

processes of development in the present world, they openly state the necessity to exchange knowledge and put into effect joint programs in all these matters within the framework of the existing Basic Convention for Technical Cooperation.

In this respect, they agree to stimulate contacts already established between the National Commission for the Development of the Nuclear Industry of Venezuela, and the National Atomic Energy Commission of the Republic of Argentina....

## Brazilians Upset By U.S. Provocations

*The Brazilian daily Jornal do Brasil, May 12, responding to the statements of U.S. Undersecretary of State for Interamerican Affairs, Terence Todman, in Caracas:*

The importance of Todman's statements denying any preponderant role to Brazil was made much greater by the fact that they were made precisely in the capital of a country vying for regional leadership. Even more: a country which has been taking political positions clearly against Brazil, whether to criticize the Brazilian regime, or to seek alliances with countries which represent an opposition to Brazil in the continent — in this case, Argentina, with the visit which President Videla began yesterday in Caracas.

The mere affirmation of Todman, suddenly isolated Brazil in the Latin American continent and left the Brazilian diplomats perplexed. Though Perez is the immediate and direct beneficiary of the negation of leadership to Brazil, Videla also will receive the benefit of that negation and its political advantages, since in this exact moment he is seeking a politico-commercial alliance with Caracas.

## CAP: Brazil Indispensable To Continental Integration

*The following are statements by Venezuela's President Carlos Andres Perez from a May 13 press conference in Caracas, countering the attempts by U.S. Undersecretary of State Todman to instigate tensions between Brazil and Venezuela-Argentina.*

"Those who speak of Brazil as a nation that plans to open a new imperialism in the region are not the Brazilians, but the enemies of Latin American integration who want to divorce Brazil from the rest of the nations of the Latin American continent.

"Relations between Venezuela and Brazil are completely normal ....Venezuela is interested, in the context of its integrationist credo, in the best of relations with Brazil...

"... Brazil is ... indispensable to the plans of Latin American integration, and we are also indispensable to Brazil for Brazil to be able to realize its manifest destiny which is the destiny of Latin America. There is no Brazilian destiny, there is no Argentine destiny, there is no Venezuelan destiny, there is a Latin American destiny."

# Behind The Mexican Political Reforms

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## MEXICO

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On April 2, Mexican Interior Minister Jesus Reyes Heróles, on behalf of President Jose López Portillo, announced the initiation of a process of "political reform." He declared that the state was attempting to "broaden the possibilities of political representation," a phrasing widely taken to herald legalization of some political parties not now on the ballot and a reevaluation of the hegemonic role of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which has been in power since the early 1930s.

Subsequently the President sent Reyes Heróles a formal letter requesting public hearings of the Federal Election Commission (CFE) to galvanize public discussion and deliberation over the appropriate content of political reforms. These hearings are now underway. Daily commentary in the press is extensive and all sides of the Mexican political spectrum, but particularly the

various groups on the left, are in ferment. The foreign press has been virtually silent on the subject.

The Reform represents the government's principal initiative to channel popular support behind its program, an "Alliance for Production." In a substantial sense, the government will stand or fall by the Reform.

What the government means by the Reform was spelled out in two major addresses by Reyes Heróles on April 2 and by PRI party president, Carlos Sansores Perez, at CFE hearings on May 14.

As International Monetary Fund-Wall Street debt collectors are demanding that Third World governments enforce repression and austerity, Reyes defined an opposite approach for Mexico. "Starting from this difficult (economic) situation, there are those who want a hardening of the government," he warned. "But to harden and fall into rigidity is to expose us to the rapid rupture of the state order and the national political order. Faced with these intentions, President Lopez Portillo is striving for the state to broaden the possibilities of political representation...(This) is the firm base of development, of the rule of liberty, and of the possibilities for social progress."

Sansores Perez expanded on these conceptions May 14. "We do not conceive of political activity separated from the populations's aspirations for material and cultural wellbeing," he said. "Public liberties, political rights, representative institutions, must be defended...because they constitute the best weapons for the people in their struggle for economic and social improvement."

He characterized the PRI's almost 50 years of rule as an expression of the political will of the majority of workers and peasants, and made it clear that the Reform should not mean the weakening of such cohesive forces. "There is no sense," he said in simply multiplying parties "to the extremes of caricature...The important thing is to foster organizations with a real capacity for social mobilization as a function of the national and international problems which affect us — authentic parties which encourage greater participation of the masses in political processes..."

