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# Military Institutional Communication

## Its Geostrategic Importance

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*Editorial Abstract: Foreign-language military journals such as Air and Space Power Journal in Portuguese have supported US national policy since the 1940s by disseminating the Air Force's operational concepts and fostering coalition military operations. Dr. da Rocha, a Brazilian professor, highlights the strategic importance of the world's Portuguese-speaking nations, contending that journals published in languages other than English are especially vital for building international understanding among militaries.*

Since the end of World War II, the US military has recognized the importance of military institutional communication and has used academic-professional journals as a prime medium for conducting it. Reading the [editorial in the fourth-quarter 1999 issue of Airpower Journal, Brazilian edition](#) (now *Air and Space Power Journal em Português*), one discovers that the Portuguese and Spanish editions of the *Journal*, originally called *Air University Quarterly Review*, began with a letter dated 1 December 1948 from Gen George C. Kenney, Air University commander, to Gen Hoyt S. Vandenberg, chief of staff of the US Air Force (USAF). General Kenney asked for permission to launch the aforementioned foreign-language publications.<sup>1</sup> By granting permission, the USAF followed the example set by the US Army, whose professional journal, *Military Review*, had appeared in Spanish and Portuguese since 1945. In fact, the USAF swiftly embraced the cause of foreign-language institutional communication because the Spanish and Portuguese editions of *Air University Quarterly Review* began only about one year after the USAF became an independent service in 1947. The journal's name later changed from *Airpower Journal* to *Aerospace Power Journal* and then, more recently, to *Air and Space Power Journal (ASPJ)*, but the effort has continued uninterrupted for more than 50 years, and its purpose has never changed.

Many senior military leaders from the United States and Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries have expressed their appreciation for the contribution made by the foreign-language editions of the *Journal*, as we can read in the 50th-anniversary commemorative issues of both those journals from 1999. However, their messages are not just congratulatory in nature. In fact, they provide an assessment of the publication's value to the USAF and the air forces of countries that comprise the target audience of these editions.

Referring to the journals, Gen Lloyd W. "Fig" Newton, then commander of Air Education and Training Command, commented, "Through the years, their thought-provoking articles have helped provide the intellectual framework for our institutions and *have promoted significant operational advancements*" (emphasis added).<sup>2</sup> Maj Gen (Brigadeiro) José Américo dos Santos, then commander of the Brazilian Air Force University/Air War College, pointed out that the Portuguese edition was relevant and instrumental for "updating data regarding military equipment and employment doctrine."<sup>3</sup> He also declared that "*Airpower Journal* has .

. . . becom[e] the reference publication of choice in the country's professional military education environment.”<sup>4</sup> Gen Michael E. Ryan, then the USAF chief of staff, noted that

both Latin American editions have become widely read and respected by airmen throughout the more than 25 Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries of the Western Hemisphere, Europe, and Africa. The journals *disseminate core USAF doctrine, strategy, policy, operational art and current issues. Both editions play a very important role in strengthening our relationship with their air force audiences. They also serve to educate, develop and nurture these officers* as their careers progress. By shaping the dialogue among airmen, the journals bring them closer together across the geographical and cultural lines separating them.<sup>5</sup> (emphasis added)

So one can see that the medium for military institutional communication with Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries initiated by the USAF immediately after its own inception has had a specific goal of “disseminat[ing] core USAF doctrine, strategy, policy, operational art and current issues” (General Ryan’s words) in order to promote “significant operational advancements” (General Newton’s words).

This article makes three points. First, dissemination of *core USAF doctrine, strategy, policy, operational art, and current issues in order to promote significant operational advancements* is very important—if not essential—to supporting US military activities worldwide in defense of US national-security interests. This claim was true in the aftermath of World War II and is even more so today in an era when combined military operations and coalition warfare are clear US foreign-policy imperatives. Second, academic-professional journals in languages other than English are particularly appropriate for reaching the goals of USAF leaders, mentioned above. Third, due to geostrategic considerations, the existence of specialized vehicles for military institutional communication in Portuguese is even more imperative today than it was 59 years ago, when General Kenney asked for approval to publish what is now the Portuguese edition of *ASPI*.

