

Amazon's problems, which were growing: the abuse of Indians, deforestation, smuggling, illegal border-crossings. In other words, the state wasn't as present as it should be."

SIVAM planners also envision a push toward "ecological zoning," according to Albuquerque. This is a fancy way of saying that once the Brazilian government knows in detail the make-up of the vast mosaic of savannas, highlands, rivers, lakes and forests that constitute the Amazon, it will be better able to set aside land for specific uses that are "ecologically correct." This could include, for example, irrigated farming on the fertile riverbanks, sustainable extraction of fruit and tree products in inland forests and fish farming in networks of lakes and river channels.

"[SIVAM] will allow us to monitor to see that only permitted activities are taking place, and we will be able to evaluate that with images," he said, rapping his fists on a table to emphasize the incontestable nature of photographic evidence, which could alert officials about illegal logging, planting, burning or mining.

But Philip Fearnside, a research professor in ecology at the government's Institute for Amazon Research, part of the Ministry of Science and Technology, said that the project has been slow in

living up to its billing as an environmental watchdog. In early March 2003, when forest fires flared in the northern state of Roraima, SIVAM didn't detect the blazes, though the military and some aircraft were later deployed with SIVAM support to combat the flames.

Lula has promised to strengthen SIVAM's civilian component, known as SIPAM, or System to Protect the Amazon. SIPAM is centered on civilian research centers, one in each Amazonian state, which process SIVAM data for environmental and scientific uses and then distribute it to local researchers. These centers are staffed by agents of federal and state regulatory agencies and are intended to download information from SIVAM and also feed it with data to coordinate Amazon-wide environmental policing and monitoring. "It's a great opportunity," for developing sustainable conservation techniques, said Mario Jardim, a botanist and ecologist with the prestigious Museu Goeldi, a research center in Belém.

The civilian centers have been going on-line in phases since 2002, but the sharing of data has so far not fulfilled expectations. "We're still waiting for the data to come out," ecology professor Fearnside said. "I think the question still is, 'how much is this going to be a military thing?' which implies, 'how much

### LULA'S ENVIRONMENT POLICY: AN OVERVIEW

As of this writing, the new Brazilian government headed by President Lula da Silva is scarcely two months old. It will require many more assessments before it can be determined just how far its accomplishments match up with its intentions in the environmental area.

So far, the most novel part of Lula's environmental policy is a willingness to treat the theme as part of national strategic planning. Previously, many growth plans were designed without putting any thought into moderating their environmental effects. This was only done later. Now the environment will be treated as a key underlying theme in all major projects undertaken in Brazil.

The government also has new and promising perspectives on the tropical rainforest of the Amazon region. One auspicious step in this regard was the appointment of ex-rubbertapper Marina Silva as minister of the environment. She knows the region

well and understands how to deal with its problems.

Also interesting is the fact that, for the first time, we are making use of SIVAM, a system of radars, computers and airplanes that cost the country \$1.4 billion dollars. The only way to keep adequate watch over Amazonia was to make a basic change in our way of doing so; the vastness of the region requires electronic resources, the use of satellites and thousands of inspectors with laptops interacting with the system.

The creation of River Basin Committees (Comitês de Bacia), a new form of administration, opens the possibility of better managing the country's water resources. These committees will include representatives of NGOs as well as water users; they will reinvest the money collected from water use fees in restoring and maintaining Brazilian rivers.

The Lula government's first environmental test concerned the production of genetically modified crops. The Environmental Ministry wanted more time to test the effects of genetically modified food; this position prevailed. [Editor's note: GM crop production is currently banned in Brazil, though soy farmers frequently violate the ban. In mid-March, President Lula announced that exports of illegally produced GM soy would be permitted

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*Fernando Gabeira has been a member of Brazil's congress since 1995, winning the most recent election as a candidate of the Workers Party (PT). Before that, he served as a representative of the Brazilian Green Party, of which he is a former president. Gabeira is also a well-known journalist and political activist. These comments were translated from Portuguese by NACLA.*

secrecy is going to be involved?' Everyone talks about openness, but experience shows when it comes to getting the data it isn't as easy as all that."

Fearnside also believes that bureaucratic inefficiency and sparse funding have meant that many of the civilian centers and some radar stations aren't fully activated and staffed, and some expensive technology may be "gathering dust" in SIVAM's many outposts.

In any case, Lula comes into office after a concerted six-year military buildup in the Amazon. Ever since democratization in the 1980s, the military has declined in importance throughout much of South America, but in Brazil's Amazon, the role of the military has recently grown. Brazilian national security officials deployed over 20,000 extra troops to the region as Colombia's conflict heated up in the late 1990s. New bases were built, some in indigenous areas. Jungle warfare exercises have intensified along the Amazon's northern fringes, with Brazilian troops practicing anti-insurgency tactics.

In 2000, with its Plan Colombia, the United States began pouring hundreds of millions of dollars in military and financial support into Colombia. Brazilian officials, seeking to calm widespread fears of the conflict's possible spillover to the Brazilian Amazon,

pointed to SIVAM—then in development—as the nation's defense, along with a troop buildup.

Following September 11 there was more widespread worry about the country's jungle frontiers bordering territory infested with so-called Colombian and Peruvian "narcoterrorists," including four groups on the U.S. State Department's list of international terror groups. Again, SIVAM was touted as Brazil's insurance against incursions, and the timetable for completion was speeded up.

Against this background, Lula may be wary of intruding on the military's new turf in the Amazon. Lula was an enemy of the military as a trade union and pro-democracy activist in the 1980s, but sought to repair the relationship during the 2002 presidential campaign. He promised a generous military budget to a demoralized and underpaid officer corps and apologized for his former opposition to the Northern Trench plan, a military buildup along Brazil's northern jungle borders launched in the mid-1980s. This was a clear nod to the military's vision of the Amazon borders as military zones that will protect Brazil from chaos in bordering Andean nations.

Lula's first major policy move involving SIVAM came in March 2003, three months after his inauguration, when he sealed an agreement with Colombian

BY FERNANDO GABEIRA

for one year in order to avoid destruction of the crops.]

Lula's environmental program also demonstrates great concern with quality of life. Initially, it has focused on guaranteeing basic sanitation in the poorest areas. In the future, these concerns should be expanded to include the restoration of beaches in Brazil's great oceanfront cities. These are both a constant tourist attraction and a possible source of "democratic recreation."

Since the 1980s, when Brazil's environmental policy made it a kind of planetary villain, there has been great evolution in this area. This was begun by the previous government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Since 1992, when Brazil hosted the United Nations conference on the environment, the nation has not stopped evolving in this area, and, naturally, it understands that its first international duty is to, in a certain way, "internationalize" its successes in this field by bringing them into the ambit of Mercosur, the regional common market. In the last two years, work has been done to unify South American environmental laws and to find common positions to take in larger international forums.

The environmental question is one of the pillars of Brazilian policymaking, along with the question



Brazilian Environment Minister Marina Silva.

of peace and the questioning of globalization as it is currently being carried out. Our position in defense of the Kyoto Agreement [which limits greenhouse gas emissions] is an example of this. Minister Silva believes that because Brazil is a nation of great biological diversity it must assume responsibility for playing a leading role in forums where such major planetary questions are discussed. ■

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