

Lula Willing to Establish Automatic Alignment with EU in Possible New Term

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Former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has become known around the world as a moderate leftist leader who, internally, pushed social changes in favor of the poor population and, in foreign policy, strengthened Brazil’s position as a non-aligned country, close to the BRICS and emerging powers. However, it appears that many of these positions will be reviewed by Lula, who plans to run in presidential elections next year. On a recent visit to Europe, the former Brazilian president met with several European leaders and promised a position of subservience on the part of Brazil, including on extremely sensitive and strategic topics, such as the conservation of the Amazon Forest. It is possible that to return to power Lula is willing to do anything, including maintaining a foreign policy of automatic alignment with the EU – which will bring great social harm to the Brazilian people.

On November 11, Lula started a tour of the European continent, visiting Germany, Belgium, France, and Spain. In these countries, the former Brazilian president met with several politicians and entrepreneurs, fulfilling an extensive diplomatic agenda by establishing strategic dialogues with possible supporters for his candidacy in the 2022 Brazilian presidential elections. The topics debated during the meetings were extremely important and demonstrated a great similarity of opinion between Lula and his European interlocutors.

In Germany, Lula met with Olaf Scholz and extensively discussed strategic issues of great importance, such as the conservation of the Amazon Forest. In a very problematic posture, Lula literally invited Scholz to “protect” the Amazon, which is something quite complicated to understand. Apparently, the former Brazilian president wants the German government to actively participate in a Brazilian environmental policy to protect the Amazon. It remains to be seen what the limits for German action in this possible environmental administration scheme would be. Indeed, this possible environmental policy seems more like an advance to the project of internationalization of the Amazon.

Previously, during the G20 meeting, Jair Bolsonaro had treated Scholz with extreme

rudeness. The German politician approached the Brazilian president, but apparently Bolsonaro did not know who Scholz was and did not greet him. The episode did not go unnoticed by the press, which released the news pointing to an even more deteriorated state for Brazil-Germany bilateral relations. In fact, such relations have been getting more complicated since 2019, precisely due to the dismantling of the Brazilian environmental policy, which was strongly condemned by the Merkel Administration. By acting rudely, Bolsonaro further intensified the crisis, while Lula, in turn, acted with political expertise by choosing Scholz as his first partner on the European tour – and by mentioning the Amazon issue during the conversation.

In Belgium, Lula was invited to speak during a conference of the European Parliament. In his communication, the former president pointed out conditions for the long-awaited EU-Mercosur trade agreement and promised to advance in all the agendas defended by the European bloc, focusing on issues such as the environment, social inclusion, job creation and the reconstruction of the post-COVID-19 world. Lula was enthusiastically applauded by politicians present at the conference and his speech was widely publicized in the European media as a form of “hope” for Brazil.

In Paris, Lula met with Macron, by whom he was received with honors of head of state – which is a symbolic and very significant act, since, considering that this ceremony is applied only in meetings with heads of state, Macron practically claimed to recognize Lula as the true president of Brazil. The same issues discussed at the other meetings were talked and both leaders outlined joint strategies to improve bilateral relations. On the occasion, Lula also met with several other French politicians, including the mayor of Paris.

Lula ended the trip after arriving in Spain. The former Brazilian president met with the prime minister of Spain, Pedro Sánchez, at the Moncloa Palace, in Madrid. Both strengthened bonds of cordiality by presenting common points of view on the discussed issues, especially on topics such as the environment, strengthening of democracy and social progress. Sánchez openly declared support for Lula’s candidacy.

In all the countries he visited, Lula not only met with politicians, but he also spoke with businessmen, journalists, union leaders, activists, and supporters. In all cases, the former president managed to gain support for his candidacy, establish contracts for investments in Brazil and outline conditions for future bilateral partnerships. In fact, Lula’s political intelligence is notorious. The choice of Europe as a campaign route, precisely at a time of decline in relations between Europe and Brazil, was of great strategic value. Certainly, his candidacy will have the financial support of European politicians and businessmen, while Bolsonaro is increasingly losing allies in Brazil and abroad.

However, some points need to be criticized. The position that Lula placed Brazil in his negotiations with Europe were extremely subservient. Basically, the former president took a trip to tell the Europeans that, if he wins the elections, Brasília will be willing to accept all the conditions imposed by the EU for economic partnerships to be established. Lula acted against Brazilian interests by inviting the future German chancellor to participate in the administration of the Amazon – which seems absurd, as it seriously violates Brazilian sovereignty. In other words, Lula is doing to Europeans what Bolsonaro did to Washington during the 2018 elections: promising a policy of automatic alignment, in exchange for political and economic support.

Lula, during his previous terms, stood out for a reasonably consistent foreign policy, prioritizing Brazilian strategic interests. He has strengthened ties with the BRICS, negotiated agreements with Iran, met with leaders of non-aligned emerging nations, and mediated the dialogue between north and south of global geopolitics. This could be the same posture at the current time, for example. Lula could try to improve Brazil's relations with China and Russia, which were also harmed by Bolsonaro's alignment with Washington, but instead he chose to substitute the US for Europe, which, unlike Moscow and Beijing, demands abusive conditions to establish partnerships.

In fact, Lula is currently occupying an important role as a "de facto chancellor", establishing dialogues and partnerships in an unofficial way, while the government remains silent, inert, and increasingly isolated on the international arena. But this parallel diplomacy is also acting against Brazilian interests. The most likely scenario is that, if elected, Lula will import all European agendas, including health passport, mandatory vaccines (with a boycott against non-Western vaccines), carbon market, among others, and advance even further in the project to establish a transnational administration of the Amazon. In exchange, Brazil will have "European investments", which will not be able to solve the social problems that affect the country.

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