaceful Western hemisphere. As a result of this fortunate dynamic, the very expression “the Americas” could become an anachronism for a part of the world we will come to simply call “America.”

**W**e speak of “the Americas” with ease, as if there were no geographic continuity in our continent

or as if the socioeconomic and institutional differences that exist between North and South were immutable and irreversible. No one says “the Europes,” “the Africas,” or “the Asias.” And yet, over the course of two centuries of political independence on the continent, it has become customary, throughout the whole world, to refer to the continent in the plural form. This stems from the contrast between one America that is a stable, rich, and prosperous democracy and of “another” America characterized by a fragile state of democracy (often corrupted or violated) and, therefore, poor and stagnant. Now, thanks to a confluence of favorable elements, the propitious moment has arrived to establish and crystallize, in this “other” America, the ideals of democracy, liberty, economic openness, and prosperity.

**BRAZIL’S AMERICANIST DIMENSION**

**B**razilian foreign policy has always had an element of Americanism—a natural derivative of our geographical position. The first evidence of implementation of this strategy in the history of Brazil as a sovereign state was the quest for rapprochement with the United States of America right after our

declaration of independence, during the tenure of our first foreign minister José Bonifácio (1822-1823). The goal was to protect Brazil’s sovereignty from European imperialism.

*Auspicious political developments in recent years came about, unfortunately, in parallel to an unprecedented example of socioeconomic and institutional self-destruction on the American continent.*

Historically, this Americanist outlook took many shapes. It gained momentum, for example, in the inter-American congresses of the nineteenth century, which led to the Washington Conference (1889) and the Third Pan-American Conference (1906). It also led to the institutionalization

of inter-American coordination in the post-World War II period, most notably in the signing of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (1947) and the establishment of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1948.

These initiatives evolved into South and Latin-American integration efforts, which took their first steps in the 1960s under the auspices of the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA). They then accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s, under the impetus of regional endeavors, among which MERCOSUR came to attain particular prominence. Integration came to the fore due to the gradual establishment of a customs union among the associate states as

well as the legally binding effects of MERCOSUR’s Ushuaia Protocol, more specifically the “democratic clause” of the trading bloc, according to which the rupture of the institutional order constitutes an unacceptable obstacle for the permanency of the affected associate state in MERCOSUR. Therefore, the country struck by democratic rupture is suspended from the integration process.

**I**n the past two decades, the Americanism vector present in Brazilian foreign policy, as well as of its other regional partners, had, however, taken on a clear anti-United States stance. This has transformed valid and necessary regional initiatives into efforts to remove the United States from as many cooperation spaces as possible in our region. It was a self-destructive course of action, more focused on rhetoric, victimhood, and resentment than results and democratic gains and economic growth.

This “anti-U.S. Americanism” trend was strongly influenced by a worldview that permeated leftist parties in the region in the 1990s. These parties considered Brazil and the countries of our regional vicinity as fertile grounds for the implementation of new forms of statist regimes, with protectionism and

*In the past two decades, the Americanism vector present in Brazilian foreign policy, as well as of its other regional partners, had, however, taken on a clear anti-United States stance.*

socialism as their core principles, even after the collapse of the socialist model in East-Central Europe and the Soviet Union. The most prominent regional example of the political tide following this line of thought manifested in the São Paulo Forum, a conference of socialist political parties and organizations launched in 1990.

**T**he São Paulo Forum has served as the ideological matrix of the left and Latin American protectionist statism for the past three

decades, exerting strong dominance and nefarious influence on areas such as political discourse and education. It has become the backbone of leftist parties that came to power in the region, conniving with and fostering intertwining political projects of perpetual power and transnational criminal activities.

Because of the rise to power in the region of parties and movements associated with the Forum, the original and most important purpose of regional integration initiatives—namely, a competitive insertion of the South American economies in transnational value chains—lost momentum in favor of new priorities of a supposedly “social” character. The only outcomes of this were more protectionism, bottlenecks, external strangulation,

and weak and unsustainable growth. This was followed by stagnation and the gradual corruption of both economic and democratic institutions.

