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by Barbara Khol

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At an April 24 press conference in Brussels, Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula), president of the Workers Party (PT), said he supported the "immediate suspension of payments on Brazil's foreign debt," estimated at $120 billion. The debt, said Lula, "is killing more people than the atomic bomb,...the Vietnam war, the Spanish Civil War. It kills innocents and children, rather than adults and soldiers."
The PT chief, who received 48% of the popular vote in the first round of the 1989 presidential elections, said the foreign debt burden is simply unsustainable. Da Silva pointed out that in five years, Brazil paid $60 billion on the debt, and in 10 years, Latin America has paid $250 billion in debt service. Next, Lula said he was concerned by Europe's increasing focus on Eastern European economic problems to the detriment of developing nations. He added, "Europe is beginning to develop a flexible policy for Eastern Europe [regarding the foreign debt]. It is time to initiate the same policy with Latin America and the [rest of the] Third World." Da Silva met with Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens, and was scheduled to convene with officials of the European Economic Community and the European Parliament. (Basic data from AFP, 04/24/91)

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