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Andrew Fishman Mr.

Max G. Manwaring Dr.

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Colloquium Brief

Strategic Studies Institute

U.S. Army War College,
The Center for Latin American Issues,
The George Washington University



BRAZIL'S SECURITY STRATEGY AND DEFENSE DOCTRINE

Compiled by
Andrew Fishman

The Center for Latin American Issues



Max Manwaring
Strategic Studies Institute

KEY INSIGHTS:

- In 1999, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) was created, with a civilian cabinet Minister in charge of all three branches of the Armed Forces. The MOD, however, was staffed by technicians and professionals from various government agencies. The MOD will now be staffed by its own professional defense bureaucracy.
- The Armed Forces have also been given new missions. The new missions are based on the precept that national military and security activities are interrelated and involve the economy, environment, politics, national productive potential, science, and technology. Therefore, the military and civilian spheres must work together in partnership to achieve their common goals.
- The principle elements of the new national defense project (Projecto Nacional) will, as a result, include: 1) New technologies; 2) A space program; 3) Nuclear capacity for peaceful purposes; 4) Restructuring of the Armed Forces; 5) Related military hardware acquisitions; and 6) Domestic and border security.
- Brazil has no expansionist intentions. Its aim is to bolster internal strategic defense and security, and intra-Latin American cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2007, Brazil's President Lula mandated the establishment of a national defense strategy. In December 2008, the Minister of Defense, Nelson Jobim, sent that strategy to the President. In 2010, President Lula signed executive orders to implement the new strategy (the Projecto Nacional). In that context, The Center for Latin American Issues (CLAI) and the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) conducted a colloquium entitled "Brazil's Security Strategy and Defense Doctrine," on October 20, 2010, in Washington, DC. The Brazilian Minister of Defense (MOD), the Hon. Nelson Jobim, provided

a broad and expansive look at Brazilian security strategy and defense doctrine based on historical precedents, and on the related Armed Forces restructuring plan implemented in 2010 under his tenure. The following is a synopsis of the important points touched upon during the MOD's 80-minute presentation.

Over the years, the Brazilian Armed Forces have been changing in character and structure, but it was not until 1999 that the MOD was created with a civilian Cabinet Minister in charge of all three branches of the Armed Forces: the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. The MOD, however, was staffed by "an agglomeration of foreigners," meaning that the Ministry was staffed by technicians and professionals from Petro Bras, the Bank of Brazil, and various other government agencies. The MOD will now be staffed by its own professional defense bureaucracy.

The Armed Forces have also been reorganized to be more responsive to the MOD, and have been given new missions. The new missions are based on the precept that national defense and security activities are highly interrelated, and involve the economy, politics, environment, national productive potential, science, and technology. Therefore, the military and government spheres must work together in close partnership to achieve their common objectives and national autonomy.

Brazil is a developing nation well situated in time and place. Unlike other areas of the world, it has no bloody religious or ethnic conflicts, and its last border conflict took place in the early 19th century. It has a strategic geography, low population density, characteristically rhetorical (as opposed to physical) conflicts, social symmetry, abundance of natural resources, and is distant from the traditional power centers of the world, as are its Latin American neighbors. However, Brazil is the most populous Latin American nation, with nearly 200 million inhabitants, and thousands of miles of land and sea borders. These borders, together with large natural gas and oil reserves and the "Green" Amazon (land and river areas within the Amazon Basin) and "Blue" Amazon (coastal areas of Brazil where major hydro-carbon and other resources are located), are strategic strengths, as well as concerns for the Armed Forces and the nation.

The resultant new national defense strategy consists of three principal elements that Brazil hopes to develop. They are: 1) advanced technologies; 2) a space program; and 3) a peaceful nuclear capacity.

Advanced Technologies.

The MOD discussed the shortcomings of Brazil's research and development in terms of integration, underinvestment, and the necessity of technology transfer. In addition to expanding funding for the military, aeronautical, marine, and nuclear research facilities, the Projecto Nacional aims to consolidate their work and to better integrate their efforts with national universities. Also, regarding the multiple military contracts the Minister discussed, he emphasized that Brazil is not a country that "buys" hardware, but enters joint venture agreements with shared production responsibilities and technology transfer, so that in the future it may independently produce its own military equipment. Both the space and nuclear programs are inexorably linked to the development of advanced technologies.

Space Program.

Brazil has been relying on the purchase of satellite images and information from other countries. As a growing power, the Minister averred, this position is untenable. With a launch site close to the equator in Alcatara, in Maranhao state, it is comparatively inexpensive to launch satellites from Brazil. The government will, therefore, pursue the development of this site and the rockets necessary to launch satellites, thereby reducing dependence on foreign countries and bolstering Brazil's space presence.

