

"Manifest Destiny" and the Brazilian Amazon: A Backdrop to Contemporary Security and Development Issues¹

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THE ISOLATION OF AMAZONIA

Currents and prevailing winds made it extremely difficult for small seventeenth-century barks, sailing from Pará (Belém) and Maranhão (São Luís), to round the northeastern bulge of Brazil and proceed southward to Salvador, then seat of Portugal's New World colony (Figure 1). Father Antonio Vieira tells how, of eight ships that set forth after he had begun his ministry in Maranhão in 1653, "only one arrived in Pernambuco; the remainder were turned back after many months of great travails and expenses, and one was even borne off course to the Indies of Castille" (Vieira 1661, 290). Indeed, communication out of Pará and Maranhão was easier with Lisbon than with Salvador.

By the mid-nineteenth century, when Matthew Fontaine Maury published his explanations to accompany wind and current charts of the oceans, developments in marine architecture had demoted "the current so much dreaded off St. Roque" to little more than a "bugbear" (Maury 1859, 348). The naval officer, Superintendent of the U.S. Observatory and Hydrographical Office, remarked, however, that it would have been quite as much an undertaking for the "clumsy" vessels in use during the eighteenth century to contend against a current of one knot, as it was for the "long-legged" clipper ships of his time to breast a flow of four or five knots (Maury 1859, 348).

The fact is that, in the seventeenth century, difficulty in clearing Cape São Roque, as well as the constant danger to Iberian domination of Amazônia, posed by other European powers, had led to the partition of Brazil and the establishment, in 1621, of a separate Portuguese state, answering directly to the European metropolis. The immense region, whose boundaries apparently were never defined, much less demarcated, encompassed roughly what now is known as Brazilian Amazonia, but also included areas of the present-day states of Maranhão, Piauí, and (in part) Ceará. It was named State of Maranhão, eventually, Grão Pará e Maranhão, and, as such, unjoined to the State of Brazil, lasted into the second half of the eighteenth century (Figure 1).

When the Kingdom of Brazil proclaimed its independence in 1822, the Amazonian provinces continued in their isolation. So much so, that the *Cortes* in Lisbon had hoped to retain their loyalty by offering them the status of a Transatlantic Province of Portugal (Studart 1959, 350). In the course of centuries, what had been the State of Brazil came to contain the nation's pulsating urban-industrial heartland; the erstwhile State of Grão Pará e Maranhão remained as its remote periphery.

THE AMAZON AS CONFLUENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI

The isolation of Amazônia and its persistence as a thinly inhabited economic backwater contributed to one perception of the region as a prize that, by appropriate maneuvering, might be pried loose from the hold of the Portuguese and, later, Brazilians. Among those who so envisioned the region, even while paying lip service to a "policy of commerce," as opposed to a "policy of conquest," was the aforementioned Maury. The period was one in which the idea of "Manifest Destiny"² played a significant role in the foreign policy of the United States. Maury threw the full weight of his considerable prestige³ into a campaign to open the Amazon to international commerce and urged the U.S. Navy to engage in scientific exploration of the river. This proposal was approved, as was Maury's recommendation of a brother-in-law, Lieutenant William Lewis Herndon, to command the expedition.
[end p. 25]

One of Maury's arguments in favor of a United States presence in the Amazon drew upon his work with wind and current charts. Although the oceanographer maintained that the current off São Roque "is neither dangerous nor ... constant," he averred that ships running under canvas

from the mouth of the Amazon to Europe to Rio to Africa or around either of the Capes must stand north and pass not far from the West Indies. This fact ... makes that river basin nearer to us than to Brazil (if we call Rio, Brazil)] and puts practically the mouth of that river almost as much within the Florida pass and under our control as is the mouth of the Mississippi (Maury 1948, 217).

