

Brazil on war footing in defense of sovereignty

by Lorenzo Carrasco

Anglo-American plans to limit Brazilian sovereignty over the Amazon region, by creating "Indian enclaves" and using the pretext of preserving the environment, has prompted powerful nationalist groups inside Brazil to *unbury* the hatchet and initiate a mobilization against the "new world order" headed by U.S. President George Bush. The reader will find in the following pages details on a series of events reflecting this nationalist reaction, such as the June 24-28 symposium, organized by the Army Command and General Staff School, on "The Lessons of the Gulf War," which included the participation of *EIR's* correspondents in Brazil (see *Documentation*).

Confirming this nationalist "war cry" were the laconic July 26 comments of former President Gen. Ernesto Geisel (ret.), who broke a silence maintained virtually since leaving power in 1976. "The Americans are very drastic" with Brazil, and "if President Collor wants to do away with misery, he must provide employment. And to provide employment, one must encourage investments and not put the nation on this recessive course," declared Geisel, criticizing the neo-liberal economic program through which President Collor de Mello has been leading the country into a veritable dissolution of the state.

The importance of former President Geisel's statement does not lie solely in the fact that the project of "Brazil as a power," including the nuclear agreement with Germany and other great infrastructural projects, was concretized under his mandate. Or that Geisel was responsible for overturning Brazil's military pact with the United States, after Jimmy Carter's illegal intervention in Brazil's internal affairs. Above all, his statements are significant because the former

President is a national figure who commands respect among a wide circle of political, economic, and military figures of every ideological shade.

Geisel's comments were preceded by those of another former President, José Sarney, who emphasized the responsibility of Henry Kissinger in blocking Brazil's national development because, according to the former U.S. secretary of state, it was not in the United States' national interest to have "a new Japan" in the Western Hemisphere.

Sarney added, "I don't believe that the problems of South America are a priority on the United States' agenda. I believe that [the U.S.] position not only in regard to Brazil, but also to the Latin American continent as a whole, is at this moment, the strategic reserve and market. . . . Any agreement at this moment is difficult, because in order to make all the concessions that the United States believes are necessary within the new world design, Brazil would have to abdicate being a nation with a great presence in the world of the future."

Amazonia, a new and 'immense Vietnam'

One of the important elements that unleashed this nationalist reaction without precedent in recent Brazilian history, were the threats of interference in Amazon policy recently made by a group of U.S. senators, through their insistence on demarcating the lands of the Yanomami Indians over rich reserves of uranium, tin, gold, and other minerals.

On June 17, Gen. Antenor de Santa Cruz Abreu, military commander of Amazonas state, told various Brazilian congressmen from the Defense Commission of the lower house, who had been expressly invited to the Amazon city of Manaus, that "we run the risk of seeing the Amazon transformed

into an immense Vietnam," because of the insistence of heads of state like France's François Mitterrand of pushing the "thesis of restricted sovereignty."

According to the daily *Correio Brasiliense*, General Santa Cruz attacked "other efforts of foreign intervention in Brazil, including the attempt to create multinational Indian enclaves through the mediation of foreign groups backing Indian causes; the intervention of European parliamentarians before the European Economic Commission, to try to block the Carajas Project; and the statements of the U.S. Treasury Secretary and the president of the World Bank, in addition to actions by the U.S. Congress, to block the flow of already-contracted loans to carry out projects in our Amazon, including the construction of highway BR 364, which would link Brazil to Peru, facilitating our exports through the Pacific."

The general was even more indignant over revelations of a World Council of Churches document, which states: "It is our duty to block every case of aggression against the entire Amazon region, whether characterized by construction of highways and airports, mainly when crossing gold-prospecting areas, dams of any size, civilian or military border projects such as barracks, military airstrips and others representing attempts to make changes, or what civilization calls progress."

The World Council of Churches document, intended for its missionaries and other institutions such as the United Nations, also proclaims, "The entire Amazon, whose major area is in Brazil but which also encompasses part of Venezuelan, Colombian, and Peruvian territory, is considered by us to be the patrimony of all humanity. The possession of this immense area by the countries mentioned is merely circumstantial. . . . It is our duty: to defend, forestall, prevent, fight, insist, convince, in a word, to use all resources which, legally or illegally, could lead to the defense, the security, the preservation of this immense territory and of the human beings who inhabit it and who are the patrimony of humanity and not the patrimony of those countries whose territories they presumably are said to belong to."

No to 'relative sovereignty'

In a similar vein, Justice Minister Jarbas Passarinho, an old politician with strong ties to the previous military governments, went before the Parliamentary Commission investigating efforts to internationalize the Amazon June 26. Passarinho frontally attacked the thesis that Brazil should have "relative sovereignty" over the Amazon, a thesis defended by "the Presidents of France and the Soviet Union, François Mitterrand and Mikhail Gorbachov, as well as American senators," reported the daily *O Globo* the next day. Minister Passarinho bypassed all protocol in criticizing Brazil's Environment Secretary José Lutzenberger, saying that "the current concern is with those who want to ignore any kind of internationalization of the Amazon, like Lutzenberger, who says he never heard anything like this in the countries through

which he has passed." Passarinho concluded, "No one is going to accept that Brazil be a prisoner at the dock, to be judged at [the international ecology conference] Rio '92."

Along with these official statements, which reveal the convulsion going on inside the government of President Fernando Collor de Mello, new revelations by *EIR* have fallen like a bombshell in Brazil. *EIR* has exposed the plans of former U.S. Secretary of Defense and World Bank President Robert McNamara to condition any new International Monetary Fund and World Bank credits to drastic cutbacks in Third World military budgets. *EIR*'s revelations appeared simultaneously in dozens of national and regional newspapers throughout the country.

