

Juggling act confronts S. Korea's President

by Lydia Cherry

As a result of South Korean President Noh Tae Woo's adeptness in "keeping the ship afloat" since his election at the beginning of the year, the Republic of Korea is not only still standing, but has moved in the direction of cooling out the time bomb on its northern border—the closed society of Kim Il-Sung. Noh has accomplished this while at the same time dodging the bullets of a Soviet-directed irregular warfare capability on his own soil—groups that are the creation of the day-to-day funding, training, and ideologies of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and allied institutions abroad.

Although he is the hand-picked successor of former President Chun Doo Hwan, Noh, a former army general, had intervened to cool out the summer riots of 1987, prior to coming into office, by calling for "the first democratic elections in 40 years." As 1988 began, Noh won that election, and took office Feb. 25.

In parliamentary elections held April 26, however, the ruling party suffered a surprising setback, failing to win a majority in the National Assembly. The party of radical firebrand Kim Dae-Jung—the front man for the shifting underground groups aligned with the WCC—rose from an underdog position to become the clear leader of the opposition forces. As a result, the clamor in the streets got louder.

As the banner of the 1987 student and dissident riots had been "Democracy," so their banners in 1988 read, "Reunification" and "Get U.S. Troops Off the Peninsula." The pundits of the major press in the United States and elsewhere claimed that the demand for reunification and increasing anti-American sentiment represented a natural deepening of the Korean nationalist movement. Budget-cutting mania in Washington added fuel to the dissidents' calls for U.S. disengagement. Noh Tae Woo was emphatic that the U.S. troops were still needed in Korea, and as Michael Dukakis became the U.S. Democratic presidential nominee, calling for U.S. troop withdrawals, Noh politely attacked him, saying that even Jimmy Carter, once elected and forced to be "responsible," gave up that careless notion.

The United States and Japan shared South Korean concern that North Korea's Kim Il-Sung regime might well follow through in its threats to turn the September Olympics into a bloodbath. What later became known as Noh Tae Woo's "Northern Policy" was only in embryonic form prior to the Olympics. But during the summer, Noh made overtures to the North for economic cooperation, and also made over-

tures to the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union for the successful holding of the games.

Noh then used the international prestige brought to South Korea as a result of the games as a diplomatic springboard to embark on a foreign policy revolution aimed at bringing about the eventual reunification of the divided peninsula—implicitly under the hegemony of the South. Speaking at the United Nations Oct. 4, Noh issued his offer to the impoverished North: "I have taken concrete steps to pave the way for free trade between the northern and southern sides of Korea. We must transform the North-South Korean relationship, so that we can reconnect every roadway, whether a major highway or a little path, linking the two sides which remains disconnected now." It was clear that "reconnecting every roadway" implied a massive effort from the economically successful South to develop the Northern economy, since the paved roads of South Korea abruptly turn into rubble dirt roads, as soon as the border is crossed.

Bhutto hopes to unify Pakistan

by Lydia Cherry

On Dec. 1, Benazir Bhutto Zardari was named Pakistan's new prime minister after national elections Nov. 16 that brought democracy to Pakistan for the first time in 11 years. Bhutto's Pakistani People's Party had polled the largest number of seats in the parliamentary elections, winning nearly double the number taken by her chief opponents organized in the Islamic Democratic Alliance, a party formed mostly of military chiefs organized around the legacy of the late President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq. Zia was killed in a suspicious airplane crash on Aug. 17.

The peaceful conditions in which the elections were held showed the degree to which Pakistan's elites—from Mrs. Bhutto to the military leadership that overthrew and judicially murdered her father—jointly acted to ensure a smooth transition of power. The outcome might have been much different; the near-daily Soviet air attacks on Pakistani villages from Afghanistan and the rise of social chaos and ethnic violence within Pakistani borders, had created the conditions for Pakistan's disintegration.

In her acceptance speech Dec. 8, Mrs. Bhutto saluted "President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the armed forces chief for doing whatever they could for restoring democracy after the incident Aug. 17." Bhutto said Pakistan has been torn apart by linguistic, ethnic, and sectarian strife, which she said she would do everything in her power to end.

Several weeks later, the acting President Ghulam Ishaq

Khan was elected—with the support of Bhutto's party—as President. While keeping the post of finance minister for herself, Bhutto retained Pakistan's most eminent foreign policy leader, Yaqub Khan, as foreign minister.

