

Who is General Figueiredo?

A profile of the 'mystery man' who is Brazil's next leader

The selection of General Joao Baptista Figueiredo as the next ruler of Brazil is the most devastating set-back suffered by Latin America's prodevelopment forces this year. The nomination of Figueiredo, currently head of Brazil's National Intelligence Service (SNI),

BRAZIL

announced by incumbent President Ernesto Geisel during the first days of the year. His candidacy was rubber-stamped by the ruling ARENA Party's convention in late March. He will be elected president by unelected electors in November, unless the military's widespread repugnance to him and his policies gives rise to a strong opposition candidacy.

Figueiredo is already seeking to reverse almost every positive tendency that has emerged in Brazil during the Geisel presidency. Geisel's policy of making Brazil an industrial power through broad economic cooperation with continental Europe and Japan will gradually be abandoned. Figueiredo's calculated attack on the French Republic in a recent interview has already provoked the postponement of French President Giscard's scheduled June visit to Brazil.

The future of plans for Brazil to obtain a complete nuclear energy-cycle technology from West Germany is threatened by Figueiredo's announced preference for agriculture over industry, for labor-intensive processes over energy and capital-intensive methods. Geopolitical expansionism is likely to stamp out incipient tendencies for Brazil's nationalist military and industrial elites to think of Brazilian "greatness" in terms of technological and social achievements.

Figueiredo Is Not Unknown

Virtually every periodical and intelligence source covering Brazil maintains that Figueiredo's policy orientations cannot be predicted. Those who are supposed to know recommend withholding judgment until he is safely in the presidency. Such analyses are occasionally made out of ignorance of the facts presented in this report; but, more frequently, they stem from a conscious desire to suppress, until it is too late, the truth of what is in store for Brazil and its neighbor.

Figueiredo is a "paper clip general," comparable to U.S. NATO Commander General Alexander Haig; his rapid rise to the command of the nation has been based

largely on his control over the infamous SNI intelligence apparatus. Most of the Brazilian brass is resentful that the future president has never had a troop command and is as distant from the concerns of the barracks as he is from those of the civilian population.

Figueiredo's success is due in large part to his mentor, the aging General Golbery do Couto e Silva, who, it is rumored, will be granted the Foreign Ministry as his reward. Golbery is widely known and despised in hispanic America for his formulation of the "Lebensraum" imperial theory of Brazilian "living frontiers:" "National borders no longer have the meanings they had in the past, because they advance or recede depending on the circumstances, and, having a life of their own, exercise a natural pressure on weaker economic and demographic frontiers."

Golbery is "the father of Brazilian geopolitics," a tropical elaboration on the geopolitical cant of British Empire theorist McKinder and related Fabian Society circles. Yet, the Brazilian military faction which adheres to his Atlanticist concepts is mistakenly called the "pro-American tendency — not because it coheres with actual American interest, but because of its slavish adherence to eminently anglophile currents in the U.S.

This clique was built around the officers who served under ex-Deputy Director of the CIA General Vernon Walters — then U.S. military attache in Brazil — and U.S. Ambassador Lincoln Gordon to overthrow the democratic government of President Joao Goulart. Walters and Gordon brought this "Castelista" faction into control of the Brazilian government in the post-coup regime of Marshall Humberto Castello Branco (1964-67).

Figueiredo, then only a colonel, was given command of the Rio section of the SNI which was being set up by Golbery as the political police. In 1966 he was transferred to Sao Paulo to set up the repressive apparatus there. During the ensuing years, his networks were responsible for thousands of political arrests and the torture and even assassination of opponents of the regime.

Figueiredo has also played a major role in the "Castelista" clique's perpetual struggle to contain and manipulate the much larger nationalist tendencies in the military. He was deployed as chief of staff for the powerful General Emilio Medici in 1969, and stayed on as Medici's controller during Medici's 1971-74 presidency, the most repressive period in Brazilian history. Figueiredo then came to head the SNI, while Golbery personally maintained as tight a hold as possible on President Geisel from a position comparable to Zbigniew Brzezinski's National Security Advisor role in the American White House.

Figueiredo has told the press that "agriculture will receive top priority" under his Administration, and that Brazil's destiny is to become "the breadbasket of the world." But the drought now ravaging southern Brazil — causing about \$2 billion in export losses — should dispel fantasies that unimproved agriculture can pump out enough exports to even keep up with Brazil's gigantic and rapidly expanding debt service.

