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Guerrilla in The Brazilian Amazon

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July 1995

Acknowledgements

The authors owe a debt of gratitude to Marcin Wiesiolek, FMSO analyst and translator, for the figures used in this study. Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey B. Demarest and Lieutenant Colonel John E. Sray, FMSO analysts, kindly assisted the authors with editing the paper.

PRÉCIS

Colonel Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro discusses the historical basis for Brazil's current strategic doctrine for defending the Brazilian Amazon against a number of today's transnational threats. He begins with a review of the audacious adventure of Pedro Teixeira, known in Brazilian history as "The Conqueror of the Amazon." The Teixeira expedition of 1637 discovered and manned the principle tributaries of the Amazon River, and it established an early Portuguese-Brazilian claim to the region. By the decentralized use of his forces in jungle and riverine operations, and through actions characterized by surprise against superior forces, Captain Pedro Teixeira established the Brazilian tradition of jungle warfare. These tactics have been emulated since those early times by Brazil's military leaders.

Alvaro explains the use of similar operations in Brazil's 1970 counterinsurgency experience against rural Communist insurgents. The actions to suppress FOGUERA (the Araguaia Guerrilla Force, military arm of the Communist Party of Brazil) provided lessons of joint military cooperation and the integration of civilian agency resources with those of the military. In defeating FOGUERA, the Brazilian armed forces did not use foreign advisors or military units--a source of confidence and pride which helps explain current attitudes about defending what Brazilians see as their the national patrimony in the Amazon.

A description of the February 1991 counterinsurgency fighting against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) near the Traíra River (between Colombia and Brazil) serves to identify a number of current threats to Brazil's sovereignty over the Brazilian Amazon. These threats are overlapping forms of grey area phenomena such as narcotrafficking, guerrilla

operations and general lawlessness in uncontrolled areas. The Traíra incident confirmed the need for a system of border region defenses against the grey area threats.

The FMSO commentary which concludes the discussion draws connections to current issues of military strategy. It suggests that Brazil's "Strategy of Lassitude" is a natural and logical outcome of its military heritage of guerrilla-style warfighting. As U.S. security specialists search for ways to guard U.S. interests against the dangers of transnational (grey area) phenomena, they might look for inspiration beyond the lessons of Clausewitz to consider these lessons from the Brazilian Amazon.

THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON: GUERRILLA WARFARE AND FUTURE STRATEGY

**by Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro
Colonel, Brazilian Army**

The Amazon basin is a strategic priority for Brazil because of the political, economic, and psycho-social interests it has in the region. This article focuses on Brazil's use of military power to protect its interests in the Brazilian Amazon. It demystifies Brazil's guerrilla warfare experience there, and identifies a linkage between Brazil's past military actions in the Amazon with future military concepts for protecting Brazilian sovereignty.

COLONIZATON AND CONQUEST

Since the beginning of Brazil's colonization, the conquest of the Amazon has been an episode written in blood, courage and determination. Blood was spilled in combat in the jungle where the threat of guerrilla warfare has been always present.

The city of Belém, capital of the state of Pará , signaled the starting point of the conquest of the vast Amazon world by the Portuguese-Brazilians. Founded on 12 January 1616 by Francisco Caldeira Castelo Branco, after the expulsion of the French by São Luís do Maranhão, the small nucleus protected by Fort Presépio became a magnet for settlers in the area. ¹ The city was the forerunner of expansion, domination and possession of the area in which a new race was established in the large equatorial zone. This was a natural product of the merging of the white Europeans with the Indians.

However, it was not a peaceful conquest. Violent disputes were fought by the Portuguese-Brazilian forces in order to expel the English, French, Dutch and Irish. They had come by way of incursions for exploration and commerce and tried to dominate the land by building permanent forts along the banks of some rivers of the region.



One significant historic figure illustrates the formidable Portuguese-Brazilian conquest and separates himself from the rest. His name was Pedro Teixeira, known in Brazilian history as "The Conqueror of the Amazon." On October 28, 1637, he left Cametá from the left bank of the Tocantins River on an audacious adventure of 2 years and 44 days. Commanding 87 soldiers and 300 hired porters and Parane Indians, his expedition embarked in 45 canoes. Captain Pedro Teixeira went up the Amazon River to Quito, Equador. During the long journey he fought, defeated and expelled foreign contingents which sought permanence at strategic points along a strip of the "Sea River." He discovered, reconnoitered, and manned the principle tributaries of the Amazon River. After defeating the Encabellado Indians, he founded a small Portuguese-Brazilian village at the confluence of the Napo and Aguarico Rivers, the modern border between Peru and Equador. The village was named the Franciscana. It signaled a delimitation of the Spanish and Portuguese domains, whose thrones had been united under the King of Spain since 1580.

Shortly after the return of the expedition to Belém, Portugal became independent of Spain and the owner of a true continental colony thanks to Teixeira's expedition and to other Portuguese explorers like Raposo Tavares. Tavares reached Belém eleven years later by descending the Madeira and Amazon Rivers from the then Province of São Paulo.² The results obtained by Pedro Teixeira's expedition served, much later, as the first argument in the doctrine of "Uti Possidetis" upon which the Treaty of Madrid of 1750 would confirm the Portuguese-Brazilian conquest.³

It is important to note that Pedro Teixeira also took part in the fight to reduce and pacify the Tupinambás Indians who threatened the Portuguese conquest of Belém and other coastal

locations like Cumã and Caités, between Belém and São Luís. In these battles his reputation as an astute, audacious military commander was solidified when he demonstrated quite plainly that the most efficient form of combat against the guerrilla warfare of the Tupinambás was also to employ the techniques of the guerrilla.

Pedro Teixeira was named "Capitã o-Mór do Grão Pará," a position which today is equivalent of the Military Commander of the Amazon. A victim of a rapid and insidious sickness, he died in Belém in 1641. His mortal remains are in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Belém which was constructed in the seventeenth century in the same area in which Fort Presépio (now Fort Castelo) was constructed.

In order to force the "Tordesillas Meridian" from the mouth of the Amazon to the Andes, Pedro Teixeira valued the techniques of guerrilla warfare.⁴ By directing his riverine operations, and by the decentralized use of his forces in actions characterized by surprise against superior forces, Captain Pedro Teixeira can be considered the developer of the tactics of the Ambush Companies. These tactics were emulated by Antonio Dias Cardoso, André Vidal de Negreiros, Henrique Dias and Filipe Camarão in the memorable "Pernambucan Insurrection," in which a native movement expelled the Dutch from the northeastern region of Brazil.⁵ This was one of the most notable and important events in the formation of the Brazilian nationality.

But the occurrence of guerrilla warfare in the history of the Brazilian Amazon has another highly significant episode in the formation of the independent state of Acre. The exploration and prosperity of the rubber commerce brought a great number of Brazilians, principally northerners to the region of Acre. This strip of land was ceded to Bolivia in 1867 by the Treaty of Ayacucho. Refusing to accept Bolivian authority over the region, the Brazilians living in Acre created an independent territory and demanded its annexation to Brazil. In response, the Bolivians founded a place called Port Alonso (today, Port Acre) in January 1889. In May of that year and with the support of the rubber workers and the governor of the state of Amazon, Luís Galvez Rodrigues proclaimed the Republic of Acre. However, the Brazilian government was obligated to deny this intention in an attempt to maintain existing Treaty obligations. In 1901, Bolivia signed the Aramayo Treaty leasing the region to the Bolivian Syndicate of New York which received authorization to collect taxes, explore for rubber and conduct mining operations.⁶

The situation became critical. In August 1902 a Brazilian guerrilla force with little more than 2000 men under the leadership of José Plácido de Castro, started a victorious insurrection. Plácido de Castro was a 26 year old southerner and "gaúcho" who adapted to the Amazon jungle conditions the same agility and mobility that the guerrillas had practiced on horse in the backwoods of the Rio Grande during the Federalist Revolution.⁷

In January 1903, after many battles, the Bolivian forces were decisively defeated and withdrew. Plácido de Castro was proclaimed governor of the independent state of Acre. On January 17, 1903 in a diplomatic victory by the Baron of Rio Branco, the Treaty of Petrópolis was signed.⁸ Brazil bought the region from Bolivia for 2 million pounds, a commitment to build the Madeira-Mamoré railroad, and an agreement to cover the payment owed to the Bolivian Syndicate of 110

thousand pounds. ⁹On 25 February 1904, the independent state of Acre was dissolved and was incorporated into the Brazilian Federation as the Federal Territory of Acre.

