

downs, creating parallel black markets, overburdening administrative systems, creating double sovereignties or parallel governments, etc.

The following are excerpts from the column "Pulso Político" in El Universal of April 18, 1988, written by Francisco Cárdenas Cruz.

The United States initiated what it hopes will be the "Panamanization" of our country, even going so far as to declare the upcoming federal elections "illegitimate," in an open and brazen intervention that harms our sovereignty, and which neither the government nor we Mexicans should permit. . . . What has happened in recent days in the American capital [the Senate vote to de-certify Mexico—ed.], seems to be a repetition of events which nowadays are keeping Panama submerged in serious conflict. . . .

Once Panama was accused of not acting with decision and energy in the fight against the drug trade, and given the immediate Panamanian rejection of such imputations, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, chief of the Defense Forces, was pointed to as an "accomplice" of drug traffickers' activities and an offensive from Washington was mounted to overthrow him. . . . Today, the "Panamanization" of Mexico, conceived, planned, and encouraged from Washington, has been launched in terms similar to those of the brother country of Central America: "To certify" that Mexico is not collaborating in the fight against drugs and to accuse members of the government of President de la Madrid of being complicit or involved with the international drug mafia. . . .

What follows is easy to predict: interference in next July's electoral process, taking up the protests and complaints of the opposition party on the illegality of the elections . . . and proclaiming that the next President of the Republic was not legitimately elected, for which reason his arrival at the post should not take place. Between that and immediate U.S. intervention in our country, there would not be much distance.

The "Panamization" of Mexico that Washington has under way, like that of the "Philippinization" to which a presidential candidate like the PAN's Manuel J. Clouthier appeals, should keep us alert and demanding that the government act with energy, decision, and urgency to prevent our territory from being turned into an internal battlefield, sponsored from without and prompted from within by Mexicans who, like Clouthier, are inciting the lighting of a fuse that neither he nor anyone else can afterwards extinguish. . . .

U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of Mexico is simply inadmissible. . . . The anti-drug fight is, now, the anticipated pretext that Washington has found to try to turn itself into the great judge of the July electoral process and, with the complicity of a handful, to "certify" illegality to back up its intervention in our country. . . . We Mexicans must all be well aware of this and very attentive to that which will occur between now and then.

Italy under Ciriaco Will it bow to 'New

by Leonardo Servadio

Italy's new government, under Christian Democrat Ciriaco De Mita, faces a war for survival on the strategic and economic fronts, against an effort to force Italy into the Soviet sphere of influence in a "New Yalta" superpower deal. The assassination of top De Mita adviser Roberto Ruffilli on April 16 was an ugly warning to the new premier, should he balk at granting the Italian Communist Party all it demands in the expected accord.

On one front, the De Mita government has already hoisted the white flag: The first act of the government was to block work on the Montalto di Castro nuclear plant. This decision means 1) increasing dependency on foreign sources for energy, at precisely the time that the Soviets are taking control of the Middle East oil route; and 2) bringing the country to the brink of internal economic disaster, making it all the easier to turn Italian institutions into a transmission belt for "crisis management," on the path to fascism.

Let us look at the two "fronts" of the war being waged on Italy, strategic and economic.

Irregular warfare

On April 14, forty-eight hours after the new government was installed, a car-bomb went off in Naples in front of the United Services Organization (USO). The explosion killed four Italian citizens and one U.S. soldier. The act was quickly attributed to Okudaira Junzo, a Japanese Red Army mercenary working for Islamic Jihad. Junzo was already wanted in connection with an attack on the U.S. embassy in Rome in 1987.

In a communiqué given to the Italian press agency ANSA in Beirut, Islamic Jihad said, "We warn Italy and its government not to continue supporting imperialism. We are determined to strike all the allies and collaborators of the imperialist countries." The press in Italy stressed that this is a specifically anti-U.S. attack and lists similar strikes which occurred between 1984 and 1987 in West Germany, Greece, and Spain against American targets. *La Stampa* of Turin on April 15 included the April 7, 1986 bombing of the offices of the Parti Ouvrier Européen (European Labor Party) in Paris. That bombing, carried out by a group linked to Direct Action,

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probably on Moscow's orders, hit the only French political party to publicly oppose the "New Yalta" policy.