There shouldn't be any expectation that Figueiredo's administration will give the agricultural sector the massive injections of credit needed for machinery and chemical inputs to raise Brazilian yields per acre from their current abysmal levels. Rather, his "agricultural priority" will be an excuse for cutting programmed priority state-sector investments in nuclear energy, steel, capital goods, and basic chemicals, investments which have been the cornerstone of Geisel's economic strategy.

In an interview in *Folha de Sao Paulo*, Figueiredo offered to turn state-built industries over to private hands, if any Brazilian interests could come up with sufficient cash to buy them. He also recently condemned the nationalist policies of bringing capital-intensive industry into Brazil's arid poverty-stricken northeast. He stated his preference for the "job-creating" slave-labor schemes which devastated the Amazon basin.

In fact, Figueiredo's program closely follows the deindustrialization policies recommended in the latest World Bank report on Brazil (see *Executive Intelligence Review* Vol. V, No. 9).

In proportion to the slowdown of Brazilian industrial growth, the Brazilian system — faced with debt service already passing \$8 billion per year — will inevitably turn to the self-cannibalistic gimmicks of squeezing out more quick-cash exports from underfed local populations. Roberto Campos, overseer of the notorious genocidal "Economic Miracle" of the 1960s and now Brazil's Ambassador to Britain, baldly states that agricultural expansion must precede any further industrialization of Brazil. Campos is expected to be Figueiredo's Foreign Minister, if Golbery does not want the post.

Although Figueiredo has never publicly criticized Brazil's ambitious nuclear energy program, nuclear development for peaceful purposes will be a victim of his overall deindustrialization strategy, which will slash growth in electricity demand and make large amounts of energy redundant.

Brazil's declining growth and mounting debt crunch will make it difficult to obtain foreign loans. Figueiredo's offensive comments about France portend disruptions of European efforts to aid Brazil. He has nowhere evidenced the commitment to Brazilian scientific and technological progress that would bring him to provide necessary funding for the nuclear program during times of escalating demands on the national budget. The program will fall farther and farther behind and, as a result, will become even more costly. This corresponds to the U.S. National Security Council's strategy for sabotaging Brazilian development through delays and through encouraging local scientists to oppose the program.

If Figueiredo is not contained, Brazil could shift radically from its present posture of discouraging regional warfare among its Spanish American neighbors. Some geopoliticians suggest that under Golbery's "living frontiers" doctrine, Brazil might stimulate a second War of the Pacific — Peru, and Bolivia; remain neutral until all combatants are exhausted; and then simply annex Bolivia. U.S. State Department circles admit that Guyana, Peru, and Bolivia are the most likely victims of a Brazilian reversion to the interventionist policies which the "Castelista" faction implemented in the U.S.-led 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic.

Such expansionism is not only coherent with Golbery's "living frontiers"; it is also the inexorable logic of Figueiredo's economic model, which will necessarily drive Brazil beyond its own borders, Nazi style, in search of loot to maintain its debt position.

Under Geisel, Brazil's foreign policy opened up friendly — and highly profitable — relations with Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. During Carter's recent visit to Brazil, however, Brzezinski revived Henry Kissinger's "special relationship status" with Brazil to play to the Castelistas' fantasies of achieving "Brazilian greatness" as a loyal NATO ally. Brzezinski encouraged the Brazilians to act as gendarmes against "Cuban influence" in the Americas and Africa. (see *Executive Intelligence Review* Vol. V, No. 14).

"Distensao"

During the months in which Geisel was deciding whom he would choose as his successor, the liberal media in Brazil and abroad insistently described Figueiredo as favoring "democratic reforms" and therefore acceptable to the "human rights" orientation of the Carter regime. As can be seen from the attitudes exhibited in his *Folha do Sao Paulo* interview, Figueiredo's much vaunted "democratization" process will be a Fabian social engineering project.

A liberalization scenario has been prepared by Gen. Golbery under the guidance of Brzezinski's Trilateral Commission partners Samuel P. Huntington and Richard Gardner, the latter currently U.S. Ambassador to Italy.

Huntington has made several trips to Brazil to lecture and consult on "political decompression" along the lines of his Trilateral Commission thesis on "The Ungovernability of the Democracies."

