



Council
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press release

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ALLEGATIONS OF HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION IN RIGHT-WING VIOLENCE IN
BRAZIL, DESPITE GOVERNMENT DENUNCIATIONS, PROVIDE DISTURBING EVIDENCE
OF RIFT IN MILITARY

--THREE TOP GENERALS LINKED TO NATIONAL TERRORIST CONSPIRACY WHICH
PRESIDENT HAS TERMED A THREAT TO BRAZILIAN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

--CONGRESSMAN GENIVAL TOURINHO MAKES CHARGES AT COHA PRESS CONFERENCE

Charges made by prominent Brazilian opposition politicians and labor leaders that high-level officials in the Brazilian armed forces are closely involved in the planning and implementation of a right-wing terrorist conspiracy have provoked increasing concern in Washington, as reports of further violent incidents arrive almost daily. The fact that top armed forces personnel, as well as Brazilian president Joao Batista Figueiredo and leading members of his party, have denounced the wave of terrorism as "anti-democratic" may indicate that a serious split is developing within the nation's military between those who favor Figueiredo's policies of "abertura"--very gradual liberalization--and those who feel the government has already gone too far in permitting strikes, demonstrations, and expressions of dissent. This split, however, may be more apparent than real.

In response to strong right-wing opposition in several key military commands over the direction of his policies, Figueiredo seems to be making concessions and moving slowly toward the right--both in foreign policy and in treatment of dissidents at home. A growing skein of agreements, visits and friendship pacts with the military regimes of Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, and ties that have been forged with the military regimes in Paraguay and Bolivia, as well as Brazil's ever-larger arms export trade to authoritarian regimes throughout the hemisphere, are examples of the increasingly conservative direction of the nation's foreign policy.

And at home, although the government has denounced the right-wing attacks, pledged to find and prosecute those responsible, and launched an investigation, Brazilian parliamentarians who have accused high armed forces officials of participation have been cited for prosecution under the National Security Act,

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which carries a jail sentence of 6 months to 2 years. Union leader Luis Inacio da Silva, who has made similar charges, is also under indictment.

Congressman Genival Tourinho, a representative to the federal Chamber of Deputies from the state of Minas Gerais, was cited last month for national security violations after making speeches accusing three leading military officials--General Coelho Neto of the 4th infantry division in Belo Horizonte, General Milton Tavares of the 2nd army in Sao Paulo, and General Bandeira of the 3rd army--of having close ties to the right-wing terrorist conspiracy, which has become known as the "Crystal Operation." Dr. Tourinho, who is making a visit to Washington and New York to meet with Brazilian specialists, detailed the charges against these military officers within the context of Brazil's current political situation at a press conference held today in Washington, sponsored by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

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