

Dateline Mexico by Carlos Méndez

Zedillo capitulates to terrorism

The government frees several Zapatistas, and dubs the narco-terrorist EZLN a group of "discontents."

On June 6, the Mexican government capitulated to narco-terrorism once again, releasing from jail two militants from the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), Javier Elorriaga and Sebastián Entzín. The EZLN is the separatist terrorist movement which attempted an armed rebellion in the impoverished southern state of Chiapas on New Year's Day, 1994. Through the constant threat of terrorism and armed warfare, the EZLN has not only maintained its armed occupation of Chiapas, but has expanded its political influence nationwide.

The two EZLNers were convicted on May 2 of this year, by Chiapas Judge Juan Manuel Alcántara, on charges ranging from terrorism to rebellion. But, following a series of protests and blackmail threats from the EZLN and its defenders at home and abroad, another Chiapas judge absolved Elorriaga of all charges. Entzín was absolved of the crime of terrorism, and his two-year sentence for rebellion and sedition commuted to a 300 peso fine. Rumor has it that schismatic "Red Bishop" Samuel Ruiz has begun blessing the EZLN's weapons.

The foreign fingerprints on this blackmail operation are everywhere. On June 10, EZLN "Sub-commander Marcos" declared that the release of the prisoners, and, subsequently, the withdrawal of the accusation of "terrorist" against the EZLN itself, was the result of "a great national and international mobilization."

For example, the Zedillo government tolerated blatant intervention in its sovereign affairs by Danielle Mitterrand, widow of the late French Pres-

ident François Mitterrand, who declared during an April visit to Chiapas: "Today, the world is becoming much smaller. Problems are no longer solvable only among people from the same country; problems are always solved in the view of the entire world."

In an interview shortly thereafter in Paris, with the Mexican magazine *Proceso*, Madame Mitterrand said, "It took me ten years to see clearly that, beyond all prompt, concrete, material aid to specific humanist action programs, the Fundación Libertés [which she founded in 1986] should serve as a liaison [for] those who resist and fight to defend their rights. . . . It is critical for them to know that they are not alone . . . to generate solidarity with these resisters." She came to this realization, she said, through her recent tour of Ibero-America, whose highlight was her meeting with the EZLN in Chiapas.

Chiapas was also visited in April by the Argentine Hebe de Bonafini, leader of the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo," a group of mothers of Argentine terrorists said to have been "disappeared." Mama Bonafini visited Elorriaga in his jail cell, and described him as a "political prisoner of the Mexican political system." She announced that she would conduct an international campaign in favor of the Zapatista prisoners. In addition, non-governmental organizations of every stripe, and a number of other European personalities, have been active in pressuring the Zedillo government on the EZLN's behalf.

The convictions of Elorriaga and Entzín had been used by the EZLN to

suspend their negotiations with the government, and to threaten a possible renewal of warfare if they were not freed. In response, the Government Ministry did an about-face, and declared that the EZLN is not a terrorist organization, but rather a movement of "discontented citizens." A day earlier, opposition congressman Rodolfo Elizondo, current president of the government's negotiating body Cocopa, said that Cocopa "believes that the EZLN has not undertaken terrorist actions in its struggle."

Upon his release from jail, Elorriaga announced that he would be joining the Zapatista National Liberation Front, where he would undertake to work "for peace," in addition to his ongoing role as adviser to the EZLN at the negotiating table, a function he had been serving at the time of his arrest in February 1995. On the eve of his release, Elorriaga told the weekly *Proceso* that he was planning to continue working with Argos, which "never abandoned me." Argos is a video producer and book editorial house, which distributes all of the videos and writings of the EZLN's "Sub-commander Marcos."

Argos's director, Epigmenio Ibarra, was assistant director of the pro-Zapatista daily *La Jornada*, alongside director Carlos Payán. Ibarra and Payán, who have just left those posts, are authors of the soap opera "Nothing Personal," produced by Argos and currently broadcast by Televisión Azteca, a television channel owned by the son of Roberto Salinas León, president of the ultra-liberal Mont Pelerin Society in Mexico, which goes by the name Center for Free-Market Studies. Just as in soap operas, finding the Mont Pelerin Institute and the Zapatistas in bed together comes as no surprise, for the name of their game is destroying the nation-state, by whatever means necessary.