



BRAZIL
AND THE
UNITED STATES
DURING
WORLD WAR II
AND ITS AFTERMATH

*Negotiating Alliance and
Balancing Giants*

FRANK D. McCANN



Brazil and the United States during World War II and Its Aftermath

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Frank D. McCann
University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH, USA

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This book is dedicated to Diane Marie who made it possible.

PREFACE

This book grew from conference papers and lectures that I gave over a number of years. My interest in the subject began in Professor Robert H. Ferrell's diplomatic history seminar at Indiana University. In this project, originally I wanted to do a brief study of the negotiations that led to the alliance between Brazil and the United States. But the deeper I went, the more it became clear that it was the very nature of those relations to be continually negotiating their contents, goals, and mutual responsibilities. As in my other studies, I have tried to keep a certain distance from the two sides and to tell the story from both Brazilian and American perspectives. To do so was, of course, dependent on having documentation from both that shed light on the same events. That was not always possible, but it was my goal. This project studying negotiations and the gradual building of trust was inspired by my continuing studies of the history of the Brazilian army.

As the notes on sources show, government records for military and diplomatic interactions were impressively rich and detailed. The difficulty was that the two countries did not release all the documentation at the same time; it came available in dribs and drabs over many years. Some American documents from the war era were declassified in the 1970s, while Brazilian materials were often opened much later. One of the most important documents, President Getúlio Vargas's diaries, were kept secret by the family until their publication in 1995. Their existence changed the level of analysis.

Throughout my emphasis is on military relations because they were central to the bond between the countries. In the 1930s the Brazilian army was the principal national institution. From 1939 the danger that the Axis would strike across the South Atlantic was very real to American military planners. They wanted to get American forces into Brazil to fend off such a threat. For the Brazilians allowing foreign troops on their soil was unacceptable. They wanted arms so that they could defend their country themselves. The story here is how the Americans eventually negotiated acceptance of air and naval bases in Brazil. Ultimately the largest American air base outside of the United States was at Natal in Northeast Brazil. Before long there would be 16 US bases, including the headquarters of the Navy's Fourth Fleet at Recife. The 16,000 American military personnel stationed in Brazil during the war had noticeable effects on Brazilian culture. German torpedoes sank Brazilian ships in their coastal waters until Brazil recognized that a state of war existed. With an eye to getting weaponry, increased international status, and revenge, Brazil sent an infantry division and a fighter squadron to fight in Italy under American command. This is the only case in the war of a foreign infantry division of an independent sovereign nation submitting itself entirely to American command and control.

Today in the United States World War II is ancient history, in Brazil it is almost yesterday. It is a focal point much more so than in the United States. But that does not mean to say that younger Brazilians know more than their American counterparts. I carry the story through the post-war years, the deep disappointment with unfulfilled American commitments and the turmoil of the 1950s and 1960s which saw Brazil refusing to get involved in the Korean conflict and the war in Vietnam. The post-war Cold War with the communist powers contributed to the Brazilian military taking control of the government from 1964 to 1985. The World War impacted greatly Brazil's process of industrialization, gradually turning it into the eighth-ranked economy in the world in 2018. Today the military aspects of the relationship are less salient, but still important. It should mean something that today there are more Brazilians in South America than the total population of the entire continent's other republics and that Portuguese is now the language of the majority of South Americans.

Brazil has consumed my academic career since 1962 when my fellow graduate students—George Fodor, Teresinha Souto Ward, and Iêda Dias da Silva—convinced me to specialize on their country. I continue to be grateful for their timely intervention.

The American Philosophical Society and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars made research in the National Archives

possible. The extensive Xerox copies of military intelligence and State Department files that I collected were organized and made accessible by student research assistants Candace Kattar and Gus Lawlor at the University of New Hampshire, who also collected very useful biographical data on 254 Brazilian general officers. They have my lasting gratitude. And I am thankful to the University for numerous research grants that frequently allowed me travel to Brazil.

Special thanks to David Mares for including me in the Minerva Grant Research Group at the University of California—San Diego (2011–2014) which studied “Brazil as an Emerging Power.” The Minerva Grant underwrote a month’s research in Brazil in 2013 that included a return to Natal and an intensive tour of the Parnamirim air base arranged by my colleague Rostand Medeiros. And my gratitude to Jose Henrique de Almeida Braga for sending me his new book: *Salto Sobre o Lago e a guerra chegou ao Ceara* which provided insights into the effects that the presence of so many Americans had on local culture.

I must acknowledge that the seminar I had the privilege of giving at the *Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos* of the Universidade Federal Fluminense in October 2014 gave me the chance to try out ideas on a remarkable group of graduate students. I am grateful to Professor Vagner Camilo Alves for his invitation and making sometimes complicated arrangements. And my thanks to Nicolette Amstutz of *Lexington Books* for mining the conference proceedings of the Brazilian Studies Association.

