

# Brazilian military nationalists resist Green putsch

by Silvia Palacios and Lorenzo Carrasco

The closer Brazil gets to hosting next June's United Nations-sponsored Earth Summit, or Eco-92, the more intense the nationalist ferment becomes in this country, where George Bush's new world order is increasingly viewed as a very real threat to national sovereignty and, in particular, to Brazilian sovereignty over the immense Amazon region, the largest reserve of natural resources on the planet.

This nationalist ferment has surfaced in various sectors of the country, most recently through the Chamber of Deputies' commission to investigate the threat of "internationalization" of the Amazon. This ferment took concrete form at a recent symposium on "The Brazilian Amazon," organized by the Brazilian Army's Command and General Staff College (ECEME), in collaboration with the Brazilian Center for Strategic Studies.

The symposium was held Oct. 7-10 at ECEME headquarters—the military's leading think tank—and was attended by numerous prominent figures, including the governors of the Amazon states, high-level government officials such as the secretary for strategic affairs of the Presidency of the Republic (the state security agency), both active and retired generals, senators, deputies, university professors, and an audience of nearly 700 made up of both civilians and military personnel.

The civil-military consensus regarding the threat posed by Anglo-American efforts to "internationalize" the rich Amazon region, reached during four days of intense debate, triggered an immediate panic on the part of the Anglo-American establishment and its Brazilian supporters. Exemplary was the Oct. 13 lead editorial of the daily *O Estado de São Paulo*, which attacked the conclusions of the symposium.

## In defense of the jungle

It was Gen. Antenor de Santa Cruz, Brazil's military commander in the Amazon, who inaugurated the symposium and expressed the point of view of the Brazilian Army. "I feel honored to be the military commander of the Amazon," said General Santa Cruz, explaining that the Armed Forces have never viewed the jungle as an enemy, but rather as its principal ally in defense of the territorial sovereignty of the area. Thus, he declared, the order of the day in the region must be "Defend the Jungle!" He reiterated what he had said earlier before a group of congressmen who recently visited

the Amazon capital of Manaus. "I gave a conference on the Amazon region, and the congressmen appeared surprised. One of them asked, 'How would your Army react to foreign threats?' I responded, 'We would turn this into a new Vietnam!'"

This evaluation is shared by other sectors of the Armed Forces. For example, Navy Minister Adm. Mario César Flores told the Chamber of Deputies' investigatory commission Oct. 8—while the ECEME symposium was in progress—that he saw strong indications of a U.S. military intervention in the zone surrounding Brazil: "This shows that they want to familiarize themselves with the theater of operations. People continue to deny it, but the possibility that a threat might come by an indirect route cannot be ignored." He also reported that the United States has been pressuring for its Armed Forces to participate in military maneuvers in the region with the Brazilian Navy. "These requests have been repeatedly denied," the minister added.

Returning to the ECEME symposium, the audience heard Gen. Leonidas Pires Gonçalves (ret.), formerly Army minister under the previous government of José Sarney, declare in his opening statement: "This symposium had to be held now, or never. . . . For quite a while I have dedicated myself, in various forums, to representing the viewpoints of the Armed Forces vis-à-vis the [Amazon] region."

"Ten years ago in the United States, I gave presentations to all the leading military schools, and it was there that I heard the first malicious questions on the Amazon. I would emphasize several points here. The Amazon has no ecological problem, nor Indian problem. It is a geopolitical and strategic problem upon which we must concentrate." General Leonidas, like other participants such as Amazonas Gov. Gilberto Mestrinho, described the "greenhouse effect" and "ozone hole threat" as colonialist hoaxes designed to provide the pretext for an assault on Brazil.

During the debate, and because of the clear role the Armed Forces are playing in defense of sovereignty, General Leonidas described the new demands of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to cut back the military budgets as "manifestations of the Pax Romana, later called Pax Americana, and now called the Pax of the G-7 [Group of Seven]. But I declare that we will be a great nation."

