Soberania & Clima

Preface[1]

The year 2023 was marked by more frequent and intense weather events, as in the case of the "super El Niño", which directly affects the Americas. Once climate-related damage and risks are verified, it begins to be perceived as an "existential threat" to life on the planet (Sears, 2021). Thus, global climate change aggravates known challenges and brings new ones for geopolitics, such as the use of technological innovations, thus increasing the degree of uncertainty for the construction of future scenarios. These innovations include geoengineering, artificial intelligence, and new fuels such as sustainable aviation fuel, and green and blue hydrogens.

Historically, the quasi-monopoly of advanced technologies has allowed a tiny part of humanity to project power over the five domains (land, sea, air, space and cyber) and over the biosphere. With technological innovations, it is possible not only to monitor and explore, but also to colonize the Amazon, Antarctica and the seabed, accelerating an unprecedented process of greenhouse gas (GHG) release. Consequently, the concentration of power in the international order and the level of social inequalities tend to increase in this century. If climate insecurity can greatly affect human, food, water, health and energy security, how should sovereign states adapt now?

In this context, political inertia is one of the biggest challenges today. With the current failure of mitigation (ONU, 2023), adaptation to increase resilience has become an essential agenda. In the meantime, who is properly prepared? Who is thinking about global risks? If the Amazon Forest, the Cerrado and other ecosystems are also threatened by climate change, how can regional cooperation be thought of? In the case of the Americas, due to the presence of invaluable biological and mineral resources, institutional weaknesses, and a high rate of social inequality, the vulnerability is even more severe as it continues to increase. In this context, it is up to the Armed Forces to prepare for: conflicts related to climate insecurity; the internal displacement of people; migratory flows; threats to critical infrastructures; and national sovereignty.

This edition of the Journal Sovereignty and Climate Dialogue aims to enrich this debate, focusing on the Americas and institutional actors, notably the military, who will also be on the front lines whenever a crisis related to climate issues occurs. Authors from six countries offer insights for reflection on the main threats and relevant measures to respond to the evolving scenarios. In the article "Improving climate resilience: a suggestive approach for Argentina", Maria Guadalupe Kerlakian demonstrates the situation in Argentina and explains the necessary involvement of public and private sector actors. Then, Paulo Roberto da Silva Gomes Filho analyzes six different perspectives of impacts on the missions of the Brazilian Armed Forces in the article "Impacts of climate change on the preparation and use of the Armed Forces", including multilateral humanitarian aid. In the article "Action and fight against the climate crisis in the midst of the Colombian conflict and post-conflict: efforts from the public and private sectors", Anna María Franco Gantiva highlights the national political scenario from the instrumentalization of nature during the armed conflict, with the concept of territorial peace. Patrick Paterson and Luis Bitencourt, in the article "Climate mitigation efforts of the U.S. Armed Forces", underline that the 2022 U.S. National Security

1. Translation: Vinícius Santiago.

Strategy recognized the climate as a “potentially existential” threat and analyze four intertwined challenges for the most powerful Armed Forces on the planet. In “Guatemala and its actions in the face of climate change”, Genners Arturo Barrios Garay highlights the national vulnerability and responses to the climate problem, with emphasis on the National Energy Plan. Finally, Fernando Portillo Romero, in “The El Niño phenomenon and its implications in Peru” observes the need to understand the risks associated with El Niño to reduce the vulnerability of Peruvian communities and ecosystems.

Two major conclusions follow from this: first, the need to prepare in the short term for uncertain futures, on a local and national scale. Second, the interest in regional cooperation through strategies and policies for climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

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