

Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

A military 'Americas initiative'

George Bush's latest plan would turn Brazil's military industry into boot-makers for the Pentagon.

Through a clumsy "divide and conquer" maneuver, President George Bush is offering Brazil preferential treatment in what has been dubbed a military Enterprise for the Americas initiative (referring to Bush's free trade proposal). Washington hopes to pacify the growing opposition within the country's military institutions to the proposal by former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to dismantle those institutions across Ibero-America.

The irony is that at the same time that the Pentagon was announcing on Feb. 5 that Defense Secretary Richard Cheney would be conducting a tour of the Southern Cone countries, with Brazil topping his agenda, a group of Venezuelan military officers was blowing the lid off President Carlos Andrés Pérez's free trade economic model, a showcase of Bush's Enterprise for the Americas initiative.

Bush's latest proposal for hemispheric military reorganization amounts to technological apartheid, for the purpose of turning the entirety of Brazil's military industry, with all of its autonomous technological advances, into a *maquiladora*, or cheap labor assembly plant for the Anglo-Americans, who have destroyed their own economies to the point that they can no longer produce for themselves.

"Brazilians could produce parts, sub-components, or weapons sub-systems. Brazilian industry could also provide materials of another sort for the American Army, such as boots, for example," stated a Pentagon spokesman to the daily *O Globo* of Feb. 5.

Another influential voice of the

Anglo-American establishment, London's International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), condemned the Brazilian military industry to death. Using the pretext of a new era of world disarmament, IISS official François Heisbourg declared Feb. 3 that Brazil's war industry has no future on the international market, nor does it have a reason to exist for Brazil's own internal security.

The Pentagon spokesman revealed that another aspect of Bush's military "initiative" would include transforming the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Command in Panama into a major center of inter-American military training, with the parallel establishment of a regional center in Brazil. The proposal reached the absurdity of suggesting that Brazil's Superior War College be converted into the new regional center's training headquarters.

At least since last October, Washington has been probing the possibilities of restoring its deteriorated relations with the Brazilian Armed Forces, which have neared rock-bottom as a result of President Bush's colonial pretensions. Thus, on Oct. 26, 1991, for the first time in a long time, a high-level U.S. military figure, Gen. George Joulwan, was in Brazil. General Joulwan is the commander of the U.S. Southern Command. Apart from meetings with Brazil's three military ministers, Joulwan met with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Marcos Azambuja and with Education Minister José Goldemberg.

Inside Brazil, Goldemberg is the coordinator of Bush's new world or-

der designs and, specifically, of the McNamara proposals to dismantle Ibero-America's military forces. Goldemberg owes his position in the cabinet to the influence of the British-Soviet elites over President Fernando Collor de Mello. Together with Pedro Leoni, secretary of strategic affairs for the presidency, Goldemberg unleashed one of the most violent campaigns ever against the Armed Forces' technological conquests, and succeeded in slashing the budget for the Army's nuclear program, which was considering construction of a modern graphite reactor.

Not accidentally, the latest round of actions taken to perpetuate technological apartheid in Brazil occurred simultaneously with the Feb. 1 meeting of the superpowers in the U.N. Security Council, where the U.S. sought to revive its condominium of power, this time with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, against the political and technological sovereignty of the South.

In a clearly coordinated offensive, at the same time that the Army's nuclear program was de facto shut down, the attacks against Brigadier Hugo Piva (ret.) for his participation in the Iraqi aerospace program were furiously revived. The daily *O Globo* of Feb. 3 published a full-page article containing the revelations of one Kenneth Timmerman, author of the book *The Death Lobby* recently released in the United States. According to Timmerman, Brazil had a very important role to play in the construction of Iraq's weapons arsenal, and had participated in perfecting the Scud-B missiles.

Such propaganda is so fantastic that even U.S. Defense Department sources who specialize in monitoring the international arms trade were forced to admit to the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* that Timmerman's charges were sheer "speculation."