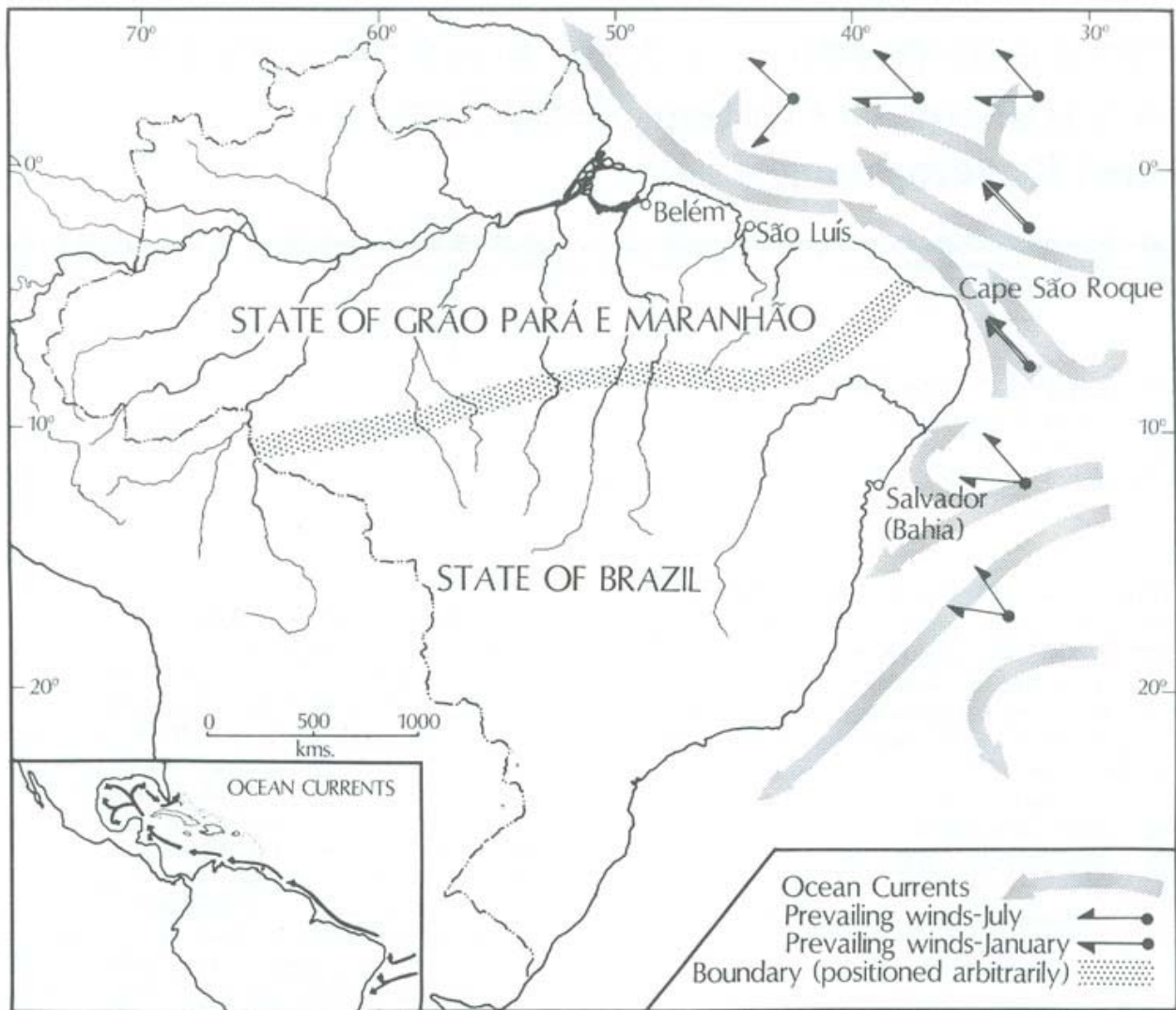


Fig. 1. The isolation of Amazonia. Currents and prevailing winds, making it hazardous for small seventeenth-century ships to round Cape São Roque, hindered the articulation of Pará (Belém) and Maranhão (São Luís) with Salvador, then seat of Portugal's New World colony. In view of the constant threats to Iberian domination of Amazonia, this fact led to the partition of Brazil in 1621. A separate state, which came to be designated as State of Grão Pará e Maranhão, was established, answering directly to the European metropolis. The two states apparently were never devined and are shown here schematically, in the frame of Brazil's present-day borders.

