

## Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

### PAN starts to militarize border

*A PAN party mob burns city hall and insults a representative of the governor in Coahuila.*

**T**he U.S. government is the intellectual author of the disturbances which occurred in Piedras Negras, Monclova, and Frontera. It is necessary to take political and criminal actions against the PAN. The acts which the White and Blue carried out clash with the measures set forth by the election law and are reason for any party to disappear," said the chief of the powerful Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), Fidel Velázquez, answering a journalist's question on whether civil war could break out in Mexico. Velázquez added that the ultimate goal of these conflicts is to make Mexico an international spectacle, playing right into the hands of the the National Action Party (PAN).

Velázquez referred to the violence set off Dec. 30 by militants and professional agitators of the Nazi PAN, in various communities of the north-east part of Coahuila state, with the aim of taking possession of the mayoralties they claim to have won.

As this column previously documented, the election campaign in northern Mexico, unlike the rest of the country, risks turning into a violent bloodbath because of the overtly anti-nationalist and subversive position taken by the PAN party, which is faithfully following orders from the U.S. State Department. The Dec. 30 events must make clear that it has been a national disaster for the U.S. Republican Party to have backed the PAN.

Especially in Coahuila, bordering Texas, the PAN is setting the stage for an escalation to force the militarization of the northern border. The result

is to invite a U.S. invasion of Mexican territory, exactly as Georgetown University pundits have predicted. Since Dec. 12-13, to protest the fact that they won not a single mayoralty in the elections, a PAN mob has been blocking the highway to Eagle Pass. This has led the U.S. authorities to set a military guard over the entrance to the city, and a nightly curfew after which citizens can neither enter nor leave.

By Dec. 30, the day when the state governor, José de las Fuentes Rodríguez, took the official protest of the new mayor of Piedras Negras—which is across the border from Eagle Pass—a mob of some 2,000 PAN followers collected outside City Hall, armed with stones, clubs, molotov cocktails, and firearms. They stormed the municipal building, set it on fire, and battled the police and firemen who attempted to cool them down. The result was two dead and more than 50 wounded.

Part of the PAN mob moved to the plant of the local newspaper *El Zócalo*, which is owned by the new Mayor Juristi Septien, and burned it as well. At that point the army had to intervene to impose law and order.

In Monclova, a mayoralty which up to a few days ago was in PAN hands and was supposed to be turned over on Dec. 30 to the new mayor, a member of the government PRI party, there are now *two* city halls; one that refuses to give up the PAN, and the one representing the incoming PRI mayor, set up in a hotel across from the municipal building.

In Ciudad Frontera and Ciudad Escobedo Reina, the same situation

prevails. In the latter town, the personal envoy of the governor was kidnapped by the mob, stripped, shaved, insulted, and tied to a tree "as a sign of protest."

Up to the time of this writing, Torreón, the state capital, as well as most of the border cities, is being guarded by the army.

The most spectacular feature of the calculated scenario to which Fidel Velázquez refer, is the publicity being giving to it by the U.S. and some European mass media. Before even the news went out in Mexico City, a German radio station was already broadcasting the events. The day of the seizure of Piedras Negras, representatives of the *Washington Post*, as well as U.S. border press, such as Radio KEPS-KINL of Eagle Pass and others, were up early and ready to cover what previously could have passed unobserved—the seizure of a mayoralty. In fact, all the media could film the disturbances, interview the antagonists, and boom up and down the frontier the "unstable climate which the Mexican border is living through."

As a Mexican journalist comments on the numerous articles puffing the PAN in the U.S. Establishment press, U.S. Ambassador Gavin is heading up a campaign strongly favoring the PAN, and the political strength with which the PAN will face the PRI in the upcoming vote is more rooted in U.S. media than in political reality. In fact, the Kissinger plan of militarizing the border cynically foresees blasting the Mexican election campaign all over the U.S.A., because it is already clear to everybody that the PAN is ready to stir up violence and be backed by favorable American propaganda.

It remains to be seen whether the CTM can move sufficient political forces to stop the PAN.