

Dateline Mexico by Carlos Méndez

Cárdenas and Iran-Contra

Why hasn't the PRD presidential candidate responded to charges that he took part in Ollie North's arms trafficking?

Despite the numerous public reports that Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas participated in the CIA's Iran-Contra operation, the candidate of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and member of the pro-terrorist São Paulo Forum remains absolutely silent on the matter.

On April 15, *Novedades* columnist Juan Ruiz Healy reproduced in his "A Fondo" column the open letter of Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) leader Mariví Carrasco, in which she demands that Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas clarify the charges against him.

The letter says: "In the context of the enormous campaign by British intelligence and its collaborators in the United States to overthrow President Bill Clinton, unleashed by, among others, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, your name as governor of Michoacán has emerged as a participant along with former U.S. President George Bush and Lt. Col. Oliver North in the arms and weapons trafficking between the United States and Central America, known as the 'Iran-Contra' operation.

"In the recently published book *Compromised: Clinton, Bush and the CIA*, written by Terry Reed and John Cummings (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1994), the operations of the 'Iran-Contra' case in Mexico are described. As is documented, these included the trafficking of weapons for the Nicaraguan 'Contras' and of drugs into the United States through the Guadalajara airport. Terry Reed, implicated in those operations and a co-

author of the book, relates how he met with you at the beach resort of Zira-huén Lake, and that you were introduced by CIA agent Félix Rodríguez, who operated under the pseudonym Max Gómez, accompanied by Pat Weber, which was the pseudonym of Amiram Nir, who died in an airplane accident on Nov. 23, 1988 in Ciudad Hidalgo, Michoacán.

"In the book *Compromised*, Terry Reed notes that Bush agent Max Gómez told him the following: 'Look, let me present you to Mr. Cárdenas,' Gómez said. . . . 'He is a very important man in the Mexican government. His father was President of Mexico. But don't forget, we have him in our pocket. Personally, I am paying him a lot of Agency money to make this project work. Don't pay attention to his regal attitude during the meeting today. He's ours' (page 323). According to Reed, the meeting was about the establishment in Michoacán of the company Maquinaria Internacional, which would manufacture weapons parts.

"Because of the gravity of these public accusations, and the fact that it has become a scandal inside the United States and internationally—a virtual 'Bushgate'—we believe that you are obliged to clarify this matter before the public as quickly as possible."

Columnist Ruiz Healy, for his part, asked: "How much truth is there in the statements of these sources. . . ? Should the PRD candidate respond to these accusations? If he doesn't, will it be the equivalent of accepting the charges of his detractors? Have we reached the point in our country of hav-

ing a collaborator of the CIA as the candidate of a national party?"

On April 16, the newspaper *El Heraldo de México* editorially commented that "a charge of this nature, no matter what the sources, requires a full explanation from Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas to the nation. Not to do so would always leave doubts." On April 20, this same daily published an article entitled "Cárdenas, Drugs, and Weapons," by Vladimir Rothschuh, who writes that "the dark past of the PRD appeared to have been overcome, until last week when the leader of this party, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, was implicated in the dirty Iran-Contra war. The book *Compromised*, by Terry Reed, relates how Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was bought by the CIA while governor of Michoacán, to facilitate the creation of a weapons-part-manufacturing plant in the area."

After linking together the Basque terrorist ETA, the Lázaro Cárdenas Foundation, the Zapatista National Liberation Army, Bishop Samuel Ruiz, and the PRD, Rothschuh concludes: "To what degree is the Terry Reed book the missing piece of the puzzle?"

In statements to the daily *La Jornada* of April 27, Sen. Miguel Alemán Velasco, son of former Mexican President Miguel Alemán, declared that the current kidnappings in Mexico are not political, but strictly business. He explained that "there already existed a list of 'kidnappables' in Nicaragua. Wasn't that a business there, which went even into Guatemala and in which those weapons ended up in Chiapas and were sold here and everywhere? There are many books which could provide information on this, primarily one called *Compromised*, which describes the entire Iran-Contra route, and in which the names of some Mexican governors appear on the lists."