

Meio século de cooperação Sino-Brasileira alcança resultados expressivos

Entrevista concedida pelo Prof. Dr. Noronha à Revista Chinesa de Ciências Sociais, publicada em Pequim, sobre as relações diplomáticas sino-brasileiras.

Fonte (Mandarim):

https://www.cssn.cn/skwxsdt/gjhy/202411/t20241122_5804731.shtml

Interview given by Prof. Dr. Noronha to the Chinese Social Sciences Magazine, published in Beijing, on the Sino-Brazilian diplomatic relations, in English:



Yang Xue

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Dear Prof. Noronha,

1. What are the cultural similarities and differences between China and Brazil?

Brazil and China have many cultural differences but share plenty of similar values and characteristics, including a benign nature of the disposition of their respective populations. The differences of course mostly arise from the long distance that separates both countries and to the time involved in the formation of the respective national States. Whilst Brazil is a young country, independent only since 1822, China has become a single State by 221 BC, an interval of 2.000 years! Of course, this fact alone is responsible for the many different features, in spite of a national character in part framed in both countries by a cruel exploitation from imperialistic countries. The diverse languages between the two countries are less an unsurmountable obstacle for cooperation than a challenge to discover fascinating new cultures and promoting understanding.

The prevailing mentality explains the sentiment of national dignity in the population of both countries. It is also worthwhile noting that the Brazilian and Chinese nationals have a great respect for human rights, the sense of justice, the ethics of respect and fairness, as well as enjoyment of the finer aspects of cultural manifestations, such as plastic arts, sports,

music, dance, literature, cinema and regional folklore. The respect for minorities and women is a factor also prevalent in Brazil and China. Regarding literature, in many ways unsurprisingly, the works of Chinese writer Mo Yan remind me of those of the Brazilian author, Graciliano Ramos.

Furthermore, it is of fundamental importance to highlight that both the Brazilian and the Chinese constitutions adopt in general lines the same principles of international relations, i.e., respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs of other countries, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence and economic and cultural exchanges with other States. This important shared Sino Brazilian concept evidently facilitates their cooperation in both the bilateral relations and multilateral fora.

Accordingly, Brazil and China vote together along the same lines in almost all occasions in international institutions, most of the times without any coordination at all. Soon, formulators of foreign policy in both countries found out that the weight of the ostensive joint Sino Brazilian diplomatic efforts is much greater than their individual sum taken separately. This point, of course, because of the complexity of the theme, would require an independent academic paper.

Both countries have, in a substantial manner, developed economically and socially in the past decades, which has reflected very well in the level of education of the respective populations, where a deep awareness of the positive consequences of bilateral economic and political cooperation has firmly sedimented. This resulting progress has encouraged several Brazilian and Chinese governments to continue and to expand the fruitful cooperation, with extraordinary progress.

2. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Brazil. How do you see the achievements of China-Brazil cooperation? In your opinion, what are the highlights of the exchanges and mutual learning between the civilizations of China and Brazil?

Few bilateral diplomatic relationships have achieved so much in half a century, in a way that has benefited not only the national well-being of both Brazil and China, but also that of different countries, as a result of a positive and fair cooperation, within a scenario of joint efforts towards a

rules-based international legal order. This cooperation is geared to achieving generalised prosperity, rather than that of a few imperialistic countries to the detriment of the overall majority of the world's population. The Sino Brazilian implementation of joint diplomatic initiatives has had a positive impact without precedents on the global governance of the multilateral institutions, since the creation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 and the other institutions component of the international legal order that followed.

Bilateral trade between Brazil and China grew from about US\$ 3 billion in 1997 to approximately US\$ 165 billion in 2023, according to Brazilian statistics. Brazil has had a consistent trade surplus with China, to the order of US\$ 48 billion in 2023. Such robust performance with China has allowed Brazil to increase its international monetary reserves to a very healthy level, which has permitted the country to pursue its own internal monetary policies without depending on the impositions of the imperialistic countries and the undependable international financial institutions controlled by them, directly or indirectly. This development has also eased the access of Brazilian economic agents to the international financial voluntary markets.

In addition to becoming Brazil's largest trade partner already for approximately one decade, China became the top foreign investor in the Latin American country with hundreds of companies establishing a commercial presence there. On the opposite direction, hundreds of Brazilian companies also went to China, which has allowed a healthy bilateral flow of businesspeople, facilitated by non-discriminatory immigration measures, ensured by both governments. It is a well-known fact the problem caused by the horizontal barriers posed by imperialistic States to nationals of developing countries.

