

Toward unity of the Fatherlands

by Vice Adm. Sérgio Tasso Vasquez de Aquino (ret.)

The following are excerpts from a presentation given on Sept. 19, 1997 by Brazilian Vice Adm. Sérgio Tasso Vasquez de Aquino (ret.), to a select audience of retired military personnel and others, at the Naval Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

I have been travelling throughout Brazil to tell people the truth as I see it, which is a commitment I have with my country and, therefore, I believe it would be interesting to give a presentation explaining the motivations which lead me to do this: In the first place, I am a Christian, a Catholic, and my concern is for justice, justice for the people. In the second place, I am Brazilian, and my concern is for the sovereignty and dignity of my country. In the third place, despite my retirement, I am a military man and remain loyal to the pledge that I took on my flag.

We are experiencing in Brazil, in Latin America, and in many other parts of the world, a situation which is a threat to the nation-state and to the Armed Forces. . . . I would like to give you two messages this evening: The first is that it is necessary to forget any prejudice or preconception or disputes of the past and, with an open heart and with all possible loyalty, Brazil and Argentina—and all the peoples of Latin America—must join forces so that we can be strong in God's world, because the unity of the countries of Ibero-America will give us exceptional strength in the international arena.

From Mexico to Tierra del Fuego, we have everything necessary to make our nations strong and our people happy, but this union must respect the sovereignties of each country, and must protect the well-being of our peoples. This is the Christian concept of true democracy, in which the government exists, or should exist, for the common good of the people. . . .

The role of the Armed Forces

The Armed Forces of each nation has an historic, important and unique role to play: in foreign affairs, the defense of the sovereignty, independence, and integrity of the national patrimony; and domestically, intervention as a last resort, when all other police capabilities of the state have failed to maintain order.

Thus, the Armed Forces is the armed branch of the Fatherland, and its very existence coincides with that of the Fatherland. You can see, in the process before Independence, that when a nation decides to seek its own path, without the imposition of a foreign will, it forms national militias to fight for independence. This was the history of all of our countries. When, finally, the nation becomes independent, these militias become the national Armed Forces.

When one nation defeats another in war, the first step it takes is to demobilize the military of the defeated nation, because the Armed Forces are the Nation; the Armed Forces guarantee the existence of the Nation.

In the case of our Latin American countries, there has been a phenomenon which people from other continents have a certain difficulty in understanding: the participation of the military in national politics. For example, in the United States of America, the Continental Army and the Continental Navy were born subordinate to the U.S. Congress, which provided the finances to create them. Therefore, it was always natural there for the military expression to be subordinate to national power, to the political expression. In our cases, the majority of the liberators were military men, and they won our independence as military men. So, the most natural consequence was for them to continue participating in the political life of their countries.

In the case of Brazil, we had an experience which was only shared by Mexico, and that but for a short period of time and through imposition from abroad. We had an empire in Brazil for 67 years, and under that empire, there were two political parties: the liberal and the conservative, and there was a political struggle between those parties and their followers. On top of this, there was always the figure of the emperor, who acted as the conciliator of these political brawls, to affirm the peace and harmony of the Brazilian citizenry.

When Army men, influenced by ideas imported from France, proclaimed the Republic of '89, the role of the emperor as moderator ended, and the role of the Armed Forces as moderator began.

So, throughout the period of the Brazilian republic, the military—primarily the Army and Ministry of War, which is today the Ministry of the Army—exercised the role of constable of the republic. The Presidents heard what the military had to say, and what's more, they took great care not to commit many errors against the people, for fear of the military reaction. So, as with the emperor, the military became a moderating power, and this continued until 1990, with the election of President Collor de Mello.

Collor de Mello began the neo-liberal process in Brazil which continues to this day, and he introduced a new phenomenon into the republican history of Brazil: He put the Armed Forces into a secondary role in public life, and we have paid a very heavy price, because, unfortunately, the politicians have not measured up to the nation. . . .

During the fight for independence, we all fought to establish pathways free of any kind of foreign tutelage. We also fought against communism, which sought to impose upon our people a dominance contrary to our democratic vocation, in terms of intrinsic dignity, human dignity, and fear of God, which are the basic characteristics of so-called Western Christian civilization, and we have been successful in this fight. Communism did not conquer our countries, because the Armed Forces did not allow it, because the people did not want it.

In the case of Brazil, we also participated in two world wars against Nazism-Fascism. So, in this world, we have suffered in recent centuries the threat of the centers of power, the Nazi-Fascist threat, and the communist threat. Now, we have the globalizing neo-liberal threat, and it is about this I propose to speak. . . .

Globalization and CVRD

When I was second in command of the Armed Forces Joint Chiefs of Staff, I participated in a strategic studies seminar at the Superior War College. There, I had the opportunity to analyze the period at the time—it was 1992—and, primarily, what was going on in Brazil since 1990, with the Collor government. I said then that the world, after having suffered the consequences of the four Communist Internationals, at the service of Moscow, Beijing, Cuba, and the Trotskyists—was now living through a period of the Fifth International.

