

## Dateline Mexico by Carlos Cota Meza

### Kissinger in Mexico

*Is Henry the K offering to clean up the Salinas government's image in time for the 1994 elections?*

In a terse communiqué issued Feb. 9 by the Interior Ministry, it was revealed that Henry Kissinger had just met with the head of that ministry, Patrocinio González Garrido. What immediately drew one's attention was the fact that Kissinger had advanced his traditional visit to Acapulco where, for more than a decade, he has revelled in the pagan celebrations of Carnival preceding Lent.

In statements to the television news show *24 Horas*, Kissinger declared from Acapulco that his visit was as traditional as all the preceding years' visits, and that he was spending his time in writing and research. Researching whom? was the question asked by political cartoonists and newspaper columnists. There is, in fact, little doubt that what Kissinger is investigating is the 1994 Mexican presidential succession.

Despite the brevity of the government communiqué, Minister González Garrido ended up revealing the agenda he had discussed with Henry Kissinger, in an extensive interview with the official daily *El Nacional*, published Feb. 11. Asked if he could guarantee clean elections in 1994, González Garrido answered: "No, what the Interior Ministry can guarantee is that we will, as government, make every effort to make our part in the process transparent, clean, impartial. . . ." The impossibility of truly clean elections is attributed by González Garrido to "the behavior of political parties and of the citizenry, [which] we cannot guarantee."

In other words, the government

will not allow any questioning of "electoral purity," as occurred in 1988 when Carlos Salinas de Gortari stole the presidency with a minority of votes and faced furious challenges from the other political parties, which claimed a victory for National Democratic Front candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

The conflict was "resolved" by George Bush and his "Spirit of Houston" meeting with Salinas de Gortari, which granted Salinas virtual recognition as Mexico's President-elect. Ever since then, it has been an established fact that Mexico's electoral results would be certified in Washington.

The other matter presumably discussed with Kissinger was what the minister called "speculation" over relations between the state and the ruling PRI party. González Garrido claimed in his interview with *El Nacional* that "this is what we hope to be able to clean up, to clarify, because we are very worried—as we have said—that people are convinced that the PRI is at an [electoral] advantage in relation to the other parties. . . ."

Clean up? Clarify? To whom? At least twice in the space of a month, the U.S.-based Inter-American Dialogue, which has substantial influence over the new Clinton administration, has insisted that the Mexican government must do away with electoral fraud and show full respect for human rights. It is naturally presumed that this will be the line of the Clinton government toward Mexico, to be used to pressure Mexico into continuing to make all the economic and political

concessions that Wall Street considers convenient. Did Kissinger perhaps offer to "help" clean up the Mexican government's image in the eyes of the White House?

The third matter of importance which González Garrido touched upon in his *El Nacional* interview is the concern that "some parties are receiving financing from drug money laundering at the regional and local levels. . . . To avoid these problems, what we must do is make the financing of the parties transparent."

To the average Mexican, González Garrido's statements are incredibly cynical, since it is a known fact that it is the PRI administration, at the national and local levels, which coexists in a vast network of mutual complicity with drug traffickers. One of the more glaring examples is the 1985 case of the El Bufalo ranch and of the assassination of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique Camarena, whose investigations had touched upon PRI banker Arcadio Valenzuela and former Interior Ministry Manuel Bartlett.

More recently, we have the case of Sostenes Valenzuela Miller, the former mayor of Ciudad Obregón, Sonora and a former state prosecutor, who is today a fugitive from Mexican justice living in Tucson, Arizona. There are also the cases of the recent governments of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, and Tamaulipas, among others.

It is from such sources as these that the illegal financing of opposition parties comes. Clearly, Interior Minister González Garrido is not planning to conduct an investigation of his own party and government. Quite the contrary. The Mexican government, through González, is announcing that it will use the accusation of "drug trafficker" and "money launderer" against any enemy, real or potential, who crosses its path.