

THE DIPLOMATIC PERFORMANCE OF THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY INSTRUCTION MISSION IN PARAGUAY (MMBIP) IN THE 1940S

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SUMMARY

This article analyzes the foundation of the Brazilian military mission of instruction in Paraguay (MMBIP) in 1942, the beginning of military cooperation between the two countries that persists to this day. The text aims to analyze the foundation of MMBIP and its operation in the early years. Research on primary sources shows that, in its early years, the MMBIP had a diplomatic dimension as important as the military, contributing to the increase of bilateral relations between Brazil and Paraguay. The performance of the mission and other diplomatic initiatives in the period interfered with the Argentine preponderance in the platinum subsystem and directed the balance in the 1960s and the Brazilian preponderance from the 1970s.

Keywords: Military cooperation; Brazil; Paraguay.

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INTRODUCTION

Brazil's relations with Paraguay are, in general, treated in the literature within the context of the Prata Basin and rarely addressed in bilateral terms. This causes strangeness in view of the particularities and nature of this relationship. There are a huge number of Brazilians in the guarani country. And Itaipu Binacional practically created a union between the two countries on the border. The Treaty of Itaipu, signed in April 1973, consolidated a change, initiated many years earlier, in the International Relations of the platinum region.

At the end of the 1930s, there was an important modification in Brazilian foreign policy towards neighboring countries. Until then, Paraguay had its foreign relations focused on Argentina. From then on, the interest in Paraguayan foreign trade being diverted to Brazil and the political identity between the regimes of Félix Estigarribia³, Hyginus Moringius⁴ and Getúlio Vargas promoted a remarkable political and cultural rapprochement between the two countries, as well as initiatives to make trade relations viable through infrastructural links: railways, highways, bridges, etc. The increase in bilateral relations between Brazil and Paraguay during this period was the basis of the strong ties that developed in later years.

The expansion of bilateral relations took place along with the establishment of military cooperation. The foundation of the Brazilian military mission of instruction in Paraguay (Mmbip) MMBIP on May 15, 1942 is inserted in this context. But relations between the two countries' militaries predate the start of the mission. There was a Brazilian military mission in the nineteenth century⁵. In October 1941, major Alfredo Stroessner was chosen as a member of a group of young officers to receive artillery training in Brazil. Stroessner would remain in Brazil only until January 1942. But the authors who analyze his long period as president of Paraguay agree that this contact was fundamental to the pro-Brazil

3 Félix Estigarribia was president of Paraguay from August 15, 1939 to September 7, 1940.

4 Hígino Morínigo President of Paraguay from September 7, 1940 to June 3, 1948.

5 A Brazilian military mission consisting of four officers, two from the Army and two from the Navy, went to Paraguay in 1851. There is disagreement about the period. Alfredo Souto Malan says that she stayed 15 months in the country (MALAN, 1988, p.13). Amancio Pampliega, on the other hand, says that it was four years (PAMPLIEGA, 1982, p.75).

orientation that Paraguay would assume during the Stronato (LEWIS, 1986; MIRANDA, 1990; DORATIOTO, 2012).

This article aims to analyze the foundation of MMBIP and its operation in the early years. Our hypothesis is that the MMBIP had a fundamentally diplomatic dimension in the period. This does not mean that it did not play the traditional role of a military mission of instruction⁶.

The primary sources used are predominantly diplomatic, mostly letters, circulars, reports, memos and telegrams sent from Assunção and to Assunção. There are some military-produced sources, almost all of which are reproduced or attached to diplomatic documentation⁷. We obtained documents relating to MMBIP from the Brazilian Embassy in Asuncion. But these documents are fragmented from a chronological point of view, covering more the events of interest to diplomacy. There are some Paraguayan sources attached to the Brazilian documentation, but in small quantity.

CONCEPTUAL BASIS: AUTONOMY AND PREPONDERANCE IN THE PLATINUM SUBSYSTEM

We will use, in terms of theoretical basis, an adaptation of the analytical-systemic approach adopted by Gerson Moura in the classical study *Autonomy in dependence of Marxist bias*; some realistic concepts of Raymond Aron modified by Leonel Itaussu Mello in the work *Argentina and Brazil: the balance of power in the Southern Cone*; and some formulations of Robert Keohane on small states (small states).

Like Gerson Moura, we consider here the state as the main actor in international relations, without, however, neglecting to pay attention to interference from other spheres. Foreign policy is conceived as the result of the combination of political conjunctures, structures that “ concern the

6 Alfredo Malan defines: “the mission of instruction: it is organized in a country, at the request of another for the latter and through an agreement or contract signed between the two governments, to provide assistance and transmit teachings aimed, through the appropriate organization, convenient doctrine and efficient preparation, all duly adapted to the conjunctural purposes and available resources, to make as objective as possible, the military organization of the assisted country (MALAN, 1988, p.10).

