

U.S. uses threats, bribes to draw Brazil into 'special relationship'

by Silvia Palacios and Lorenzo Carrasco

In the aftermath of the dramatic military developments in Venezuela in February, the Bush administration is trying to accelerate implementation of a new order of hemispheric security, based on an inter-American system of limited sovereignties, that will impose stability upon the International Monetary Fund's "democracies" of the continent.

The recent tour of U.S. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney to several key Ibero-American countries—Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, and Panama—had the express purpose of pressuring the armed forces of those countries to join the hemispheric military reorganization of Bush's new order, which would imply the self-mutilation of those armed forces as the necessary first step toward their subordination to a multinational strike force under Pentagon control. The same idea had already been presented by Cheney at a conference of American army commanders held last November in Washington, D.C., and U.S. diplomacy has been using discussion of the Haitian crisis within the Organization of American States (OAS) to promote the same agenda.

During his pass through Brazil, Secretary Cheney dropped several veiled threats against the armed forces of the continent. In clear reference to the military insurrection in Venezuela in early February, Cheney said that the United States will use all of its "moral and diplomatic authority to strengthen democracy in the hemisphere." It is important, he added, "that we work with other governments of the region and with the Organization of American States" toward that end.

He further proposed, one by one, each of the aspects that make up Bush's new hemispheric military policy. In a meeting with Brazilian President Fernando Collor de Mello, for example, Cheney openly declared that the United States would like to see the Brazilian Armed Forces reduced in size, and more involved in the fight against drug trafficking.

The daily *O Estado de São Paulo* editorialized Feb. 23 that Cheney "came to work with very clearly defined objectives." Among these were a proposal to transfer a part of the training program of the U.S. Southern Command, currently headquartered in Panama, to Brazil. As part of the U.S. pressure to strengthen the role of "civilian society," a huge

pressure campaign has been unleashed inside Brazil to create a Defense Ministry that would unify the three presently existing military ministries.

The 'McNamara plan' for dismantling the military

In sum, the elements of Washington's new hemispheric military policy, based on the same doctrinal principles first presented in May 1991 by former U.S. defense secretary and former World Bank president Robert S. McNamara, are the following:

- Reduction of military forces;
- Making official a regional system of "technological apartheid," imposing supranational control through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and ratification of the Tlatelolco Accord in the nuclear field, and of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in the area of missile launchers;
- Modification of the military training program, transforming schools of higher military studies into indoctrination centers centralized by Washington, to guarantee "civilian control" of the armed forces;
- Redirecting the functions of the armed forces away from national defense and toward the Bush administration's phony war on drugs;
- Conversion of the OAS into a continental version of the United Nations Security Council, with military prerogatives to impose, as necessary, the new order of limited sovereignties throughout the hemisphere,

Junior partner in Bush's new order?

To crystallize its new hemispheric security strategy, the Anglo-American Establishment which rules through the Bush administration, needs to buy Brazil, by whatever means necessary. As is well known, the Brazilian Armed Forces have come out publicly against the colonial impositions of the new order. To neutralize them, Washington has launched a diplomatic offensive which, through a clumsy combination of bribes and threats, is parodying what in the 1970s was known as the Brazil-U.S. "special relationship," fruit of the political machinations of former secretary of state Henry Kissinger.

As part of this new parody, and for the purpose of nurturing the fantasies of President Collor and his foreign affairs Establishment, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali threw out the bait—in a February interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel*—that Brazilian membership in an expanded U.N. Security Council was being considered, along with that of Germany, India, Japan, and Nigeria. The new U.N. secretary general's romance with Brazil goes back to at least last November, when Foreign Minister Francisco Rezek traveled discreetly to Egypt to express Brazilian support for the anticipated election of Ghali to the U.N. post.

