

## Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

### Labor-bashing

*The Díaz Serrano case may have special wrinkles, say U.S. strategists who hope to collapse Mexico's institutions.*

A new push is under way to break the hegemony of Mexico's PRI-allied labor unions and their 83-year old leader, Fidel Velázquez.

The International Monetary Fund and its defenders have long stated that a strong labor movement is incompatible with the levels of austerity that the IMF demands. Some of these IMF defenders acknowledge that knocking out the labor component of the ruling PRI party means the collapse of the party as a whole, and a rapid downward spiral into ungovernability—the real goal of the depopulation strategists who control the Fund.

A case in point are some recent comments by Robert Bond, regional manager of First National Bank of Chicago. Bond is one of the highest-level think tankers on loan to the U.S. banks in the Ditchley Group creditors' cartel, having served previously as a Latin America expert at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C.

Bond stated that the "only way" for the Mexican government to impose IMF austerity "is for Mexico to open up its political system. The entire Mexican system has to be realigned, away from a closed circle of power groups which control the policy of the PRI.

"For example," Bond continued, "to impose austerity, the power of the labor movement over the PRI must be reduced."

The interesting means to this end

Bond put forward was to use the current corruption scandal involving former Pemex boss Jorge Díaz Serrano to tar the oilworkers' union as a whole, the strongest single union in Mexico and one which is at the center of labor's capability of resisting the IMF.

In my column of July 14, I indicated how the Díaz Serrano scandal could move in several directions. The one favored by the IMF forces is against the family and other close associates of former president José López Portillo.

Bond is one of those creditor voices giving the order to "get López Portillo." But he has this specific scenario:

"The [López] Portillo faction has the support of the labor movement, and this could polarize the country. Can de la Madrid take them on? They are very powerful. They still have the Petroleum Workers' Union, for example. *Will the Díaz Serrano prosecution lead to investigation of the Petroleum Workers' Union?* You know that if he stole \$34 million, he didn't do it alone."

If the situation breaks that way, Bond continued with satisfaction, "de la Madrid will lose the government's ability to deal with labor. The petroleum workers will walk into his office and threaten to shut the country down, and they can do it. You get a total breakdown of the de la Madrid government's ability to work with organized labor."

Bond was asked how quickly such a blowup could take place. "It depends

how fast they push Serrano," was the immediate reply. "If they push fast, it could mean mass strikes by as early as July or August. I would say it will take until the beginning of September."

While Bond spread the word in private, "Mexican oil expert" George Grayson spread the word in public. A fanatical Malthusian who teaches at William and Mary University in Virginia, Grayson proposed in 1977 that the United States shut its border with Mexico and initiate a policy of mass deportations, as the stick to force Mexico to abandon any pursuit of high-technology industrialization.

This zeal earned Grayson a place as a regular contributor to the *Washington Post*, as well as a featured lecturer in recent months for David Rockefeller's Council of the Americas.

In the July 24 issue of the *Post*, Grayson charged that "the real test of de la Madrid's anti-corruption drive is whether it takes on the 110,000 member oil workers' union. . . . [This drive] is more than just an interesting political sideshow: it is central to Mexico's future."

In August 1982, when the first "Mexico crisis" was at a peak, a top staffer at the social-democratic Washington think tank known as the Institute for International Economics, called Mexico's labor movement "the single most unsettling problem" in the country. The labor movement's demands "must be crushed," he stated, "no matter what the social cost."

In the middle of July 1983, the same source was, if anything, even more insistent: "In Mexico, things will be bad in a matter of weeks," he declared. "The labor movement there is prepared to snap back against the austerity program. This will blow apart the IMF package and scare the creditors away. The labor movement will have to be put into line."