

Expanding Japan Cooperation in South America



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More than five decades ago, when the conditions of communication, transportation and restrictions imposed by post-war treaties were the key, we were able, in a joint Brazil-Japan effort, to put into practice the new concept of economic distance, which allowed us to deliver iron ore and other commodities in Japanese ports at competitive prices. This has enabled Japan to rebuild its industry and, also, to stimulate development in science and technology. Both, countries have made tremendous strides, in particular, by the advent of more than 200 joint industries, as well as cooperation treaties that have benefited a number of sectors of the economy, reflecting job creation and improving social conditions.

Innovation with high technological content is the strongest characteristic in the present and for the future of the humanity. Communication, transport, energy, medical, agricultural technologies have advanced rapidly and irreversibly in last decades. It must be emphasized that cooperation between countries should be the motto in order such advances can, at the same time, diminish differences in innovation, economic and social issues what is the key to reach more security for the populations.

Contrary to this assertion, it is important to bring to light two recent events, one in Europe / European Union and the other in North America. In the first case, United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union, in the episode knowing as BREXIT. In the second, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States of America brought to the international political and geostrategic scene a conservatism and isolationism that could hardly be associated with the United States.

The so-called BREXIT raises concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of blocs of countries for common regional development and common trade policies at a time migration issues overlap with the many other shared interests. In the case, it highlights, also, doubts about the union of the countries inside UK itself. At the moment, almost one year of such a plebiscite decision, it is not possible yet to draw a clear picture of Britain's decision consequences to leave the EU. However, there are indications that England would emphasize commercial agreements with

other countries outside the European bloc, as its commitments to the European bloc will change. Japan, Brazil and Latin America need to be aware of this opportunity. England remains a main actor in scientific / technological area, as well as, in commercial development, even though it has shrunk in its industrial area.

In the case of the United States of America, Trump's campaign promises, lead to believe that US is going to change the anterior established politics regarding its traditional partner countries, in industry and trade besides immigration issues. One of them, is the TPP - Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement - of which Japan is a member. In the moment I write this paper, there is, too, a great concern about the questions Trump's administration is rising about WTO - World Trade Organization. Nevertheless, about the two, as well as, other international compromises US was a creator and/or a member, it requires some more time to be sure about the real direction of Trump's politics. However, it is important to monitor the development of such events in order do not neglecting the opportunities that may open up for bilateral agreements and even for multilateral agreements that would blow up in absence of US in that stage and, also, to ones US will privilege.

With regard to Latin America, special in South America, Japan has much to contribute and to receive in exchange through the huge market this continental region represents. Otherwise, especially in Brazil, the technological advances were substantial in the agriculture. However, in topics such as new sources of energy, high efficiency transportation, medicine and new drugs among others, Japan reached levels far beyond those developed by Latin America.

The Wise Man Group Brazil / Japan, over the decades has sought to identify the areas of mutual cooperation between our two countries. However, even from what has been said above, it is up to the Brazilian side to add to the equation of cooperation, so far bilateral, other Latin American countries, notably the South American ones. I am convinced, from everything I have known and continue to follow, that Japan could induce a huge leap in the modernization of transport in South America which would make our countries, together, more competitive on the international stage. Likewise, such cooperation could be extended to the generation of clean and high efficiency energy, in addition to the predominant hydroelectric matrix.

South America needs to see itself as a set of integrated countries and nothing is more effective for this than transport and energy. Japan can play a leading role in this regard.