7 We did not find documents about the foundation and early years of the Brazilian military mission of instruction in Paraguay (MMBIP) in the Army Historical Archive. The oldest documentation there is from the late 1950s. Nor did we obtain the reports of the military attaches to the Ministry of the army of Brazil. The Ministry of Defense reported that this documentation is scattered and not available for consultation.

totality of the capitalist field and the place occupied in it by the country under study" (MOURA, 1980, p.37).

Our object of study are two countries subordinate to the North American hegemonic Center, a set that forms a system of power⁸. In Robert Keohane's model we can position Brazil and Paraguay within the international system as system-affecting state and system-ineffective, respectively (KEOHANE, 1969, pp. 295-296)⁹.

Here we have to include the notion of platinum subsystem. Within the system of power in which North American hegemony has been established, there is a subsystem that has some autonomy. Parodying Leonel Itaussu Mello, it is necessary to bear in mind that the Brazilian-Paraguayan relationship (the author writes Brazilian-Argentine) cannot be detached from power relations at the level of the Inter-American and international systems, just as it cannot, equally, be dissociated from the influence exerted by both on the power relations of the platinum subsystem (MELLO, 1996, P.53).

Leonel Itaussu Mello used in the artwork *Argentina and Brazil*: the balance of power in the Southern Cone the notions of balance, hegemony and Empire presented by Raymond Aron in *Peace and war between nations*. Equilibrium occurs when political units are in a balance of forces. The Empire occurs when political units are dominated by one of them, losing their autonomy and disappearing as centers of political decision. Between these two categories lies hegemony. In this case there is indisputable superiority of one of the political units, but it does not seek to absorb the others respecting their independence (ARON, 1986, p.220-221). There is another category, preponderance, placed by Aron as a subtype situated between equilibrium and hegemony. Itaussu Mello uses preponderance as an autonomous concept, which seems appropriate to our study (MELLO, 1996, p.48-49). He defines her:

We understand that the typical situation of preponderance is configured when, within a certain group of political units, the disruption

8 Power system is a group of states, formed by a hegemonic Center (great power) and its respective area of influence (Subordinate Allied States) (MOURA, 1980, P.41).

9 Keohane classifies states as system-determining, system-influencing, system-affecting states and system-ineffective. The latter, the small states, "can do very little to influence the forces that affect them, except in such large groups in which they have minimal influence and in which they are dominated by greater powers". His foreign policy is an adjustment to reality, not a rearrangement of it.

of the balance of power does not engender for the beneficiary unit a position of undisputed supremacy, nor does it reduce the others to a state of impotence, which are characteristic of hegemony (...) Thus, the preponderance exercised by the unit of greater weight within that subsystem is subordinated, in turn, to the hegemony of another more powerful unit, which occupies the apex of the most comprehensive system (MELLO, 1996, p.49).

Itaussu Mello demonstrates in his work that Brazil's power politics in the platinum region and the modernization of the economy altered the Brazilian-Argentine balance of power existing in the 1960s towards a Brazilian preponderance in the 1970s. However, the balance of the 1960s was the result of a process that began with the Argentine preponderance established in the first thirty years of the twentieth century. In the 1930s, despite being "the infamous decade" in Argentina, its preponderance was assured in the platinum subsystem. Brazil was going through a revolutionary process and only modified the foreign policy of the oligarchic Republic from 1935. Argentine ancestry over Paraguay and Bolivia was undisputed. In addition, there would be no change in the regional balance of power without the modification of Brazil's relations with these two countries, especially with Paraguay situated "[...] on the open flank of Southern and central Brazil " (COUTO E SILVA, 1967, P.55).

Between 1942 and 1948¹⁰, Brazil, with the founding of MMBIP and with other bilateral initiatives, interfered with the Argentine preponderance. Paraguay, taking advantage of the favorable conjuncture, used one of the strategies that small states (small powers) use to obtain advantages, moderate independence, that is, nod relations with the rival country (KEOHANE, 1971, p.162). The sources examined are rich in examples in this regard.

With respect to sources, the concept worked by Eduardo Svartman of the Brazilian diplomatic elite (EDB) is quite useful. The Brazilian diplomatic elite was composed of diplomats, politicians and military who were active in Brazil's foreign policy during the 1930s and

10 In fact, since 1939 during the government of Felix Stygarribia.

1940s. Svartman presents an interesting analysis to capture the social insertion of this elite from three variables: the class of which it is part, the bureaucratic establishment that integrates and the group with which it is committed (SVARTMAN, 1999, p.22). "Such dimensions [of group, class, and bureaucratic status] also open space for capturing the originality of those who produced Reports, Analyses, and propositions to act on the troubled international reality of their time" (SVARTMAN, 1999, p.22). So these were the guys who produced our sources.

THE CREATION OF MMBIP: INTERESTS AND ARTICULATIONS

In the early 1940s, contacts between the Brazilian and Paraguayan armies grew closer. On March 25, the group to which Alfredo Stroessner belonged, left on a mission to Brazil (EL DIARIO, 25 mar. 1940). On the occasion of the commemorations on 7 September 1940, Paraguay sent the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel Raimundo Rolón, to represent President Félix Estigarribia. According to Paul Lewis, Rolón was a kind of mentor to Alfredo Stroessner (LEWIS, 1986, p.132), and Alfredo Mota Menezes credits him with the interest in the rapprochement of Brazil that flourished among the military (MENEZES, 1987, p. 50-51).

