

In Brazil, some want to reopen the 1970s war against subversion

by Silvia Palacios

A campaign has been touched off in Brazil to reopen the chapter of the deaths in the battle against communist terrorism which was waged by the Brazilian Armed Forces in the 1970s. The aim of this is to advance the plans to dismantle the military, following the pattern of dramatic events in Argentina under the government of President Raúl Alfonsín, who, under pressure from the Anglophile oligarchy, decided to punish the military leadership for their battle against terrorism, and the Malvinas War, by unleashing a torrent of vendettas which split the society into warring camps.

Although the Brazilian government is just acting as a receiver and mediator for international pressures exerted by self-styled human rights defenders such as Americas Watch and Amnesty International (AI, actually an arm of the British intelligence service), inside the government there are motives for stirring up this kind of fight. It starts with President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who has never given up the idea pushed by the Inter-American Dialogue—the Wall Street bankers' think-tank of which he is a founding member—to downgrade the Armed Forces' role.

The government has just unveiled a plan, responding to these pressures, for opening up the file of the politically "disappeared persons" which had previously been treated as a closed chapter in the country's history, thanks to the amnesty decree of 1979. Such United Nations non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as AI, Americas Watch, and their Brazilian satellites, mainly entrenched in the Workers Party (PT), demanded that this law deal with three aspects: a) recognition of the number of deaths, b) payment of compensation to the families, and c) investigation of the circumstances of the deaths, which would imply a mea culpa on the part of the Armed Forces for having fought the groups which were rebelling against the constitutional State.

The Justice Ministry, in the name of the government, granted the first two demands, but the third remained excluded, albeit ambiguously. But besides this plan, the Justice Ministry is working on another which will heighten the showdown with the military. The National Congress is prepared to discuss gradually doing away with military justice, and decreasing its role to merely holding courts-martial for military crimes, removing its jurisdiction over what are consid-

ered to be public safety crimes.

In the last week of May 1995, a case occurred which illustrates the kind of motives involved in the pressure on the Armed Forces. By presidential order, Col. Armando Avolio Filho, the military attaché in the Brazilian Embassy in London, was suddenly removed from his post, accused by Amnesty International and Americas Watch of having been a torturer of political prisoners in the 1970s.

Human sacrifice offered to Britain

Without the slightest exaggeration, Colonel Avolio's head was the prize which the Cardoso government turned over to the British, to show them that this really is a government that respects human rights. In early May, AI's president, Pierre Sané, made a fact-finding tour through Brazil, at the end of which he labeled President Cardoso's attitude toward the hundreds of cases of politically disappeared persons as "extremely disappointing." And, he proclaimed, "we are not going to close this file." A few days later, in Brazil, with the group "Never Again Torture," and in London, in diplomatic and media circles, AI started mobilizing to demand that Brazil comply with the aforementioned three demands, adding the punishment of Avolio to their list.

Such a punishment and public humiliation for a high-ranking officer had never occurred before. Perhaps what was most surprising was the aggressive British diplomacy, which moved in tandem with AI and Americas Watch to demand it. The *Guardian*, a London daily, published a lying report "exposing" Colonel Avolio's activities, based on information turned over by Amnesty International, which has sponsored volumes of "exposures" of cases of political repression.

To force the desired objective, on May 15 the spokesman of the opposition Labour Party, Tony Lloyd, announced that his party was asking British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd to undertake an investigation to clarify the charges against the colonel. This was then requested from the Brazilian Embassy in London. In a bizarre intervention into a country's internal affairs, the Foreign Office went so far as to have the British ambassador in Brazil demand from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry a rapid explanation of the events.

Nevertheless, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso proceeded at once to purge Colonel Avolio, because AI's or Americas Watch's pressures were not isolated actions. Indeed, the "human rights card" is part of the diplomatic deal made with the Anglo-American powers, especially involving the desire of the hegemonic group in the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, to revive the colonial special relationship that Brazil used to have with Britain in the last century. As one of the principal Brazilian collaborators of Americas Watch admitted in an article on May 7 in *Folha de São Paulo*: "Our embassies have stopped treating NGOs as enemies. In London, Ambassador Rubens Barbosa is a valid dialogue partner for Amnesty International and other organizations."

