

Dateline Mexico by Jacobo Frontoni

Drug legalizers and casinos

The campaign to permit casinos here has been revived, combined with an offensive to legalize drugs.

Prominent Mexican figures, including Ambassador to Beijing Jorge Eduardo Navarrete and certain leading newspaper publishers, have joined the international campaign to legalize drugs. This campaign is now being combined with another, long-standing drive to promote the legalization of casinos in Mexico. Casinos have been banned since 1936, when nationalist Lázaro Cárdenas was President of Mexico.

Not accidentally, both campaigns coincide with recent official declarations by the Salinas de Gortari government that flight capital that returns to Mexico will *not* be investigated as to its origin, and that it is in any case "extremely difficult" laundering of drug money through the Mexican banking system.

Although their campaign is certainly not new, the promoters of casino legalization have re-taken the offensive. On Sept. 17, *El Universal* journalist Juan Bustillos charged that "the effort to install a dog-racing track at the port of Acapulco is more than first meets the eye. . . . Carlos Laviada, who formally appears to be the interested party in this business . . . represents just the tip of the iceberg. . . . It is the Televisa consortium which is—or may be—behind this promotion." "these centers . . . are in reality being converted into huge laundries of ill-gotten wealth."

The Televisa media empire, created by former President Miguel Alemán, is working hand-in-glove with the hotel and tourism "industry"

store casino gambling; this is the same mafia that brought Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel's drug-trafficking networks into Mexico in the first place.

On Sept. 20, also in *El Universal*, journalist Pablo Palomino denounced those who "seek the installation of casinos . . . under the pretext of 'the great source of foreign exchange they would represent.' As is known, such an argument is a fallacy, since with the authorization of such installations . . . the entrance of the mafia would be almost immediate. Gambling and drugs are indissolubly united. . . . Further, a casino easily encourages 'money laundering.' "

Antonio Haas, one of Mexico's most longstanding advocates of the restoration of casinos, has now come out proposing drug legalization. In an article published in the magazine *Semana*, Haas says that "the war of extermination against the drug trade declared by Presidents Bush and Barco . . . is going to accomplish very little." "ous legalization worldwide and distribution of drugs by governments offer the only solution."

On Sept. 24, the daily *La Jornada*, run by Miguel Angel Granados Chapa os Chapa, reproduced an article from the London *Economist* of Sept. 2, which unabashedly proposed the legalization of drugs (see *EIR*, Sept. 15, 1989, "Bankers back drug mafia by issuing demands for drug legalization").

ies the *Economist* piece, described by the Mexican daily as "serious and well-argued,"

which, after noting the political, economic, and social ravages of the drug trade, goes on to lament the cost of government battles against the mafia. *La Jornada* lies, "There is no indication of a victory of the authorities over the criminal drug organizations, at least in the short term. . . . Given these circumstances, one cannot dismiss proposals such as that formulated at the beginning of this month by the British weekly *Economist*. . . . Neither is it prudent to dismiss *a priori* its proposals stemming from ethical positions of principle."

On Sept. 26, Granados Chapa wrote, "It appears both improper and contradictory, but the proposal to decriminalize drugs as the only means of combatting its abuse and the criminality that accompanies it should merit discussion and attention, above all when an institution as above suspicion as the British weekly *Economist* assumes responsibility for formulating it."

ing tendency toward legalization of certain drugs under certain circumstances. . . . From this new view of consumption, one can proceed to a new perspective regarding the trade."

Such talk is not limited to journalistic mouthpieces for the drug lobby. Mexico's ambassador to China and former assistant secretary of foreign relations Jorge Eduardo Navarrete, in an article published in the magazine *Tiempo* of Sept. 14, declared that the possibility of "controlled drug legalization"

the *Economist*. Navarrete asserts: "In my opinion, the response [to the drug problem] . . . should combine in some form elements of decriminalization of [drug] use, control over supply, and a multilateral battle against illegal trafficking in drugs. . . . However, a well-balanced focus is not, for the moment, politically viable."