

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

Mexico's southern refugee problem

The United Nations has won permission to open a refugee office in Mexico. That's no simple matter.

On Feb. 1, a military man, General Graciano Pinzón, was sworn in as Governor of the southern state of Yucatán. Only days before, in the neighboring state of Chiapas, the ruling PRI party had launched Gen. Absalón Castellano, the former director of the Military Academy, as its candidate—and guaranteed winner—of this year's state governor election.

This conspicuous political profile of military men in Mexico's southern states reflects the growing concern with which the country's ruling groups are watching their border with Central America. Beginning last year, thousands of Central American refugees, mostly Guatemalans, started emigrating north, fleeing civil wars, economic blight, and military brutality.

On Jan. 20, Luis Ortiz Monasterio, the new head of the Mexican Commission to Aid Refugees, reported that there are at least 80,000 Central American refugees now in Mexico. A few days later, the Governor of Chiapas, Juan Sabines, confessed his despair over the immigration problem, stating that immigration is now "uncontrollable" in his state, despite the best efforts of the Mexican army to contain it.

The refugees themselves are only part of the problem. Mexico's left has also made it clear that they will make use of this exodus to cause political problems for the Mexican government. They have now been joined by the "One

Worldist" bodies in the United Nations and by British-run "human rights" groups, in calling for a Mexican policy of virtual "open borders"—under which the Mexican government would have no way of discerning who is a legitimate refugee and who is a Guatemalan or Salvadoran guerrilla, and no control over immigration.

These forces have pressured the López Portillo government to allow the U.N. High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) to bring its agents into Mexico in order to run refugee camps there. Their model is the anti-national operations run by this and other "human rights" commissions in places like Somalia and Southeast Asia. Refugee camps in these regions have been made into hotbeds of antigovernment operations.

Although the López Portillo government has resisted this assault and has repeatedly stated that it will solve the problem without outside meddling, last month the U.N. scored an important victory: it will be allowed to open an office of the UNHCR in Mexico, to deal with the Central American refugee wave. As a source close to these circles told *EIR*, "once the problem is more advanced, the government will have no choice but to ask the U.N. for help."

"The naming of a UNHCR representative . . . indicates that international agreements are opening their way" in Mexico, chimed in an

exuberant Sergio Méndez Arceo, the notorious "Red Bishop" of Cuernavaca and a key terrorist controller. Méndez Arceo is now putting together an organization of priests in the border area to "help" the refugees.

The UNHCR move came at the same time that another U.N. human rights delegation, this one led by the Viscount of Collville, visited Mexico to agitate around the case of "disappeared persons," leftists supposedly kidnapped by Mexican police forces. The British Viscount's visit gave occasion for a campaign in the left press around a report on Mexican "disappeared persons," conveniently published at the same time by the London-based group, Amnesty International. The report compares the Mexican government with the fascist regimes of Chile and Argentina.

Mexican authorities are not unaware of the trap being set for them by the refugee problem. In statements to the leftist daily *Uno Más Uno* on Jan. 20, Ortiz Monasterio rebuked the UNHCR's push to set up highly unstable refugee camps inside Mexico, stating that his government will not allow the creation of "refugee ghettos." "We don't want to isolate our Central American brothers," Ortiz said, but to intergrate them into Mexican society and the economy as soon as possible. He added that the government is already drawing up concrete economic plans to do this.

Ortiz also knocked the wind out of the leftists' sails in reporting Mexico will *not* perform any massive deportations; rather immigrant cases will be examined one by one. "Migration is a new problem Mexico is just beginning to learn to deal with," Ortiz concluded.