

Will Mexico disintegrate in next year's presidential elections?

by Hugo López Ochoa and Gretchen Small

It surprised no one that Luis Donaldo Colosio used his acceptance speech Nov. 30 as the presidential candidate of the ruling PRI party to announce that, if elected, his mission will be to continue, now in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the International Monetary Fund economic policy imposed since 1983 by Presidents Miguel de la Madrid and Carlos Salinas de Gortari. "There will be no deviations, let that be clear," he said. "Financial discipline has arrived to never leave again."

From his post as president of the PRI in the first years of the Salinas government, and then as secretary of ecology and social development, Colosio, baptized by the PRI as the candidate of "Unity and Hope," was always the standard-bearer of "social liberalism," the slogan with which the so-called "generation of change" has tried to disguise the cruel effects of the savage finance capitalism imposed upon Mexico as a condition for signing NAFTA.

Slave master for genocide

Colosio consolidated his aura of power within the Mexican system when, as PRI president in 1991, he set up the Program for National Solidarity (Pronasol) of supposed social aid which has now become the hallmark of the Salinas regime. Because of that program, Colosio was credited with being the architect of the PRI's triumph in the 1991 mid-term elections, which momentarily rescued an image of legitimacy for the Salinas regime which it had not enjoyed since the PRI's electoral debacle in the 1988 presidential elections. That election convinced many that the party had won only by fraud. The tales of the supposed success of the Solidarity program have reached such heights that the Anglo-American oligarchy now champions it as a model of how to keep International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies intact for all Ibero-America.

The PRI machine is presenting the 43-year-old Colosio as a sensitive man concerned about poverty; a social fighter since his youth when he participated as a leader of the student movement which shook his native state of Sonora in 1967; and, of course, a man influenced by the 1968 student movement—"the generation of change." Indeed, in his acceptance speech, Colosio promised to resolve the unemployment and wage problems, and support small and medium-size industry.

But a statement by Bank of Mexico director Miguel Mancera on the very day Colosio was "unveiled" as the PRI's candidate, provides a more accurate translation of what Colosio means by "creating jobs": The time has come to promote, "preferentially, projects which are labor-intensive, and not capital-intensive," Mancera said, arguing that the lack of capital or domestic savings left no other choice.

Back in March 1993, the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement of Mexico issued a statement entitled "Down with the Mexican System of Genocide! Neither Economic Liberalism nor the Farce of Pronasol!" which denounced Colosio's Solidarity program as the equivalent of the slave labor armies created under Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's Economics Minister. It can well be said that Pronasol implements the education which Colosio received at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and Austria's International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, two of the world's top planning centers for the malthusian Club of Rome.

Succession not guaranteed

In previous years, it has been safe to assume that whoever the President of Mexico "unveils" as the PRI's candidate will, with surety, become the next President, the months of election campaigning and voting serving only to rubber-stamp the President's choice. For the first time in decades, however, this can no longer be assumed. There is no guarantee that the PRI's candidate, Colosio, will indeed become Mexico's next President in 1994.

Two processes have overturned the field upon which Mexico's presidential elections have long been based.

Across the globe, political parties and institutions are shattering under the weight of usurious financial policies which violate the laws of physical economy, and Mexico is no exception, wishful delusions about Pronasol's power to contain the crisis notwithstanding. Even the farm vote, a traditional bastion of support for the PRI due to the enormous control which the party exercises over the poor communities and collectivized agriculture, already threatens to vanish by next year. Throughout 1993, and increasingly since August, mobilizations by farmers and peasants have been multiplying against farm foreclosures and the government's austerity policies which have driven the Mexican farm sector into bankruptcy.

Piggy-backed upon that political upheaval, however, is the strategy of some in Washington and their Wall Street mentors, to direct the effects of that crisis to obliterate Mexico's national institutions, now that they have shredded its national economy with the imposition of NAFTA. At the center of this operation are the radical "democrats" of the Inter-American Dialogue, a bankers' policy group which today tightly controls the Clinton administration's Ibero-American policy. Deploying Castro's São Paulo Forum parties as their instrument, the Dialogue has set out to unleash the dogs of war and terrorism against national institutions across the continent. Here, too, Mexico is no exception, despite the illusions of many that no one in Washington could be so insane as to push the United States' closest neighbor into civil war.

