

## Andean Report by Mark Sonnenblick

### Ecuador disrupts Ibero-American unity

*The Socialist International used the inauguration of its newest President to sow regional discord.*

**R**odrigo Borja's inauguration as President of Ecuador Aug. 10 was used by the Socialist International as a stage for disrupting the movement toward Ibero-American unity. Ever since plans were set for the Panama City "Meeting Toward the Second Amphictyonic Congress" at roughly the same time, Socialist International agents began building up the Borja inauguration as a counter-event.

Venezuelan ex-President and Fidel Castro confidant Carlos Andrés Pérez went to great lengths to upstage the Panama conference.

In an Aug. 10 radio address, Borja claimed, with some exaggeration, "This is the most important international meeting that ever took place in Latin America on the occasion of a presidential inauguration." The Cubans had the conflict between the events in Panama and Quito, Ecuador, on the top of their minds. Havana's Cubavision Television asked Fidel Castro Aug. 11, "When Simón Bolívar called for the amphictyonic congress in Panama in one of his letters, he thought of the city of Quito as an alternative to Panama. What do you think?" Castro replied, "If you ask me to vote, I would vote for Quito."

Reagan and Gorbachov agreed at the Moscow summit that Cuba be reintegrated into hemispheric diplomatic affairs. Borja provided Fidel Castro with his first invitation to South America since 1971, giving him an excellent chance to meet a half-dozen Presidents, including Colombia's Virgilio Barco. Barco's Liberal Party decided, just four days after that meeting, to join the Socialist International.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega was another honored guest. As one of his first acts of office, Borja restored diplomatic relations with the Sandinistas, which had been broken by his predecessor.

Integration among the non-communist Ibero-American states, however, did not fare so well. Borja used his inauguration speech to fan the embers of a long-resolved border dispute with Peru. He declared, "We want to settle the territorial dispute that we have had with Peru for such a long time. The existence of this conflict precludes the possibility of attaining economic and social development in the two countries." He demanded "respect for our rights in the Amazon region." The "dispute" had been settled by the Peace and Border Friendship Treaty, signed in Rio de Janeiro in 1942.

Suspecting that Borja might pull such a stunt, Peruvian President Alan García did not go to the inauguration. But he sent a hefty delegation, including Vice President Luis Alberto Sánchez. Sánchez later noted, "an hour and a half to go, news arrived that the speech President Borja was to give had a paragraph alluding to Peru, which is a question which for us is completely settled within a juridical framework." He tried to get the paragraph omitted, but "it was not possible to get any results and, therefore, we did not attend" the ceremony.

Peruvian Foreign Minister Luis González Posada added that Peru's attending the Borja inauguration would have meant accepting his demands in respect to presumed rights over Ama-

zon territories. He stressed the key point: The continent faces much more serious problems, such as foreign debts, narcotics traffic, and terrorism. "We should solidly join together on those themes for what we consider defense of the continent," he insisted. "We seek to add, not to subtract; we seek to multiply, not to divide; and that is our position."

In a speech to his countrymen, Alan García also nailed Borja for his effort to sabotage the historic movement to unite Ibero-America: "To affirm, reiterate, and repeat that there is a conflict after having signed a treaty accepted and guaranteed by other countries, does not contribute to the integration and harmony of the peoples."

García's statement highlights how an arcane border question, which on the surface appears to just be Borja throwing a chauvinist bone to his country's nationalists, has much graver implications. The Rio Protocol signed by Ecuador and Peru in 1942 is guaranteed by four countries: the United States, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. If Ecuador could get away with unilaterally abrogating that treaty, it would provide a very dangerous precedent for the United States to try to abrogate the 1977 Panama Canal Treaties, despite their being guaranteed by 22 other republics.

In the 19th century, England used "balance of power" schemes to "divide and conquer" South America. Today, border conflicts between neighbors play much the same divisive role for Henry Kissinger's geopolitical strategems. His protégé David Ronfeldt elaborated in mid-1970s RAND Corp. studies how to manipulate a "Second War of the Pacific" in South America. Every time regional integration advances, long-forgotten border conflicts spring back to life like a phoenix.