In April 1941, another group of Paraguayan officers arrived in Rio de Janeiro to take an improvement course (CORREIO DA MANHÃ, 29 jan. 1941). In June, Paraguay's Minister of Education, Anibal Delmas, requested Antonio Vilhena de Ferreira Braga¹¹, chargé d'affaires a. i. of Brazil, that the officers and students of the Military School, invited to the festivities of September 7, could remain in Brazil for at least two or three weeks, "[...] so that they have, with our military elements, a more prolonged Conviviality, which is already serving as the basis for the friendly and cordial rapprochement between the armies of the two countries, which is one of the wishes of the current government."¹² It is observed that, from the Estigarribia government, an environment of rapprochement between the armies was being built and it was in this context that the foundation of the Brazilian military mission of instruction in Paraguay occurred on May 18, 1942.

11 Antônio de Vilhena Ferreira Braga was Brazil's interim chargé d'affaires Paraguay several times between 1938 and 1942

12 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Confidential 130. (June 20, 1941).

The first contacts for the installation of the mission took place in 1941 between Getúlio Vargas and Higino Morínigo when Getúlio Vargas' visit to Asunción. There was already some base, since one of the first additions of the Brazilian army installed was that of Asunción in 1934. In February 1945, when the farewell to Asunción of Ladário Pereira Telles, first head of MMBIP, the commander of the Paraguayan Cavalry Division, Victoriano Benitez Vera, attributed to the Brazilian general José Pessoa Cavalcanti de Albuquerque the idea of the military mission¹³ (EL PARAGUAYO, 13 Feb. 1945).

The idea was to create a military mission, the purpose of which would be to organize courses in cavalry, horse riding and physical education. On April 18, 1942, a team of five Brazilian army officers arrived in Asunción. They were Arold Ramos de Castro, Milton Barbosa Guimarães, Sylvio Américo Santa Rosa, Jeferson da Rocha Braune, headed by major Ladário Pereira Telles. They arrived at the central train station, having been received by major Victoriano Benitez Vera, and by the regimental commanders (LA TRIBUNA, 21 May 1942). On the morning of 22 April, the members of the mission went to the López Palace, accompanied by the interim chargé d'affaires, Ferreira Braga, and the Attaché, major Francisco Damasceno Ferreira Portugal, where they were received by Higino Morínigo. The president saluted the officers and highlighted:

The coming of the Brazilian military mission constitutes a ratification of the wise policy of rapprochement with the noble people of the North initiated by the head of the nationalist revolution, a policy whose maximum culmination was applauded on the visit of

13 We did not find any document proving that José Pessoa was the idealizer of the mission, neither in the Embassy of Assunção, nor in the historical archive of the Army (where there is no documentation of the time of the foundation of the mission), nor in the CPDOC-FGV. It would make sense, from José Pessoa's biography, for his interest and knowledge about Paraguay, but only a statement by a Paraguayan military man in a newspaper report is not enough to confirm this hypothesis. José Pessoa's suggestion regarding the creation of the mission would have occurred on Vargas' visit to Asunción. In Vargas' diary, on August 4, 1941, he writes: "departure from Asunción, in the morning, with the attendance of the president, members of the government, military graduation and great assistance. (...) Arrival at Ponta Porã, in the field next to the barracks of the 11th Regiment. It was the general José Pessoa, in Cavalry weapon inspection service " (VARGAS, 1995, p.412). Thus, we know that José Pessoa accompanied the visit, remembering that Ponta Porã borders Pedro Juan Caballero in Paraguay. Our Griffin.

Hon. President Vargas. The Brotherhood of Paraguayan-Brazilian arms is eloquent proof of the very cordial ties that exist between the two nations (LA TRIBUNA, 23 Apr. 1942).

Our hypothesis is that, in the nationalist period in Paraguay, between 1942 (founding of the mission) and 1948, the MMBIP had a more diplomatic than military dimension, contributing greatly to the expansion of bilateral relations between the two countries. We believe that the main motivation for the installation of the mission was to insert Brazilian military in Paraguayan society, establishing alternative channels to diplomatic ones. The mission worked in conjunction with the Brazilian Embassy in Asuncion¹⁴. Some episodes, such as a serious incident that occurred at the mission in 1944, and the negotiation of its agreement in 1948 corroborate our hypothesis.

There was (and still is) in Paraguay a very strong context of dyadic relations and patrimonialism. In addition, the sources are abundant in mentioning the "Paraguayan distrust" towards foreigners. This is a historical fact, due to the isolation to which the country was subjected in the José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia period¹⁵, and stemming from the war of the Triple Alliance, which turned geographical neighbors into potential enemies.