Governments whose rhetoric has always been marked by self-commiseration with regards to the United States thwarted projects designed to strengthen the competitiveness of our region's economies. The result of this course of action was the weakening of legal certainty for investors and investments, and of the very institutions that form the state. In some countries, fortunately, this trend turned out to be doomed. In others, these political movements, once in power, succeeded at institutional dissolution. In the clearest case, Venezuela, they managed to erect a destructive dictatorial regime that feeds on the hunger and poverty of its own people, and that still finds support in sectors—that are fortunately ever more marginal—of our countries' politics.

**BRAZIL'S REGIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Brazil has escaped a similar fate thanks to the electoral results of 2018, a historic moment in which the Brazilian people, through a fully

transparent democratic process, rejected institutionalized corruption and a false identity based on victimhood and the belittlement of our nation. Brazilian citizens firmly stated their desires and ambitions for their country, their

*Public and private institutions, as well as civil society from across the entire American continent, should act in coordination and in defense of freedom, peace, order, and sustainable economic development in order to enhance our common competitiveness in the international market.*

region and, ultimately, the American continent to be free, peaceful, and democratic.

Public and private institutions, as well as civil society from across the entire American continent, should act in coordination and in defense of freedom, peace, order, and sustainable economic development in order to enhance our common competitiveness in the international market. Let

us work, prosper, and grow wealthier without ever ceasing to contribute, cooperate, and collaborate. Without teamwork encompassing all the countries of the American continent, it will not be possible to achieve long-term and equitable, sustainable development.

We have taken a decisive step in the conformation of a regional group of democracies with the creation, in March 2019, of PROSUR—an agile and modern mechanism committed to the defense of freedom and the rule of law in South America.

Established by the presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru, the fundamental values that underpin the group are: democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

In order to honor these principles, member states have decided to speak up on three occasions in support of democracy in countries of the region. In 2019, they issued two statements condemning violent acts that took place, respectively, in Ecuador and Chile. There were also calls for domestic dialogue, in light of evidence that groups and movements, with varying degrees of ties to the São Paulo Forum, had taken advantage of the situation to foster instability in those two countries.

In July 2020, in a new and decisive initiative—this time in the name of democracy in Guyana—the members of PROSUR expressed their concern with a delay in the conclusion of the electoral process in the country. The situation proved to be a serious threat to the democratic principles of a country deeply in need of domestic stability to foster the exploitation of its mineral resources. It is essential for Guyana and

its people to leave behind, for good, a history of chronic poverty and instability. The unified stance of the members of PROSUR contributed to the recognition of the victory of President Mohamed Irfaan Ali, who took office in August and

*PROSUR has displaced UNASUR, whose growing defense of authoritarian regimes in our region was only matched by its inefficiency to promote regional integration itself, even as its bureaucratic structure grew ever more expensive and enlarged.*

will now be able to guide this sister-nation of ours in a path of unprecedented prosperity.

With its simplified and lean structure, PROSUR has displaced UNASUR, whose growing defense of authoritarian regimes in our region was only matched by its inefficiency to promote regional integration itself, even as its bureaucratic structure grew ever more

expensive and enlarged. The Guyanese question, which can now be deemed to have been fairly and satisfactorily resolved, is proof that regional integration is heading in the right direction. PROSUR objectives are convergent with those of the OAS, whereas UNASUR sought precisely to be an anti-OAS, or an OAS without the USA.

Within MERCOSUR, Brazil has succeeded, since 2019, in leading an effort to rescue the original purpose of the bloc and implement a modernizing agenda, with three main axes: I) intensification of trade

negotiations with third partners; II) review of the Common External Tariff (CET); and III) engagement in an institutional reform of the bloc.