In Brazilian military slang—I don't know if you say the same thing here in Argentina—we are accustomed to dubbing all of these variations of Communism as the International Communist Movement (ICM), and so I said then: "Gentlemen, we are now facing a new ICM, the Fifth International, the International Capitalist Movement."

It does not have a nation; indeed, it often imposes itself upon the interests of the most powerful nations. Many times, it works against the United States itself, and also tries to impose its control over the world. Its orientation is to freeze world power, which is something that good Brazilian diplomacy has always fought, throughout its history. This freeze would take the following form: The powerful, rich, developed countries, would continue *secula seculorum*, and countries like ours, the developing, peripheral ones, would serve as raw materials providers, and nothing more. Our countries would have no opportunity to realize their destinies and their national aspirations.

Along with this, came the so-called phenomenon of globalization. It is clear that globalization exists. The communications media instantaneously bring what happens in Asia or in Africa to every part of the world. At night, through television, we become aware of what has happened in the world. So, there is a phenomenon of globalization. However, this is not just gaining instant knowledge of events throughout the world, with all its consequences. It is domination, it is plundering the capital of countries which have not yet found their

destinies. Neo-liberalism becomes one and the same with neo-colonialism.

Even now, in Brazil, we had the sad development that, despite the reaction of aware portions of the population, of the leaders who went out to the streets to protest, who wrote all the protests they could, the company Vale do Rio Doce was sold.

Selling Vale do Rio Doce was a crime, not only because its reserves were valued between \$1.3 and \$1.5 trillion, but also because it had railroads, it had ports, it had warehouses, all this. But even more than this, it had the "know how" and the "know why" of mineral exploration that we Brazilians have developed for ourselves. To sell it was criminal, but to sell it at the price at which it was sold—a bit more than \$3 billion . . . !

It was sold to certain international interests which are already owners of the major mining companies of the world. So, we are today living in a state of financial speculation. The most common and most fragile assets are paper. It is money without a foundation. The real wealth is in the minerals, in the productive land, in the water, which will become very rare in the next century, and it is in the Sun itself, as a source of energy. These gentlemen of the great international oligarchy know this, and that is why they are buying up all our wealth, to guarantee their own futures. . . .

I may be referring to the Brazilian problem, but when one meets a Latin American brother and begins to speak, we come to the conclusion that we face the same thing. We are, as the Navy well knows, in the same boat. We must fight for our boat, because if this Latin America sinks, we all sink together.

Democracy and demagoguery

Everyone in Brazil, including the military, yearns for democracy: We want democracy to once again preside over the destinies of our country, but we want democracy based on virtue and on concern for the common good.

They say that the definition of good government is very easy: It is that which makes the people more happy, or less unhappy, especially the least affluent and most abandoned portion of the population. We want a democracy with this spirit. Since 1985, we have had democracy, but it is a formal democracy, the same as in the majority of our countries. It is a democracy in which there are free elections, in which there is freedom to make political propaganda, in which many parties contest in the elections, in which individuals alternate in power, but despite all of these formal mechanisms of democracy, the fruit we have reaped is oligarchy—the worst form of the oligarchy, nepotism, favoring friends, relatives, colleagues and friends of those who are in power. It is a plutocracy, based on money and on an assault on the public treasury; it is demagogic, because it lies.

In every election, these gentlemen appeal to the people, they make promises, make commitments, they are elected and

they forget. Four years later, they return with the same lies and are elected again. This oligarchy is tyrannical, because it goes against the rights and needs of the people.

All of this occurs because there is manipulation of the elections, they are won with money . . . Money and television elect persons. Today, for example, our President is a sympathetic figure. When he speaks, he is very convincing, but we have today an institutionalized lie. It seems that the practices of Goebbels and of George Orwell's *1984* are in full force, because it seems that it is sufficient to tell a lie many times on television, for the people to believe it is true.

We are living a virtual truth that has nothing to do with reality, and the great objective of these people, of every follower of neo-liberalism, is to keep themselves in power. There is no longer a concern for meeting the common good, there is no national program. For example, we are limited to controlling inflation, to the stability of money, and that's it. That is very little, for a country as vast as ours, with the problems that we have.

Programs of education, of housing, of jobs, are necessary. Unemployment is growing, because the markets are being opened, so highly recommended by the liberals, and because so many foreign products are arriving that are so much cheaper than ours. . . .

What has happened, is an attack on our national patrimony with this process of privatizations and, also, international greed for the Amazon which so concerns us. There are world leaders, such as France's [former] President François Mitterrand, for example, who insisted that the Amazon should not belong to Brazil, but should be the common patrimony of humanity, with all of its wealth.

These neo-liberals have no scruples, and say exactly what they want. We have to defend ourselves, and to defend ourselves we need strong Armed Forces with a deterrent capability. That is, any adversary or enemy which seeks to impose its will upon our peoples should have to think twice before undertaking such an adventure, out of fear for the consequences. This is why the Armed Forces have been made the main target for destruction, because everyone knows that while there are strong and powerful Armed Forces, no one can impose a will damaging to our national interest.