Plácido de Castro combined rare skill and understanding of the strategic aspects of the geographic, political, economic and social factors which brought the citizens of Acre to the armed fight. In his military operations, Castro applied a strategy of genuine Napoleonic inspiration, using the classic principles of the art of war. Then with reduced numbers, he adapted his forces and tactics to the enemy, weather, and terrain conditions, leading a highly mobile guerrilla campaign.

These two historical examples of Amazon military campaigns were characterized by great political and strategic military significance. They demonstrated enormous patriotic enthusiasm and showed the fundamental importance of techniques of guerrilla warfare in the Amazon region. And as we shall see of recent situations in which Brazilian regular forces became involved in guerrilla warfare in the Amazon Region, the lessons learned in the campaigns conducted by the extraordinary Pedro Teixeira and Plácido de Castro remain valid in modern times. These lessons will be used again if it should ever become necessary to defend Brazil's vital interests in the Amazon.

COUNTERGUERRILLA EXPERIENCE OF THE '70s

On a sunny Amazon morning in November 1970, a Brazilian Air Force (FAB) Albatross SA-16 aircraft entered its final approach in preparation for dropping airborne forces on the Tocantins River near the city of Marabá, in the state of Pará. From 7,000 feet, twelve men from the Special Forces Company of the Brazilian Army Airborne Brigade jumped in a military free fall operation. After a 30 second delay, they opened their parachutes and the team leader unraveled a Brazilian flag from his equipment. They drifted onto a small drop zone, a white sand bar in the middle of the river.

The team landed, rapidly organized itself and, at the quick time, brought the flag to an awaiting Brazilian Navy river patrol boat where a marine lieutenant received it from them. The patrol boat then moved from the island to the port of Marabá. ¹⁰ There, the marine solemnly disembarked and passed the flag to a lieutenant from one of the Jungle Infantry Battalions of the Military Command of the Amazon. This infantry officer then drove to the city center square and passed the flag to a student from a public school. With the accompaniment of the national anthem, the student raised the flag at the national pavilion.

This significant civic ceremony, as witnessed by thousands of residents of that Paranes city, signaled the end of the first great joint military operation realized by the Brazilian Armed Forces in the Amazon, Operation Carajás 70.

Using members of the three armed forces, and with the participation of various units that were not headquartered in the Amazon, Operation Carajás 70 was a counter-insurgency effort in a jungle environment. It was an excellent example of joint training. However, this was more than a training exercise. The principal objectives of Operation Carajás were presence and dissuasion

because in that time frame there were strong indications of the presence of a center of rural guerrillas in the region known as "Bico do Papagaio." [11](#)

Actually, around a year and half later, in April 1972, intelligence sources confirmed the existence of this guerrilla center in the region around the cities of Marabá, state of Pará, and Xambioá, state of Goiás. The then illegal Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B), which had a Maoist orientation, had established a training area there, with hopes to develop a liberated zone.

The Araguaia Guerrilla Force (FOGUERA), as the revolutionary movement had named itself, was established with a large sum of resources from the international communist movement, a majority of which were from Albania. The relationship of the Communist Party of Albania with the FOGUERA was such that everyday at 9 PM, a one-hour Portuguese language program was broadcast via short wave from the Radio of Tirana, capital of Albania. The program was specifically directed to the movement of Araguaia, and the radio programs that were transmitted to the region, always gave a heroic connotation to guerrilla actions. There was a long range network integrating the guerrilla force, an intermediate station and the Tirana station. Dismantling this radio link was one of the first successful objectives of Brazilian communications and security forces.

The area chosen by the PC do B was extremely susceptible to subversive actions. The region was one where the state and local governments were only able to maintain a small presence. The hospital network and state of sanitation were highly deficient. Malaria and leishmaniasis (protozoan infection) were diseases of epidemic proportions in the region, and a large part of the population was anemic and infested with various other diseases. There was no treated water and very little drainage in the localities. The economy of the region was based on harvesting naturally occurring items like nuts in the spring and wood in the winter. Agriculture was subsistence farming of corn, cassava (manioc) and rice. The quality of life of the population was really very low.

On the other hand, the location of the area close to important roadways was extremely favorable to the PC do B because the region received a considerable number of new colonists and this permitted the secret entrance of guerrilla reinforcements. Militarily the guerrilla's choice of this area was very intelligent because the region fell on the boundary between two Brazilian Army Military Area Commands, that of the Amazon (CMA) and of the Planalto (CMP). In the beginning of operations this caused coordination and control problems for the Army commands and gave a substantial advantage to the guerrilla forces.

In May 1972, when the Brazilian military operation effectively started, FOGUERA had about 80 guerrilla fighters of which about 15 were women. The movement was organized into a Political Bureau, a Military Commission and three Guerrilla Detachments, each one with three groups of 8 to 10 members each.

The Political Bureau was the head organization of the PC do B, which in that time frame had split away from the Soviet inspired Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) in order to follow the Chinese Maoist line. Adopting the principles of Mao Tse Tung, the PC do B idealized the escalation of a guerrilla movement in rural areas which, after receiving the support required by

the rural population, would be extended to urban areas. The members of the Political Bureau of the PC do B rarely were in the area but they instructed others and kept abreast of everything as it happened. All Military Commission decisions were subordinate to the approval of the Political Bureau.

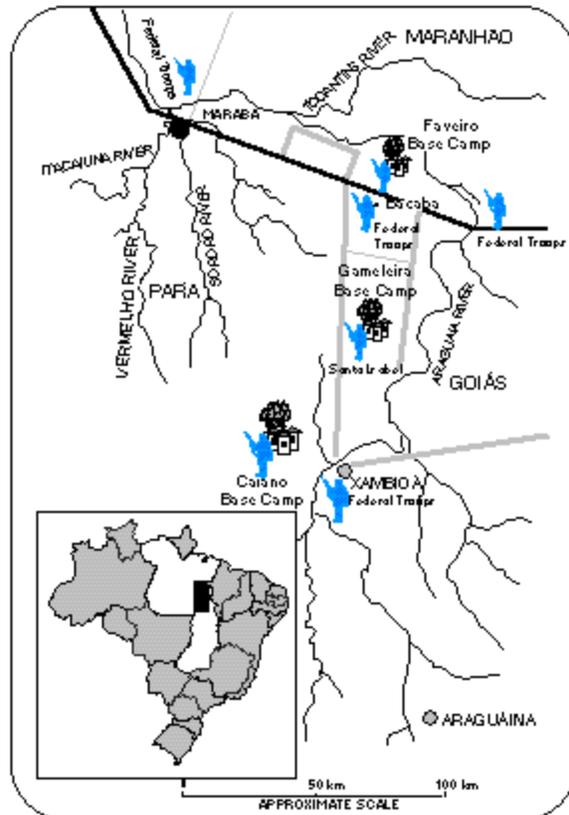
The Military Commission constituted the command of FOGUERA. Its mission was to plan, coordinate and conduct guerrilla force actions. The leadership as well as other elements in command of the Detachments and Groups were almost totally made up of members who had completed guerrilla warfare course abroad, notably in Peking, Tirana and Havana.

Subordinate to the Military Commission were the three Detachments which were the true maneuver elements of the terrorist organization. The Faveiro Detachment was the northern-most unit with responsibility for an area close the Transamazon highway; the Gameleira Detachment was in the center; and the Caiano Detachment was in the south. For security reasons, these detachments operated in a compartmental fashion without knowing the planned or current operations of the others. The deputy commander of the detachment exercised the functions of the Political Commissar to improve the guerrillas' understanding of communist ideology. The system of command and control of the Military Commission over the Detachments was based on contacts at selected locations and predetermined dates and hours, established by strict compartmentalized methods and the use of passwords. This system made the guerrillas captured alive an important and necessary source of information for counter guerrilla actions.

