

# Institutional Instability In Latin America

With a wink and a nod from Washington, civilian parties in the military-run nations of South America are busily scrambling for power in a controlled game of musical chairs between themselves and sections of the armed forces. The military regimes of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru have announced plans to pave the way for elections. In Argentina, the sudden mobilization of political parties has been given momentum by deliberate Navy protection.

The present action to "civilianize" the regimes of Latin America is a phase of National Security Council Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski's policy based on "human rights." The objective of the civilianization, however, is not "democracy," but *institutionalized instability*. When the U.S. government is based, as is now the case, on a policy which offers nothing to its allies — no energy, no investment, no industry — it has no allies. All it has is debt collection outposts in tenuous "spheres of influence" which must be kept in disarray if they are to be kept at all.

Such a process was not accidentally foreseen by Brzezinski's Argentine collaborator, Mariano Grondona, who earlier this year noted that all of Latin America had to be brought to a new political system based on civilian-military joint rule.

Critics of Brzezinski who favor a Henry Kissinger-style diplomacy, have lambasted his "bungling" the human rights approach. Yet, they themselves make it abundantly clear that the personal diplomacy they prefer is merely the flip side of the "activist" techniques. On fundamental objectives, they concur. It is revealing that Kissinger's Chile, whose fascist government has made it a "raison d'être" to "pay our debts on time and in cash," as Pinochet repeatedly states, has been exempt of Brzezinski's human rights crusade.

## *Controlling Both Sides*

Roger Fontaine, Latin America director at Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies — the home of Henry Kissinger's think-tank networks on Latin America — stated the method bluntly in the *Washington Post* Dec. 4.

*Soon Latin America's politics will be undergoing another sea change: an honest-to-God return to civilian rule, replacing military regimes that have dominated the area all through the 1970s.*

*... There is no evidence that this next swing to democracy will be any longer lasting than previous such trends. Indeed, all the evidence suggests that we are just going through another cycle, another swing of the pendulum begun long before Jimmy Carter walked down Pennsylvania Avenue. And the only thing as certain as this swing of the pendulum is that there will be a return swing, back to militarism.*

*... Military governments in Latin America are in trouble. Peru for example, has been run by the army since 1968. The government promised a social revolution of the Third World type, and handed the Peruvian people a shattered economy with an enormous foreign debt and the strong possibility of a 40 percent rate of inflation next year. A similar story of mismanagement could be made for other military regimes, with the possible exception of Chile and perhaps Brazil.*

*... Serious splits are developing within the ranks of the armed forces themselves — splits which threaten the integrity of the institution itself ... Therefore, civilians will be given the reins — for a while — and the officers will be left licking their (often self-inflicted) wounds. For a while — that is the operative phrase.*

*... Perhaps it would help if the administration understood that these swings from civilian to military back to civilian rule are not that bad. They do provide the roughly functional equivalent of a two-party system, with the 'ins' managing for a while and, when tired or corrupt or just plain incompetent, being replaced by a fresher, unspoiled set of 'outs'. With very few exceptions, this military-civilian "two-party" system is working in most of Latin America."*

Fontaine stressed that the U.S. government should commit itself to neither "ins" nor "outs". Brzezinski's policy, though tactically criticized by Fontaine, is producing precisely the effect Fontaine describes.

## *Showcase: Argentina*

Already, Argentine president Videla has echoed the line. In a discussion with Japanese journalists early this week, Videla said a "strong and stable democracy" would be set up in Argentina, to "prevent the pendular swings" between military and civilian rule. The semi-official daily *La Opinion*, defined the new "democracy" as one of "military-civic convergence" similar to Uruguay, since "purely civil government is unthinkable at present in the cone, and purely military government cannot prolong itself without harming itself".

The case of Argentina is exemplary of Brzezinski's method. The NSC director is now mobilizing the pro-British, extreme fascist wing of the Peronist movement to destroy the antimonetarist nationalist forces emerging in the ranks of the Army. When Secretary of State Cyrus Vance visited Buenos Aires a few weeks ago, he made a point of meeting with representatives of civilian parties, who shortly after he left, held a "Parliament Day" attended by 400 senators from the "recessed" political parties. Almost immediately, the ultra-right Peronists collected 50,000 signatures demanding political amnesty

and a return to guaranteed civil and political rights. A month ago, this kind of activity would have been met by virulent repression.

A State Department spokesman compared the new mobilization of the political parties of the 1970 "Hour of the People" coalition which led to the overthrow of General Levingston and the eventual return of Juan Peron in 1973. Peron then unleashed the fascist AAA (Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance) apparatus of his party to butcher its own nationalist wing.