### **The Need to Share Knowledge**

In her article “[\*Operation Iraqi Freedom: Coalition Operations\*](#),” Squadron Leader Sophy Gardner, Royal Air Force, writes that

we, the US and UK militaries, left the end of phase three of Operation Iraqi Freedom having worked successfully as a coalition and having faced practical challenges along the way. We can see that these were largely overcome through a combination of fortuitous timing (an extended planning period), strong personal relationships (particularly at the senior levels), mutual dependence and burden sharing . . . and a motivation to find common ground and to engineer solutions to any problems that threatened the coalition’s integrity. Most importantly, trust was established at all levels. For the future, whether we consider either mindset, doctrine, and culture, or equipment, concept of operations, and interoperability—it is *mutual cooperation and contact* which will provide us with the best chance of staying in step.<sup>6</sup> (emphasis added)

Lt Col Frank M. Graefe of the German air force expressed similar concepts in his article “[\*Tomorrow’s Air Warfare: A German Perspective on the Way Ahead\*](#)”:

Due to the United States' military-pioneering role and technological superiority, that country will predominantly determine the developments in warfare over the next several decades. Therefore, one would do well to take a closer look at the US policy documents and strategy papers that will govern such developments and to draw lessons from the US conduct of operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Doing so will help identify the changes that coalition partners of the United States have to follow *in order to ensure compatibility in terms of the conduct of operations*.<sup>7</sup> (emphasis added)

Awareness of the need for mutual understanding between the US military and its military allies seems so important to US policy makers that a number of schools in the United States afford the opportunity for contact among these militaries. Such is the case with Air War College, Air Command and Staff College, and Squadron Officer School, all located at Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama; Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island; Naval Postgraduate School, Presidio of Monterey, California; as well as the Inter-American Defense College; National Defense University; and the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, all located in Washington, DC.

At these institutions, the mutual cooperation and contact (mentioned by Squadron Leader Gardner) to foster compatibility in terms of the conduct of operations (pointed out as an interoperability requirement by Lieutenant Colonel Graefe) do effectively occur. In fact, such contact also offers a way to better familiarize allied militaries with US military doctrine, strategy, policy, and operational art and to enable significant operational advancements. These outcomes are also important products of the successful USAF institutional-communication efforts by the foreign-language *ASPJ* editions because operational advancements are a prerequisite for interoperability. When people must work together, knowledge sharing becomes essential as a basis for achieving shared understanding. Whether involving the meaning of words denoting specific activities through the proper working of weapon systems and tools for guidance, communication, and so forth, or the commander's expectations about the strategic and operational performance of troops under his or her watch, without shared understanding, misunderstandings will certainly occur—and misunderstandings in warfare oftentimes lead to death and undesired destruction.

### **The Need for Military Institutional Communication in Languages other than English**

Regardless of the value of contacts among militaries of different countries, they do not constitute a suitable replacement method for disseminating core USAF doctrine, strategy, policy, operational art, and current issues through academic-professional journals—the main source of what Gen José Américo referred to as updating data regarding military equipment and employment doctrine.

#### ***The Need to Publish in Languages other than English***

Today one can imagine deeming English an international language. If so, then English-language media for military institutional communication would achieve the objective of disseminating core USAF doctrine, strategy, policy, operational art, and current issues in order to promote significant operational advancements. This, however, is not the case.

Col John Conway's article "[\*The View from the Tower of Babel: Air Force Foreign Language Posture for Global Engagement\*](#)" discusses the need for proficient foreign-language speakers in the Air Force to assure appropriate mutual understanding and operational effectiveness when American troops interact with personnel from non-English-speaking countries during military operations.<sup>8</sup> Such mutual understanding requires (1) that people speak a common language, and (2) that they communicate in the other country's language instead of in English. Thus, the USAF understands that it should not expect effective conveyance of its message to allies without providing US personnel proficient in foreign languages—even to deal with the simplest matters concerning situations of everyday life. In terms of disseminating core USAF doctrine, strategy, policy, operational art, and current issues in order to promote significant operational advancements—certainly a more subtle and complex matter—one could not expect full understanding without expressing the ideas in the foreign reader's own language. Again, to recall the ideas of Squadron Leader Gardner and Lieutenant Colonel Graefe, such an understanding is essential to interoperability.

