

# Destabilization threat still live in Mexico

by Valerie Rush

The specter of destabilization, which the Mexican electorate had hoped to banish with their vote for institutional stability on Aug. 21, has risen once again, as the shock-troops of the narco-terrorist São Paulo Forum re-take the warpath, especially in the southern state of Chiapas. In just a few short weeks, armed militants of the opposition leftist PRD party of defeated presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas have joined with thousands of gulled peasants and Indians under the control of the terrorist Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) to sow chaos and, in all likelihood, armed confrontation that could lead to civil war.

In the wake of the August presidential elections, which resulted in an overwhelming victory for ruling PRI party candidate Ernesto Zedillo, both Cárdenas and EZLN chief-tain "Sub-Commander Marcos" issued statements denouncing the electoral results as "fraudulent" and warning the government of unforeseen consequences if it did not step down. As Cárdenas put it in an interview with *Proceso* magazine in early September, President-elect Zedillo is a "usurper." "This is a fight without end," Cárdenas said. "If we can prevent these electoral results from being imposed, if we can have a new election called, if we can prevent someone without legitimacy from being seated in the presidency of the republic, this is the direction we must follow."

"Sub-Commander Marcos" was more explicit. The vote results, both nationally and in the Chiapas gubernatorial race, were "unacceptable," and unless the government retreated, there would be "a bloodbath," he said.

## Blowing up Chiapas

The Chiapas situation is, once again, the trigger point for an intended destabilization which could rapidly spread across the nation. The electoral defeat of PRD gubernatorial candidate Amado Avendaño in this volatile state has been denounced both by the EZLN's forces and by the PRD, and PRI governor-elect Eduardo Robledo has been warned to withdraw before his December inauguration, or else. PRD national president Porfirio Muñoz Ledo threatened, "If the government doesn't take care, it will ignite the flame." Avendaño insisted that he would not take "one step back," and warned that it would be "a serious error" to inaugurate Robledo. He raised the possibility of Chiapas separating from

the rest of Mexico.

There has been a flood of land takeovers, marches, and street protests in Chiapas, promoted by Zapatista front groups such as the Emiliano Zapata Proletarian Organization (OPEZ). During the last week in August, armed PRD militants took over several cattle ranches, threatening to slaughter beef herds if the militants were not provided food, clothing, and chunks of the property. Some farmers, including owners of as few as five hectares, were beaten. These acts of violence and blackmail have enraged cattlemen and farmers, prompting them to form their own private defense forces—increasing already high tensions.

On Aug. 31, the EZLN issued an open letter to Robledo, published in the dailies *La Jornada* and *El Financiero*, in which Chiapas cattlemen who have been hiring private guards to protect their properties are threateningly urged to offer the guards much more money, because "now their wages are very little for ending up with a Zapatista bullet between the eyes. They should ask for a wage hike and life insurance, so that there will be something for their widows."

And on Sept. 4, more than 20,000 Indians and peasants organized by OPEZ and related terrorist front groups blocked the main highways and bridges of the state, including the Pan-American Highway leading into Guatemala, while PRD militants took over radio stations and mayoral offices and read statements demanding recognition of Avendaño as governor. On Sept. 6, a PRD leader in Chiapas was assassinated.

## Narco-terrorist links are continental

These efforts to re-ignite a Chiapas insurgency are part of a broader scenario being run by the Cuba-spawned São Paulo Forum to plunge as many Ibero-American countries as possible into chaos. Both the EZLN and Cárdenas's PRD party are members of the Forum, as are pro-terrorist and terrorist organizations in a number of other countries, including Peru, Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Brazil. It is no accident, for example, that the Mexican police discovered a propaganda cache of the Peruvian Shining Path in the heart of Mexico City in August. The Mexican citizen arrested at the site confessed to using his position as a secondary-school teacher to print up the terrorist literature and to recruit children from the school.

At the same time, *El Herald* journalist Leopoldo Mendivil charged in a column that the "philosophical" center of operations of Shining Path was a Mexico City convent of the "Sisters of the Sacred Word," which just happens to be financed by the diocese of Bishop Samuel Ruiz of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. Bishop Ruiz, a leader of the existentialist Theology of Liberation in Mexico, is the *éminence grise* of the Zapatista Liberation Army in that state.

With the outgoing government of Mexican President Carlos Salinas having to contend with a narco-scandal and bank crisis, renewed fighting in Chiapas could indeed "ignite the flame," as the PRD's Muñoz Ledo has threatened.