Minister Jobim also spoke to the shortcomings of the U.S.-based Global Positioning System (GPS), particularly in the southern hemisphere. Rather than rely solely upon this system, Brazil will develop a mechanism that allows it to combine and freely alternate between the three dominant global positioning systems: GPS, Europe's Galileo, and Russia's GLONASS, for greater functionality and versatility.

Peaceful Nuclear Capacity.

According to the MOD, nations operating on the international stage are accorded a higher level of respect if they have nuclear capabilities. As a rising power, Brazil should focus on developing this area for three purposes: 1) nuclear submarines (without nuclear arms); 2) medical and agricultural uses; and 3) energy. Nuclear power plants could help supplement the national reliance on hydroelectric dams that makes the country susceptible to, and dependent on, seasonal rainfall patterns. The new Projecto Nacional includes three additional elements: 1) restructuring the Armed Forces; 2) military hardware acquisitions; and 3) domestic infrastructure and border security.

Restructuring the Armed Forces.

Prior to the new restructuring of the Armed Forces, there were many internal squabbles among the three branches. Previously, the President would select a 4-star service chief to head the Joint Chiefs for a 2-year term, after which the chief would return to his respective branch of service. This system pressured the chief to inappropriately favor his own branch, as head of the other chiefs. Under the new system, the chief selected would be reassigned to the reserves, be deactivated, and be unable to return to his previous branch, thereby eliminating his potential bias. This further increases the power of the MOD.

Military Hardware Acquisitions.

Brazil is making substantial investments in military hardware. It is purchasing four traditional and one nuclear submarine in an agreement with France. A new facility for the submarines will be built in Itaguaí, Rio de Janeiro state, at a total cost of 6.7 billion euros. Additionally, the Navy will acquire five patrol ships, five frigates, and a supply ship to patrol the coastal areas of Brazil that Minister Jobim calls the "Blue Amazon."

Brazil has entered into another agreement with France to acquire 56 Eurocopter EC 725

Super Cougar transport helicopters, along with the technology transfers. The helicopters will be assembled in Brazil. Additionally, Empresa Brasileira de Aeronáutica, S.A. (Embraer) has plans to begin production of the KC-390 transport aircraft by 2018. It has already signed agreements with Colombia, Chile, the Czech Republic, and Portugal to work together on this project. Jobim says the KC-390 will be produced at half the cost of the American-made Hercules transport aircraft. Then, the MOD spoke about the FX2 fighter jet. Contract bids have been made, but commercial partners will not be selected until after the presidential run-off elections held on October 30, 2010. The MOD said that it plans to have the full capacity to build the FX2 independently within the next 8 to 10 years.

All of these acquisitions are meant to transform the Armed Forces' capacity for strategic mobilization. These new hardware acquisitions will also allow the military to achieve its goals of strengthening border security, protecting vital domestic infrastructure, and securing the Green and Blue Amazons.

Domestic and Border Security.

Minister Jobim defined the critical national infrastructure as consisting of petroleum fields; gas fields in the Amazon; international hydrocarbon pipelines; hydroelectric dams; refineries of bio-diesel and oil; thermo-electric plants; natural gas plants; the nuclear energy production areas of Angra do Reis, Rezende, and Iperó; ports; airports; telecommunication facilities; the highway network; and the electric power grid. To protect these areas, Brazil must do a better job of securing its 9.7 million kilometers of land borders, in addition to its expansive coastline and river networks. These areas are easy points of entry for hostile forces to attack Brazil and take down vital infrastructure. Thus, the defense strategy has introduced a new program for helping to secure the borders. It is called the Integrated System for Monitoring the Borders (SISFRON).

Under this plan, the Army would add 28 frontier platoons to the Amazon region, based mainly at river border crossings, bringing the total to 49. These units would be primarily responsible for

pursuing environmental crime and illicit smuggling. At the same time, the Navy would develop a "Second Fleet" to patrol the Amazon River network and secure the mouth of the Amazon River. The Air Force would use its new helicopters and planes to target potential threats, and to transport troops quickly and efficiently to threatened points. To pursue this plan, the Army will vary its brigade structure and create specialized heavy and light brigades that can more efficiently respond to particular concerns.

The Minister then spoke to the government's renewed faith in the military-controlled CINDACTA (Centro Integrado de Defesa Aérea e Controle de Tráfego Aéreo [Integrated Air Traffic Control and Air Defense Center]) air traffic control system for both military and civilian air traffic, because of the military's efficiency and because the military cannot go on strike. With the growth of domestic and regional civilian air traffic, the MOD plans on constructing three new CINDACTA bases spread across the Amazon to monitor all air traffic.

Conclusion.

In his concluding remarks, Minister Jobim stressed that Brazil has no expansionist intentions. Its aims are to bolster strategic defense and security, and intra-Latin American cooperation.

The views expressed in this brief are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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