

Report from Rio by Lorenzo Carrasco

Sovereignty and the nuclear issue

Brazilian nationalists in the Congress offer a splendid response to the Foreign Ministry's "beggars' diplomacy."

The globalist factions that tend to dominate Brazilian diplomacy have become panicky over the recent decision by Brazil's Senate Foreign Affairs Commission to postpone ratification of several nuclear safeguard agreements: the Quadripartite Agreement signed in December 1991 with Brazil, Argentina, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the Tlatelolco Treaty amendments. The reaction of the U.S. State Department, according to the magazine *Relatorio Reservado*, will be to block the sale of eight ships to the Brazilian Navy. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will fly to Brazil in late February to discuss the Senate decision, among other matters.

The State Department's policy, a continuation of that of the Bush administration, is the doctrine of "technological apartheid," which uses the pretext of nuclear nonproliferation to deny advanced technology to the Third World.

Sen. Dirceu Carneiro, in a bold act of defiance against the enormous pressures of the Foreign Affairs Ministry (Itamaraty), and especially of Strategic Affairs Secretary Adm. Mario Cesar Flores, stated that under the contested agreements, "we fear that the IAEA could end up making ad hoc inspections" of Brazilian nuclear installations, which would in effect give the agency—that is, the powers of the United Nations Security Council which run it—the same prerogatives that gave formal legal justification to their scandalously unilateral behavior in inspecting Iraq's nuclear installations immediately following the "sur-

gical bombings" of Desert Storm.

Even before Foreign Affairs Minister Celso Amorim had a chance to respond, Finance Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a member of the Inter-American Dialogue and a mooted presidential candidate, denounced the Senate vote as "unfortunate," given the impact such a decision could have on various commitments, especially in the economic and financial arenas. "The international repercussions are negative; nothing in this day and age can justify Brazil's failure to adhere to nuclear safeguard clauses," Cardoso lamented.

Foreign Minister Amorim added: "The decision to postpone consideration of the agreements, in particular the Tlatelolco amendments, prevents us from participating in an important meeting of the Organization for Banning Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, in which Argentina and Chile have already taken part as full members." According to Amorim, the lack of an agreement with the IAEA will keep Brazil out of any international nuclear cooperation agreements and, supposedly, deny it access to sensitive technologies.

Speaking in the name of Itamaraty's globalists, the daily *O Estado de São Paulo* in its Jan. 17 editorial, "Splendidly Isolated," launched a direct attack on the group of nationalist senators who rejected the agreements:

"Thanks to a handful of senators who prefer to align themselves with the fallacious arguments of nostalgic informal advisers of the 'Great Brazil' persuasion, and who even appear to believe that Brazil is an enormous au-

tarchy that can grow despite what the countries around us say and do, the credibility that Brazilian diplomacy has constructed around the nuclear program has just gone down the drain. . . . We can credit the 'nationalists' of the Senate Foreign Affairs Commission for the splendid isolation Brazil faces through their lack of judgment."

The Senate decision, although potentially a temporary one, nonetheless must be seen as a dignified response to what we might dub the "beggars' diplomacy" that has been conducted by Itamaraty ever since the presidency of Fernando Collor de Mello. That "diplomacy" has unfortunately continued under the direction of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who appears to be the actual decision-maker for current President Itamar Franco.

An example of this beggars' diplomacy can be seen in statements made by Foreign Minister Amorim during a recent visit to the United States. He lamented that, despite all the changes taking place in Brazil, "today a fully democratic country, with a free and vigorous press, active social movements . . . [and] deep structural reforms in the sense of economic liberalization and privatization substituting for the old protectionist practices . . . there appears to be a strong perception that bilateral relations have changed for the worse."

Amorim pointed out that in the early 1970s, when Brazil lived "under an authoritarian regime, [where] human rights were not respected, protectionism was the touchstone of economic policy and, in the area of international security, adherence to non-proliferation agreements was deliberately avoided," the country was more respected by the United States, despite the enormous pressures that led to a rupture of military agreements with that country.