The Brazilian government is working to build a MERCOSUR that is more integrated into the world, more focused on improving competitiveness, and more efficient and simplified in terms of its institutional framework. Brazil has broadened, thematically, the regional trade deals already in place to include non-tariff themes (services trade, investments, and government acquisitions), be it by way of bilateral negotiations—such as Brazil has been doing with Chile—or in a joint manner, through MERCOSUR.

The conclusion of trade negotiations with crucial partners such as the European Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), as well as the commitment to continue and accelerate negotiations with partners such as Canada, South Korea, and Singapore, will enhance the competitive insertion of the Brazilian economy, together with those of our associates, in international supply chains—both in the short-term and in the long run. A superior and more effective integration effort is essential to boost sustainable economic development, which we have lacked in recent decades.

*Under President Bolsonaro, Brazil has given maximum priority to the construction of a free, peaceful, democratic, and prosperous South America.*

Obtaining concrete gains for the common citizen is the goal we seek to achieve by establishing a solid legal framework for our insertion in the international economy. The choice for prosperity paves the way and constitutes a crucial element

for the consolidation of democracy on our continent. Protectionism, statism, and authoritarianism have been intimately associated with our history and that of our region. We now have the opportunity to break this vicious cycle that has tragically stained the history of the American continent to the south of the United States for the past 200 years.

**SUPPORTING VENEZUELA’S DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE**

Under President Bolsonaro, Brazil has given maximum priority to the construction of a free, peaceful, democratic, and prosperous South America. We have taken an active role in the efforts to reestablish democracy in Venezuela, a country that, unfortunately, is the utmost example of the failure of anti-Americanism not just in our region, but also in the world. There is no analogous case, on any other continent, of social and economic self-destruction in a previously stable society in the absence of war.

In face of grave humanitarian consequences of the economic, social, and

political collapse of this sister nation, we have taken the lead in diplomatic initiatives to offer the Venezuelan people the possibility to, once again, decide their own fate. And we have done so in coordination with the countries of the Lima Group. In August 2020, the Lima Group repudiated the announcement of the regime headed by Nicolás Maduro to hold parliamentary elections in December without guaranteeing neither the fairness of the process nor the full participation of the country’s main political forces. We can no longer tolerate the succession of electoral frauds that allows a narcoregime to stay in power and, consequently, put regional stability at risk. Among other plights, we have seen about five million Venezuelan citizens leaving their country in despair, which has overburdened the social protection system of neighboring countries and bordering subnational units.

With its internationally praised “Welcome Operation,” Brazil has already sheltered more than 400,000 Venezuelans in search of refuge and protection. Fundamental aspects of this operation include the support, documentation, and “interior placement” offered to every Venezuelan in Brazil. Venezuelans citizens arriving in Brazil, independently of their migratory status, enjoy full access to employment opportunities, public services and social programs, including the emergency minimum income initiative that President Bolsonaro instituted in the

context of the COVID-19 crisis to support families and low-income individuals. Venezuelan migrants and refugees have been relocated, on a voluntary basis, to some 600 Brazilian cities. Thanks to this logistical effort, 260,000 Venezuelan refugees decided to stay in Brazil for good. The mid-September 2020 visit of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Boa Vista shows the dimension of the regional effort to give refugees the appropriate assistance after escaping Maduro’s tyranny.

Moreover, the Brazilian government decided to prohibit the entrance into our country of high-ranking officials of the Maduro regime who are suspected of having violated human rights. The September 2020 report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela conducted by the United Nations Council of Human Rights also reinforces our contention that Brazil and its partners in the Lima Group have taken the right course by initiating measures to isolate the Maduro regime.

The report indicates that there are ample reasons to hold accountable both the Venezuelan state and numerous individuals in its employ. It concludes that there is enough evidence to believe that Maduro and his ministers are responsible for crimes against humanity, including “murders, incarcerations, torture, sexual violence, forced disappearances, and other inhuman acts.” The report clarifies that these violations occurred in a context

of the gradual rupture of the country's democratic institutions and the rule of law, with standards of selective political repression carried out against individuals critical to the regime, including members of its congress, mayors, and the military.