The globalist "human rights diplomacy" has gone to the extreme of intervening into sensitive internal affairs which are considered national security matters. One was the Avolio case. Another is the fact that the Justice Ministry signed a convention with AI to allow it to start courses in "human rights and respect for citizens" for local police, federal police, military personnel, and civilians, which will be taught by professors trained in the slanted AI vision of human rights, considered as a supranational weapon to be wielded at whim against sovereign nation-states.

Brazilian allies

These international networks have friendly folks to talk to on the Brazilian side. One of them is the secretary general of the Justice Ministry, Jose Gregori, the current negotiator in the case of the disappeared persons. He and his wife are old, intimate friends of the President and Mrs. Cardoso. Gregori is also very close to banker Marcilio Marques Moreira, the former finance minister, and he is famous for having set up the Human Rights Chair at the University of São Paulo.

He represents, within the Justice Ministry, the tie to the terrorist networks of the continent, via his long and close friendship with Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns, the archbishop of São Paulo, who is one of the leaders of the South American "theology of liberation," a friend of Fidel Castro, and a sort of chaplain for the terrorists who collect around the São Paulo Forum, the above-ground front for the terrorists founded by Castro. Gregori's daughter is a member of the Student Non-Violent Nucleus at the University of São Paulo, which until recently was a kind of Brazilian branch for Americas Watch. That was the sponsoring entity for campaigns like "Never Again Torture," which has consistently sought the mea culpa of the Armed Forces, and is now working on the project for getting rid of military justice.

There are other highly placed allies in the Cardoso regime in the so-called campaign for human rights. Take the Sirotsky family, influential spokesmen for the U.S.-based Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), and owners of the newspaper *Zero Hora* of Rio Grande do Sul, which

they use to propagandize for all kinds of campaigns against the military, and especially for reopening the "disappeared persons" cases. One of the Sirotsky family's agents is the mentally unbalanced Jair Kriesche, president of the Movement of Justice and Human Rights of Rio Grande, who acts in conjunction with a faction of Israeli military intelligence.

The long-cherished ideal of the demilitarizers is to be able to punish, humiliate, and finally destroy the armed forces of the countries of the South American Southern Cone, and what better opportunity than allowing the pro-terrorist intercontinental network to activate itself in coordinated fashion to achieve that objective?

Kriesche and the Workers Party are trying to use the Brazilian government's bill in favor of their causes as a lever to extend the same concerted pressure to other countries, especially Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile. They argue that since Brazil recognized, in its list of dead, the existence of foreigners, including three Argentines who were active in the Montoneros, the communist guerrillas who tried to provoke civil war in Argentina in the 1970s, "This proves the responsibility of our country in joint operations of repression in the Southern Cone," as Kriesche stated on Aug. 3.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Human Rights Committee in the House of Deputies, Nimario Miranda, a PT member, said he was willing to head up this coordination. On Aug. 6, he said that he is trying to create a "human rights connection" which will act as the interchange among such organizations, especially those formed by parliamentarians of South American countries, as a "Mercosul for the disappeared" (Mercosul is the name of the Southern Cone free-trade zone to encourage looting the economies).

At the moment, Nilmaro Miranda is coordinating the defense, not of dead terrorists, but live ones. Together with his counterpart in Chile, he is pressuring the Brazilian government to extradite to their respective countries—where they are sure to be handled with kid gloves—the Chilean and Canadian terrorists who took part in the kidnapping of businessman Abilio Diniz in 1989. This was an action carried out by a multinational terrorist group whose activities were linked to the operations that were discovered with the famous explosion of the weapons bunker in Managua, Nicaragua.

The reopening of the issue of politically disappeared persons and the punishment against Colonel Avolio have stirred major unrest in the military ranks, with consequences that the demilitarizers may not be counting on. The June issue of the most influential military magazine, *Ombro a Ombro*, warns, in a comment on the colonel's case: "In the face of this challenge to the military institutions, any attitude of weakness by the command of the Armed Forces can lead to a painful process of breakup, as occurred in Argentina, after which their military leaders accepted as a 'condition' of the unsigned 'truce' after the undeclared war with Britain for possession of the Malvinas Islands, the virtual dismantling of their heroic Armed Forces."