This latest exposé made crystal clear for the entire Brazilian military institution that the plan to internationalize the Amazon is in an active implementation phase. This view was reflected in an article by journalist Tarcisio Holanda, one of the most widely read Brazilian political commentators, and published in his July 9 column in Brasilia's leading daily *Correio Brasiliense*. After quoting from *EIR*, Holanda concluded: "There no longer appears to be any doubt that a final blow against our sovereignty over the Amazon, the greatest reserve of raw materials in the world, is being readied."

Making defense firms into 'maquilas'

What has helped place Brazilian nationalist layers on a state of red alert, are the unequivocal signs that the Collor government is committed to implementing, by hook or by crook, the Anglo-American demand that the Brazilian military-industrial capability be dismantled.

When Collor visited Washington in June, the Bush administration had hoped to be able to sign a new U.S.-Brazilian military accord as a means to achieve this goal. This didn't happen because Brazil's civilian and military sectors adamantly rejected it. But now the Collor government has come back with a different approach, which is being championed within the Collor administration by Finance Minister Marcilio Marques Moreira and Science and Technology Secretary José Goldemberg. Their aim, as exposed by reporter José Casado in the June 26 issue of *Gazeta Mercantil*, is to transform Brazil's military industries into *maquiladoras*—the in-bond assembly plants which have become so notorious in Mexico—which in turn would supply components for military equipment produced by large foreign companies. The major companies in the military-industrial complex—the aircraft producer, Embraer; Engesa, which produces combat vehicles; Avibras, producer of rockets and missiles, and others—will become branch offices of the large Anglo-American military companies.

As José Casado charged, "the basic idea is to transform these industries, which functioned as [development] poles within the military-industrial complex, from their status as primary contractors to subcontractors and complementary suppliers of the large Western companies which are leaders in the world

market of high-technology weaponry. The government is preparing its strategy to transfer control over these three companies' stock to foreign capital. Negotiations under way indicate that the leading companies in the world weaponry market will take over 40% of voting capital. . . . The most advanced negotiations so far are those regarding Engesa. The British Aerospace group leads the stock acquisition, taking 40%."

The same intention is reflected in an article in the June 17 issue of *Aviation Week & Space Technology* magazine, including comments from one of the major observers of Brazil's military industries, Prof. Ethan B. Kapstein of Harvard University's Institute for Strategic Studies. Kapstein told *Aviation Week* that Brazil as well as other Ibero-American countries, with their "cheap, ample labor, will remain tempting partners for U.S. companies which all need to cut costs because of sagging military budgets." *Aviation Week* cited the examples of McDonnell Douglas and Sikorski, which already contract subcomponent work in Brazil "because of the deep technological base, good company leadership and excellent workmanship available there."

Technological apartheid in full swing

The primary argument wielded by Washington and its allies in Brasilia is that in the post-Gulf war world, all Third World countries must submit their state-of-the-art technolog-

ies to supranational "supervision" to guarantee non-proliferation of "dangerous weapons." In practice, this means the dismantling of these technological capabilities.

For example, Bush proposes to "sterilize" such Brazilian state-of-the-art technologies as the independent nuclear and aerospace programs, through signing of such international accords as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and the Multilateral Export Control Committee (CoCom). The last was originally designed to control exports by NATO and its allies of militarily sensitive products to the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact; since the revolutions in Eastern Europe, CoCom restrictions have been increasingly directed against the industries of nations of the South.

In statements reported in the July 3 *Gazeta Mercantil*, Finance Minister Marcilio Marques Moreira explained approvingly: "It's a matter of creating the conditions for normalizing technological relations among Brazil and the leaders of those sectors in the First World. . . . This will allow us access to the primary science and technology centers [in light of] the existing concerns in those centers regarding nuclear proliferation, or of chemical and bacteriological weapons which are transportable by vectors which should also be the object of such control. The control regimens exist, whether we like it or not," Marques Moreira emphasized.

Who is disarming Brazil's defense?

The following is excerpted from an article by Mauro Santayana in the June 29 edition of Gazeta Mercantil.

Renounce the independent production of weapons and remain defenseless. . . . Is it the case that U.S. military hegemony, allegedly confirmed in the Gulf war and in the Soviet Union's national crisis, guarantees us a *pax aeterna*?

No nation which values itself should be forced to renounce the instruments of its own defense, unless it has been defeated by arms and, as a result, finds itself occupied by the victor. These instruments are basically armies and weapons.

The average citizen also has the right to suspect that disarming and giving up Brazil's industrial infrastructure reflects a unique strategic project. . . . Have some who possess privileged knowledge and astute patriotism concluded that it is better to accept dependence as the wisest option for survival and general happiness? Shall we be the first to consciously submit to a new world order and to

docilely obey the orders of the Planet's Supreme Council, made up of the Big Seven (although the word is that now, with the cooptation of the Russians, it will be eight) under Washington's leadership?

We could, *ad absurdum*, accept the thesis of submission, but it would first be appropriate to listen to the nation . . . we would then invite those gentlemen to send us a governor-general, since, in that case, we wouldn't even have enough dignity to send them *gauleiters*. We could renounce the Portuguese language and adopt that 720-word English which, some historians say, was enough for the slaves of the [U.S.] South to communicate with their masters.

The nation is not being heard, and if it were, it would say no to those who push it toward dissolution. The vast majority of Brazilians may not know the letters of the alphabet, nor the verses of the National Anthem; perhaps they are being corroded by hunger, by disease and by sadness. Yet, despite the internal oppression of the unjust social order, there is in these people, in their social consciousness, an idea of nationhood which many of the wealthy and educated have lost. Ask those Brazilians if they accept foreign tutelage, if they agree with disarming the country, if they applaud the handing over of Usiminas [a state steel company], or the internationalization of the Amazon.