The governors of two Amazon states, Gilberto Mestrinho

of Amazonas and Jader Barbalho of Para, stressed the urgency of economically developing their respective states through great infrastructural works requiring massive investment. Specific projects for the Amazon were presented at a special panel sponsored by the Brazilian Center for Strategic Studies, under the Brazilian national security doctrine combining national defense with economic development.

### **The truth about the Amazon**

The ECEME symposium further served to unmask the myths promoted by the ecologists in their zeal to declare the Amazon the “patrimony of humanity.” For example, General Santa Cruz explained that a great deal of confusion had been introduced over the distinction between what is called the “legal Amazon,” which embraces an area of 5.6 million square kilometers, and the true Amazon jungle, which is but half of this area. Thus, when one asserts that 8% of the Amazon has been deforested, one must clarify the fact that this has not occurred within the jungle region proper.

Further, stated General Santa Cruz, “two-thirds of the hydroelectric potential of the country is centered in the region. Thus, if one were to carry out all the electricity-generating projects of the Plan 2010, 0.2% of the territory of the legal Amazon, that is, 11,000 square kilometers, would be flooded.”

Amazonas Governor Mestrinho charged that Brazil’s indigenous peoples, and especially the Yanomami Indians, are being used as an instrument by those who seek, for their own reasons, to carve a multinational Yanomami enclave out of the region along Brazil’s border with Venezuela. The truth, he pointed out, is that “the Yanomami are currently settled on lands rich in primary gold reserves. The Yanomami speak four different dialects which are unintelligible to one another. Their total number is slightly less than 3,000, and they would be located on 9.4 million hectares.”

### **Lutzenberger: a fox guarding the henhouse**

A key element was introduced into the symposium through a question raised by *EIR* correspondent Lorenzo Carasco: “In recent testimony to the Chamber of Deputies’ investigatory commission on the internationalization of the Amazon, Environment Secretary José Lutzenberger denied he had received financing from foreign entities to promote the thesis of the preservation or untouchability of the Amazon region, a fact I had presented in earlier testimony to the same commission. Meanwhile, we have an official document of the British Gaia Foundation, dated 1988 and entitled ‘The Life and Work of José Lutzenberger, Leading Brazilian Environmentalist’ . . . which demonstrates precisely this connection, including a detailed picture of financial disbursements to assist Mr. Lutzenberger’s work, primarily against the projects of Calha Norte, Carajas, and the hydroelectric works of Electrobras’s Plan 2010. How do you view this?”

Governor Mestrinho, an aggressive opponent of the ecol-

ogists, was the first to respond, stating, “I don’t know why he is environment secretary, when his links to foreign conservationist entities are known. It seems to me that he is the least appropriate person for the job.” Next came President Collor’s Strategic Affairs Secretary Pedro Paulo Leoni, who evasively commented that “Professor Lutzenberger is here to carry out the environmental policy of President Fernando Collor.” Gov. Jader Barbalho declared, “I don’t see anything wrong with international treaties. What has been made here is a very serious denunciation that goes against the Amazonas

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—Gen. Antenor de Santa Cruz

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development programs. . . . It should not fall to the governor of Para state to comment, but to the strategic affairs secretary, who must take into account the charges of this journalist.” Secretary Leoni did not care to address the issue further.

Over the next days, the protests against Lutzenberger did not cease. Congressman Atila Lins, president of the investigatory commission on the Amazon, declared during his presentation of the commission’s initial findings that “the great merit was to place the debate on the Amazon before the entire country.” Deputy Lins declared that “one of the four factors revealing the existence of a plot to internationalize the region”—along with the Indian question, contraband, and the drug trade—is the ecological radicalism of Lutzenberger. “All of his actions are anti-patriotic . . . he serves an international game . . . and I have proof that he is working against Brazil,” concluded the congressman. “Between 1988 and 1990, he received 50,000 pounds sterling to continue his work against Brazil. Therefore, he is an agent paid to immobilize the development of the region. His continued presence in the government has been highly detrimental to the interests of the Amazon.”

Sen. Aluizio Bezerra, vice-president of the Amazon Parliament, stated that “to ask Lutzenberger to guard Brazilian interests in the Amazon is like asking the fox to guard the henhouse.”