Moreover, military institutional communication is *not directed only* to a military audience whose interests could focus on topics such as technical instruction, knowledge about advances in available war-fighting technology, doctrine, and operational art. One must pay attention to other issues beyond the specific aspect of military interoperability. For example, through military institutional communication, foreign military and civilian leaders can become better informed about US military goals and procedures. Having these leaders understand this information can prove crucial to American interests when a country has to decide whether or not to participate in US-led coalitions or vote for or against American interests on relevant matters of common defense or foreign policy in international deliberating forums. Because democracy is gradually becoming a global way of life, one cannot, in turn, restrict such decisions to a national elite or an oligarchy. Rather, the decision needs to find legitimacy among the other country's population.

In his article "[\*Planning for Legitimacy: A Joint Operational Approach to Public Affairs\*](#)," Maj Tadd Sholtis shows the importance of legitimacy as a center of gravity for military public affairs:

Legitimacy derives from real and readily apparent behaviors or effects that define the functional relationships between the military and key publics. Domestically, such behaviors would include the extent of political maneuvering or public protests against military actions, imposed tactical restrictions on fire and maneuver, and blows to unit morale, defense spending and military recruiting. Abroad, legitimacy will affect the military contributions of our allies, basing options, transportation routes for force deployment and re-supply, and grassroots support for terrorist or insurgent attacks against U.S. forces, among other considerations. . . .

. . . Legitimate military operations will promote public expressions of support from a wide variety of non-aligned sources: national leaders or their official spokespeople, international organizations, political or special interest groups, other opinion leaders like academics or clerics, or populations as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

So legitimacy can be essential to the success of military operations, especially in coalition warfare.

Legitimacy implies conforming to recognized principles or accepted rules and standards, which brings about, in people affected by a decision or action whose legitimacy comes under scrutiny, the willingness to bear the results of such a decision or an action. Of course, good information about the basis and justification for the decisions or actions at stake serves as a fundamental part in building their legitimacy. The dissemination of good information requires making it available in the language of the people whose acknowledgment of the legitimacy of such decisions or actions one desires. Therefore, military institutional communication has relevance to disseminating information about technology, doctrine, and operational art. This communication perhaps becomes even more important to instilling within the population of a country whose support for those actions one desires, the idea of legitimizing planned or executed military actions. One can view recent decisions to begin publishing [Arabic](#), [French](#), and [Chinese](#) editions of *Air and Space Power Journal* as supporting this reasoning. Thus it seems clear that a country with global interests, such as the United States, must maintain a significant effort in military institutional communication in languages other than English.

### ***The Utility of Academic-Professional Journals***

Academic-professional journals meet the requirements of disseminating ideas and retaining legitimacy. First, they are essential for updating the target audience's information on issues that concern them. Indeed, the number of military officers who become aware of technological innovations or innovative strategic analyses by reading academic-professional journals is far greater than the number of those who can leave their units for an extended time to learn or participate in exchange programs with professional-military-education institutions abroad. Also, journals can reach a greater variety of audiences, including academics, decision makers, and people at large who have an interest in political and strategic studies. Such individuals exercise a multiplier effect merely by conveying the acquired ideas to other people and offering new ones emerging from reflection about what they have learned through the journals. In this case, they present feedback that generates debate and helps to illuminate technical issues as well as promote intellectual solidarity among researchers who participate in the conversation—both effects are important to accomplishing the goals of military institutional communication. Moreover, if the journal maintains high academic standards, it acquires intellectual prestige, which adds value to the information the journal conveys, making the published information automatically worthy of attention and reflection from potential readers. Now comes the legitimacy issue.

