



Is Cuba fomenting revolution to get at Mexico's oil?

by Tim Rush

In the last week of March, the Carter Administration deployed a battery of high officials to Congressional hearings with two charges: that Cuba has stepped up direct intervention into the Caribbean and particularly Central America, funneling arms to Salvadorean insurgents through Honduras; and that the ultimate aim of Cuba and the Soviet Union is to create an "arc of crisis" targetting Mexico's southern oil fields, the strategic prize of the entire region.

The day after this testimony was leaked to the international press, a choleric Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda convened a special two-hour press conference to refute the Carter Administration line. "It's pure idiocy to think that the Soviet Union and Cuba are intervening in the problems of Latin America to take control of Mexican oil, as U.S. military strategists are thinking," he responded. In an unusually direct criticism of a high American official, he stated that he "disagreed with Vance's view" that Cuba was "directly intervening" into Latin America. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance had made the charge at Senate Foreign Relations hearings March 25. Two days later Mexican Defense Minister Felix Galvan López arrived in Havana for a two day visit which was subsequently extended another day.

Behind this exchange lies a spreading conviction in Mexico, other areas of Latin America, and policy and business circles in the U.S. that Administration policy is not one of *avoiding* an "arc of crisis" right on our southern flank but of *creating* one. Recalling the roles of Henry Kissinger and National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski in bringing Khomeini to power in Iran, these circles argue that the goal of such crazed geopolitical gambling is to bring the combined Central America-Caribbean region to an Iran-style "chaos threshold value" where major direct U.S. intervention would become politically feasible. A feature of this strategy is to destabilize Mexico through violence on its southern border.

From the viewpoint of Carter's advisors, the destabilization of Mexico is essential both to prevent a link-up

between Mexico and Washington's perceived economic adversaries of France, West Germany and Japan, and to take control of Mexico's sizable oil deposits.

Washington is especially concerned about President Lopez Portillo's upcoming trip to France and West Germany (see Dateline Mexico column this issue).

Is it true?

How much truth is there to this perception? The evidence is disquieting.

- The administration does not seriously believe that "Cuban intervention" is the guiding force of events now unfolding, even less that "Mexican oil" is the ultimate Cuban objective. An informed source at the New York Council on Foreign Relations stated the new ballyhoo was "nonsense," designed merely to "create a climate and enough back-up for a U.S. military intervention." This estimate is widely echoed in even conservative think-tank circles, who term the scenario "far-fetched."

Regardless, Administration spokesmen continue to charge Cuba with responsibility for destabilizing the area, while simultaneously announcing stepped-up U.S. "vigilance." In early April, for instance, the U.S. deployed high-speed missile-bearing ships to patrol the Caribbean and to contain Cuban "expansionism."

- The possibility of unilateral U.S. moves to heat up the area is heightened by Carter's increasingly desperate re-election bid. James Reston identified this desperation factor in a March 28 New York Times column: To "release the political tensions around the administration... Carter is under great temptation to take dramatic action and to raise the level of international crisis, for the greater the threat abroad, the more likely he is to be supported at home." The CFR source emphasized the same point: far from the election campaign dampening the chances of U.S. intervention, "it is now more realistic than ever before."

- The Washington-spun scenarios of how Mexico will get embroiled in the Central American vortex are

reaching new heights of detail and sophistication, involving the Mexico-Guatemalan border areas, the Indian populations of the region, rural guerrillas, domino effects spun off events further south in the "arc of crisis" etc.

- Perhaps most worrisome of all, there is ample evidence that the U.S. is deliberately fomenting the process of Iranization in the region. This process, involving a meshing of political destabilization with the most backward of religious beliefs and practices, was propelled giant steps forward with the assassination of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador March 23 and the carnage of the Palm Sunday memorial services a week later.

Key in this regard is the record of what America's diplomatic staff is doing "on-the-scene" in El Salvador. First, U.S. ambassador Robert E. White, only in the country a few weeks, lashed into the Salvadorean business community for sponsoring "hit squad" killings of political opponents including Archbishop Romero, in a speech to the San Salvador American Chamber of Commerce. According to a Wall Street Journal report, a leading businessman immediately charged that the White statements "have made me a target for everyone."

Four days later, after the Palm Sunday massacre, Ambassador White with equal surety charged the left with responsibility for the new killings. These statements drew the wrath of the Church and the left.

Here was the spectacle of the U.S. ambassador personally handing out public verdicts of blame in an incendiary and confused situation within hours of events which rocked the entire region.

Documentation

'Mexico is susceptible to destabilization'

The Council on Interamerican Security, a Washington pressure group with connections to Georgetown University, has launched a propaganda campaign around the theme that Cuban involvement in Central America is aimed at acquiring Mexico's oil. The council, which has connections to the Jesuit Georgetown University circles of Henry Kissinger, carried out a similar strenuous lobbying effort one year ago for American intervention in Nicaragua to save since-ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza.

The council argues that the United States is the rightful controller of Mexico's oil, and that the biggest obstacle to American control is Mexico's strong, nationalist traditions and political stability.