Frederick Hicks suggests that the association in Paraguay between a relatively open class structure, a strong national consciousness, a two-party political system and mass involvement in politics, characteristics associated with representative democracy, and the series of conservative dictatorships that plagued the country (until 1989) is possible thanks to the development of certain types of interpersonal relationships called "dyadic contracts." (HICKS, 1971, p. 89). Frank Mora even points out that after democratization in 1989, Paraguayan institutions and bureaucracy remain permeated by patrimonialism and patronage (MORA, 2003, p.13). The concept of dyadic contract was formulated by George M. Foster from the study of a peasant village in Mexico (FOSTER, 1961, p.1173-1192). According to Foster, these contracts are of two types: those made between

14 The Brazilian Legation in Asunción was elevated to the embassy on 7 January 1942.

15 José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia was president of Paraguay from 1816 to 1840. It was a period of international isolation of the country

people of the same socioeconomic status, and those made between individuals of diverse socioeconomic status. Both types involve reciprocal obligations. But these obligations are different. For the first type, they are symmetrical, that is, they are equal complementary reciprocal obligations for both parties. For the second type, they are asymmetric-reciprocal not complementary, since each part owes to other different things (FOSTER, 1961, P.1174-1175). Hicks considers that this type of relationship exists in several rural societies, having already been described in Italy, Spain, the Philippines and Latin America. But

What seems distinctive in Paraguay is the way the complex of dyadic contracts is linked to the system of national political parties. The system has the effect of politicizing the peasants (and the urban lower classes) by directing their political energy to support conservative groups, which generally do not act in their interest. The system is also related to the preservation of caudillismo, a political system that involves a succession of leaders who come to power through violence with the support of followers who expect the division of the spoils that come from the leader (HICKS, 1971, p.90).

For Hicks, both types of dyadic contracts are present in Paraguay, where “[...] the proliferation of these types of relationships can create a network that permeates all of society, but it is a network based on interpersonal relationships, much more than on class unity or opposition” (HICKS, 1971, p.96).

For our purpose, we are interested in symmetric dyadic contracts, which Hicks calls collegiality (colleague relationship). In these, the participants are of the same status. It is considered a friendship obligation to provide friends with Favors that depend on position, knowledge, or ability. It is assumed that these favors will be returned at the appropriate time.

A friend who works at customs manages to

release a parcel quickly and without formalities, a friend who works in the administration of Railways gets a last-minute reservation. A member of the Liberal Party keeps his government job, a young son of liberals gets entering the national college or a leftist is not bothered by having colored friends or relatives in the upper echelons of government. Someone is not expected to wait their turn and comply with the formalities of bureaucratic procedures if they have a friend who can make things easier, and the friend will be upset if the favor is not asked of them (HICKS, 1971, p.98).

Hicks also points out that most Paraguayans would be shocked if this were characterized as corruption. For those who participate, this is seen as a trait of friendship and fraternity, of which Paraguayans are proud. They emphasize that there is no money involved. "The point is that by doing a favor, the person creates an obligation to the other party to return it, while the bribe does not create such a tie" (HICKS, 1971, p.99). This anthropological digression aims to show how important was, for bilateral relations between Brazil and Paraguay, a permanent Brazilian military mission on guarani soil. Highly qualified Brazilian officers who remained in the country for about three years, living with their Paraguayan counterparts and with diplomats, politicians, journalists. Both in Brazil and Paraguay, the period studied by US is marked by the wide participation of military personnel in diplomatic affairs (SVARTMAN, 1999, p.57, DORATIOTO, 2012, p. 421). It would be naive to believe that, in this context, a permanent military mission of instruction would be active only in technical and military matters.

In the dispatch of July 10, 1942, Ferreira Braga points precisely in this direction:

In addition to their professional activity, each of the members of the mission has also had a personal and social role, with their Paraguayan comrades, official personalities and social elements, which not only ensures them, among

the former an environment of esteem and trust, but also among the others a situation of different concept and sympathy, to which their wives have contributed a lot.

Thanks to the reception that this situation will give them on many sides, the officers are already. Brazilians and their ladies in frequent contact with the Paraguayan media and with the diplomatic corps accredited here, to whose meetings, with few exceptions, they have been invited. It would be idle to emphasize the benefits that all this will result for our policy with Paraguay and especially for the action of our diplomatic representation here, in relation to which lieutenant colonel Ladário and his four co-workers have demonstrated a spirit of solidarity and a purpose of collaboration in favor of Brazilian interests that highly speak of their patriotism, and, for this very reason, I am very honored and pleased to be able to leave this information¹⁶.

“Personal and social performance”, “contact with Paraguayan media and the Diplomatic Corps”, benefits for Brazilian policy with Paraguay. In the historical archive of the Army we had access to the books of occurrence of MMBIP between 1970 and 1994¹⁷. Social activity is impressive: parties, dinners, tributes, book launches, awards. Social gatherings were almost daily.

Comments for Ferreira Braga¹⁸ regarding the salaries of the officers it is also related to this: “it is little to be able to attend as they should to the commitments and the representation that the situation imposes on them”. Social commitments and representation: that’s what they should earn more for.