The help I received from librarians and archivists allowed acquiring documents and books beyond number. The staffs of the Diplomatic and Modern Military Branches of the National Archives stand out in my memory. My daughter Katherine’s invitation to be a contributing editor to the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* (Hispanic Division, Library of Congress) has kept me abreast of the latest historical research in Brazil. *The Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty*, the *Arquivo Histórico do Exército*, the *Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil*, and the *Arquivo Nacional* contributed to my research more than I can possibly detail. My dear deceased friend Colonel Luiz Paulo Macedo de Carvalho and his wife Lucia Maria were my teachers, translators, guides, and frequently congenial hosts. Over the years Macedo said that we should write a book together about the full range of the military relations of our two countries. I hope that this one is a step in fulfilling his idea. Colonel Durval Lourenço Pereira arranged a visit to the preparatory school of the *Academia Militar das Agulhas Negras* and graciously shared his research on the 1942 German submarine attacks. His research changes how those attacks should be interpreted.

André Gustavo Stumpf has been my sure guide in understanding Brazilian politics and much more about his country. David Fleischer's incomparable weekly reports on Brazil keep it real and immediate. Colonel Sérgio Paulo Muniz Costa has long been helpful in shaping my understanding of the Brazilian army. Also I was aided and encouraged by my editor at Palgrave Macmillan Christine Pardue, whose gentle prods kept me going. And thanks to Danna Messer for the fine index.

Selecting photos proved complicated due to copyrights, proper resolution, and bureaucracy. Three individuals and their organizations were especially gracious in their assistance: Alexis Quinn of the George C. Marshall Foundation Research Library, Lexington, Virginia; Matthew Hanson of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York; and Major Alcemar Ferreira Jr. of the Brazilian Army's *Arquivo Histórico*, Rio de Janeiro. Mr. Hanson not only provided photos, he identified individuals whose names I did not know, and sent along a very helpful document related to FDR's Natal meeting with Vargas.

Some of the text, expanded and in different form, was drawn from previous publications. Chapter 6 draws on "Brazil and World War II: The Forgotten Ally, What did you do in the war, Ze Carioca?" *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y El Caribe* (University of Tel Aviv), Vol. 6, No.2 (1995), pp. 35–70. And Chap. 8 utilized "The Rise and Fall of the Brazilian-American Military Alliance, 1942–1977," *Revista Esboços* (Florianópolis), Vol. 22, No. 34 (July 2016), pp. 13–60.

Among the most valuable things an author can have are friends, colleagues, and relatives who read and critique with pencil in hand. My compadre Michael Conniff started with the proposal and gave me insightful commentary throughout the writing of the book. Sonny Davis, and my brother Bernard McCann, attacked my punctuation with impressive zeal and made wise comments on the text. Darlene Sadlier saved me from making some factual errors. Francisco Ferraz and Sidney Munhoz bought a Brazilian perspective with their useful critiques. But above all, I thank my dear wife Diane Marie, who read and re-read draft after draft making the text more understandable. And she read the entire text aloud as we checked the proofs. She gave up our usual canoe excursions on the Lamprey throughout many fair weather days, as well as ski trips in New Hampshire's White Mountains, so I could disappear into my study. Her constant encouragement, good nature, tolerance, patience, and love made this book a reality.

A thousand thanks to all.



Fig. 1 Map of Brazil, circa 1940s. From *The Brazilian-American Alliance, 1937-1945* by Frank D. McCann, Jr. (Copyright © 1973, renewed 2001 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission)

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Airport Development Program
AG	Adjutant General
AGV	Archive of Getúlio Vargas CPDOC, FGV (Rio)
AHE	Arquivo Histórico do Exército (Rio)
AHMRE	Arquivo Histórico de MRE (Itamaraty Palace, Rio)
AMAN	Academia Militar das Agulhas Negras
AOA	Arquivo Oswaldo Aranha, CPDOC, FGV (Rio)
BEF	Brazilian Expeditionary Force
CIEX	Centro de Informação do Exército (Army Intelligence)
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CPDOC	Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil
DA	Department of the Army
DAR	Division of American Republics (State Department)
ECEME	Escola de Comando e Estado-Maior (Command and General Staff School)
ESAO	Escola de Aperfeiçoamento de Oficiais (Officers Advanced Training School)
EW	European War
EXP	<i>Expedido</i> (outgoing MRE dispatch)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDRL	Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (Hyde Park, New York)
FEB	Força Expedicionária Brasileira
FGV	Fundação Getúlio Vargas (Rio)
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers (State Department)
G2	Army Intelligence

GS	General Staff
JBUSDC	Joint Brazil-United States Defense Commission
MATS	Military Air Transport System
MID	Military Intelligence Division (General Staff, War Department)
MMB	Modern Military Branch (NARA)
MRE	Ministério das Relações Exteriores
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration (Washington DC)
NPR	National Public Radio
OCIAA	Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs
OCMH	Office of the Chief of Military History
OF	Official File (FDRL, Hyde Park)
OPD	Operations Plans Division (General Staff, War Department)
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PAA	Pan American Airways
PPF	President's Personal File (FDRL, Hyde Park)
PSD	Partido Social Democrático
PTB	Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro
RG	Record Group (NARA)
SADATC	South Atlantic Division Air Transport Command
SLC	Standing Liaison Committee (State, War, Navy Departments)
SNI	Serviço Nacional de Informações (National Intelligence Service)
USN	United States Navy
WD	War Department
WPD	War Plans Division (General Staff, War Department)
WWII	World War II

