

Cárdenas and Zapatistas say war will continue in Mexico

by Carlos Méndez

On Nov. 7, while the Mexican Congress was meeting to formally ratify Ernesto Zedillo as the new President-elect of Mexico, defeated presidential candidate of the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was outside the congressional building addressing a rally of supporters and demanding that the Aug. 21 elections be annulled and an "interim President" be named. Not accidentally, these are the same demands as the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in Chiapas.

Zedillo, representing the ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), was elected with 51% of the vote against 17% for Cárdenas.

Cárdenas also announced protest demonstrations and marches for Dec. 1, President Zedillo's inauguration day, and for Dec. 8, which is the day that the PRI's governor-elect in Chiapas, Eduardo Robledo, takes office. Cárdenas and the Zapatistas are also demanding that an interim governor be named in Robledo's place. In fact, Cárdenas said of the EZLN in Chiapas: "Its presence establishes, in fact, the existence of two powers in Mexico, as unlike each other as can be."

In Chiapas, the PRD's defeated gubernatorial candidate Amado Avendaño has announced that on Dec. 8, "civil society" will "carry out democracy by its own hand." He called for seizing the governor's palace, installing a "transition government" with himself at the helm, and "convoking a constituent assembly to prepare a new Chiapas constitution." This is apparently Avendaño's concept of "democracy": imposing by force the demands lost at the ballot box.

The whole world is now waiting to see what Zedillo will do. That is why the Zapatistas are going for war now, trying to set the country on fire before his inauguration.

The Zapatista insurgency is on a model promoted by

the Windors, the royal family of Britain, which combines separatism with civil war and genocide, as *EIR* recently charged in Mexico City. According to the Nov. 4 evening edition of *Excelsior*, *EIR* correspondent in Mexico Carlos Cota Meza told a press conference that "the World Wildlife Fund [now the World Wide Fund for Nature, headed by Prince Philip] is responsible for the training of the EZLN. . . . Cota Meza added that EZLN guerrillas received training in the Lagunas de Montebello, an ecological zone protected by the aforementioned association, such that while they may not have collaborated in its military exercises, they did know what those persons were doing and did not denounce them, which automatically makes them accomplices."

The drums of a separatist war

The Zapatistas have repeatedly insisted that if the government imposes Robledo as governor of Chiapas, war will break out. And Avendaño, in his recent tour of Europe, said in Madrid that if Robledo is imposed, "it could be too late to prevent a new war."

Upon returning from his tour, Avendaño confessed openly that one of the Zapatistas' objectives is to separate oil-rich Chiapas from Mexico. Addressing the second meeting of the Zapatistas' National Democratic Convention (CND) in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas in early November, Avendaño said that while in Spain he had been given documents which explain the means pursued by several communities of that country to consummate their "autonomy."

Avendaño was in the Basque region of Spain which spawned the terrorist ETA, and while there he met with Cárdenas, who just happened to be in Spain at the same time. In an interview in *Siempre* magazine on Nov. 3, PRI congressman from Chiapas Cuauhtémoc López Sánchez de-

clared that the most interesting thing about Avendaño's tour was that "while in Spain, he met with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in Euzkadi, ETA's region. What did he go for? What was he seeking? To revive separatist sentiments of the Chiapan people? Such a possibility is unreal, but no less worrisome."

In his speech to the CND, Avendaño stated that "the autonomy of the peoples within a single nation can be done; it has already been done in other countries, and it can also be done here." He said he would hand the separatist documents from Spain to PRD congressman Antonio Hernández Cruz, also a leader of the pro-Zapatista Independent Union of Agricultural Workers and Peasants, and to other leaders of the State Council of Indian and Peasant Organizations. Both organizations are part of a cluster of Zapatista fronts which have been "liberating territory" in Chiapas by force.

Congressman Hernández told the daily *La Jornada* on Nov. 2 that "the Indians have the right to all the resources that exist in their territory: soil, subsoil, rivers, flora, etc." Asked what he thought about the oil which was defined as national patrimony by the present Mexican Constitution, Hernández answered: "Yes, but who is the nation now?"