Subordinate to each Detachment were 9 Fire Groups; these were the basic elements of the guerrilla force. A Fire Group's autonomy was extremely restricted and it operated under strict control of the Detachment Commander.

For the most part, members of FOGUERA were recruited by the PC do B from the university students of large urban centers of Fortaleza, state of Cear , Salvador, state of Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, state of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, state of São Paulo. A good number of them were already living a clandestine life that had been compromised by their actions during urban terrorism.

The guerrilla training was done to achieve two basic objectives, one of a practical character and the other, theoretical. The practical part was directed to the preparation of the soldier and of the elementary units for combat in a jungle environment. The instruction included map reading, ambushes, explosives and destruction with improvised material.



BICO DO PAPAGAIO REGION 1972, WITH LOCATIONS OF GUERRILLA BASE CAMPS AND FEDERAL TROOPS

The theoretical part had the specific goal of strengthening the ideological knowledge of members of FOGUERA. In a general way the morale and the belief in the cause were elevated through teaching the party doctrine. Besides the military training, the Groups were also used in the "productive work," principally in newly cleared areas, in order to sustain the guerrilla forces.

Together with the local rural population, the guerrillas developed a psychological action program called the "work of the masses" with the objective of obtaining the support of the population. The result of this work was effective in some areas where they could organize a support force. But at no time did the FOGUERA get to recruit into guerrilla forces elements of the local population which may have been likely to fight alongside them.

In truth, FOGUERA was a guerrilla force in an initial and incipient stage. Its armament consisted of hand guns, hunting weapons and some rifles obtained from isolated actions against the outposts of the state Police of Pará. One of the most serious mistakes committed by the federal forces was to initiate operations which are normally used against guerrilla forces in their final stages of organization and development (when they are ready to be employed in combat).

The Brazilian counter guerrilla actions against local forces can be divided into three phases: 1st phase, from April to October 1972; 2nd phase, from April to August 1973; and the 3rd phase, from September 1973 to March 1975.

The first phase was characterized by the massive use of Brazilian troops. In August 1972, these troops numbered about 1,500 men. Fundamentally, two battalion-sized combat bases were established, one in Marabá and the other in Xambioá. Six company-sized combat bases were set up in the interior of the operational area. In the first phase, a series of mistakes were made:

- *Mistaken concepts for operations and tactics.* The planning and conduct of the initial operations in the "Bico do Papagaio" region started from the presumption that the counter guerrilla actions to be conducted would be the type that are normally unleashed against forces already in the stage of a National Liberation Army (Hammer-Anvil, Piston-Cylinder, etc). One of the first operations completed in the area was a clean-sweep action on the only existing mountains in the region, the Andorinhas Mountains, which do not have natural cover. After being bombarded with napalm by the Air Force, the mountains were the object of a vigorous search and encircle mission conducted by a large force. The results were dismal because the guerrillas were never there. In jungle lands, the federal patrols moved by large platoon formation of 35 to 40 men. They followed the trails. The guerrilla groups moved through the jungle with smaller groups of 5 to 10 members. It is no surprise that the initial actions showed themselves to be very ineffective.

Photo: 1972, Brazilian Special Forces and Jungle Infantry search Foguera Base Camp.



- *Lack of Tactical Unity of Effort (unit coordination).* Unity of effort was lost in planning and operations because the combat base in Marabá was under the control of the Military Command of the Amazon (CMA) while the one in Xambioá was under the command of the Military Command of Planalto. A simple call for aero-medical evacuation produced a complex problem of coordination.
- *Incomplete Intelligence.* There were no maps or aerial photographs of the operational area in compatible scales. Lack of knowledge of the terrain was enormous. The disposition and composition of FOGUERA was unknown. Combat intelligence was extremely scarce about recent and current enemy activities, peculiarities and deficiencies.
- *Great diversity in units employed and deficiencies in training.* Units from different parts of the Brazilian territory were used in this phase. Some of them had serious deficiencies in training for counter guerrilla operations in a jungle environment. Many of the units consisted of new recruits who had not completed a half-year of instruction; they were psychologically immature. Some casualties occurred by accidental discharge of weapons and by mistaken shots fired when patrols inadvertently met in the jungle.

- *Lack of continuity in operations.* Unlike the guerrilla force which had been in the area for some time and remained there, the troops were used for predetermined periods. They never remained more than 20 days, and returned to their base camps without being replaced. This discontinuity hurt the operations and created a serious negative view of the military among the population.

Despite all of these problems there were two positive aspects of the first phase. The first was that some casualties (about 15) were inflicted on the guerrilla force. Second was that all levels of command gained a thorough understanding about the seriousness of the insurgent situation in the area. In October 1972, in a decision taken in Brasilia by the highest level of command of the Ground Force, the operations were interrupted. Planning for the second phase considered all of the lessons collected in the first phase. It was decided that a major intelligence operation would be necessary to survey in detail the FOGUERA, the terrain and the local population. This intelligence operation, which was called Operation Sucuri, was planned in its smallest details and cautiously launched. The results were exceptional and Sucuri clearly reached all of its intelligence collection goals.

The information obtained in Operation Sucuri made clear to the superior command that the problem could not have only a military solution. There would be a need to integrate military actions with diverse national and state civilian governmental organizations in order to ensure a complete elimination of the subversive center.

The third phase, called Operation Marajoara, was launched immediately after the conclusion of the surveys developed in Operation Sucuri. The Military Command of the Amazon (CMA) was appointed the command headquarters with command and control of all units including the several civilian federal and state governmental agencies involved.

Professional troops were selected from the best trained jungle infantry and airborne units. A rigorous training program emphasizing the exercise of leadership at all levels was conducted both in garrison areas and in the combat area.

Three combat bases were established, one in Marabá with the principal command post; one in Xambioá, and the third in Bacaba on the outskirts of the Transamazon highway. An efficient and secure system of communications was established which greatly enhanced the command and control system. Likewise, an efficient system of logistical support was created which accounted for all the highly specialized characteristics of the mission and operational environment.

The entire force (including Air Force personnel) operated undercover in civilian clothing. Under a "cover story," the soldiers acted as if they were elements of the Federal Police. This decision was taken, principally, to avoid the recognition that the Brazilian Armed Forces were being used in an internal defense problem of this nature.

The patrols began to operate with only five to ten men, comparable to the combat power of the guerrilla enemy. Also, Brazilian patrols began using the considerable skills of selected local inhabitants who acted as guides or trackers. These elements proved to be decisive for the success of the operation. Instead of moving on the trails, the patrols were able to move through the

jungle, making use of the aerial photo products of the Air Force. Once again, the lesson that the guerrillas are best fought by other guerrillas was reinforced. In this context, the important role executed by the elements of the assigned Special Forces Company stand out.

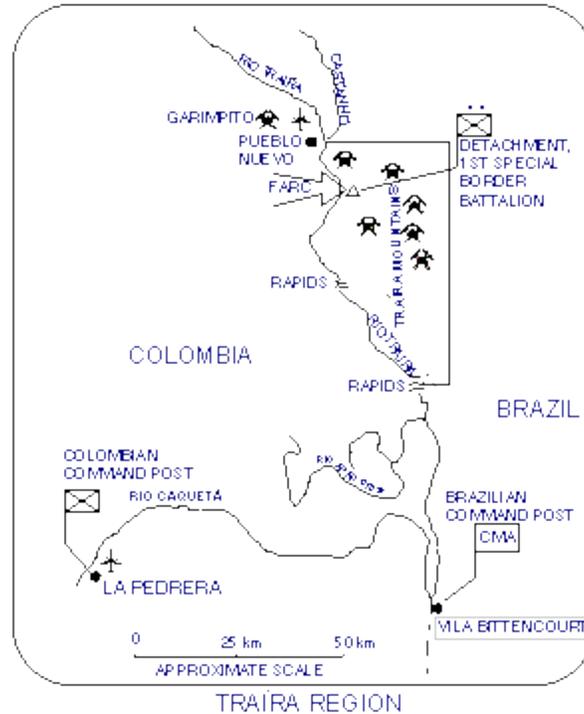
These unconventional warfare experts were continuously involved in the actions against the FOGUERA, beginning with the commencement of intelligence operations in Operation Carajás 70. In the third phase, Operation Marajoara, these elements acted as force multipliers, training engaged units and preparing self defense forces in the local communities, launching intelligence operations and psychological operations together with the local population, and they were used in selected direct action missions against the internal enemy.