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CHAPTER 1

A Relationship of Unbalanced Giants

Brazil and the United States are the two giants of the Western Hemisphere in territory, population, natural resources, and industrial plant. They have never engaged each other in war, their governments have had relatively few disputes of the sort that fill the pages of diplomatic and military histories, and they have adjusted their relations to new regional and world conditions many times since José Silvestre Rebello presented his credentials to President James Monroe in May 1824 as the first representative of the independent Empire of Brazil. Though their relations have been peaceful for 194 years, and give every sign of remaining so, there has been a thread of tension running throughout the fabric of their relations.¹

The sources of this tension have been political, economic, and cultural, and they are also related to the differences between the identities and systems of the two countries. Though Brazil and the United States have many similarities, they are profoundly different from one another.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

First let us look at the similarities. They are both huge political entities, with their land borders measured in thousands of kilometers (miles), their long seacoasts supporting old seafaring traditions, and they both experienced a long struggle to occupy, control, and develop vast interior spaces. They both have deep traces of their colonial experiences in their national

characters. Both reflect predominately European traditions that overran native cultures and land claims, but both display cultural traits influenced by native values and practices. Both used extensive slave labor and had their cultures significantly marked by African influences from their large African-descended populations. Both absorbed European and Asian immigrants. And their respective military institutions have played major roles in their own systems, though in very different ways. The Brazilian military stance is constitutionally defensive, although its military has intervened in politics to the extreme of taking control of the national government. The Americans have used their military to intervene in neighboring countries and international wars while avoiding direct interference in US national politics. Both countries share the common feature of having superficial knowledge and understanding of the other's society. Brazil is seen from the United States through a Caribbean and Spanish-American haze, while for Brazilians the United States has a mythical Hollywood and TV image. Both see themselves as unique expressions of humanity. To make matters more complicated for American understanding, Brazilian governments and intellectuals, aside from some on the left, have not thought of their country as part of Latin America (which was a French cultural construct) until recently, but rather as a continental-size chunk of South America.²

Their differences are perhaps more salient. Brazil was born at the end of the medieval era and the beginning of the Renaissance in the Catholic heritage, while the United States grew from a colonial experience on the East Coast of North America related to the Protestant Reformation. The Portuguese monarchy kept Brazil closed to foreigners and foreign trade from 1580 to 1808, while the Americans had a lively international maritime trade from early on. Their intellectual ancestry produced different attitudes toward law; in the United States, whatever is not outlawed is legal, while in Brazil to be legal, a thing must be specified in law. This in turn has produced different attitudes toward government, Americans assume that they are free to act and so tend to ignore government and to resent its interference in their daily lives, while Brazilians seek permission, recognition, and support from the government. Or perhaps better put from the ever-present bureaucracy. Americans created impersonal, impartial mechanisms, such as the graduated court system, before which they seek to resolve their differences; Brazil has a similar appearing system of courts, but on a more personal level, Brazilians seek to settle problems via the intercession of friends, relatives, and patrons. The *panelinha*, an informal grouping of individuals who share common interests and personal

ties, has “a significantly pervasive role in the brokering, clientelistic nature of the Brazilian political-governmental system.” Such groups are difficult to identify and study, but they are one of the unseen linkages “between various interests, organizations, and agencies” that maintain networks of influence throughout Brazil. Access to such networks is obtained by what the Brazilians call *pistolão* or the exercise of influence. The networks can be positive or negative, but their functioning can undermine the rule of law. Regulations and laws may or may not catch hold and endure (*pegam ou não pegam*), but they will likely be struggled against via what is known as the *jeito* or *jeitinho*, the overcoming or getting around annoying or inconvenient obstacles. *Panelinha* and *jeito* “serve as means for reconciling the modern and the traditional – certainly a continuing need for citizens of changing but not yet transformed Brazil.”³ Via the *jeitinho*, as Roberto DaMatta observed, “we do what we want and avoid open conflict with the law.”⁴

An extreme example of a *jeito* could be Brazilian Chief of Staff Pedro Aurélio Góes Monteiro’s reaction to US Navy Secretary Frank Knox’s request in 1943 to discuss cooperation and to be briefed on Brazil’s war plans. In fact there were no war plans on which to brief the Americans, so Góes did a *jeito* by quickly gathering his staff officers for an all-night session in which they created ostensible war plans. The next day the general was able to expound on Brazilian plans as if they had existed for months or years.

The landholding patterns and their attendant social-economic and labor systems that grew out of these respective histories were also dissimilar. The Brazilian Land Law of 1850 reinforced the tendency toward large landholdings with slave or peon labor, while the American Homestead Act of 1862 increased the number of small family farms. Witness too the importance that the American Congress gave to education with the passage in 1862 of the Morrill Act that set aside public lands in each state for the support of public universities. That Act gave rise to the great state universities that have contributed so much to the development of the American economy and society. In Brazil the public universities were not established until the 1930s; the lack of public education for the masses acted as a drag on development. In 1940 Brazil’s white people were 47% illiterate, Negroes were 79%, and Pardos (mixed) were 71%,⁵ while the American white population was 4% illiterate and the black 20%. The United States, in the decades after the Civil War, adopted racial segregation as a lamentable response to the abolition of slavery, while Brazil hid

its racial prejudice behind a seemingly more tolerant miscegenation. After slavery was outlawed in 1888, the Brazilian elite gradually embraced the convenient idea that the country enjoyed a racial democracy, which made good press copy but was far from the truth. The two countries had been intimately joined by the African slave trade. Though it was illegal for US citizens and vessels to participate in the slave trade, they and American capital engaged enthusiastically in the dastardly traffic between Africa and Brazil.⁶

