

Brazil's PSDB Chief Resigns Charging Government of Corruption

Contributed by Iolando Lourenço
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Brazilian Senator Eduardo Azeredo (PSDB, state of Minas Gerais) announced, Tuesday, October 25, on the Senate floor that he will resign his party's presidency in order to defend himself "openly" against charges that he received money from advertising executive Marcos Valério during his gubernatorial reelection campaign in 1998.

"Notwithstanding my indignation and disgust over the cowardly attacks that I have been suffering and which are indirectly aimed at the PSDB, one of the chief opposition parties, I have decided to get a jump on the facts," Azeredo affirmed.

On November 18, the PSDB will hold a national convention to elect a new executive commission and president. In the senator's view, his decision to withdraw from the presidency will confer "tranquility and concentration" on the succession process.

And it will leave the PSDB "freer" to combat the government's "mistakes: "In this battle, which is of interest to all of Brazilian society, I shall remain firmly entrenched in this Senate and in my party."

Azeredo said that he believes he is being used as a "tool" in a "farce" to divert the attention of the Brazilian population away from the scandals involving the government and the PT.

"I will not allow my name to be used to conceal the government's corruption. They picked me as a target because I exercised the presidency of the PSDB," he denounced.

In testimony before the CPMI (Joint Parliamentary Investigative Commission) on the Post Office, the ex-treasurer of Azeredo's campaign, Cláudio Mourão, confessed to having received US\$ 4.863 million (11 million reais) from Marcos Valério.

Azeredo said that he was neither aware of nor had he authorized the loan. And that he was informed of the debt a year after the campaign.

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