

Report from Rio by Lorenzo Carrasco

National security without a nation

With a firm eye on his political future, Admiral Flores declares borders, nations, and armed forces passé.

During a seminar on "Brazil and the New World Setting," held at the Rio de Janeiro State University in the first days of August, Adm. Mario César Flores once again displayed a remarkable talent for dialectical juggling, when he—as head of the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs (SAE), which is responsible, one assumes, for the intelligence services that protect Brazilian national security—extolled the virtues of a supranational "new world order" which seeks to bury national sovereignty. That is to say, Admiral Flores is charged with protecting something which he believes to be on the road to extinction.

According to Flores, "The United Nations Organization is the most appropriate international body to become the center of a global security system, which should replace the schemas of regional blocs and coalitions of countries in force in the 20th century." Flores's remarks were reported in *Tribuna de Imprensa* on Aug. 12.

Acceptance of the idea that sovereignty should be limited by a world government, was also the central proposition of Flores's mediocre book, *Foundations for a Military Policy*. There he asserts that "the idea of limited sovereignty and its natural long-term associate, the idea of a global unity, cannot, in principle, be rejected *a priori* as absurd, and perhaps will even correspond to the course of national evolution of the 21st century, which—who knows?—may come to its close having produced a better integration of humanity

than that of the juxtaposition, usually in conflict, of sovereign nation-states."

During the Rio seminar, Flores also asserted that "the concept of borders" is being revised, to become "more permeable" in regard to certain subjects, such as the environment. "On planetary issues," he said, "the idea of absolute power is losing force. The economy itself becomes every day more integrated. Political borders are losing the influence which they had in the past."

Given his full acceptance of the new world order, it is no wonder that Admiral Flores insists the armed forces are suffering an identity crisis, because their "role in the new world order is not yet defined." The Brazilian Armed Forces, according to Flores, should accept the job of helping the great powers establish this new order, a step which implies transforming their duties as guardians of sovereignty into those of mere guardians of order.

For him, the creation of collective security systems—such as the Inter-American Dialogue seeks to establish in the Western Hemisphere—will make it possible "to dispense with" the existence of armed forces, each with its own capability to make war, which of course also makes it necessary "to dispense with" the development of any classified scientific and technological capabilities.

This position taken by the official "charged with national security," explains the drive carried out in close coordination with the Foreign Ministry, to ram through the National Con-

gress the nuclear agreements which authorize, in practice, international inspection of the centers of national technological development: the Quadripartite Accord with Argentina and the International Agency for Atomic Energy, and the modified Tlatelolco Treaty.

In reality, the Armed Forces of Brazil are not suffering any identity crisis. It is the head of SAE himself, perhaps, who is afflicted. Any military officer who goes to war against the industrial development of Brazil—which was achieved thanks to the state dirigism begun under the "Lieutenants' Movement" of the 1920s, which allowed the country to leave behind its condition of being a semi-slave plantation and become an industrial economy—must suffer a rather deep identity crisis. The same kind of crisis is suffered by he who, charged with the security of the sovereign nation, argues for its extinction.

Admiral Flores's political career, however, appears to be prospering. With these views, he could occupy an important cabinet post in the government of whichever of the two currently front-running presidential candidates wins the October elections—that is, Luís Inácio "Lula" da Silva and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, both members of the Inter-American Dialogue and propagandists for a new regional order subordinated to a United Nations world government.

Thus, the history of the 1989 election is repeated. At that time, Flores was considered to be Lula's de facto Navy minister. Lula was defeated by Fernando Collor de Mello, but Flores still got the job.

One could disagree with Admiral Flores's strategic vision, but he does deserve recognition for his mastery of the art of setting his sails so as to best capture the prevailing winds, to ensure his political survival.