

Rockefeller launches Western Hemisphere looting bloc

by Gretchen Small

Former Chase Manhattan chairman David Rockefeller personally took to the podium Feb. 16 in Caracas at this year's annual conference of the Americas Society—the multinational business group run by the Rockefeller interests—to outline the terms under which the economics and politics of the Western Hemisphere are to be reorganized in the global restructuring being worked out between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-American elite.

The time has come, Rockefeller insisted, to turn the Western Hemisphere into a vast free-trade zone, in which all government interference with private business is eliminated. "The triumph of the Reagan-Bush foreign policy, that is to say, the free-trade accord between Canada and the United States," makes it possible to now do the same between the United States and Latin America, he argued. That U.S.-Canadian accord "is a model of how two nations can create a structure for cooperation."

He waxed so eloquent upon the matter that he quoted Simón Bolívar, the man called Ibero-America's Liberator, as the inspiration for this plan. Only by uniting in *this* way, will the Americas survive in the coming decade, he claimed. The combination of Asian economic development and the looming formation "in 1992 [of what] many fear will be the constitution of 'Fortress Europe,'" requires the realization of the "Bolivarian vision of a united America which acts as a center of relations between Asia and Europe."

"I believe the climate is right and the stage is set for our nations to come together in a Congress of the New World, a hemispheric summit in which all the democratic nations of the Americas would participate," Rockefeller told the conference. "There has rarely been more fertile opportunity for diplomacy, for statesmen, and for individuals in the private sector to join with each other to tackle the problems of the hemisphere."

He even decried the high unemployment and hyperinflation resulting from the foreign debt, the "tragedy" of drug trafficking, destruction of forests, and terrorism—all problems for which he carries as much responsibility for creating as any banker living today.

In a small bow to political reality in the hemisphere, Rockefeller did suggest that the governments of the Group of

Eight countries (minus Panama, he specified), had better do the inviting to his New World Congress, if the idea is to be politically viable. That is, as long as "business leaders"—like himself and his friends—are assured a leading role in deciding the hemisphere's future, he added.

In a press conference the next day, Rockefeller argued that his free trade plan is but one part of the growing interdependence of the world, including between the United States and Soviet Union. "Slowly but surely, people have been realizing that we really live in a very small village," he said. "During many years there has existed serious competition between the two superpowers. . . . The recent development which we have seen in the Soviet Union seems to suggest to us that a disposition toward change exists in that nation; we hope this is so. And if it is so, both countries can move progressively towards disarmament."

Rewarmed Kissinger plan

Rockefeller's Venezuelan doings bring to mind his sometime nickname as "Kissinger's piggybank." Two days before Rockefeller spoke, Henry Kissinger was himself out campaigning for the free trade zone plan in Mexico. For some time now, Kissinger has been beating the drums for Mexico's debt crisis to be used as the springboard for the creation of such a hemispheric bloc. The week of Jan. 8, Kissinger's syndicated column (run in the *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post*) argued that Mexico must be "the test case" for the reforms required in all Ibero-America: "privatization, freeing capital flows, and reducing governmental exactations."

Mexico's economy must be opened up, to function as a sub-sector of the U.S.-Canada free trade common market, he argued. He added that this, then, may become the stepping stone for the creation of a Western Hemispheric bloc which can complement emerging European and Asian trading blocs.

Mexican patriots have bitterly fought Mexico's integration into the free traders' version of a hemisphere-wide Common Market (as opposed to an industry/science-driven Ibero-American market which such American system economists in the hemisphere as Lyndon LaRouche advocate). The removal of all tariff barriers and the replacement of Mexico's

national currency by the dollar, as this crowd plans, will deliver the final death blow to national industrial and agricultural production.

The free trade promoters have been quite clear that Mexico's role in their common market is to serve as a sweat shop and slave labor camp for multinational assembly operations, with a few people employed in the casinos and brothels Kissinger's Acapulco friends hope to set up when Mexico becomes the jet-set tourist haven they envision.

Now, while in Mexico for his annual February vacation in Acapulco (where this year, as always, he was hosted by the Alemán family interests, the controllers of Mexican tourist and communications industry), Kissinger took time to enjoy a private Valentine's Day luncheon with Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. A terse communiqué issued by the presidential office at the end of the day reported only that "President Salinas and Dr. Kissinger analyzed the international perspectives and took up matters of interest to Mexico and the United States."

