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## Brazil

### Brazil: Dilma in Wonderland – by Carolina Barros

By [admin](#) ☐ August 12, 2010 ☐ [Email This Post](#) ☐ [Print This Post](#) ☐ [Post a comment](#)



“Maravilhoso” panorama in the latest opinion polls — with a 10 percent lead and an apparently irreversible upward trend, Dilma Rousseff, the PT (Labour Party) candidate, will win Brazil’s presidential elections in October. If she does pull it off, she would be the first woman elected president in her country (and the third in the Southern Cone after Michele Bachelet in Chile and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina). But also after eight years in power, the popular Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva would have in “Dilminha” a trusty custodian of the “Wonderland” he has bequeathed. With the idea of returning to Planalto government house, perhaps in 2014 (although Lula himself again ruled this out this weekend) or in order to concentrate in peace on global policy while Dilma administers the Brazilian giant domestically.

Lula’s legacy is enviably “maravilhoso,” as the numbers attest — according to the IMF, per capita income in Brazil rose by 162.8 percent between 2001 and 2010. Furthermore, there is every

prospect of the Gross Domestic Product rising by a further 35 percent, i.e. during the highly probable presidency of Dilma.

And that is not all — again according to the IMF, the per capita income of each and every one of 193 millions Brazilians could be reaching the five-digit mark next year at 10,000 dollars while in 2013, Brazil could be overtaking Italy to become the 7th economy of the world. Those bleak figures from 1968-1973 when the World Bank registered 11 percent growth for the entire period and a per capita income of barely 500 dollars would fade into an increasingly distant past.

And there is more still — the economic transformation of the Lula years has trickled down to the lowest social strata (indeed “trickle” would be an understatement). According to the economist Marcelo Neri from the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, the per capita income of Brazil’s richest 10 percent grew 11.2 percent but the poorest 10 percent shot up 72 percent.

“Today the poor know that they can arrive”, summed up Lula in a recent interview with the weekly *IstoÉ*. He was obviously referring to the benefits of two of his most effective social plans, “Zero Hunger” and the “Family Plan,” which have allowed the poorest of the poor three meals a day (as he promised during his 2002 election campaign), thus bringing 30 million Brazilians into the consumer world.

### **Two staying on**

With this inheritance, Lula’s main heiress Dilma has already begun to assemble her future presidential team to differentiate herself from her predecessor. Her campaign entourage has leaked that there will be special advisors to the Presidency, along United States lines, in two areas: defence and foreign affairs. In other words, her “own people” since it is an open secret in Brasilia that both the current Defence and Foreign Ministers, Nelson Jobim and Celso Amorim respectively, will be staying on if she is sworn in on January 1, 2011.

Jobim’s continuity is explained by the unfinished agenda from the “revamp” of the Brazilian armed forces with the purchase of armaments, aircraft and a “blue water” fleet (with a nuclear submarine included) still pending. Nor has the reform of the defence portfolio in the direction of a more civilian ministry been completed — a task very much identified with the person of Jobim himself, the first non-military minister in that post, who does not hide his 2014 presidential aspirations. To this transformation, Dilma plans to add a touch of her own — to place the ABIN intelligence agency within the direct control of the President.

As for Itamaraty, the veteran minister Amorim is preparing a mega-reform for the “Dilma era.” According to *IstoÉ*, Amorim intends to double the permanent staff of the Foreign Ministry, taking it up to 1,500 officials (during eight years of Lula, Brazil opened up 64 new missions, taking the current total up to 223).

That is why there is now talk in Brasilia of a bill to create 400 new diplomatic posts.

“Amorim is aiming for diplomatic overpopulation which will deprofessionalize our Foreign Ministry,” said an old Itamaraty hand when consulted by this newspaper. These changes which Amorim plans for the Dilma presidency will also help Lula.

“I want to pass on all Brazil’s social triumphs to other American countries and to Africa,” the outgoing president said in a long interview last weekend, in which he clarified how he will seek to construct a regional Latin American party or political organization “with a new doctrine”. This international construction which he projects would be supported by a think tank (the Lula Institute, of course) and by the extended global networks of Itamaraty.

Nevertheless, in Brazil’s Wonderland these future dreams of Lula could become a nightmare for Dilma. The problem with the marvellous legacy she will be receiving is that Lula comes with it as part of the package. Invincible, with a positive image of 86 percent and with 76 approval ratings

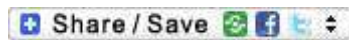
for his administration, the intensely popular shadow of Lula and the possibility of his returning to the Presidency in 2014 could trap Dilma in a labyrinth. A contradiction almost on the scale of Lewis Carroll's masterpiece but without a White Rabbit and without any Queen of Hearts.

Source: [Buenos Aires Herald](#) (Argentina)

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1.

Excelente análisis...! Es muy probable -creo- que Roussef no será Lula, por dos fundamentos: a) el crecimiento de la economía necesitará un “entrepiso” para cambiar el aire, pues está un poco recalentada; b) Roussef es más estatista que Lula. Espero equivocarme porque lo que es malo para Brasil será malo para nosotros.

*Posted by Adolfo Ruiz | [August 13, 2010, 5:11 am](#)*

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