

Lopez Portillo Names Echeverria Ambassador For Third World Affairs

Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo designated ex-President Luis Echeverria extraordinary and plenipotentiary Ambassador for Third World Affairs on May 15. The naming of Echeverria to this newly created post insures the refocusing of Mexico's efforts to lead the Third World to battle for a new world economic order — and continue the offensive for peace and Third World development which Echeverria led during his 1970-76 presidential term.

Lopez Portillo's decision, which officially acknowledges Echeverria as a powerful government spokesman and advisor, was immediately backed by leading political figures. The head of the Chamber of Deputies, Augusto Gomez Villanueva, called Echeverria's appointment "the best guarantee to maintain the unity of the revolutionary forces in Mexico." The ruling PRI party officially endorsed the nomination emphasizing that Echeverria's great experience in Third World problems will benefit Mexico's international relations. The official government daily *El Nacional* stated editorially that the studies on Third World problems which Echeverria will carry out "will serve to orient our government."

The appointment of Echeverria is a high point in Lopez Portillo's progressive political offensive since his visit to the White House in February of this year. During his Washington visit Lopez Portillo realized that Carter's Administration was committed to demanding of Mexico the same austerity measures that the International Monetary Fund was insisting that Mexico impose. In response, Lopez Portillo announced in March a Political Reform to mobilize all the political forces of Mexico around

the main national problems.

As part of this offensive, on Labor Day, Lopez spoke at a demonstration of one million workers to issue a warning to traditionally Wall Street-allied Mexican businessmen and demanded that they support his economic strategy, the Alliance for Production. Then on May 3, Lopez committed himself to defend Echeverria's progressive Agrarian Reform by distributing to peasant families land taken from large landowners of the state of Sonora.

In the same week, Lopez's Minister of Commerce, Solana, announced a government fund to stimulate the medium and small industries that want to participate in the Alliance for Production. At the same time, the government food production and distribution center, CONASUPO, announced it was going to open stores together with the largest labor union of Mexico, the Mexican Workers Central (CTM), in order to maintain control over the prices of basic products, a direct attack on the speculators.

The response of U.S. and Mexican pro-Wall Street forces to the consolidation of this nationalist thrust came yesterday through United Press International. A UPI story played on the front-page in the Mexican daily *Ovaciones* warns that, according to a U.S. military source, the power of the Mexican army is growing and that power can be used to launch a military coup. The article adds that the military now has the power to form a military government to put an end to the corruption and inefficiency of the civil society, which it considers "rotten." The UPI dispatch ends by noting that in other Latin American countries the Armed Forces have taken power; "why not in Mexico?"

Jamaica Rejects IMF Conditions For Loan

JAMAICA

The Jamaican government has flatly rejected the three primary conditions set forth by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for financial support. According to an official Jamaican government communique released May 9, "the political directorate (of the ruling People's National Party) ... took the decision that we would not accept those conditions which we thought were inappropriate." The communique was issued following the arrival in Kingston of a high level United States delegation led by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter American Affairs, William Luers.

The official communique revealed in full for the first

time the IMF conditions for granting Jamaica financial assistance. Among other things, said the government release, the IMF demanded a 40 per cent "across the board" devaluation, the "elimination of social programs," and the abolition of foreign trade and exchange controls.

"We told them in January (1976) that it could not be done," said the Premier in a speech three weeks ago before a mass concentration of labor supporters. "No outside forces," he added, should dictate to Jamaica.

Mr. Manley then brought the crowd up cheering when he emphatically stressed that under no conditions will the programs of social reform which benefit the large majorities of the masses be discontinued. The Jamaican government, he continued, has a policy of promoting social development. "If the IMF will not lend us money on those terms, we will borrow it elsewhere on those terms."