

Brazil, India, South Africa Forge South-South Alliances

by Lorenzo Carrasco

While the Group of Eight richest nations annual summit, this year in Evian, France June 1-3, produced little of significance in the face of the world political and economic catastrophe—aggravated by the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq—the leading nations of the South’s developing sector made good use of that meeting for intense diplomatic initiatives toward forming a bloc, whose unity would enable them to withstand the crisis, while participating in a desperately-needed reorganization of the current world order.

In his speech to the summit, Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva presented the urgent necessity for developing countries to take up the kinds of economic and social programs implemented in the U.S. by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1930s, and the Marshall Plan to rebuild the war-torn nations of the belligerents following World War II. President Lula declared, “No theory—no matter how sophisticated—can be indifferent to misery and exclusion. Looking at contemporary history, above all, those periods which followed serious economic and social crises, I see that it was important social reforms that opened the door for development. Those reforms brought millions of men and women into production, into consumption, into functioning as citizens, and created a new and long-lasting economic dynamism. Thus it was in the United States beginning in the 1930s. And so too in the period following the Second World War in Europe.”

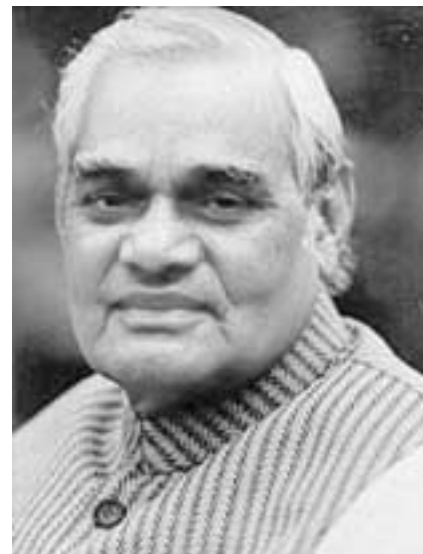
As the Brazilian press reported, the Evian summit yielded two days of intense talks between the delegation from Brazil, and the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Russia, China, India, and Malaysia. President Lula told the journalists, “We left the meetings with the idea that the developing nations need to establish closer ties among

ourselves,” and suggested that Brazil host the next summit of the Group of 15 developing nations. The Malaysian news agency Bernama reported that Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad, Algerian Prime Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the new Chinese President Hu Jintao, and President Lula had met in private.

During the various meetings held, Brazil’s delegation did not hide its enthusiasm for the idea of creating a kind of Group of Four (G-4), comprised of the four emerging powers of the South: Brazil, India, South Africa, and China. According to Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, the group could be expanded to five or six members.

After Evian, the venue for South-South negotiations moved to Brasilia, where on June 5-6, Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha became the first Indian foreign minister to visit since the two countries established relations in 1948, after India achieved Independence. The meetings ended with important economic agreements. But the most politically significant event in Brasilia, was the meeting of Minister Sinha, his Brazilian counterpart Celso Amorim, and South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma for trilateral talks, which culminated in the formation of a group which they dubbed “The India, Brazil, and South African Dialogue Forum.” They also determined that, on the invitation of the Indian government, the next meeting would take place in New Delhi, sometime during the next 12 months.

Meantime, on June 4, the Defense Ministers of Brazil and South Africa met in Cape Town, South Africa, where they signed an historic defense agreement. As Celso Amorim has recently been emphasizing, Brazil’s foreign policy priorities are to strengthen Ibero-America’s Common Market of the South, or Mercosur, and to revive an active policy toward



Brazil's President Lula, South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki, and India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee are forming a Brazil-South Africa-India triangle. Their foreign ministers met June 6, and issued a Brasilia Declaration, of their intention to regularly consult "with the aim of examining themes on the international agenda and those of mutual interest."

Africa, taking advantage of the fact that Brazil shares the Portuguese language with several African countries, and that Brazil has the second largest black population on the planet, after Nigeria.

Post-Globalization Universe

Brazilian diplomacy includes among its foreign policy instruments the National Bank of Economic and Social Development (BNDES), which will finance various physical integration and export projects, not only involving Brazil, but also the other countries of Mercosur—Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

Officially, the South-South negotiations Brazil is striving for as a natural extension of its policy for the physical integration of South America, do not compromise its ongoing trade negotiations with the European Union and the United States. The U.S. appears determined to have the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) in place by 2005. But the truth is that Brazil and the other nations of the South are already acting within a "post-globalization" political universe, and are clearly returning to the path abandoned in the late 1970s, when South-South negotiations were sabotaged by Henry Kissinger and company, paving the way for the past three decades of economic and social devastation. In fact, the early June visit to Brazil of U.S. Special Trade Representative Robert Zoellick shows that the open or veiled threats of the neo-conservative government in Washington, are not having the anticipated effect of forcing Brazil to accelerate the FTAA negotiations. On the contrary, there is widespread rejection of what has come to be viewed as an arrangement under which Brazil would be forced to make unilateral trade concessions, with a corresponding loss of sovereignty.