The two countries are continental in size, in 1940 Brazil had a population of about 41,114,000, while the United States had 132,164,569, but then much of Brazil's territory was beyond the reach of the central government. In 1940, Brazil was still the land of coffee, it dominated world production. The American economy was heavily industrialized and moved by extensive coast-to-coast and regional railway networks which also linked population centers all across the land. With the exception of Minas Gerais, Brazil's population was concentrated along its long coast just as it had been in the colonial era. And with the exception of the rail line from Rio and São Paulo to Rio Grande do Sul, the republic's railroads ran from ports a relatively few miles into the hinterland to carry out regional products for export. The interior areas were tied together by mule train trails, rather than roads, which were few and far between. Even the "highway" from Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo was gravel in 1940. As historian Joel Wolfe observed, "It was not until Brazilians began to manufacture automobiles in the 1950s that they built the first major roads into the interior."⁷

Another major difference between Brazil and the United States as the world skidded toward war was that the former was a dictatorship, while the latter was an elected representative democracy. Getúlio Vargas had come to power via a revolution in 1930 that toppled an oligarchy led by the elite of the state of São Paulo. He was the governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul bordering Uruguay and Argentina. His military allies were reformist officers committed to making the army a force for change and bringing Brazil into the modern world.⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt came to the presidency in early 1933 in a type of electoral revolution that brought Democrats to power after a decade of Republican rule had plunged the country into the greatest Depression in history. In attempting to reconstruct their economies, the two chief executives felt a unity of purpose and a spirit of comradeship. In 1934 Vargas had been elected president by the constituent assembly turned national congress after writing a new

constitution. Economic difficulties and political disagreements stymied plans for rearmament and industrialization. By 1937 it was clear that Brazil could not pay on its national debt or on bonds sold abroad and also arm itself. The army was alarmed by its evident weakness in being unable to defend against persistent corrosive regionalism and rising international tensions. Brazilian politics entered into crisis as the 1938 presidential elections neared. Minister of War General Eurico Dutra was convinced that an explosion was about to occur. Laws were not working, he declared, and that only the armed forces were “capable of saving Brazil from the catastrophe ready to erupt.” It was necessary to act, “even outside the law,” he asserted, “in defense of the corrupted law and institutions.” The Chamber of Deputies would be purged of its reactionary, weak, and incapable members; in fact it would be closed. Dutra insisted that “the constituted authorities should be maintained. The movement will carry with it the President of the Republic, whose authority will be reinforced.”⁹ To end the stalemate, Vargas with General Dutra and Army Chief of Staff Pedro de Góes Monteiro toppled the constitutional government in the name of the higher good of the security of the *Pátria*. Vargas made a pledge, or *compromisso*, that he would equip and arm the armed forces so that they could carry out their assigned duty, in return they would provide the muscle for a regime of force and national development. The regime was styled the *Estado Novo* (New State) to mark its break with the past. This would be the government that the United States would have to work with in creating a framework for hemisphere defense.¹⁰ Roosevelt viewed the Brazilian situation with a certain tolerant benevolence. He had long had a fascination with Brazil. As a youth, during a trip to Paris, he had seen the exiled Emperor Pedro II in a park. And, of course, he was stirred by the adventure of his cousin, Theodore, journeying the River of Doubt with Brazilian Colonel Cândido Rondon in 1914. That venture had emblazoned the Roosevelt name on the river in the Western Amazon. He would have known that his cousin considered the “last frontier” to be in Brazil.¹¹ He visited Rio de Janeiro briefly in 1936.

The dissimilar national psychologies of the two countries affected what they expected from their relationship. The Brazilians frequently envisaged more from the United States than its political system allowed the government to give. In the twentieth century, Brazilian leaders thought that the bonds of “friendship” between the two governments gave them claims on the United States. They did not appreciate that friendships between leaders, while extremely useful in furthering relations, did not transfer to

friendship at the societal level; that personal friendship did not convert into national favors. As a result, at times Brazilian leaders were disappointed when their expectations were not fulfilled by their American counterparts. For their part the Americans, caught up in their fears of the Axis, minimized Brazilian national pride and worries about foreign encroachment on their territory. They expected Brazilians to trust them, ignoring that US history in Latin America recommended that the Brazilians should be wary.

It is not surprising that tension arises between two huge dynamic countries linked by many different kinds of interactions. Some of the sources of tension are cultural, while others are related to the imbalance between the two economies. The form of Brazil's government—which has ranged from monarchy to oligarchic presidency to dictatorship to elected congress and presidency—has been less important than other factors as a source of tension. Certainly in the post-World War II period, there has been tension regardless of the type of national leadership. Developmentalist, left-leaning administrations, right-wing military regimes, and civilian-centrist governments have all had their share of problems with the United States and vice versa.

