Minister Jobim provided a broad and expansive look at Brazilian security strategy and defense doctrine based upon historical precedents and on the new armed forces restructuring plan implemented in 2008 under his tenure. The following is a summary of the important points touched upon during his 80-minute presentation.

For much of history, the role of the armed forces and defense in Latin America focused on civil and political repression, but this is no longer the case. During the establishment of the democracy, one of the principal topics discussed was the subordination of the military to the civilian government. Over the years the Brazilian armed forces have been changing in character and structure, and only in 1999 was the Ministry of Defense created with a civilian cabinet Minister in charge of all three branches of the armed forces: Army, Navy and Air Force.

The Brazilian defense strategy is founded principally upon the precept that national military and development strategies are and should be integrally linked. Brazil is a developing nation well situated in time and place. Unlike other areas of the world, it has no bloody religious or ethnic conflicts, and its last border conflict was in the early 19th century. It has a strategic geography, low population density, characteristically rhetorical (as opposed to physical) conflicts, social symmetry, abundance of natural resources, and is distant from power centers of the world, as are its Latin American neighbors. However, Brazil is the most populous South American nation, with nearly 200 million inhabitants, thousands of miles of land and sea borders. These borders,
together with large natural gas and oil reserves, and the “green” and “blue” Amazons, are strategic strengths, as well as concerns, for the armed forces and the nation.

The new national defense strategy is called the “Projeto Nacional” (the National Project). It has no expansionist intentions and aims to bolster strategic defense and intra-Latin American cooperation. Security is an interrelated issue that involves the economy, environment, politics, the military, national productive potential, science, and technology—but not just the military—and the Projeto Nacional recognizes this fact. Therefore, the military and civilian spheres must work together in partnership to achieve their common goals and national autonomy.

Three principal elements of the new defense posture that Brazil hopes to develop are (1) advanced technologies, (2) a space program, and (3) nuclear capacity.

Advanced Technologies

The Minister discussed the shortcomings of Brazil’s research and development in terms of integration, underinvestment, and the necessity of technology transfer. In addition to expanding funding for the military aeronautical, marine, and nuclear research facilities, the Projeto Nacional aims to consolidate their work and better integrate their efforts with national universities. Also, regarding the multiple military contracts the Minister discussed, he emphasized that Brazil is not a country that “buys” hardware, but enters joint venture agreements with shared production responsibilities and technology transfer, so that in the future it may independently produce its military equipment. Both the space and nuclear programs are inexorably linked to the development of advanced technologies.

Space Program

Brazil has been relying on purchasing satellite images and information from other countries. As a growing power, the Minister averred, this position is untenable. With a launch site close to the equator in Alcatara, in Maranhão state, it is comparatively inexpensive to launch satellites from Brazil. The Government will therefore pursue development of this site and of the rockets necessary to launch satellites, thereby reducing dependence on foreign countries and bolstering Brazil’s space presence.
Minister Jobim spoke also to the shortcomings of the U.S.-based Global Positioning System (GPS), particularly in the southern hemisphere. Rather than rely solely upon this system, Brazil will develop a mechanism that allows it to combine and freely alternate between the three dominant global positioning systems: GPS, Europe’s Galileo, and Russia’s GLONASS, for greater functionality and versatility.

Nuclear Capacity
According to Minister Jobim, on the international stage nations are accorded a different level of respect if they have nuclear capabilities; as a rising power, Brazil should focus on developing this area for three purposes: nuclear submarines (without nuclear arms); medical and agricultural uses; and nuclear energy. Nuclear power plants could help supplement the national reliance on hydroelectric dams that makes the country susceptible to, and dependent on, season rainfall patterns.

Restructuring of the Armed Forces
The previous structuring of the highest level of the Armed Forces caused many internal squabbles among the three branches, said Jobim. Previously, the President would select a 4-star service chief to head the joint chiefs for a two-year term, after which the chief would return to his respective branch. This system pressured the chief to inappropriately favor his own branch, as head of the other chiefs. Under the new system, the chief selected would be reassigned to the reserves, be deactivated, and no longer be able to return to his previous post, thereby eliminating this potential bias. This further increases the power of the Minister of Defense.