The ploy is only too clear. Brazil is being invited to take a seat at the First World's table, as a sort of poor "junior partner," to help the Anglo-Americans consolidate their imperial in the Western Hemisphere. The scheme has its inevitable historic parallel with Portugal's João VI regime at the beginning of the last century, when British machinations succeeded in seating Brazil, then the Portuguese imperial seat, in the Holy Alliance, in exchange for its automatic alignment with the policies of British Foreign Minister George Canning. It is worth noting that the personal weaknesses and pretensions of President Collor are unfortunately all too similar to those of King João IV.

It was at the end of last year that the Collor government signaled its availability, initially suggested during the Persian Gulf crisis, to embrace the new military policies emanating from Washington. Collor agreed to subject control of Brazil's nuclear technology to the oversight of the U.N. Security Council, through de facto compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which had historically been rejected by Brazilian diplomacy as a discriminatory accord.

In this same context, in early December 1991, Brazil and Argentina signed a safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, opening up all of its nuclear installations to international supervision. Commenting on the agreement in a Dec. 16 interview with *O Estado de São Paulo*, IAEA director Hans Blix expressed satisfaction that one of the lessons learned from the Iraqi nuclear program is that "the agency cannot limit itself to mere inspection of installations. The agency should also have the right to demand inspections of undeclared installations." Blix added, "If we believe that a country is not complying with its obligations, this is referred to the Board of Governors, or to the United Nations Security Council, which is the appropriate place to apply economic, diplomatic, or political pressure."

At the same time, between November and December of last year, in a well-coordinated move, Brazilian and U.S. diplomatic moves intensified. On Dec. 16, U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Richard Melton offered praise for the nuclear agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and then announced that a delegation of the Missile Technology Control Regime would be visiting Brazil in January 1992, to discuss with Brazilian authorities exercising greater control over exports of strategic materials.

One month later, the Collor government issued a decree creating a new agency to substitute for the Brazilian Commission of Space Activities, without the participation of the Armed Forces and subject to the control of the Secretary of Strategic Affairs. Pedro Paulo Leoni was named to head the new agency.

And as if the message weren't clear enough, the Foreign Affairs Ministry announced in a November 1991 evaluation "the normalization of military relations" between Brazil and the United States, as evidenced by the visit of high-ranking U.S. military commanders to the country. For the first time, it was revealed that the head of the U.S. Southern Command, Gen. George Joulwan, had been in Brazil.

It was also no surprise that President Collor de Mello pledged to Cheney that his country would submit to the new colonial technological order. On Feb. 19, Collor sent a bill to the National Congress which would classify as a crime the import or export of any product that could be either directly used for war purposes, or which had multiple uses. The bill seeks to control transactions in areas of sensitive technologies, and also considers criminal the export of services directly linked to the use of war and/or nuclear materials.

Playing with fire

Unlike the earlier years of the U.S.-Brazilian "special relationship," today the South American nation is suffering the worst depression of its history, with a collapsed industrial infrastructure and with the clear opposition of its own Armed Forces to the Bush administration's colonial designs.

Cheney's meetings with the three Brazilian military ministers were apparently the coldest possible. Although nothing from the meetings has yet been publicly divulged, it is known that the Armed Forces have insisted that they will not get involved in the war against drugs, since they see their mission otherwise.

Perhaps the response to Cheney regarding his proposed dismantling of the existing military apparatus was given before he even arrived in Brazil, by the Army Ministry. A Feb. 6 editorial in the official Army magazine *Noticiario del Ejercito*, entitled "The Lessons of History," declared, with reference to the war against Iraq: "It is worth noting that the recent international developments indicate that the germ of controversy flourishes when and where it is least expected. It is not, therefore, prudent to turn cowardly in the midst of difficult times, and much less in the face of crushing comparisons between our Armed Forces and the extraordinary military might of the developed countries, so recently demonstrated.

"Regarding the criticisms which seek to emphasize the obsolescence of war matériel currently in use by the Brazilian Armed Forces, it is worth remembering that Hitler prepared his exceptional war machine—despite the severe restrictions imposed by the victors of World War I—using obsolete or simulated material."