

Africa (74) October 1977

Dear Sir, p. 8

Regarding the article 'Pretoria turns to the Latins', published in the July issue of AFRICA, I should like to point out the following facts:

The Brazilian Government has no plans whatsoever – nor has it ever had – for any strategic or military alliance in the South Atlantic involving South Africa. This position has been made quite clear on several occasions. Following an official denial, in August 1976, of the existence of any plans for a military alliance of the kind alleged, the Brazilian Minister for External Relations, speaking to the press on September 21, categorically reaffirmed Brazil's

opposition to any collective defence treaty of the South Atlantic involving the participation of the Government of South Africa and, referring to the South African Government and its policy of *apartheid*, declared that Brazil would not take part in a collective defence system entailing the defence of a segregationist regime.

Again in September 1976, the Brazilian Mission to the United Nations issued a press release to the same effect; and at a press conference held on October 14, the Brazilian Minister of the Navy denied there was a possibility of a military alliance with South Africa.

2. Military manoeuvres such as UNITAS have been taking place over a number of years within the framework of the Inter-American defence system and do not involve South Africa in any way. The Brazilian navy has no knowledge whatsoever of the alleged participation of an officer of the South African navy in the UNITAS XVII exercise and can aver that no such officer has ever taken part in UNITAS manoeuvres or any other naval exercise aboard a Brazilian ship. Moreover, the Brazilian navy has never, whether alone or with another country, sent a mission to the Simonstown Base.

3. Brazil's position regarding the situation in southern Africa is clearly summed up in the following paragraph, taken from the Joint Declaration signed on May 24 by the Foreign Ministers of Nigeria and Brazil, during the former's visit to Brazil: 'They denounced all forms of racial discrimination especially the *apartheid* policy of South Africa, which has been condemned by the United Nations as a crime against humanity. The Foreign Ministers considered desirable that all states should lend their cooperation and assistance for the peaceful settlement of the situation in Southern Africa. They expressed their support and solidarity to the peoples in southern Africa in their legitimate struggle for freedom, independence and human dignity.'

It is surprising that despite repeated Brazilian statements the subject should again be brought up in a supposedly well-informed magazine and, even more so, for the Brazilian government's official position to be disregarded and preference given to allegations and insinuations from unidentified sources.

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