Some problems could have been avoided if Brazilian and American leaders had better understanding of the other's society, language, culture, and political system. But, given the lack of such understanding, it is not surprising that Brazilians would feel uneasy facing the highly organized, economically and militarily strong United States. American impatience, ethnocentrism, and self-righteousness make Washington take positions on such matters as basing troops, atomic energy, and Amazonian development that strike Brazilians as potential threats to their national sovereignty.

Brazilian and American expectations of each other came into play at such moments. In the post-war era, Brazilians quite rightly recalled their role in World War II, which at certain points in that conflict was very important. Indeed, Brazil was a factor in the pre-war tension between the United States and Nazi Germany, because one of the elements of contention in the 1930s was over the Brazilian market and access to Brazil's raw materials. During the war the American air and naval bases in the Northeast of Brazil played major roles in destroying Axis submarines in the South Atlantic and in the Allied victories in Egypt and North Africa. The supply of natural resources and foodstuffs was of basic importance, as was the denial of those things to the Axis. The Brazilian Expeditionary Force

[*Força Expedicionária Brasileira*, commonly referred to as *FEB*] in the Italian campaign was important to both countries, but for different reasons; to the Americans it embodied a guarantee of Brazilian commitment to the Allied cause; to the Brazilians it was a blood sacrifice that would bind them to their American allies in a special, deep friendship that would bring future benefits.

Brazilians and Americans viewed American wartime assistance differently as well. The building of the steel mill at Volta Redonda in the state of Rio de Janeiro was for the Americans a short-term, immediate measure, a bargaining chip that helped keep Brazil out of the German camp, but Brazilians viewed it and the later economic advisory mission led by Morris Cooke, that recommended long-term support of Brazilian development, as the beginning of continued American assistance. Such aid would not be given to Brazil's rival, Argentina. Oswaldo Aranha, who as foreign minister kept Brazil on a steady pro-American course, expressed the relationship as one in which Brazil would support the United States on the world scene in return for United States' support of Brazilian hegemony in South America. Stated so neatly, it seemed, from the perspective of Rio de Janeiro, to be a *fait accompli*, but in the Department of State, such thinking was met with caution and the desire to avoid becoming "entangled in the subtle web of Mr. Aranha's balance of power politics."¹²

Brazilian leaders were understandably drawn to the point of view of Americans such as Morris Cooke, who believed that the colonial-era economy was coming to an end and that Brazil would attain industrial maturity through hydro-electric energy, air transport, and light metals. Cooke was committed to the idea that great things could be "accomplished for Brazil and ultimately for the United States in the free passage of our technology as an essential element in the industrialization of Brazil."¹³ At the time Brazilian leaders were not aware that Cooke's report was received with skepticism in the State Department, where one official commented that it contained "captivating excursions into fantasy," and that Cooke seemed to be infected with the enthusiasm about Brazil's natural resources and future that prompted "so many otherwise normal American visitors to Imaginative thinking."¹⁴ Those Americans with direct experience, who had actually been in Brazil, especially those who spoke Portuguese, often saw things differently than those who lacked such experience.

Brazilians and Americans came out of the war with different expectations of each other. 1945–1946 was a time of great historical change for the world and for the two republics. The American leadership was no

longer the same one that took the United States into the war; it had a vague or no memory of a special Brazilian role. The events of the war had eliminated recollection of the difficult days of 1939–1942. In contrast, the Brazilian post-war leadership was composed of many of the same men who had led Brazil during the conflict, with the notable exceptions of Getúlio Vargas and Oswaldo Aranha. The replacement of elites in the United States was more rapid and continuous in the two decades after the war than it was in Brazil.

When you look at what was available to read about the war, you notice that the Brazilian role fades from view. Secretary of State Cordell Hull's and Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles's memoirs and historians William Langer and Everett Gleason's 1952 and 1953 books on the start of the war gave Brazil its due, but there was no comprehensive study of the Brazilian involvement until Princeton University Press published *The Brazilian-American Alliance, 1937–1945* in 1973. And that book did not appear in Portuguese until 1995. Even major studies of the war make no reference to Brazil. The vast majority of Americans today know nothing of Brazil's contributions to Allied victory. Indeed, Americans still confuse Brazil and Argentina and think that Brazil tended to support the Axis and after the war offered sanctuary to fleeing Nazis. Witness the book and film *The Boys from Brazil*, which dealt with a plot to recreate the German Reich, which was actually set in Paraguay!¹⁵ Americans are still surprised to learn that Brazil fought alongside the Allies. As a result the constant post-war Brazilian references to the wartime alliance had no popular reverberations in the United States.

