

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menendez

Reagan's Mexico connection

Mexicans are looking at who Ronnie sees when he visits—and what a Reagan administration may mean for Mexico. They are not at all happy with the picture.

Mexican government and intelligence circles are working overtime to figure out what a Reagan administration policy toward Mexico would look like.

One of the angles being scrutinized is who Reagan personally knows and visits in Mexico. The trail is not hard to find. Just two weeks ago Ronnie, Nancy and 27 secret service agents showed up at the Sonora ranch of Diego Redo for the 12th consecutive summer vacation in Mexico's Sierra Occidental Mountains. Reagan's host strode around his San Juan de la Cuesta spread, dubbed "Camp Reagan" for the occasion, sporting a "Reagan for President" pin on his lapel and shooing away reporters to give his close friend maximum peace to prepare his nomination acceptance speech.

Now to understand who Diego Redo is, it's useful to make a few historical points. The backbone of the Mexican aristocracy during the colonial period were the great northern ranching barons, with the Sánchez Navarro family among the most notorious. This elite reconstituted itself with the same landowner base under the 1876-1910 dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, known as the Porfiriato. Among the big names: the Creel, Cue, Terrazas and Madero families. Today, the hard-core families of this 400-year aristocratic lineage take their ideological cues from the feudalist and semi-secret "free enterprise"

cult known as the Mont Pelerin Society, based in Europe among circles attempting to reestablish the Hapsburg throne. The Mont Pelerin branch in Mexico is headed by Agustín Navarro Vásquez, intermarried with the Sánchez Navarros, and by Gustavo R. Velasco, law professor and intimate friend of the head of the Sánchez Navarro clan today, Juan Sánchez Navarro.

Diego Redo could not be more closely tied to this feudalist crew. His sister is Juan Sánchez Navarro's wife. Diego's nieces and nephews through intermarriage are Creels, Cues and Maderos.

So blueblooded is this set that when Diego Redo invited the British ambassador to the San Juan ranch a few years ago, he mounted a foxhunt in full regalia for his guest, to the astonishment of his Mexican rancher neighbors.

Sophisticated Mexicans recognize that these networks would not become the primary channels of Reagan administration policy toward Mexico, because of their restricted public institutional character. But they see these networks exemplary of the stratum Reagan links up with in Mexico, as well as deeply coloring his perceptions of the country he calls, according to Diego, "part of our way of life."

More immediately behind such hallmarks of Reagan policy toward Mexico as a U.S.-Mexico-Canada Common Market, referred to in Reagan speeches as a North Amer-

ican "Accord," is Reagan's foreign policy chief Richard Allen. It was thus hardly reassuring to Mexican government leaders, following President López Portillo's no-nonsense rejection of such a Common Market in a late-May speech to the Canadian parliament, to read Allen's remarks to the Mexican daily *Uno Mas Uno* when interviewed at the Republican Convention.

The "Accord" remains the basis of Reagan policy, he said; "it is time for us to share our natural resources." To even the most naïve Mexican, that sounds like a heavy-handed rush for Mexico's oil. What did he think of López Portillo's scorching rejection of the plan? "I am not aware of his statements."

The man who in turn briefs Allen on Mexico and Latin America is Roger Fontaine, Latin American affairs honcho at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. Fontaine was one of the principal authors of the Rockefeller "Critical Choices Commission" chapters on Latin America almost a decade ago, and moved into his current position as a protégé of Henry Kissinger. So it is Kissinger's extensive Mexico operations—based at former president Miguel Alemán's Acapulco resort home—which are coming back on board if Reagan wins.

The "traffic cop" arranging Fontaine's access to Reagan is American Security Council chief General Daniel Graham. The ASC recommends that Mexico turn to the U.S. to help it "protect" its oil fields. Most Mexicans look at this and think they are being set up, possibly even for invasion. And they are unhappy indeed with Diego Redo Jr.'s choice for the U.S. Presidency.