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## Brazil & Neighbors Still Working on Military Alliance Free from US

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Unasur, the Union of Latin American Nations, meeting in Brazil this week agreed to create a South American Defense Council, which will have "a collective vision of defense," as it was defined by Chilean President Michelle Bachelet who currently chairs the twelve-member group.

The agenda of the Defense Council, originally proposed by Brazil, will be worked out next month in Chile.

"The Defense Council is a forum on defense affairs basically at consultation level, and with the possibility of reaching a degree of integration in defense affairs," according to Brazil's Foreign minister Celso Amorim.

"This must not be seen as a classical military alliance since there will be no South American military forces," underlined Amorim given the resistance expressed by Uruguay and Colombia.

However it's the first time a regional council in defense affairs does not include the United States.

Unasur also agreed on a four months deadline to give time to all country members Congresses to approve the founding chart of the organization, (only Venezuela and Bolivia have done it so far) and naming a standing secretary general.

An issue which has proved controversial since the candidate from countries as Venezuela and Ecuador is Argentina's former president Nestor Kirchner, which is objected by Uruguay, possibly Peru and Colombia, and even Paraguay which suggested that if no consensus is reached on Mr. Kirchner some other candidate should obtain the necessary consensus.

A political violence report by a special Unasur human rights commission, which was considered by the Bolivian opposition as "shamefully biased" had no objections from country members according to Amorim.

The report refers to recent acts of violence when allegedly peasants were massacred by opponents of Bolivian President Evo Morales and threatened to trigger an uprising.

Mercopress