

Military Rule in Brazil, 1964 - 1985 : A Critique

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Abstract : *Brazil was under military rule from 1964 to 1985, one of the longest such rules in Latin America. This paper deals with the military's influence in Brazil's political life with particular emphasis on the cause-effect relationship between professionalization of the armed forces and the coup d'etat of 1964. The initial goal of the military government was to tackle the economic problems of the country and to establish a "clean" democracy. Although, in the economic realm they could show an average annual growth rate of 10% from 1967 to 1974, they ultimately failed to give any long-term solution. At the height of their rule, the military had resorted to repression of political opponents, which was relaxed only toward the end of their administration when it was realized that they would have to relinquish power eventually.*

The question is now being raised as to how it was possible for the military to remain in power for such a long time. This prolonged military rule was basically due to reasons unique to Brazil, therefore not quite possible for any other developing country to cite it as a model. Given the changes that have taken place since then both domestically and internationally, it is unlikely that the military would feel inclined to intervene in civilian politics again. It may be projected with some confidence, that democracy would do well in Brazil, particularly under the new generation of political leaders.

Brazil, the country which had "saved" itself in 1964 has come a long way since then. The military "saviours", having ruled the country for more than two decades have

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relinquished power to the civilians, thereby putting it in its rightful place in the community of democratic states. This article, as the title suggests, seeks to make an assessment of the military rule during the period 1964 - 1985.

Brazil was under Portuguese colonial rule from 1500 onwards when Pedro Alvares Cabral landed on the north-east coast of this "nation- continent".¹ Unlike the other countries of Latin America Brazil did not have to fight for its independence; it merely changed the form of its government. From a colony it emerged as an empire in 1822, when it became the seat of a branch of the Portuguese royal family. In 1889 it was turned into a republic; the armed forces played a major role in it and the first two presidents of the Republic were marshals.²

In the 1930s, the country experienced a period of the Brazilian variant of fascism when the New State Movement (modeled after the Novo Estado of Dr. Antonio salazar of Portugal) was launched by Getulio Vargas. His followers continued to be in power till 1964. The accepted rule of the political game in Brazil in the pre-1964 days was the maintenance of a balance among the main economic and political players. It was assumed that the demands of these players would be moderately satisfied without dissatisfying anyone of them.³ Between 1945 and 1964 the equilibrium was not disturbed by any political leader to the extent that President Goulart did. In the prevailing political turmoil, Goulart tried to bolster up his position by undertaking plans for agrarian reform, nationalization of private oil refineries, even appealing to the masses to support his government against his opponents. To make matters worse, he even incited the non-commissioned military personnel to revolt against the superior officers - a thoroughly unpardonable offence in the eyes of the military hierarchy.⁴

In March 1964, in reaction to the economic and political crisis faced by the government of President Joao Goulart, the military, fearing a leftist takeover and a civil war, took over the reins of the administration. Brazilian democracy was never perfect, for it was riddled with corruption, state paternalism, clientelism, etc. However, from 1945 to 1964, "Brazil was a nation in which competitive elections, the right to criticize government policy, and an official commitment to racial equality were accepted by everyone in public life as mainstream ideals".⁵ Although a changed political and economic strategy was called for it did not necessitate that this prevailing impasse take the form of repressive military rule.⁶

Professionalization and the 1964 Coup

The March 1964 coup was expected to be a brief interlude in the Brazilian political life, a view that was shared even by the U. S. Ambassador Lincoln Gordon. From 1945 to 1964 the military had intervened in politics but only in their capacity as moderators, that is, they stepped forward to overthrow an unacceptable civilian president and then withdrew to the barracks. Marshal Humberto Castello Branco, the new military President and the leader of the 'Sorbonne' group of the Escola superior de Guerra (ESG), himself did not think that this military rule would continue for more than two decades.⁷ According to George Philip, the conditions required for a "moderator" transition, i.e., "an officer corps willing to return power to civilians, a popular civilian candidate at least minimally acceptable to the military, and an external social and economic environment which can be managed", were not present after the 1964 coup.⁸ While Castello Branco was prepared to play a moderating role, the hard-line officers within the military

were not.⁹ This group regarded the 1964 coup as an opportunity to exert its influence in Brazilian politics by eliminating what it called civilian "corruption".¹⁰ They put the blame for the failure of the republic established in 1946 on the civilian politicians; "the perceived Marxist penetration of Brazilian society was purportedly caused in part by the corruptness and cynicism of pre-1964 politics and politicians".¹¹ Civilian politicians were thus regarded with much disdain and were to be treated harshly if they interfered with development plans.¹²