Brazil and the United States were military allies from 1942 to 1977. The alliance was an important element in Brazil's modernization and the development of its armed forces. As an historical note, when Brazil gained independence from Portugal in 1822, Brazilian Emperor Pedro I sent an envoy to Washington with instructions to negotiate an alliance with the northern republic. The Americans believed that "a Treaty of alliance offensive and defensive to repel any invasion of the Brazilian Territories by the forces of Portugal" was not likely to be necessary and so declined, but concurred in the "expediency of permanently uniting our two Nations in the ties of Friendship, Peace and Commerce" and that the United States was disposed to conclude a treaty to that effect.¹⁶ So business was to be the basis of the relationship. However, there were crucial exceptions to the tendency of the American government to hold the Brazilians at arm's length. For example, in 1893, President Grover Cleveland violated

neutrality laws by allowing a private businessman, with Brazilian interests, to raise a 12-ship flotilla, armed with the era's most feared naval gun and electrical torpedoes, crewed and commanded by Americans, and steamed for Rio to suppress rebels against the then new Brazilian republic.¹⁷ The Brazilian government was so pleased that it commemorated July 4 as a holiday. The relationship over the next decades has been labeled "an unwritten alliance."¹⁸ In 1917 the Brazilian army sent a group of officers to train at the US coast artillery school, as well as a mission to study the organization of American war plants and arsenals, Brazilian officers served on American warships in World War I, and Brazil welcomed a large American Naval Mission in 1922.¹⁹ During the Great War, Brazil was largely distracted by its own problems. The army was concluding its suppression of a serious peasant rebellion in the Contestado region of Santa Catarina and Paraná and attempting to modernize itself and its relationship to society. The war in Europe seemed far away, even though Brazil became a rather inactive belligerent. Some of the army's younger officers were frustrated with missing a chance to fight, which provoked a few of them to volunteer for service in the French army.²⁰ The gap between the United States and Brazil perhaps was symbolized by the flag that the organizers of the victory parade in New York gave to the Brazilian delegation. It was the flag of the Brazilian Empire that had been overthrown in 1889.

BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

After World War I, seeking to modernize their army, the Brazilians turned to France for an advisory mission. They considered inviting the Americans to learn from the United States' massive mobilization, but thought that they were culturally closer to the French and political and banking interests in São Paulo backed the choice of France.²¹ By the 1930s the Brazilian General Staff was somewhat disenchanted with the French and piecemeal began seeking American assistance for specialized training in coastal artillery, medical care, and aviation. American aircraft and weapons producers were more interested in accommodating Brazilians at their plants than were American military officials in training them in their schools and bases.²² The idea of a military alliance was not on the official agenda of either country. Indeed in 1933–1938, Brazil, which could not afford to buy arms in the United States (also made difficult by neutrality laws), turned to Germany, where it could use "compensation trade" to acquire weapons. This was not an ideologically based decision, but a practical

economic one. The Brazilian army chief of staff warned "...we are disarmed, even our rifles are in a sad state."²³ This interlude of doing business with the Nazi regime caused undue suspicion in the United States and resulted in the labeling of some Brazilian leaders involved as Germanophiles.

At the very time these purchases were being negotiated, Brazilian army intelligence officers were saying that the "ambitions and demands of Germany, Italy, and Japan" were a "latent danger for Brazil." They also recommended "greater closeness with the United States of America, our principal support in case of war." These officers saw the United States as Brazil's best customer, but noted that "we buy relatively little from them." They understood that unless Brazil developed its military power, it could not liberate itself from "North American dependence," which they thought it could do "without prejudicing an even greater closeness with the great confederation of the north."²⁴

As the world slid toward another great war, Brazilian army leaders believed that they had to depend on their own wits and resources and that they should use the crises that lay ahead to obtain the greatest advantage for Brazil. When considering the looming war clouds, Brazilian military and presidential papers continually pointed to the United States as the logical partner.

WORLD WAR II ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES

In January 1937, such thinking naturally led President Getúlio Vargas to offer discussion of all forms of military and naval cooperation, including an American naval base in a Brazilian port to be used in case of aggression against the United States. At the time Washington was not prepared to act. Less than two years later, it would be the Roosevelt administration that would be desperate to obtain bases in Brazil.

The popular perception of World War II in Brazil has a curious poisonous undercurrent suggesting that the United States had somehow drawn Brazil into the conflict against the better judgment of Brazilian leaders. At its extreme this undercurrent alleges unbelievably that US Navy submarines sank Brazilian ships to provoke the country to enter the war.²⁵ This tale had its origins in the efforts of Nazi agents to undermine the credibility of Brazil's war effort. It was believed by some at the time and has been passed on down to the present. Some of the literature on the Brazilian Expeditionary Force carries a warily suspicious tone that Brazilians, especially the FEB troops, had been exploited by the United States. Some

commentary suggests that the United States pressured Brazil to enter the war. The documentary evidence leaves little doubt as to what actually happened. However, some of these false undercurrents are fixed in a portion of the popular Brazilian imagination.²⁶

Even some noted Brazilian historians have carelessly misread events. For example, Boris Fausto, historian at the Universidade de São Paulo, asserted: “By the end of 1941, without waiting for authorization from the Brazilian government, American troops had set up bases in the Northeast”²⁷ [emphasis added]. This book shows the absolute falsehood of that statement. Alternate facts and unresolved doubts must not be allowed to infect history. Keeping analyses firmly based on archival records lessens the space available for fake stories.

