

Echeverría publicly denounced the Chipinque conspirators—who met in the black of night disguised with hoods—as “fascists.”

The same pattern of induced conflict between the Mexican government and private sector has re-emerged. Top private bankers returning from the Atalaya meeting expressed a “lack of confidence” in the Mexican peso, and called on businessmen to put all their liquid assets into dollars—a hair’s breadth from transferring them out of the country altogether.

The *Washington Post* then contributed to the environment, reporting that over \$4 billion had already fled Mexico in the last half of 1981—with worse developments planned for 1982. And a Mexican business leader interviewed by *EIR* reported bluntly that his federation believed that a frontal assault on the government and its economic policy was needed—and that he expected a sizeable devaluation of the peso in 1982 and a drop of GNP growth rates from 8 to 4 percent.

The Rockefellers’ Council of the Americas held a quiet seminar in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 21 to get out this scare story to American corporate executives. And the Wharton School think tank deployed its Mexico expert, Abel Beltrán del Río, to Monterrey, Mexico to prophesy gloom to a business seminar there.

The irony of this coordinated attack is that the Mexican economy is—in its fundamentals—perhaps the *strongest* economy of any today in the underdeveloped sector. It has had real GNP growth rates of 8 percent for each of the last four years, higher than any other in the Third World; it has invested its oil revenues judiciously in capital formation and purchase of advanced technology; and it has created nearly 1 million new productive jobs per year over the recent period.

These were exactly the arguments adduced by Mexican President José López Portillo to counter the Atalaya conspirators. On Jan. 21 he spoke before a group of Mexican industrialists, and appealed to them to consolidate an alliance for economic growth between the public and private sectors. “There are economic pressures against Mexico,” he told the businessmen, “and we have to defend ourselves because we can in no way stop growing.”

These economic pressures are all converging around the July 1982 presidential elections, which is when the Atalaya conspirators hope to achieve real political instability inside Mexico, possibly by forcing a sizeable devaluation of the peso. “Hurricane winds” have been seeded across the country, recently reported a widely read column in the Mexico City press; the reference was to the moves to shatter the ruling PRI party being carried out by the left and right opposition parties, and by complicit elements within the PRI itself.

If the Atalaya conspirators get their way, it will be a “hot summer” indeed in Mexico this year.

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## BACKGROUND

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# The roots of the Atalaya conspiracy

by Hector Apolar

The origins of the Atalaya meetings go back to the 1960s when Banamex’s head, Agustín Legorreta Chauvet held extensive discussions with Herman Kahn’s Hudson Institute in the United States. Out of that collaboration came Legorreta’s idea that Mexican businessmen have been made to understand that the era of “business is just business” is over. Kahn advised Legorreta to establish a kind of “round table” to address the issue. After consulting with the heads of the most powerful economic groups in Mexico, Legorreta went forward with his idea.

In 1974, Banamex organized an international meeting on “Perspectives of Humanity,” whose stated purpose was to publicize the anti-growth theories of the Club of Rome. The main speakers were: Herman Kahn; Antonio Carillo Flores, former Mexican Foreign and Finance Minister and head of the United Nations-initiated Population Council; Victor L. Urquidi, the only Mexican member of the Club of Rome and head of the liberal think tank, Colegio de México; international Jesuit monetarist Robert Triffin; Raul Prebisch; Walter Rostow; and Jorge Castañeda, Mexico’s current Foreign Minister. The conclusion of the meeting was rather crude: Mexico has to stop its population growth.

In 1979, after a period of reorganization, Legorreta institutionalized his idea in the form of a series of meetings called Atalaya. A committee of the 20 top businessmen of the country was established, and in 1979 they organized an “International Food Conference.”

The main speakers in 1979 were: Julián Rodríguez Adame, former Agriculture Minister of Mexico and International Secretary for Agrarian Development of the Rockefeller Foundation; Mahabub ul Haq, the Pakistani World Bank and Cambridge University “radical”; Manuel J. Clouthier of Mexico’s Businessmen Coordinating Council and others. The conclusion of this meeting was that Mexico lacked the capacity to feed its population.

In 1980, the Atalaya meeting focused on the “Future of Capitalism,” and in 1981 discussion was centered around the need for Friedmanite solutions to Mexico’s various economic problems.