

U.S.-Mexico summit: 'brutally frank'

A contentless reaffirmation of good feeling between Mexico and the United States was how most U.S. press covered the summit meeting between Mexican President José López Portillo and U.S. President Jimmy Carter. But the Washington, D.C. event was in fact neither contentless nor particularly warm.

For the first time in the history of such talks, the most detailed "inside" view of the summit which took place on Sept. 28-29 was provided by one of the protagonists—not the press and their "knowledgeable sources." In conversation with reporters aboard his airplane, Quetzalcoatl I, and in an address delivered to almost half a million Mexicans gathered in Mexico City's central square for his return, López Portillo launched a new era in "open diplomacy."

Energy remains a primary point of disagreement between the two nations, despite the signing of the long-delayed natural gas deal. Mexico is determined to develop its energy resources only as fast as its domestic and revenue and consumption needs require—except as an international order of the kind proposed by López Portillo at the United Nations on Sept. 27.

Nor is Mexico very happy with Washington's insistence of "appropriate," "small is beautiful" technology aid. "Think big" is López Portillo's oft-repeated slogan.

López Portillo had hardly left Washington when the simmering tensions between the two countries flared up anew. The *New York Times*, citing statements from the National Security Council's Guy Erb, claimed that Mexico had agreed to discuss compensation for alleged damages to Texas from the Ixtoc-I oil spill. The reply from Mexico's Foreign Relations Ministry within 24 hours: a "baseless" distortion of Mexico's agreement to discuss environmental issues "for the future."

During his plane flight and upon his return to Mexico City, López Portillo had this to say:

On the talks with Carter: "Frank, at times brutally frank."

On a North American Common Market: "We have already stated that we have no interest in this ... and even less as a result of obligations concerning energy (presented by López Portillo to the U.N.—ed.). At that time we said: we do not believe in bloc solutions to resolve energy problems. Faced with a possible U.S.-Canada-Mexico Common Market, we prefer an energy supply system inscribed in a world approach. We have an obligation to explore a world system and not a bloc system."

On wielding the "food weapon" against oil producers: "The alternatives are very simple: either we put the world in order or disorder. Of course, an oil producing nation which is also a food producing country like the U.S. has not yet decided to use food as a weapon. But at a certain moment it could do so. And what is gained? We disorder the world even more. The cry of many in the U.S. is: 'So we won't sell wheat.' And where will this end up? This is the escalation of violence which our (energy) proposal (to the U.N.) is designed to avoid."

On "illegal aliens": "Upon the passionate urging of our Chicano brothers, we told the President that we viewed the denial of human rights in education, in health and in legal protection for Chicanos with great concern; that we did not accept the propriety, between civilized peoples, of confusing immigration rights with labor rights, and much less, with human rights.... We repeat here: it is no crime to look for work. The man who looks for it is only asking for the opportunity to be a man in all his potential.

"This is what I said (in Washington) and now I add: It must be our nationalist purpose to create the opportunities so that all Mexicans have work here.... This is the imperative which all of us Mexicans must fulfill....

"The problem of jobs in Mexico is that people are not trained. That is why we have insisted so on training."

On joining the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT): "I told Mr. Carter, we are considering this in our study groups. That is why I would prefer

Carter waves the 'big stick'

In an address to the New York-based Foreign Policy Association Sept. 28, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance enunciated a six-point strategy toward Latin America. He called this a "new direction" in U.S. policy toward the hemisphere based on "shared responsibility, not domination or dependence—on justice and accommodation, not confrontation."

But the policy Vance enunciated—and the policy put into motion around the so-called Cuba crisis—is anything but "accommodating." Vance made clear that Washington will not tolerate challenges to U.S. political or economic domination of the hemisphere. As the first point, Vance said, U.S. economic relations with Latin America will be based on a "stronger, better capitalized ... more responsive" International

not to discuss GATT with you at this time.... The question is for us to establish a development model organized for export, both inside and outside the country.... We are not going to commit (economic) suicide. We are not going to have an industrial development program and then a system which would negate it in international trade."

