

# Kissinger, Abrams threaten Mexico

*The international banking oligarchy wants to impose its presidential candidate—at all costs. By Hugo López Ochoa.*

In an unusual and extensive article written for the Aug. 14 *Los Angeles Times*, former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger called on the United States to “adapt to the new reality in Mexico,” and help bail out the bankrupt PRI government before it’s too late.

The article was reproduced Aug. 18 by the Mexican daily *Excelsior*, and in it Kissinger urges the U.S. government to put aside its “somewhat understandable” resistance to “involvement” in the debt problem. “The issue has gone beyond theory,” warns Kissinger, who insists that if Mexico’s creditors fail to provide the “outside help” that will enable PRI presidential choice Carlos Salinas de Gortari to revive economic growth in Mexico, “this failure can turn out to be a tragedy.”

Thus Dr. Kissinger joins the campaign of the international banking oligarchy in trying to save the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and its candidate Salinas who, by insisting on a fraudulent triumph at the polls, is driving the country into a constitutional crisis without precedent in the history of Mexico since the 1910 Mexican Revolution against the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship. Salinas is being challenged by nationalist Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the candidate of the National Democratic Front (FDN), who has presented incontrovertible evidence of fraud against his candidacy.

On Aug. 18, Cárdenas culminated a dramatic tour of the country “in defense of the vote,” with an address to more than 120,000 students and professors at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). There, Cárdenas charged, “It is possible that [President] De la Madrid hears Kissinger’s voice, but in six years of rule he has not heard the voice of the Mexican people.” The combativeness of Cárdenas’s supporters was unparalleled. Their battle cry of “Hit ‘em hard!” constantly interrupted the FDN candidate as he said, “Unlike the current government, which listens more to the IMF and to Kissinger, the FDN proposes in its program that we stop paying the foreign debt under its present terms, and that a shift be made in economic policy, to recover growth and the living standards of Mexico’s majorities.”

Also on Aug. 18, the daily *Unomásuno* carried the statements of none other than Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs and champion of multiple

destabilization campaigns against Mexico. Said Abrams, “I know that people are saying Mexico is on the verge of collapse, and expect a revolution next week . . . but we, in the U.S. government, do not agree with these perceptions.” Behind his sugary defense of Mexico, however, was the threat: “The next President of Mexico should commit himself to following through the economic program of his predecessor, if he truly wants the country to progress. If this occurs, things will go well for Mexico. . . . We are optimistic and I believe that all this talk of chaos is crazy.”

Both Abrams and Kissinger praised “De la Madrid’s brave efforts,” a reference to the so-called Economic Solidarity Pact which has prolonged the economic shock measures that have plunged Mexico into an unprecedented economic depression. Kissinger did not fail to prescribe for Mexico precisely the same measures which have miserably failed to date: the Morgan Plan, which would have debtors buying up their own devalued debt, exchange of debt for equity in bankrupt companies (euphemistically known as “opening up the market place”), and integrating Mexico into the “U.S.-Canadian free trade zone.”

## Salinas: more of the same

Encouraged by the likes of Kissinger and Abrams, Finance Secretary Gustavo Petricioli (“The Tiger”) stated on Aug. 23 that “Miguel de la Madrid has been very brave” in not adopting “populist, demagogic” measures in “an election year.” Petricioli predicted “an orderly transfer of power, with no fear of surprises,” so that Salinas de Gortari could “face up to the challenge of sustained growth.” That same day, former Finance Secretary Jesús Silva Herzog, a member of the pro-drug-legalization Inter-American Dialogue, also echoed Kissinger: “The next government should not begin its rule with a new political call to society to tighten its belt,” but rather should have as its number-one priority the “recovery of growth.”

Salinas de Gortari has already begun a series of frantic meetings with different sectors of his own party to prevent further desertions to the Cardenista ranks, meetings at which he has promised—according to well-informed sources—that “we will not ask for any more sacrifices,” since “the time for

growth has arrived.”

Silva Herzog himself acknowledged that the only way such growth could take place would be with “a reduction of [debt] payments abroad on the order of 40% to 50%, which would make available some \$5 billion for productive investments.” He lamented, however, that “the behavior of the creditors doesn’t permit this, and therefore the problem persists.”