To get behind the Naples bombing, one need only look at the threats against Italy issued by the Soviet news service Novosti, as soon as it became clear that Italy would accept the 72 American F-16s kicked out of Spain by Prime Minister Felipe González.

Is 'protection' needed?

The Naples attack is not an isolated case: For some months, Italy has been experiencing widespread guerrilla warfare aimed at paralyzing its economic infrastructure.

- In early April, several high-tension power line poles were found partially sawed through in the Trentino region, near the border with West Germany and Austria. Had they fallen, they could have caused a regional blackout.

- On April 11, an express train between Venice and Paris carrying 300 passengers derailed on the bridge over the Toce river near Domodossola, because several reinforced concrete blocks had been placed on the tracks. Had the train fallen off the bridge, it would have been a massacre; had the train not been slightly behind schedule, it would have collided, as it derailed, with another train traveling in the opposite direction which it normally passes on that very bridge.

- On the night of April 12-13, three car bombs were detonated against an ENEL power plant and two electrical supply companies. They were accused in a leaflet of holding an interest in nuclear plant construction. Operations of this type, technically relatively easy to execute, have been carried out on a large scale over the past three years by the Soviet-funded "Green" circles in West Germany, for the dual purpose of "initiating" experts in terrorist actions and sabotage.

Italy is not threatened by Japanese crazies, but by the Soviet Union. This is real irregular warfare, whose objective is to paralyze the country's economy, until Italy surrenders, breaks its alliance with the United States, and accepts "protection" from Moscow.

On the financial front, the situation is the same. The De Mita government was born under the blackmail of a usurious financial policy which will lead Italy to disaster. The "line"

which the Bank of Italy wants to impose on the new government is clear: Make drastic cuts in spending to destroy the real economy, in the name of "a balanced budget."

The Bank of Italy's recipe

The Bank of Italy's views were expressed in an article published by *Corriere della Sera* on April 5. It noted that after 1982, the government would have been in the black were it not for interest payments on past and current debt obligations, and that "financial burdens" now represent about 70% of the annual expenditure needs of the state, a figure equal to 8% of the Gross National Product. In other words, because of the high interest rate policy imposed in 1979 on the United States and the world by then Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker, Italy's public debt has grown not because of spending on needed public services and infrastructure, but because public bond issues were directed to meeting payments of interest on previous bond issues. Italy entered into a spiral, in which the payments on previously contracted debts imposed an increase in the debt itself, with no investment in services or infrastructure.

The prescription from the Bank of Italy is that the way to put an end to the vicious cycle of indebtedness is to reduce spending—but not, of course, debt payments. The taxes paid by Italians are now to go *exclusively* for debt payments. Of course, 70% of government expenditures already goes to pay interest on debt, leaving very little that can be cut from public services. Yet, the Bank of Italy proposes that these few remaining services be cut.

Such operations, the bank has not failed to observe, can only be carried out by strong governments which proceed expeditiously, given the popular resistance that can be expected. Nor should it be forgotten that in case the deficit needs to be cut by devaluing government securities, a strong government is a necessity, since this would occur at the expense of small savers. The big financial oligopolies are already in process of buying up the economically functional and productive parts of the state apparatus.

Hence, the Bank of Italy's demand is that widely discussed institutional reform go in the direction of stronger governments, beginning with the abolition of the secret ballot in parliament, which would permit the elimination of a good part of the opposition to the demanded austerity policies. That proposal is now being loudly voiced by the same ex-Premier Bettino Craxi who is demanding a ban on nuclear plant construction in Italy.

Has the De Mita government accepted this line from the Bank of Italy? Many things point in that direction—for example, the naming of "technician" Maccanico to the ministry which is supposed to initiate the institutional reforms. As the heir of Enrico Cuccia at the public investment bank Mediobanca, he presided over the privatization of Montedison and Mediobanca itself. He is the perfect man to oversee an "institutional reform" whose sole purpose is to service a fascist austerity policy, whose sole purpose is to service debt.