

## I. Action for Peace Talks

# Lula da Silva Urges Creation of an International ‘Peace Club’

by Gretchen Small

Feb. 4—Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has opened a new flank for international peace, with his call for a group of nations to come together and help reach a peaceful resolution to the war between Ukraine and Russia. Brazil is stepping forward for this task, Lula announced, and he specifically named India, Indonesia, and China as three other leading developing sector giants which could help set such an initiative into motion.

President Lula presented his proposal publicly in his Jan. 30 press conference in Brasilia with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz following their talks. Brazil has a “vocation” of participating in multilateral organizations, Lula first pointed out, listing all kinds of bodies Brazil had helped found, from Mercosur to the BRICS. But now, he said, the world urgently needs a “club of peace.” He elaborated his idea:

“We have to create another body in the same way that we created the G20 after the economic crisis of 2008.... We want to propose a G20 to discuss the question of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. That war is not in the interest of anyone; it is not in the interest of any other country....

“Brazil is willing to make a contribution. I believe China plays an important role. I think India can play an important role. I think Indonesia can play an important role ... that we create a club of people who want to build peace on the planet....

“The world needs peace.”



Bundesregierung/Zahn

*Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil (right), presented his proposal for an international “peace club” of nations at a joint press conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (left) in Brasília, Jan. 31, 2023.*

### Enter the Global South as a Strategic Factor

The idea of Brazil initiating such a grouping for peace was raised publicly by East Timor President José Ramos-Horta a month ago. Ramos-Horta had attended

Lula da Silva’s Jan. 1 inauguration, and met privately with him afterwards. He told Brazil’s *UOL* news outlet that he had proposed to President Lula “that he initiate joint work with the leaders of Türkiye, India, Indonesia, South Africa and even with China, to establish a group to mediate a solution” to the Ukraine-Russia conflict, because “together, Brazil and those countries have the weight and the credibility” to do that. Ramos-Horta told *UOL* that Lula was not certain if Brazil was



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*José Ramos-Horta, the 4th and 7th President of East Timor.*

important or sufficient enough in the world for such a role, but he agreed that together, “those countries might be heard.”

Within a month, despite facing multiple problems in rebuilding Brazil’s gutted economy and unity left by departing President Jair Bolsonaro, Lula decided the urgency of the world crisis required such an attempt be made, because, as he said, “the world needs peace.”

Schiller Institute leader Helga Zepp-LaRouche immediately welcomed President Lula’s initiative. She had herself proposed last November that the time had come for the nations of the Global South, which represent the majority of the world’s population, to step forward and insist that a new international security and development architecture must be negotiated for comprehensive and lasting peace to be secured worldwide.

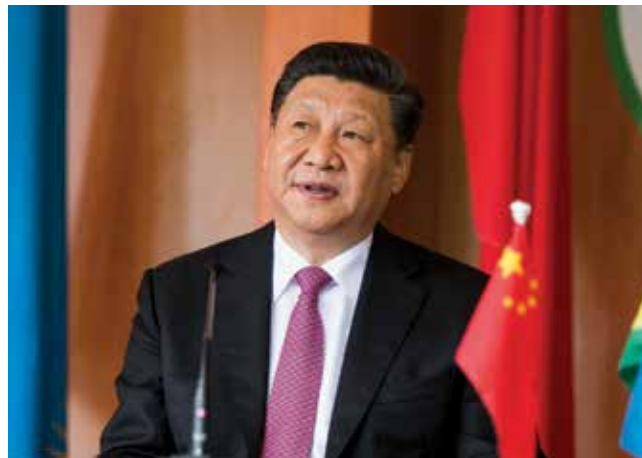
“The driving force behind this war danger is the imminent disintegration of the neoliberal financial system, which has now entered the hyperinflationary phase as a result of years of liquidity injections into the monetary system, and of the ‘Great Reset’ policy,” she wrote in the longer [article](#) from which her speech to that conference was taken.

“It is ... appropriate that the Non-Aligned Movement countries speak with one voice at the next occasion, at the G20 conference in Indonesia in November (or at an extraordinary session of the UNGA [UN General Assembly], if called on an emergency basis), and that they demand a new security and economic architecture, which takes the interest of every country into account,” she proposed. “It is a proven principle in history, that peace treaties only function if they take into account the interest of each party, as was the case with the Peace of Westphalia.”

## Diplomacy Begins

Lula insisted repeatedly and forcefully in the press conference, to the evident chagrin of Scholz, that peace must be built by people who want peace. “To try to reach an end to the war ... what we have to do is form a group strong enough to be respected at a negotiating table—and sit down with both sides,” Lula said.

He reported that he had discussed his “peace club” idea with Scholz, and with France’s President Em-



Office of President Paul Kagame

“Our Chinese friends,” says Lula, “have a very important role” to play in his proposed “peace club.” Shown: President of China Xi Jinping.

manuel Macron when the two spoke at length by phone on Feb. 2, and that he intends to discuss the proposal with President Joe Biden when they meet in Washington on Feb. 10.

But Lula stressed that he believes China is crucial to this initiative. He reiterated that “our Chinese friends have a very important, very important role” to play, which he intends to discuss with President Xi Jinping when he goes to China, a visit currently planned for March. “It is time for China to roll up its sleeves and try to help find peace between Russia and China,” in his view.

