

ARENA Circles React to Firing

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[Text] While ARENA President Francelino Pereira was reading a declaration to the press, stating that "the nation is one: Dividing it would be a crime," Senator Eurico Rezende, government leader in the Senate, was answering some of the charges made in his note by the former army minister Gen Sylvio Frota, especially those regarding foreign policy--in relation to Cuba, the PRC and Angola--and also his charge that there are subversives in the various echelons of the government.

Twice yesterday afternoon Pereira declined to comment on the current political events. Yet, he ended up by doing so late in the afternoon--reportedly after contacting Planalto Palace--as he read the following declaration:

"The unity of the government leadership is guaranteed: It has not been shaken. The nation is enjoying both tranquillity and peace. The authority of President Geisel has once again been demonstrated. The Brazilian people are aware that their destiny is being led by a great statesman, a leader and a patriot who is basically dedicated to the country's best interests. ARENA expresses its unwavering confidence in the action of the president of the republic, and has the assurance that the country will continue to move toward achieving political and socioeconomic development. This is one nation: Dividing it would be a crime. Fortunately, the country was living and continues to live under a climate of unity and work, in which all Brazilians are participating. There is absolutely no crisis. Nationwide, the people remain united and fully confident in the vigorous administrative action and the unequivocal leadership of President Geisel. The decision made yesterday was one of a purely personal nature, since in any presidential system it is the president's prerogative to appoint or to remove cabinet ministers, pursuant to the terms of the constitution. The government continues to work as a team, which is fully geared toward, and exclusively dedicated to, serving the Brazilian national interests."

Contradicting his habits and his usual relaxed manners, Senator Eurico Rezende told reporters that he would rather answer written questions regarding the various issues discussed in Frota's statement.

He stated that "an immediate, thorough investigation is always carried out whenever the government's security and information organizations receive reports on the existence of subversive elements at any level of the administrative echelons. If the charge is confirmed, the appropriate measures are taken. Since this is a highly subjective issue, care should be taken before bringing charges against anyone to avoid hastiness and injustice."

"But the truth is that the revolution has acted with extreme severity against both subversives and corrupt individuals. In this regard, it has always remained alert."

The senator from Espirito Santo State also said that "the establishment of diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1974 followed a basic guideline of President Ernesto Geisel's foreign policy: to expand our capacity for diplomatic action and to defend the most legitimate national interests. One must not overlook the fact that this [diplomatic] activity is necessary for the preservation and strengthening of our national power. Thus, it has become necessary to open new fronts of contacts and cooperation with other countries in order to meet the growing demands of our own external security."

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Rezende added: "This [diplomatic expansion] is undoubtedly a significant, and sometimes sensitive, matter. But the Brazilian Government always investigates thoroughly every aspect of this problem and only proposes a solution after having conducted a thorough analysis designed to safeguard the national interests. One of the major points, if not the fundamental one, of this analysis is the opinion of the National Security Council. And in the case of our resumption of relations with the PRC, this high collegiate body approved this decision. Provisions for bilateral coexistence were established and the basic principles guiding the exchange of diplomatic representations are being complied with. These principles are: the respect for territorial sovereignty and integrity, the principle of nonaggression, the nonintervention of one country in the domestic affairs of the other country, equal advantages and peaceful coexistence. It is proper to state that Brazilian-PRC trade offers great possibilities of growth considering the PRC interest in intensifying its economic cooperation with countries having a market economy. And it is proper to emphasize that the PRC is today the second-leading Brazilian trade partner in the Far East."

Rezende noted that "faced with an accomplished fact and to prevent the continental institutions from being weakened by radicalized positions, and after a thorough analysis of the position maintained by the other delegations, Brazil decided to abstain from voting the proposal to lift the sanction imposed on Cuba by the OAS in 1964. Later, in 1975, our country again abstained despite the fact that there was then a greater number of delegations supporting the proposal of giving the OAS member countries freedom of action to maintain relations with the Republic of Cuba. Our abstention thus reflected the lucidity of the Brazilian diplomacy."

Rezende also noted that "the Brazilian UN vote was not anti-Semitic, since we are a racial democracy. The Brazilian position cannot be considered anti-Jewish. Our position is in keeping with our recognition of the state of Israel, whose creation we consider a historical fact. The principle that Israel has the right to exist as a state has been reaffirmed, even recently, by Brazilian officials."

Rezende added: "Brazil's relations with Angola have always been marked by a scrupulous respect for the international political process. Long before Angola's independence, Brazil established an official representation before the transition government which consisted of the FNLA, the MPLA and UNITA. The head of that representation had ambassadorial rank. Pursuant to this line of action and during the enforcement of the Alvor Accord, Brazil maintained contacts with the three movements, strictly observing the priority treatment owed to them. Serious conflicts arose later among the three pro-independence organizations, a fact which led the Portuguese Government to consider suspending temporarily the Alvor Accord. As a result of this internal struggle, the MPLA government proclaimed Angola independent and Brazil, strictly complying with the principle of nonintervention and respect for self-determination, recognized the Luanda government and its special representation was converted into a diplomatic mission."

Rezende concluded by stating that "in addition to Brazil, the Angolan Government was recognized by the leading Western nations, even by Japan. After its admission to the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Angola was accepted as a member of the United Nations, without any negative vote and with only one abstention."

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