Another related argument was intended, like the preceding one, to expand the spatial framework within which the imagined American right to a continental empire might legitimately be consummated. Maury claimed flatly that the distant Amazon River basin "is but a continuation of the Mississippi valley" (Maury 1852, 393). In this case, a territorial nexus was to be sought, not in the physical geography of the sea, but in economic complementarity: "What one lacks, the other supplies. Together, they furnish all those products and staples which complete the list of articles in the circle of commerce" (Maury 1852, 395). [end p. 26]

An idea that had been formulated earlier in the century found renewed and amplified expression in Maury's 1851 statement that "the currents and winds at sea are such as to unite in the Florida Pass, the commercial mouth of the Amazon with that of the Mississippi" (Maury 1852, 391). In effect, President James Monroe had written in 1823: "I consider Cape Florida, & Cuba, as forming the mouth of the Mississippi" (Monroe 1902, 313). Similarly, in claiming as a "physical fact ... that the valley of the Amazons is but a commercial *appendage* of the Mississippi," Maury (1852, 395-96; italics added) echoed the ideas, and even the language, of geographical predestination that had become quite common in the second decade of the century (Pratt 1925). Expansionist thinking already had vaulted what once was deemed to be the ultimate "natural barrier": the sea. Thus, for instance, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, while recognizing that there remained a number of "formidable objections to the

extension of [the] territorial dominions [of the United States] beyond the sea" (Adams 1823,373), was not deterred. He asserted that the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, "from their local position, are natural *appendages* to the North American continent" (Adams 1823, 372; italics added). In a sense, therefore, Maury merely broadened a concept that has been called the "doctrine of the appendage" (Weinberg 1935) and that, at the time of his writing, already encompassed the Caribbean.⁴

SECRET AGENDA

In 1853, Maury published a brochure entitled *The Amazon and the Atlantic Slopes of South America*, translations of which appeared in several South American countries.⁵ One can imagine the indignation and suspicions, aroused among Brazilian readers by charges such as that "[Brazil] and its rulers have had "the Amazon" for 300 years, and the first practical step toward subduing it and developing its resources has yet to be taken" (Maury 1853, 62). Or by Maury's prediction that Brazil's policy of keeping the Amazon passageway closed to foreign flags would be regarded as "a nuisance, not to say an outrage" (Maury 1853, 62) by the American people, who would come to consider the free navigation of that river "second in importance ... to the acquisition of Louisiana, if it be *second* at all" (Maury 1853, 63; italics in original). Maury, in addition to perceiving Amazonia as a cornucopia of "dazzling" wealth (Maury 1852, 394; 1853,6), believed that the region was destined "to prove the safety valve of [the] Union" (Maury 1853, 63), an allusion to the settlement in Amazonia of Southern planters with their slaves.

Had Brazilians been privy to some of Maury's unpublished writings, their indignation would have been much greater, their suspicions amply confirmed. A notable example are the instructions given to his kinsman Herndon in a letter dated April 20, 1850. In one passage of his confidences *en famille*, Maury expressed a desire to see the Amazon populated, not by "an imbecile and an indolent people," but rather by a "go ahead race that has energy and enterprise equal to subdue the forest and to develop [sic] and bring forth the vast resources [sic] that lie hidden there" (Maury 1948, 217). Maury's intentions--not limited to scientific or even commercial interests, but also of political nature--did not necessarily reflect those of his government:

I care not what may be the motive which prompts the Govt to send you there. Your going is to be the first link in that chain which is to end in the establishment of the Amazonian Republic for when the Govt has done what I have been urging it to do and what it intends to try to do viz secure by treaty the right to navigate that river, it can no more prevent American citizens from the free as well as from the Slave States from going there with their goods and chattels to settle and to revolutionize and republicanize and Anglo Saxonize that valley than it can prevent the magazine from exploding after the firebrand has been thrown into it (Maury 1948, 217).⁶

Although Maury warned Herndon not to "let the real object of [his] visit ... be known" (Maury 1948, 223), the hydrographer's published writings relative to the Amazon were provocation enough. His exertions and the ensuing controversy and "diplomatic duel" between Brazil and the United States (Soares 1971, 61) probably stiffened the sentiment of most informed Brazilians against, and delayed relaxation of, the closed-door policy for the Amazon. On the other hand, some citizens, passing over Maury's intemperate language and hardly concealed expansionist designs, were impressed by the opportunities they believed would result from opening the Amazon, and mounted a campaign to this end. Gonçalves Dias, one of the country's poetic luminaries, who espoused the cause, suggested whimsically that, on balance,

...inimical to Brazil ... hated ... as the advocate of the unbridled ambitions of the Americans, Maury ... should be qualified as ... meritorious [in relation to] the Amazon [From] his exaggerations ... dates the increased attention which the government has given to the affairs of those provinces At least it knows ... that the Amazon exists, knows that it belongs to [Brazil], and shows regard for it, precisely because it is coveted by the Americans (Dias 1938).