#### *Continuity With Echeverria*

This approach continues the fundamental orientation of the preceding Echeverria administration (1970-76). In response to efforts spearheaded by the fascist Monterrey group of businessmen to cut the government off from its mass constituency through manipulated student conflicts, Echeverria launched a "political opening" which brought many 1968 student leaders into the government and allowed a proliferation of new left parties. He formed an umbrella group of the progressive peasant confederations, the Pacto de Ocampo, and worked toward establishing similar strength for labor in the Workers Congress. He attempted to combine these interests into a "Popular Alliance," which despite major difficulties, served as the key bulwark against the fascist advance intensified by Monterrey in the last years of Echeverria's government.

#### *Response From the Left*

At present, Mexico has four registered parties: the PRI; the Fabian left Popular Socialist Party (PPS); and two parties allied with the Monterrey Group, the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM) and the National Action Party (PAN). Requirements for other parties to be registered have been prohibitive.

There are virtually no new parties on the "right" with a ghost of a claim for legalization. Former Interior Minister Mario Moya Palencia (now director of the *El Sol* chain of newspapers) has attempted to promote two proto-fascist vehicles, the Mexican Democratic Party (PDM) and the Sinarquistas, but there is broad recognition that they have no base and no legitimacy.

It is on the "left" of the conventional spectrum that the Reform has most relevance. Here, the proposals for Reform have called forth entirely different responses from the two major groups of parties.

The Socialist Workers Party (PST), the Mexican labor Party (PLM), and several other smaller formations, have expressed their wholehearted concurrence with the aims and methods of the Reform. They have insisted that only parties which seriously address the nation's problems, represent mass forces, and work within the framework of the Mexican revolution and the Mexican constitution be given expanded rights under the Reform. This, they argue, excludes Moya's fascist sectlets and a

variety of programless provocateur parties claiming "left" affiliation.

As stated by PLM Executive Committee Member Marivilia Carrasco in a column in *El Universal* May 18, the Reform must be aimed at "guaranteeing the permanent and organized mobilization of the population to strengthen the institutions of the Mexican Revolution" in the face of efforts by "international finance capital" to impose "Chile-style" debt collecting regimes on the Third World. She added that the Reform must "permit us to overcome the shortcomings of the past," when popular mobilizations ultimately failed for lack of a "cadre force with scientific preparation," able to educate broad strata of the population around the need for advanced scientific program.

For the other wing of the "left" — broadly headed by the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) and including the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), the Mexican Workers Party (PMT), a faction of the PPS, and elements of the Democratic Tendency of electrical workers — the Reform has produced intense factional infighting and disarray. As Reyes Heróles and Lopez Portillo are quite aware, liberalization of Mexico's "rules of the game" severely undercuts the "rationale" by which these left sectlets have justified terrorism and violence as the "honest response" to a "closed system."

One faction in these left forces, represented at this point by Martinez Verdugo, secretary-general of the PCM, has shown a willingness to work within the framework of the Reform. But the dominant factions, those most directly controlled by the U.S.-based Institute for Policy Studies, the Monterrey Group or Monterrey's agents Moya Palencia and Mexico City mayor Carlos Hank Gonzalez, have tried to wreck the Reform. One of their key demands is that *all* parties be registered, no matter what their size or nature. This would be an invitation for conditions of chaos which would rapidly "demand" the "solution" of military repression.

This "ultra" faction has also insisted that the chief architect of the Reform, Reyes Heróles, and the Elections Commission he presides over, be removed from Reform deliberations. His "tricks, wily ways and closed manner," they charge, must be stopped. This is a confession of just how effectively Reyes' moves have so far succeeded in restraining their provocateur activities.

#### *The University*

The most concerted effort to sabotage the Reform is now taking place around the universities. Sansores Perez, in his testimony to the Election Commission, indicated that the universities must be part of the political life of the country and that legitimate political parties must have a role on campus.

This call represented a major threat to the "right-left" controlled environment which has effectively shut university "politics" off from the political processes and programs of the rest of the country. Guillermo Soberon, the rightwing rector of the National Autonomous University, immediately denounced Sansores for trying to "politicize" the campus.

Spokesmen for the Reform have reacted vigorously to Soberon's challenge, however. The Central Committee of the PRI has "invited" Soberon to "express his views" to the Election Commission, presided over by Reyes. It will be an intimidating forum for Soberon — if he attends.