We must strengthen the Armed Forces, to guarantee our independence, our sovereignty, the integrity of our national patrimony which is so threatened.

Solutions

Solutions are possible, When I was in Rio Grande do Sul, they said to me: "Look, Admiral, you sound like a prophet

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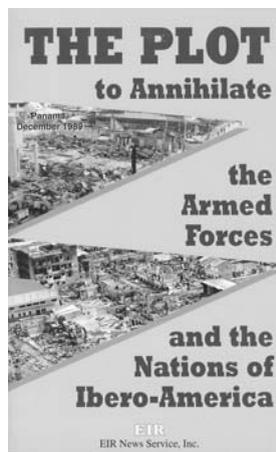
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of the Old Testament, telling us of the errors. But what are the solutions?"

So, the solutions. I am going to use the methodology of the Superior War College: political solutions, psychosocial solutions, economic solutions, and military solutions. There are solutions. In our case, the unity of all the people. . . . The strengthening of the Armed Forces is the first step, because they are the bulwark of nationality. . . .

I would like to return to my two opening points, and to make a profession of faith: that we forget all the misunderstandings of the past, the disputes and the rivalries, and that we together build a future and that we work toward the unity of all Latin America, so that we will have force. That we commit ourselves to justice and peace in our societies. A deep commitment to the Fatherland and to its greatness. . . .

Many may say, this admiral is a false prophet. It is comfortable for him, now that he is retired, to say all these things. But I spoke like this while in active service. When I had my three stars, I sent a document to my chiefs, to the ministers of the three forces, to the heads of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I also issued a public declaration before all the Navy admirals, on Dec. 29, 1992.

Perhaps it was a coincidence that, three months later, they put on the list of promotions an admiral who was my junior and, despite the fact that I still had one year and eight months of active duty left, I was obliged by law to retire.

Therefore, I am not saying these things out of vanity, which, thank God, I do not have. It is merely to say to you that I am not a new Christian and that I have no electoral interest in this, but a love of my people and of my country. I would like to bring to you these convictions, asking almighty God to give us the power, talent, and strength to continue the good fight, fighting for the greatness of each one of our Fatherlands, and for the integration of the nations of Latin America, with respect for the characteristics of each one, with respect for national sovereignties, and seeking the peace and happiness of all our peoples.

Today, many are dying of hunger. Now, the truth cannot be hidden for much longer, and we are seeing in Brazil, which is the phenomenon which I know — although I admit that the same is happening in Argentina, in Mexico, in Peru, and elsewhere — that people are beginning to recognize the treason, the lies, and the impositions to which we are being subjected. And, God willing, I am certain that this is going to change. But it is necessary to unite all well-meaning people, the patriots, the military, the Christians, the men of good will of all religious orientations. That is why we are no longer preaching only in the desert, because people are listening. We are suffering, but we are being faithful to our greater commitments, as you are, with your grave suffering because of your commitment to your Fatherland, Argentina. And after Good Friday, with all certainty we will have Resurrection Sunday in our countries. It all depends on us.

Martínez: the basis for collective security

The following are excerpts from a presentation given by Argentine Vice Adm. Carlos Martínez (ret.), who shared the panel with Brazilian Admiral Tasso (ret.), at the Naval Center in Buenos Aires on Sept. 19.

These policies [of collective security] in our country have produced damaging effects upon the defense budget and the development of industries and technologies themselves. On the other hand, in Brazil, with much more personality, I believe, a certain distance has been kept from those kinds of policies, and none of its technological development has been abandoned. . . .

The joint strategic project to which we must aspire should include the clear necessity of protecting the vast geographic spaces which are of common interest, such as, for example, the South Atlantic, and which should be, for us, zones of peace and cooperation and are, further, the purer half of the planet, above all when we spend so much time talking about contaminated areas. . . .

We have, for example, the concern of European countries over the Amazon, just as there could be for our lands of the Pampas, which are, as I said, the purest that exist in the world. Without adequate deterrent capability and without adequate political determination, these vast areas could be greatly coveted by international interests. . . .

A strategic project is required which includes, as Admiral Tasso Vasquez stated, an adequate deterrent capability coordinated among countries, and a political will grounded in our historic, cultural, and Christian roots. . . .

Globalization is nothing more than an ideology which, with the argument of optimizing economic processes, business, finances, etc., is simply bringing about a new distribution of labor on an international scale, as occurred in the past century, and appears to be the developed countries' present means for trying to rule us. . . .

Sovereignties are trampled upon and restricted. Publicly, there has been much talk about how sovereignties and borders should disappear. Financial power subordinates nations and national economies, erases borders, and razes everything that opposes these plans. . . .

A great policy, with noble objectives and with sufficient deterrent military power, based on our roots, on our style of life, on our Christian sentiments, as I said earlier, demands