In 2001, Noronha Advogados, the law firm I founded, received authorization from the Chinese authorities to open up a branch of its offices in Shanghai. It was the first Latin firm to have Chinese offices and that was before the reform of the legal professions in China. Towards the end of the decade, the Confucius Institute started opening a number of facilities within top universities in Brazil, the first of which at UNESP, in the State of São Paulo, in which I had a presidential honorary role. Brazilian banks established a commercial presence in China and Chinese banks in

Brazil in the early part of that decade, which facilitated trade. In the same year, many Chinese chambers of commerce started organizing trips to Brazil in order to acquaint their members with the Brazilian economic environment. The Chamber of Agriculture was the first of them.

In 2007, as a result of the increased interest in China, I founded the first post-graduation course on Chinese law in Latin America, at the Escola Paulista de Direito, of which I was also the co-ordinator and one of the professors. Since the first year, the substantial participation of Brazilian students surprised many people. Subsequent interests evolved rapidly in other cultural areas, such as language, sports, music, dance, cinema, history, literature, education and information, among others. Reliable and readily available Chinese information in many areas are a safe port for Brazilian researchers in a world dominated by propaganda and fake news.

In 2017, as president of the Brazilian Union of Writers, I signed the first cooperation agreement with the Chinese Union of Writers, which opened the doors for bilateral cooperation among authors of both countries. Cultural promotion ensures better understanding and facilitate the formulation of new initiatives. In the same year, the authorities of Brazil and China decided to take the strategic partnership initially formed in 1993 to a much higher level.

In spite of the many differences, Brazil and China have abundantly demonstrated to the world that, with good faith, respect and the promotion of humanistic values, cooperation for mutual development with satisfactory results in the economic, political, social and cultural areas is not only eminently possible but highly desirable. In addition, this is an equation that ensures the parties involved to become joint winners. The joint diplomatic efforts also assist both States in fighting the adverse propaganda and cruel prejudices against them on the part of the imperialistic countries.

3. In the context of global governance, what is the significance of China-Brazil relations?

This significance appears in a number of different areas. For example, Brazil and China have transformed the profile of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which, before 2001, the year when China acceded, was an institution led by imperialistic countries for their exclusive benefit,

to the detriment of the legitimate interests of the vast majority of nations, all of which developing. Opposition to the evil intents was made from an early stage, since 1947, by Brazil, India and a few other developing countries, but that was curtailed by the actions of the cartel of the powerful, with the support of other multilateral institutions dominated by them, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). China reinforced the group of developing countries that seeks to make the WTO return to its stated objectives of promoting generalised prosperity for the benefit of the population of its member states.

Sino Brazilian cooperation within the framework of the WTO is also important to neutralize trade wars such as that the USA and the EU have historically moved against Brazil and, more recently that of the USA against China which resumed in 2018 in a virulent manner, because of lack of competitiveness of its own economy. As always, the US allegations of unfair trade practices on the part of China are fraudulent. Consequently, the multilateral system can no longer be easily manipulated, in view of its consensual basis of deliberations, a situation which moves the USA away from it. A diplomatic challenge posed now to the member States of the WTO is to bring the USA to conformity to the organization's legal order.

Recently, in 2024, Brazil, China and a number of eleven other countries created a group of Friends for Peace, in reaction the notorious shortcomings of the United Nations in promoting its stated objectives, due to opposition of imperialistic countries that can only address their perceived national objectives, without any regard to the international legal order. This grouping is both a meritorious and much needed initiative, in view of the chaos prevailing in the world today, with possible disastrous consequences for humankind.

The group Friends for Peace is a direct consequence of a joint Sino Brazilian proposal for peace with respect to the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, presented as good offices. The Sino Brazilian proposition, which was conceived within the framework of the UN Charter, the international treaty of highest hierarchy, has received increased support from the international community at large, excluding naturally the NATO countries, all client States of the USA, keener on stoking the fire of war for perceived tactical geopolitical interests and profit for their military industries.

4. Some scholars argued that China is not part of the Global South. What is your take on this? What role does China play in South-South cooperation?

Global South is not a geographic concept, but rather a political notion and postulate based, from a legal perspective, on the five principles aforementioned, which are enshrined in both the Brazilian and the Chinese constitutions. In view of the corruption of the international legal order carried by imperialistic countries, the union of developing countries behind concepts of Justice, respect and decency has opposed many abuses that would otherwise be carried out by the oppressive forces, at the same time that it has provided a forum for the promotion of positive values worldwide. In certain present conflicts, the so-called Global South has already intervened with a view to promoting peace, stability and prosperity, in a generalized manner. In addition, the stalemate in which the United Nations sometimes is mired brings the Global South to the forefront of alternatives for the construction of a better world order, based on the rule of law. Brazil and China are committed to this task.