Legitimacy is far better attained by means of open and serious debate through an academic journal than through propaganda. Free and good-faith academic debate seeks to reach a consensus, which means a “kind of collective consciousness attained as a result of rational discussion.”<sup>10</sup> Consensus contrasts with *homonoia*, a Greek word literally meaning *sameness of minds* and connoting a “kind of collective consciousness attained through an emotional venue, resulting from behavioral conditioning through the employment of rites, forceful discipline and other means—more or less subtle—to crystallize reflexes.”<sup>11</sup>

History clearly shows that consensus serves as a typical source of decisions in democracies, while dictatorships—especially those that disguise themselves by adopting some external trappings of democracy—use *homonoia* as a preferred tool for manipulating people. So a procedure of institutional communication that self-imposes the constraints of a rational discussion conducive to consensus benefits from a net advantage as a foundation for legitimacy. This is precisely what happens in the case of academic-professional journals.

## **Geostrategic Considerations in Finding Target Audiences for Military Institutional Communication**

Having established that military institutional communication with non-English-speaking countries must occur through academic-professional journals in languages other than English, we must examine which languages deserve preference. In fact, budgetary constraints always impose the need for choices based on priorities. As mentioned before, more than 50 years ago the USAF, like the US Army, became aware of the usefulness of publishing journals in Spanish and Portuguese for military institutional communication. One can easily understand the choice of the Spanish language for a journal on the grounds of obvious US interests in Spanish-speaking countries located in its neighborhood—Mexico and Central American countries—whose citizens comprise a significant percentage of the US population. But why Portuguese?

In his article “[\*Origins of Western Hemispheric Defense: Airpower against the U-Boats\*](#),” Maj Roger J. Witek comments on the geostrategic importance of the South Atlantic from an airpower point of view. In his discussion, the South Atlantic means primarily Brazil and Argentina, one a Portuguese-speaking country and the other Spanish-speaking.<sup>12</sup> Taking into account the role played by different countries during World War II, one sees that negotiations which led to the establishment of a US air base in the Brazilian city of Natal, essential to US military operations in North Africa, reflect Brazil’s geostrategic importance. However, a classic geostrategic analysis of Brazil’s stature in the international equation lies beyond the scope of this article. Among the reasons for not conducting such an analysis are innovations in war-fighting technology that have brought significant changes to the strategic meaning of several variables that one should consider.

Hence, we will look for more objective parameters to help make our point. We base our contention that the Portuguese language has been and remains indispensable to US military institutional communication on the values of a potential indicator (PI)—an index of the geostrategic relevance of various countries in the world, based on variables traditionally associated with expectations of a country’s possibly becoming a world power. After classifying the countries of the world by PI, one sees that Brazil merits a significant communication effort in its language.

### ***The Potential Indicator—Trying an Objective Analysis***

Building indicators is a traditional technique for quantifying variables relevant to measuring a phenomenon. When such measurement depends on several variables, the numerical indicator that measures it must consist of a composite of those variables, and the indicator’s value must be directly proportional to the variables positively correlated with the phenomenon—as well as inversely related to those negatively correlated with it.

Traditionally, one evaluates a country’s potential in the psychosocial, political, economic, and military realms. Thus, the PI proposed here consists of a composition of meaningful variables from these four realms of national power. Moreover, for optimum usefulness, one must build the indicator on variables with objectively measured, well-known, and available values for every element—in this case countries—that we compare. Therefore, we have chosen the following variables: population (psychosocial), territorial area (political), gross national product (GNP) (economic), and military expenditures (military).



These variables are widely acknowledged as partial PIs. One usually deems countries with large populations and vast territories potential world powers. Analysts commonly rank the world's economies by GNP values—well-known, widely employed economic indicators. Military expenditures synthesize several variables, encompassing not only the size of the military but also its technological sophistication, factoring in the relationship between weapon complexity and expenditure. Both features seem reasonable criteria for gauging potential military effectiveness. Additionally, military expenditure has the advantage of taking into account aspects related to science and technology, at least in military applications. The product of these four variables for each country represents its PI value. To ensure uniformity of data, we have drawn the variables' values from the current edition of *The World Factbook*, published by the Central Intelligence Agency. Since that reference does not include the value for Russian military expenditures, we obtained that figure from the Web site of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. For Russia, despite the lack of assurance of methodological uniformity in obtaining the value, one may reasonably assume that values do not diverge by an order of magnitude. Because our analysis uses orders of magnitude only, an occasional discrepancy will not invalidate the argument.