On the International Monetary Fund: "On many occasions, justice for the Mexican peasant, for example, is not (to be sought) in Mexico, but in the IMF and its system, which we are dedicated to modifying."

On oil prices: "How do we know what the price of a barrel of oil is if we do not know the price of a tractor?"

On Soviet troops in Cuba: "We reaffirmed the Mexican position.... Support for the SALT treaty. But we had the occasion to state there as here: Mexico, in accord with the principle of nonintervention, does not admit (the right) to military enclaves anywhere in the world. For us it is just as serious that there are U.S. troops in Cuba as that there are Soviet troops in Cuba; because we do not want foreign troops in Mexico, just as we do not want to see a situation of foreign troops in the United States.

We want equal treatment for all...."

On the Ixtoc-1 oil spill: "I wish to repeat here, face to face with my people, that when indemnification was discussed for possible, eventual damages from Ixtoc, we said the following: We do not recognize as law an argument which is not general.... If they did not

recognize their responsibility in the salinization of the Mexicali Valle, with what right do they ask us to recognize such a law now in the Gulf of Mexico?"

On nuclear energy: "There is then the area of production of energy from other sources (than oil), fundamentally nuclear.... We now have in Laguna Verde (Mexico's first commercial reactor complex, due to come on line in 1982—ed.) an energy development facility which it fell to me to initiate when I was head of the Federal Electricity Commission.... The important thing about Laguna Verde is that there is professional employment for a new type of technician which the country requires...."

On the U.S. presidency: "The problem is that the President of the U.S. is a world figure. Any pre-electoral process is important to the whole world and, unfortunately, (in) U.S. pre-electoral politics ... the President is already playing electioneering tunes. And the result of this is ... a tremendous distance between the functioning of a President of the U.S., which is universal, and the selection processes, which are parochial.... Thus, since the selection system is not appropriate to his function, everything gets distorted along the way. When I have to meet not with the President of the United States, but rather with a precandidate of a political party, that's extremely serious."

On the possibility of a U.S. oil-grabbing invasion: "For that to occur, there would have to be a total rupture of the international order. This precondition would be the great drama of humanity."

Monetary Fund. Bilateral U.S. aid will focus not on capital-intensive development, but on meeting "pressing daily needs of people in poorer countries."

Vance then put forward his strategy to prevent another Nicaragua, where U.S. attempts to maintain the client Somoza regime, a paradigm of U.S. "imperial" policy, and to impose a "moderate solution" by military force were defeated. Vance railed against the alleged attempts by Cuba to "exploit internal tensions," and said that the United States will not permit any "outside interference" in its own backyard.

The "new direction" in U.S. policy is a return to gunboat diplomacy and the "Big Stick," using, as in the early 1960s, the pretext of a "communist threat" to militarily impose IMF austerity on the continent. Under the rubric of securing the U.S. against the possible "threat" of Cuban-Soviet invasion, Washington has formed a military "permanent, full-time Caribbean Joint Task Force" stationed in Florida's Key West, and is staging armed maneuvers in and around the U.S. military enclave at Guantanamo Bay,

Cuba. President Carter, announcing the creation of the Task Force in his Oct. 1 national television address, said its purpose is to "respond rapidly to any attempted military encroachment" in the Caribbean region.

Simultaneously, Washington is "sounding out" Latin American governments on the creation of a permanent "interamerican peacekeeping force," to intervene anywhere in Latin America where there is a perceived threat of "outside interference." Washington has been advocating a military standing army—modeled on the strikeforce used to squash the 1965 Dominican Republic popular uprising against the repressive Trujillo regime—since June. Cyrus Vance then proposed a joint Latin American military intervention in Nicaragua to prop up the crumbling Somoza regime. The proposal was shot down by Latin America, which viewed it as a threat to national sovereignty. The U.S. may formally propose an intervention force at the upcoming assembly of the Organization of American States in Bolivia later this month.