The 1964 coup was a clear departure from previous military interventions in the sense that the military took over power as an institution, where individual army officers played a minimal role. According to Alfred Stepan, "Most cases of what appears to be long term military rule turn out to be one-man, personalist dictatorship which manipulate and dominate rather than represent the military".¹³ Prior to 1964, the Brazilian armed forces believed that they did not have either the legitimacy or the capacity to rule the nation.¹⁴ The military leaders could have overthrown the Goulart government in 1963, but they waited till public opinion was totally in their favour, and there was unity in civil opposition, so that there would be no risk of any civil strife.¹⁵

By the mid-1960s, however, the attitude of the military concerning political rule had changed. The organization of the Escola de Guerra (ESG), or Higher War College, was largely instrumental in bringing about this attitudinal transformation. The ESG, founded in 1949, was modeled after the U. S. National War College. However, there was a difference in the orientation of the ESG. Since Brazil was a developing country, it was felt that the role of the powerful armed forces cannot be separated from the crucial question

of national development, nor could the problem of national security be regarded as something distinct from that of education, industry or agriculture.¹⁶ The curriculum of the ESG included subjects that "were distant from military matters *per se*, for example, political subjects, psychological, social affairs, and economic affairs, military affairs, logistical and mobilization affairs, intelligence and counter-intelligence, and Doctrine and Coordination"¹⁷ Military and civilian participants were required to know about inflation, agrarian reforms, electoral laws, transportation, and education.¹⁸ There was even an active and powerful alumni association to enable the graduates of the ESG to keep themselves in touch.¹⁹

Accordingly, the Brazilian military adopted the ideology of national security which attempted a linkage between defence and security of the country with economic development. This ideology was premised on the concept of self-sufficiency in raw materials, foodstuffs and industrial production. Insurgency renders the nation vulnerable, and poses a threat to its developmental activities, which is perceived to be emanating from civilian incapacity to solve social problems.²⁰ In brief, modernization was to be achieved on a priority basis in order to safeguard the internal security, a task for which the professional military officers are very competent, indeed. In the words of General Golbery do Couta e Silva, a theoretician of ESG, "The planning of national security is an imperative of the hour in which we live... For us in the underdeveloped countries... planning assumes aspects of another order which puts everything in relief".²¹

The training received at the ESG, therefore, naturally produced better educated and thoroughly professionalized officers. It may be mentioned that 60 percent of the generals

participating in the 1964 coup had attended the Higher War College.²²

According to Samuel P. Huntington professionalization referred to three basic ingredients: "expertness; social responsibility; and corporate loyalty to fellow-practitioners" which he argued could make the armed forces "politically sterile".²³ His thesis was, however, rendered invalid in actual practice. Professionalization as such is not an adequate inhibiting factor for military intervention. In the classic words of S. E. Finer, "... if the armed forces are not to intervene, they must believe in an explicit principle - the principle of civil supremacy"²⁴ Needless to mention, this was not the principle which guided the Brazilian military planners in 1964.

Institutional Acts

The coup having been successfully carried out, the next task of the new military rulers was to rid Brazil of the undesirable elements which were having a baleful effect on the economy and politics of the country. Politics would now be given a new and clean image which would in turn lead to a higher stage of development.

The military rule had a direct impact on the office of the chief executive. The President was vested with tremendous authority, making it the most powerful post in Brazil.²⁵ A series of Institutional Acts promulgated after 1964 consolidated the military regime, transforming it into a bureaucratic-authoritarian instrument within a very brief period. An Institutional Act is defined as "an organic law that suspends or replaces provisions of the constitution or legal system. Institutional Acts are means by which new

revolutionary governments change legal order and legalize their actions".²⁶ Under the authorization of these acts, the President could suspend the fundamental civil rights, dismiss civilian officers from their posts, cancel the mandate of the national, state and local elected officials, order arrests, declare a state of seige and enact laws without congressional approval.²⁷

The executive was also strengthened by the complex structure of that branch. The main departments of the central government were the National Security Council (CSN), the Civil Cabinet, the Planning Secretariat, the Armed Forces General Staff (EMFA), and the National Intelligence Service (SNI).²⁸ The SNI officials had easy access to any executive office, and could influence and manipulate all policies.²⁹

It was with the promulgation of the Fifth Institutional Act in late 1968 that the "moderator" image was wiped off for good. Brazil was then virtually turned into an authoritarian country. Between 1968 and 1974 the hardliners of the military were on the ascendance. This was also the period when the regime was faced with leftist insurgency and terrorism, which were duly and effectively dealt with by the military, as well as by the ultra-rightist death squads.