Within the scope of the so-called Global South, in 2009 there was created an intergovernmental organization functioning as geopolitical group and identified with the acronym BRICS, now formed by Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates. The countries which are part of BRICS seek ample political cooperation, economic progress and social advancement within the framework of the same fundamental principles I mentioned earlier in this interview.

The formation of a multilateral bank by the BRICS states Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa in 2015 was a fundamental step in cooperation by developing countries with a view to support public or private projects through loans, equity participations and other financial instruments, without political strings attached as was, and still is, the case with the so-called Bretton Woods institutions. The bank, which has a capital base of US\$ 100 billion is now called the New Development Bank, has its headquarters in Shanghai, in the People's Republic of China, and is currently presided by Dr. Dilma Rousseff, a former president of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Within BRICS there are now important consultations and negotiations with respect to an eventual possible creation of a common currency. The initiative has in principle plenty of merit, as it could eliminate, in great part, the total alienation or limitations to partake in international trade posed to developing countries and caused by the need to have prior availability of the US dollar. As an example, why would Brazil need the US dollar in order to trade with China, as the bilateral trade is already so great? After all, Brazilian traders receive payments in Real and the Chinese in Yuan.

This traditional, as well as artificial, difficulty is often greater with respect to smaller developing countries and least developed States. Both, as a result, not only find enormous obstacles for achieving their development goals, but also become dependent on unreliable multilateral institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, which promote the political interests, selfish economic aims and ethnocentric reasons of the imperialistic cartel led by the USA.

In addition to the substantial role played by China as a result of the enormous achievements of the country in the economic, social and political areas, one should not forget the importance of the implementation of its constitutional principles in international relations, which offer a stark contrast to the ways and means of the imperialistic nations and their deplorable legacy of abuse, misery, despondency and destruction.

5. 2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. What do you think of Chinese modernization?

As I wrote in my 2021 book in the Portuguese language on the Opium Wars and the Unequal Treaties, on October 1, 1949, the foundation of the People's Republic of China ended one hundred long years of imperialistic aggression and the twenty-two years of the puppet Kuomintang regime. On that occasion, comrade Mao Zedong, then general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, declared "we have now entered the community of peace-loving nations. We will work with courage and effort to create our own civilization and happiness, as well as to promote

world peace and freedom". Those were ominous words that still resound today.

In fact, that moment, seventy-five years ago, represented not only a watershed in Chinese history, but also in international relations. Such a notable conquest was achieved by the Chinese people under the competent leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, in peace, with due respect to human rights, in order, and within the frame of international law. This was not achieved without major sacrifices on the part of the Chinese people, due to the inhumane hardships resulting from the callous political, economic, financial and military blockade imposed by the imperialistic countries.

The modernisation that ensued in China comprised not only an economic and financial prosperity without precedents, but also the strengthening of the prerogatives, including an ample concept of human rights and general well-being of China's population. The international cooperation offered by the People's Republic of China, and the results it afforded, allowed many of the same benefits to a number of other countries, including Brazil. Today, the Chinese people are justly proud of the national achievements and stand behind the political structure that has allowed such developments and offers an exciting proposal for the future.

ABOUT DURVAL DE NORONHA GOYOS (Born in 1951)

Lawyer admitted in Brazil, England/Wales and Portugal. Represented several developing countries in international matters, including Argentina, Brazil, Bangladesh, China, Cuba, India, South Africa and Uruguay. He was an ad hoc diplomat for Brazil during the negotiations of the Uruguay Round of the GATT and for Bangladesh (honorary consul general). Assisted the G-33 developing countries in multilateral matters. Arbitrator listed by GATT, WTO, CIETAC, SHIAC and SCIA, among other centers. Post-graduation professor (retired) of international law, the law of international trade and Chinese law. Visiting professor in Argentina, Bangladesh, China, Cuba, India, Italy, Paraguay, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, Uruguay and USA. Author of 72 books, of which 12 on China, published in Portuguese, English, French, Italian and Mandarin Chinese. He is a co-author of the World Encyclopaedia of Peace of the United Nations. Member of the Academy of Letters of Portugal. Former president of the Brazilian Union of Writers and current international director of the Union of Writers of the State of São Paulo. His books are in 400 international anglophile libraries, according to WorlCat. It is estimated that a greater number of his books is held by other libraries around the world, including in China. He writes regularly for Brazilian newspapers on international issues.