

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

The Central American flank

Washington circles plan to greet de la Madrid with a December war in Central America, some in London are saying.

Fears are growing in Central America that an all-out war between Nicaragua and Honduras, with the probable participation of El Salvador, will erupt before the end of the year," according to a provocative little piece in London's *Sunday Observer* Oct. 10. "Diplomats and politicians in Central America are treating the possibility of a conflagration as inevitable."

The timing is aimed at Mexico. The *Observer*, whose connections to Lord Carrington and Henry Kissinger my *EIR* colleagues have covered extensively, used a "highly placed" Mexican source to make its point: "I don't think the U.S. will let it happen before December. Reagan has the November congressional elections to get out of the way. And there's also the question of President Miguel de la Madrid taking over in Mexico on Dec. 1 to bear in mind. However, the important thing is that they all seem to have decided that the Sandinistas have had long enough, and that the time has come to get rid of them."

As Mexican government officials are well aware, extending the "population wars" of Central America into Mexico has been the long-range target of the advocates of chaos and confrontation in the region for quite some time. Before Sept. 1, these circles expected Mexico's economic crisis to keep its attention focused inward until Central America's polarization had irreversibly infected Mexico itself.

By August, some of Henry Kissinger's associates in the United States freely chatted about their counseling

to Guatemalan military officers not to worry about Mexico; internal disunity and a fracturing military will keep it from answering new provocations mounted from the Guatemalan side of the border.

Within a week of the Sept. 1 nationalization of credit in Mexico, however, the López Portillo administration turned its attention once again to Central America. Mexico joined with Venezuela, after consultations with Brazil and Argentina, to lay down the law to Nicaragua, Honduras, and the United States. Letters to the heads of state of those nations from the Mexican and Venezuelan Presidents demanded a halt to the charges and counter-charges of who began the fighting, and specified steps to be taken by both countries to stop the slide toward full-scale war.

A meeting among the Presidents of Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Venezuela was proposed to work out honorable resolution to the concerns of both nations. An Oct. 13 date was tentatively suggested.

Thomas Enders, the Kissinger-hand filling the Latin American post at the State Department, was not pleased at "outside intervention" to end his pet crisis. Administration spokesmen nonetheless put a "smiling face" upon their response.

"The Reagan administration has been underwhelmed all along by Mexico's peace-making efforts in Central America, but to say so aloud would be bad politics south of the border," the *New York Times* explained in a recent

Sunday review.

What followed was simple, straightforward, crass duplicity.

American readers were treated to a stream of stories on how the administration favored a peaceful settlement in Central America. Suddenly, "exposés" of American funding of Somoza's old buddies, now operating from camps inside Honduras along the border with Nicaragua, began appearing, and reports of American pressure to "rein in" Honduras's hardline generals were churned out.

President Reagan dispatched a "soft but non-committal answer" to the Mexican and Venezuelan Presidents to keep them satisfied, the *New York Times* asserted, giving Enders time to organize a counter-meeting in Costa Rica of Central America and Caribbean Foreign Ministers which could change the agenda. Held Oct. 4 and chaired by Enders, the meeting excluded Nicaragua, which was repeatedly denounced as the main "aggressor" in the region. There Enders promised U.S. military assistance in case of war if the attending nations agreed to set up a "mutual defense pact" against Nicaragua—an offer the U.S. press neglected to report.

Honduras President Suazo Córdoba, who takes his cue from the State Department, politely waited for 24 hours after the Oct. 8 Reagan-de la Madrid border meeting, before finishing off the Mexican peace plan: he announced he was "too busy" to attend the proposed Caracas meeting.

Washington insiders then put out the word quietly that the administration was no longer worried about the Mexican peace initiative; it would die of its own accord. López Portillo is a "lame duck" who will be out of office in two weeks (sic), one over-eager fellow explained Oct. 13, and de la Madrid is "completely under control."