

Project Democracy apparatus plays its final card in Brazil

by Silvia Palacios and Lorenzo Carrasco

The surprise switch of Sen. Fernando Henrique Cardoso from head of Brazil's Foreign Affairs Ministry to the post of finance minister was a clear countermove against the growing role that the Brazilian Armed Forces have begun to play in defining the direction of the wobbly Itamar Franco government. The military's reemergence is occurring in the context of unquestionable signs of national disintegration: the appearance of separatist movements and growing instability on the Amazon border, sponsored from abroad by "Project Democracy" proponents determined to limit Brazil's sovereignty and open its vast economy up to unrestrained looting.

In fact, the new ministerial reform began with the demands for increased budget allocations and improved wages by the military ministers, during a May 18 meeting with President Franco. That meeting concluded with the release of an official government document supporting all the military demands, especially those concerning "the necessity of modernizing combat equipment and adequate training of the units." The document also said that "the President of the republic and the military commanders concluded that the national crisis occurs within a universal panorama of change, which demands that the nation fulfill its historic destiny of building a just, sovereign, and free society within western traditions."

Defense of sovereignty

In opposition to prevailing universalist scenarios, the government document is emphatic that "the ethnic conflicts in Europe, the battle for control over strategic zones of the world, and the formation of economic, political, and regional blocs demand greater efforts in defense of territorial and political sovereignty on the part of countries as large and rich in natural resources as Brazil," a clear reference to the separatist efforts and threatening military maneuvers the United States carried out in the Guyanese Amazon in April (see box).

The document concludes with a warning to the country's discredited and corrupt party machinery: "Democracy cannot commit suicide, as has occurred in many countries because of the state's tolerance of its enemies."

This declaration, bearing the signature of President Franco, triggered an hysterical campaign within both the Congress and the leading news media on the part of, especially,

the Workers Party (PT), which charged that a process of "Fujimorization"—a reference to Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori—was taking place in Brazil. The PT's Leninist leader in Congress, former terrorist José Dirceu, was beside himself with rage when he screamed that "it is unacceptable and even unconstitutional for the President to bring the military back onto the political scene."

The ultra-liberal newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, a Project Democracy mouthpiece, is in full agreement with the PT. It stated in its May 20 editorial, entitled "Democracy Threatened," that the government document reminds one of "the '50s and '60s, when conspiracy was rife in the barracks and the then-minister of war issued official notes informing the public that calm and tranquility reigned throughout the nation."

The liberal newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* also made a reference to what it called "Itamar's Note," stating that "the climate in the country is already one of uncertainty and apprehension because of the government's inability to adopt anti-inflation measures. . . . It could not be a more inopportune moment for the head of Planalto [the presidential office] to come out howling against imaginary and anonymous enemies of the state."

In their meeting with Franco, the military ministers reportedly demanded the firing of PT militant Maria Luiza Erundina as minister of public administration, the office which oversees negotiations over military wages. They also demanded the firing of the president of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), Sidney Posuelo, an anthropologist and defender of non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) interventions into Brazil's Indian reservations. Posuelo was a radical opponent of any attempts to modify the vast Yanomami Indian reserve, whose strategic location along the border is considered by the Armed Forces as a danger to national security, a concern which is redoubled in light of U.S. military maneuvers in neighboring Guyana.

The firing of Erundina occurred one day after the publication of the government document, prompting a furious outburst from the minister herself. Her attacks on other members of the government led to the ministerial reform that culminated within hours in the appointment of Henrique Cardoso to the Finance Ministry. Until then, that ministry had been occupied by Eliseu Resende, a man who faithfully carried

out the dictates of the international financial institutions but who nonetheless had failed to win their full confidence.

Enter the Inter-American Dialogue

The truth is that the naming of Sen. Fernando Henrique Cardoso to the Finance Ministry culminates a project of the Anglo-American establishment to reassert their absolute control over the Brazilian economy, and to continue the program of "internationalization" and economic "opening" that was suspended with the impeachment of the super-corrupt Collor de Mello regime late last year. Stated another way, one could say that Cardoso's elevation to a virtual prime ministership post in the Itamar Franco government is intended to put an end to all nationalist resistance to the new world order.

