

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

Lessons of La Paz

The real issue at the summit was not Central America but Mexico's solidarity with the rest of Latin America.

The most important, overlooked quote of the Aug. 14 summit between Presidents de la Madrid and Reagan in La Paz, Baja California, was the following from the Mexican president:

"President Reagan: You enter today, across the threshold of Mexico, into Latin America.

"Latin America unites both an intense need for social transformation and the effects of a convulsed world, effects which in turn limit the largely unsatisfied desire for development in freedom, democracy, and justice.

"It is urgent to counterpose . . . respect for the law, for national institutions, and for development to the social backwardness aggravated today by profound economic crisis and by shows of force which threaten to unleash conflagration."

The tension at the summit lay precisely in this definition of Mexico's strategic posture, at a time when the Reagan administration shows signs of hardening its allegiance to the supranational institutions such as the IMF which are imposing anti-development policies.

In economic terms, the game has been to split off Mexico from the moves toward a debtors' cartel by the rest of the continent. Though de la Madrid gave no hint of throwing off the IMF program which has so devastated Mexico's living standards and growth prospects—not to mention U.S. exports—his statement that "Latin America starts here" was a warning that Mexico is not turning its back on the rest of the continent. Any

remaining illusions in Washington that Mexico could somehow be brought into a "North American Alliance," as broached by Reagan in his presidential campaign, were put to rest.

The fact that de la Madrid linked the need to address the continent's economic crisis to denunciation of "shows of force"—a reference to Washington's military escalations in Central America—emphasized that the Contadora Group's Central American peace-keeping efforts can not be separated from the continent's larger struggle to restore economic growth.

But there was an added edge to de la Madrid's remarks, perhaps linked to his decision of two weeks ago to crack down on the PAN separatist movement's growing strength in the north, and his knowledge that U.S. State Department and FBI agents are deeply involved in the insurrectionary activity.

His insistence on "respect for law and for national institutions" had more than rhetorical importance in this context. Even sharper was the warning that Mexico has not forgotten how to resist "dismemberment and invasion."

He spoke just three weeks after George High, the U.S. embassy official in Mexico City who had secretly carried out a series of meetings with PAN leaders and Church supporters during the spring, was rewarded with the post of director of Mexican affairs at the State Department.

The only specific accomplishment of the summit—besides continuation of U.S. credits for Mexican grain pur-

chases and hints of further U.S. oil purchases for the strategic reserve—was an agreement on increased environmental cooperation on the border. Seemingly innocuous, the agreement in fact is a foot-in-the-door for a much larger project: the undermining of the nation-state status of both Mexico and the United States. The "world federalist" Malthusians behind documents like the *Global 2000 Report* began a campaign over 10 years ago, highlighted in the principals behind the Law of the Sea project, to substitute supranational control mechanisms for the institutions of the nation state, using environmentalist issues as the pretext for the changes in sovereignty.

An Aug. 13 editorial in the flagship newspaper of the British establishment, the London *Times*, traced the Kissingerian path that enemies of both the United States and Mexico have now prepared. The *Times*, which supports the financial and anti-nation state policies creating the crisis, stated: "Today's difficulties would be tiny compared to the massive upheaval across the U.S.-Mexican border should Mexico's indecipherable polity start to disintegrate" under the impact of spreading Central American turmoil and "the strain of economic austerity at home."

The editorial stresses that "American suspicion of Mexican stability is longstanding and well founded. . . . Washington has watched with justifiable concern the mismanagement of [Mexico's] economy. . . . The health of this secretive, unpredictable and inherently arbitrary system of [presidential] leadership cannot be taken for granted."

The *Times* compares the result to events in Iran, and confidently forecasts "insurrection, revolution, or just [sic] a prolonged period of economic and social disintegration."