

Dateline Mexico by Hugo López Ochoa

Drug legalizers out of the closet

Following the assassination of Cardinal Posadas Ocampo, the clamor for drug legalization has become deafening.

Shortly before the May 24 assassination of Cardinal Juan Jesús Posadas Ocampo at the Guadalajara airport, Mexican Attorney General Jorge Carpizo caused a scandal with a public announcement that his office would be investigating a list of journalists suspected of ties to the drug trade. His comments naturally unleashed a flood of speculation over possible names of the allegedly pro-narcotics journalists under investigation, at the same time that all of Mexico's national dailies published editorials attacking Carpizo because his comments reportedly damaged the reputation of the entire field of journalism by virtue of his failure to name the names.

And yet, even as they were complaining about Carpizo's announcement, many of these same newspapers have handed over their editorial pages and opinion columns to open defenders of the legalized cultivation and trade of narcotics, thereby proving that their complaints are nothing but "crocodile tears."

As was demonstrated to be the case in Colombia, where numerous outspoken advocates of drug legalization in 1989 proved to be on the payroll of either the drug cartels or the drug mafia-controlled politicians, the Mexican media doth perhaps protest too much.

We are not interested in speculating about the names to which Carpizo refers, because the partial list of journalists and politicians which we publish below is based on hard fact, on the written and signed statements of the individuals themselves. It were

well if the attorney general were to begin by investigating these individuals, presenting the nation with a report of his findings and proceeding to legally prosecute the guilty.

If he does not, his office's declared war on narco-journalism will have been proven to be a farce, just as much so as the government's prosecution of the drug lords who are alleged to be implicated in the murder of Cardinal Posadas Ocampo. This prosecution appears to be, at best, part of a factional battle among mafiosi controlled from the highest levels of government.

In this sense, the statements of Foreign Minister Fernando Solana, made to the daily *Unomásuno* on May 28, are revealing. According to the newspaper's coverage, Solana stated that "Mexico will ask the United States to legalize consumption of drugs as a way to discourage the drug trade and its criminal effects, which Solana insisted would be one of the alternatives under consideration by a study group that Mexico and Germany have demanded be set up in the United Nations."

According to *Unomásuno*, Solana "indicated that this group will consider many alternatives, and is open to any possibility that will allow this cancer of modern society to be cured."

If *Unomásuno's* report is true, it would not be the first time that such statements have come from high-level government officials. In 1989, both the Mexican ambassador to China Jorge Eduardo Navarrete and foreign affairs legal consultant Alberto Szeke-

li came out for drug legalization, according to *Tiempo* magazine of Sept. 14, 1989 and a Notimex report published in Peru's *El Nacional* in January of that same year.

What can one say of the fact that within the attorney general's office (PGR) itself, there are government officials who have come out openly for the legalization strategy, and yet have not been denounced or fired. This is the case, for example, of PGR representative Teresa Jardi of Chihuahua state, whose pro-legalization statements were covered by the magazine *Contenido* and the newspaper *El Heraldo* of Chihuahua, on Feb. 15 and March 4 of this year.

The list of journalists who have urged the option of drug legalization, using the pretext that the drug traffickers are too powerful to defeat, includes:

Miguel Angel Granados Chapa, Margarita Michelena, Mauricio González de la Garza, Jesús Vergara Aceves, Rodrigo Calvillo, Marco Antonio Vázquez Espinoza, Eduardo R. Huchim, Manu Dornbierer, Luis Pasos, Antonio Haas, Guillermo Ibarra R., Eva Tecuanhuey, Tomás Garza, Hugo Garavito Amezaga, and José Matos Mar.

Then, of course, there are the opposition politicians who dance to the same tune:

Diego Fernández de Ceballos (PAN); Rafael Aguilar Talamantes and the entire congressional bloc of the PFCRN (Party of the Cardenist Front of National Reconstruction); Ifigenia Martínez de Navarrete; and so on.

Given the state of war this country is in with the drug trade, can all these pro-legalization advocates merely be exercising their right of free speech, or are they perhaps receiving orders and stipends from drug traffickers protected from above?