Another important role noted in the achievement of the counterinsurgency campaign objectives was the success of the Air Force units, particularly the helicopter squadrons. Performing infiltration, exfiltration, resupply and aeromedical evacuation missions, these units were a prime factor in the success of the operation.

About three years after the start of the counterinsurgency campaign, and having collected a great number of important lessons learned for all levels of command, the most dangerous center of rural guerrillas in Brazil was eliminated. Furthermore, the Brazilian Armed Forces had established a sound basis for doctrine and operations in a jungle and mountain environment.

DEFENDING THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON TODAY

At twelve hundred hours, Tuesday, 26 February 1991, about 40 men who called themselves guerrillas of the Colombian Communist Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), Simon Bolivar Command, Force and Peace Faction, conducted a raid into Brazilian territory. They attacked a Brazilian Army detachment that was stationed in a semi-permanent camp on the bank of the Traíra River at the border between Brazil and Colombia.



The attack was conducted in three echelons. The fire support element remained on the Colombian bank while the other two, assault and security, unleashed an intense fire of automatic weapons against the detachment camp. The surprised members of the camp tried without success to react. During the action, the Brazilian unit of 17 men suffered three dead soldiers and nine wounded. Two illegal Colombian miners who were previously detained in the camp, and were awaiting evacuation to Vila Bittencourt, state of Amazonas, also died.

By the end of the raid the Colombian guerrillas had stolen the radio station, ammunition, uniforms and all the armaments of the post. Apparently, they suffered no losses. They carried 5.56 mm automatic weapons and various hunting rifles. They wore light green uniforms and rubber boots. Two women that were identified among the attacking commandos had already been detained at the post before.

The Minister of the Army, Commander of the Brazilian Ground Force, authorized the Amazon Ground Force Commander to establish the Traíra Detachment to confront the riotous situation in the region of Traíra Mountains. The lawless situation there was caused by the presence of a great number of illegal Brazilian and principally Colombian miners who had arrived in Traíra after the deactivation of the works of the Paranapanema Mining Company. This mining company retained the ore exploration permit issued by the Brazilian Federal Government.

In later intelligence operations it was proven that the Colombian FARC guerrillas were allied with cocaine dealers and illegal Colombian miners. With the permission of some Indians corrupted by narco-guerrillas, they had attacked the gold ore areas at the old abandoned mines of the Paranapanema Company in order to obtain resources for their subversive actions. The Colombian guerrilla action seemed to be a reprisal for previous counter guerrilla actions conducted by the Traíra Detachment.

It should be noted that the activation of the Traíra Detachment under the command of the then 1st Border Command of the Solimões/1st Special Border Battalion, Tabatinga, state of Amazonas, was limited to the specific mission of maintaining law and order. Their operations were limited to deporting Colombian miners to their territory and stopping Brazilian miners from entering the area. The Brazilian Federal government planned to normalize the local situation, then return Brazilian miners to the area.

Operation Traira, 1991, Special Forces troops gather information from Tucano Indians.



The FARC attack against the detachment was an unforeseen action with respect to the mission of the detachment. Since the first Brazilian border platoons were established in the Amazon, attacks of this nature had never occurred.

The FARC action of February 1991 in the Traíra River initiated the planning and execution of a combined operation staffed by the Armed Forces of Brazil and Colombia named Operation Traira. This operation was the principal result of an extra-ordinary Regional Bilateral Meeting between Brazil and Colombia. The meeting was held on 9 March 1991 at the headquarters of the Unified Command of the South, Leticia, Colombia with the participation by Colombian forces authorities from the IV Division (Colombian), Vila Vicenzio and the Brazilian Military Command of the Amazon (CMA), Manaus.

This meeting established various combined accords and some recommendations. These defined the forces' committed to operate in their respective territories with the objective of maintaining order and pacifying the border region. The meeting also established the coordinated actions to be conducted by Brazilians and Colombians at all levels of planning. There was an agreement for the immediate and continuous exchange of intelligence related to subversion, terrorism, and narcotrafficking in order to neutralize any threat which might arise. Also, there was a recommendation that the armies of Brazil and Colombia should foster combined management of the problem in an effort to increase government presence in the area and to support community development activities.

In the Brazilian territory, the command post of CMA remained in Vila Bittencourt, state of Amazonas, headquarters of one of the border platoons along the Colombian frontier. In the Colombian territory, the command post was at La Pedrera, Province of Taraira.

The results of Operation Traíra were extremely significant. On the Colombian side, there was the efficient action of the Bejarano Munoz Battalion, La Pedrera. This is a highly trained counter guerrilla unit and its patrols established effective control in their area of operations.

On the Brazilian side, the exceptional performance of the 1st Special Border Battalion, (1st BEF, today the 8th Jungle Infantry Battalion, Tabatinga, state of Amazonas) stands out. ¹² Overcoming the initial trauma of the Traíra attack, the 1st BEF was able to eliminate seven of the guerrillas, who had attacked the Detachment, as well as imprison members of their support network and recapture a good part of the stolen military material and equipment.

Major participating units included elements of the traditional Amazonas Battalion, 1st Jungle Infantry Battalion (1st BIS), Manaus. This elite unit of CMA demonstrated a high level of preparedness for jungle operations. The Strategic Reserve elements of the Brazilian Army, the Special Forces, and the Army Aviation units (always present in crisis situations in the Amazon region) were quick to respond to requests for support and reinforcement.

Again the presence of unconventional warfare experts from the 1st Special Forces Battalion (1st BFEsp), Rio de Janeiro, state of Rio de Janeiro, was extremely useful. The 1st BFEsp deployed an Immediate Action Detachment which integrated with troops from the Special Forces and Commandos. Performing intelligence operations and selected direct action missions, they proved to be indispensable to the commander of the operation.

Operation Traíra marks an historically significant point for Army Aviation. This was the first opportunity for the recently created Army Aviation Brigade, Taubaté, state of São Paulo, to be deployed in a real combat operation in the Amazon. It was its baptism by fire. The Ajuricaba Patrol employed 4 multipurpose Pantera helicopters and 2 scout Esquilo helicopters. Aviation support personnel and maintenance troops were well prepared for the operation. The aircraft supported the infiltration and resupply of Colombian patrols. After the operation, 2 Panteras and 2 Esquilos helicopters were left in support of the 1st BEF in the Traíra region for an additional six months. It is important to keep in mind that to be successful, the rotary wing aircraft in the Amazon require special employment techniques that are not normally required in other areas. Under combat situations these special techniques are very demanding upon the skill of the aircrews, but these challenges were overcome by high training levels, motivation and leadership.

Operation Traira, 1991, Command Post of 1st Special Forces Battalion.



The Brazilian Air Force participation was also decisive for the success of the Trajira Campaign by providing intra-theater airlift of soldiers and logistical support with C-130 Hercules and C-115 Buffalos. The FAB was represented on the staff in the command post of the operation by an air support liaison officer from the VII Air Force Command (COMAR VII), Manaus. He assumed the planning duty and directed the employment of the air assets allocated to the operation by the Air General Command (COMGAR), Brasília, Federal District. The assets all based in Vila Bittencourt included two C-95 Bandeirante aircraft for aerial reconnaissance, six UH-1H helicopters and six AT-27 Tucano fighters. The operation demonstrated that in the Amazon, without adequate support by the Air Force, the Ground Force will be extremely limited in its combat, combat support and sustainment operations.

**1991, infiltration of immediate action detachment
of 1st Special Forces Battalion.**



The Brazilian Navy also had a role in Operation Traíra. A Navy river patrol boat from the Amazon Fleet (FLOTAM), Manaus, deployed to Vila Bittencourt to assist with logistical support and to increase security levels in the region.

