

Brazil to Adopt Rapid Strike Force as New Military Model

Contributed by Newsroom
Monday, 04 August 2008

The Brazilian government neither intends nor is it planning a massive troop build-up along its northern borders but wants a well-equipped rapid strike force to dissuade foreign intrusions, a senior government official said this weekend.

Brazil's President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, signed a decree last month to permanently deploy army troops on Indian reservations along its borders in response to concerns over possible incursions by guerrilla fighters, drug traffickers and others.

Brazil has borders with all South American countries with the exception of Chile and Ecuador. The "hot" areas are in the Amazon, along the borders from south to north, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela and the three Guyana.

Brazil next month is expected to present a new long-term strategic defense plan that will shift the armed forces' defense priorities away from its southern borders to the Amazon region, its long Atlantic coast and its air space.

But Roberto Mangabeira Unger, minister for strategic issues and co-author of the plan, said in an interview that this realignment should not concern its neighbors in the Amazon, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru.

"We do not feel threatened by any of our neighbors and therefore no major part of our proposals will result in significant deployment of Brazilian troops along our borders". Mangabeira Unger said in an interview.

The strategic defense plan, which Lula still needs to approve, will propose making Brazil's military more agile.

"We want to restructure the army along the model of a rapid deployment strike force" said Unger. The idea is to have modular regional brigades that could quickly reach hot spots along its vast resources, he added.

Historically Brazil's major forces concentration until last century was in the south, the all powerful Third Army with seat in Rio Grande do Sul which was supposed to counter the region's main rival and competitor Argentina.

However since the launching of Mercosur and the gradual consolidation of the axis Brasilia/Buenos Aires the two countries are virtually partners.

Mercopress