Political Repression

After the 1964 coup legal Brazilian political activities revolved around two government-sponsored parties: the pro-government party, the Alliance for National Renovation (ARENA) and the "opposition" party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MEB). With the first, the government controlled the legislature, and the other became

a loyal opposition party. The legislative democracy thus created was largely formalistic, with little political effect.³⁰

The overall political climate during this period was extremely repressive, where military courts tried political cases, and political offenders were tortured by secret police forces. By the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the guerrilla movement proved to be such a problem that the Brazilian government was compelled to use "any and every means . . . to get information needed to exterminate the guerrilla threat".³¹ Two radical guerrillas leaders, Carlos Marighela and Carlos Lamarca became well-known for bank robbery, plane hijacking, kidnapping foreign diplomats, bomb throwing and other means of pressurizing the government.³² However, by the early 1970s the guerrilla menace was exterminated. The human rights record was so dismally poor that it provoked widespread protests from abroad, including the Pope,³³ though the United States government remained unconcerned about the repression carried on by the Brazilian military government.³⁴ According to the Rockefeller Report of 1969,

"Democracy is a very subtle and difficult problem for most of the other countries of [Latin America]. The authoritarian and hierarchical tradition which has conditioned these societies does not lend itself to the particular kind of popular government we are used to. For many of these societies, therefore, the question is less one of democracy or a lack of it, than it is simply of orderly ways of getting things along".³⁵

The Economic "Miracle"

When the military took over power in 1964, the country was running an inflation rate of 7.4 percent per month.³⁶ By the end of 1964 the rate was brought down to 3 percent. Along

with controlling the inflation, the new military government undertook ambitious plans to modernize the economy through industrialization and encouragement of direct foreign investment. The overall economic policy was to rely on market forces.

The manufacturing sector was given every incentive to develop, so much so that soon the Brazilians were boasting that they were selling "watches to Switzerland, computer components to the United States, and shoes to Italy."³⁷ Even the arms industry received a boost which at present occupies an important place in the economy. According to one estimate Brazil exports about US \$ 3 billion worth of arms per year.³⁸

Foreign direct investment, which had already been in a good position even in pre-1964 days, was permitted to carve out an even more advantageous niche for itself after 1964. The American multinational companies enjoyed maximum benefits but there were West European, Japanese, Arab and even Iranian firms, as well, sharing the fruits of direct investment.³⁹ The left-wing critics of such liberal access of foreign investment, particularly that of the United States, depicted Brazil as having become a "sub-imperialist" power, which in turn was to exploit other Latin American countries.⁴⁰

During the period 1967-1974 the average annual growth rate of the Brazilian economy was 10% and in 1973, the "cinderella year", the growth rate was well over 11 percent. Such a record pleased scholars like Samuel P. Huntington to regard CUPS as "a sign of independence and the real beginning of the process of modernization and development."⁴¹ Another scholar, Georges-Andre Fiechter holds a somewhat similar view. "The modernizing regime

which was born of the 1964 Revolution has carried through within an authoritarian framework, a considerable task of promoting human and economic welfare."⁴²

However, this overall rosy picture was marred by the reality of mass poverty, "the extreme concentration of income, and the increase in inequality".⁴³ Despite economic miracle a preponderant portion of the population was living in misery - 40 percent were consuming less than 10 percent of the national income.⁴⁴ There were regional disparities in economic development, the most poverty-stricken region being northeastern Brazil, and malnutrition and disease were widespread among the poorer sections of the society.⁴⁵ The chief beneficiaries of the economic growth were the upper and upper-middle classes, the multinational corporations, commercial farmers, landed elites of the northeast, urban professionals, bureaucrats, white-collar workers, etc. The factory-workers and unskilled labourers were less fortunate. At the bottom were the peasants who subsisted on the fringe of the economy.⁴⁶

Delfim Netto, the Brazilian finance minister during this period, countered charges of neglecting social welfare and equitable distribution of wealth by arguing that rapid economic growth was more important than distribution. As far as he was concerned, it was expected that rapid growth would be accompanied by increasing inequalities and that it was illogical to raise the question of distribution before that of production.⁴⁷ But the so-called economic "miracle" was not a unique phenomenon and certainly not beyond criticisms.

Firstly, the post-1964 military government did not start its economic programme from a scratch, since the growth process was underway long before 1964.

