

February 28, 1996

Cable from Brazilian Foreign Ministry to Embassy in Washington, 'Brazil-United States. Visit of the Secretary of State. Non-proliferation.'

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Summary:

This cable reports the visit of the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Brazil. Issues related to non-proliferation dominated the meeting. Christopher emphasized the importance of Brazil strengthening its commitments to non-proliferation norms by signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Brazilian officials expected to improve the dialogue with the US administration after Brazil's adherence to the MTCR.

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To the attention of SGA and Head of Minister Staff

Summary: The dialogue with the United States on non-proliferation took a new tone in view of the recent evolution of Brazilian policy in the spatial and nuclear areas. Contacts with the American Secretary of State open the opportunity in political understandings in questions such as the CTBT and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Although a return to the traditional expressions of "encouragement" to adhere to the NPT it may be possible, in the spatial area adherence to the MTCR gives Brazil credentials to stress to the United States the benefits of supporting associations of entrepreneurial content to the Brazilian space program.

283 61800 Non-proliferation continues to be a compulsory item of the American rhetoric about the international order in the post-Cold War period. This is an area in which the evolution of the Brazilian position made clear during the last few years the permanent commitment of the country with the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of sensitive technologies. The expectation of the signature of cooperation instruments in the spatial and nuclear areas as a result of the visit of Secretary Christopher to Brazil is emblematic of the constructive spirit which has generally characterized the bilateral relations in the field of non-proliferation, in spite of the differences of view that remain on both sides, especially with regard to the NPT and the role of nuclear weapons.

2. The United States reaffirmed in 1994 the central role of the continuing possession of its armament for its own security and reiterated practically in the same breath the importance of the barriers against the expansion of the nuclear club expressed in the NPT. The period prior to the New York Conference on the extension of that treaty was marked, in this sense, by a vigorous amassing of pressure and persuasion instruments. The result of the conference, despite the qualifications that may be attached to the peculiarities of the decision, enshrined the NPT, from the viewpoint of the United States, as the only instrument endowed with legitimacy and universality able to ensure the objectives of non-proliferation.

3. The clarity of the Brazilian commitments on non-proliferation was a reason for the expansion of the area of understanding with the United States during 1995, even in the absence of demarches by the American government to obtain the Brazilian adherence to the NPT, either before New York or in the months following the extension. However, once the American objective of perpetuating the treaty was consolidated, every indication points to the fact that the objective of its universalization remains. It is therefore predictable that the question will be raised once more by the United States in the context, for instance, of the Brazilian position on the CTBT and on the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

4. The question of the NPT should not affect the bilateral understandings on the CTBT, since it seems clear that there is an identity of objectives between Brazil and the United States which the latter should find useful to stimulate, once the American flirtation with the possibility of maintaining some kind of tests is overcome. In the context of the Brazilian interest in joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group, however, I believe there will be room for the return of the traditional expressions of "encouragement" for Brazil to adhere to the NPT, a very recent example of which is

the demarche of the European troika, in Brasilia, about the NPT (Circular cable 26.062). Ambassador Graham, director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, in informal contacts with Brazilian diplomats in Washington and in New York, recently expressed his conviction, that also seems to be that of the Clinton administration, that that the Brazilian adherence to the NPT is now only a question of time. I believe, therefore, that Secretary Christopher may touch on the issue when dealing with the NSG.

5. The Brazilian adherence to the MTCR, last October, was a significant spur for the bilateral dialogue in the area of cooperation from government to government. This trend has been stimulating American companies to increasingly consider Brazil as a partner and an important market in the area of space applications. I believe that, in this context, the American government, despite the growing ease in official contacts in past couple of years, will not yet expound clearly to private operators the contents of its new policy with regard to Brazil. While the specter of concerns over missile proliferation has disappeared, to a large extent that posture can be ascribed to the fact that the government of the United States remains unwilling to encourage the entry of competitors in a market of launchers and launching systems - including bases such as Alcântara - in which its position in the coming ten or fifteen years is not promising in view of the difficulties in the development of a new generation of launchers able to compete effectively with Ariane. Even acknowledging this obstacle, however, I believe it might be useful to emphasize to Secretary Christopher the necessary improvement of the prospects of entering the Brazilian market for countries willing to commit themselves as partners in the development of Brazilian space applications.

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