Although the Soviet Union made no attempt to hide its enmity with Zia ul-Haq, it is evidently not pleased with Mrs. Bhutto's emergence either. The *Patriot*, newspaper of the Indian Communist Party, on Dec. 6 called Bhutto a "captive." "Compulsions have transformed Ms. Bhutto into a captive prime minister who is dependent on many factors for her survival in power," wrote the *Patriot*.

Despite the fact that her brothers were involved in Soviet-directed terrorism, Mrs. Bhutto has indicated that she has no intention of turning Pakistan into a Soviet puppet. She has been emphatic that the only solution for Afghanistan is for the Soviets "to get out!" Pakistan immediately rejected Soviet President Gorbachov's proposals for a ceasefire and subsequent negotiations for a government in Kabul, as a ploy to place conditions on Moscow's promise to execute a full withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan by Feb. 15, 1989.

It is hoped that Mrs. Bhutto's coming to Islamabad will bring about an improvement in relations with India. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi sent warm congratulations to her on Dec. 2.

Benazir Bhutto's major electoral commitment, to turn around "economic policies based on wrong thinking" because "we are on the brink of catastrophe," promises to put her in head-to-head conflict with the International Monetary Fund. She has thus far said she hopes to delay Pakistan's answer on the conditions put forward by the IMF for an \$800 million restructuring facility until June. "Alternatively, as our hands and feet have already been bound [by the IMF], let this be the last legacy of the last regime."

Her other pledge to deal harshly with Pakistan's drug economy and the destabilization factor emanating from this is already putting her government to the test. Six people died in drug-related riots in the port city of Karachi on Dec. 14.

Mexico: the elections of classical tragedy

by Hugo López Ochoa

Wall Street financial circles are still reeling from the panic that hit them with the results of the presidential elections of July 6, 1988 in Mexico. Ever since Dec. 1, when Carlos Salinas de Gortari, of the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), took office as President, Mexican policy has been determined and will continue to be for the immediate future, by the fact that on July 6 the party which has ruled Mexico

since 1929 was on the verge of losing power.

On that historic day, the voters went to the polls and overwhelmingly chose the nationalist presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who, supported by a coalition grouped under the National Democratic Front (FDN), offered a program to "save national sovereignty" from the hands of Mexico's creditors and to launch an economic recovery based on freeing up resources which are now earmarked to pay foreign debt.

The PRI did prevail, but it is clear that the country faces a mass strike process in which the old "dirty tricks" and classic "rules of the game" by which the ruling party used to control the opposition, buy it off, or blackmail it, while keeping its own ranks in line, no longer works. The Cárdenas vote was not a vote for an opposition party, but the expression of a Mexican cultural paradigm which reaches beyond the parties, crosses artificial divisions of "right" or "left," and expresses itself inside and outside the established institutions. This cultural paradigm is expressed in the 1917 Constitution, the outcome of a Revolution that cost 1 million lives early in this century, and which is summed up in the beautiful Article 3: "Democracy [is] not only a juridical structure and a political regime, but . . . a way of life founded upon the constant economic, social, and cultural betterment of the people."

The President of Mexico in this century who did the most to advance this precept was Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's father, President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40). Lázaro Cárdenas, in the course of his policies of agrarian reform, nationalization of oil and other strategic areas, and accelerated industrial growth, clashed with the oligarchist clique of Plutarco Elías Calles, the PRI founder, and ran him out of Mexico. This same paradigmatic battle is what Mexico is still living through: "Callism" versus "Cardenism," i.e., oligarchism versus nationalism. Cuauhtémoc himself is not part of the traditional opposition—the Communists and the right-wingers of the National Action Party (PAN). He only left the PRI in October 1987. Ex-President Miguel de la Madrid stuck to Callism, in an act of moral stupidity comparable only to the gods of Olympos, by which he drove Mexico to the brink of civil war.

The PRI rout

Thus, when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas started, on July 16—with a rally of more than 400,000 supporters in Mexico City—a triumphant post-election national tour, a historic campaign that brought together millions, many more citizens than were at his pre-election campaign rallies, panic broke out in the leading ranks of the PRI. The seeping wounds of a divided PRI could no longer be hidden, and a rout began: Darwin Ballinas, who had run on the PRI ticket for the federal Congress in the state of Tabasco, announced he was going over to the Cardenists; then Andrés López Obrador, who as a PRI state official had won great popularity for his reformist

policies, also in Tabasco, announced he had accepted the FDN candidacy for state governor.

