

Dateline Mexico by Hugo López Ochoa

Will Panama be betrayed?

The former deputy foreign minister denounces the "serious irresponsibility" of not standing by Panama.

In a March 15-16 front-page interview with Mexico's newspaper of record *Excelsior*, former Deputy Foreign Minister Ricardo Valero warned, regarding the Panama crisis, "It appears to me that there has not only been hesitation on the part of the Latin American conscience, but irresolution . . . which could prove extremely dangerous."

He explained. "We are on the verge . . . of sanctioning interventionist actions like those which have occurred in the recent past, both in the Philippines and in Haiti. . . . Regarding the self-determination of Panama, we should not only make general statements of principle—which certainly have their validity—but face up to the concrete situation. It would seem to be an enormous irresponsibility on the part of the Latin American countries not to make a great effort at solidarity with the Panamanian people at this moment."

Valero's statements, addressed to Ibero-America but indirectly aimed at the stinking sewer of treason at the Mexican Foreign Ministry under Bernardo Sepulveda, is also an assault on the generalized policy of surrendering to the oligarchy of the U.S. Eastern Establishment which has characterized the Miguel de la Madrid government from its inception.

This is most clearly seen in the case of Ricardo Valero himself, who issued his public statements on Panama just before his departure for the Soviet Union as Mexico's new ambassador—exiled to Siberia, as it were—after the surfacing of his differences with the Mexican administration on

foreign policy in general, and Central America in particular. Those differences led to his dismissal as deputy foreign minister a few weeks earlier. It was no accident, in fact, that Valero's removal came just a few days before the late-February meeting between Ronald Reagan and his Mexican counterpart, Miguel de la Madrid.

Although the Mexican Chamber of Deputies has come out against any foreign intervention in Panama, a position seconded at the Foreign Ministry through its new Deputy Minister Manuel Arriaga, the fact remains that Mexico has refused to take precisely those "concrete actions" that Valero spoke of. A few days ago, Foreign Minister Sepulveda still refused to tell journalists whether Mexico recognized the government of Panama's new President Manuel Solís Palma.

When Valero was provocatively queried whether he considered the Panama government to be "democratic" or not, he drily responded, "Democracy and self-determination are not necessarily incompatible, but to choose the one requires that it be done through the self-determination of the people."

Valero also denounced the decision of the Group of Eight—Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Uruguay, Mexico, Colombia, and Peru—to separate Panama and its new government from their ranks, a move intended "it would seem, to finish off the Contadora Group," which was founded on the Panamanian island of Contadora, and which gave birth to the Group of Eight. Valero charged that the disintegration of Contadora began

with the so-called Esquipulas Accords, promoted by Costa Rican President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Oscar Arias, which, "without a doubt, tended to neutralize the Contadora Group's action, Latin America's actions."

The statements of Valero have found their counterpoint within the campaign to "close ranks" around Panama, being carried out by the Mexican Labor Party (PLM). Mari-vilia Carrasco, PLM presidential candidate, has been the sole political figure in the country who has proposed "facing the concrete situation" of U.S. aggression against Panama.

"In a matter of hours, Ibero-America could undo the economic blockade against Panama, by granting it emergency credits—Panama has only 2 million inhabitants—which could serve as the first step toward establishing an Ibero-American Monetary Fund," declared Carrasco in an interview she gave *EIR* during a campaign stop in Saltillo in the state of Coahuila.

The Mexican Labor Party's Panama mobilization has received extensive coverage in the Mexico City press as well as media from the interior of the country. Until now, none of the other opposition parties in Mexico—including the so-called leftists—have raised their voices in support of the principle of non-intervention and Ibero-American solidarity with Panama. So much for the charges that Panama's Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega is being backed by Moscow!

The reality of Mexico's betrayal of its founding principles has not been lost on Mexico's own political class. As many diplomats, and even leaders of the ruling PRI party itself, have told *EIR*, "I only hope that President Miguel de la Madrid understands that it is not by kneeling to Washington that aggression against Mexico will be avoided."