Everything also indicates that MMBIP created an additional

16 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Confidential 137. (July 10, 1942).

17 Brazil. Rio de Janeiro. Army Historical Archive. The Brazilian military mission Education in Paraguay.

18 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Confidential 137. (July 10, 1942).

channel for the collection of information by the embassy. The telegram of March 22, 1947 from the Embassy of Assunção to the Minister of Foreign Affairs informs the imminent dismissal from the mission of medical captain Luis Lacerda Werneck. Stresses that this act may be considered unfriendly due to the captain's great efficiency in the prophylaxis, Epidemiology and vaccination services of the Paraguayan army and recalls that "it is appropriate [...] his stay in the aforementioned mission, because in these services and in the Central Army Hospital, Captain Werneck is one of the best elements of information from this embassy"¹⁹. Thus, the mission was also a way for the embassy to gather information from the military.

MMBIP INCIDENT: DIPLOMATS TAKE ACTION

At the end of October 1944, there was a serious diplomatic incident involving the Brazilian military mission and that motivated the departure of Ladário Telles from the mission command. The way the issue was resolved shows that at that time MMBIP was more valuable to the Foreign Office than to the War Office. The commander of the Paraguayan Cavalry Division, Victoriano Benitez Vera, sought out major Silvio Americo De Santa Rosa and informed him that a Paraguayan soldier had denounced a Brazilian officer for an act of "active pederasty" practiced with another Paraguayan soldier. The case was brought to the Paraguayan Minister of National Defense who ordered it to be hushed up. As rumors grew, however, Santa Rosa sought out the accused who, in turn, sought out Ladario and reported the case, denying the accusation²⁰.

Murillo Tasso Fragoso replaced Francisco Negrão De Lima 21 at the time of the incident. From the documentation it is evident that the absence of Negrão De Lima contributed to the aggravation of the case. Ladario Telles demanded that a syndicate be held with the presence of the accused and the accusers. He demanded a retraction from Benitez and the punishment of his accusers. Benitez Vera replied that he could not give any satisfaction" [...] because to the word of the Brazilian officer he put that of the Paraguayan soldier, for whom he had the duty to watch as Commander. And, he added that, therefore, it only remained for him to

19 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Secret 82. (March 22, 1947).

20 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Confidential. (November 18, 1944).

communicate the case to the higher authority²¹.

On November 17, after many promises not fulfilled by the Paraguayans, Ladario announced that he would interrupt the work of the mission. On that day, Negrão De Lima returned to Asunción. In Telegram to Pedro Leão Velloso,²² Negrão De Lima pointed out that “I noticed that the tension of the environment was not limited to that circle. It had spread all over city the news of the incident with the “Brazilian mission” carried in a wave of ridicule, jokes and obscenity”²³.

On the 18th, the Brazilian Embassy received the note of exclusion of the soldiers “for *defamatory misconduct*”²⁴. Negrão De Lima and Tasso Fragoso considered the case poorly conducted by Ladário Telles, who, instead of provoking a syndicate, should have drowned out the case²⁴. Negrão De Lima began to worry about the repercussions of the case with the Brazilian Ministry of War²⁵ and the possibility of mmbip MMBIP withdrawal from Paraguay. He writes for Pedro Leão Velloso:

Major Ladário told me that he would make Minister Eurico Dutra feel that ‘Paraguay is not offering an environment of dignity for the exercise of a military mission’. I have reason to suppose that this view, if really adopted, will be the child of his personal resentments, engendered in the friction of the incident. In the first place, if this had been the Paraguayan environment, it should have been clearly noticed with a few months of contact and experience, and not only after three years. Secondly, two important American military missions and an Argentine naval mission are functioning satisfactorily here. It would be absurd if only for us there were no space and sympathy, when it is in the public consensus that the current policy practiced by President Getúlio Vargas with

21 Francisco Negrão De Lima was Brazil’s Ambassador to Paraguay between 1942 and 1946.

22 Pedro Leão Velloso was acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil between August 24 from 1944 to 20 February 1945.

23 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Confidential 476 520.0 (43). (1944).

24 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Confidential 476 520.0 (43). (1944).

25 Eurico Gaspar Dutra was Brazil’s Minister of War from 1936 to 1945

Paraguay has raised to its climax the cordiality of our relations²⁶.

Ladário's tenure as head of the mission became unworkable. 27. He embarked for Brazil on 26 November. Negrão De Lima sent telegrams to Pedro Leão Velloso on November 25 and December 5 to know the impression of Getúlio Vargas and Eurico Gaspar Dutra on the case²⁷. On December 7, he received a telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the opinion of Eurico Gaspar Dutra:

The impression of the Minister of War is that the incident was an intrigue prepared to force the withdrawal of the mission, which is not sympathetic to certain elements. It refers to the mission in general and not to its component members. I found him skeptical of its maintenance, for the conviction that other intrigues would be forged in the future for the same purpose. Colonel Ladário Telles, in any case, will remain there until his promotion. This distinguished officer, by the way, is able to inform you of the Minister of War's thoughts, for he has talked with him at length²⁸

Two days later, Negrão De Lima insisted with Pedro Leão Velloso on the need to convince Eurico Gaspar Dutra of the importance of mmbip's MMBIP permanence in Asunción. He suggested to be sure that Dutra would modify his opinion if he listened to the other members of the mission and sent to the assumption person "[...] serena, oblivious to the issue to clarify it in the very environment in which it occurred."²⁹ "The withdrawal of the mission, for the reason that the Minister of War supposes to be accurate, but it seems to me the result of an immense misconception, may constitute a historical error, throwing discouragement and distrust

26 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção confidential 476 520.0 (43) 1944.

