

'War and Economics' Join To Change Brazil Policy

by Lorenzo Carrasco

The unilateral decision of the administration in Washington to launch a war against Iraq, has sharply accelerated the diplomatic efforts of the Brazilian government to define an independent foreign policy, in order to guarantee the country some maneuvering room in the face of growing pressures in the areas of security and international trade. This reaction is not insignificant, in view of the obsessive intention of the chicken-hawks in Washington to turn the strategic Triple Border region in South America—where Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina meet—into a focus of foreign intervention; or, when one considers the intent to define the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) as a looting zone, expressed explicitly by pure-blooded chicken-hawk Robert Zoellick, President Bush's U.S. Trade Representative.

Brazil's position, which aligned instantly, in February and March, with the German-French-Russian effort to try to stop the war from being launched, has rapidly evolved into a series of strategic actions. It was in this context that Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad made a state visit to Brazil in mid-March, giving a clear signal that Brazil is closely eyeing the Malaysian example—breaking with the policies of IMF and George Soros.

'Principles Are Not For Sale'

In an interview published March 31 in the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, who is heading this new diplomatic effort, fiercely defended the government's tough opposition to war. Asked if Brazil did not fear retaliation, including economic, from the United States, Amorim responded: "Principles are not for sale! But I do not believe there will be retaliations. I don't believe that would be in the interests of the United States. First, they know that there is no anti-Americanism, no antagonism, against them. And second, what interest would they have in weakening the largest democracy on the continent, after themselves? I couldn't understand that."

Amorim granted this interview from Athens, where he was participating in the European Union meeting with Ibero-American countries, which inaugurated a tour that took him to the Vatican, Russia and France.

In Rome, Amorim was received by Pope John Paul II, to whom he delivered a letter from President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva which stressed the political and spiritual importance of the Pope. "The international community is in particular

need of moral authority and spiritual leadership," and the Pope has an extremely important role to play in reinitiating dialogue on the future of Iraq and in the reorganization of the world order, Amorim said. The President's letter emphasized that "Brazil, the country with the largest Catholic population in the world, which lives peacefully with other creeds, shares the Vatican's concern over the creation of a new center of instability and possible aggravation of extremisms."

After being received by the Pope, Amorim met with Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, the Vatican Undersecretary of State for Relations with States, with whom he discussed questions related to Ibero-America, specifically with regard to the Brazilian initiative of the Group of Friends of Venezuela.

Potential New World Order Emerging

The next day, on April 1, the Brazilian Foreign Minister was in Moscow, where he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. Amorim was accompanied by the Foreign Ministers of Peru and Costa Rica, Allan Wagner Tizón and Roberto Tovar Faja; all three, representing the Rio Group. Out of that meeting came a "Declaration of Moscow," which in a clear message to the United States, states: "The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations and Security Council in international relations, as the leading universal instrument for maintaining peace and international security, and in support of economic and social development. They also stressed the need for strict observance of the UN Charter and universally recognized principles and norms of international law."

Wagner reported that the four Foreign Ministers had "converging views" that the combat in Iraq must end "as soon as possible."

The Foreign Ministers agreed "that a central objective of the international community should be to reduce the threats of conflict on any scale to an absolute minimum," pointing to the intensification of threats to national, regional and international security, such as international terrorism, the illegal drug trade, transnational organized crime, and poverty and extreme poverty, "which put stability and democratic governability at risk."

The 19-member Rio Group is the informal consultative mechanism which is the closest thing to an integrated political body which the Ibero-American nations have. All the major nations of Ibero-America are members, with one Caribbean country participating each year in representation of that part of the Americas.

Thus, as Ivanov noted, the visit of the Rio Group troika was "a remarkable event in relations between Russia and the Latin American countries," with special importance at this crucial and dramatic time. Overall, our discussions focused on how that crisis may affect the creation of a new world order, he reported.