To validate this indicator, we applied it to countries usually considered the most important in the world through the use of the size-of-economy criterion, as shown by those nations' respective GNP values. The results validate PI as an indicator of relevance on the world scene (table 1). The table does not show Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking countries because they appear in tables 2 and 3. One can see that the PI values reflect the importance generally associated with countries. Specifically, the calculus of the US PI is consistent with its position as the world's sole superpower. The Russian PI reflects the country's importance after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

**Table 1. PI values for states whose GNP exceeds  $1 \times 10^{12}$  US dollars**

	<b>A</b> Population $\times 10^6$ people	<b>B</b> Territorial area $\times 10^6$ km <sup>2</sup>	<b>C</b> GNP $\times$ US\$ $10^9$ (PPP) <sup>a</sup>	<b>D</b> Military expenditure $\times$ US\$ $10^9$	<b>PI</b> (integer part of $A \times B \times C \times D$ )
World	6,446.131	148.940	59,380	750.000	42,757,463,462,020
United States	295.734	9.631	12,370	370.700	13,060,654,048
China	1,306.314	9.597	8,158	67.490	6,902,496,661
Japan	127.417	0.378	3,867	45.841	8,537,829
India	1,080.264	3.288	3,678	18.860	246,385,489
Germany	82.431	0.357	2,446	35.063	2,523,854
United Kingdom	60.441	0.245	1,867	42.836	1,184,271
France	60.656	0.547	1,816	45.000	2,711,374
Italy	58.103	0.301	1,645	28.182	810,780
Russia	143.420	17.075	1,535	18.000	67,663,010
Canada	32.805	9.985	1,077	9.801	3,457,596

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2006), <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook> (accessed 6 March 2006). Data on Russian military expenditures comes from Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, <http://www.ufaq.com/wiki/en/ar/Armed%20Forces%20of%20the%20Russian%20Federation.htm>.

<sup>a</sup>GNP in purchasing power parity (PPP) (US dollars)

We can also determine the PI for countries to which the USAF distributes Portuguese and Spanish editions of *ASPJ* (tables 2 and 3). Table 2 shows that the Brazilian PI greatly exceeds that of any other Portuguese-speaking country. Table 3 shows that Mexico has the greatest PI among Spanish-speaking countries.

**Table 2. Portuguese-speaking countries (target audience for the Portuguese edition of ASPJ)**

	<b>A</b> <i>Population</i> <i>x10<sup>6</sup> people</i>	<b>B</b> <i>Territorial</i> <i>area</i> <i>x 10<sup>6</sup> km<sup>2</sup></i>	<b>C</b> <i>GNP</i> <i>x US\$ 10<sup>9</sup></i> <i>(PPP)<sup>a</sup></i>	<b>D</b> <i>Military</i> <i>expenditure</i> <i>x US\$ 10<sup>9</sup></i>	<b>PI</b> <i>(integer part of</i> <i>AxBxCxD)</i>
Angola	11.827	1.247	28	0.184	76
Brazil	186.113	8.512	1,580	11.000	27,533,289
Cape Verde	0.418	0.004	3	0.014	0
Guiné-Bissau	1.416	0.036	1	0.009	0
Mozambique	19.407	0.802	26	0.117	47
Portugal	10.566	0.092	195	3.497	663
Sao Tome and Principe	0.187	0.000001	0.2	0.0007	0
East Timor	1.041	0.015	0.4	0.004	0

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2006), <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook> (accessed 6 March 2006).

