

## Dateline Mexico by Héctor Apolinar

### Chihuahua governor to resign?

*PRI leaders appear to have finally had it with Chihuahua boss Baeza and his PAN "amigos."*

Sources have it that the departure of Chihuahua governor Fernando Baeza is imminent, due to an intense pressure campaign from various old-line political and labor sectors of the PRI, who are disgusted with Baeza's efforts to turn Chihuahua state into a political laboratory of "bipartisan" rule with the fascist National Action Party (PAN).

The PRI campaign to oust Baeza was launched in earnest when it became evident that the Chihuahua governor was refusing to seriously combat the destabilization campaign of the PAN throughout that state. The complaint of the PRI opposition to Baeza is that while he is busy requesting "moderation and conciliation" from the PAN, that party's hoodlums are rioting in the streets, and involved in every possible act of provocation against the government, without any response from Baeza's office.

The PANista group in Chihuahua is the same which inaugurated a new political strategy for the party, namely, that of abandoning a policy of "loyal opposition" for one of open and radical confrontation with the government. This group is led by Francisco Barrio Terrazas, former PAN candidate for governor of Chihuahua, and Luis H. Alvarez, former Chihuahua city mayor and currently national PAN president.

Barrio and company are the group which hired the services of Irangate's top fundraiser, Carl "Spitz" Channell, to represent them in Washington through the public relations firm Clews Communications. The PAN group in Chihuahua is the brains behind the Ir-

angate "Mexico connection."

The PRI wants Baeza out not only for his failure to defend Mexico and the PRI "in times of war," but also because of his open collaboration with the enemy. In a June 10 interview with the Mexico City newspaper *El Universal*, Baeza confessed that Chihuahua was a laboratory for "bipartisanship" and warned the national leadership of the PRI, "We must mature in the exercise of public functioning." Baeza, a PANista in his youth, made a veiled reference to the refusal of the leading PRI leaders to accept co-rule with the PAN, as the U.S. government has demanded.

Baeza has not waited for "acceptance" to implement his own "co-rule" recommendations. He has stocked his state cabinet with so-called "em-PANizados" (disguised PAN followers), such as his secretary of communications and public works Luis Luján Peña, whose brother is a PAN state leader. As one journalist wrote in the June 12 issue of *El Sol de México*, Baeza has formed his government "with leading members or ex-members of the National Action Party, from the secretary general of government to more modest posts. The old-line PRIistas are simply removed from power. Now, the consequences are coming to light."

Just days earlier, violent confrontations had occurred between PAN hordes and police forces in the town of Jimenez, leaving one citizen dead. Immediately, PAN state leaders began to organize a series of protest acts, although it was common knowledge that it was the PAN itself which trig-

gered the provocations. Nonetheless, Baeza did not hesitate to meet with the PAN leaders.

Baeza's collaboration with the PAN is not coincidental, in view of the links to the drug trade that both he and the PAN share. Baeza has been unable to rid himself of the stigma of being a puppet of the so-called "Chihuahua Group" of Eloy S. Vallina, the notorious narco-banker who responded to the 1982 bank nationalization with the pledge, "They took our banks, but we'll take Chihuahua." Vallina's group heavily funds PAN activities in the state, and in view of his connections into both the PRI and PAN parties, exercises absolute control over state politics.

Nonetheless, Baeza has become increasingly isolated. According to rumors circulating within Mexico City government and press layers, Baeza has lost the backing of Defense Minister Gen. Juan Arévalo Gardoqui, and of several important politicians. Rumors made public June 12 by columnist José Cabrera Parra, who is linked to Interior Minister Manuel Bartlett, revealed that federal government strategists are now searching for someone to replace Baeza in the Chihuahua governorship.

According to Cabrera Parra, the government is seriously worried that the PAN could actually seize political power in Chihuahua, a key border state, with the support of the Mexican "Irangate" apparatus.

That Cabrera Parra is writing this about a governor whom Bartlett personally helped muscle into office suggests that Fernando Baeza's days are indeed numbered. If that is the case, Bartlett may lose his bid for the PRI presidential nomination as well, since he fought hard and dirty to get Baeza into office . . . and many PRIistas won't forget that.