According to Lula’s Special Advisor (and former Foreign Minister) Celso Amorim, Brazil views Türkiye as another nation which could participate in such an effort. Amorim explained to Brazil’s 247 TV on Feb. 1:

“What President Lula wants is to look to the future and try to help in the negotiation. And in this process,

he has emphasized that it is necessary that other actors participate, not those who are already directly involved in the conflict. He has mentioned the importance that China has in this process. Someone has to talk to the Russians, it’s no use having only people who talk to Zelensky ... but it also cannot be China alone. So, I think that countries like Brazil, Türkiye, India could come in. Countries that either because of their size or because of their strategic importance can also have an effective influence. It is necessary to breathe fresh air over this situ-



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Celso Amorim, Special Advisor to President Lula.

ation. It cannot be just the United States and the European Union on one side and Russia on the other.”

### Peace Means Stop Sending Weapons

High on Scholz’s agenda for his trip, was to get Brazil to sell to Germany some of its stocks of ammunition for the Leopard 1 tanks which are part of Brazil’s military equipment, which would then pass that ammo on to Ukraine. He insisted on pressing this request, despite the fact that the Brazilian press had revealed three days before he arrived that the request would be turned down.

According to the widely-cited Jan. 27 story in *Folha de São Paulo*, Lula had rejected the proposal when he met with his military command on Jan. 20. Then-Brazilian Army Commander, Gen. Júlio Cesar de Arruda had argued for accepting the German request, from which Brazil would get around \$5 million, and when

Russia. Brazil is a country of peace.... And that’s why Brazil doesn’t want any participation in this war—not even indirectly, because I think, that at this moment, we should be looking for who can help find peace between Russia and Ukraine. We need to find someone, because up to now, the word ‘peace’ is being used very little.”

### Russia Not Solely Responsible for this Conflict

Despite lying press stories to the contrary, President Lula did not hold Russia solely responsible for the bloody conflict taking place in Ukraine.

Lula had been slammed by the mainstream media for months after his May 4 interview with *Time* magazine, in which he had called out NATO, Biden and Ukrainian President Zelensky for “encouraging the war,” instead of seeking a negotiated solution. The interview earned him a brief place on the first hitlist issued by Ukraine’s notorious Center for Countering Disinformation in July 2022.

Then-candidate Lula had pointed to JFK’s resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis as an example of the kind of real leadership required today. “In the same way that the Americans persuaded the Russians not to put missiles in Cuba in 1961, Biden could have said: ‘We’re going to speak a bit more. We don’t want Ukraine in NATO, full stop’.” That would not be a “concession” to Russia, but a step toward peace, he [said](#) to *Time* magazine:

“Let me tell you something,” Lula added in that interview. “If I were President of Brazil and they said to me,

‘Brazil can join NATO,’ I’d say no.... Because I’m a guy who only thinks about peace, not war. [...] Brazil doesn’t have disputes with any country: not with the U.S., not China, nor Russia, nor Bolivia, nor Argentina, nor Mexico. And the fact that Brazil is a peaceful country will allow us to reestablish the relationships we created between 2003 and 2010. Brazil will once again become a protagonist on the world stage, because we will prove it’s possible to have a better world.”

Asked about that interview in his press conference with Scholz, now-President Lula cited the Brazilian saying whose English equivalent is, “it takes two to tango,” as the import of what he had said in that interview:

“Some said it was because of NATO deploying to the border of Russia. I remember a speech by Pope



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While German Chancellor Scholz came to ask Brazil to sell ammunition to Germany for Leopard 1 tanks—to be passed on to Ukraine—Lula rejected the proposal, insisting instead on pursuing negotiations with his “peace club” initiative.

objections were raised, suggested that the ammunition be sold to Germany with the proviso that it not be sent to Ukraine—an obvious absurdity. President Lula had insisted that Brazil would maintain its neutral position, according to the report.

Whatever other reasons were involved in the decision, Gen. Arruda was removed from his post as Army Commander the day following that meeting.

So, when asked by a German reporter at the joint press conference how he had answered the German Chancellor’s “request” that Brazil provide the tank ammunition, President Lula delivered a categorical “No.” With a by then stony-faced Scholz at his side, Lula explained:

“Brazil has no interest in passing on munitions, so that they are not used in the war between Ukraine and

Francis, saying that people couldn't expect Russia to remain quiet with a barking dog on its borders. Today, I have a clearer idea of the cause of this war and I think that Russia committed the classic error of invading the territory of another country. Therefore, it is wrong.

"But I continue to believe that it takes two to tango. It is necessary for them to want peace. Frankly, I have heard very little about how to find peace, to stop the war. I've heard very little, and that's why I have proposed that another body of some kind be created to see if peace can be achieved between Ukraine and Russia. I know it is not easy, because if it were easy, they would have stopped already, right? But, at the same time, I think that they began something, and then it's not known how it will end."

What he then said, however, was so pointed that most media censored it completely: Lula raised the case of President George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq, which was knowingly based on a lie.

Lula reported that he had reminded Scholz about the Iraq war, and he referenced how Brazil knew for a fact that it was a lie at the time, because a leading Brazilian diplomat headed the UN Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons at the time. (*Nota bene*: Bra-

zilian Ambassador José Mauricio Bustani was forced out of that position in March 2022 for patently false reasons created by none other than the infamous John Bolton, then Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Matters.)

Lula said:

"Bush knew that he [Iraqi President Saddam Hussein] did not have any [chemical] weapons, but war was necessary. And Bush then invaded Iraq, destroyed Iraq; Saddam was hung, and up to today they haven't found the supposed chemical weapons [that] were the reason for the war, right?"

"I believe that the reason for that war between Russia and Ukraine must be made clearer—whether it is caused by NATO, if it is over territory, if it is over entry into the EU—things about which the world has very little information.

"The only thing that I know, is that if I can help, I am going to help. How, I do not know. But if it is necessary to talk to Putin, if it is necessary to talk to Zelensky, I have no problem talking in the attempt to find peace. What's necessary is to form a group which is strong enough, which is respected at the negotiating table, and sit down with both."

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