

López Portillo's trip: against a 'dark age'

by Tim Rush



Mexican President José López Portillo concluded the European portion of his international tour with his third emphatic warning of near-term world war in as many capitals.

At a state banquet in Stockholm, Sweden, May 22 he warned that nuclear catastrophe is "imminent" and that the world faces a "new Dark Age" if a successful peace strategy is not immediately initiated. In Paris and Bonn, he had given Giscard and Schmidt Mexico's fullest backing in those leaders' quest to preserve detente and resist Cold War pressures from London and Washington.

A day later, in a press conference summarizing the visits to France, West Germany and Sweden, and on the eve of his final stop, Canada, the Mexican President warned that beyond all the problems of the Third World itself the "prospect of a developed country entering the path of underdevelopment" was of acute concern. The comment was widely taken as a reference to the United States under Carter economic policy.

The content of the Mexican peace strategy was outlined in two successive events during López Portillo's stay in Sweden. At the Swedish House of Industry, May 22, the Mexican President extended short scheduled remarks into a full speech devoted to Mexico's commitment to industrialization. Beyond full-scale industrialization, he said, Mexico "wants to make itself an independent industrial export nation." Previously foreign investment has tended to establish plants in "simple-minded" fashion—where the labor is most abundant and cheap. Instead, Mexico wants to build entire new cities along the coast, with large port facilities, he said. This means not just scattered factories here and there, but "big projects."

The next day he toured the ASEA-Atom facilities, one of Sweden's premier high-technology firms and its largest producer of nuclear energy technology. Mexican Industries Minister de Oteyza delivered unscheduled remarks stressing that nuclear energy was a key component

of Mexico's development strategy and that Mexico was pleased with the feasibility study for large-scale nuclear development in Mexico recently completed by ASEA-Atom. It was simultaneously announced that Mexico has arranged 51 percent national control of ASEA-Atom's Mexican affiliate, and in conjunction with the parent firm, will start preparations for producing nuclear reactor components in Mexico.

In his wind-up press conference later that day, López Portillo linked this economic program to the war avoidance issue. It is urgent to deal with the immediate crises in such places as Iran, Afghanistan and the Caribbean, he stated, but equally urgent to address "the underlying causes," which are "economic disorder" and lack of real development.

The Swedish response to Mexico's "oil-for-technology" focus was praised by López Portillo and his ministers, and it was announced that Mexico is sufficiently satisfied with the progress of transfer of technology agreements to proceed with oil exports slated to rise to 70,000 bpd for early 1981.

'There is little time left to stop war'

EIR has confirmed that López Portillo seriously considered cancelling or postponing his European trip due to the danger of war in the Caribbean.

According to these reliable sources, Mexican intelligence estimates were that a U.S.-Soviet confrontation triggered somewhere in the Middle East or Cuba was imminent. The Mexican government's evaluation was that, in such an eventuality, the U.S. could take advantage of López Portillo's absence from his country to launch an invasion in the Caribbean, specifically against

Cuba. It was believed by the government that Mexican diplomacy could help to avert such an action.

The fact that López Portillo proceeded with the trip indicates that he felt his European summits were indispensable to defuse the danger.

Statements by both Giscard and Schmidt testified to the depth of attention paid to the Caribbean.

Giscard, in remarks at a state dinner for López Portillo May 16, stated that "we must exchange views on the situations where we have particular interest. I refer to the situation in Central America or in the region of the Caribbean where France is present with its American (overseas) departments."

Schmidt declared in remarks following the Bonn luncheon for López Portillo May 20: "You have showed me this morning, in a very expressive way, how Central America also threatens to become a dangerous focus of crisis. The problems of the neighboring countries, the problems of Central America and the Caribbean are very delicate. On account of the weight of its democratic tradition and the richness of its human and natural resources, Mexico has a key role. ..."

At a state dinner May 22 hosted by Sweden's royal family, President López Portillo addressed these words on the danger of imminent war to the international community:

The most important of the interests and goals (shared by Mexico and Sweden) is the preservation of international peace and security, gravely threatened by forces which even escape the control of the protagonists.

The world is passing through one of the most dangerous moments in the postwar period, due, principally, to the multiple hotspots which represent potential scenarios for the outbreak of a global conflict. There were, it is true, other moments in which war appeared imminent, but in those limited situations, which all of us recall, the problem was localized territorially and strategically.

Today, on the contrary, there are numerous regional conflicts which are linked among themselves, and linked with the strategic systems of the great powers. Each of these problems can, of its own, unleash an international conflagration, and the combination of several of these problems increases the possibilities that such a thing occur...

This is, in bold strokes, our position on problems relating to world peace and security, which constitute the preconditions for any initiative on political collaboration and cooperation...

In this manner we march toward the threshold of a new century which does not appear to correspond to the utopias of some optimistic futurologists but rather to the somber visions of those who foresee the return to a new Dark Age wrapped in the shadows of death.

Very little time remains to us to stop the generalization of famine, violence and war...

Exclusive
Interview
with
Philippe
Esper



'All French industry backs Mexican growth'

by Sophie Tanapura, Paris correspondent

Philippe Esper, Delegate for Foreign Action at the French Industry Ministry, granted the following exclusive interview to Sophie Tanapura, EIR's Paris correspondent, on the eve of Mexican President José López Portillo's trip to France.

Q: Would you give us your estimation of the results of industrial cooperation between France and Mexico since French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's trip to Mexico one year ago?

A: What I would first like to point out is that economic and in particular industrial relations between France and Mexico have developed very much over the last few months and years. They have not achieved the level we would like yet, but nonetheless, our exchanges with Mexico reached more than 2.5 billion francs during 1979. French exports to Mexico went beyond 2 billion francs and Mexican exports to France were in the order of 500 million francs, not including oil transactions.

During the first months of 1980 growth has continued, since Mexican exports to France increased at a rate of 100 percent, while French exports to Mexico increased by nearly 50 percent. Therefore the level for us is still insufficient, but its growth is strong and therefore encouraging.

Another point that must be stressed is the development of French investments in Mexico. The entirety of French industry has shown a great interest in developing industrial cooperation with Mexico; in other words, has