THE AMAZON EXPLORATION EXPEDITION

The expedition conceived by Maury yielded two valuable reports, one by Herndon (1853), the other [end p. 27] by Gibbon (1854). That Herndon shared, to some degree at least, his brother-in-law's geopolitical vision and professed to believe "that the Valley of the Amazon and the Valley of the Mississippi ... are sisters which should not be separated" (Herndon 1853, 193), did not detract from the scientific observations he made. His, for instance, are the first recorded data on the nature of the Amazon's bedload and he may also have been the first to set down the concept of a connection between the *Verano del Niño* of the Cordillera and stage levels in the lowland course of the Amazon (Herndon 1853, 264; Sternberg 1987a, 207).

Herndon's book seems to have enjoyed great popularity at the time of its publication, since successive printings added up to a total of at least 30,000 copies. The fact that this interest was noted to exist even before the documents were published (Herndon 1853, 4) suggests that the readership was not limited to arm-chair travelers, enjoying vicariously the experiences of two naval officers in Amazonia. Previously influenced by the writings of Maury and others, some readers may have had in mind especially the economic opportunities that might accrue from opening the river.

One who fell under the spell of Herndon's "alluring tale" of the Amazon was the young Samuel L. Clemens, who considered it

one of the "turning points of [his] life" (Baender 1973). In fact, he "was fired with a longing to ascend the Amazon" (Baender 1973, 259), there to "make a fortune" (Twain 1924, 2: 289).⁷

THE AMAZON OPENED

Eventually, opinion in Brazil had come to favor the commercial development of the river, and in 1866 the Brazilian portion of the Amazon had been opened to merchant ships of all flags. Within a decade, Ceylon was receiving rubber seedlings grown in the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, from seeds collected on the banks of the Tapajós by Henry A. Wickham, later knighted by the British government. As a result of the well-known operation, the southeast Asian tropics would burst into the rubber market during the period preceding the war of 1914-18. They became the world emporium of the commodity and dealt a calamitous blow to the single-product economy of the Amazon.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the American Civil War, thousands of disenchanting southerners were resolved to start a new life abroad. For the former Confederates, the accounts of Herndon and other travelers in Brazil, which in ante-bellum days had excited the imagination of American readers, took on a new and personal significance. A number of enterprising individuals turned such interest to advantage, becoming promoters of immigration and colonization in Brazil. None was more adventurous than Lansford Warren Hastings, who contracted with the state of Pará to establish settlers on a tract of land covering sixty square leagues in the proximity of Santarém, at the junction of the Tapajós and Amazon rivers. Hastings, in his book, *The Emigrant's Guide to Brazil*, states that, at one point in the negotiations, he was

...surprised to learn, from an official of the government, that [his] matters would be greatly retarded by the prevailing opinion, that had somehow obtained credence, that if emigration to the Amazon were encouraged, the Americans would soon over-run that country, and like California, it would fall into the hands of the United States government (Hastings 1867, 62).

Such a denouement, the immigration agent added, "was not feared in other provinces, where the Brazilian population would predominate" (Hastings 1867, 62), a remark that indicates Brazil's particular apprehensions regarding Amazonia.

Certainly, in the case of Hastings, there would have been ample grounds for governmental concern. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that, if the authorities had known more about the entrepreneur's past, his presence in the region would have added considerably to their worries. A native of Ohio, Hastings had led one party of emigrants to Oregon, and another to California, and he had schemed to topple the government of Mexico's most distant province, set up a republic, and install himself as president (Hunsaker 1930; 1931).

The settlement established by Hastings with Confederate emigrants at Santarém in 1867 was mentioned by a number of nineteenth-century travelers (e.g., Smith 1879, 135-75), and it has been the subject of several studies (e.g., Griffin 1978). In these writings, as well as in Brazilian and United States government records, one can find the multiple factors involved in the colony's abysmal failure and ultimate disappearance.

A CLIMATE OF SUSPICION

For the countries whose territories include a part of the Amazon Basin, the region continued to represent both a token of great potential wealth and an uneasy reminder of the precariousness of a jurisdiction over remote, isolated and sparsely settled *terrae incognitae*. Apprehensions regarding the exercise of a given country's sovereignty stemmed not only from the intentions attributed to its South American neighbors, but also from diverse North American and European interests. Some of these had to do with territorial claims by individual states, as in the case of the litigations between Brazil and Great Britain or France.