The fact is that Kissinger and Abrams, and their local mouthpieces, are threatening to unleash a “tragedy” in Mexico if the country proceeds to follow the popular mandate of the July 6 elections: No to the IMF! “A too-sudden change might tear Mexico’s brittle social fabric and create a regional confrontation,” says Kissinger in the cited article.

### Official obsession

While the mighty oracles of Wall Street sound the alarm, the mobilization headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas is expanding daily, despite a stubborn and dangerous obsession by President De la Madrid to impose his successor, and to bog the popular mobilization down in interminable debates in the Electoral College.

The College was convened on Aug. 15, and is responsible for certifying senators and deputies elected July 6; it is also responsible for resolving all electoral challenges to the seating of those deputies and senators, to permit the Sept. 1 seating of the newly elected Congress, which will in turn certify the hotly contested presidential election.

The PRI has taken advantage of the fact that the Federal Election Code has left legal control of the elections in the hands of the government and the PRI, permitting it to “decree” who wins and who loses and thereby assure an eternal PRI majority in both the Federal Electoral Commission and the Electoral Colleges. For days, the Electoral College has been unable to discuss the certification of elected deputies, because the opposition parties have been driven to use of stalling maneuvers to try to contain the PRI’s “steamroller” tactics, including its systematic refusal to permit scrutiny of the results from 25,000 polling stations (nearly half the total polls), which remain sequestered by the secretary of the interior in the basement of the Legislative Palace, under military guard.

At the same time, a chain of provocations and assassinations has been set loose in an apparent effort to convince the opposition to back down from its challenge to the Salinas election. On Aug. 15, while the PRI-dominated media were attacking the opposition deputies in the Electoral College as “Jacobins,” extensive coverage was simultaneously given to the torching of the mayoral offices in Apatzingán, Morelos, “by FDN supporters.” Cárdenas immediately charged that the arson was the work of government “provocateurs” seeking to discredit the FDN, and he released details on how three days prior to the fire, all employees had received their wages and the building’s archives were removed by municipal au-

thorities, in anticipation of “trouble.”

The “trouble” was not accidentally prepared for Aug. 15, because that was the same date the FDN set up a “permanent sit-in” in front of the Congress, and ordered simultaneous demonstrations across the country to give backing to the FDN deputies inside the Electoral College. The PRI had also financed newspaper ads to fan political tensions, explicitly blaming the FDN for “inciting to rebellion.”

The heart of the Cardenista movement in the cities is the children of old supporters of nationalist President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40). It is against these layers that the fury of the De la Madrid regime has been directed. Four university students were found assassinated Aug. 21, their tortured bodies discovered in their own car, which was loaded with FDN literature and fundraising materials.

In the midst of general outrage at the incident, Cárdenas used the occasion of presenting condolences to the parents of the murdered youths to charge that “this is a political act committed by the dark, retrograde, and reactionary forces of the government, for the purpose of intimidating the youth . . . and their parents, so that we will prevent our children from participating in democratic actions.”

### Constitutional crisis

Outrage against the government is such that desertion from PRI ranks has reached the highest levels. On Aug. 19, on the first page of the widely read daily *La Jornada*, Samuel I. del Villar, a former high-level official of the De la Madrid administration, charged that “on taking power, the President abandoned his campaign program, that of ‘Moral Renovation.’” Del Villar was the President’s chief adviser in that program. The priority of the first half of the current government was to arrange an “economic reordering . . . through a power structure protective of injustice and unproductivity.” Del Villar added that the Economic Solidarity Pact was designed to “safeguard the interests of the international banks regarding the debt.”

Del Villar wrote that “publicly available evidence on the result of the elections . . . does not enable one to reasonably conclude who became President.” He warned that the country was heading rapidly into a “constitutional crisis,” against which there remain but three options: 1) Declare Salinas President, but provide unequivocal proof that it was he who won the election; 2) Declare Cárdenas President, who, according to the results of approximately half the polling places which have been reviewed, won the majority; or 3) Annul the elections, and call new ones as the Constitution provides.

“Any other alternative will see the crisis degenerate into constitutional corruption . . . and into predictable chaos and violence.” Del Villar, who voted for Salinas, nonetheless says that “We are obliged to heed the will of the majority,” since otherwise, Salinas would become another Porfirio Díaz, the dictator against whom Mexico’s 1910 Revolution was fought.