

IV. The battle over Mexico's foreign policy

by Elsa Ennis

On Jan. 5, President-elect Ronald Reagan will meet Mexican President José López Portillo on the bridge that links El Paso, Texas, with its Mexican "sister city," Ciudad Juarez. The place of encounter symbolizes the opportunity Ronald Reagan now has to reverse the Carter administration's opposition to Mexico's industrialization, a policy that has taken Mexico-U.S. relations to their lowest point in 50 years. Should Ronald Reagan assure the Mexican leader that he will reject Zbigniew Brzezinski's now-famous vow not to permit the rising of "another Japan south of the border," and that he will promote an oil-for-technology policy as the baseline for the two countries' relations, this could not only turn U.S.-Mexico relations around overnight, but also lay the basis for Reagan's overall policy toward the developing sector.

Nonetheless, while each leader prepares to take advantage of this opportunity, political factions in both the Reagan transition team and the Mexican government are hastily working to spoil the summit and set the two leaders up for confrontations and misunderstandings over a series of issues.

The sabotage work is being done from three main flanks:

- The insistence by some Reagan advisers—grouped around National Security Adviser-designate Richard Allen—on making a "North American Accord" the basis U.S.-Mexico relations.

- The attempt by the Socialist International and their conduits to make the explosive crisis in El Salvador a top agenda item for the two leaders, to the point of even forcing them to line up on opposing sides of that country's civil war. The Socialist International's main inside operative in this wrecking job is Mexico's Foreign Minister, Jorge Castañeda, and his networks within that ministry.

- A desperate last-minute effort by these networks to make a minor U.S.-Mexico disagreement on bilateral fishing treaties a major point of confrontation between the two countries.

The 'North American Accord'

In announcing the summit meeting in a press conference Dec. 18 Richard Allen said the meeting "comports

well with the initial statement at the time of Governor Reagan's announcement that his desire was to seek a North American Accord."

This "accord" is a variant of Zbigniew Brzezinski's concept of a "North American Common Market" to be formed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States, which has been repeatedly rejected by the Mexican government. In a speech delivered to the Canadian parliament in May 1980, President López Portillo categorically stated that "the creation of such an entity would inevitably hinder our industrial development [and condemn] Mexico to perpetually extract and export raw materials for consumption by more advanced societies."

Although Mexico's feelings about the "common market" have been expressed loudly, several Reagan advisers—and the President-elect himself—have persisted in promoting it.

In his announcement to the press Dec. 18, Allen even indicated that there have been discussions with European leaders aimed at convincing them of the benefits of such an accord. According to Allen, "The Europeans . . . feel very comfortable about the United States' developing policies that will bring about a very good-neighbor relationship on the continent of North America."

The El Salvador trap

While President López Portillo has expressed concern over his "noncoincidence" with Ronald Reagan on Central America, his foreign minister, Castañeda, is going out of his way to make these differences into a fundamental division.

He has even publicly defied López Portillo's stated policy toward El Salvador by assuring the left-wing opposition of nonintervention, and encouraging their forces there to step up their offensive and set up a "regional government." In an interview in the Mexican magazine *Proceso* in December, Castañeda went to the point of stating that Mexico has virtually made the decision to break relations with the Salvadorean government and only awaits the guerrillas to take and hold a territorial seat to announce the break.

Right after the *Proceso* interview was made public,

President López Portillo expressed a totally different perspective for El Salvador in an interview with the foreign press, in what most observers viewed as a public reprimand of his own foreign minister.

In the same interview, López Portillo sidestepped journalists' attempts to force him to attack Reagan's so-called right-wing, militarist positions toward Central America, saying that he could not comment on the subject because he did not yet know the Reagan administration's policies toward that region. "That's what I will find out" at the Ciudad Juarez meeting, he said.

Castañeda's fishy business

Those who hope to sabotage the U.S.-Mexico talks apparently decided in late December that they had not yet succeeded in derailing the potential for an oil-for-technology accord, and so they moved to throw in a last-minute monkey wrench.

On Dec. 29, the *New York Times* Mexico correspondent, Alan Riding, a known opponent of Mexico's modernization drive, broke the news that the Mexican government had decided to terminate all fishing accords with the United States. Riding's source for the "shocking revelation" cited in his report was his friend Andrés Rozental—stepson of Castañeda, and the foreign ministry official in charge of preparing the Reagan-López Portillo meeting from the Mexican side! Riding quoted his inside sources "predicting" that the Mexican decision could "provoke a new storm in relations," and that it could be "high on the agenda" in the Ciudad Juarez meeting.

That same day, the *Washington Post* Mexico correspondent, Marlise Simons (who is Mrs. Alan Riding), ran a front-page story on how the Reagan team was causing "embarrassment" to the Mexican government by cutting Carter administration officials out of the Reagan-López Portillo meeting. The story was immediately picked up by several U.S. national radio and newspaper networks. Simons's source: "Mexican officials preparing the talks."

'Provocations'

A furious official in the Mexican embassy in Washington, reached by the *Executive Intelligence Review* this week, denounced both stories as totally fraudulent. In the fishing treaties, he said, all that was involved was a formal notification by Mexico to the United States that it did not wish to renew existing treaties and wanted to negotiate new ones—a mutually agreed upon approach.