While a reform of the world financial system along the lines proposed by Lyndon LaRouche, of convoking a New Bretton Woods conference and formally putting the current global banking and financial system into bankruptcy reorganization, has not yet been openly proposed, the South-South diplomatic negotiations have no future unless the current world order is changed, and soon. Thus, this new Brazilian diplomacy is causing great distress within the Anglo-American establishment. This is reflected in comments made by British historian Kenneth Maxwell, of the New York Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). In an interview published June 1 in *Folha de São Paulo*, Maxwell described Brazilian foreign policy as "major confusion," and ridiculed the Brazilian intention of reestablishing itself as the primary South American leader. "Leadership needs followers. That aspiration has been more in the minds of the authorities in Brasilia, than in reality. Many Hispanic countries of South America, for example, would opt to negotiate directly with the United States, in the event of any real trade conflict and should there be the opportunity of a bilateral accord."

Brazil-South Africa-India Triangle

The Anglo-American aggression against Iraq accelerated Brazil's decision to open up a Eurasian diplomatic flank. Thus, after openly supporting the French and Russian positions at the UN, the new Brazilian government declared that a priority of its foreign policy would be relations with India, China, and Russia, nations with which Brazil has been increasingly expanding its foreign trade. In fact, during the past few months, China has become Brazil's second largest trading partner.

The June 6 Brasilia meeting by the foreign ministers of

Brazil, South Africa, and India, acknowledges the strategic significance of their decision to set themselves up as a group of nations for regular political consultation, given the weight of each country has in its respective region. As their Declaration of Brasilia states, "This was a pioneer meeting of the three countries with vibrant democracies, from three regions of the developing world, active on a global scale, with the aim of examining themes on the international agenda and those of mutual interest. In the past few years, the importance and necessity of a process of dialogue amongst developing nations and countries of the South has emerged."

In open criticism of the unilateral Anglo-American decision to wage war on Iraq, the Declaration states that the three foreign ministers "give special consideration to the importance of respecting the rule of International Law, strengthening the United Nations and the Security Council and prioritizing the exercise of diplomacy as a means to maintain international peace and security." In the Declaration, they also agreed on "the need to reform the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council. In this regard, they stressed the necessity of expanding the Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent member categories, with the participation of developing countries in both categories."

At the same time, they reaffirmed that "the new threats to security—such as terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, drugs and drug-related crimes, transnational organized crime, illegal weapons traffic, threats to public health, in particular HIV/AIDS, natural disasters, and the maritime transit of toxic chemicals and radioactive waste—must be handled with effective, coordinated and solidary international cooperation, in the appropriate organizations, based on respect for the sovereignty of States and for International Law."

The Declaration of Brasilia further emphasized the priority of fighting hunger and poverty, for which it committed to share experiences and to "study a trilateral food assistance program." They similarly "identified the trilateral cooperation among themselves as an important tool for achieving the promotion of social and economic development." Their societies, they noted, have diverse areas of excellence in science and technology, and "the appropriate combination of their best resources will generate the desired synergy. Amongst the scientific and technological areas in which cooperation can be developed are biotechnology, alternative energy sources, outer space, aeronautics, information technology and agriculture. Avenues for greater cooperation in defense matters should also be explored. The Ministers agreed upon putting forward to their respective governments that the authorities in charge of the portfolio for science and technology, defense, transportation and civil aviation, among others, also hold trilateral meetings, aiming at the creation of concrete cooperation projects."

India's Proximity to Ibero-America

The trilateral meeting in Brasilia was preceded by the visit of Indian Foreign Minister Dr. Yashwant Sinha, which took place immediately following the June 2 meeting between President Lula and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Lausanne, Switzerland, at which President Lula was invited, and agreed, to visit India in early 2004. The Indian minister's visit to Brazil is part of an unprecedented Indian diplomatic offensive throughout Ibero-America. This was made clear when Minister Sinha decided to convoke all the region's Indian ambassadors to a June 8 meeting in Rio de Janeiro, to pass along the government's new diplomatic orientation toward Ibero-America.

In an interview published June 5 in the Brazilian newspaper *Valor*, Sinha said that the major difficulties in relations between the two continents are "questions of logistics and related matters, such as the lack of direct air and maritime routes; no Brazilian or Indian airline links our nations. . . . A great obstacle to our bilateral trade has been the volatility of exchange rates. . . . We are trying to overcome the problem of credit for imports, by developing credit lines for Brazilian banks through our Eximbank. We are confident that all obstacles can be overcome."