This time, the strong man behind the Peronist-dominated political coalition is Admiral Emilio Massera, the raving fascist member of the three-man junta who has repeatedly used his terror machine and control of the Navy to sabotage President Videla's independent foreign policy initiatives, most notably his fostering of relations with Venezuela and the socialist countries. For his militarist exploits in "defense of the liquid fatherland," (Massera's term for the ocean!), Massera is lavishly paeaned in the British press.

Admiral Massera was given an additional boost by the British Crown when it awarded Chile three islands in the Beagle Channel off the Argentine coast. The provocative and unfounded decision gave Massera the platform to launch his naval campaign to defend "Argentine liquid territory against mutilations." Massera is well trained in British geopolitics, and is one of the loudest spokesmen of the South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO), a pet project of the London-based Institute for Strategic and International Studies. SATO also happens to be the stated objective of Grondona, as he detailed last May in Brzezinski's *Foreign Policy*.

Propelled by the notoriety of his naval exploits, Massera is now moving to take over the presidency, and City of London interests tied to Brzezinski's NSC are heading up his international campaign. Larry Birns, head of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs and collaborator of NSC "human rights activists" like Robert Pastor, accepted on Dec. 8 an invitation from Argentine naval intelligence to publicize Massera's "presidential campaign." Birns told this news service several weeks ago that he supports Massera despite his known involvement in the fascist death squad apparatus, because "any divisions you create in the junta are good. It weakens the military."

For the occasion, Massera adapted his stance. In an interview with *Nacional*, a prominent Caracas daily, he said that calls for "democratic systems through popular consultation are made because we (the armed forces — ed.) don't know how to rule." Civilian participation, he said, is necessary because "its as though a civilian took the helm of a ship. He'd have to accept my advice; I'd have to tell him go this way, steer in this direction." Massera also said he favors amnesty for political prisoners such as former President Isabel Peron.

Beneath the demagoguery, Massera's internal policies favor British interests as does his wild militarism. During a tour of Colombia in June 1977, Massera labeled technological development as subversive, charging that "the contemporary world, hypnotized by a dazzling technology, seems to live the illusion of an unlimited process of perfection."

Massera's candidacy in collaboration with the fascist

wing of the Peron movement propelled by Brzezinski's human rights advocates is meant to check the "developmentalist" group centered around retired General Juan Guglielmelli. There will be no lull in repression of the working class and political parties who continue resisting the dismantling of the economy.

General Guglielmelli has been organizing military men and industrialists around a "national security doctrine" — explicitly meant to counter Massera's British doctrine — based on a program for national development which he traces to Alexander Hamilton. Fiercely opposed to both the British and the Rockefellers, Guglielmelli last week attacked the economic policies of Massera's allies as treasonous capitulation to those monetarist interests. The General urged "organizing the nation around not only the development of our raw materials, but the optimum and unhalting development of our productive forces." Ironically, he is appealing to the model of U.S. industrialization policies instituted against the British, at a time when the U.S. government has nearly abandoned its own heritage.

## Einaudi: Mix Military, Civilian Rule To Guarantee Latin Debt Payment

"Kissinger's Kissinger for Latin America," Luigi Einaudi, told a Columbia University seminar on "Militarism and Democracy in Latin America" last week that the U.S. should try to replace existing military regimes in South America with "mixed military-civilian constitutional rule."

Although he has lost most of his political clout with Henry's departure from office, Einaudi retains his title as Director of the Office of Policy Planning of the Inter-American Affairs section of the U.S. State Department, and is working for a return to Dr. Kissinger's lethal brand of "realpolitik".

Einaudi's approach is best seen in his analysis of Peru. There he recommends "stabilizing" a coalition between the centrist faction of the Army headed by President Francisco Morales Bermúdez, the Social Democratic blackshirts of the APRA Party, and the oligarchic interest groups. "If we can help Morales Bermúdez keep the pendulum from going all the way to the right, we are strengthened in dealing with other military regimes in South America," declared Einaudi. He cautioned that the "holding of the center" would be a difficult task "since the excesses committed in the First Phase (of the Peruvian Revolution) mean that a regime à la Pinochet is likely." Einaudi stressed that Peru can not now establish a real democracy, since it is very risky to hold "elections in a period of economic unrest, but elections in all countries can be managed to some degree."

Speaking that same day in Lima, General Morales Bermúdez retracted previous promises of a return to complete civilian rule in 1980 and declared that "neither the civilians nor the military will have absolute responsibility in the future for what happens in Peru".