

Oligarchs revive Chiapas conflict in plan to break up Mexican nation

by Carlos Cota Meza

The British-led assault on the world's fourth-largest nation, Indonesia, under the pretext of a global armed military intervention into the province of East Timor, allegedly in defense of "human rights," marks an escalation in the financial oligarchy's intent to do away with the nation-state altogether.

Mexico is in the sights of these same international forces, and the secessionist Zapatista enclave in the state of Chiapas has once again been reactivated, with the strong participation of supranational agencies, posing an ominous threat to national sovereignty.

On Sept. 7, Diorodo Carrasco, who has served since May 21 as Government Minister in place of Francisco Labastida (one of the ruling PRI party's four Presidential pre-candidates), suddenly released an open letter to the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), entitled, "One More Step Toward Solving the Conflict in Chiapas." The letter is a total abdication of the principles that the federal government had been defending, with some ups and downs, since it first took office in December 1994.

The six points defined by the new Government Minister within the so-called Larrainzar Agreements with the Zapatistas, are that the government 1) asks that the Mexican Senate incorporate into its analysis "other rulings and information on the issue of indigenous rights and culture"; 2) calls on the EZLN to participate in a program that fulfills the commitments contained within the San Andrés Larrainzar Agreements; 3) pledges to free members or sympathizers of the EZLN who have been arrested, as long as they "are not implicated in bloody deeds or violations"; 4) will analyze the denunciations of "harassment made by the NGOs, and affected persons or communities"; 5) supports the establishment "of a new attempt at mediation, civil and non-partisan"; and 6) affirms that government representation "will have adequate decision-making and negotiating power."

The proposal must contain something really rotten, because the next day, the Bishop of San Cristóbal in Chiapas, Samuel Ruiz, immediately supported it. The renegade Bishop Ruiz is effectively the commander of the Zapatistas (see profile in *EIR*, Feb. 25, 1994). Accompanied by Mairead Maguire, 1977 Nobel Peace Prize winner and member of the consulting board of Amnesty International, Ruiz described the government initiative as "quite positive," because "it places

dialogue on the national level, which is where it must be."

By suspicious coincidence, on the same day that the government presented its open letter to the EZLN, another Nobel Peace Prize winner (1987), Oscar Arias Sánchez, "recommended," from the city of Monterrey, where he was participating in the Servants of Peace symposium, that "Mexico turn to friendly governments and to international personalities to solve the Chiapas conflict." The former Costa Rican President stated that "countries with internal conflicts should, with humility, seek to find the necessary means and support for ending them."

Thus, in the turbulent political situation the country is facing, we suddenly discover that the mis-named "Chiapas conflict" is one step away from becoming internationalized, creating the basis for the intervention of organizations such as the United Nations, as in East Timor.

Sen. Luis Santos de la Garza, a member of the opposition National Action Party (PAN) and also of the Committee of Legislative and Judicial Affairs, was very eloquent as to what this all means, when he stated, "I believe that it is a political gesture, a radical change, a modification that promises to carry out the San Andrés Larrainzar Agreements"; but these, said the Senator, "will crush the life out of the Constitution, because they would create areas of exception, which the Constitution itself does not authorize." Nonetheless, the PAN legislator welcomed the government's changed attitude, "given that many national and foreign personalities are hoping that the Chiapas problem will be quickly solved."

Serious political conflict

Bishop Ruiz couldn't be happier. The new government policy offers to revive (point number 5) his National Mediation Commission (Conai), which had been created on Oct. 13, 1994 as the result of talks between the Bishop and Manuel Camacho Solís, who had at the time been designated "negotiator" with the EZLN by then-President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

It was President Ernesto Zedillo, then a Presidential candidate, who demanded that Camacho Solís be fired for wanting to "take leaps into a vacuum," and for placing institutional stability in danger with his "conversations in the [San Cristóbal] Cathedral." Later, the "Chiapas conflict" cost the political

heads of Estéban Moctezuma Barragán and Emilio Chuayfet Chemor, in the Government Ministry.