Elsewhere in the interview, in support of President Lula's "Zero Hunger" initiative, Sinha pointed out that India had achieved "self-sufficiency in food production. Further, India is the largest producer of milk in the world, and today we have a surplus of feed grain that we can export. The Indian government successfully implemented food-for-work barter programs, and we would be happy to share our experience in combatting hunger, with Brazil and other countries."

As stressed in the joint statement at the conclusion of Minister Sinha's official visit, Brazil and India are two geographically large, developing nations, which "face similar challenges in economic and social terms. They share similar viewpoints regarding the international system, and aspire to greater participation in political, economic and financial world decisions."

In addition to the essential points defined in common at the trilateral meeting with South Africa, Dr. Sinha added, according to *Valor*, that regarding the "bilateral agenda, they expressed their satisfaction with the unprecedented increase in trade in recent years, which in 2002 reached a total of \$1.2 billion. Projections for growth in the current year are also encouraging. Exports not only increased, but also diversified. The two governments referred to the possibility of Embraer airplane sales to the Indian government in the immediate period ahead, which would open up perspectives for cooperation in the aerospace sector."

There was also discussion of launching Brazilian satellites with Indian missiles. "In the same regard, they expressed satisfaction with the contribution of the Indian pharmaceutical industry of high-quality and competitively-priced medi-

cines to the Brazilian National Health Program, and the presence in Brazil of information technology 'joint ventures' with India. . . . The adoption of the program of mixing ethanol with gasoline, adopted by India and similar to the 'Proálcool' [program of Brazil], contributed to increase the possibilities of bilateral cooperation regarding goods and services."

These advances in cooperation will increase more rapidly with the preferential trade accords soon to be signed between India and Mercosur.

South Africa-Brazil Defense Pact

No less dramatic, however, is the defense pact signed in Cape Town between South African Defense Minister Mosiuoa Lekota and Brazilian Defense Minister José Viegas Filho, according to South African news agency BuaNews, and reported in Brazil by Defensanet. Lekota stated, "The Gulf War brought new challenges and additional responsibilities to make multilateralism the foundation of world stability."

The dispatches further report that the pact would facilitate cooperation between the military organizations and defense industries of the two countries, in research and development, acquisition and logistical support, purchase of military equipment, and exchange of peace-keeping experiences. "As a developing nation, we seek associations with friendly nations, to facilitate access to advanced technologies," declared Minister Lekota.

Viegas Filho emphasized that the two countries share a great deal. "Brazil is the largest country in Latin America, while South Africa is the largest, in economy if not in territory, and the leading force on the African continent." As stressed by Defensanet, the pact "revives the old project of creating a military, operational and industrial area in the South Atlantic," and could serve as the lever for a revival of programs for aeronautic development and smart missiles.

Africa's 'Thirst for Brazil'

The agreements with South Africa are part of a broader Brazilian diplomatic strategy in Africa, typified by Foreign Minister Celso Amorim's statement in a June 4 interview in the Brazilian magazine *IstoE*. "I recently visited various African countries, preparing for the August visit of President Lula to the continent. . . . I saw in all of those countries [Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Ghana] a thirst for Brazil. Some see Brazil as a big brother. . . . We haven't the resources of the developed countries, but we have a lot of experience, business acuity, a language much closer to the Africans. Combine this with a very strong awareness by this government of our black, African ancestry, and we have a new impulse in the direction of Africa."

In a May 25 article in *Folha de São Paulo*, Amorim explained, that with "76 million of Afro-descendants, we are the second largest black nation in the world . . . and the gov-

ernment is determined to reflect that circumstance in its foreign policy."

In the same issue of *Folha*, Brazilian Ambassador Rubens Ricupero, Secretary General to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), emotionally recalled the social debt that Brazil owes Africa, and especially Angola, from which "perhaps 68% of the Africans who built Brazil came. . . . We have a debt with Angola that is incommensurable and impossible to pay. Blood debts, generated in the heart of families, are not paid with money; they are met with unconditional solidarity and help. But Brazil will only begin to make this kind of payment to Angola and to Africa, when it is able to pay the debt which it contracted with its own marginalized people, many of them descendants of Africans. Today, as the President of Brazil prepares to visit Angola, we would do well to understand that solidarity with the Angolans and solidarity with the poor of our land, is one and indivisible."

