

# Narco-terrorist offensive in Mexico: Government's weak response will fail

by Carlos Cota Meza and Dennis Small

With the violent offensive of the narco-terrorist People's Revolutionary Army (EPR) on Aug. 28, and the latest rupture of peace talks with the government on the part of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), Mexico is once again the target of attack by those seeking to shatter its institutions, and its sovereignty.

The official response of the Ernesto Zedillo government has been to pretend that the EPR is terrorist and must be repressed, but that the EZLN is not, and that, therefore, continued peace discussions with it must be pursued. The truth, however, is that *both* groups are instruments of the same "irregular warfare" against Mexico, run from abroad, and that the degree of subversive military actions will continue, regardless of whether the government yields to their demands. The EPR and the EZLN have a common origin: the Revolutionary Workers Party-Clandestine Union of the People (Procup). Some journalistic sources allege that the EPR is a direct split-off from the EZLN. There is evidence that both groups have links to the drug trade, organized in their respective theaters of operation.

The EPR offensive triggered a firm response, at least verbally, from President Zedillo. In his second State of the Union address on Sept. 1, Zedillo told the Congress: "We will fight each terrorist act, using all our capacity and enforcing the laws with full rigor. Invariably adhering to law and respecting individual guarantees and human rights, we will act with the full force of the state!"

In addition to the speech, the Executive has permitted the Mexican Army to carry out a much more active role in the fight against narco-terrorism over the past few months. For example, on Aug. 19, the Army put all of its units along the borders with Guatemala and Belize on alert, as part of an anti-drug operation concentrated in the states of Tabasco and Chiapas. The operation, dubbed "Azteca 7," set up 20 inspection stations along the border, and in the Lacandón Jungle, center of the Zapatista rebellion. Two days later, more than 10,000 soldiers were deployed to the states of Guerrero, Veracruz, and Oaxaca, against drug- and arms-trafficking networks.

## Anti-military campaign

While this level of freedom of action allowed the Army is not adequate to the task of eliminating narco-terrorism, it has been more than sufficient to provoke hysteria among the

national and international allies of the EZLN and EPR. For example, the London *Financial Times* of Sept. 17 complained that "the civil-military equation is being redefined in Mexico," given that "a new guerrilla threat, corruption in the police forces, and the penetration of drug cartels have thrust Mexico's Armed Forces to the center-stage of national affairs." The *New York Times* of Sept. 14 also protested because the Mexican Army is "out of the barracks."

Inside Mexico, both the "right" and the anti-national "left" are also shrieking in protest. For example, the legislative bloc of the National Action Party (PAN) in the Senate protested Sept. 17 against the alleged "growing militarization of the country, and the risk that the soldiers will go beyond the powers that the law has conferred on them." The PAN legislators insisted that "there is no question of the risks of this militarization," and complained that they have not been informed as to "the degree to which the President is deploying the Army to safeguard the internal security of the nation." During their press conference, the PANistas proposed that President Zedillo set up a National Guard, "as the Constitution establishes, to avoid the excessive use of the Army."

The anti-military "left" is coordinated and deployed by the Inter-American Dialogue, headquartered in Washington, D.C. The IAD was the organization charged with giving political shape to George Bush's "new world order" policy for Ibero-America. That is why the IAD was the principal propagandist for the book *The Military and Democracy: the Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America*, better known as "The Bush Manual" to dismantle the continent's armed forces. This plot seeks to dismember Mexico territorially, and to dismantle such key institutions as the Presidency and the Catholic Church. The Chiapas conflict contains all the ingredients of this plot, and the sudden appearance and terrorist actions of the EPR are one more stage in the overall scenario.

Mexican members of the Inter-American Dialogue include Jesús Silva Herzog, Mexico's current ambassador to Washington; Beatriz Paredes, current leader of the National Peasants Federation, former governor of Tlaxcala, and former undersecretary of the Interior; and Marielaire Acosta Urquidi, leader of the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights. Former banker Agustín Legorreta has signed the Inter-American Dialogue report which proposes drug legalization, as has Carlos Fuentes, sympathizer

and promoter of the EZLN. Businessman Claudio X. González, who served as foreign investment adviser to former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, was brought onto the IAD board in 1994.

### Several questions

In the aftermath of Zedillo's second annual State of the Union address, in which he announced a firm policy against subversion, several questions arise: 1) How will the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights "lobbyists" react to the President's resolution? 2) How will that section of the federal government react, which believes that the Mexican state has become "obsolete"? 3) How will that part of the weakened federal government react under pressure from certain political sectors in the United States, which insist that it dialogue with the EZLN? 4) Will not the same thing happen as in February 1995, when President Zedillo identified "Subcommander Marcos" as Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, and ordered his arrest, but then, under international pressure, reversed himself with the excuse that "Marcos" was protected by the amnesty law granted by Salinas de Gortari and his commissioner Camacho Solís?

The reaction of the NGOs and the human rights "lobbyists" is obvious enough; nothing less can be expected of them. The Augustín Pro-Human Rights Center, owned by the Jesuits, defends the EPR with the argument that, "by legal definition," they are not terrorists, since they have only attacked police and military targets. A terrorist, says Jesuit David Fernández, "is one who generates terror within the civilian population." Shamelessly, Bishop Samuel Ruiz, the EZLN's real commander, has proclaimed himself *mediator with the EPR*, from the central offices of the Interior Ministry. Since he is already a "mediator" with the EZLN, this makes him—as he himself has said—the "national peace-maker" for dealing with "the violence that prevails in the country."

Similarly, instead of backing President Zedillo's pledge, a faction of the ruling PRI party has announced the creation of a Mexican Movement for Peace and Development, presided over by Gonzalo Martínez Corbala. Martínez is recognized as one of the creators of the Critical Current of the PRI party, which produced the movement headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo in 1987. Martínez Corbala, a veteran collaborator of former President Luis Echeverría, and the personal political negotiator for Carlos Salinas de Gortari, gave the inaugural address of the new movement, during which he offered himself as "peace mediator" with the EPR: "We would like to talk to them. . . . [We] are at the orders of the parties in conflict."

The movement, he said, proposes "to do away with the arms race, and to create generalized conditions for a creative and pluralistic dialogue on peace." To achieve this, his movement is announcing plans to hold a World Assembly for Peace, on Oct. 23-27.

But the greatest danger may come from within the Zedillo

government itself, which has put forth a proposal that could lead to a dangerous internationalization of the conflict in Mexico. Immediately following his State of the Union address, President Zedillo travelled to the Tenth Summit of the Rio Group, held in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The concluding resolution of the summit was entitled "Self-Control over Conventional Disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean," and received the unanimous support of the 13 governments of the Rio Group. Among other things, it seeks to limit military budgets, as well as to freeze exports of certain kinds of weapons, along with the licenses for their manufacture. It proposes the creation of total or partial demilitarization zones, and regulation of the quality, weight, and cost of military equipment. In its general outlines, the document proposes "to make these agreements mandatory."

According to press reports, the proposal was made "by the Mexican delegation," headed by President Zedillo and Foreign Minister José Angel Gurría Treveño, although others point out that the proposal was encouraged by Bolivian President Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada, a prominent member of the Inter-American Dialogue. What is not in doubt is that this proposal absolutely coincides with the anti-military plot discussed in the "Bush Manual," and would only benefit the narco-terrorists of the EZLN and EPR in Mexico, as well as their colleagues abroad.



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<http://www.clark.net/larouche/welcome.html>

**TO REACH** the campaign by electronic mail:

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