Secondly, post-1964 economic success was not necessarily due to the market-oriented policy of the conservative regime; the state-controlled enterprises also played an important role. Ironically, the anti-communist military government assisted in making "the state-sector-largely begun during the Estado Novo during the 1930s more effective, while at the same time creating conditions in which efficient private business could prosper."⁴⁸

Thirdly, the main factor in Brazilian economic development is not the incumbent government, but the country itself, since it offers so many advantages to the investors and entrepreneurs.

Fourthly, there were major socio-economic structural problems that remained unsolved.

Finally, the economic boom faced a serious set-back with the onset of the oil crisis of 1973, and the consequent economic recession of 1974-1975.⁴⁹

One effect of the energy crisis was to compel the Brazilian government to look for alternative sources of energy. The policy of rapid industrialization was dependent on the inflow of foreign capital and technology. As long as energy and capital goods were cheaply available and loans could be secured on easy terms, such a policy was tremendously successful. With the onset of the manifold increase in oil price after 1974 and the soaring price of capital goods, the Brazilian economy, extremely prosperous so far, was hard hit, thereby putting an enormous strain on the "miracle". Since Brazil was importing 80 percent of its oil, it was in an extremely difficult situation for the country to pay its growing oil bill. Linked with this oil crisis was the question of mounting foreign debt which, as such, was

tolerable as long as the economy itself was booming. This led to an increase in foreign debt from US \$ 5.3 billion in 1970 to US \$ 115 billion in 1989.⁵⁰ To make matters worse, the climate for Brazilian commodity export had at the same time become depressed. The international market for soyabean, sugar and coffee was sluggish, and demand for Brazilian iron ore and manufactured goods had also decreased..⁵¹ In this situation Brazil resorted to import controls and import substitution.

It was in the wake of the growing energy crisis that the Geisel government decided to turn toward nuclear power as an alternative source of energy.⁵² According to the terms of the 1972 contract, US Westinghouse Electric was to construct Brazil's first nuclear power plant, but enriched uranium fuel was to be supplied from a plant in the United States. In May 1974 India, the first Third World country in the world, exploded its own nuclear device, a development which inspired the Brazilians, as well as the Argentines, to acquire their own fuel cycle nuclear capacity.⁵³

With this end in view, an agreement was signed in June 1975 between Brazil and West Germany according to which the latter was to supply Brazil with nuclear technology. The transfer of nuclear reactors which would produce enriched uranium was to enable Brazil become self-sufficient in its energy requirements. The crux of the problem was that this nuclear technology could also be used for the purpose of making nuclear weapons, a contingency that would greatly assist Brazil in its quest for big power status. This implication was obvious to the US policy makers so concerned with the problem of nuclear proliferation in the developing countries, and accordingly the deal was strongly condemned.⁵⁴ It may be mentioned that Brazil has refused to sign the 1968 Nuclear Non-

proliferation Treaty, therefore not pledge-bound not to develop nuclear weapons. The Brazilians were, on the other hand, exhorted to utilize solar energy rather than "facilitate nuclear energy."⁵⁵

"Abertura" or Political Opening

With the inauguration in 1974 of Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979) Presidency Brazilian politics took a new turn. President Geisel, a relatively moderate army general, wanted to return the country to pluralist democracy, which in effect meant that ARENA would not be turned into a one-party system *a la* Mexico.⁵⁶ The need for 'abertura' or political opening arose because, according to Juan Linz, the military, even after ten years of rule had failed to institutionalize the regime.⁵⁷ Due to certain ambiguity and contradictions of the post-1964 political development in Brazil, neither the charismatic legitimacy formula, or the corporatist, non-party legitimacy formula, or the one-party fascist and populist alternatives could be implemented.⁵⁸

That political repression had to be brought to an end was contemplated by Brazilian authoritarians as early as 1972, when the Harvard political scientist, P. Samuel Huntington's views were sought. Huntington suggested that the best solution for Brazil would be to institutionalize the existing political system, and urged the Brazilian government to study the Mexican one-party system. In simple words, he was not encouraging a representative, pluralist democracy. Wander Guilherme dos Santos, a Brazilian political scientist, unlike Huntington, was around the same time recommending that means should be adopted gradually to lead the country to democracy, the emphasis being on the word gradually.⁵⁹