On Feb. 16, the Mexican daily *El Herald* published a wire reporting on yet another attempt to promote Kissinger's Mexico plan, this one by Kissinger Associates employee Alan Stoga. An article by Stoga in the newsletter *The International Economy* repeated that a Mexican debt relief plan based on a free trade agreement could serve as a model for other debtor countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela.

Kissinger made sure to promote himself as the real power in Washington these days. In an interview with the Alemán family's *Televisa* network Feb. 16, Kissinger gave his blessing to the Mexican government's austerity plan, promised that Bush and his advisers have "a lot of goodwill towards Mexico," and suggested that Presidents Salinas and Bush meet to discuss how Mexico can be "responsible" in its treatment of debt.

John Negroponete, Bush's controversial ambassador-designate to Mexico, should be acceptable, he said, because Negroponete ("a disciplined functionary") had formerly been his employee. "He was part of my personnel many years ago," Kissinger assured his listeners.

He even hinted he was positioning himself to use the inevitable blowout of the Ibero-American debt as his springboard to return to office in Washington. Kissinger told *Televisa* that since he would not accept any position in the Bush administration other than Secretary of State, and Bush wanted to put his friend James Baker there, he remained outside the official government. He noted, however, that he is good friends indeed with many of the new cabinet officials.

The only touch of "humility" Kissinger displayed, was his comment that he was to have joined Reagan's cabinet two years ago, except that "there was opposition because it was thought I was too desirous to negotiate with the Soviet Union. Basically, they were against me because I was a friend of Nelson Rockefeller, who was identified with the moderate wing of the Republican Party."

Rockefeller as liberator?

Can the Kissinger-Rockefeller duo succeed? The reaction in Venezuela is telling. Rockefeller was received like royalty by some in Venezuela, a country, after all, in which his family has held controlling economic and political interests since the beginning of the Venezuelan oil boom in the 1920s. Rockefeller went calling on the Caracas political and business elite (accompanied always by Venezuelan businessman Gustavo Cisneros), and then inspected prospective buying opportunities in Venezuela's state-sector companies in the mineral-rich Guayana region.

President Carlos Andrés Pérez decorated both Rockefeller (now chairman of the board of the Americas Society) and George Landau (the former U.S. ambassador to Venezuela who left in 1985 to become president of the Americas Society), with the Order of Francisco Miranda and Andrés Bello, one of Venezuela's highest awards.

"Here in Venezuela we will never forget the services rendered to our country with such devotion by the unfortunately departed Nelson Rockefeller," Pérez declared. "And David, his brother, has kept alive this tradition of friendship and collaboration. . . . I can say with satisfaction that I share his criteria, and I share the concepts which he expounded on yesterday for all of Latin America."

"I think that we are experiencing the birth of a new relation, not only between our hemispheric nations, but in the world, in the Universe," Pérez added. "We are all sincerely moved by the meetings and accords which the two worlds, which humanity has sadly divided into, have entered."

Others, not so eager to return to the days when Venezuela was dismissed internationally as "Rockefeller's ranch," voted with their feet against the banker's schemes. On Feb. 21, the Venezuelan Chamber of Deputies voted 90-86 to halt debate over the free-trade austerity program which Pérez had announced just a day before welcoming Rockefeller to Venezuela—until such time as the government releases the Letter of Intent which it has drawn up with the International Monetary Fund. Hysterical at revealing the terms of the deal with the IMF, Pérez's Treasury Minister Eglee Iturbe de Blanco rejected the request as impossible to meet. As of this writing, the government's austerity package is still stalemated.

Meanwhile, the extraordinary press coverage of the American politician most hated by the IMF, Lyndon LaRouche, continued throughout Venezuela. Now, regional papers, such as *Correo de Caroni* in Guayana province and *El Araqueño* of Aragua have given extensive coverage to LaRouche, and his proposals for resolving the crisis. *La Nación* in Táchira ran a full page story, based on an *EIR* release, under the blazing headline, "the IMF Kills Millions in the Third World."

Unconnected? As Venezuelan Labor Party secretary general Alejandro Peña told *El Nacional* in a Feb. 20 interview, LaRouche is viewed, and supported internationally, as the man who is committed to fighting "the usurious practices of . . . that monster, David Rockefeller."