<sup>a</sup>GNP in purchasing power parity (PPP) (US dollars)

**Table 3. Spanish-speaking countries (target audience for the Spanish edition of ASPJ)**

	<b>A</b> <i>Population</i> <i>x10<sup>6</sup> people</i>	<b>B</b> <i>Territorial</i> <i>area</i> <i>x 10<sup>6</sup> km<sup>2</sup></i>	<b>C</b> <i>GNP</i> <i>x US\$ 10<sup>9</sup></i> <i>(PPP)<sup>a</sup></i>	<b>D</b> <i>Military</i> <i>expenditure</i> <i>x US\$ 10<sup>9</sup></i>	<b>PI</b> <i>(integer part of</i> <i>AxBxCxD)</i>
Argentina	39.538	2.767	537	4.300	252,619
Bolivia	8.858	1.099	24	0.132	31
Colombia	42.954	1.139	303	3.300	48,920
Chile	15.981	0.756	181	3.430	7,501
Costa Rica	4.016	0.051	40	0.064	1
Dominican Republic	9.050	0.049	59	0.180	5
El Salvador	6.705	0.021	34	0.157	1
Spain	40.341	0.505	1,014	9.906	204,632
Ecuador	13.364	0.284	53	0.655	132
Guatemala	12.014	0.109	21	0.202	6
Honduras	6.975	0.112	21	0.101	2
Mexico	106.203	1.973	1,066	6.043	1,349,813
Nicaragua	5.465	0.129	16	0.032	0
Panama	3.140	0.078	22	0.147	1
Paraguay	6.348	0.407	31	0.053	4
Peru	27.926	1.285	169	0.829	5,028
Uruguay	3.416	0.176	33	0.257	5
Venezuela	25.376	0.912	162	1.678	6,291

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2006), <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook> (accessed 6 March 2006).

<sup>a</sup>GNP in purchasing power parity (PPP) (US dollars)

One can also categorize countries by the order of magnitude of their PI (table 4). Three countries have PIs of an *extremely high* order of magnitude: the United States, China, and India. Such values reflect the geostrategic importance of China and India, demonstrated by the special-status policies applied to these countries by the United States—for instance, US agreements to provide India with the latest generation of weaponry without requiring interruption of that country's nuclear program. Brazil follows Russia in an intermediate category—*very high* PI—between the three gigantic countries (United States, China, and India) and powers such as Japan, Canada, France, Germany, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. One should note that Mexico follows the main European countries and Japan, even though its PI is an order of magnitude lower than Brazil's. Argentina is located between Italy and Spain in the group whose PI is an order of magnitude smaller than Mexico's—fairly high



PI. Among Spanish-speaking countries, we find Colombia, Chile, Venezuela, and Peru in the *significant* PI category.

**Table 4. Distribution of countries according their PI values**

<i>Extremely High Order of Magnitude (<math>\geq 10^8</math>)</i>	<i>Very High Order of Magnitude (<math>10^7</math>)</i>	<i>High Order of Magnitude (<math>10^6</math>)</i>	<i>Fairly High Order of Magnitude (<math>10^5</math>)</i>	<i>Significant Order of Magnitude (between <math>10^3</math> and <math>10^4</math>)</i>
United States China India	Russia Brazil	Japan Canada France Germany Mexico United Kingdom	Italy Argentina Spain	Colombia Chile Venezuela Peru

### ***PI as a Leading Criterion for Military Institutional Communication***

PI offers an objective criterion to assert a language's geostrategic importance, putting aside fallacious reasoning, which could distort sound judgment. For instance, some people pay attention to the number of countries that share a language as their native tongue—an immaterial observation. Each country is a distinct political entity, with different people and governments expressing different interests and political wills on the world scene. English has acquired its present global relevance because it is the language of the world's sole superpower, not because it is the language of a number of countries without any geostrategic meaning—or because of the number of English speakers around the world.

One should note that during the apogee of the British Empire, no one acknowledged English as the international language because, regardless of the United Kingdom's status as a very important world power, its geostrategic level of importance was comparable to that of other colonial powers. Only after the United States became a superpower, especially after its rise to the status of sole superpower, did English become the world's lingua franca. Similarly, the relevance of Spanish to US military institutional communication has no relationship to the number of Spanish-speaking countries or Spanish speakers. Rather, the prominence of that language reflects the existence of countries such as Mexico (whose PI has an order of magnitude of  $10^6$ ) and Argentina (whose PI has an order of magnitude of  $10^5$ ).