The goal of the policy of *distensão* or decompression was not the immediate achievement of democracy; rather it meant that there would be less repression which would lead to the establishment of what came to be known as "Relative Democracy".⁶⁰ This was in no sense a project for the establishment or re-establishment of a democratic order, it was, "as the opposition has frequently insisted since, a project for the stabilization of an authoritarian one. Open brutality was to cease, but only to the extent that the opposition cooperated in disciplining itself"⁶¹ The liberalization policy was expected to achieve a better equilibrium which would be different from the state of political strangulation experienced during the Medici period (1969-1974).⁶² There were two groups who challenged this plan. To one group belonged the business community, the leftists, the church hierarchy, the Brazilian Bar Association, academic social scientists, and a new pattern of industrial unionism. This diverse but clamorous group's goal was to dismantle the authoritarian system by forcing the government to shift more toward the democratic end of the political spectrum. Then, there was another opposition group, represented by the military officers themselves who were apprehensive of losing their privileged position in a more open political system, and were thus involved in subverting the process of re-democratization.⁶³

In the November 1974 direct congressional elections the MDB party became victorious, which was indeed an unpleasant surprise for the Geisel administration. It was an indication that the regime's popularity was waning.⁶⁴ The only way to ensure that the next elections would not be won by the MDB was to provide for indirect elections in the senate and in the states, which would however, be possible only by a constitutional amendment.

In April 1977 such an amendment was passed, known as the April Package which re-imposed censorship. It was apprehended that under the prevailing circumstances the *abertura* process would be adversely affected, which, fortunately did not turn out to be so. In fact, the process of liberalization was so slow and erratic that it was said that the "country moved two steps back for everyone forward."⁶⁵

The presidency of Joao Batista Figueiredo (1979-85) took the process of liberalization a step forward. In August 1979 an amnesty was granted to the political dissidents which was instrumental in creating a buoyant mood in the country.⁶⁶ By the end of that year a major party reform plan was approved by the government, which permitted six new parties to operate politically. The ARENA was dissolved and replaced by the Social Democratic party (PDS).⁶⁷

In November 1981 an electoral reform programme was passed by the government known as the November package. This deal sought to give the government party an edge over the opposition. This project, however, did not serve the purpose, as the opposition gained a clear advantage in the congressional and provincial elections in 1982.⁶⁸

Re-democratization

Putting an end to much speculation about whether and when there would be an actual transition to democracy; on January 5, 1985 an electoral college elected Tancredo Neves a candidate of the opposition PMBD. This was to a great extent due to the three way split in the government party. However, due to the demise of Neves on the eve of the inauguration in April that year, Jose Sarney, the vice-

president took over the charge of the presidency. After the completion of his five year term of rather uneventful and as some say "inefficient" tenure (the only thing of interest was the adoption of a new/ the eighth constitution in 1988), in march 1990 Fernando Collor de Mello was sworn in as the president, the first directly elected one since 1961. This peaceful presidential succession is an important milestone in the history of Brazilian politics and augurs well for the future of constitutional democracy there. People were afraid that there might be a repetition of the events of 1964, when, just prior to the 1965 elections, because of deep economic and political crises, the coup d'etat took place.⁶⁹

The new government of president Fernando Collor de Mello has undertaken ambitious plans to reduce the huge state sector, which controls about two-thirds of the economy, and in the process he hopes to save about 10 percent of the GNP or approximately US \$ 40 billion.⁷⁰ This is supposed to be a step forward in the reduction of four-digit inflation and elimination of mass poverty. In order to accomplish the anti-inflation policy, the Brazilians would have to undergo financial hardship, as a strict fiscal policy is to be imposed, at least in the short-run. Among his other measures is the abolition of the much-dreaded SNI. Although a candidate from the political right, Collor does not intend to alienate the leftist and the labour leaders, which is a manifestation of his balanced outlook.

The interesting question may now be raised as to how it was possible for the Brazilian military regime to maintain itself in power for more than two decades. There cannot, obviously, be any simple answer; however, at least two factors may be put forward. Firstly, in 1964 the people were very much in favour of military intervention in national politics. Brazilian economy and politics at that time were in

such shambles that it was sardonically said that Brazil grew at night, while the politicians were asleep.

Secondly, there was the paradox about the Brazilian military rule, which, inspite of being harshly repressive toward dissidents, was not without public support. According to a survey conducted during 1972-73, when the military were firmly in control the country, 59 percent of the people were of the opinion that they could "always trust" the military regime, or "trust it in most cases"; in contrast to this, only 12 percent held a contrary view. 41 percent absolutely supported "military involvement in national politics, 17 percent were "more or less" in favour. 81 percent of the respondents said that they wre totally content with "government policy".⁷¹ The term authoritarian clientelism may be used as an explanation for this kind of civilian support. It may be defined as a system where "a military regime acquires civilian alliés who are willing to accept subordination to military leadership in exchange for some share in running the state and especially some share in the benefits which it provides".⁷²

The transition to democracy in Brazil has been relatively easy even though the transition period itself lasted for more than a decade. A number of reasons may be adduced as a possible explanation for this smooth transfer of power from the military to the civilians.