Another source of uneasiness has resulted from [end p. 28] transactions with non-territorial actors, such as plurinational corporations and, in at least one case, international governmental organizations. Representative of the former type of dealings was the attempt to implant in innermost Amazonia a foreign body conceived in the tradition of the "chartered companies." The issue arose at the turn of the century, when Bolivia found it impossible to exert its sovereignty over the prime rubber-producing lands of the Acre territory, which were being occupied by Brazilian rubber tappers. The La Paz government turned to an Anglo-American "Syndicate of Capitalists," which would "incorporate in England or in the United States of North America or ... in some other foreign country," a company to assume the administration of the territory (*The Acre Concession*, ca. 1901). The potential foothold for possible political action on the part of foreign powers was eliminated when the Brazilian government paid the Syndicate to relinquish its concession and reached a settlement with Bolivia, according to which the territory was transferred to Brazil.

An example of involvement with the second type of non-territorial actor mentioned above is provided by the reaction to a research and development plan for the area sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Proposed in 1946 by the Brazilian representative to UNESCO, the idea of an International Institute of the Hylean Amazon

eventually had to be abandoned because of bitter opposition.⁸ The Institute, it was alleged, posed a risk to Brazilian sovereignty, which, following massive foreign immigration, might be supplanted by international jurisdiction over Amazonia. Truly, a concern with "internationalization" has never been far from the surface.

The perception of this threat, or, in a less extreme version, of international intrusiveness in domestic matters pertaining to the region, appears in many guises. There have been, for instance, recurrent denunciations that, because of the region's "emptiness," it was being eyed as a safety valve for surplus populations---from Asia or elsewhere.

Considerable resentment can be generated by any hint of international interference with Brazil's stewardship of the environment or of criticism regarding the country's behavior toward Indian nations. When striking out at those who speak for ecological soundness or the rights of Indians and squatters, rubber tappers, and folk fishermen, there is a whole keyboard of fears and suspicions upon which to play.

The admonitory response of the world community to the realization that actions taken in Amazonia may bear adversely upon the global ecosystem often have been seen as unwarranted meddling. A bizarre example is an episode initiated when a well-known German scientist expressed the opinion that a noticeable increase in the volume of atmospheric carbon dioxide would result from the removal of Amazonian forests. Although the greenhouse effect, to which such an increase contributes, will eventually impact all humankind, this issue generally does not evoke a sense of immediate peril. However, the scholar's statements came to be distorted in the press and quoted as predicting a decrease in atmospheric oxygen. This widely divulged canard invested the matter with a powerful emotional charge. Worldwide expressions of concern regarding what has become a bit of ecological folklore generated resentment in Brazil. Such comments were taken to imply that decisions regarding Amazonia should be constrained by the obligation to preserve an essential component of the planet's life support system (Sternberg 1986).

New apprehensions are added to old. There is an increasing concern with infiltration of ideologies, with terrorists, with the traffic of narcotics. Libyan commandos are said to be operating on the far side of Amazonia's northeastern borders, in Guyana and Surinam (with the Kourou space station as a potential target).⁹ The possibility is mentioned in the Brazilian press of guerrilla forays across the western and northwestern frontiers: terrorists affiliated with Peru's Sendero Luminoso and Colombia's M-19.

It is against this broad spectrum of apprehensions that one must view the succession of plans launched by Brazil to affirm and exercise sovereignty over its share of the Amazon Basin. It seems only yesterday that the 1966 tax incentive legislation was providing leverage for the establishment of huge cattle ranches, a program coupled in 1970 with the construction of an ambitious highway system. Now, another project is being revealed.

THE "CALHA NORTE" PROJECT

Following a recommendation by Brazil's National Security Council, *Conselho de Segurança Nacional* (CSN), a special Inter-ministerial Work Group, *Grupo de Trabalho Interministerial* (GTI) was set up in 1985. Its object: to draft a plan for economic development and enhancement of national security in the lands lying "north of the troughs (*calhas*) of the Solimões and Amazonas rivers" (CSN 1985, 1).

Justifying the council's proposal was a reference to Brazil's long-standing concern regarding the effective integration into the national body politic of the northern flanks of the Brazilian Amazon valley. Comprising some 14 percent of the country's territory, this area was characterized as underpopulated, essentially unexplored, and fringed by extensive borderlands" inhabited practically [only] by indigenous peoples" (CSN 1985, 1). **[end p. 29]**

The CSN scenario included the possibility of armed conflict between certain neighboring countries--an obvious reference to rival claims on the Essequibo region made by Venezuela and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. "In combination with the present political juncture in the Caribbean," such an eventuality, it was reasoned, could result in the "projection of East-West antagonisms into the northern part of South America." The case thus was made for strengthening "the expressions of National Power" in the region (CSN 1985, 1).

