

Brazil to boost military presence to protect Amazon

April 27 2012



File picture shows an aerial view of the Novo river in the Amazon state of Para, northern Brazil. Brazil will boost its military presence in the Amazon region to protect its huge natural resources from any external threat, Defense Minister Celso Amorim told the Senate.

Brazil will boost its military presence in the Amazon region to protect its huge natural resources from any external threat, Defense Minister Celso Amorim told the Senate.

"The commitment to the defense of the [Amazon](#) is fundamental. Navy, Air Force, all services will boost their presence in the Amazon in the next few years," he said without giving further details.

Amorim said Brazil did not feel threatened by any neighboring country but added: "We cannot rule out that some power from outside the region" may covet the natural resources of the Amazon, the planet's largest rainforest and its main source of fresh water.

"We are working on a plan to deploy (security) forces and the Amazon plays a very important role. It's the most vulnerable part of our country," Amorim said.



Graphic on the Amazon rainforest. Brazil will boost its military presence in the region to protect natural resources, Defense Minister Celso Amorim told the Senate Thursday.

"We have a wealth of resources which can make us the target of adventures," he added.

Amorim said the country's strategic planners were planning to boost "transparent cooperation" with other Amazon countries, referring to plans to set up a security commission with Peru and Colombia.

"We do not feel threatened by any South American countries and we do not want anyone to feel threatened by us. We always want full transparency to avoid suspicions," the minister said.

Brazil, Latin America's largest country and the world's sixth largest economy, shares the sprawling Amazon with Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.

Brasilia is also boosting its naval power in the South Atlantic with a ambitious submarine program to protect its huge deep-water oil reserves and project its growing influence.

Under the National [Defense Strategy](#) unveiled in 2008, the navy was tasked with developing a blue-water force to protect Brazil's huge sub-salt oil reserves, the [Amazon river](#) basin and its 7,491 km (4,655 miles) coastline.

The sub-salt [oil fields](#), located off the country's southeast Atlantic coast beneath kilometers of ocean, [bedrock](#) and hot sat-beds, could contain more than 100 billion barrels of high-quality recoverable oil, according to official estimates.

The centerpiece of the naval buildup is the ProSub program under which France is to supply four Scorpene-class diesel-electric submarines and help develop the non-nuclear components of Brazil's first nuclear-powered fast attack submarine.

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Citation: Brazil to boost military presence to protect Amazon (2012, April 27) retrieved 23 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-04-brazil-boost-military-presence-amazon.html>

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