

Marinho broke old agreements with the once all-powerful Sen. Antonio Carlos Magalhaes, abandoning him to his fate in the midst of corruption scandals.

The reason for this, is that the tendency of the old political structure, for all that it keeps its agreements with the dominant international system, will tend to resist the ongoing metamorphosis, announced by President Cardoso, of non-governmental organizations into neo-government organizations, as the WWF in Brazil is seeking to do today.

A Two-Century Battle To Open the Interior

by Lorenzo Carrasco and Nilder Costa

From the last century onward, British imperialists have based their policies for Ibero-America on preventing the nations there from following the American example of industrializing the interior. To this end, the British pursued policies of controlling the mouths of all the continent's great rivers, encouraging the balkanization of Ibero-America, and maintaining Brazil as a giant slave plantation (Brazil was one of the last countries in the world to ban slavery, doing so only at the very end of the 19th Century).

In the mid-19th Century, London organized a scorched-earth war against the then-highly developed nation of Paraguay, led by the so-called Triple Alliance (Argentina-Brazil-Uruguay), which was controlled by the British Foreign Office. That war achieved the desired effect of suffocating, down to the present time, the development of what is potentially the economically richest region of the entire continent: the area defined by the Paraná and Paraguay River basins (**Figure 1**), which includes rich agricultural regions in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Paraguay, and which, properly conceived, could bring about the agro-industrial development of the entire region, including Bolivia and the interior of all South America.

The result of the sabotage by the British and their collaborators in South America is today visible everywhere: Six different rail gauges are used for the continent's railways, making their link-up next to impossible; transcontinental transportation systems are lacking; electrical energy is generated at different cycles per second in neighboring countries; and regional and border disputes are deliberately fostered, which have kept the countries of Ibero-America at each others' throats. During the 20th Century, the British have kept up the same geopolitical games that served them so well in the 19th Century, using now the cover of environmentalism, indigenism, and the fomenting of Jacobin revolts.

The 'Great Waterway'

For example: The Paraná River and its tributaries represent the principal natural line of penetration into the South American interior, starting from the Río de la Plata estuary. The Paraná River system includes the region called the Cerrado (near No. 7 on Figure 1), a strategic, virtually unexplored region of 2 million square kilometers of prairie lands, in which a number of the major river systems of the continent (the Amazon, Paraguay, San Francisco, and Paranaíba) originate. The Cerrado region, with its 150 million fertile hectares to be exploited and with no shortage of water, could be one of the world's most important breadbaskets in the 21st Century.

There is a long-standing proposal to open up this area to development by establishing an integrated waterway on the Paraná and Paraguay Rivers. In fact, the Paraná-Paraguay waterway is merely one component of a century-old project, even more ambitious, known as the "Great Waterway," first envisioned by the German scientist Alexander von Humboldt, following his 1800-04 trip to South America. The latter would join the basins of the Orinoco, Amazon, and La Plata rivers, and would integrate all the countries of South America (with the exception of Chile) in a river network 9,818 kilometers long. This project would facilitate the development of the vast interior of the continent.

The strategic significance of the economic development and population this would bring to the interior of the continent, is comparable to that of the Rhine-Danube waterway in Europe envisioned by Charlemagne, but only recently completed.

There are two critical bottlenecks in this proposed Great Waterway: the linkage of the Orinoco with the Amazon system; and the linkage of the Amazon with the de la Plata system. Thus, it is not surprising to find, that one of the principal campaigns of the World Wide Fund for Nature in South America since 1994, has been to demand the creation of a 300,000 hectare "ecological park," the so-called Pantanal Nature Park, precisely at the latter of those two bottlenecks: the headwaters of the Paraguay River in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, where water management and river improvements are required, to link the two systems.

MSIA Counterattacks In the Courts

On Jan. 29, the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) in Brazil filed an appeal before the Rio de Janeiro state appeals court, requesting that an injunction issued against the MSIA on Jan. 17 at the instigation of the World Wide Fund for Nature's Brazilian association, WWF-Brazil,