In July and August almost all the public meetings with the PRI base were suspended, not only on Salinas's part, but also of the worker and peasant sectors, due to the risk that they might end up being pro-Cárdenas meetings; during the Electoral College meetings, which began on Aug. 15 at the Federal Electoral Commission, and later in the Chamber of Deputies, starting Sept. 2, there was always the latent threat that the labor congressmen of the PRI, especially the oil-workers unionists, might cross over to the FDN and support the demand for a "vote-by-vote" recount of the sealed ballot boxes sequestered by the Interior (Gobernación) Department; in early August, a powerful PRI faction in Jalisco threatened to join the FDN in that state's gubernatorial race; and finally, within the PRI there arose a strong anti-fraud faction, which repeatedly urged Salinas de Gortari to show some sense and immediately kick out the oligarchic and technocratic factions of the PRI and launch a series of reforms under the premise that the priority has to be getting back on the track of economic growth. This faction took shape rapidly and now calls itself the "Corriente Crítica" of the PRI, headed by nationalist Rodolfo González Guevara.

The lessons learned

On Nov. 30, the Salinas cabinet was announced. The nationalist landslide had to be "considered" by the new President, and so the cabinet, surprisingly, included, between ministers and lower posts in various state institutions, a broad spectrum of officials identified with the nationalist policies of the era of Luis Echeverría (1970-76) and José López Portillo (1976-82). The naming of Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios to the Interior Department stands out. He headed the Federal Security Police in 1964-70, when Luis Echeverría was his immediate superior as Interior Secretary. Then, under President Echeverría's successor President López Portillo, he served as Undersecretary of Interior under the latter, and more recently, was governor of the state of Veracruz. He is believed to be strongly backed by the oilworkers' union, whose moral leader Joaquín Hernández Galicia, has been attacked with renewed fury recently by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Hernández Galicia stated on the eve of the July 6 election that even if he wanted them to, the workers in his union would not vote for Salinas if Salinas did not promise a change in economic policy. After Salinas was inaugurated, Hernández Galicia told the magazine *Impacto* that "in case Mexico were corralled by the international bankers and their Mexican chums . . . and there was no solution but suspension of payments, President Salinas would have the oil union by his side."

In contrast, Manuel Camacho Solís, Salinas's right-hand man and theoretician of the need to destroy PRI "corporativism," by which he means the patriotic unions, was stuck in

the post of Regent of the City of Mexico, when he was hankering to be Interior Secretary. No doubt Salinas figured out that for the time being, he cannot govern without the nationalists.

Lessons not learned

But there is one lesson Salinas has not learned, and which, strategically, could cost him the country. His entire economic cabinet is made up of a group of extremist monetarist ideologues who will go on subjecting the economy and Mexicans to the brutal austerity of the International Monetary Fund. That means that during the next six months, which Salinas is calling his "transition," there will be bigger sacrifices for Mexicans, while the debt is being renegotiated, which supposedly will permit growth to resume starting in the second half of the year. Heading this economic cabinet is Miguel Mancera Aguayo, infamous because President José López Portillo stripped him of power in order to nationalize the banks in 1982. Mancera was rehabilitated by Miguel de la Madrid in December 1982, as a signal to the banks he would toe the IMF line.

After Mancera, the most influential official is Pedro Aspe Armella, Secretary of Finance and Public Credit. Aspe is a scion of the most rotten monetarist aristocracy of the country from the beginning of this century. Another key official in economic policy is Ernesto Zedillo Ponce, Secretary of Planning and Budget, member of the "kindergarten" of the Bank of Mexico trained under Miguel Mancera. His job will be to continue to restrict public spending and productive investment.

This gang reflects the "gradualist" economic mentality of Salinas, which he shares with Miguel de la Madrid. "The increase in economic activity has to be gradual. . . . Immediate economic growth is limited by the low rates of investment in the last few years. A sudden recovery would favor imbalances . . . we can't make a forced march . . . 1989's economic policy will be transitional," he said in his inaugural speech. The same strategy was promised by Miguel de la Madrid, and year after year, the "recovery" was delayed, from 1982 until, in December 1987, a hyperinflationary bubble exploded which gave the *coup de grace* to the PRI for the July 6, 1988 elections.

It is as in classical tragedy. If the actors of the drama do not give up the paradigmatic assumptions which created the drama, every act they take to resolve the situation, under conditions of new rules of the game, will lead them to worsen things until the outcome is tragedy. Salinas does not want to understand that we are on the verge of a worldwide economic collapse, far worse than what was observed in the October 1987 stock market crash, which requires measures that cannot wait six months. It requires a unilateral declaration of debt moratorium now, or the country will crumble in his hands. The Mexican people already said it: Tyranny has a limit.