A CIS spokesman recently offered the following scenario for events leading to an American military occupation of Mexican oil fields.

Q: U.S. government officials charge that Cuba and the Soviet Union are heating up Central America into an "arc of crisis" with the strategic goal of controlling Mexico's oil resources. Is this your own evaluation?

A: That is in total conformity with our reading of the situation. Mexican oil has to be viewed as the strategic objective in Central America ... I'm very pleased the

A Palm Sunday massacre in El Salvador

With the Pope's personal emissary in attendance, the funeral of slain Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador on Palm Sunday was turned into a massacre that will have the effect of bringing "theology of liberation" psychosis into dominance throughout Latin America. Professional snipers, like those who gunned down the archbishop a week earlier as he delivered communion in the church, fired into the crowd from rooftop positions, setting off panic among the over 100,000 gathered for the memorial service. The toll: 50 dead, 200 wounded.

The Pope has now sent two messages to the region

eulogizing the work of liberationist priest Romero, as part of a broad swing of the Church behind the previously minority liberationist faction.

And in Mexico, where the Church is historically a highly conservative force, the events in El Salvador have resulted in a fanatical "Christian Marxist" realignment. On April 3, a procession to the most popular of Mexican cult shrines, the Basilica of Guadalupe, was led by none other than the Mexican Communist Party, a gaggle of Maoist gangs, and liberationist priests! They chanted slogans: "Guadalupe, your people will be victorious," and "Romero, Romero, you are here among us."

The "liberationists" are exploiting the martyrdom of priests to play on the underdevelopment and ignorance of the peasant masses in Latin America to promote pseudoreligious mass psychosis. The conversion of Romero himself, previously a conservative, to the liberationist cause was triggered two years ago by the killing of one of his parish priests.

government agrees. This is a warning that we've been making for a year.

Q: How would U.S. counteraction actually work?

A: What you're talking about is this. You have a substantial Mayan Indian population in Chiapas [one of Mexico's oil-producing states, on its southern border—ed.]. You have ethnically the same people you have across the border in Guatemala. Historically, Guatemala laid claim to portions of what is now Chiapas and, I believe, possibly also Yucatan. So one can very easily conceive of a scenario whereby a communist government in Guatemala would support a so-called national liberation struggle inside Chiapas, and also Yucatan. We know that Chiapas and Yucatan have some of the most serious rural guerrilla problems in Mexico. So this would be a scenario that would be very susceptible to destabilization.

Q: And that goes right into the...

A: ... oilfields. So you have a situation there which reads like this: The United States is isolated from Middle Eastern oil in a period of military hostility and we turn to Mexico for additional supplies, and the terrorists make it quite clear to Pemex that if supplies are increased or even continued to the United States or to Europe as a replacement for Middle Eastern oil, the oil goes up in flames.

Q: And then what do we do? Intervene?

A: Exactly.

'Carter's response could be incompetent'

Among some Reagan advisers, there is concern that direct U.S. intervention into Central America and the Caribbean, which they support, would be bungled by Carter. They want to wait until their man gets into the White House. The American Enterprise Institute's senior Latin American analyst, Pedro Sanjuan, delivered the following evaluation in conversation with EIR this week:

I'm not one who believes that the situation is going in the direction it is primarily because of the Cubans. Now, it's of course alarming that the Cubans are in there, and even one penny of Cuban aid would be excessive, but the basic problem is the bungling of the United States, of the Carter administration....

You know, if you wanted to be facetious about it, you could think that the course of events leading to a threat to Mexico was planned in the United States.

It will be a different ball-game if we get Carter out. Then we can strengthen the sensible forces down there. The situation is eminently reversible.

Mr. Sanjuan was asked if he saw a danger of Mr. Carter undertaking a major foreign policy adventure to improve his political fortunes at home. He replied:

What I agree with is that if El Salvador gets to the point where it really embarrasses the U.S., then the President could turn around and order some kind of incompetent and dangerous response. I've been telling the liberals, it's much better to do this kind of thing with a tough guy who's sure of himself, in a different administration.

Guatemalans seeking 'hot pursuit' into Mexico

A senior U.S. military commander, recently retired, talked at length with Guatemalan military counterparts in a December, 1979, visit to Guatemala City. His impressions:

I would say that the Guatemalans view the border situation [with Mexico] as serious. They feel they are not getting full cooperation from the Mexican government. The [Guatemalan] terrorists appear to be using Mexico as a sanctuary. The government hopes to get the Mexican government more concerned about it, because ultimately this will affect Mexico as well as Guatemala. At the time the Guatemalan armed forces recognized they had a problem, there was talk about the possibility of using hot pursuit to go over the border. The Americans did it to Pancho Villa. They hoped they'd be able to work out some agreement with the Mexican government where they'd get a cooperative military commander on the other side and would plan straight operations against the guerrillas.

Asked about the possibility of the Guatemalan military threatening Mexico's oil fields in order to force Mexico to back away from providing asylum to the guerrillas:

Ah, well, we talked *around* that. It was the sense that the Guatemalans have their close interest in that Mexican oil, because of the proximity, that they *might* go in there.