The crisis has just begun

For 24 hours after the nomination of Colosio, the Mexican political class was thrown into panic when it was not known what Manuel Camacho Solís, the powerful mayor of the Federal District, would do. Camacho had been the principal rival of Colosio for the PRI's nomination, and upon losing it, rumors flew that Camacho would accept nomination as the presidential candidate of the rival Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), replacing its current candidate, Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas.

Cárdenas is one of the stars of the São Paulo Forum, and thus the PRD has become the leading instrument of the Inter-American Dialogue in its war against Mexico. Camacho's favors to Cárdenas and the PRD machine became notorious while he served as mayor, and he has many personal friends in the party. At the last minute, Camacho fell back into line and accepted the post of foreign minister in Salinas's government—the mere refusal to accept a new post would have provoked a crisis—but a split in the PRI remains a possibility on various fronts.

Then, 24 hours after resolving the Camacho affair, another crisis exploded under the PRI in the state of Yucatán, when the provisional governor, Dulce María Sauri Riancho, resigned in the wake of the wild electoral fraud perpetrated by the PRI against the rival National Action Party (PAN) in the Nov. 30 state elections.

The response to Colosio's nomination from Wall Street and Washington provided another warning that these elections will not follow the rules of the past. The *New York Times* greeted the news with an editorial Dec. 1 declaring Mexican democracy to be "a cynical joke." Salinas has made "only marginal changes in a political system built on blatant patronage, physical intimidation and pervasive electoral fraud. . . . But Mexicans and their neighbors are not inclined to wait much longer," they threatened.

Two days later, the State Department hosted a meeting of government agencies and 12 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to discuss how to reconstruct "Mexican democ-

ocracy" through the upcoming elections. Invitees included representatives of the State Department's Agency for International Development (AID), the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the Carter Center of Atlanta, the left-wing Washington Office on Latin America, the Foundation for Democracy, and the National Endowment for Democracy's two branches—the National Democratic Institute and the National Republican Institute—among others.

Robert Pastor, chief of Latin American affairs at the Carter Center and a participant in the State Department meeting, hailed it as a sign that for "the first time in a long time . . . Washington, in this case the Clinton administration, has begun to address the issue" of Mexican democracy.

As an AID official explained to a journalist from Mexico's *El Financiero*, one item on the agenda was how to help Mexican "civic organizations" monitor the elections, oversee election booths as supposedly "non-partisan" observers, and set up "independent" systems of parallel vote counting. The model for such an operation is the State Department-run operation against Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in February 1986, where it was a fraudulent "non-partisan" vote-counting organization—run by foreigners—that was central to overturning the election and installing Corazon Aquino.

U.S. monies have already begun to flow to set up this operation. One of the primary beneficiaries of National Endowment for Democracy financing today is a "civic organization" set up by the Cárdenas campaign.

Gore follows Dialogue script

One year ago, the Inter-American Dialogue announced that with NAFTA would come a war against Mexico's institutions. The Dialogue report, *Convergence and Community: The Americas in 1993*, declared: "For NAFTA to succeed . . . Mexico must open its politics, end electoral fraud, and fully respect human rights." At a press conference releasing the report, Dialogue president Richard Feinberg emphasized that there is "a strong political component" to NAFTA, singling out Mexico as a target for political "reform." Today Feinberg heads Latin American affairs for the National Security Council.

This was also the message given by Vice President Al Gore in his visit to Mexico Dec. 1, immediately following the nomination of Colosio. Gore lectured 5,000 business leaders gathered at Mexico's National Auditorium that what must follow NAFTA is the spread of "democratic political culture" across the continent. To be sure the message was heard, Gore used the word "democracy" 12 times during his simple half-hour speech! Gore then announced that the United States will soon invite the heads of state of those countries deemed democratic by the United States, to participate in a western hemisphere summit—something the Dialogue has been championing for sometime—in order to "codify" the principles of democracy and free trade.