

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menendez

Concerned about the southern border

Mexican security authorities are keeping a close watch on Guatemala's stability—and are worried.

In mid-June, I reported that the Society of Jesus was destabilizing the state of Chiapas, in the heart of Mexico's strategic oil region. I explained at the time that Mexican officials were concerned that Guatemalan terrorist activity might also "spill over" the border into this vital area, and create serious political problems.

This week, those fears of the "Guatemalan Connection" were heightened in Mexico. The Oct. 13 issue of *Business Week* reported that the Guatemalan government of General Romeo Lucas had stated that the main obstacle to defeating their country's serious guerrilla problem is the haven that Mexico provides, allegedly with the tacit approval of the Mexican government. According to the article, which was given big play in the Mexican press, Chiapas also serves, along with Cuba and Belize, as a conduit for illegal arms into Guatemala. *Business Week* added that the Guatemalan military believes that this guerrilla activity is part of an international conspiracy sponsored by the Cubans, the Russians, and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas.

But within 24 hours of the first story hitting the newsstands, both Mexican and Guatemalan authorities issued denials of the *Business Week* tall tales. Guatemalan ambassador to Mexico Jorge Palmieri told the press that Gen. Romeo Lucas had made no such statements, and that the Mexican au-

thorities had repeatedly given the Guatemalans full guarantees on this guerrilla security matter.

For the Mexicans, Defense Minister Gen. Félix Galván himself told the press that, although some in Guatemala might say that guerrillas are passing from that country into Mexico, and that they are supplied with Mexican arms, "this is totally false."

General Galván's prompt, strident denial cleared the air; but it also reflected the Mexican government's growing concern over its southern border. It is a well known fact that the Mexican army has reinforced its security along its southern flank in recent months, given that it is in this region that Mexico's principal oil wealth is concentrated.

One Mexican security analyst consulted by *EIR* reminded us of the case of Guatemalan guerrilla John Sosa, who in the 1960s frequently crossed into Mexican territory. Sosa was eventually captured by the Mexican army.

The *Business Week* article brought to the surface the long-simmering related issue of Guatemala's stability. Some diplomatic observers firmly believe that, in the Central American maelstrom, Guatemala is an island of political stability, and that its armed forces will have no trouble defusing the guerrilla threat. Better-informed analysts, however, know that this is not the

case, and that the real problem is that the destabilizing forces operating inside Guatemala are fully supported from outside the country by powerful interests.

One relevant example of this outside support for instability is the recent reactivation of the territorial conflict between Guatemala and Belize by British foreign minister Lord Carrington, during his recent Latin American trip. A *Financial Times* article of Oct. 10 reported that a new round of negotiations between Britain and Guatemala has begun, and that Belize "is likely to move swiftly to independence despite possible objections from neighboring Guatemala, which claims sovereignty over it." Most observers agree that Guatemala will invade Belize the moment Britain grants it independence and pulls out its troops.

Another important "outside" factor in the destabilization of Guatemala is the Society of Jesus, which actively conducts its organizing activities among the Indian population of that country. I have explained in this column on other occasions how the Jesuits have also carried out similar activities among the Indians of Chiapas and other Mexican states, and are having some success in turning entire tribes into religious fanatics. One shocked security official told *EIR* that in a recent tour of the area, he came across one Indian tribe that argued in favor of "collective suicide"—Jonestown-style. This official's office has a huge map of the state of Chiapas hanging on the wall, on which he has pinpointed each and every one of the sects and indigenous groups that live in the zone.

Mexico is indeed keeping a sharp watch to the south.