Of course, in specific cases one must take into account geostrategic considerations other than PI. For instance, one cannot analyze Portugal and Spain by their PI while ignoring their pertinence to the European Union. In this sense, Argentina's PI is more relevant to a geostrategic analysis of Argentina than Spain's PI is to Spain because the latter, as a member of the European Union, finds itself in a different context. Likewise, specific American interests in Central America and the Caribbean make the countries in those regions a source of special concern in US foreign policy, independently of their PIs.

However, since Brazil has a PI just below that of the three giants (United States, China, and India) and Russia, and above that of Japan, Canada, France, Germany, Mexico, and the United Kingdom, the US military cannot afford to lack Portuguese-language media for military institutional communication. Therefore, Portuguese editions of professional military journals merit continued priority from the US military leadership. Furthermore, such a quantitative argument corresponds with qualitative considerations when one notes the increasing influence of Brazilian foreign policy in Portuguese-speaking African countries such as Angola and Mozambique—regionally relevant countries whose PI analysis lies

beyond the scope of this article. However, the recent decision to publish a French edition of *Air and Space Power Journal*, aimed at reaching primarily the French-speaking African countries, shows that the USAF recognizes Africa's growing geostrategic importance. Moreover, the position of Brazil in South America and its policy of continental integration—inscribed as a rule in the Brazilian constitution as of 1988—extend its influence to Spanish-speaking neighbors with fairly significant PIs.

As a matter of fact, US officials have made a number of comments regarding Brazil's geostrategic importance. During her confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee after being nominated by Pres. George W. Bush as secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice declared that "the U.S. relationship with Brazil is 'extremely critical to the region' [and] applauded Brazil's leadership of the U.N. stabilization mission in Haiti."<sup>13</sup> During his visit to Brasilia, Brazil's capital, on 6 November 2005, President Bush remarked, "Relations between Brazil and the United States are essential."<sup>14</sup> Another US official, Commerce Deputy Secretary David Sampson, stated that "the United States and Brazil are 'close friends' and that strong U.S.-Brazil leadership is important for the Latin American region."<sup>15</sup>

However, one finds the most expressive synthesis of Brazil's present relevance on the world scene in an article titled "Eyes on the Americas," which comments on Canada's connections with Latin America and describes Brazil as "an emerging priority":

While multilateral cooperation in the hemisphere is critical, Canada's relations with individual countries of the region are also vital. A key tie is with Brazil, an emerging giant comprising half of South America's population and GDP [gross domestic product], identified in Canada's recent International Policy Statement as a priority nation.

"Brazil is a major, sophisticated and influential player on the multilateral scene, whether it is in world trade negotiations as leader of the G20 or in UN peacekeeping operations," notes Florencia Jubany, a senior policy analyst at the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) in Ottawa. "Brazil is also a central actor in the Americas, and shares many points of convergence with Canada's own foreign policy."

Jamal Khokhar, Director General of the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau at FAC [Foreign Affairs Canada], says that Canada and Brazil "not only share a hemisphere, they share goals, priorities and—perhaps most important of all—values." This makes the two countries natural partners, he says. "We are living in a world of rising powers and Brazil is one of those powers. Canada appreciates Brazil's leadership and believes it can make a difference in the hemisphere."<sup>16</sup>

Brazil is a force behind South American integration and has played a moderating role, which is critical given the economic hardships in neighboring Andean nations such as Bolivia and Ecuador and the potential for political unrest there.<sup>17</sup> Brazil's consistent adherence to the principle of people's self-determination worldwide and to the strengthening of its own democracy instills in its neighbors the confidence to make the Brazilian government's formal or informal mediation a factor of stability in South America. Moreover, the good personal relations cultivated by Brazilian president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva with President Bush as well as South American leaders such as Argentinean president Nestor Kirchner, Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, and Bolivian president Evo Morales facilitate international dialogue and enhance the already acknowledged geostrategic importance of Brazil.

