

Report from Rio by Lorenzo Carrasco

Military crisis in Brazil

The McNamara Plan has gone into high gear as government-military clashes start to escalate.

Using as a pretext a case of supposed corruption in the Army's purchase of military uniforms, Brazilian President Fernando Collor de Mello has unleashed a confrontation with his Armed Forces which has already turned into the worst military crisis since the Armed Forces left the government in 1985. In fact, the accusations which triggered the crisis came from the Oct. 20 edition of the daily *O Globo*, whose owner, Roberto Marinho, has been a militant of U.S. State Department causes ever since it helped him to establish his mass media empire. The *O Globo* charges, in turn, followed a systematic campaign of attacks on the Armed Forces by the weekly magazine *Veja*.

O Globo's charges were aired less than one month after the Army's official mouthpiece, *Noticiario do Exército*, publicly denounced *Veja* for "nefarious behavior" which gave substance to "the position of certain sectors who raise suspicions of clandestine relations between segments of our mass media and powerful foreign groups." For *O Globo*, it seems, "the shoe fits."

Veja, like the *O Globo* empire, is a long-standing propaganda vehicle of the U.S. State Department. Its owner, Victor Civita, belongs to the Inter-American Dialogue, which sent out the first signals of Anglo-American plans to dismantle Ibero-America's armed forces.

It was the Inter-American Dialogue which hatched former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's "doctrine," recently endorsed by International Monetary Fund Managing

Director Michel Camdessus at September's IMF meeting in Bangkok. According to the McNamara Doctrine, IMF credits must be conditioned upon a reduction in Third World military budgets.

This proposal is now also being promoted by the World Resources Institute of Washington, D.C., an "environmentalist" institution in which, in addition to McNamara, Brazilian social democratic Sen. Fernando Henrique Cardoso (also of the Inter-American Dialogue) and green lobby Congressman Fabio Feldmann also participate.

In order to get a better grasp of the origins of the military crisis emerging in Brazil, one must consider the early October statements of Venezuelan President and Socialist International Vice President Carlos Andrés Pérez. By warning of the danger of a military coup in countries like Peru, Guatemala, and Brazil, Pérez implied that doing away with the Armed Forces was a top priority. These statements, it would appear, prompted fellow Socialist and Rio de Janeiro Gov. Leonel Brizola to give an Oct. 17 interview to the daily *Folha de São Paulo*, in which he compared the present moment in Brazil to the conditions that led to the 1964 military coup.

The Venezuelan President was forced to make a retraction in an official statement released Oct. 17, which said, "The national government categorically denies the information . . . according to which the President of the Republic had told representatives of Venezuelan political parties that 'a failure to intervene in Haiti would en-

courage coup attempts in Latin American democracies in a pre-coup state, such as Guatemala, Peru, and Brazil.' "

In response to the *O Globo* accusations, an official Army communiqué described them as "one more episode in the systematic campaign to try to discredit the Armed Forces in the public eye . . . this time centered in the newspaper *O Globo*. . . . The Army regrets that such a prestigious newspaper . . . has so precipitously published news containing unconfirmed information and aimless conclusions. In whose interest is such an irresponsible procedure?"

Similarly, the chief of the presidential military cabinet, Gen. Agenor Homem de Carvalho, stated that the accusations "are part of a campaign to demoralize the Armed Forces." Even Army Minister Gen. Carlos Tinoco urged Congress to investigate the campaign "launched for the purpose of compromising the Army."

More insightful was the president of the Military Club, Gen. Nilton Cerqueira (ret.), who named Robert McNamara as the inspirer of a "conspiracy against the Brazilian Armed Forces." According to Cerqueira, reported *Folha de São Paulo* Oct. 27, "the unfavorable analyses of Brazil's military published in the press in recent months constitute the 'dissemination' of the McNamara theory."

The uneasiness of Brazil's military ministers was clear in their refusal to appear at a ministerial meeting, called Oct. 26 at the home of Amb. Marcos Coimbra, Collor's brother-in-law and head of the civilian cabinet. President Collor responded with a public censure of the head of the General Department of Army Services, Gen. Iris Lustosa de Oliveira, who the day before had denied any corruption in the acquisition of the military uniforms.