

U.S. State Department secretly helped build the PAN

U.S. State Department policy has been for many years to secretly build up the National Action Party (PAN) as a challenge to Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), *EIR* was told in July, 1982 by one of the top half-dozen U.S. academics specializing in Mexico. "This has been going on for a long time. I don't know about the Hermosillo consular office, but definitely in Mexico City," he said. "I know that is true from personal contacts at the Embassy. It's been going on for at least 4-5 years. . . . You won't get any of them to tell you what I've just told you. They talk to me because of a different relation I have with them. You would have to go at it indirectly, probing what reactions they might have to the results of the elections. . . . The PRI has been sensitive to the U.S. Embassy link to the PAN."

In an interview at that time, following elections in which the PAN made major gains, a State Department spokesman said: "The PAN is a conservative business-oriented party, like the Republican Party in the United States."

Dale Junker, U.S. Vice-Consul in Hermosillo, was just as sanguine about the PAN. Asked by an American businessman in July 1982 about the impact of daily demonstrations of up to 5,000 PAN supporters, including one which burned down the local election offices in Caborca, Junker replied: "Things are calm. Well yes, there have been demonstrations, but these are just marches, you couldn't really call them demonstrations. . . . Yes, there was this fire in Caborca, some sort of electrical short in an office in the City Hall. The local authorities investigated it because obviously there was a lot of suspicion about it. But the PRI didn't take advantage, the PRI did the investigating and concluded it was just an electrical short." Told that it was not just any room in the City Hall, but the elections office, Junker replied: "Well, yes, it was the elections office, but the votes had been counted and certified already."

Since last summer, State Department involvement with the PAN has become such a scandal throughout Mexico that U.S. officials are now highly circumspect in their public statements. George High, newly-appointed director of Mexican Affairs at the State Department, has given orders for no one in the bureau to comment on the "opposition parties" in Mexico, *EIR* sources report, because of the sensitiveness of the issue. High got his new position as a result of his perfor-

mance at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, where he functioned as the State Department's field officer in charge of coordination with the PAN. High participated in a clandestine planning session with PAN leaders in Hermosillo, Sonora on April 22 of this year, one of a series that he conducted throughout the volatile northern tier of Mexican states. The Hermosillo meeting became a national scandal when it reached the newspapers early the next month.

Top State Department officials who have refused to speak in their own name have supplied journalists with names of think tank experts "who can be expected to know State Department thinking." We publish excerpts of a discussion with one of them, made available to *EIR*:

Q: I would like to hear from you what the American policy toward Mexico currently is.

A: For years the U.S. had basically ignored Mexico. But things started to change in the 1970s, when changes in Mexico, both in its attitude toward the U.S. and to the rest of the world, started to change as well. It actually started with Luis Echeverría [Mexican president, 1970-76]. The U.S. came to see Mexico, not as a neighbor, but as a problem or as a difficult country to deal with.

In the 1950s and 1960s we could count on Mexico doing pretty much what the U.S. wanted, but now we can no longer do that. Mexico has its own priorities, its own objectives.

Q: What are the prospects for U.S.-Mexican

A: There are and will continue to be a constant series of tensions and problems in the relationship that will get dealt with by one President or another and will get stabilized and then will break out again into a crisis and cause more problems and difficulties later on. There will always be problems, while at the same time leaders of both countries will meet periodically and will say that they are great friends and that we need to understand each other better. This will constantly go on.

Q: So I take it that the U.S. would like to see a political shift in Mexico toward a political system that would tend to adapt more to the U.S. needs?

A: Oh yes, and there are a lot of pressures on Mexico.

Q: Does the U.S. have lobbying groups inside Mexico?

A: I'm not really aware of how successfully the U.S. is using groups in Mexico. I have been told that the Mexican Army, for example, is more worried about Central America than is the political leadership. That may be true, but I don't know if the U.S. has anything to do with it.

Q: What about groups like the PAN whose economic and Central American policies are closer to the U.S. views?

A: I suppose that if anyone would take the PAN seriously in the U.S., they would be more in favor of the PAN than the PRI. I just don't know if the U.S. is clever or dumb enough to try to use the PAN in that way.