In the "North Trough Project" (*Projeto Calha Norte*) devised by the GTI (1985), top priority for immediate action was assigned to the 150 km-wide boundary zone or belt (*Faixa de Fronteiras*).¹⁰ This hugs the international frontier from the point where the Amazon River enters Brazil to the Atlantic, a distance of some 6,500 km (Figure 2). It is part of a ribbon of land marked off with national defense in mind and running the entire length of Brazil's 23,000 km boundary (Brasil 1979).



Fig. 2. The "Calha Norte" project. Brazil's most recent plan for Amazonia aims at economic development and enhancement of national security in the territory north of the Solim es-Amazonas River. Top priority was attributed to a 150-km wide "boundary zone"; an estimated 50,000 Indians live in the mineral-rich belt, where a number of newly constituted "frontier platoons" are to be deployed. The highly schematic map is redrawn from *Folha de S o Paulo* (Natali 1986). Only those Brazilian outposts located in the immediate vicinity of the border are indicated (by a dot and symbols for Army and Air Force).

The origin of this peripheral tract dates back to legislation enacted in 1850. This had sought to promote settlement of the frontier by the concession of land grants within "a zone ten leagues [66 km] wide along the limits of the Empire" (Brazil 1850; 1854). Soon afterwards, a decree mandated the establishment of "military colonies" within the boundary zone (Brazil 1854).

As to the confines of northern Amazonia, more than a century had elapsed when they were to have been opened up by the Perimetral Norte road, planned during the early 1970s. However, this undertaking was put on hold in 1977, pending improvement of Brazil's economy. The Calha Norte project has now targeted four segments of these marchlands for preferential treatment. That inhabited by the Yanomami Indians is of particular interest to this discussion and will be touched on below.

Chief objectives of the project are an increase in bilateral relations; a greater "military presence"; a restoration of boundary markers; and an expansion of the activities of the agency in charge of Indian affairs. An overarching concern in the whole venture has been "confidentiality," since, it was asserted, "government priority accorded to the Calha Norte might suscite exaggerated domestic expectations, as well as unfounded fears on the part of bordering countries" (GTI 1985, 2). The administration was relatively successful in keeping the activities of the task force under wraps for about a year. By early November 1986, however, although efforts were still being made to contain the dissemination of the plan, passages of the document were cited verbatim in the Brazilian and foreign press (e.g., *The New York Times*).

As foreseen by its proponents, the disclosure of the Calha Norte operation created quite a stir, resulting in a flurry of headlines. Two aspects, in particular, generated widespread misgivings. One was the matter of an "increase in military presence [end p. 30] in the area" (GTI 1985, 3); the other, the "definition of an indigenous policy appropriate for the region" (GTI 1985, 4).

Military Presence

The plan calls for the establishment of additional military outposts along the northern borders. Air fields, already under construction at the time of this writing, are to serve such units,¹¹ and to play a basic role in the settlement of the frontier, with the army bases acting as "development poles" to attract colonists.

When the Calha Norte story broke, Brazilian newspapers reported that the project was "preoccupying neighboring countries" (*A Prov ncia ...* 1986; Moreira 1986), who perceived the operation as an attempt to "militarize the boundary" (*Jornal do Brasil* 1986b; *Correio ...* 1986). The assurances offered to the adjoining republics (*Folha ...* 1986; *Jornal do Brasil* 1986a) probably did not dispell any long-established reservations about Brazilian geopolitical thinking.¹² However, international suspense could not be

maintained by speculating on the immediate danger generated by "at most 1,000 men" (*Correio* . . . 1986), strung out in small detachments over a vast frontier. There was nothing to be gained by questioning the statement that the project was "an internal matter" (*Jornal do Brasil* 1986a).

But, precisely one "internal matter" refused to go away. It involved the constitutional rights of a special group of Brazilians and was kept in the public eye by a ground swell of domestic opposition to the project. A thousand soldiers hardly posed a credible threat to Brazil's neighbors. Yet, the impact of these troops and of everything that their presence implied is potentially catastrophic for the life style, indeed the very survival, of culturally and epidemiologically vulnerable Indian populations.