The report recommends, moreover, that the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court take into consideration the needs of the victims and for justice to be done in a timely manner.

**I**n Brazil's course of action regarding the Venezuelan dictatorship, President Bolsonaro's government neither acts according to an ideological whim devoid of any legal base, nor does it violate the fundamental precepts of Brazilian foreign policy, as some critics allege. Rather, it acts strictly under Article 4 of the Federal Constitution, which states the principles and values that guide the relations of Brazil with other sovereign nations, with an emphasis on the prevalence of human rights. It is this principle that underpins our actions against a regime based on spreading hunger and state terror, as the report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission attests.

The actions of Brazilian foreign policy to promote democracy in our region—

and particularly in Venezuela—are also rooted in other precepts of the Brazilian Constitution, as enumerated in the same Article 4: I) non-intervention and self-determination, for we carry a firm conviction that political transitions from au-

*In Brazil's course of action regarding the Venezuelan dictatorship, President Bolsonaro's government neither acts according to an ideological whim devoid of any legal base, nor does it violate the fundamental precepts of Brazilian foreign policy, as some critics allege.*

thoritarian regimes must be conducted by the people and marked by free, clean, and fair elections; II) defense of peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, which extends to authoritarian regimes rejected by their own people; III) repudiation of terrorism, which includes state terrorism practiced by an illegitimate government against its own citizens; and IV) the quest to achieve the economic,

political, social, and cultural integration of the peoples of Latin America, so that we may refer to this part of the continent in the future as an area free from dictatorships, poverty, and underdevelopment. In short, Brazilian foreign policy seeks to establish a future in which the differences in terms of political stability and economic prosperity between Latin America and North America become less evident with the passing of time.

In this regard, Washington's proposal, which Brazil fully supports, stands out as a blueprint for the return of democracy in Venezuela. The "Institutional Framework

for Democratic Transition" calls for free and transparent presidential elections within six to twelve months—a period of time in which both Maduro and Acting President Juan Guaidó would relinquish public office in favor of a national transitional government conducted by a Council of State. Based on this initiative, 34

governments released, in mid-August 2020, a Joint Declaration of Support for Democratic Change in Venezuela, demanding free and clean elections in the country. Among its signatories are not only the Lima Group countries, but also the members of the International Contact Group, a multi-regional initiative that

gathers members of the European Union such as France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. It would be peculiar to accuse and interpret the efforts of the countries of the region and democratic European powers of being subordinated to the United States of America.

## SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY

**S**tate terrorism—a central element of the policy of systematic and constant violation of the human rights of the local population by the Venezuelan narcoregime—and its linkages to international terrorism and organized crime constitute one of the main concerns of not only Brazil

but our regional partners as well. In order to eliminate latent threats to democracy by armed movements in countries of the region (such as Colombia), Brazil has intensified, under President Bolsonaro, its engagement in regional security fora, in particular the Ministerial Hemispheric Conference to Combat Terrorism, whose

third session took place in January 2020 in Bogotá.

On that occasion, Brazil and other signatories reiterated their "inarguable commitment" to deny any kind of support to those who finance, plan, or commit acts of terrorism, as well as those who collaborate with it them, which is clearly the case

with regards to the illegitimate Venezuelan regime. We have consolidated, in the regional treatment of the issue, the linkage between terrorism and the threat to democratic stability, as it undermines the basis of our countries' economic and social development.

Strengthening the hemispheric dialogue on this issue is essential to carrying out initiatives such as the regionally shared system of people-tracking and the consolidation of Ameripol (the Police Community of the Americas) as an effective regional mechanism to combat the association of terrorism and transnational organized crime. We have

*Brazilian foreign policy seeks to establish a future in which the differences in terms of political stability and economic prosperity between Latin America and North America become less evident with the passing of time.*

done so by granting legal status and technical autonomy analogous to those of Europol and Interpol.