As for Mexico's supposed embarrassment over the Reagan team's exclusion of Carter officials, the Mexican official said: "That's ridiculous," since the Reagan-López Portillo meeting will be an informal exchange of views. "These articles are provocations," he concluded.

Documentation

López Portillo versus Castañeda

Since he was named foreign minister in May 1979, Jorge Castañeda has tried to channel Mexican foreign policy away from President López Portillo's prodevelopment orientation and toward a zero-growth, North versus South confrontationist perspective. Castañeda has worked on this closely with the Socialist International, and with the Brandt Commission in particular.

The following quotes taken from Castañeda's interview in the Dec. 17 issue of the Mexican magazine *Proceso*, and from López Portillo's interview with the foreign press Dec. 20, indicate the depth of the rift.

On El Salvador:

Castañeda: A premature break [in Mexican relations with El Salvador] would not serve the political objective one is seeking. . . . It is a question of waiting for the opportune moment. . . . The struggle has not yet taken on the requisite characteristics to be able to recognize, for example, the "belligerent" status of the opposition, since it has no territorial seat, nor is it habitually obeyed by a sector of the population in a specific zone.

López Portillo: Political problems are largely results of economic problems which have not been resolved. . . . This is basically the reason why Mexico continues being supportive of this neighboring region whose history and destiny are our own. We will maintain relations with El Salvador according to the principles of the Estrada Doctrine [non-intervention in foreign countries] and we have not found sufficient reason to either exercise or terminate our diplomatic representation there.

On the Brandt Commission:

Castañeda: According to *Proceso*, "Jorge Castañeda highlights the Brandt Report as a 'promising sign.' Its recommendations, he says, are not altruistic; they are pragmatic; they intend to prevent a crisis of broader consequences. He thinks the assertion that the Brandt Report follows a World Bank plan is unfounded: 'There's no way to prove that. I can't believe that Brandt, Kreisky, or Palme are following a World Bank plan. Some, like Heath or Frei, may be. But that doesn't show that all are.

"The original idea [of the Mexico June summit

meeting] was taken from the Brandt Report which proposed a summit meeting. Then, President López Portillo turned it into a political initiative. Thus he cut the umbilical cord linking the proposal with Brandt; he depersonalized it. Mexican-Austrian contact was set up and, concretely, Kreisky and López Portillo began to flesh out this possible scenario and how it would be organized.' ”

López Portillo: If the June meeting actually takes place . . . what we basically expect is what we could call a symbolic contact of political will at the highest level. . . . For these reasons, Mexico took the risk of becoming one of the sponsors and protagonists of this possible meeting.



Castañeda and family: a political dossier

On Dec. 30, the Mexican political scene was shaken by an uproarious rally in front of the National Congress demanding the ouster of Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda.

The rally, led by the Mexican Labor Party (PLM), rapidly polarized the congressmen around the PLM's denunciation of Castañeda's treasonous support for the Socialist International's zero-growth perspective for the Third World, and his blatant deviation from President López Portillo's foreign policy directions. The PLM also drew attention to Castañeda's known proclivities to consume excessive quantities of alcohol with jokes about his close relationship to "Willy Brandy."

According to political observers, the polarization

Jorge Castañeda (l) with Kurt Waldheim of the United Nations.

around the Castañeda case is now shaking the cabinet itself.

A review of Castañeda's political pedigree—and that of his family—gives a good idea why he has become the center of such a heated controversy in the Mexican political scene.

Jorge Castañeda, Sr. is the chief asset of the Socialist International in the Mexican government.

A leading proponent of one-world international jurisprudence, Castañeda is a 25-year collaborator of the British-Canadian Special Operations Executive (SOE) unit headed by Major Louis M. Bloomfield, through his involvement as an associate member in the Bloomfield-founded International Law Association of the United Nations. Bloomfield and his associates in the ILA are notorious for their links to the Permanent Industrial Expositions (Permindex), an organization cited in American and French judicial investigations as the agency responsible for planning President Kennedy's assassination and multiple assassination attempts against French President Charles de Gaulle.

Mrs. Rozental de Castañeda is the second wife of the foreign minister, and is part of the Eastern European exile group around Bloomfield. She is a Russian-born Canadian whose primary allegiance is to the Zionist movement she organizes for.

Andrés Rozental is the foreign minister's stepson and also the director of North American Affairs in the foreign ministry.

He is currently in charge of preparing the López Portillo-Reagan meeting. Rozental is on intimate terms with the *New York Times's* Mexico correspondent, Alan Riding, who has gained notoriety in the country for his outrageous opposition to its industrialization.

Right after the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution, Rozental was sent to that country to set up diplomatic relations with the new government. According to highly placed Nicaraguan government sources, negotiating with Rozental proved a unique experience: more than Mexico's, he seemed to be Israel's ambassador.

Jorge Castañeda, Jr. is the family hand in the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), the country's most rabid supporters of drug legalization, homosexuality, and zero growth. PCM leader Jorge, Jr. played a key role in a recent factional fight aimed at rallying that party totally behind this perspective.

Castañeda Jr.'s articles in the PCM's tabloid *Machete* and in the Jesuit-led daily *Uno mas Uno*, were a crucial vehicle for ousting those party members who opposed this orientation.