

Chihuahua elections: Mexico turns back a threat to sovereignty

by Mark Sonnenblick

The victory of the ruling PRI party in the July 6 Chihuahua state elections shows that Mexican patriotic forces inside that party and the labor movement are reasserting their power. Despite heavy pressure from Washington for "political pluralism," the state was not given away to the National Action Party (PAN),

The "Mexico-bashing" games played in the U.S. Congress by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.)

The remoralization of Mexico's ruling party means that the country's creditors will find it more difficult than they may have expected to grab control of Mexico's prime assets as conditions for renegotiating the country's unpayable \$97 billion debt. On the contrary, Mexico has opened its doors, its radio and television, for Peruvian President Alan García to talk up his sovereign imposition of national priorities on creditors.

Mexico is still talking with its creditors. But, behind the scenes, it is intensely promoting the first Latin American summit meeting ever, as a vehicle for joint regional action on the debt.

The overwhelming PRI vote has also stalled, even if temporarily, the "New Yalta" plans of the U.S. State Department and allied political circles. Those plans revolved around using electoral violence on the U.S.-Mexican border to force a redeployment of American troops from Europe back to North America—thereby abandoning Europe to Soviet domination.

The danger of the PAN provoking a violent explosion along the Texas border remains, but newsmen sent to look for trouble on election day failed to find it. "I'm really disappointed," a veteran U.S. TV correspondent complained, the daily *Unomasuno* reported the day after the elections. The correspondent went on, "My chiefs in New York called me and said I was sending them crap, that they want stories on the violence. . . . But there isn't any!" The U.S. media, which had worked so hard to prepare for violence, blacked out reports of an election with less disturbances than in a hotly contested race in Massachusetts. Four days after the elections, the *New York Times* could come up with little more proof of fraud than a PAN poll watcher who said he had been kept out of a polling place for trivial credential problems.

Harley Schlanger, Texas leader of the National Demo-

cratic Policy Committee, reported from Chihuahua just before the election, "As election day approached, foreign press and 'observers' descended on Chihuahua. Most of them were pro-PAN, and were convinced that fraud and violence were inevitable. A reporter from El Paso told me that he had seen the PRI bring in ballot boxes already full. When asked where he saw this, he said, 'I didn't really see it, but I heard about it.'"

As per the scenarios ground out by Washington think tanks, the defeated PAN gubernatorial candidate, Francisco Barrios, demanded that the election be annulled. To "make the government repent for having committed the biggest electoral fraud in Mexican history," he promised "10 days of action," a formulation bringing to mind the "10 days of rage" enacted by Weatherman terrorists in Chicago in 1969.

Barrios said the PAN executive has planned 56 actions. On the first day, the PAN blocked streets in Ciudad Juárez, across the Río Grande from El Paso, Texas, and tied up 17 intersections in the capital, Chihuahua, for an hour. On the second day, 3,000 PAN members rioted in Ciudad Juárez after one of them was arrested on charges of carrying a pistol. On the third day, most businesses closed down for 12 hours.

Any upsurge of PAN violence has nothing to do with annulling the elections. Any chance of that ended when Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid ratified the PRI victory July 8 by proclaiming, "We [Mexicans] have ratified our decision to continue forming a society of free men, in a democratic context in which power originates in the great majorities."

Observers in Mexico believe the PAN may be stirring a ruckus as part of bargaining a new peace with the government, in which all the illegal things it did during the electoral period would be pardoned. Or, it might be going after a serious stepping-up of violence. But a violent rampage would be short-lived, because the Mexican army has quartered 25,000 soldiers and police under its command in the state to deal with any trouble.

Were the PAN to act on its repeated threats of violence, it would be proving accusations that it was an agent of Mexico's foreign enemies seeking to undermine the country. It would pay a heavy price, including the loss of its party registration.

Such a crazy gambit cannot be ruled out, since even the PAN's foreign controllers realize the party is incompetent to rule Mexico. The PAN has never been anything more than a collection of drug pushers and promoters of Hitler's slave-labor economic policies, and of wealthy landowners who never accepted the Mexican Revolution. Under the "free enterprise" slogan, which endears PANista operatives to the easily-manipulated Senator Helms, lurks an unholy alliance of Nazi-Communists, made clear by the open collaboration between the PAN, and the Moscow-controlled PSUM, Mexico's communist party.