In a parallel development, the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN) established, in August 2019, the South American Intelligence Network against Organized Crime and Terrorism (RISCOT). This is a structure that gathers together the intelligence services of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. RISCOT intends to facilitate joint and concrete actions for the prevention of organized crime and terrorism on the continent.

An essential factor in our search for the reaffirmation and defense of democracy on the American continent is the rapprochement between Brazil and the OAS, after a long, extensive period of unjustified distancing. The Brazilian government, after years boycotting the OAS's work for democracy in our continent, has become, under President Bolsonaro, a faithful and active partner of the Organization of American States.

In fact, the most cherished and consolidated asset of the OAS is the promotion of democratic values. Democracy is a concept that finds practical sense in the work of the OAS. The Organization has given concreteness to the concept through initiatives, mechanisms, and actions that have a real impact on the life of the peoples of the hemisphere. In

the OAS, we have an important guardian of democracy. Only a few international organizations can say the same.

In the last few years, the OAS has engaged in the defense of democracy on several fronts, always with the strong support of Brazil, as is the case of the crisis in Venezuela.

In June 2018, the OAS General Assembly approved its first resolution on the Venezuelan crisis based on the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IDC), following the suspension of Venezuela's participation in MERCOSUR for its violations of the Ushuaia Protocol. After Maduro's illegitimate reelection in 2018 and the expiration of his term, in January 2019, an extraordinary meeting of OAS foreign ministers approved a resolution that did not recognize the legitimacy of Maduro's "second election" and, therefore, of his current term. In April 2019, the representative of Acting President Guaidó, as designated by the Venezuelan National Assembly, Ambassador Gustavo Tarre Briceño, was admitted in the Permanent Council of the OAS. The Guaidó government reversed the process of withdrawal from the OAS, which had been started by the illegitimate regime. In August 2019, the legitimate government adhered again to the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR).

Thus, the situation in Venezuela is now also being considered within the

framework of TIAR. In September and December 2019, the Consultative Organ of the Treaty, gathered at the ministerial level, approved two resolutions that resulted in the adoption of a list of people with ties to Maduro's illegitimate regime to be targeted by a criminal investigation.

Unfortunately, Maduro's dictatorial narcoregime still possesses a degree of regional support: it has not been possible, up to now, to gather the necessary votes to adopt a resolution, be it by the OAS Permanent Council or its General Assembly, to recognize Guaidó as the legitimate acting President of Venezuela. This shows that Brazil and our partners in the Lima Group must renew our efforts towards the consolidation of democracy on the continent. The worsening of repression coupled with the economic situation in Venezuela prevented Maduro's oil-based diplomacy from guaranteeing added regional support to the *chavista* regime (in particular, in the Caribbean). The Maduro regime has been gradually losing the support that it once had in the OAS. The decisive role of the Lima Group has accelerated this process. It is crucial to keep this up and strengthen its role.

Brazil's active defense of democracy in the Western hemisphere becomes equally evident in our support for the activities of the OAS Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO). In 2018, Brazil's Superior

Electoral Tribunal (TSE) donated financial resources to the OAS Fund for Electoral Observation Missions, which are being gradually used to fund observation missions in different countries in the hemisphere. Brazil also received an OAS electoral mission for the first time in its history, on the occasion of the holding of our general elections in October 2018. The same will take place during the Brazilian municipal elections in November 2020. As a stable and consolidated democracy, Brazil receives, with tranquility, the scrutiny of OAS electoral missions. The country will keep working to ensure that these missions contribute to the strengthening of democracy in our hemisphere.

Brazil will keep striving for the consolidation of democracy as the sole legitimate form of government on the American continent. We will also work for more regional and hemispheric integration and for the prevalence of human rights, non-intervention, and self-determination, in accordance with the principles of the Brazilian Constitution. Some might continue to criticize us, doing so because we nurture high ambitions for Brazil and the American continent, and also because we dare put aside concepts that have led us nowhere. Once we achieve the goal of a free, peaceful, and prosperous America, ruled by democracy and prosperity from North to South, those who want to look back will say, recalling the present era, that "it was back then that it all began." ●