

Brazil's Figueiredo writes to Argentina's Seineldín

In December 1997, Army General (ret.) and former President of Brazil João Baptista de Oliveira Figueiredo wrote an open letter to Argentine President Carlos Menem, calling on him to pardon and release from jail former Argentine Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín, who is currently serving a life term for his resistance to the destruction of the Argentine Armed Forces. Below we publish the letter which General Figueiredo recently wrote to Colonel Seineldín.

Rio de Janeiro, April 3, 1998

Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín
Campo de Mayo, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Dear Colonel Seineldín:

It was with great happiness that I received the diploma from your brave comrades in arms. At this time, I would

like to reiterate that your ideals and motives are also my own. Throughout my long military career, in which I had the good fortune to rise through every rank in my branch, I never saw any essential contradiction between the fundamental interests of our nations. Rather to the contrary, as history has proven, the occasional divergences between them, mutually prejudicial, have been slyly fomented by strange interests, the same which today hide in the wings of defamation campaigns against our nations.

At this grave moment of world crisis, the unity of our nations and of our Armed Forces is a necessary and indispensable element for security and for real perspectives of development, not only of both nations, but of all the nations of Ibero-America. United, we will be in a position to undertake a policy of hemispheric security based on respect for national sovereignties, for the inalienable rights of the individual, and for human dignity, in substitution for the old TIAR [Inter-American Reciprocal Treaty, governing defense matters], buried during the Malvinas War. Only on this basis will it be possible to build a future in which our nations can contribute to the evolution of civilization.

Please accept, and pass on to all of your comrades in arms, an affectionate embrace from this comrade.

networks controlled by London, these same insurgent networks are endangering the very existence of the nation.

Gilmar Mauro, one of the main MST leaders, acknowledged this weeks before organized looting began in Brazil's northeast, in the aftermath of the drought there. He announced that we are in a "low-intensity civil war." In this regard, the logistical infrastructure of the Theology of Liberation networks enters into the picture. Together with London's NGO spawn, the Theology of Liberation networks are forming indigenous combat movements in various areas of the strategically important Amazon region of Brazil, which are targeting infrastructure projects, such as bridges and dams, for destruction. The most critical situation is in the state of Amapa, on the northern border with the Guyanas, where a separatist movement is being formed.

This threat to Brazil's territorial integrity was described by Oliveiros Ferreira, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, as an "internal hemorrhage." Ferreira emphasized the key role the Armed Forces must play, noting in the daily's April 29 edition: "What distinguishes the current crisis from earlier ones is that today's has all the characteristics of an internal hemorrhage, whose external signs are small and not very frequent. Civil society—or political society, if you prefer—and the state itself, lack sufficiently solid institutions to absorb, without recourse to the Armed Forces, the changes and the crises. Given this, whether we like it or not, whether they like it or not, the Armed Forces stand out, as the

Constitution says, as the only permanent national institutions. As Lassalle stated, they are the main, if not the only real factor of power in the country."

A cloud of madness

As national disaster looms, symptoms of President Cardoso's emotional imbalance are coming to the fore, only partially as a result of the sudden deaths of two of his political coordinators, Communications Minister Sergio Motta and government leader in the House of Deputies Luiz Eduardo Magalhaes. Even before those tragic events, President Cardoso showed his Hobbesian face, when during an April 8 speech, he stated that "in politics, whoever states what they want, loses. . . . Does this mean that in the ethics of politics, ambiguity and lies are necessary parts? No. Perhaps ambiguity, but not lies."

However, for the President, there exist two kinds of ethics, one based on absolute principles, which is what determines the truth, but "that is not the position of the practical man, of the politician, of the man of government, nor of the statesman. The politician should not at every instant be in the pulpit proclaiming the truth," declared Cardoso. This Presidential ethic could be observed in practice in his dealing with the northeastern drought, when the President called for a 15-day delay in beginning the distribution of food, and even stated that such solidarity in this case was too expensive, because it meant that Air Force planes had to transport the food.