PAN's controllers would be willing to destroy their own asset in a flurry of violence, if they thought it would lead to pulling U.S. troops out of Europe, as advocated by Henry Kissinger. Parallel chaos operations such as mercenary vigilante squads rounding up illegal aliens on the Arizona-Mexico border have the same intent.

Chihuahua: a turning point

The exciting part of the Chihuahua election story went unreported by the U.S. press. All the hype of Helms, and the foreign press, was not sufficient to overcome the PRI's major advantage: It is the political party which represents Mexico's majorities. To win, it must mobilize that support and get it to the polls. That is what the PRI did.

Helms and cronies portrayed the Chihuahua elections as a "test" of Mexico's democracy. They expected the PRI to lose in a fair election. In an abomination to the PRI's mass membership, the PRI candidate was hand-picked to be a loser, in a back-room deal between Interior Minister Manuel Bartlett and the "Chihuahua Group," the tightly-knit club of feudal landowners, front-men for foreign-owned border sweatshops, and cross-border narcotics traffickers.

The Chihuahua Group declared July 7 that the PRI and PAN candidates were equally acceptable. As far as PRI leaders of peasant and worker constituencies were concerned, both were unacceptable.

Several steps taken by Mexico's leaders during the last week of the campaign turned around this planned defeat, without systematic fraud. First, the "LaRouche Card" was played. As a representative of the NDPC, the political organization founded by U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, Harley Schlanger held a series of press conferences in Chihuahua and Mexico City, in which the IMF/New Yalta scenario was exposed. These were covered on TV news nationwide, and on page one of the leading dailies. This provided the Mexican voters with an understanding that Senator Helms's intervention on behalf of the PAN was part of a conspiracy aimed at destroying Mexico, and the Western alliance.

Secondly, the PRI sent some of its top organizers into Chihuahua, to "get out the vote." In "town meetings" throughout the state, the PAN was exposed, and voters were challenged to give a massive defeat to the "traitors." On election day, foreign reporters were stunned to see buses of

peasants and workers arrive at the polls to vote for the PRI candidates.

Finally, to ensure a calm and orderly election, more than 25,000 troops were brought in. This discouraged PAN plans for violent disruptions and intimidation of voters and election officials; it also was a preemptive measure against post-election violence, and demonstrated that the government would not be intimidated.

These last-minute steps spoiled the scenarios in Washington and Moscow, which counted on a PAN victory or massive fraud. The buses arriving at the polling places would have been empty had the issue been the candidates or the declining economy.

The turnaround was engineered largely by the Mexican labor movement. Over the past few months, its battle cry for defense of living standards and defense of sovereignty from creditor demands has won hegemony inside the PRI. Its position was recognized by President de la Madrid in his Feb. 21 speech, reiterated much more strongly June 2.

Fidel Velázquez, the head of the Confederation of Mexican Workers stated July 3, "PAN has shown itself to be a traitor to the Fatherland by provoking the interference of U.S. authorities in the internal affairs of Mexico." Velázquez moved on Chihuahua knowing that by giving PAN even a foothold in Chihuahua, to propitiate Mexico's "friends" in the United States, the country's sovereignty would be lost. With the overwhelming victory for the PRI's reluctant candidate, the party smashed whatever political deal Bartlett had cut during his secret meetings with top Wall Street strategists at Columbia University in New York.

Peruvian emissaries

Now, Mexico has greater freedom to take sovereign action on its debt. Mexico will be adamant in insisting that creditors accept the terms de la Madrid has outlined, which permit a bit of growth in 1987 and 1988. Its will is already being strengthened by Peruvian envoys.

From June 23 to July 5, Peruvian Congressman Wilbert Bendejú Carpio toured Mexico. He was sponsored by the international Schiller Institute of Helga Zepp-LaRouche. One of the most trusted partners of Peruvian President Alan García, Bendejú spoke at a dinner with 200 leaders of Mexico's powerful oilworkers' union, met with the Foreign Relations Commission of the Mexican House of Representatives, and addressed 80 students and teachers from the National Polytechnic Institute.

Again and again, the Mexican leaders listening to Bendejú expressed shock at the relative ease with which the economy of a nation may be ordered, once national interest is put first over debt payment, as the García government has done.

"How far can one go against the powerful economic interests without suffering reprisals?" asked one congressman from Sonora. Congressman Bendejú's answer was simple: Peru expects the support of the Ibero-American continent.