Indigenous Policies

An estimated 50,000 persons, more than one fifth of the surviving Indians of Brazil, will be at risk. Several non-governmental bodies, spearheaded by agencies of the Catholic Church, reacted vigorously¹³ to the announced 'reformulation of indigenous policies' (GTI 1985, 2). These were to be rendered, in the words of the Minister of the Interior, "compatible with national security" (Natali 1986). Such intentions are seen as threatening the Indians' statutory right to their territory and "the exclusive usufruct of all natural resources contained therein" (Brasil 1969). The focal point of concern are the lands of the Yanomami, a nation that the GTI's proposal describes as a small population of an estimated 7,500 Indians who live ... in tens of scattered villages, (*malocas*) adjacent to an extensive 900 km-long section of boundary with Venezuela, a country that is also home to numerous indigenous groups of the same ethnicity.

The action of those who defend the territorial rights of the Yanomami is portrayed as a threat to the integrity of the fatherland: "There have long been pressures, from nationals as well as from foreigners, for the establishment--at the expense of present Brazilian and Venezuelan territories--of a Yanomami state" (GTI 1985, 5).

Some journalists endorsed and elaborated on this picture. A news-magazine story suggests that "foreign organizations linked to missionary work, and guided by the more radical sectors of the Brazilian Church" were encouraging the transformation of the region into a huge international Indian reserve to harbor the Yanomami of Brazil and Venezuela. "A sort of new country (*país*) would be created under "the tutelage of international organizations" (Lagoa, Costa and Pumar 1986, 47).

Such allegations have been met by a chorus of protests, none more forceful than that of Senator Severo Gomes, author of a bill establishing the Yanomami Park. He perceives in the GTI's denunciations an echo of "the worn-out and mendacious talk of miners and ranchers, whose ambition is to seize the lands of the Indians with the help or negligence of the Armed Forces" (Gomes 1986). There is no question that the Yanomami nation's living space is very rich in mineral resources, being continually intruded upon by hordes of prospectors. In fact, the entire north Amazonian boundary zone has been described as a "veritable Eldorado" (Sant' Ana 1986).

CONCLUSIONS

As shown by the arguments involving the Yanomami, really a matter of civil rights, even domestic issues may be cast in geopolitical dimensions and placed within a frame of reference dictated by national security considerations. The mind-set that underlies both Calha Norte and the reaction of neighbors to the plan reflects the persistence of a high degree of defensiveness relative to the Amazon.

Brazil's stance in respect to the region follows from a larger geopolitical vision, influential since the 1950s. One component of this view is "an essentially preventive geostrategy of containment" (Silva 1967, 175). Another tenet is a renunciation of external imperialism; Brazil's expansionism, according to this thinking, should be turned inward, with the objective of integrating and developing the immense empire that exists within its borders (Silva 1967,174). The latter injunction, as was seen here, **[end p. 31]** does not quite allay the concerns of neighbors, and Brazilian "geostrategy" has its detractors. Among the most severe are members of the military establishment in adjoining countries, who resent what they perceive as a centuries-old expansionist tendency. An example is the book by one Bolivian lieutenant colonel, *Avance al Oeste* (Westward Advance) significantly subtitled "Luso-Brazilian doctrine" (Miranda 1982, italics added).¹⁴ There are critics who equate the idea of the country's "continental vocation," held by some of Brazil's geopolitical theorists, with the United States doctrine of manifest destiny. A divisional general in the Argentine army, for instance, decries a corpus of thought based, he claims, on the belief of Brazil's *destino manifesto* (Gugliamelli 1976).

The analogy is unduly facile. But, on the subject of manifest destiny, there is little doubt that schemes of some United States citizens imbued with nineteenth-century ideas of territorial predestination did affect Brazil's geopolitical thinking. Upon coming to light, foreign territorial designs such as those so obsessively entertained by Maury contributed their share to the survival and recurrent heightening of the climate of suspicion that envelops Amazonia. In such an atmosphere, one does not always easily distinguish between the very real dangers--not limited to the international political sphere--that threaten the region,¹⁵ and imaginary perils woven from a skein of protean conspiratorial theories. Thus, with attention focused on foreign covetousness

and colonialist maneuvers, the dangers of another form of colonialism--endocolonialism, currently practiced by national economic groups, notably some of those based in São Paulo--may remain largely overlooked.¹⁶ A pivotal feature in Brazilian strategic thinking relative to its northland has, therefore, continued to be that of overcoming its isolation by linking it to the southeast. This policy has increased the political and economic dependency of Amazonia on the financial power centers of the urban-industrial core.