The clearest indication that Senator Cardoso's appointment was a countermove to the re-emergence of the Armed Forces in public life is the fact that never in the history of Brazil has the naming of a finance minister prompted so much euphoria among the liberal elites. Represented by such mouthpieces as *Folha de São Paulo*, *O Estado de São Paulo*,

and the magazine *Veja*, the elites published special dossiers designed to forge the image of a statesman for sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso. *O Estado de São Paulo* especially presented Cardoso as a virtual prime minister, a project that has in fact been in the works for months.

The involvement of the Anglo-American establishment in this scenario can best be seen by contrasting the treatment received by Eliseu Resende during his visit to Washington in April, with that of Cardoso's recent visit. Despite his title of Brazilian finance minister, Resende was barely received by third-level government officials. Cardoso, on the other hand, was received with great pomp and enthusiasm by the highest ranks of the Clinton administration, including a private meeting with Vice President Al Gore, National Security Council chief Anthony Lake, and White House Trade Representative Mickey Kantor.

Cardoso's meeting with Secretary of State Warren Christopher was especially noteworthy, as the Brazilian senator has maintained a friendship with Christopher ever since the latter served as human rights coordinator in the Jimmy Carter

New military mobilization in the Amazon

To the disillusionment of the ingenuous who believed that after the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (Eco-92), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, international pressures on the Brazilian Amazon would cease, the latest U.S. military maneuvers held in neighboring Guyana confirm the very real threat that the "new world order" poses to the Amazon region, the world's greatest unexploited reserve of natural resources.

The daily *Correio Brasiliense* reported on May 14 that 7,000 U.S. soldiers disembarked on Guyanese territory in April to conduct jungle survival maneuvers along the border with Brazil. The maneuvers were begun, under cover of secrecy, on April 28 and concluded on May 16. Officially, the operations were carried out by personnel from the Army's Special Operations Command headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and backed by helicopters and amphibious vehicles.

It is symptomatic that the maneuvers in Guyana were carried out by special troops from Fort Bragg, the same which in August 1992 were forced to leave the Bolivian Amazonian state of El Beni due to massive protests from every sector of Bolivian society, which vehemently opposed U.S. military maneuvers on their territory. According to official reports released in Bolivia at the time, those special troops had participated in both the Persian

Gulf war and also in the invasion of Panama.

The concern of the Brazilian Armed Forces is especially great given that the political crisis in Suriname—the conflict between Col. Desi Bouterse and President Venetian—is a scenario that could lead to a Dutch military intervention into its old colony, a move which could in turn receive U.S. backing, as occurred in the case of the Malvinas War. In 1991, *EIR* charged that behind the accusations of drug trafficking against Colonel Bouterse were plans—revealed by the Dutch press itself—for a Dutch military invasion of Suriname.

Important historical background in this context is that Brazil took care to exclude from the Amazon Pact the three former Guyanas (French Guiana, Suriname, and Guyana), correctly claiming that their participation would give foreign powers a pretext for intervening into Amazonian development. Brazil considers the region as the entrance hall to the Amazon.

Following the meeting of the three military ministers with President Franco, the high military command held its own meeting in the city of Manaus, capital of Amazonas state, on May 20 and 21. Army Minister Zenildo de Lucena issued an urgent call for unity among the three forces because, he said, "the military is the final bulwark of the country." In what is viewed as a clear response to the veiled threats implied by the U.S. military maneuvers, the military commanders in Manaus announced that the Brazilian Armed Forces would conduct military operations this year throughout the great breadth of the Amazon.

U.S. proposes to send troops to Brazil

EIR has learned from high-level diplomatic sources that the Pentagon has a contingency plan to send military engineers to the desert regions of Brazil's impoverished northeast, to drill wells for water. It appears, according to these sources, that "the United States wants to repeat in Brazil the experience of humanitarian imperialism they began in Somalia."