Firstly, the Brazilian people are generally easy-going, optimistic, tolerant and conciliatory. Since they are not vindictive by nature, it has facilitated the granting of amnesty to those military officers involved in arrest, torture and killing, as well as the generation of confidence about their ability to solve social crises peacefully.⁷³

Secondly, the military leaders were compelled to withdraw from politics out of necessity, due to the "intractability" of problems prevailing there. It is also indicative of the limitations of armed forces to rule a country for a prolonged period of time.⁷⁴ As Mitchell A. Seligson had stated, "While some of the Latin American military regimes could point to areas of progress, none was able to transform the economy and nearly all jeopardized long-term economic growth by debt crises for which they are ultimately responsible".⁷⁵

Thirdly, while it is a fact that the Brazilian military regime was a highly repressive one, the number of "disappearances" was insignificant, 35 in 1971 and 9 in 1975.⁷⁶ The death toll was also much lower. In the case of Argentina the per capita death toll was 100 times higher than in Brazil.⁷⁷

Fourthly, the Brazilian people have had enough of military rule. The political repression and torture have been a traumatic experience for them, a producing a sobering effect on the people, something that was not there in the 1960s. Then, the attitude of the leftists has changed considerably; many of them, scornful of bourgeois democracy before the 1964 coup have now come to accept it as indispensable for the restoration of civilian government.⁷⁸

Finally, the international political environment has also undergone a change. Communism, as a panacea for all economic and political ills, has collapsed not only in Eastern Europe, but in the Soviet Union itself, the erstwhile bastion of Marxism-Leninism - which now stands dissolved. The development would tend to make the communist ideology less appealing to the Brazilians than in the pre-1964 days. It may be mentioned that fear of

communist infiltration, which had polarized the Brazilian society for quite a while, was one of the reasons for the military intervention in 1964.

Conclusion

From this survey of Brazilian politics from 1964 to 1985 some conclusions seem to follow. Firstly, professionalization of the armed forces does not necessarily make them apolitical, rather it is the other way round, as is borne out by the Brazilian coup of 1964.

Secondly, the Brazilian model of political repression and economic growth posed a serious dilemma of development, which could not be satisfactorily resolved by the military rulers. Their declared purpose for the assumption of power was laudable, but was not reflected in their subsequent performance. That is to say, starting with the apparent missionary zeal of salvaging the country from partisan politics, they could not effectively deal with the crucial question of equitable economic growth and popular participation. The military regime which was expected to be of short duration, and to prepare the ground for "clean democracy", unfortunately degenerated into a repressive authoritarian machinery. Even the authoritarian character could not be given an institutional form because of the absence of legitimacy and a host of other problems, which ultimately and inevitably paved the way for re-democratization of Brazil.

Another important lesson to be learnt from the Brazilian experience is that, the system that was sustained from 1964 to 1985 was something *sui generis*, i. e., a model (with both its positive and negative aspects) that cannot

possibly be expected to be replicated elsewhere in the Third World.⁷⁹

It can be reasonably stated that Brazil is a country with a future. Its abundant natural resources, large internal market, access to technical and managerial skills and vast supply of experienced labour are all positive points for the country. These factors, combined with its continental dimension may enable Brazil to play a major role as an actor on the world scene.

The new democratic government is not only keen about achieving *grandeza* or greatness, but is also aware that it cannot be blind to the questions of unequal distribution of wealth and elimination of poverty. President Collor has said that his "generation can no longer live with a Brazil that is an economic giant but a social pygmy"⁸⁰ If successive civilian governments are sincere in their efforts to continue the balanced development of the country then the proper environment for civilian rule would be fostered. Needless to say that this would lessen the appeal of militarism, as well as the inclination of the military to intervene in civilian politics.

While the armed forces may still enjoy certain privileges in the country, and be in a position to exert their influence in politics, the fact that civilian political institutions have emerged after two decades of exclusion in a more robust condition cannot be ignored. To quote S.E. Finer again, "The (Brazilian) military's creative role in public policy is still high, but so is that of the civilian institutions".⁸¹

This would leave ample scope for the armed forces to play a constructive role along with the civilians, which

would be very much in line with their ideology of national security. For instance, they can become the guardians of the national political border. They can also co-operate with the civilians in clearing up the Amazon region to create living-place for the fast-growing Brazilian population, with due regard to the protection of the environment. In times of natural disaster, they can provide as in other countries, succour to the affected people.

