

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

Will Congress sabotage war on drugs?

Senators and congressmen have launched new attacks on the de la Madrid government, just as anti-drug cooperation is finalized.

Dennis DeConcini, Democratic senator from Arizona, and Paula Hawkins, Republican senator from Florida, told the ABC program "This Week with David Brinkley," that the United States should give new credit to Mexico or vote in favor of new international loans *only* on condition that Mexico agrees to launch a "real" war on drugs.

Hawkins noted that she had presented a bill to the U.S. Senate, urging the withdrawal of Mexico's "most-favored nation" status in the textile trade, unless the de la Madrid government granted the United States the right for "hot pursuit" of drug traffickers across their common border. Mexico is firmly opposed to this on the grounds that this would violate its national sovereignty.

Senator Pete Wilson (R) of California proposed that the U.S.-Mexico border be sealed for three years, as a means of pressuring for debt renegotiations as well as a halt in the flow of illegal immigrants. He admitted that such a measure could prove very costly for Mexico, but "it would be more costly still to allow millions and millions of illegals to enter each year."

We think it most interesting that these U.S. congressmen pursue such a destabilization campaign against Mexico, at the very time that the Reagan and de la Madrid governments have signed the sweeping new anti-drug "Operation Alliance".

One must first of all remember that DeConcini, apparently vying with Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) for the title of chief "Mexico-basher," is known

for the experience he acquired in aiding the overthrow of the Marcos regime in the Philippines, experience he apparently intends to apply elsewhere. DeConcini met with President de la Madrid during the Mexican chief of state's recent visit to Washington, and demanded that he annul the recent state elections in Chihuahua. In that context, he warned de la Madrid of what had happened to Marcos for failing to "democratize" his country.

Because the State Department failed to force the Mexican government to hand over the governorship of Chihuahua state to the drug-running Nazi PAN party, it is now trying to use charges of "corruption" to force major concessions on the economic front, concessions which would simultaneously strengthen the hand of the PAN forces while undoing the anti-drug offensive that the Mexican government and army have launched.

A primary concern of these U.S. congressmen is the fact that Mexican Attorney-General Sergio García Ramírez has declared the entire northern border between Mexico and the United States an "emergency zone," and has launched an offensive against both drug trafficking and drug abuse in the region. The idea is, in essence, to retake control of the states from a drug-trafficking elite, control which happens to precisely overlap the strongholds of the PAN in those border states.

Another concern of the congressmen is the fact that despite all the destabilization campaigns run against Mexico, the Mexican attorney-general still offered public praise for the

United States's newly escalated anti-drug effort. Referring to this fight, the Mexican official declared, "The modern drug trade is a crime against humanity, a crime which transcends borders, whose protagonists are powerfully equipped with financial resources and who seek to erode—and are effectively succeeding in eroding—the political, social, and economic institutions, the entirety of society. Brother nations and friends are today the arenas of a fierce war between governments and criminals." García Ramírez noted that the U.S.-Mexico border required special attention in this regard.

It is not only essential to view the northern border region as an emergency zone from the point of view of drug trafficking, but also to shut down the vast network of drug money laundering that infests the region. Many of these operations are directly supported by the PAN, or by government officials and employees who are nonetheless ideologically aligned with the PAN, that is, working to undermine national institutions.

The Mexican government is also trying to outflank the PAN in the upcoming elections in Sinaloa state, one of the states where the drug mafia is most entrenched. In fact, the situation in Sinaloa has reached such a point that the official PRI candidate, presidential loyalist Labastida Ochoa (formerly mines and energy minister) was viciously attacked for his statements in favor of an all-out war against drugs; his car was bullet-riddled as a warning by the mob.

It is no accident that the PAN candidate for governor of Sinaloa is the wealthy Manuel J. Clouthier, whose business ties to Mexican drug trafficker Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo and to Honduran cocaine king Ramón Mata Ballesteros have just been highlighted in the Mexican press.