The proposal, which was presented to Brazilian authorities and which evidently was firmly rejected, denotes an ominous intent, above all because it occurred simultaneously with the U.S. military maneuvers in Guyana.

Noteworthy in this context is the publication in the May 26 edition of the Brazilian magazine *Istoé*, of a report on secret U.S. military plans to invade Brazil's northeast during the Second World War, on the supposition that Brazil might ally itself with Germany.

government, which brought U.S. relations with Brazil to their lowest point ever. Christopher's enthusiasm over Cardoso's new appointment was expressed in a personal telephone call of congratulations, the first time this has ever occurred in U.S.-Brazil relations.

But the key to Senator Cardoso's success with the Clinton administration is not his self-proclaimed intellectual endowments, but rather the fact of his having been a founding member in 1982, together with other prominents of the Anglo-American Establishment, of the Inter-American Dialogue, a "think-tank" created for the purpose of supplanting traditional bilateral relations between the United States and the rest of the sovereign nation-states of the hemisphere, with a supranational agenda. The Dialogue is an offspring of Project Democracy, launched by the Anglo-American establishment in response to the dramatic deterioration of hemispheric relations due to the crisis of the foreign debt and the pro-British stance taken by the U.S. government during the Malvinas War.

The Dialogue's "innovation" since its founding, is its proposal for a new order based on limited sovereignty, the radical free trade of neo-liberal economics, and the dismantling of the Armed Forces as a panacea for all political problems in the region. In particular, repeated attacks against the Armed Forces have taken the form of what has come to be known as the McNamara Plan, in reference to former U.S. Defense Secretary and Dialogue notable Robert McNamara,

who presented the World Bank and International Monetary Fund with a 1991 proposal for conditioning loans to debtor nations upon their reduction of military budgets.

In October 1991, Senator Cardoso, together with other Dialogue members such as McNamara and Roberto Civita, as well as other Brazilians such as Fabio Feldman, Maria Tereza Padua, and Jaime Lerner, signed the World Resources Institute document entitled "Pact for a New World," which links preservation of the environment to demands for population control and dismantling of Ibero-America's armed forces. "Disproportionate military budgets, which are no longer necessary for national security in the post-Cold War era, should be partially converted into budgets for environmental, economic, and human security. In fact, once it were determined that environmental problems pose a greater threat to the security of the next generation, it would be necessary for military expenditures to be allocated to confront that threat," the document concludes.

Cardoso's relationship with the Inter-American Dialogue is so close that its bulletin *Dialogue* of April 1993 states that "the Latin American members currently 'on loan' to their governments include Brazilian Foreign Affairs Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso." This takes on even greater significance in view of the fact that the Inter-American Dialogue has become the principal mediator of hemispheric relations for the Clinton administration, placing itself above all concerns of national sovereignty.

Institutional crisis imminent

The decision of the military leadership to return to the institutional role it has always played in Brazilian history places it on a collision course with Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who as we have shown is one of the fiercest opponents of the Brazilian Armed Forces and one of the country's leading advocates of the new world order.

As foreign minister, Cardoso began the process of Brazil's legal submission to the new world order, putting forward the argument that Brazil could eventually be accepted as a Permanent Member of the U.N. Security Council. This was the item under discussion between Cardoso and Britain's Foreign Office chief Douglas Hurd, to whom Cardoso offered to revive a "special relation" between their two countries, in the geopolitical mold of the 19th century. This apparent Anglo-American backing was presented by Cardoso to U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali during a May 20 meeting in Washington, just hours before being nominated finance minister. Boutros-Ghali personally favors the idea of expanding the Security Council.

With the continuation of a policy of economic opening, draconian austerity, and the so-called "modernization project" already announced by Cardoso, a resurgence of the institutional crisis that was only *postponed* by Collor's dramatic fall from power is predictable in the not-too-distant future.