

## Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

### Bush's New World Order under attack

*Brazilians are making the connection between Bush's war aims abroad and his imperial designs closer to home.*

When the fantasy of a "brief" Anglo-American war against Iraq collapsed, Brazil's elites began to issue public condemnations of George Bush's fascist "New World Order," as the most serious external threat yet to confront the Brazilian nation.

Beginning a year ago with the U.S. invasion of Panama, fears began to surface within the Brazilian Armed Forces and among an influential group around the Foreign Ministry, that Bush's actions had now legitimized the concept of intervention; and with it, the possibility that attempts would be made to limit Brazilian sovereignty over its Amazon region. The ecological pressures the Bush administration has directed against Brazil were proof positive. From then on, the Armed Forces established defense of the Amazon as their strategic priority.

With the outbreak of the Persian Gulf war, this danger to Brazil is breaking into public consciousness.

On Jan. 21, Brazil's most important financial daily, *Gazeta Mercantil*, published an analysis entitled "The New International Order," asserting that "in the view of the Planalto Palace, the Foreign Ministry, and parts of the military structure which influence the country's foreign policy actions . . . Washington's postwar diplomacy will be characterized, at least in the beginning, by an offensive against such peripheral countries as Brazil, in areas . . . vital to preservation of their newly won hegemony.

"Within this perspective," it continues, "the Middle East is seen as the first real focal point of North-South conflict in place of U.S.-Soviet conflict, im-

plying serious consequences for Brazilian foreign policy. It is believed that once the war is over, a very likely reflection will be the acceleration of U.S. diplomatic action toward Brazilian environmental policy. . . . The Amazon will begin to be considered 'the common patrimony' of humanity."

*Gazeta* quotes George Bush's description of his "Initiative for the Americas" as an effort to link environmental protection to debt relief. "Not as a challenge to national sovereignty, in this case Brazil's," says Bush, "but as an affirmation of international common interest." Writes *Gazeta*, Bush "was insistent on repeating this proposal of swapping foreign debt for nature, whose rejection has been one of the pillars of Brazil's position."

The journal concludes that "if the current direction of the war continues, countries like Brazil will probably end up paying a very high price for the imposition of [Bush's] New World Order."

Retired Brig. Gen. Hugo Piva, who has been the victim of a slander campaign because of his work in Iraq's space program, gave a radio interview Jan. 16 in which he identified the Gulf war as a war over resources. U.S. presence will not end with the Iraq conflict, said Piva. "The United States went to the Gulf to remain there and guarantee its oil supply. . . . The situation is complex, for if the U.S. remains in the Gulf, other Arab countries could rise up."

"Make no mistake! The Persian Gulf war is the new face of an eternal battle between the idea of Empire and the idea of national freedom," com-

mented *Gazeta Mercantil* columnist Mauro Santayana, who is associated with Brazil's foreign policy networks. "The real U.S. adversary is not Saddam Hussein, but its own allies which encroach on its space: Japan and Germany. . . . Today, the U.S. is moving to guarantee its oil supply at low prices. If the U.S. is not stopped, it could show up tomorrow, armed with the same pretexts, to guarantee the oxygen of the Amazon—so in demand—or the fertility of our countryside."

Another commentary revealing the nature of Bush's interventionism was published in *Tribuna de Imprensa*: "What, in the end, is Bush's New World Order? Could it be a pact among the Western powers not to pass technology on to the Third World, under the pretext that they might use it to build weapons?"

This perception that Bush's "new order" would target Brazilian sovereignty has re-ignited the national debate that has raged among Brazil's elites for more than a century, over turning Brazil into a sovereign and technologically developed power, versus a "Brazilian Empire" administered in concert with the Anglo-Americans.

It is no surprise that spokesmen for the world financial elites are pressuring Brazil to formally endorse Bush's war aims in the Gulf. Thus, Brazilian banker and oligarch Herbert Levy criticized Foreign Minister Francisco Rezek Jan. 22 for defending the idea of an international conference to address the Palestinian problem. Wrote Levy, Rezek "is ceding to [Argentine] President Carlos Menem the leadership of the nations of Latin America in the free world. Menem had the vision to place himself among the 28 nations which are backing the United States, to a greater or lesser extent."