One American strategist with close ties to the Golbery clique foresees a political reform injecting more "pluralism" into Brazilian politics. An elaborate multiparty system of safe "opposition" parties will be set up to diffuse the expected upswell of tensions as the economic system grinds down to harsher austerity levels. The strategist commented: "The politicians will be so involved with forming new alliances among themselves that I don't expect them to have any significant input into national policy before about 1983."

But Figueiredo's strategy of "pluralism" is not likely to prevent an explosion of the tremendous social tensions bottled up in the Brazilian system. Whenever

manipulation fails, the Castelista faction is fully prepared to do what it did during the 1968-70 political explosion — throw Brazil under violent militarist repression.

—Mark Sonnenblick

Figueiredo Gives His View

The following are excerpts from Gen. Figueiredo's debate-interview in the Sao Paulo daily, Folha, April 5:

On French Democracy

Look here, I have studied what you call French democracy in depth. When they are threatened with losing in a district, the president moves the district. They take away a city from here, add it to another district General de Gaulle created something called Article 16, which establishes a state of siege that is much worse and more arbitrary than our Institutional Act No. 5 You're not going to tell me that the French system isn't manipulative, because I've studied the matter in depth.

On The House of Lords

And what is wrong with appointing one-third of the Senate? (This "reform was decreed last April to prevent opposition from winning in November congressional — ed.)

House of Lords, and aren't you always saying that England is a democracy?

During the empire, didn't the emperor appoint everybody, and didn't everything work well for so long? (The Brazilian empire was a Rothschild front based on slavery; it crumbled under Republican pressure in 1889 —ed.)

Brazilians Too Ignorant To Vote

Are you telling me the people are ready to vote? How can Brazilians in many places in the northeast vote well when they don't even know about hygiene? The other day, right here in Brasilia, I found a soldier from Goias in the barracks who had never brushed his teeth, and another one who had never used a bathtub. And then you tell me the people are prepared to elect a president

. . . . I do not believe I am being elitist; I am a realist.

On Repression

Q: You have said that if ARENA loses in November...

A: What I said was that thing would be more difficult if the MDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement, the official opposition party — ed.)

not want to yield at all. And what I say is that we all have to yield a little.

. . . . Look here, if the MDB wins, in addition to this thing about the constituent assembly, well . . . the military is not ready for it. This is when things will blow up. Either I blow up with it, or I join forces with them and we move toward a regime which will be much worse than this one.

On Public Opinion

Public opinion does not exist. You create it. If you want to, you can change public opinion.

On Labor

Q: Are you in favor of free wage negotiation between businessmen and workers?

A: I am. Now you always need someone as an arbitrator, because between a group of radical workers who only want raises and a group of profiteers who don't want to give any raises, you need the mediation of the Labor Ministry.

The French Respond To 'King' Figueiredo

The Information Director of the French Foreign Ministry made the following comments to newsmen inquiring about the postponement of Giscard's visit to Brazil following Figueiredo's insults to France. The French official was quoted in O Estado de Sao Paulo, April 22:

Officially, the French Government did not react, since it was a matter of declarations by a candidate. We think they were from a very inexperienced person who was misinformed. It is true that the candidate has already been designated President, but he has not yet been enthroned.

Doesn't

Israelis Talk War

Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan said that he expects a new war to erupt in the Middle East, in an interview on Swedish television May 9. Asked if he feared a new war, Dayan said:

"Yes, I do, even if it is not logical. There is a great risk of a new war as long as the conflict continues. One can never tell when it will start, but just as in the case with Lebanon something can happen. The Arab allies are prepared and they are receiving great military assistance. So there could very well be a new war.

"I think just now the greatest obstacle is that President as-Sadat is unable to get other Arab leaders to cooperate in his peace initiative. He will not have a separate peace. That is why as-Sadat is very unwilling to continue the peace talks."

Dayan's statement has heightened worries among

Middle East analysts that a renewed Mideast conflagration is in the works. These perceptions were backed up by comments made by Israeli Chief of Staff Rafael Eytan in an Israeli television interview on May 11. In the interview, which is excerpted below, Eytan provocatively discarded Sadat's peace overtures as insincere and stressed that the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights are vital to Israeli "security needs" and can never be relinquished.

Eytan: "Basically, I think the basic intention of the Arabs has not changed. Namely, to fight against the State of Israel and remove it from the agenda. The basic Arab intention has not changed in my opinion. Possibly some members of the Arab world are trying different ways to realize the same end."