Another substantial development is a new commitment to human resources within the Armed Forces. Previously, the Defense Ministry has been an “agglomeration of foreigners,” meaning that technicians and professionals from Petrobras, Banco do Brasil, and various government agencies and companies would staff the Ministry. The new strategy aims to create its own defense bureaucracy with career professionals that will staff the Ministry of Defense.
Military Hardware Acquisitions

Brazil is making substantial investments in military hardware. It is purchasing four traditional and one nuclear submarine in an agreement with France. A new facility will be built in Itaguaí, Rio de Janeiro state, at a total cost of 6.7 billion euros. Additionally, it will acquire five patrol ships, five frigates and a supply ship to patrol the coastal areas that Minister Jobim refers to as the “Blue Amazon.”

Brazil has already entered into an agreement with France to acquire 56 Eurocopter EC 725 Super Cougar transport helicopters that will be assembled domestically, along with technology transfers.

Empresa Brasileira de Aeronáutica S.A. (Embraer) has plans to begin production of the KC-390 transport aircraft by 2018. It has already signed agreements with Colombia, Chile, the Czech Republic, and Portugal to work together. Jobim says it will be produced at half the cost of the American-made Hercules transport aircraft.

Minister Jobim also spoke briefly about the pending FX2 fighter jet. Contract bids have been made, but commercial partners will not be selected till after the presidential run-off elections on October 30, 2010. Jobim said the Ministry of Defense plans to have the full capacity to build the FX2 independently within eight to ten years.

All of these acquisitions are meant to transform the Armed Forces’ capacity for strategic mobilization. Each in its own way, these new pieces of equipment will allow the military to achieve its goals of strengthening border security, protecting vital domestic infrastructure, and securing the Green and Blue Amazons.

Domestic and Border Security

Jobim defined the national critical infrastructure as consisting of petroleum fields; gas fields in the Amazon; international hydrocarbon pipelines; hydroelectric dams; refineries of biodiesel and oil; thermoelectric plants; natural gas plants; the nuclear production areas of Angra dos Reis, Rezende, and Iperó; ports; airports; telecommunication facilities; the highway network; and the
electric power grid. To protect these areas, Brazil must do a better job at securing its 9.7 million kilometers of land borders in addition to its expansive coastline and river networks. These areas are easy points of entry for hostile forces to attack Brazil and take down vital infrastructure points. The defense strategy introduced a new program for securing the borders called the Integrated System for Monitoring the Borders (*Sistema Integrado de Monitoramento de Fronteiras* – SISFRON).

Under this plan, the Army would add 28 frontier platoons to the Amazon region, based mainly at river border crossings, bringing the total to 49. These units would be responsible primarily for pursuing environmental crime and smuggling. At present all border posts have telephone and internet access. The Navy would develop a “2nd fleet” to patrol the Amazon River network and secure the mouth of the Amazon River. The Air Force would use its new helicopters and planes to target potential threats quickly and to transport troops quickly and efficiently. To pursue this plan, the Armed Forces will vary its brigade structure and create specialized heavy and light brigades that can more efficiently respond to particular concerns.

The Minister spoke to the government’s renewed faith in the military-controlled *CINDACTA* air traffic control system (Centro Integrado de Defesa Aérea e Controle de Tráfego Aéreo) for both civilian and military air traffic because of the military’s efficiency and inability to go on strike. With the imminent growth of domestic and regional civilian air traffic, the Ministry plans on constructing three new CINDACTA bases spread across the Amazon to monitor air traffic.

**Conclusion**

In his brief concluding remarks, Minister Jobim said that 50 years from now the national plan of the Ministry of Defense and the nation will focus on meeting the demand for drinkable water, animal protein, grains, and both renewable and non-renewable energy sources nationally and for all of Latin America.