## **The Portuguese Edition of Air and Space Power Journal: A Success Story**

One can cite the Portuguese edition of ASPJ as an example of the USAF's successful efforts in military institutional communication. Indeed, General José Américo writes that "*Airpower Journal* has established itself as an important vehicle for the exchange of ideas and has created a partnership between [the US Air Force's] Air University and the Brazilian Air University."<sup>18</sup> Numerical data reinforces the veracity of his assessment (table 5). The number of articles by Portuguese-speaking authors published in the English and Portuguese editions of ASPJ since 2000 is impressive. The existence of the *Journal's* Portuguese edition enabled the contribution of 24 Portuguese-speaking authors, who wrote 26 articles. During the same period, the *Journal's* English edition published five articles by Portuguese-speaking authors. The Portuguese edition creates a valuable venue that allows English- and Portuguese-speaking militaries to exchange ideas about professional topics.

**Table 5. Number of contributions to ASPJ by Portuguese-speaking authors**

<i>Year</i>	<i>ASPJ (English)</i>	<i>ASPJ (Portuguese)</i>
2000		4
2001	1	2
2002		1
2003		1
2004		4
2005	2	4
2006	1	6
2007	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>5<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>26<sup>b</sup></b>

*Source:* Data provided by ASPJ staff.

<sup>a</sup>The five articles were written by four different authors.

<sup>b</sup>The 26 articles were written by 24 different authors.

## **Conclusion**

Since the end of World War II, the US military has been aware of the importance of using journals to disseminate core US doctrine, strategy, policy, operational art, and current military issues for the benefit of militaries from non-English-speaking countries. That is why academic-professional journals such as the Spanish and Portuguese editions of *Military Review* and *Air University Quarterly Review*—now *Air and Space Power Journal*—have come about. Such publications provide information to the US military's allies concerning defense policies, strategy, military technology, military organization, and many other topics needed to enhance interoperability in case of participation in combined war-fighting operations.

Academic-professional journals serve several purposes. They promote debate, offer innovative solutions to problems, and disseminate information that allows easier understanding and more favorable analysis of US military activities by both military and civilian officials, as well as people interested in political and strategic studies. Such dissemination is also part of an effort to build a sense of legitimacy among allies regarding American military activities, generating the political and military support needed in coalition warfare.

The use of languages other than English is indispensable despite the increasing number of people familiar with that language. Indeed, full understanding of complex matters requires communication in the speaker's or reader's native tongue. It is not a coincidence that Spanish and Portuguese were the very first languages chosen for such a dissemination of knowledge. In fact, this choice was a response to a geostrategic need in the aftermath of World War II that remains fully valid today.

One should avoid simplistic criteria for choosing the languages to promote military institutional communication. For example, the number of countries or individuals who speak a particular language is immaterial compared to objective geostrategic considerations. Rather, a quantitative PI comprised of population, territorial area, GNP, and military expenditures can better measure the relative prominence of nations. The PIs of various countries can differ by orders of magnitude. The United States, as the world's sole superpower, has a PI whose order of magnitude is  $10^{10}$ , followed by China ( $10^9$ ), India ( $10^8$ ), and Russia and Brazil (both  $10^7$ ). Among Spanish-speaking countries, Mexico has the greatest PI ( $10^6$ ).

PI is an objective criterion of geostrategic importance whose analysis validates the priority of the Portuguese language in the US military's efforts in institutional communication. Of course, this does not suggest that the Spanish language or efforts driven by other strategic considerations are not worthy. Instead, this article makes the point that the US military must use Portuguese for communication because the numeric value of Brazil's PI reinforces the recognition of that country's geostrategic importance, as already acknowledged by US and Canadian officials. The successful example of the Portuguese edition of *Air and Space Power Journal* in attracting the participation of Portuguese-speaking authors shows that a Portuguese communication channel favors the exchange of ideas and dissemination of knowledge among an audience whose geostrategic importance as a target for military institutional communication is guaranteed by the very high order of magnitude of Brazil's PI.

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**Feedback? [Email the Editor](#)**

## Notes

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