The current problems existing in the arc of the Amazonian border from French Guiana to Bolivia, involve the management of Indians, clandestine mining, and the smuggling of precious minerals, contraband and arms. The root of the problems can be linked to the strong connection between foreign guerrillas and drug traffickers which create the phenomena of narco-guerrillas (particularly in Peru and Colombia). This situation presents the possibility of escalating crises which have the potential to unleash threats to the vital interests of Brazil in the Amazon. This especially concerns the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the national patrimony.

**Operation Traira, 1991, Brazilian Jungle Infantry
extracted by Pantera (Panther) helicopter.**



In November 1991, another operation was launched at the Colombian border by CMA to confront the latent threats remaining from the FARC. This operation called Operation Perro Loco was conducted in the region of Iauarete and Querari (also know as the "Cabeça do Cachorro," or "Dog's Head" region), both in the state of Amazonas.(13) The 5th Jungle Infantry Batallion, 5th BIS, São Gabriel da Cachoeira, state of Amazonas, the 1st Special Forces Batallion, 1st BFEsp, and 14 helicopters from the Army Aviation Brigade participated. Like Operation Traíra, this

operation demonstrated the operational capabilities of the units involved. They achieved their objective which was to dissuade the Colombian narco guerrillas in the region from conducting incursions into Brazilian territory.

OPERATIONAL DESIGN FOR FRONTIER DEFENSE

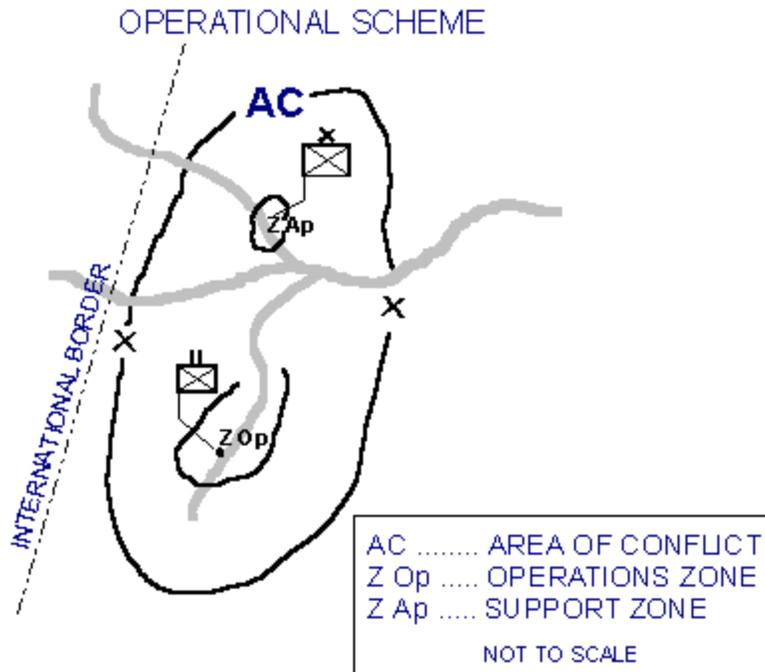
In directives sent by the Army General Staff (EME), Brasília, DF, relating to External Defense, the Ground Operations Command (COTer), Brasília, DF, was directed to plan the use of ground forces in the defense of vital interests of Brazil in the face of these types of threats. All of the lessons learned in the experiences of Operation Traíra and Operation Perro Loco were considered in developing long-term plans for operations in the Amazon.

The definition of this type of conflict is one of the most important ideas in the current strategy. This is a low intensity conflict, where the threat, generally designated as "the adversary forces" may present itself under various forms: narcotraffickers, guerrillas with or without political motivation, Indians without Brazilian citizenship, clandestine gold miners, international adventurers, foreign infiltrated agents (to include state sponsored and privately sponsored), or a combination of these elements--all threatening Brazilian National Security and undermining its sovereignty.

The overall political objective of these military operations will be reached when, at the conclusion of the conflict, the sovereignty and integrity of the National Patrimony is established throughout the region. The operations will not be suspended until the "adversary forces" have been expelled from the Brazilian National territory. The corresponding military objectives can be synthesized as defending the population and National Patrimony through the destruction of "adversary forces" operating within the National territory.

Fundamentally, ground force action will increase in intensity, passing from the tactics of prevention, to suppression, and then operational actions following this escalation: 1) military support to federal, state or city administrative organs of civil government; 2) intelligence gathering operations and operations against "adversary forces"; 3) operations of major size if the "adversary forces" evolve more developed strategies and organizations.

The strategic conception for the use of the ground force in these situations means that despite the conduct of operations to destroy the adversary forces, there will not be a general activation of the Brazilian Military War Structure. This means the typical situation will be military operations other than war (MOOTW).



In order to deal with these types of situations, the activation of a Conflict Area (AC) can be made by the Military Command of the Amazon (CMA) through the authority of the Minister of the Army, Ground Force Commander. The establishment of the AC in terms of a defined territorial limit must be restricted to a border area where there may be imminent or already occurring threat. In terms of command structure, the AC must be divided into an Operations Zone (Z Op) and Support Zone (Z Ap). The AC commander has the responsibility to establish the command and control structure as well as responsibilities within the AC.

The Operations Zone (Z Op) must remain restricted to a region where operations for the destruction of adversary forces will take place. This region must include ground and air space necessary for the conduct of all operations. In principle, the commander of the Z Op must be the commander of the echelon directly responsible for the destruction of the adversary forces. His command post must be located to best control and coordinate the operations.

The Support Zone (Z Ap) is a region for facilitating sustainment support of the operation, much like a communications zone in US Army doctrine. In principle, the command post of the Z Ap must be collocated with the principal logistics base. Basically, the supplies arrive at the Z Ap by air or river and normally the Z Ap will be an area where an adequate airfield exists. From there, the supplies will be transported to the Z Op through the use of helicopters.

The size of the Conflict Area (AC) to be established by CMA will be a function of the seriousness and complexity of the problem to be resolved. In an area where the combat power of the adversary force is considerable, with significant irregular forces, guerrillas, and/or foreign narcotraffickers, the activated AC must be of a size adequate for a brigade. The commander should be from one of the four Jungle Infantry Brigades (depending on the area of the conflict)

stationed in the strategic Amazon Area. In this case, the brigade commander could designate one of his battalion commanders as Z Op commander, and his S-4 as Z Ap commander.

The Ground Operations Command (COTer), based on available combat information, establishes priority areas for planning and training. If the problem is small or restricted to the elimination of a small group that periodically enters Brazilian territory, CMA could decide to have their subordinate brigades establish an AC appropriate for a battalion.

For planning in an activated AC, the available resources include the combat, combat support and logistics elements of CMA, and the combat, combat support and logistics elements of the Brazilian Army Strategic Reserve. This includes employing elements of the Army Aviation Command, those of the Airborne Infantry Brigade and those of the Special Forces Battalion. Besides these, the combat, combat support and logistics elements of the Brazilian Air Force and of the Brazilian Navy are available and can be allocated to the Ground Operations Command (COTer) by the General Air Command (COMGAR) and by the Naval Operations Command (CON).

Brazilian Army patrols Amazon in LM-1 assault boat equipped with global positioning system and sonar.



These resources can be increased depending on the complexity of the problem to be encountered and the requirements of the private and civilian governmental organizations (federal, state, and city), all of which fall under the command of the AC. In these ways, the Brazilian Army is given an adequate structure for the preparation, planning and conduct of operations to confront adversary forces in defense of the strategic Amazon area.

FUTURE STRATEGY FOR THE AMAZON THEATER

The threat to Brazilian interests in the Amazon are, in large part, a function of the ability of Brazil's friendly neighbors to control or defeat their serious internal conflicts. In the short term, this seems unlikely. The presence and current intensity of narco-guerrillas in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia is such that "social bliss" now or in the near term is unlikely despite the extraordinary attempts that have been taken by their respective governments. Also, the threat tells us that

fighting foreign narco-guerrillas in an External Defense situation in areas along the Amazon border remains a possibility and suggests a need for multinational, combined operations in both the short and medium terms.