27 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção 166 (1944).

28 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção 167 1944; Brazil. Embassy of Assunção 175 (1944).

29 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção 158 (1944).

halfway and thus compromising for many years all the work of bonding so far carried out with this country.”³⁰ On December 15, Negrão De Lima received a new Telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informing him that his point of view was being considered appropriate and that the Brazilian military mission would not be withdrawn³¹.

Correspondence sent by major Francisco Damasceno Ferreira Portugal, who had already been a military attaché in Paraguay, to Negrão De Lima on December 19, 1944, demonstrates how the Ambassador of Brazil in Paraguay was important for the maintenance of MMBIP in Asuncion after the incident. Ferreira Portugal reported that he obtained information from Coelho dos Reis, in charge of the secret correspondence of Eurico Gaspar Dutra. Dutra reportedly learned of the incident, first, through Ladário, in a personal conversation. Afterwards, he read Negrão De Lima’s report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At first, he was inclined to withdraw from the mission, following Ladário’s opinion. The report of Negrão De Lima:

The chapter in which you explain the present and future results of Brazil’s new policy towards Paraguay, and the inexplicable fact of changing it by virtue of a despicable incident, which would have gone unnoticed if it had not been for the Ladário’s lack of skill and tact, who acted on his own when fate took you away to Belo Horizonte, was³².

Ferreira Portugal commented that Dutra decided to maintain the mission in Paraguay, since his withdrawal would be inopportune “because of the danger of marking his name, at all times, with the stigma of such a scabrous incident”³³. Thus, the end of the episode was the return of the accused to Brazil, the removal of Ladário Telles from the head of

30 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção 178 (1944).

31 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção 178 (1944).

32 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção 159 (1944).

33 CPDOC-FGV. Arquivo Negrão De Lima. Diplomatic Activity. (December 19, 1944).

the mission, and his departure occurred on February 11, 1945³⁴, and the maintenance of MMBIP on guarani soil.

It doesn't matter what happened in itself. The accusation could be true or slanderous. What is relevant in this episode is what he reveals about the importance of MMBIP at that time for bilateral relations. The diplomats, especially Negrão De Lima and Tasso Fragoso, were committed to closing the case and keeping the mission on Paraguayan soil. If the solution had remained in the hands of the military, perhaps MMBIP would have been closed then, with only two years of existence. Ladario took the case as a personal offense and tried to influence Dutra into withdrawing the mission. Dutra, by information that we have, inclined to the withdrawal of the mission. We believe that Negrão De Lima's commitment to Pedro Leão Velloso was fundamental in keeping MMBIP in action.

THE MMBIP REGULATION AGREEMENT: DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY INTERESTS IN THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

The negotiation of the mmbip MMBIP regulation agreement in 1948 was another occasion of great involvement of Brazilian diplomacy. Until 1948, the Brazilian military mission remained in Paraguay without any regulatory instrument. Between April and November of this year, a complex negotiation involving the Armed Forces and diplomacy of the two countries, as well as the American military mission, resulted in the agreement that regulated the mission until its closure in 1994.

Why did this need arise only in 1948, if the mission had been operating since 1942? The answer seems to be in the telegram of Raul Fernandes³⁵ to the embassy in Asuncion on 3 December 1947.

According to reports, the Paraguayan government is determined to dispense with the services that the Brazilian military mission of instruction provides in that country. That decision would be

34 Ladário Telles was relieved of command of the mission on 4 January 1945, due to promotion. On the same day, Lieutenant Colonel Inima Siqueira (CORREIO da MANHÃ, 5 January 1945) was appointed commander.

35 Raul Fernandes was Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil between December 1946 and January 1951

tied to the rumored agreement that apparently exists between Presidents Domingo Perón and Higinio Morínigo. I do not need to make it clear To Your Excellency that it is of great interest to us that the said military mission should remain in Asuncion. In this sense, Your Excellency must make every effort, always bearing in mind the need for a contract signed between the Brazilian and Paraguayan governments so that our military can continue quietly in their work of military instruction. Negotiations to that end should not be opened until after the appropriate poll. I ask Your Excellency for the special gift of bringing us up to date on this subject³⁶

Júlio Augusto Barbosa Carneiro³⁷ however, he believed that these comments were rumors spread by enemies of Morínigo. He informed Raul Fernandes that, in an interview with general Morínigo in October 1947, Perón had the opportunity to offer him the coming to Paraguay of an Argentine military mission.

