

## Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

### Military alert against Bush's new order

*Growing numbers of Brazil's military believe they are next on the New World Order hit list, and they don't like it.*

In an effort to gain greater support for its Persian Gulf war deployment, the Bush administration has activated the parallel government structure known as Project Democracy, an apparatus which Bush himself had been instrumental in putting together during the Reagan years, and which received public attention when its corrupt intrigues came to light in the Iran-Contra scandal. Along with this, the U.S. government, according to Brazilian business circles, is quietly promoting the laundering of Kuwaiti and Saudi funds in exchange for unconditional support for the genocidal war against Iraq, either by sending troops to the Middle East, as Argentina has done, or in other ways consistent with Bush's "New Order."

At a Jan. 29 meeting of the Brazil-U.S. Chamber of Commerce in São Paulo, Elliott Abrams, the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, with U.S. Ambassador Richard Melton at his side, launched a volley of threats. "We Americans would like Brazil to demonstrate its support of this United Nations initiative" regarding the Persian Gulf, or otherwise the Brazilian position would end up being "worse than the lukewarm support that Germany is giving the allies. . . . We don't want ships, but we do want words. We expect a firm pronouncement that Brazil totally and unequivocally supports the allied forces."

Abrams went on: "To straddle the fence will not help Brazil's trade with Iraq after the conflict; that is going to depend on the next government."

The coincidence between Abrams's

visit and the offer of Kuwaiti and Saudi funds is not surprising, if one takes into account that the former assistant secretary was responsible for similar operations to finance the Contras and other secret Project Democracy operations. Abrams is also known as a vocal proponent of the plan to dismantle the armed forces of Ibero-America.

For his part, U.S. Ambassador Melton sent a letter to the daily *Gazeta Mercantil*, published on Jan. 31, which reaffirmed the Bush administration pressures. "The United States is pleased to see the greatest possible support of the nations which are members of the United Nations. . . . The international community will have sent a permanent warning to any dictator or despot, present or future, who plans an illegal aggression. Therefore, the world must take advantage of this opportunity to realize the promise, which has existed for a long time, of a new order," wrote Melton.

The Brazilian Armed Forces' reaction to U.S. cynicism was unequivocal. On Feb. 1, the country's major papers gave prominent coverage to a note entitled "Officers Criticize U.N. Action in Gulf." They reported, "The most moderate wing of the Army believes that the United Nations acted too hastily in giving its backing to countries which notoriously have interests in the Persian Gulf. That evaluation comes from a senior military source who participated in a Rio de Janeiro meeting of generals to analyze the Persian Gulf problem."

The tough editorial in the January issue of *Ombro a Ombro*, a military monthly, is cited as the main source

reflecting the opinions of the Armed Forces. *Ombro a Ombro* said, "We will not go into the merits of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, but we cannot be silent in the face of what we watch with horror: on the eve of the third millennium, a conflict being resolved by force of arms."

"The U.N., created to assuage conflicts and fight for peace, showed itself to be impotent. . . . Its resolutions are not complied with and its omission in cases in which the great powers have interests is visible. It is going down the same path as the failed League of Nations and its destiny, if it continues this way, is to be buried in a 'Desert Storm.'"

"The Kuwait affair," continues *Ombro a Ombro*, "the motive of which conflict descends upon not only the Gulf region but the Middle East and threatens the world, has its roots in the concept expressed by voices of profit that 'the oil belongs to humanity.' Accepting such a concept is terribly dangerous, since were it to strengthen similar concepts, such as, for example, 'the Amazon is the patrimony of humanity,' Brazil's sovereignty could be at risk."

The article then says, "The President of the United States' declaration of his desire to build 'a new world order for the next 100 years' is also troubling. Under whose control? Who is going to dictate the rules of that order? . . . From this follows the requirement that any country wanting to have a top position in the concert of nations must have Armed Forces which are well instructed and technologically equipped, without which, the risk of being a defeated and looted country is evident."

As former Army Minister Leônidas Pires Gonçalves recently summarized Army thinking: "This region, the Amazon, will not become another Persian Gulf."