Peru's Wagner, speaking as the current chairman of the

Rio Group, agreed that the meeting marked a “new stage in relations between Russia and Latin American countries.” He announced that given “the high degree of coincidence of our views,” it was decided that Russian-Troika meetings would be held yearly, and a heads of state meeting between Russia and the Rio Group would be taken into consideration. A Russian-Ibero-American heads-of-state summit would mark a major shift in decades of geopolitics, indeed!

While still in Moscow, Amorim took care to respond to concerns that a great distancing from the United States was occurring. He added, however, that he felt it necessary for Brazil to meet with U.S. authorities. “I am absolutely interested in this, and am trying to see how this can occur,” he told the daily *O Estado de São Paulo* on April 2. “It is fundamental for us. . . . I see no reasons for a deterioration in relations, because we do not hold an anti-American sentiment. The fact that we have differences does not mean that we are adversaries.”

Asked by *O Estado* if “Brazil’s strategy to clearly align itself with countries that oppose the war is motivated by the country’s old ambition to join the Security Council as a permanent member,” Amorim answered adamantly, no. “Our motivation in favor of peace and international law is authentic, genuine, and reflects the sentiment of the Brazilian people as expressed by the two houses of Congress.”

Break With Empire, Financial System

But all of this laudable effort in the field of diplomacy will fail, unless the underlying cause of war and the drive to empire is addressed: the global economic breakdown crisis. This, the Lula government has not done, as it instead continues to adhere to the genocidal policies which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has dictated to Brazil. This, in turn, has created a domestic political nightmare for the Lula government, since an important part of the ruling Workers Party adheres to the policies of George Soros (economic conservatism and social radicalism), which clearly represents the Achilles’ heel for the Lula government, and concomitantly, of its own foreign policy.

Hunger will not be defeated by good intentions, nor will peace be won by waving white handkerchiefs, was the central message of an historic speech given by Congressman Enéas Carneiro on March 27 to the plenary of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, and directed to President Lula. Citing warnings from “the renowned American economist and thinker Mr. [Lyndon] LaRouche” that this international financial system based on “*pure speculation*, without any correspondence to the physical world” is leading to “the abyss,” Carneiro stated that the only effective form of opposition to the Bush’s government’s imperial impulse is a rupture with the IMF system.

He stated firmly: “At this time, when the majority of the civilized world states that it is opposed to the invasion of Iraq by the United States, it is not enough for us from Brazil, a

continental power, to say we are not in agreement with the invasion. . . . There is only one way to oppose that true genocide. . . . And that is by the definitive rupture with the rotten model that is imposed on us by the international financial system, of which the IMF, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Trade Organization and company are all tentacles.

“And now I speak directly to His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Brazil. Your Excellency has in your hands an opportunity without equal in the history of Brazil. Take advantage of the historic opportunity that is being offered us by the owners of the world themselves. Say, *Enough!* to this nauseating and infected model that sucks out the innards of the nation,” he urged.

Armed Forces and Rupture

Although the press refused to cover Enéas’ speech—he is, nonetheless, the head of a faction in the Congress, elected in 2002 with a historic record vote in São Paulo—the newspaper *Ombro a Ombro*, which represents the most nationalist wing of the Armed Forces, supported his statement in its April editorial, entitled “Empire and Rupture.” “Some might question the mixing of war with Brazilian economic and financial policy. In fact, this goes to the very heart of the matter. This war is the expression of an imperial impulse to maintain a dysfunctional and failed financial system, the same one that is subjugating us, forcing us to depreciate our public patrimony, reduce wages, and keep growing masses of citizens unemployed, creating conditions for transforming part of our territory and cities into ungoverned areas, in certain cases vulnerable to invasion by that world power emerging so brutally,” the paper wrote.

“Rupture with this financial servitude would be the expression of an independent foreign policy in defense of our sovereignty and territorial integrity. . . . A planned rupture is preferable to an improvised one, perhaps forced as an emergency response to a combination of serious internal and external factors. This could organize the process of national reconstruction, mobilizing the sane forces among our political leadership and productive sectors of the economy, the vast majority of public opinion, and, of course, including the support of the Armed Forces. The only thing lacking is the decision of the Commander in Chief.”

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