The *FEB* in the Italian campaign was the culmination of a long and complex process of negotiations and confidence building from 1938 to 1944 that created the alliance between Brazil and the United States. My intent is to study the nature of Brazilian-American military relations, the negotiations that created the alliance, and the often divergent objectives of the two nations. From 1938 onward, American leaders had been worried about Brazil’s vulnerability to German attack, especially against its north-eastern bulge. They feared that if the Axis could secure part of the north-east its forces could launch an air attack on the crucial Panama Canal. Moreover, the United States needed air and naval bases to confront the Axis submarines that were threatening the passage of Allied shipping through the South Atlantic and to fly aircraft, equipment, and supplies across to Africa and then onto the Middle East, Russia, South Asia, and the Far East. Their solution was to obtain permission to build air and naval bases in Brazil’s northeast, eliminate Axis-owned airlines from Brazilian skies, build up Brazilian military capabilities, and station American troops in the region to assure its safety. In 1940, to prepare the critical airfields before an actual emergency occurred, the US Army made an agreement with Pan American Airways to make arrangements with Brazilian authorities and to do the construction via its subsidiary *Panair do Brasil*. As a result when the need arose in 1942, the necessary airfields were available to handle the increasingly heavier military traffic from Miami through Brazil to Africa and beyond. In retrospect the army was pleased with its wisdom because without “the foresighted planning that preceded the 1940 contract with Pan American, the entire course of the war might have been changed.”²⁸

The history of World War II has tended to focus on the battlefields, but victories could not be won without munitions, equipment, food, and all manner of other supplies. And without transport by air and sea, such crucial things could not reach their destinations. In the vast logistical network created by the United States, the Northeast of Brazil was the “indispensable link.”²⁹ When the North Atlantic air route closed down in the winter months, “the Brazilian route handled virtually all air traffic to Europe and Africa, a large part of the planes and emergency supplies for India and China, and some of the lend-lease materials for the Soviet Union.” This traffic included thousands of supply planes and some 2500 combat planes flying to overseas stations. In 1943, the vitally significant Brazilian airway would be “the air funnel to the battlefields of the world.”³⁰

Until the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Brazilians did not share American strategic worries about the Axis. For them the struggles in Europe and Asia were far away and they believed that the more likely immediate threat to Brazil was from Argentina in the south. Some Brazilian leaders thought that as in World War I they could avoid large-scale involvement. But above all they wanted to control defense of their own national territory. Moreover, they were uncertain that the United States could or would come to their aid if Brazil were attacked. In reality their armed forces were weak, and they had insufficient industrial capability to produce their own weapons. Where the two national perspectives and objectives deviated, there were tensions, suspicions, and misunderstandings ruling the day. American military and naval intelligence reports and analyses richly documented the issues involved, but, as would be expected, they were colored by an American perspective that was impatient with Brazilian worries about sovereignty. The documents were classified secret and unavailable to historians for decades after the war. They and the Brazilian archives for the period have been gradually opened to researchers, and some documents have even found their way into print. Thus, it is now possible to have a more balanced account of what took place.

NOTES

1. For relations in the decades prior to the 1930s, see Frank D. McCann, “Brazil and the United States: Two Centuries of Relations,” in Sidnei J. Munhoz & Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva, Eds. *Brazil-U.S. Relations in the 20th and 21st Centuries* (Maringá: Editora da Universidade Estadual de Maringá, 2013), pp. 23–51.

2. Leslie Bethell, “Brazil and Latin America” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (August 2010), pp. 457–485. Darcy Ribeiro in his study of the meaning of Brazil projects its destiny as joining “with all Latin Americans in our common opposition to ... Anglo-Saxon America” See his *Brazilian People: The Formation and Meaning of Brazil* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), pp. 321–322.
3. Ronald M. Schneider, “Order and Progress”: *A Political History of Brazil* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 20–21; Belmiro Valverde Jobim Castor, *O Brasil Não É Para Amadores: Estado, Governo e Burocracia na Terra do Jeitinho* (Curitiba: IBOP-Pr, 2000), pp. 46–50; and not to be missed is Roberto Da Matta, *O que faz o brasil, Brasil?* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1989), pp. 29, 41, 66–69.
4. Livia Barbosa, *O Jeitinho Brasileiro: A Arte de ser mais igual que os outros* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Campos, 1992), Roberto DaMatta, Prefácio, no page number, pp. 125–137.
5. T. Lynn Smith, *Brazil: People and Institutions* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), p. 490.
6. Gerald Horne, *The Deep South: the United States, Brazil, and the African Slave Trade* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), pp. 3–4. For race in the two countries see Thomas E. Skidmore, *O Brasil Visto de Fora* (São Paulo: Editora Paz e Terra, 2001), pp. 101–125. For a study that analysed participation by US-built ships, the financing and organizing of their voyages see Leonardo Marques, “The Contraband Slave Trade to Brasil and the Dynamics of US Participation, 1831–1856”, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 47: part 4 (November 2015), pp. 659–684.
7. Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress, The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 5.
8. I have described and analyzed the 1930 movement in *Soldiers of the Pátria: A History of the Brazilian Army* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 259–300.
9. Dutra told Hélio Silva this version in 1959; Silva, 1937: *Todos os golpes se parecem*, pp. 390–391; Luiz Gonzaga Novelli Junior and Mauro Renault Leite eds., *Marechal Eurico Gaspar Dutra* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1983), pp. 228–229.
10. I have detailed the alliance among Vargas, Dutra, and Góes Monteiro in “The Military and the Dictatorship: Getúlio, Góes, and Dutra” in Jens R. Hentschke, ed. *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 109–141 and “Compromisso Among Vargas, Góis Monteiro, Dutra and the Establishment of the Estado Novo,” *ACERVO, Revista do Arquivo Nacional*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Jul.–Dez. 2017), pp. 19–35. <http://revista.arquivonacional.gov.br/index.php/revistaacervo/article/view/814/867>.

