

## Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

### Soviet military aid: an illusion

*Brazil's armed forces have been forced to turn to the Russians for technology denied them by the West.*

The efforts of the U.S. State Department and other Western governments to block Brazil's development of frontier technology—especially space and nuclear technology—have driven the Brazilian armed forces into a desperate search to obtain these technologies from the East bloc. This is, perhaps, the most critical point on the agenda to be discussed during Brazilian President José Sarney's trip to the Soviet Union in late October, accompanied by his ministers of the Navy and Army.

This situation is confirmed by the recent visit by high-level Brazilian Air Force officials to the Soviet Union, in which, for the first time in Brazilian history, they were permitted to view Soviet military installations. On Sept. 12, in a review of his visit, Air Force Commander Brig. Gen. Cherubin Rosa Filho stated, "Our space program is backward and the seven great powers of the world [United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Italy, West Germany, and Japan] have refused to collaborate on technology exchanges. Thus, I believe that the solution may lie in making a deal with the Russians."

The most urgent requirement of the Brazilian aerospace program is technology that would allow the development of its Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV).

This rapprochement with the Soviet Union, and also with the People's Republic of China, is not unexpected, and began to be pursued in earnest in response to a meeting in Washington in April 1987, where the Western in-

dustrial nations openly decided to sabotage the Brazilian space program by suspending sale of components, systems, satellite parts, and even technical assistance. Similar restrictions have already caused a delay of at least two years in the Brazilian Complete Space Mission.

As of that April 1987 meeting in Washington, Brazil began to strengthen its cooperation and technology transfer programs with the Soviet Union and the P.R.C.; in July of this year, President Sarney and his military ministers traveled to Beijing, where they agreed that both countries would launch, in 1992 and 1994, respectively, a remote sensing satellite for both meteorological and natural resource surveying. However, it appears that Brazil's primary interest—in the Satellite Launch Vehicle—was not resolved, and the march continued to Moscow.

At the same time, the matter of exchanging military attachés between Brazil and the Soviet Union is being made conditional on the assistance Brazil receives for its space program. Thus, Air Force Minister Octavio Moreira Lima, commenting on the trip of Brig. Gen. Rosa Filho, asserted: "It is a long-standing issue, and when we have to decide between creating an attaché's post in China or in the Soviet Union, we will choose the first because of more immediate interest."

However, Brazil's armed forces are deluded by Mikhail Gorbachov's *perestroika* policy, and overlook the fact that the technological obstacles they are encountering stem not only

from the limitations imposed by the Western nations, but above all by the New Yalta accords agreed upon between the superpowers. Of this, there are ample indications.

As recently as Sept. 26, representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States met in Washington to discuss ways of containing the proliferation of ballistic missiles in the Third World. H. Allen Holmes, assistant secretary for the political-military affairs at the State Department, who headed the U.S. delegation, reported that the two nations "found common interests." Their primary concern was how to halt the efforts by Brazil, Egypt, and Argentina to develop their own missiles.

Brazil's own scientists who work in the space area have been able to confirm, on the Soviet side, that the New Yalta pact to block Third World technological development is in force. "Until now the Russians have only offered us very limited scientific proposals, and what we most need at the moment is the technology we know they control," reported the general director of the Space Research Institute (INPE), after a trip to the Soviet Union last year to sound out possible cooperation in that area.

Thus, in the Gorbachov era, the pact to limit technological advances imposed on Brazil since the postwar period has been revived, and with greater force than ever. It is the same agreement which, in the 1950s, prevented Brazil from developing nuclear energy and, in the 1970s, which Jimmy Carter carried out with near-religious fervor.

It would appear that the only Brazilians to profit from this opening to the Soviet Union are those of the Itamaraty (foreign relations) establishment, who are equally committed to covering for Gorbachov and for the State Department strategists.