

## Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

### Who stands behind Bartlett?

*Is the front-running presidential contender a mere front-man for the dope mob?*

Considered the "leading candidate" for the Mexican presidency in 1987, Interior Minister Manuel Bartlett is surrounded by an important and powerful economic and political grouping which seeks power for the purpose of imposing what some here ironically describe as a "Stalinist or Mussolini-style democracy."

Authoritarianism is the facade which Bartlett has built in his capacity as the person in charge of internal political and security matters. Behind that facade is the "Alemanista" political grouping, associates of the late former President and mafioso Miguel Alemán, and now headed by his son, Manuel Alemán Velasco, the newly appointed president of Televisa. Televisa, in turn, is Ibero-America's largest television and radio network, founded during the 1930s by the U.S. drug-mafia-linked National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).

Bartlett represents powerful interests in Mexico. But he was not the one intended for the presidency. Bartlett is a political by-product of Mario Moya Palencia, the current Mexican ambassador to the United Nations, and interior minister from 1970-76.

Under the government of Luis Echeverría, Moya Palencia was an "almost certain" candidate for the presidency, but then he was destroyed by a constellation of nationalist forces.

By 1976, Moya was finished, but Bartlett revived him through his appointment as ambassador to the U.N., after collaborating with U.S. Secre-

tary of State George Shultz to force the resignation from that post of Porfirio Muñoz Ledo. Muñoz Ledo was labor minister under the Echeverría government, and as such had been part of the nationalist effort to prevent Moya Palencia's nomination to the presidency.

On July 2 of this year, Bartlett took a political risk which has cost him dearly. He invited Moya Palencia to be the guest speaker at the inauguration of a government-sponsored forum on the electoral reform of the Mexico City government. Moya's appearance at the express invitation of Bartlett caused such a furor in political circles that CTM labor chief Fidel Velázquez attacked the forum as an exercise in demagoguery that diverted energies from addressing the real economic problems facing the country.

More recently, Moya and Bartlett have suffered an even worse scandal. In mid-August, circles linked to Bartlett launched a wave of rumors predicting that Foreign Minister Bernardo Sepúlveda would soon be resigning to distance himself from "possible disagreements" between Presidents de la Madrid and Ronald Reagan, on the eve of the Mexican head-of-state's visit to Washington in August. The rumor also suggested that Moya Palencia would be named the new minister. According to some sources, the rumor was virtually a fact.

However, at the same time, several Mexican newspapers began to report on the publication of James Mills'

book, *The Underground Empire*. The part of the book the newspapers chose to play up reported on the charge by several Drug Enforcement Administration agents in 1975 that the extremely powerful drug trafficker, Alberto Sicilias Falcón, enjoyed the protection of none other than Mario Moya Palencia, then interior minister.

The DEA agents claimed that Falcón gave weapons to Mexican guerrilla groups in exchange for drugs. In particular, they referred to the case of the guerrilla Genaro Vázquez Rojas, who operated in the state of Guerrero, where most of the heroin and marijuana in Mexico was produced.

One of the newspapers suggested that Mario Moya Palencia was knowledgeable of that situation. Manuel Bartlett operated at the time as an interior ministry employee in Moya Palencia's confidence. According to certain sources, this information killed Moya's aspirations to become foreign minister—and perhaps those of Bartlett for the presidency.

Bartlett's links to drugs have surfaced before. In the aftermath of last year's scandal over the assassination of DEA agent Enrique Camarena on orders of the mafia godfathers, it was learned that the director of the Federal Security Department (DFS), Antonio Zorrilla Pérez, had received enormous quantities of money in exchange for his protection of the drug traffickers who murdered Camarena. Despite all the evidence, Bartlett's ministry published a report which only blamed Zorrilla for "administrative negligence," as a result of which, the DFS head was neither accused nor arrested.

But Zorrilla, before quietly resigning and slipping out of the country, told several persons that part of the protection money he received went "higher up," to a "buddy."