

Dateline Mexico by Carlos Cota Meza

What does Negroponte do?

The reign of U.S. "proconsul" John Negroponte in Mexico has coincided with a series of strange developments.

Less than one year in his post, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico John Dimitri Negroponte is already a central figure in Mexican politics. And while his influence grows weightier by the day, various anomalous events have been occurring, such as the Drug Enforcement Administration-coordinated kidnaping of Dr. Humberto Alvarez Machain in Guadalajara, and the forced U.S. admission that a "special operations group," with probable military credentials, exists inside its Mexico City embassy.

Most striking has been the ongoing bitter dispute between the two governments over the role of DEA agents inside Mexico. On June 15, the Mexican Foreign Ministry gave Negroponte "the new rules that will guide the presence on national territory of U.S. officials who are part of the Drug Enforcement Administration."

Once the "new rules" were established, the Chamber of Deputies summoned Foreign Minister Fernando Solana before it to explain the agreement whereby 40 Mexican anti-narcotics agents would be permitted to operate on U.S. territory, in exchange for an equal number of DEA agents on Mexican soil. Solana's appearance before the Border Affairs Commission, originally scheduled for June 26, was postponed a month—the result of Negroponte's intervention.

On June 23, Negroponte suddenly paid a "courtesy visit" to Guillermo Jiménez Morales, the head of the First Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, with whom, reports an informed Mexico City political columnist, Negroponte has cordial relations. At the

end of the visit, Negroponte told reporters that the two governments "have agreed not to publish the details" of their arrangement governing DEA agents in Mexico, but that it was "based on the principle of respect for Mexican sovereignty and laws." When the reporters insisted on knowing how many U.S. military personnel were "working" at the U.S. embassy, and how many DEA agents there were in Mexico, Negroponte specified that these were "the kinds of details into which we are not going to go."

Rodolfo Medina, Washington correspondent for the magazine *7 Cambio*, observed that "the Council on Hemispheric Affairs . . . recently released the text of a letter that Negroponte himself gave to former Honduran President José Azcona Hoyos, in which Washington warned that it was prepared to withhold accusations against high-level military officers involved in drug trafficking, in exchange for the extradition of another narco: José Ramón Matta Ballesteros. . . . What is happening in Mexico seems very much like what happened in Honduras." Medina wonders aloud: "What is Negroponte's mission in Mexico?"

As *EIR* has detailed in the past, Negroponte is a destabilization specialist, a skill he acquired during his stint at the U.S. embassy in Saigon in 1965, under the direction of Henry Cabot Lodge. It is well known that street riots intended to undermine the nationalist government of the Diem brothers, and to justify their overthrow and later assassination, were directed from that embassy. Some of the

riots were headed by Buddhist monks; Buddhism is a religion in which Negroponte has specialized.

Negroponte's mission in Mexico is to prevent, at all cost, the advance of the nationalist opposition movement around Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and other sectors both within and outside the government who want to set an independent course in Mexican foreign and economic policy. To that effect, Negroponte's aim is to prevent a political reform and new legislation that would reflect the electoral and political reality of the Cardenist movement, and the genuine aspirations for progress of the Mexican people.

It is no coincidence that during the short period of his ambassadorial term thus far, the terrorist Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Party of Popular Unity has reappeared, and has demonstrated a logistical capacity for carrying out assassinations, kidnapings, and dynamite attacks in various parts of the country. Death threats have been issued against the pro-Cárdenas journalist Jorge Castañeda, son of the former Mexican foreign minister of the same name.

No one doubts that the threats against Castañeda are directed, by association, against Cárdenas as well. The harassment against Castañeda began in the United States with Wayne Cornelius, a professional academic "Mexico watcher" and mentor of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and Mexico City regent Camacho Solís. Cornelius tried to keep Castañeda out of various U.S. media, under the charge that he is a "Cardenista."

It would thus seem that while Negroponte is already setting the agenda for the Mexican Foreign Ministry, he may also be managing the "Contra" groups emerging inside Mexico, just as he did during his Central American stint.