

**September 2, 1985**

**Cable from Rafael Vazquez, Argentinian Ambassador  
to Brazil, Requesting Meeting with the Brazilian  
Foreign Minister**

**Citation:**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/117519>

**Summary:**

In this cable to Buenos Aires, Ambassador Vazquez reports that he requested a meeting with Minister Olavo Setúbal after General Leonidas Pires Gonçalves suggested that he would support a Brazilian nuclear weapons program. Vazquez also discusses a conversation with the Brazilian Foreign Minister's chief of staff, who told Vazquez that General Leônidas Pires refuted the reports of a Brazilian atomic bomb.

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**SECRETO (\*)**

**AG. NUCLEARES  
GABINETE  
ECONOMICOS  
AS LATINO ( SUR)**
**NUMERO GENERAL DE RECEPCION**
**48416**
**ORIGEN:**
**BRASILIA**

 Fecha y hora recepción D.T.: DIA **02** MES **SET** HORA **1215**

 Fecha y hora tramitado D.C.: DIA **02** MES **SET** HORA **1230**

Cable Nº

**BRASILIA - MUY URGENTE-**
**PARA CONOCIMIENTO INMEDIATO SR. CANCELLER, SECRETARIO DE ESTADO SA-  
BATO Y SUAL (SUR).**
**CON REFERENCIA A MI 1311 DE AYER DOMINGO SOBRE DECLARACIONES GE-  
NERAL LEONIDAS PIREs RESPECTO FABRICACION BOMBA ATONICA POR PARTE  
BRASIL, A PRIMERA HORA DE HOY 2 HABLE CON JEFE GABINETE CANCELLER,  
EMBAJADOR RUBENS BARBOSA, Y LE PEDI UNA ENTREVISTA CON EL MINISTRO  
OLAVO SETUBAL.**
**1). EMBAJADOR BARBOSA ME EXPRESO:**
**A. QUE MINISTRO SETUBAL SE ENCONTRABA EN SAN PABLO DE DONDE  
REGESARA POR LA NOCHE. EL PEDIDO DE AUDIENCIA LE SERIA  
ADELANTADO POR TELEFONO.**
**B. QUE NOTICIA HABIA SIDO DESMENTIDA POR EL GENERAL LEONIDAS  
PIRES.**
**2). NO OBSTANTE ELLO NICE PRESENTE QUE ME INTERESABA RECIBIR ESA  
INFORMACION POR PARTE DEL CANCELLER SETUBAL.**
**3). DECLARACIONES QUE, SEGUN EL "CORREIO BRAZILIENSE", HABRIA  
PRONUNCIADO EL MINISTRO DE EJERCITO SOBRE UN TEMA TAN DELICA-  
DO, JUNTO A LAS QUE HOY PUBLICA LA PRENSA ATRIBUYENDOSLAS AL  
PRESIDENTE DEL SENADO Y A VARIOS LEGISLADORES (VER MI 1313),  
CONFIGURAN UN CUADRO SERIO Y QUE REFLEJA, EN PRIMER ANALISIS,  
UNA SINGULAR DESMESURA EN LA APRECIACION DE ESTE ASUNTO.  
NO CABE DUDA QUE AUN EN CASO DE QUE TALES DECLARACIONES  
SEAN DESMENTIDAS (LO QUE ES MUY PROBABLE SUCEDA), SITUACION  
PUEDE CONducIR A COMPLICAR EL CUADRO INTERNACIONAL PARA BRASIL  
Y ARGENTINA.**
**CABE PREGUNTARSE, SIN EMBARGO, SI ESTA SITUACION NO PODRIA  
SER UTILIZADA POLITICAMENTE PARA IMPULSAR CONVERSACIONES  
TENDIENTES A LOGRAR UN PRONTO ENTENDIMIENTO AL MAS ALTO  
NIVEL ENTRE LOS DOS PAISES, FUNDADO EN DECISION COMUN DE  
UTILIZAR EL DESARROLLO NUCLEAR -ABIERTO ENTRE LOS DOS PAI-  
SES- CON FINES EXCLUSIVAMENTE PACIFICOS.**
**4). PERO ES CLARO QUE, A ESTA ALTURA, LO PRIMERO SERA OBSERVAR  
CUALES SON LOS DESMENTIDOS O PRESIONES QUE FORMULEN LAS MA-  
XIMAS AUTORIDADES BRASILENAS SOBRE ESTE ASUNTO, Y CUAL SE  
GRADO DE CONFIABILIDAD QUE ELLAS INSPIREM. (URANGA).**
**VAZQUEZ**
**-b-  
MS**

SECRET

Nuclear affairs/Minister's Office/Economic/Latin  
American Affairs (South)

General reception number 48416

ORIGIN: BRASILIA

Date and time of reception: 02 Sept. 12:15

Date and time of treatment: 02 Sept 12:30

Cable no. 1312 BRASILIA - MOST URGENT

For immediate knowledge of the Minister, Secretary of State Sabato and SUAL (SUR)

With reference to my cable of yesterday Sunday on declarations from General Leonidas Pires Gonçalves on manufacture of atom bomb by Brazil, early today 2nd I spoke with the Foreign Minister's Chief of Staff Ambassador Rubens Barbosa and requested an interview with Minister Olavo Setúbal.

1) Ambassador Barbosa told me:

A. That Minister Setúbal was in São Paulo whence he would come back in the late evening. The interview request would be taken to his attention by telephone.

B. That the news had been refuted by General Leônidas Pires.

2) Nevertheless, I said that I was interested in receiving that information from Minister Setúbal.

3) The declarations that, according to "Correio Braziliense" the Minister of the Army purportedly made about such a delicate issue, together with those published to-day in the press attributing them to the President of the Senate and several parliamentarians (see my cable 1313), configure a serious picture which reflects, at a first analysis, a singular exaggeration in dealing with this question. There is no doubt that even in the case such declarations are denied (which very probably shall happen), the situation may lead to complications in the international panorama for Brazil and Argentina.

One might ask, however, whether this situation could be politically used to push forward conversations aiming at a prompt understanding at the highest level between the two countries, based on the common decision to utilize nuclear development - open between the two countries - for exclusively peaceful purposes.

4) It is however clear that at the juncture the first order of business will be to observe the denials or pressures that the highest Brazilian authorities may make about this question and what is the degree of trust they inspire.

(Signed) VAZQUEZ