Earlier, on Oct. 21, Margarito Ruiz, coordinator of the Indian Peoples Front, declared that the autonomy of the Indian peoples "means territory, resources, and administration of those resources without detaching from the state." Together with the Independent Union of Agricultural Workers and Peasants and the State Council of Indian and Peasant Organizations, the Front has been "liberating" territory in recent weeks, especially in the northern border areas of Chiapas. As part of their declaration of "autonomy," they have been shutting down the schools and threatening to shut down the health clinics, water supply, and electricity.

In a televised interview on Nov. 7, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari said that "autonomy is not the proposal of the immense majority of the [indigenous] communities. In the first place, they view themselves as Mexicans. . . . Further, to propose autonomy, especially in that zone of Chiapas bordering another nation, carries the risk of a secession of territory, and we Mexicans will never accept that—not even the immense majority of Indians who coexist in that region."

The British hand

What is happening in Chiapas is very similar to what the British proposed several decades ago for the takeover of Peru, where the Shining Path narco-terrorists have enslaved and assassinated thousands of Ashaninka Indians who were considered "in the way" by the royal family's International Union for the Conservation of Nature. According to the 1978 book *The National Parks of Peru* by then IUCN director Mark Dourojeanni, there had been plans to create a 235,900-hectare National Park in Cutivireni (inside the current Apurimac Reserve, where Shining Path ran its Ashaninka concentration camps), but that project had been put on hold because the area had been severely degraded "by the presence of a large

population of Campa [Ashaninka] Indians, who cultivate, hunt and fish under the excessive influence of settlers and of religious organizations." The park was later "cleansed" of natives and religious organizations—by Shining Path.

In the same way, the Zapatistas, Cárdenas, and their fronts intend to eliminate all those who stand in the way of their indigenist separatist plans, whether it be the institutions of Chiapas, the agricultural producers, or the substantial Indian population.

Although President Salinas insists that the cease-fire with the Zapatistas holds, and that violence has ended, the fact is that the only side observing the truce is the government and the Mexican Army. The Zapatistas have continued to invade public and private properties, using violence against the population and against the economy in the style of Peru's Shining Path.

As the Coalition of Citizen Organizations of Chiapas charged at a Nov. 8 press conference in Mexico City, "even where there is a military truce . . . there is actual warfare against the Chiapas population by belligerent groups under the umbrella of the Zapatistas, who continue their tactics of destabilization [through] . . . assassinations, kidnappings, [land] invasions, robberies, [and] arbitrary toll-collection on roadways."

The coalition, which speaks for more than 180 organizations representing the majority of Chiapas's rural and urban population, also charged that because of the Zapatista insurgency, the planned local private investment of some \$66 million has been suspended, trade has fallen 40%, tourism has plummeted, and there are vast losses and unemployment because of the invasion of some 140,000 hectares dedicated to raising livestock and growing banana and coffee (Chiapas produces 50% of Mexico's coffee crop). In addition, there has been "the displacement of some 20,000 families" from the conflict zone.

More assassinations?

Adding to the crisis are the well-grounded fears that still more high-level assassinations could occur, following the murders of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio and PRI Secretary General José Francisco Ruiz Massieu.

Among those who want to destabilize the country is former peace commissioner in Chiapas Manuel Solís Camacho, who has said he will return to politics on Dec. 1, the date his memoirs will be released. Enemies of both Colosio and Zedillo, because they got the PRI presidential nomination he felt should have been his, Camacho is committed to destabilizing Mexico. In a column in the newspaper *El Heraldo de México* on Nov. 1, Leopoldo Mendivil quoted extensively from a June 7, 1994 interview with Camacho in which Camacho denounced Zedillo for refusing to collaborate with him. Mendivil noted that Colosio's widow once said that "if Luis Donaldo had acted [like Zedillo], he would surely be alive today. But my husband was too nice to Manuel."