On the other hand, our vision must focus on possible threats to Brazilian constitutional authority and the maintenance of law and order. This threat is related to the interest in the Amazon by groups called "Landless Movements." This can exacerbate the difficult situation there. These conflicts (which may or may not have ideological connotations) may demand the use of federal force. Eventually a fight against adversary forces in an Internal Defense scenario could result. The region of the "Bico do Papagaio" continues to be a potentially explosive region for this type of conflict. In order to prevent its escalation, much more than military presence is required. There is a need to see more efficient government action coordinated at the federal, state and city level. However, to remain ready in the future for these types of situations, all levels of military commands must stay permanently updated on plans for integrated security.

But to make any type of prospective analysis involving the questions of security of the Brazilian Amazon, one must significantly consider the present international environment and the implications of demands produced by groups who have appointed themselves as leaders of a "New World Order." In this new international system, where the United States of America has become the only economic and military superpower, new centers of tension and friction have grown with relation to ethnic, religious and national identities.

In this new view, environmental questions have been raised with a new special importance. Under the auspices of ecological preservationists, international social interest groups have constructed and spread a negative image of the Brazilian Amazon. From this new framework, the world has seen pronouncements, like that of President Mitterrand, in which the defense of the Amazon rain forest is elevated to a cause of fundamental importance for humanity. Such pronouncements advocate the formation of supranational organizations to police the environmental management provided by the governments of underdeveloped or developing countries. This is an explicit presentation of the principle of "devoir d'ingerence" (right of intervention).(14)

It is not within the scope of this work to provide an assessment of future external threats to Brazil's vital interests in the Amazon. In order to confront a threat that involves the possibility of a conflict against an extra-continental multinational military force of superior combat power, the Army General Staff (responsible for the formulation of political-strategic policies and concepts) has already promulgated a "Strategy of Lassitude." This strategy by definition, seeks a prolonged conflict of attrition characterized usually by low intensity guerrilla warfare to make the adversary tired in body and spirit.

The translation of the Lassitude Strategy to the operational level presupposes an adoption of irregular warfare as the principal form of warfighting in which there exists a disequilibrium between the combat power of Brazilian forces and those of possible opponents. Because of the inferiority of material resources and the great disparity in the technical-scientific area, there is an implicit impossibility of direct conflict between the enemy and Brazil's conventional forces, whether offensive or defensive.

The great objective will be to demonstrate to the enemy that the price to pay to maintain the dominance over any region will well exceed the benefits. In this context it is important to underscore that the Brazilian Army is the only Latin American Army with the same concept of employment of Special Forces as the US Army. This concept says that Special Forces Operational Detachments will establish Unconventional Warfare Operational Areas (UWOA). The difference between the US and the Brazilian concepts is that while the US SF will work with foreign populations outside American territory, the Brazilian SF will work with Brazilian population, in a Resistance Movement environment, when a invasion threat of the Brazilian territory occurs.

The concepts of Lassitude have been developed for two simultaneous levels of action: the material plane of the military forces, and the moral plane of psychological action. On the material plane, the foreseen combat will be based upon the intense use of typical guerrilla actions. In order for regular forces to effectively use guerrilla warfare techniques, it is not necessary that they be converted into guerrilla forces. This would be an inconceivable and damaging backwards step in the development of a campaign.

On the moral plane of psychological action one must distinguish the work to be developed from the diverse actors present. The objective will be to give to the Brazilian soldiers and population the required moral support that will permit them to conduct a long duration campaign. The same moral capability will be able to drain the invader psychologically, forcing him to give up the fight.

One must keep in mind that the campaign cannot be concluded until the sovereignty and integrity of the National Patrimony is fully achieved. There is a growing national consciousness that in a situation like this, the objective will only be achieved by the removal of all the foreign elements from Brazilian territory.

Planning for a Strategy of Lassitude will require that Brazilian leaders correctly identify the center of gravity. The strategic center of gravity of the invader is likely to be his national will that leads him into the situation. When he has suffered sufficient losses and the cost-benefit ratio is no longer in favor of the action, the resolve (national will) for such action will weaken. This will be the preponderant factor for the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Brazilian territory.

On the other side, Brazilians can not ignore factors which work against the new strategy. These include the sparse population, the unknown terrain, the existence of unverified borders, marginal positioning in relation to transportation networks, and the non-integration of numerous regions of the Amazon with the Brazilian power centers. These factors can potentially create conditions of fragmentation and consequently detract from a unified defense effort.

One can not forget also that the adopting of Lassitude presupposes sacrifices that will be imposed on the entire Nation. It is likely that any powerful enemy will try to break the Brazilian national will, the prime component in the implementation of this strategy. This is truly the focal point to be developed: establish and consolidate a national will which directly supports the defense of Brazil's vital interests in the Amazon.

CONCLUSION

The vestiges and the ruins of numerous forts and the restored artillery batteries with their old bronze cannons are testaments to more than 350 years of fighting by Brazilian ancestors in order to conquer and maintain sovereignty in the Brazilian Amazon. The use of guerrilla warfare techniques have been the constant theme in this struggle.

The jungle environment, the territorial extension, the immense length of border, the sparse population, the lack of transportation and the precarious communications are all characteristic factors of the strategic Amazon area. The high priority of the Amazon to Brazilian interests, the unique nature of the region, and the finite limits of Brazil's Armed Forces have led to the development of a singular style of combat.

Through the years, clearly the true developmental principle of the Amazon has been the pioneer actions and bravery of the Brazilian Armed Forces, whose efforts and sacrifices have always been present. In the most remote locations of the region, the Brazilian Army has had an influence in the formation and consolidation of the nationality of the population. And the mission to enmesh Brazilian culture into the hearts and minds of each citizen, over and above the mission of maintaining the safety of thousands of border kilometers, has been realized by the sacrifices and commitments from the soldiers of the Amazon.

But the defense of vital interests of Brazil in that area is not an exclusive work of the soldiers of the Amazon. It is a responsibility of all Brazilians, military and civilian including those of other areas of Brazil. If a threat from outside should materialize, then all Brazilians will be needed to contribute to defending the Amazon, using guerrilla warfare if necessary, as we have done in the past and are doing again today.

In conclusion, this article focused on Brazil's use of military power to protect its economic, political and social interests in the Brazilian Amazon. By providing the distant and recent history of the Brazilian Army's role in regional security and development, the paper explains the strategic importance of the Amazon for Brazil. It brought to view Brazil's guerrilla warfare experience, and linked the military history of the Amazon basin with future strategic concepts for protecting Brazil's national patrimony.

Nothing can reflect better Brazil's determination for the success of the missions of security and integration of the Amazon than a phrase from the former Brazilian Army leader, Gen. Rodrigo Otavio: "Hard is the mission to develop and defend the Amazon. But harder, however, was that of our ancestors in conquering it and maintaining it."

ENDNOTES

1. Francisco Caldeira Castelo Branco was the Portuguese commander who founded and governed Belém, capital city of the state of Pará, until he was ousted in 1618. In 1615, he took reinforcements from Recife to help Jerônimo de Albuquerque, another Portuguese Captain, in his

fight to expel the French from the state of Maranhão, whose capital city was São Luís do Maranhão.

2. Antonio Raposo Tavares was a Brazilian "bandeirante" (explorer). Governor of the São Vicente Captaincy (in colonial Brazil, a jurisdictional division corresponding to a province) and head of the so-called "exploration of the territorial limits," which reached the Amazon and returned to São Paulo in 1650, covering more than 12,000 Km, the most extensive of all the geographical reconnaissance expeditions undertaken in Brazil.

3. Uti Possidetis ("as it exists now") This is the application of a principle of Roman private law to the field of international law. Enunciated in the Treaty of Madrid (1750), which was signed by Spain and Portugal, it constitutes a master stroke of international politics in relation to the New World, opposing the status quo ante, or the return to the "situation that previously existed."