11. Theodore Roosevelt, *Through the Brazilian Wilderness* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 333.
12. Eric. C. Wendelin, Memo, Division of American Republics, June 10, 1944, 832.00/5-3144, RG 59, NARA. For discussion see McCann, *The Brazilian-American Alliance, 1937–1945* (Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 327–328.
13. Morris Cooke to Miguel Alvaro Ozorio de Almeida and Samuel Wainer, June 30, 1943, Cooke Papers, 0283, FDRL; for more on Cooke Mission see Cooke, *Brazil on the March – A Study in International Cooperation* (New York; McGraw-Hill, 1944).
14. Walter N. Walmsley, DAR, December 8, 1942, 832.20/480, RG 59, NARA.
15. The book came out in 1976 and the film followed in 1978.
16. José Silvestre Rebello presented his credentials on May 26, 1824, and stayed in the United States until September 1, 1829. In response to Rebello's notes of January 28 and April 6, 1825, there was Henry Clay, Secretary of State, to José Silvestre Rebello (Brazilian Charge d' Affaires in the United States), Washington, April 13, 1825, Document 136, William R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations*, Vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 233–234. Emperor Pedro I's instruction to Rebello to seek an alliance was in Luis José Carvalho e Mello to Rebello, Rio de Janeiro, 15 de Setembro 1824, Despachos Ostensivos, 1823–1827 (444/2/28), Arquivo Histórico Itamaraty (Rio). The best study of those early years is Stanley E. Hilton, "The United States and Brazilian Independence," in A. J. R. Russell-Wood, ed. *From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 109–129.
17. Steven C. Topik, *Trade and Gunboats: The United States and Brazil in the Age of Empire* (Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 135–177. The Empire of Brazil was overthrown by a military coup on November 15, 1889.
18. E. Bradford Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio-Branco and Brazilian-American Relations* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1966).
19. R. D. Layman, "The Brazilian Navy in the Great War," *Relevance: The Quarterly Journal of the Great War Society* (Spring 1996), Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 31–33.
20. For the Contestado affair and Brazil during the war, see McCann, *Soldiers of the Patria: A History of the Brazilian Army, 1889–1937*, pp. 121–190. For Brazil in the war, see Francisco Luiz Teixeira Vinhosa, *O Brasil e a Primeira Guerra Mundial* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, 1990), pp. 99–183.

21. The commander of the French army, Marshal Joffre, recommended his former chief of staff, BG Maurice Gustave Gamelin, as chief of mission. He would be best known as commander of the French army in the disastrous defeat by the German invaders in 1940.
22. McCann, *Soldiers of the Patria*: pp. 250–251, on private and official military interests in Brazilian ties pp. 360–361.
23. Estado-Maior do Exército, *Relatório ... 1936 ... G[eneral] D[ivisão] Arnaldo de Souza Paes de Andrade* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa do Estado-Maior do Exército, 1937), Arquivo Histórico do Exército (Rio), pp. 4–5.
24. General de Divisão Francisco Ramos de Andrade Neves (Chief of Staff), Rio de Janeiro, Aug. 3, 1934: Estado-Maior do Exército, *Exame da Situação Militar do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa do Estado-Maior do Exército, 1934), Arquivo Histórico do Exército (Rio). Quotes are from pp. 5–9.
25. Hélio Silva said that this tale was spread by Axis agents to cast doubt on Brazil's reasons for joining the conflict. The rumor's longevity and spread is remarkable, I have been asked about it by students in various parts of Brazil. See Hélio Silva, *1942, Guerra no Continente* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1972), p. 394. It is discussed on the internet, usually trying to discredit its validity; see Túlio Vilela, <http://educacao.uol.com.br/historia-brasil/brasil-na-segunda-guerra-terror-no-atlantico.jhtm>.

A popular magazine, *Super*, published a piece on Brazil and World War II “Pearl Harbor no Brasil”; some readers’ comments asserted that the United States sank the ships [“*na verdade foi os EUA que atacaram o Brasil, e botaram a culpa nos nazistas*” (in truth it was the United States that attacked Brazil and put the blame on the Nazis)]; see: <http://super.abril.com.br/forum/Revista/Edicao-setembro2010-A-genetica-fracassou/Pearl-Harbor-no-Brasil>.

However, the sinking of Brazilian ships was closely documented by the recorded testimony of survivors that the submarines were German. See detailed reports on 14 vessels in Ministério das Relações Exteriores, *O Brasil e a Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1944), Vol. II, pp. 61–148. Moreover, captured German naval records regarding the attacks on the Brazilian ships are very clear: US Navy, Office of Naval Intelligence, *Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy, 1939–1945* (Washington, 1947), pp. 86, 89–90. See the “Report on a Conference between the Commander in Chief, Navy and the Fuehrer at the Berghof the afternoon of 15 June 1942” in which Hitler approved executing the submarine attacks on Brazilian shipping and ports. German sub attacks had started in February and on June 15, 1942; Hitler approved the continuation and increase of submarine attacks on Brazil to begin at the start of August. Considerable correct information is readily available in Brazil; for