

Dateline Mexico by Hugo López Ochoa

Who really governs the country?

On the eve of the presidential elections, the military opposes handing the country over to "multinational" groups.

I have always upheld my affiliation and my loyalty to the party which brought me to the presidency of the Republic. As a result, I continue to be a PRI militant and I hope the party wins," President Miguel de la Madrid announced on June 3. This declaration of loyalty to the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party seemed necessary, given what the aristocratic ex-banker Agustín Legorreta had implied on May 18, when he boasted that a small clique of businessmen imposed on the President the economic shock program he has applied since Dec. 15, 1987.

"The economically important decisions in Mexico are made by 300 people," said Legorreta, according to the daily *Unomasuno*.

It is significant that the President made his loyalty declaration two days after the armed forces, through Navy Secretary Adm. Miguel Ángel Gómez Ortega, pronounced against handing over the country to the aristocracy of bankers and speculators who have prostrated it for the past five years. Admiral Gómez told a public meeting including De la Madrid and his whole cabinet June 1, "This is not a republic of businessmen or of 300 powerbrokers, but one of citizens . . . because neither democracy nor government, neither economy nor politics, neither state nor armed forces, could be explained or understood here in our Fatherland without the people as the central subject."

The message was clear. Legorreta had also boasted, "We gave the government a deadline for cleaning up its finances . . . and [it] complied even before that," by selling state compa-

nies, as per the International Monetary Fund's debt-for-equity conversion scheme. Had it not done so, Legorreta claimed, inflation would have reached 1,000% in July and the PRI would have run "the risk of losing power."

Legorreta was most proud that the state decided to sell off Cananea Mining Co., the world's biggest copper mine, to Mexican businessmen backed by Midland Bank and Société Générale. In this regard, Admiral Gómez declared that the Navy "is not the armed force of any group, but of the nation's interests. It defends its territorial integrity and its sovereign rights and does not believe in any kind of multinationalization to the nation's detriment, much less in those who seek to replace the people as the sole repository of its sovereignty."

While de la Madrid and the PRI's candidate to succeed him as President, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, are busy denationalizing, Admiral Gómez praised President Gen. Lázaro Cárdenas, who nationalized the oil companies in 1938.

Only one month before the July 6 presidential elections, this reflects the life and death battle inside Mexico's ruling elite over the economic program which would prevail during the next administration. De la Madrid baptized Legorreta's economic program the Economic Solidarity Pact. One of its defenders, Mexican Ambassador to Japan Francisco Javier Alejo, admitted to the daily *La Jornada* May 12 that it was modeled on "the design of German minister Hjalmar Schacht," Hitler's economics minister.

But the recession worsened by this program has destroyed workers' incomes and caused industrialists and farmers to go bankrupt, which has left the PRI in danger of losing the base of its power.

Further doubts about de la Madrid's true loyalty to his party arose after Carlos Bazdrech, a top aide to the secretary of finance, revealed a plan for the PRI to "co-govern" with those 300 businessmen by conceding government posts to the "political right" in the elections.

The "political right" is the National Action Party (PAN), whose presidential candidate, Manuel J. Clouthier, on May 23 led actions of "civil disobedience" against the government, including blocking highways all over the country. "We are already governing, because to govern is to make oneself obeyed; and they are obeying us," said the triumphant Clouthier that day. He also asserted that the PRI's Salinas "robbed me of my program."

On May 18, the general secretary of the oil workers' union, Salvador Barragán Camacho, demanded that Salinas de Gortari expel from the government "the multimillionaires" who want to preserve the interests of the worst dictatorships Mexico has had. The day before, the oil workers' political chief, Joaquín Hernández Galicia, revealed that he had given Salinas an ultimatum to change his economic program.

"The people have had it . . . with five years of looting," he said. "The worst enemy you have is your boss," he said, in reference to the President. And, he warned Salinas, "if you don't change things in your electoral campaign, only Don Fidel Velázquez and I are going to vote for you." Fidel Velázquez, one of Mexico's top political figures, leads the labor section of the PRI.