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NOTES

1. A condensed version of this essay was presented at the 1987 International Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, Mérida, México.
2. Although there are earlier indications of the belief in a particular predestination of the United States for continental dominion, the expression only became current after 1845. This is the year in which John L. O'Sullivan, in an editorial claiming the country's right to fulfill its "manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given," brought it to national attention (Weinberg 1935, 145).
3. Maury, with the help of the U.S. Navy, set up a network to compile, for use of sailing ships, observations on winds and currents made by mariners all over the world. They resulted in his *Wind and Current Charts* and explanations to accompany them. In addition, he was a prolific writer and an impressive amount of his production was translated into several languages. John Leighly, in the critical introduction of the most recent edition of Maury's *Physical Geography of the Sea*, writes that "few books with scientific pretensions can have enjoyed as much popularity among the general reading public" (Leighly 1963, ix). Maury credits the expression that serves as title to this book to Alexander von Humboldt, who is reported to have regarded him as the founder of a new and important science (Leighly 1963; Martin 1918, 150).
4. Eventually, the idea of propinquity was extended to Hawaii and even to the Philippines (Weinberg 1935, 68-70).
5. The publication brought together a series of letters signed "Inca," originally published by the *National Intelligencer* and the *Union*, in the city of Washington. Extracts from the letters, in Portuguese translation, were published during the course of the same year by the *Correio Mercantil*, of Rio de Janeiro.
6. In his instruction given to Herndon, Maury further stated that when the southern states of his country became "overpopulated with slaves the [end p. 32] African slave trade will be stopped and they will send these slaves to the Amazon" (Maury 1948, 217).
7. Clemens was greatly impressed with Herndon's "astonishing tale about coca, a ... product ... so nourishing and so strength-giving" that the natives could go "all day on a pinch" of the powdered stuff. It was by opening up "a trade in coca with all the world" that he dreamed of becoming rich (Baender 1973, 459). In 1857, Clemens embarked on a steamer down the Mississippi (Hirst 1987, 70), in order to "take ship, at New Orleans, for Pará" (Baender 1973, 461). When he "found there was no vessel sailing for the Amazon" (Baender 1973, 461), his boyhood dream of becoming a Mississippi pilot came to the fore, and he begged the pilot with whom he had become acquainted on the downstream trip "to teach [him] the river" (Baender 1973, 461). Thus was born Mark Twain.
8. The story of the IIHA episode is given in Galey 1977, especially pages 128- 79.
9. Thus, according to a Reuters dispatch, the *Algemeene Dagblad* (Rotterdam) recently reported that British intelligence agents in Guyana had informed the French government about Libyan commandos operating in Guyana and Surinam. It was thought that they might be planning a raid against the Kourou space station, where France's Ariane rockets are launched (San Francisco ... 1987).

10. The expression has been used (also in the singular, *Faixa de Fronteira*) at least since the late 1930s (as in decree-law No. 1,164/1939). Given the fact that the Calha Norte project was narrowed down, for the time being at least, to the border zone, the designation *calha* (gutter, flume, trough; by extension, valley, basin) is somewhat misleading. Indeed, the international boundary is located far from the axis of the Amazon "trough," and a large part of it follows water divides and mountain crests, such as the Parima, Pacaraima, and Tumucumaque ranges, which include some of Brazil's highest mountains, (e.g., the culminating Pico da Neblina, to which an elevation of 3,014 m is ascribed).
11. Whereas initially there was mention of a half dozen or so garrisons and airports, reports at the time of this writing are that their number has been increased to about 20.
12. For a recent overview of Brazilian geopolitical thinking, see Hepple (1986).
13. See especially the statement given to the media by the Indigenist Missionary Council, "O fim das nações indígenas" (CIMI 1986); and the press release, "A Igreja frente ao Projeto Calha Norte," signed by the bishops of western Amazonia (CNBB 1986).
14. Chapter one is titled "Brazilian Doctrine of Westward Advance from 1492 (*vis*) to the Treaty of San Ildefonso."
15. A major cause for genuine alarm are the environmental and cultural effects of the prevailing model of economic development. I have addressed several aspects of this theme elsewhere (e.g., Sternberg 1977; 1981; 1987a; 1987b; in press).
16. It is not always possible to distinguish clearly between national and international interests.

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