4. The Tordesillas Meridian was determined by the Treaty of Tordesillas, between Spain and Portugal, which settled conflicts over lands explored by Columbus and other late 15th century voyagers. The original line of demarcation, established by Pope Alexander VI, ran from pole to pole 100 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. At Tordesillas, the Meridian was moved to 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, or between 48° and 49° west of Greenwich. This new demarcation was ratified by Pope Julius II in 1506. The new boundary enabled Portugal to claim the coast of Brazil after its discovery by Pedro Alvares Cabral in 1500. Brazilian exploration and settlement far to the west of the line of demarcation in subsequent centuries (toward the mouth of the Amazon and past) laid a firm basis for Brazil's claim to vast areas of the interior of South America.

5. The Pernambucan Insurrection (1645-1654) was a successful rebellious movement against the Dutch government in the northeast of Brazil. This historical event marked the beginning of the formation of the Brazilian Nationality. Antonio Dias Cardoso, André Vidal de Negreiros, Henrique Dias and Felipe Camar are among its heroes.

6. The Bolivian Syndicate was an agricultural company established with English and North American capital, which tried to seize control of the state of Acre (1901). Headquartered in Bolivia, it had its own police force and armed fleet. Company representatives arrived at the village of Antimari (Acre River), but changed their minds because revolutionaries dominated the whole river, and Bolivian interest and resistance was fading fast.

7. The Federalist Revolution (1893-1895) was an armed movement in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the south of Brazil, which originated from disagreements between Republicans and Federalists, and occurred as Floriano Peixoto was assuming the presidency of the country.

8. The Treaty of Petrópolis was signed by José Maria da Silva Paranhos, the Baron of Rio Branco, Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the representatives of Bolivia. Through this treaty, Brazil acquired, by purchase and exchange, the territory that is today the state of Acre.

9. The Madeira-Mamoré railroad was built connecting the towns of Guajará-Mirim, in the border with Bolivia and Pôrto Velho (in western Brazil on border between states of Amazonas and

Rondônia). It was used for the flow of rubber production to the Madeira River. It was known as the "Devil's Railroad," because of the great number of deaths during its construction. It was deactivated in the 1960's.

10. The city of Marabá, state of Pará, is located on the Tocantins River about 450 miles upstream from the Atlantic Ocean and city of Belém. The Tocantins flows from south to north.

11. "Bico do Papagaio" (Parrot's Beak) is a region that was originally along the border between the states of Goiás and Pará, so named because its outline, formed by the Tocantins and Araguaia Rivers, resembles a parrot's beak. This region today is in the newly formed state of Tocantins.

12. Special Border Battalion in Portuguese is Batalhão Especial de Fronteira, or BEF. In 1992, the five Special Border Battalions were reorganized into Jungle Infantry Battalions with greater combat capabilities.

13. The "Cabeça do Cachorro" (Dog's Head) is the northwest region of the Brazilian Amazon that borders Colombia. The shape of this region, which includes the villages of Iauarete, Querari and São Joaquim, gives rise to its name.

14. Devoir d'Ingerence (right of intervention). The Non-Governmental Agencies' World Conference was held at the Hague, during 17-20 December 1991, at France's request, and brought together 800 delegates from all over the world. During his speech, French President François Mitterrand alluded to the devoir d'ingerence of the World Community in the protection of the environment, suggesting the creation of a supranational authority that would be responsible for the aforementioned protection.

9 May 95

COMMENTARY:

SIGNIFICANCE OF BRAZILIAN STRATEGIC THINKING

by William W. Mendel

Colonel Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro's essay concerning the Brazilian experience in the Amazon captures the North American reader because of its rough parallel to U.S. history of "winning the wild west." Though the United States had mostly tamed its West by 1900, Brazil is still in the process of bringing order and progress to the outer reaches of its Amazon region. Seen through the eyes of a senior Brazilian officer, this paper about Brazil's counter guerrilla experience can be appreciated on several levels of interest to U.S. security professionals dealing with Iberoamerican issues.

THE COUNTERGUERRILLA EXPERIENCE

First is the frank discussion of Brazil's history of guerrilla warfare in the Amazon Basin by which national boundaries were drawn and from which the Brazilian nationality was formed.

This includes the "fight to reduce and pacify" indigenous peoples who threatened the Portuguese-Brazilian conquest of Brazil. Alvaro's story of jungle fighting, which he brings forward to the present time, may drive some readers to the library seeking further details of Brazil's early history.(1)

In the modern history of Brazil, the FOGUERA (Araguaia Guerrilla Force of the Communist Party of Brazil) was the most important rural threat to Brazil's national security. Alvaro's story of Operation Carajás 70 and subsequent operations to counter FOGUERA's guerrilla actions, describe the maturation of the modern Brazilian armed forces in actions that influenced doctrine and joint interoperability. By 1974, the military had largely finished-off the rural guerrilla military arm of the Communist Party of Brazil. In defeating the Communist guerrilla movement, the Brazilians did not employ foreign advisors or foreign troop units. This makes the Brazilian armed forces unusual in the Latin American military experience, and explains the feeling of pride that members of the armed forces have in their defense of the national patrimony.

The Traíra incident was significant for Brazil for two reasons. This was the first incident in which Brazilian soldiers were killed in combat with rural guerrillas since the combat with FOGUERA in 1974.(2) The event served notice to the Brazilian government that the defense of the frontier was serious business that needed support. Indeed, Minister of Foreign Affairs Francisco Rezek was reported to have advised the Colombian government that the Brazilian Army could not accept this kind of action, and something would be done to counter the guerrilla groups.(3) The consequence was the planning and execution of a combined Brazil-Colombia operation. According to the Brazilian Minister of the Army, some seven Colombian guerrillas were killed; four guerrillas were captured and later handed over to the Colombian Army.

The incident also confirmed the need for frontier troops. Since 1920, the Brazilian Army has had a program to keep watch along the border. Today five jungle infantry battalions patrol the border areas of the Brazilian Amazon, which is 60 percent of the national territory. The mission of these battalions is made difficult by the "facts of the Brazilian Amazon" described by the Minister of the Army in his 1991 testimony to the Brazilian National Congress:

- The great size of the Brazilian Amazon region;
- the weak transportation network, mainly riverine;
- the small and diversified population;
- the difficulty faced by the government to make its presence felt;
- the extant that Indian tribes ignore borders;
- the presence, and the predatory behavior of miners from various countries, that attracted by gold, corrupt the Indians, operate in diverse areas without any authorization, and without respecting the borders or environment;
- the acts of foreign religious missions, not always working on their religious function;

--the presence of organized guerrilla groups and powerful drug cartels in some neighbor countries

--the intervention of multinational groups under various justifications: environment, Indian rights, internationalization of the rainforest

--the difficulty that our neighbor countries have in protecting their border areas.(4)

The presence of the border troops has become critical to countering the grey area phenomena of the Brazilian Amazon.

COUNTERING THE GREY AREA PHENOMENA

On a second level of interest, Colonel Alvaro includes valuable "lessons learned" about issues that will interest U.S. policy-makers and strategists. These issues include: recognizing the immediate danger to the national welfare presented by grey area phenomena (drug trafficking, insurgency, smuggling, lawlessness, poverty, refugee flows); developing interagency cooperation and integration to achieve policy goals--especially the need to integrate military resources and operations with those of civilian elements of government; and putting someone in charge of multiagency actions in designated operating areas. Similar issues also confound U.S. strategy development, and their resolution remains problematic.(5)

Alvaro's *Guerrilla Warfare in the Amazon* demonstrates Brazilian recognition of several grey area phenomena as being threats to national sovereignty. Only recently has U.S. national leadership placed emphasis on these kinds of dangers to the U.S. interests, notably in President Clinton's National Security Strategy. There it is stated that:

Transnational phenomena such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, environmental degradation, natural resource depletion, rapid population growth and refugee flows also have security implications for both present and long term American policy. In addition, an emerging class of transnational environmental issues are increasingly affecting international stability and consequently will present new challenges to U.S. security.(6)

Brazil's economic development of Amazon states such as Roraima, Amazonas, Acre, and Rondônia has alarmed some in the international community. They believe that increased access and use of the natural resources of the Brazilian Amazon will bring harm to the global environment.