In future there may be occasional 'disturbances' emanating from the barracks; however, these would have much less chance of success than before, as has been proved since 1985. Unlike the 1964 coup, any military coup d'etat is unlikely to receive support from the United States, whose foreign policy goals have undergone a major change since the end of the Cold War.

The United States is now more committed to the world-wide establishment of democratic institutions and promotion of democratic values, rather than combating the now decaying spectre of communism. The Bush administration would not feel inclined to express solidarity with any military regime coming to power through the overthrow of an elected government. During the Cold War period, U. S. assistance for right-wing military governments anywhere in the world was almost assured. With the change in the international political scene, such assurances would not be automatically forthcoming.

Any military leader in Brazil is aware of the fact that the United States is a country that has to be reckoned with. Even as early as 1973 Philippe C. Schmitter was thinking about the effect of the withdrawal of U.S. support. "It would be interesting . . . to observe the reaction of Brazil's military if the United States military were publicly to retract

the *de facto* concession they have granted the Brazilians as guardians of the 'Free World' and Western Civilization in the Southern Hemisphere."⁸²

Democracy is more than a socio-political concept. It is a way of life that has to be nurtured with care and patience, and which cannot be delivered in a perfect form at any particular time. Rather, it is a goal toward which people have to move, on the basis of trial and error. In case of Brazil, the process of re-democratization appears to have endured the critical ordeal of systemic transition quite admirably in the last six years or so. In all probability, the civilian and military components there would be moving in tandem, at least for the foreseeable future. This would have an important bearing on the political development in South America, as well as on relations among the regional countries recently weaned away from military rule.

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9. *Ibid.* p., 136.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Riordan Roett, "The Political Future of Brazil", in William H. Overholt, *The Future of Brazil*, (Boulder, Colorado : Westview Press, 1978), p. 81.
12. *Ibid.* It may be pointed out that Latin American officers, in general, harbour a deep animosity toward civilian politics which they perceive to be dissension, political parties to be factious; politicians to be scheming or corrupt, and the expression of public opinion to be insubordination, Eric Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments*, (New Jersey : Prentice Hall, 1977) p. 56.
13. Alfred Stepan, "The Emergence of Military Rule", in Amos Perlmutter and Valerie Plave Bennett eds. *The Political Influence of the Military : A Comparative Reader* (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 265, 266.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
15. Alfred Stepan, quoted in Eric Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments*, (New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, 1977), p. 97.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 266. Brazil, in fact, started to professionalize its armed forces as early as the late nineteenth century when a German military training mission led by General Koerner arrived there. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Military Withdrawal from Politics: A Comparative Study*, (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1987), p. 58.
17. Stepan, *op. cit.*, p. 267.
18. Nordlinger, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
19. Fiechter, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
20. Augustus Varas, *Militarization and the International Arms Race in Latin America*, (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), P.19. The National Security Doctrine also involved the moulding of future generations along the lines adopted by the military regime after 1964. This included a Course, formulated to uphold the Brazilian brand of this Doctrine, which was made compulsory for every student from the first grade to the post graduate level to study. Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85*, (New York and London: Oxrord University Press, 1988), p. 83.
21. Quoted in Hewlett, *op. cit.*, p. 64-69.
22. Nordlinger, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
23. S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback : The Role of the Military in Politics*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988). P.20.
24. *Ibid.*, p.22.
25. Riordan Roett, *op. cit.*, p.71.
26. Enrest Rossi and Jack C. Plano, *The Latin American Political Dictionary*, (Santa Barbara, California : ABC-CLIO, 1980), p. 54.
27. *Ibid.*, PP. 154-155.
28. Roett, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
29. Skidmore, *op. cit.*, p.57 The SNI was created after 1964, coup by General Golbery do Couta e Silva, who once told a journalist, "I have created a monster", Philip, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

30. Martin C. Needler, *An Introduction to Latin American Politics*, (New Jersey : Prentice Hall, 1977), p. 332.
31. Skidmore, *op. cit.*, p.89
32. John Edwin Fagg, *Latin America : A General History* (New York : Macmillan Publishing Co.,1977), p. 773.
33. Needler, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
34. Robert Wesson, "Brazil : Independence Asserted" in Robert Wesson ed. *U.S. Influence in Latin America*. (New York : Praeger, 1982), p.65.
35. Edward J. Williams, *The Political Themes of Inter-American Relations*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971), p. 111.
36. Frederick L. Hartmann, *The Relations of Nations*, (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 65.
37. Needler, *op. cit.*, p. 334.
38. Varas, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
39. Fagg, *op. cit.*, p. 773.
40. Needler, *op. cit.*, p. 335.
41. Quoted in Maniruzzaman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
42. Fiechter, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
43. Hewlett, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
44. Peter Calvocoressi, *World Politics Since 1945*, (London and New York : Longman, 1989), p. 484
45. Roett, *op. cit.*, p:166.
46. Gary W. Wynia, *The Politics of Latin American Development*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp.233-234. The remark by one of the Brazilian military presidents "That the system was good for Brazil but not for Brazilians" had some truth in it. Fagg., *op. cit.*, p. 77.
47. Skidmore, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-44.
48. Thomas E. Skidmore, "Politics and Economic Policy Making in Authoritarian Brazil 1937 - 1971", Quoted in Jorge Dominguez,

