

## Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

### Technology noose tightens

*In reward for its break with Iraq, Brazil is seeing the Anglo-Americans train their guns at its high-tech trade.*

The daily *Jornal do Brasil* reported Sept. 14 that the Bush administration is demanding from Brazil the head of Air Force Brigadier Hugo Piva (ret.), as punishment for his leading a group of Brazilian technical experts who are collaborating with Iraq in aerospace projects through a private firm. When the Middle East crisis erupted, *Jornal do Brasil* reported, the government of President Fernando Collor de Mello concretized its abrupt rupture with Iraq by making "a secret promise to the U.S. government that Piva's actions would be investigated."

Collor further guaranteed that "vigilance over the aeronautic-technological complex" at São José dos Campos would be increased.

The same newspaper reported that the Brazilian Senate was proposing to "fully investigate" trade and, above all, technological relations that Brazil has maintained with Iraq for more than a decade.

"It will be a veritable inquisition," *Jornal do Brasil* commented on the dozens of inquests which the investigation, proposed by Sen. Jutahy Magalhães, will entail.

Brazil's dramatic abandonment of its longstanding close ties to Iraq was hardly a wholehearted contribution to the Anglo-American war effort. Rather, it was the direct result of overt U.S. blackmail. Exemplary are the nearly daily attacks against Piva, attacks which have grown to the point of accusing him of endangering "Brazil's prestige."

In exclusive statements to *O Estado de São Paulo* on Sept. 7, Brigadier Piva said that the attacks—above all

from the U.S. press—were "because I am inconveniencing people, because I occupy a space which until a short time ago was the privilege of the superpowers. And they are interested in destroying me for that."

He also defended the legitimate motives behind Brazil's original close relations with Iraq: "Iraq helped us substantially during the first oil crisis, when there was no oil available anywhere in the world and Brazil had no money to buy it."

All indications are that the punishment demanded by Washington goes far beyond Brigadier Piva, and is modeled on what former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has been accustomed to imposing upon Third World nations and leading figures who aspired to provide their nation with advanced technological development as essential to defeat poverty.

Kissinger was famous for expressing his attitude by saying, "Nothing important for universal history could come from the South."

The current offensive against Brazilian-Iraqi relations represents a watershed in the superpowers' longstanding efforts to prevent Brazilian access to advanced technology. Instead of being rewarded for its break with Iraq, the United States has been tightening the technology noose around Brazil. This is the most important strategic consequence of the escalation of North-South conflicts which began with the current Middle East crisis.

For example, the administration of George Bush has indefinitely "postponed" the sale to Brazil of an IBM 3090-300 supercomputer, which was

intended for purchase by the aircraft construction company Embraer to conduct crucial aerodynamic calculations. The sale had already been authorized by U.S. Special Trade Representative Ambassador Carla Hills, but on Sept. 14, it was revealed by the press that the final decision was up to Bush's National Security Adviser, Gen. Brent Scowcroft.

This decision is coherent with the Aug. 29 statement made by the former U.S. representative to the Coordinating Committee on Multilateral Export Controls (Cocom), who told the London *Financial Times* that Cocom would be reimposing controls over previously unrestricted sales to Third World countries. The aerospace programs of India, Brazil, Iraq, Argentina, and Egypt have been continually victimized by discriminatory decisions by Cocom, and nothing has changed.

What has the military and scientific-technical elite of Brazil most concerned about the country's sovereign right to technological development, is that President Fernando Collor himself, and especially Science and Technology Secretary José Goldemberg—a fanatical devotee of Thomas Malthus—have insisted, at least publicly, on the need to end such high-technology projects as the nuclear program. Collor told the foreign press on Sept. 5 that, to his way of thinking, "Nuclear energy is a permanent threat to the citizen."

This new Brazilian position is being received with euphoria by circles around the State Department in Washington, because it is seen as a "demonstration that President Collor is prepared to break with past policies, and indicates that Brazil is prepared . . . to adhere to precepts of international control over advanced technology that it had always rejected," according to *Jornal do Brasil*.