France in retreat after 1988 elections

by Christine Schier

A few weeks ago, the widely read daily *France Soir* carried a picture of Prime Minister Michel Rocard sitting in the cockpit of a fighter plane dressed in pilot uniform, with the ironic comment: "In spite of appearances, there is a pilot." The remark captures rather well the prevailing mood in France since the presidential elections of last May which saw François Mitterrand reelected with a very comfortable margin. His Socialist government is weak and undecided and, though pilot there may be, he has set no national course.

One can argue that the previous "cohabitation" government of Socialist President Mitterrand and Gaullist Premier Jacques Chirac was no bastion of institutional strength, either; the very fact of cohabitation meant a weakening of the institutions set up by Charles de Gaulle, under the Fifth Republic. But now, the Fifth Republic is about to be dealt the death blow, while various financial vultures and private interests gather round to snatch up what power they can from the carcass.

Nowhere is this weakness more blatant than in the social realm. The communist-led trade union, the CGT, has been leading strikes in the public sector over the past few months, whose aim is not labor benefits, but the destabilization of the state itself. The "guerrilla-style" strikes are attempting to disorganize three key branches of the economy: transportation, communications, and energy, and to do so with relatively very few workers in crucial positions, such as maintenance of the subway or operating the national power grid. This is a specific sort of irregular warfare which, so far, the government has been unable, or unwilling, to resist. Faced with such impotence, the French are growing ever more cynical. Although the Communist Party and various Trotskyist elements are instrumental in leading the strikes, the movement would never succeed were it not for the complicity and the manipulation of the "leftists" in the Socialist Party, like Laurent Fabius and Lionel Jospin, who oppose the "social-democratic centrist" Michel Rocard.

The weakening of the centralized state fits in perfectly with the Single European Act of 1992, which aims, from a different level, at taking power and sovereignty away from the nation-state to confer them on financial giants and bureaucracies. It is tragic, that in the fatherland of de Gaulle, who fought tooth and nail against a supranational Europe, no major politician of any stripe has denounced Europe 1992. Quite the contrary. For François Mitterrand, who bitterly opposed and envied the General during his lifetime, such a position is not surprising. Likewise for Michel Rocard, who

prides himself on being a disciple of de Gaulle's most fervent opponent, Jean Monnet. Their government has already opened up the French economy to international raiders, linked both to the Socialists and to Trilateral Commission member and Prime Minister hopeful Raymond Barre.

But even among the nominal "Gaullists"—heirs in name only of the general—there is no opposition to 1992. They rather claim to be the most "Europeanist" of all. The RPR has not yet gotten over its stinging defeat in the presidential elections, followed by a setback one month later in the legislative elections. The strong points of the Chirac government had been its commitment to fighting international terrorism and to modernizing national defense, while opposing the sell-out of Europe implied by the New Yalta deals between Washington and Moscow. It proposed a "Marshall Plan" for the Third World, known as the "Guillaume Plan" after the agriculture minister, which could have countered the International Monetary Fund-directed genocide in Africa. But Chirac never gave substance to the plan, which quickly fell into oblivion.

On all these points, the Rocard government has taken a contrary stance. It has moved to cut back defense programs and personnel, particularly in those advanced fields of research which have been a must in French defense policy since de Gaulle. Here again, the need for austerity is invoked to soften the shock of the cutbacks. Somewhat belatedly, François Mitterrand has begun a charm offensive of his own toward the East bloc, with a myriad of state visits, economic offers, and utterances about the "European common house." He is racing to catch up with his West European neighbors, no doubt to avoid being left in the antechamber of the new house.

As for anti-terrorism, one example should suffice to illustrate the in-depth attack launched against judicial and law enforcement institutions, under the direction of the Justice Minister Pierre Arpaillange. In November, a member of the special committee of magistrates set up by the Chirac government to investigate and try terrorists, Judge Boulouque, was indicted under an obviously faked charge of having leaked information to the press. This judge was in charge of the "Gordji case," which had led to a break in French-Iranian relations.

The Rocard government is fragile and increasingly under attack, as the guerrilla movement launched from within intersects the offensive of a supranational Europe 1992 and a New Yalta from without. Raymond Barre certainly considers himself the man who could best step in to preside over the fall of the Fifth Republic, with the blessings of the international financial establishment. The only political force in the country which defends the institutions of the Fifth Republic and a grand design for France in the world is the small but growing Parti ouvrier européen, led by Jacques Cheminade and associated with the international movement of Lyndon LaRouche.