The strongest statements were from Gen. Leonidas Pires Gonçalves, who declared that “we must forge a movement to get this *apátrida* [man who betrays his country] out of the Environment Ministry. I feel the same hatred I felt when

## Brazilian Army condemns 'new order' magazine

"Who could be interested in the strange and sordid campaign seeking to discredit the Brazilian Armed Forces that has been unleashed by the magazine *Veja*? Could the motivation for this unpatriotic stand be coming from abroad, since it is directed against a national institution?" Thus begins an unprecedented editorial of the official daily of the Brazilian Army, *Noticiario do Exército*, in its Sept. 26 edition.

Directly attacking Bush's new world order, the editorial continues: "At a moment when one sees international maneuvers which seek to maintain an unjust *status quo* by means of which the developing nations are prevented from rising to long-sought positions on the international scene, one would expect a patriotic position, an alert to the nation and support for the Armed Forces on the part of all the press. . . . The ominous actions of that weekly [*Veja*] could tend to confirm certain sectors' suspicions of clandestine relations between elements of our press and powerful foreign groups. Can there be any other explanation for this impressive coincidence of positions which, internally, cause the restructuring of our defense agencies according to parameters convenient to those who, externally, are suggesting a progressive attenuation of the Armed Forces of the developing countries?"

The importance of this editorial lies in the fact that, for the first time, the Brazilian Armed Forces has officially indicated—in fact, with surgical precision—the source of the insidious campaign against the continent's armed

forces. *Veja* magazine is edited by Abril publishing house, headed by Robert Civita. Civita is a member, together with other prominent Brazilians such as the sociologist Sen. Fernando Henrique Cardoso and writer Celso Lafer, of the Inter-American Dialogue.

Starting as early as 1988, the Inter-American Dialogue launched a campaign to reduce the role of the armed forces of the Ibero-American countries. Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who is also a member of the Inter-American Dialogue, is the author of the doctrine which is now in the process of being adopted by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, according to which loans to developing sector countries must be made conditional upon cutbacks in their military budgets.

Civita is also a member of the executive board of the World Wide Fund for Nature (previously known as the World Wildlife Fund, or WWF), presided over by Great Britain's Prince Philip. The WWF is one of the world's leading environmentalist organizations, which has made Brazil a prime target of the Anglo-American new world order.

In early October, two weeks after the editorial of *Noticiario do Exército* appeared, the Brazil-United States Chamber of Commerce held a ceremony at the Plaza Hotel in New York, at which its directors presented their Figure of the Year award to Roberto Civita. Also receiving the award was Walter Weiner, president of the Republic National Bank of New York, the centerpiece of Edmond Safra's financial empire. Sen. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, together with former Brazilian Finance Minister Delim Netto, were among the invitees.

Perhaps it is among this prestigious gathering that the Brazilian military might find the answer to its question: "Who could be interested in *Veja*'s strange and sordid campaign?"

[Brazilian Communist leader Luis Carlos] Prestes said that if there were a Brazil-Soviet war, he would be on the Russian side."

### Military nationalism

General Leonidas's statements, which tended to represent the majority sentiment of those in the symposium audience, were fiercely criticized by the daily *O Estado de São Paulo* in its Sunday editorial of Oct. 13. Under the title "Military Nationalism," *O Estado* revealed its fear of the nationalist movement's potential to take on a popular dynamic of its own, thereby checkmating the policies of Bush's new order:

Commenting on the seminar, *O Estado*'s editors lamented that the ECEME's "participation . . . in a movement

which already has a specific commission in the National Congress may gain its own dynamic and become a nationalist movement against anything 'foreign,' with no specific enemy or target."

Hysteria even led *O Estado*'s editors—supposedly anti-communist liberals—to state that there exist "international organizations interested in driving a wedge between Brazil and the United States (note that this is not a matter of the non-existent Communist International)," whose purpose is to "induce the Brazilian military to defend a sovereignty that was never threatened." In denying the green threat of the international oligarchy, *O Estado* has been forced to erase one of the most important moments in Brazilian history: the military's 1936 fight against the "Communist Putsch," organized under direct orders from the Comintern.