President Morínigo reflected that this country already has two foreign military missions, American and Brazilian, whose work has been very satisfactory, and that another foreign mission did not seem opportune to him. President Perón then proposed that Paraguayan officers be sent to Argentina to attend their military schools, which was accepted by general Morínigo. He told me today that he decided to invite Major Antonio Henrique Almeida de Moraes, a member of our military mission, to

36 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção secret 148. (December 3, 1947).

37 Júlio Augusto Barbosa Carneiro was Brazil's Ambassador to Paraguay between July 1947 and 1950.

advise the General Staff and to prepare a reform of the Ministry of National Defense. He added that he could not give greater proof of confidence to Brazil and that the services of major Moraes in the General Staff would have the character of a personal collaboration with the commander in chief since it was not possible for him to ostensibly give such a task due to this being a sector already entrusted to the US Mission. I made it clear to the president that we did not want anything done that would in any way upset the American officers who serve here. The president told me that he had considered this and that for this reason major Moraes' charge would be confidential. I think you will agree with me that it is advisable for the Ministry of War to examine this delicate aspect of the matter in order to avoid the risk of indiscretions and of possibly being considered by the American military mission as interference by our mission in the tasks expressly reserved to it.

Even so, Raul Fernandes' concern reiterates the importance of MMBIP for diplomatic relations. Apparently, if it were not for diplomatic initiative, the mission would have remained unregulated for longer.

On February 18, 1948, Barbosa Carneiro sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and worship of Paraguay, Cesar Vasconcellos, a aide-memoire, requesting that the Paraguayan government consult with the United States government regarding the future mmbip contract, as there would be such a provision in the American mission contract.³⁸ In a message of February 20 to Raul Fernandes, Barbosa Carneiro replied to the telegram of February 14, when Fernandes had communicated that "the War Department of the United States of America has just expressed no objection to the Brazilian contract, since its clauses did not clash with

38 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Booked 23 520.0 (43). (February 20, 1948).

those of the contract of the American military mission in Paraguay.”³⁹ Subsequently, Barbosa Carneiro reported that he had spoken on the 18th with Higino Morínigo and that the president agreed to the conclusion of the contract. Thus, before the Paraguayan government consulted the US government on the contract, Brazil had already done so and obtained a positive opinion.

After a series of negotiations, the agreement was signed on August 3, 1948. Since the signing, the concern of Brazilian diplomacy has been with its ratification. On August 8, Barbosa Carneiro sent a telegram to the Foreign Ministry reporting Argentine discontent with the agreement:

The Argentine Ambassador was very angry at the signing of the agreement on our Military Mission. I am informed that shortly after the signing, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and worship received a telegram from the Paraguayan ambassador in Buenos Aires insisting that this agreement not be concluded, which would create a very bad impression in the Argentine official media, as he would explain by voice when he arrived here next week. (...) So manifest bad mood can reverberate in certain influential media so as to slow down or even prevent ratification. I believe that it would be of great effect if you would convey to the Ambassador of Paraguay there the commitment of the Brazilian government for immediate ratification, that is, before the House of Representatives goes on vacation at the end of this month.⁴⁰

After several negotiations, Paraguayan ratification took place

39 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção secret. (February 6-14, 1948).

40 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Secret 108. (August 8, 1948).

on November 25, 1948.⁴¹ Two points are evident in the negotiation of the MMBIP agreement. The context of dispute with Argentina and the US military hegemony in Latin America that was imposed in the 1940s.

The dispute between Brazil and Argentina for influence in Paraguay began at the time of independence and has a long history in the century

XIX. Brazil politically influenced Paraguay until 1904, when Argentine influence, which in economic terms was hegemonic after the war of the Triple Alliance, became also decisive on the political level. It was only from 1936, with the Rafael Franco government and with the foreign policy redefinition of the government installed in 1930, that Brazil began to work to resume its link with Paraguay. Gustavo Eberle de Carvalho shows Brazil's rivalry with Argentina during the Buenos Aires Peace Conference (1935-1939), in which the peace treaty between Paraguay and Bolivia was negotiated after the Chaco War (1932-1935), precisely around influence in the smaller countries of the region (CARVALHO, 2019). According to Francisco Doratioto, the idea of potential Argentine aggression became a profound force in diplomatic action in the Brazilian imagination during most of the twentieth century, until the beginning of the Brazil-Argentina integration process in the 1980s (DORATIOTO, 2014, P.32). We perceive this "Argentine danger" in the diplomatic documentation on MMBIP. According to Svartman, the fear was real (SVARTMAN, 1999, p.165), although today, analyzing the situation of the time, it seems very unlikely that there was a war between Argentina and Brazil. In fact, this factor favored Paraguay in its strategy of moderate independence.