Colonel Alvaro's concern over French President Francois Mitterand's comment about a right to intervene in other countries' internal affairs when issues of the environment are involved suggests to some Brazilians another danger to Brazil's sovereignty. And the perception that the United States also has designs upon Brazil has found voice in recent years among some who have sincere concerns for U.S. intervention policy. For example, a São Paulo, Brazil newspaper editorial titled "Brazil Surrounded," admonished its readers about advancing a so-called "theory of the siege," but still suggested that:

The presence of American soldiers in the Amazon region is proof enough--after all, are they not also in Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, and even in Argentina? What interests can the United States pursue in those countries but to hem in Brazil by monitoring its air space with powerful radars? Why would they intend to lay siege to Brazil? Because Brazil is the only developing country that can undermine the real power wielded by vast economic sectors in the United States inasmuch as by subduing environmentalists' restrictions we can reach the Pacific!(7)

Looking beyond the chimera of U.S. intervention in the Amazon, Alvaro has identified rock-solid threats representing a dynamic of grey area phenomena that U.S. security specialists cannot ignore. This is the linkage of narcotraffickers and guerrillas. Since U.S. involvement with conflicts in El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 1980s, support for counterinsurgency has been unpopular. However, counterdrug operations in overseas areas have been funded. This has led to the peculiar assertion in some U.S. interagency circles that no clear linkage exists among the narcotraffickers and guerrilla groups. But as Colonel Alvaro advises from first hand experience in Brazilian border regions:

The root of the problems can be linked to the strong connection between foreign guerrillas and drug traffickers which create the phenomena of narco-guerrillas (particularly in Peru and Colombia). This situation presents the possibility of escalating crises which have the potential to unleash threats to the vital interests of Brazil in the Amazon. This especially concerns the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the national patrimony.

Brazil is taking direct action against the narco-guerrilla nexus as one objective in its counterdrug strategy. The U.S. Andean Ridge Strategy for reducing the movement of illicit drugs to the United States will remain problematic until the transnational narco-guerrilla linkage is accounted for in counterdrug campaign design.

In describing military operations in Brazil's border regions, *Guerrilla Warfare in the Amazon* provides insight for integrating multi-agency resources. Brazil's military leaders recognized that there would be a need for interagency cooperation in order to integrate military counterinsurgency actions with other national and state governmental organizations. As Alvaro states, "There is a need to see more efficient government action coordinated at the federal, state and city level."

The problem of establishing a regional czar or lead agency was solved by establishing the Military Command of the Amazon as command headquarters with control of all units including several civilian federal and state governmental agencies. In this case, the armed forces were seen as best able to command and control complex civil and military operations. While this model may not fit U.S. interagency endeavors, the important point is that the Brazilians seized the initiative, put someone in charge, and integrated multi-agency actions.

A STRATEGY OF LASSITUDE (WEARINESS)

Finally, the reader is well informed by Brazil's Strategy of Lassitude for defending its national territory from intervention forces. This is a strategy for making the enemy weary--exhausting his national will. Certainly this strategy demonstrates a seriousness of intent to maintain sovereignty in the Brazilian Amazon and offers Brazil's view of intervention threats. Most interesting is that Brazil's military strategists were able to extend their vision for national defense beyond the

structure of today's popularized annihilation concepts to consider a range of options appropriate for the situation. U.S. military planners might wonder if current U.S. staff training and military doctrine, which demands "prompt and decisive" warfare, could facilitate or even allow thinking about attrition-style strategies.(8)

The Lassitude Strategy is a form of attrition warfare suited for the vast reaches of the Brazilian Amazon. Remarkably it is similar in intent to Mexico's National Defense Plan I for defending against foreign intervention on Mexican soil. The Mexican strategy is based on the use of regular and irregular forces to undertake an extensive guerrilla war against an intervention force.(9)

Similarly, Brazilian operations will employ joint forces using predominately guerrilla warfare concepts to grind down and exhaust an invader. Although a likely scenario for an incursion onto Brazilian soil may be difficult for the North American strategist to posit, the Brazilian military must seriously consider perceived dangers to the national patrimony.

Today it is very popular in U.S. military circles to quote Clausewitz, such as: "...war is an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force."(10) Military strategists overlook Russian General Aleksandr A. Svechin who reminds us that there are other strategic considerations beyond seeking the decisive battle. Svechin saw a span of intermediate forms of military operations between the extremes of destruction and attrition warfare:

The term attrition is a very poor expression of all the diverse shades of different strategic methods outside the realm of destruction.... A strategy of destruction is unified and allows for only one correct decision. In a strategy of attrition the intensity of armed conflict may vary, and thus each level of intensity may have its own correct decision. One can determine the level of intensity required by a given situation only through very careful study of economic and political conditions.(11)

This is exactly the approach taken by Brazilian strategists in forming their Lassitude Strategy. They are accounting for Brazil's economic, political and military elements of national power as they match strategy to conditions imposed by the mission, threat, geography, time, and force structure.

Still, Colonel Alvaro demonstrates how closely Brazilian strategists parallel Clausewitz' tenet of the "remarkable trinity"--the need in war to maintain a balance between the people, the army and the government. "The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people..." Clausewitz writes.(12) In this regard, Alvaro makes clear the need to enjoin the support of the people in conducting a strategy of Lassitude.

Colonel Alvaro's account of *Guerrilla Warfare in the Amazon* provides the North American reader with a concise account of jungle warfighting. But the significance of this example of Brazilian strategic thinking for U.S. policy and planning is its description of politico-military intent and its potential use as a concept for countering some of today's grey area dangers.

ENDNOTES

1. Currently accessible in book stores is the well regarded history of Brazil from the mid-1800s until 1914 by Gilberto Freyre, *Order and Progress* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986). [BACK](#)
2. Carlos Tinoco, Ministro do Exército, "Exército--Amazônia--Traíra," *Exposic_ão Do Ministro Do Exército Ao Senado Federal* [Carlos Tinoco, Minister of the Army, "Army, Amazon, Traíra River," Testimony of the Minister of the Army to the National Congress] (Brasilia, Brasil: Abril 4, 1991), 07/15. [BACK](#)
3. "O ataque da guerrilha," [guerrilla attack] *Veja* (Brazil, 6 March 1991): 24. [BACK](#)
4. Carlos Tinoco. 10/15. [BACK](#)
5. During the early 1990s USSOUTHCOM initiated actions to improve interagency cooperation and the integration of multi-agency resources in efforts to counter grey area phenomena (especially narcotrafficking and insurgency) in the Southern Theater. By 1994, essential funding for such initiatives was lost due to military cut-backs. See Mendel and Bradford, *Interagency Cooperation: A Regional Model for Overseas Operations* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, McNair Paper 37, March 1995). [BACK](#)
6. William J. Clinton, *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, D.C.: February 1995), 1. See also the NSS of July 1994, p. 1. The last Bush Administration NSS of January 1993 mentions the environment, terrorism and the illicit drug trade; see pp. 1, 11, 18. [BACK](#)
7. "Anti-Americanism Resurfacing," *FOLHA DE SAO PAULO* [editorial in Portuguese] (Sao Paulo, Brazil), 15 Aug 93, p. 3, in FBIS-LAT-93-158 Daily Report, 18 Aug 1993. [BACK](#)
8. John M. Shalikashvili, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: February 1995), 13. The Strategy states: "Clear Objectives--Decisive Force. In any application of force, military objectives will be clearly defined to support our national political aims in the conflict. We intend to commit sufficient force to achieve these objectives in a prompt and decisive manner." With the advantage of the world's best military forces, the people and military leadership of the United States expect rapid, decisive victory. Should U.S. strategic power wane, then it may become necessary to consider other strategies. [BACK](#)
9. Ignacio Ramirez, "El Ejercito: Su Estructura Estrategica y Su Doctrina de Guerra," [The Army: Its Strategic Structure and Its Warfighting Doctrine] *Proceso* (Mexico, 14 February 1994): 7. [BACK](#)
10. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret eds. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976) 77. [BACK](#)
11. Aleksandr A. Svechin, *Strategy*, (Minneapolis, MN: East View Press, 1992), 246. [BACK](#)
12. Clausewitz, 89. [BACK](#)