

Kissinger, Powell snubbed in S. America

by Cynthia R. Rush

The nations of South America's Southern Cone—Brazil, Argentina, and Chile—were subjected to a double whammy in early November when both former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Colin Powell descended on them to demand adherence to the new world order's military and economic agenda.

In the case of Brazil, which has just gone through a political crisis culminating in the removal of President Fernando Collor de Mello on corruption charges, the trip was designed to deliver a threat to new President Itamar Franco as well as to military leaders: Don't contemplate a break with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) austerity economic policies or consider any military policy other than what Washington dictates for the region.

But if the luminaries of the Anglo-American political establishment thought that a visit by Kissinger and Powell were sufficient to exact obedience from these nations, they learned otherwise. Except for Argentina, whose slavish embrace of every aspect of Anglo-American policy is something of a continental embarrassment, military and political leaders in Brazil and Chile gave the duo something less than a warm welcome.

In Brazil, Foreign Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a member of the Inter-American Dialogue, the Washington-based thinktank that has had substantial input into U.S. policy for Ibero-America in recent years, set up a meeting for Kissinger in Brasilia with Finance Minister Gustavo Krause and Planning Minister Paulo Haddad, apparently so the two could receive Henry's pearls of wisdom. The meeting was sabotaged, however, when groupings in Congress opposed to it called Haddad away to testify at hearings before he could finish eating.

EIR has also learned that other high-level ministerial meetings that were planned for Kissinger didn't materialize. In fact, his visit to Brazil ended on a scandalous note. Not only did acting President Itamar Franco cancel a meeting with him, but the country's leading daily, *Jornal do Brasil*, splashed all over its pages pictures of Kissinger sitting at a seminar—for which he was paid \$25,000 to speak—picking his nose. Not exactly the image of a highly respected ally.

A new military mission

The truth is that not all the region's military leaders are prepared to accept the orders which Powell came bearing

from the "demilitarizers" within the Anglo-American establishment—that it is time for the armed forces to "restructure" themselves, reduce their size and budget, and redefine their mission away from a defense of national sovereignty to become a national police force used largely to combat the drug trade. Powell insisted that drugs were the single "greatest threat to democracy today."

But, *EIR* has learned, Powell reportedly "got an earful" from Brazilian military leaders who aren't willing to dismember their armed forces. The general also got the cold shoulder in Chile, where Gen. Augusto Pinochet, head of the Army, and his second in command were visibly absent from Santiago during Powell's brief stay.

In Argentina, where the Menem government is in a cold sweat to implement whatever Washington demands, things were different. Kissinger proclaimed that Buenos Aires had replaced Paris as the city he felt most comfortable in, and Powell, after being feted with wine and *empanadas* at Menem's residence, gushed that he was "truly among friends." Kissinger met twice with Defense Minister Erman González to offer advice on how to restructure the Armed Forces, and lavished praise on Menem for having the "courage and decisiveness" to impose brutal austerity.

It was in this friendlier environment that Powell dared to air a controversial proposal for the creation of a continental military force whose job would be to "keep the peace on the planet," but "especially in the Americas, if unexpected conflicts were to occur." Since he repeatedly emphasized the links between drugs and subversion, it's likely that such a military force would also be intended for fighting drugs.

This proposal coincides with discussions taking place among Washington policymaking circles on how to reform the Organization of American States (OAS) so that it can respond militarily against member nations which overturn "democracy." The premise of this discussion is that national sovereignty is an outmoded concept and must be redefined to permit "collective actions and responsibilities," including intervention against nations which might challenge Washington's policy agenda.

In an article published in the Fall 1992 edition of *Foreign Policy*, a former official of President Jimmy Carter's National Security Council, Robert Pastor, demanded that "the OAS must overcome its reluctance to consider military options, even those against drug traffickers or in supervision of a cease-fire." If the OAS fails to act, Pastor warns, then the United Nations will have to be brought in.

Powell firmly supported the Menem government's proposal to become a member of NATO, and recommended that other countries, especially those in the developing sector, should also be allowed to join. In this sense he echoed Robert Pastor's suggestion that "a web of new relationships needs to be woven between the industrialized countries and Latin America's new democracies."