MST Uprising Part of Soros Plan for Brazil

by Silvia Palacios

Throughout the month of May, Brazil's proto-terrorist Landless Movement (MST) launched a wave of unusually violent land invasions, which, though apparently blind, are in reality part of the low-intensity warfare unleashed successively in three states: Pernambuco, Paraná, and São Paulo. In one land invasion in the northeastern state of Pernambuco, a well-organized group of 2,000 invaded a sugar mill, and set fire to houses and agricultural machinery. In statements to the daily *Folha de São Paulo* on May 24, National Agrarian Auditor Gercino José de Silva, who has held the post since 1999, warned, "This is a powderkeg. In terms of radicalization and violence, I've never seen anything like it."

In Paraná, another group destroyed and burned an experimental agricultural station working on genetically-modified plants, charging that these types of crops are illegal in Brazil. The attack was led by Roberto Baggio, the MST's Paraná coordinator, who also serves on the Economic and Social Development Council created by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. "We're going to destroy the large farms and transform these areas into camps" for the MST, Baggio threatened.

Culminating this fascist offensive, the MST defiantly announced that it is organizing throughout the country, and that it will set up a gigantic camp in the Pontal del Paranapema region with 5,000 families prepared to resist, until they are settled on land. Launching the mobilization on May

25, MST leader José Rainha said the camp would be a “new Canudos,” referring to a rural rebellion in the early 20th Century, which put up fierce armed resistance against the Army of the newly-created Brazilian Republic. The region chosen for the “new Canudos” continues the strategy the MST has followed since 1996, to create a kind of independent republic in the Pontal del Paranapanema, a region in southern Brazil, where infrastructure vital to the national economy—a great density of electricity transmission lines from the giant Itaipú hydroelectric complex, and the Tieté-Paraná waterway—are located.

With the MST’s new, destabilizing insurgency, the Lula government is reaping what it had sown, in two ways.

First, it has stubbornly kept the country under the dictatorship of the International Monetary Fund’s usurious policies. Just as the very powerful cabinet Chief of Staff José Dirceu admitted, the new government put “an abrupt brake on the economy,” without considering the social consequences, such as historic unemployment rates, industrial paralysis, and urban violence, which Brasilia says is its chief concern. The incredibly high interest rates and draconian budget cuts, including in social expenditures, have won the government effusive praise from the IMF and World Bank.

Second, the MST’s insurgent actions are, in part, the offspring of the government, which put national agricultural policy in the hands of MST representatives and their fellow

travelers in the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), controlled by Theology of Liberation radicals. Take Agricultural Development Minister Miguel Rossetto, a Jacobin rabble-rouser and opponent of modern agriculture, who justifies official inaction in the face of MST aggression, arguing, as he did on Jan. 3, “It is not the government’s task, within a democratic state of law, to suppress social movements’ ability to mobilize.” Another MST ally is Marcelo Resende, president of the National Colonization and Agrarian Reform Institute, recommended for that post by the CPT, of which he is also a member.

Although Brasilia says the MST isn’t acting in the government’s name, and even denounced the recent wave of violence, the truth is that the MST is treated as a privileged protagonist of the government’s social agenda. For example, in the midst of the current violence, the Education Ministry announced it had signed an agreement to run literacy programs at MST rural camps.

The maneuvering of these Jacobins inside the Lula government has unleashed a fierce battle inside the ruling Workers’ Party (PT) as well, which threatens to fragment the nation. It could also damage its foreign policy, and destroy the historic diplomatic initiatives to forge South American unity and South-South cooperation, toward a more just international order.

The Other Face of George Soros

This policy bears the trademark of international financier and speculator George Soros, typified by “economic conservatism and social radicalism,” so ably expressed by one of his Brazilian interlocutors, Education Minister Cristovam Buarque. Thus, the Central Bank’s policy of financial speculation is reconciled with the social policy defined in the many gatherings of the World Social Forum in Pôrto Alegre, backed by Soros and his allies in the Anglo-French Goldsmith family, and including the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) committed to destroying the sovereign nation-state.

Soros and his NGO network also advocate weakening the Armed Forces and other security forces, and back the “decriminalization” of drugs, their euphemism for legalization. National Secretary for Public Safety Luiz Eduardo Soares, formerly of the Viva Rio NGO financed by oligarchical families, firmly supports these policies. Soares is now involved in a “sociological” restructuring of security forces, which, if implemented, will so undermine them, as to make them unable to combat the drug cartels that sow terror in Brazil’s urban centers.

Moreover, Soares is part of the powerful international drug legalization lobby, in which several foundations tied directly to Soros work. What this lobby seeks in the Lula government, can be seen in the April 3 edition of the internet magazine *Narco News Bulletin*, which pointed to the existence inside Brazil’s government of a current favoring drug decriminalization.

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