- : "The foreign policies of Latin American States in the 1980s: retreat or refocus", Samuel P. Huntington and Joseph S. Nye, eds., *Global Dilemmas*, (Lanham, Md. University Press, 1985), p. 1978.
49. Wynia, *op. cit.*, pp. 234.
50. William H. Overholt, "The Debt Burden", in William H. Overholt ed. *The Future of Brazil* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press 1978), pp. 211, 212. The 1988 debt figure has been taken from Riordan Roett, "Brazil's Transition to Democracy", *Current History* (March 1989), p. 120.
51. Overholt, *op. cit.* pp. 213.
52. Offshore oil explorations were expanded by Petrobras, the state oil enterprise, after 1973 to augment the availability of oil. Skidmore, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-179.
53. Skidmore, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
54. Norman Gall, "Atoms for Brazil, Danger for All", *Foreign Policy on Latin America 1970-1980* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1983), pp. 57-80. Enriched Uranium is necessary for both the utilization of reactor fuel as well as for the production of nuclear bombs.
55. Gall, *op. cit.*, p. 77. Brazil is also trying to make optimum use of hydroelectricity as a source of energy. The giant Brazil-Paraguay Itaipu hydroelectric dam is an example. Dominguez, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
56. Skidmore, *op. cit.*, pp. 163.
57. Silvo R. Duncan Baretta and John Markoff "Brazil's Abertura: A Transition from What to What?" in James M. Malloy and Mitchell A. Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America*, (Pittsburgh, Pa.: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), p. 44.
58. For details, see, Juan J. Linz, "The Future of an Authoritarian Situation the Institutionalization of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Brazil", (in Amos Perlmutter and Valerie Plave Bennett eds., *The Political Influence of the Military: A Comparative Reader*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 285-297, (in Perlmutter and Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-297.)

59. Skidmore, *op. cit.*, p.165
60. Rossi and Plano, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
61. Baretta and Markoff, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
62. Bolivar Lamounier and Alkimar R. Moura, "Economic Policy and Political Opening in Brazil", in Jonathan Hartlyn and Samuel A. Morley eds. *Latin American Political Economy Financial Crisis and Political Change*, (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986), p.180.
63. Barretta and Markoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.
64. Fagg, *op. cit.*; p. 773.
65. John Orme, "Dismounting the Tiger : Lessons from Four Liberalizations", *Political Science Quarterly* (Summer 1988), p. 262.
66. Lamounier and Moura, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
67. Lamounier and Moura, *op. cit.*, p. 194. The other parties are the Party of Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMBD), successor to the erstwhile PDB; the Popular Party (PP); The Workers Party (PT); Brazilian Workers Party (PTB); and Democratic Workers Party (PDT).
68. Calvocoressi, *op. cit.*, p. 485.
69. Roett, "Brazil's Transition to Democracy", *Current History*, (March 1989), p. 117.
70. *Newsweek* (March 26, 1990), p. 33.
71. Geddes and Zaller, *op. cit.*, pp. 229, 230. Although statistics may not always present an accurate picture, they could at least show the trend in any given situation.
72. Christopher Clapham and George Philip. "The Political Dilemmas of Military Regimes", in Clapham and Philip eds., *op., cit.*, pp. 12, 13.
73. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85*, P. 269.
74. Maniruzzaman, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

75. Mitchell A. Seligson, "Democratization in Latin America", in Malloy and Seligson, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 5.
76. Orme, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
77. Skidmore, *op. cit.*, p. 269.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 310.
79. However, the inescapable fact remains that authoritarianism is still regarded as a rather tempting option for a number of countries eager to chart the path to economic development, for the achievement of which competitive politics is at times thought to be too destabilizing, and fraught with undue hazards.
80. *Newsweek*, (March 26, 1990), p. 3.
81. Finer, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
82. Philippe C. Schmitter, "The 'Portugalization' of Brazil" in Stepan, *op. cit.*, p. 230.