We can also see the great concern with the US military hegemony that was imposed in Latin America from 1940. In 1943, an American military mission arrived, with much more resources abundant than those of the Brazilian. In addition, unlike the Brazilian one that operated without regulation, it signed an agreement that guaranteed exclusivity in the future for United States missions. This means that if MMBIP withdrew from Paraguay, it would not be possible to send a new Brazilian mission. This explains the effort of diplomacy to keep the mission in Asunción on the occasion of delicate situations, as in 1944, and subsequently the negotiation of an agreement. The possible installation of a Brazilian aeronautical mission also demonstrates the attempt to occupy a space that

41 Brazil. Embassy of Assunção. Secret 78. (November 27, 1948).

would be occupied by the Americans⁴². With the United States, Paraguay exercised the second strategy of small states defined by Keohane, super loyalty (KEOHANE, 1971, p.162).

FINAL REMARKS

The commitment of diplomats and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in resolving the 1944 incident and negotiating the mmbip MMBIP contract demonstrates the diplomatic dimension of the mission in its early years. Not by Chance, the installation of MMBIP practically coincided with the arrival in Paraguay of Negrão De Lima, the first Brazilian ambassador in Asunción. A politician, journalist and deeply connected to the Estado Novo project, he was very clear about the peculiarities of Paraguayan society, such as nationalism, distrust and the weight of personal relationships. In 1944, he vehemently defended the permanence of the MMBIP and used the officers of the mission to obtain information and forward decisions.

In 1948, Barbosa Carneiro personally engaged in negotiating an agreement for the mission to remain in Asunción, at a time when, due to the US military presence, the importance of Brazilian support had declined for Paraguay.

Everything indicates that this presence of Brazilian military in Paraguay since 1942 established very special relations between the two armies.

Golbery do Couto e Silva (1948-1950) and João Figueiredo (1955-1957)⁴³ they were mmbip officers. Tomás Espósito Neto reports how the Treaty of Itaipu in the 1970s was negotiated under peculiar circumstances between the military of the two countries:

42 On November 4, 1942, Negrão De Lima mentioned to Oswaldo Aranha the convenience of adding an aeronautical mission to the work of MMBIP, whose coming would be "extremely advantageous for the policy we are carrying out and would now be very opportune". Brazil. Embassy of Assunção 207. (November 4, 1942). However, in 1943, Paraguay received an American aeronautical mission. The U.S. government asked for clarification regarding the negotiation of a Brazilian aeronautical mission (UNITED STATES, 1942). Welsey Frost, the U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay, said in an August 11 message that it was right that the mission "[... it would definitely be American." (UNITED STATES, 1942).

43 In the documentation of the Embassy of Assunção there is a copy of a monograph by João Batista de Oliveira Figueiredo called "the political and military factors in transport planning" dated September 1955.

When analyzing the confidential documentation, it can be seen that high Brazilian authorities, among them general Figueiredo – head of the National Intelligence Service in the Geisel government – made “tourist trips” to Paraguay with some regularity. Interestingly, during some of these moments of “rest”, the authorities of both countries held talks on state affairs, such as the issue of cycling and problems in bilateral relations. Also frequent were the trips of Paraguayan military personnel to Brazil and their contacts with Brazilian authorities [...] (ESPÓSITO NETO, 2020, P.200).

These reports suggest that the presence of MMBIP in conjunction with military attaches established a kind of “parallel diplomacy” between the two countries that often bypassed Itamaraty⁴⁴. MMBIP remained in Asunción until 1994. It returned in 1995 with another denomination: military cooperation Brazil Paraguay. It remains to this day in Asunción, being the only permanent Brazilian military mission abroad.

The study of this little - known chapter in the history of Brazilian foreign policy raises questions to be investigated in future research, such as the role played by MMBIP in the increase of Brazilian-Paraguayan relations in the period of Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989), in general, and in the negotiations of the Treaty of Itaipu, in particular.

44 Unfortunately we did not have access to the reports of the Brazilian military attaches to the Ministry of War (except for a few whose copies were with the diplomatic documentation). We consulted with the Ministry of Defense and we had information that this documentation is scattered and not available for consultation.

A ATUAÇÃO DIPLOMÁTICA DA MISSÃO MILITAR BRASILEIRA DE INSTRUÇÃO NO PARAGUAI (MMBIP) NA DÉCADA DE 1940

RESUMO

O presente artigo analisa a fundação da Missão Militar Brasileira de Instrução no Paraguai (MMBIP), em 1942, início da cooperação militar entre os dois países que persiste até hoje. O texto tem por objetivo analisar a fundação da MMBIP e seu funcionamento nos primeiros anos. A pesquisa em fontes primárias demonstra que, em seus primeiros anos, a MMBIP teve uma dimensão diplomática tão importante quanto a militar, contribuindo para o incremento das relações bilaterais entre Brasil e Paraguai. A atuação da Missão e outras iniciativas diplomáticas no período interferiram na preponderância argentina no subsistema platino e encaminharam o equilíbrio na década de 1960 e a preponderância brasileira a partir da década de 1970.

Palavras-chave: Cooperação militar; Brasil; Paraguai.

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PARAGUAYAN WEATHER

THE TRIBUNE

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