

Calderón Has That Old Sinking Feeling

by Dennis Small

This week's "Impeccably Bad Timing Award" was won, hands down, by Mexico's official President-elect Felipe Calderón, who arrived in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 8 for a high-profile, two-day visit with U.S. President George Bush—one day after the Bush-Cheney Administration's spectacular drubbing at the polls in the U.S. midterm elections. One is reminded of the glassy-eyed matron on the *Titanic*, who steps onto the ballroom floor and insists on dancing with the ship's captain—at exactly the point that the *Titanic* is going under. You have to wonder which of the two is crazier.

But then again, Calderón's dance card isn't exactly over-subscribed these days. In fact, the man who was proclaimed the official winner of the July 2 Presidential elections in Mexico, after fraud and irregularities on a scale that even made Karl Rove blush with pride, can hardly show his face in public in Mexico, without a gigantic security deployment that militarily occupies the conference hall or meeting place before he arrives. He is hated by the population.

For example, the day before leaving for Washington, Calderón was whisked into a meeting with businessmen of the Mexican Foreign Trade Council, where he proclaimed that his administration would concentrate on fighting "crime and terrorism," and that this battle "could even cost human lives." Given that Calderón's international Synarchist sponsors have instructed him to follow the Bush-Cheney lead in all matters, some in Mexico were left wondering if this newly announced war on terrorism would also include water-boarding and other torture techniques pioneered by Dick Cheney et al.

Calderón and his handlers have been very tight with the Bush Administration, and those behind it, for some time. For example, on Sept. 12-14, Calderón's top foreign policy advisors, including Arturo Sarukhan, participated prominently in a forum in Alberta, Canada, on the "deep integration" of the U.S. and Mexico on the energy and military fronts, which was co-chaired by none other than George Shultz, the godfather of the Bush-Cheney Administration.

Calderón, alas, is not alone.

First and second runner-up for the "Bad Timing" award were also won by Ibero-American governments which, like Mexico, have ignored Lyndon LaRouche's warnings about the end of globalization, and have chosen instead to jump on board the *Titanic* with all four feet. For example, Colombian

President Alvaro Uribe is also scheduled to visit Washington in mid-November, to lobby the Administration and Congress for rapid approval of a suicidal Free Trade Agreement that he has been negotiating with the United States. As we explain elsewhere in this issue, one of the significant facets of the U.S. elections was that they were a mandate *against* free-trade economics—a fact which President Uribe is about to learn, the hard way.

And then there's the case of Peruvian President Alan García, who is also desperate to drink the poison of a free-trade accord with the United States, and has named the ultra-free-trader Hernando de Soto as his representative to negotiate the matter with the United States. De Soto was also scheduled to travel to Washington in mid-November on that assignment, and had a scheduled meeting with . . . none other than Donald Rumsfeld. Oops.

'Two Governments'

While Mexico's illegitimate President-elect Calderón was in Washington, waltzing on the deck of the *Titanic*, the man who actually won the July 2 elections, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, was touring Mexico and meeting with the country's poor. López Obrador has launched a national organizing tour across Mexico's 2,500 municipalities in the lead-up to his announced inauguration as "legitimate President of Mexico" on Nov. 20.

Speaking on Nov. 3, López Obrador stated forcefully that "the neo-fascist right wing is mistaken, if they think that they will hold power until the year 2030." He went on to explain that the mission of the legitimate government which he will head is to protect the Mexican people from foreign-dictated "structural reforms," the dismantling of the social protection system set up by the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and the looting of the national patrimony, which the "dogmatic and fundamentalist" power elite is determined to continue. This is a reference to international financial circles' insistence on the privatization of Mexico's national oil company, Pemex, and the Federal Electricity Commission.

This is not going to be a "symbolic," or shadow government, he explained, but "a government truly of the people, for the people, and with the people. . . . Let it be heard far and wide: the defense of the interests of the people and of the national patrimony do not permit wavering or indecisiveness."

López Obrador repeated this message on Nov. 5, at rallies in three cities in the state of Hidalgo, which drew 2,000, 1,000, and 5,000 supporters, respectively—orders of magnitude more than Calderón is capable of mobilizing. López Obrador explained that, as of Dec. 1, when Calderón is scheduled to be inaugurated, "there will be two governments: a spurious one with its puppet President, and a legitimate one, that of the Mexican people."

The elections in the United States have brought López Obrador's promise that much closer to becoming reality.