Francisco Labastida Ochoa took the post of Government Minister in January 1998, only days after the massacre of a group of Indians in the community of Acteal, Chenalho. New attempts at negotiations in Chiapas at the time led to the dissolution of Ruiz's Conai, which had demonstrated "excessive partiality" in favor of the EZLN's secessionist proposals. In addition, the Bishop had demanded constitutional changes that would have overturned the state's ownership of the soil and subsoil, and of natural resources, among other things.

During 14 months of his administration, through May of this year, President Zedillo had repeatedly visited Chiapas, slamming the "apostles of violence," criticizing the "hypocritical" defenders of Indian interests. And, as proof of the area's stability, President Zedillo did aerobic exercises in Palenque and swam in the Montebello Lakes, zones considered part of the Chiapas "conflict." With the new open letter, Zedillo's policy has suffered a 180-degree turn.

Ever since the Chiapas conflict began, it has been evident that the true objective of the EZLN is to inflict a political defeat on the National Army, which is one of the institutional pillars of Mexico's national cohesion. With the open letter, the Zapatista strategy has moved an important step forward.

The drastic political changes that President Zedillo is introducing through his new Government Minister, reveal the high level of supranational political pressure being brought to bear on him, to make him believe that with this new policy turn, he will succeed in appeasing the enemies of the nation-state, allowing for an "orderly transition" toward the end of his six-year Presidential mandate. The opposite will, in fact, be the case.

The Balkanization plan

There are clearly strong supranational pressures to produce another East Timor in Mexico, and behind this one, can find the followers of Manuel Camacho Solis. Juan Enríquez Cabot, Camacho's right-hand man in real estate negotiations in Mexico City (together with financial speculator George Soros), recently published an article in the quarterly *Foreign Policy* magazine of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in which he summarizes the thesis upon which he is currently writing a book, entitled, *Flags, Borders, Anthems, and Other Myths*. (See accompanying interview.)

Enríquez states that "the tide of secessionism which is sweeping across the world" is not only produced by "catastrophic social unrest," but also by globalization—which is perfectly fine, according to him. Globalization downsizes states, "as if [they] were a business conglomerate," while establishing free-trade zones. Autonomous regions and new little states thus become conceivable and viable.

Enríquez foresees the destruction of nations from Africa to Spain, to even the United Kingdom. He writes off "Goliath states"—Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, and Russia—as al-

ready lost. All, he writes, "face massive internal challenges that could lead to splits within their borders sometime early in the next century." He cites as exemplars of the most successful "nations," small countries such as Luxemburg, Singapore, and Switzerland.

He emphasizes that separatism could divide up the United States, as well as the Americas in general. "It *can* happen here," he writes. "The nations that comprise the 'new world' of the Western Hemisphere have long taken comfort in the absence of historical cleavages and catastrophic conflicts that have afflicted their 'old world' progenitors. But in an era of globalization, the secessionist impulse knows no geographical boundaries."

On Mexico, Enríquez says that "Mayans throughout Chiapas" are "questioning the status quo," and adds that in "relatively rich" northern Mexico, there are raised "voices of dissent . . . asking what benefit they derive from their national identities."

Enríquez Cabot is the son of Antonio Enríquez Savignac, who was a prominent official in the government of Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid. On the maternal side, he comes from one of Boston's banking families, historically linked to the British Crown. The title of his book echoes Thomas Cooper, the pro-slavery American of the last century, who stated: "The nation is a grammatical invention. . . . It lacks existence and emerges, like a simple vision, from the head of the politicians."

Enríquez is simply regurgitating what Camacho had already written during his stay at Princeton University, under the tutelage of Richard Falk—an expert, together with Zbigniew Brzezinski, in the destruction of nations.

Raising the specter of civil war

Attempting to fulfill the "prediction" of the fragmentation of Mexico made by Enríquez, the governor of the state of Guanajuato and Presidential candidate for the PAN, Vicente Fox, issued a provocation in mid-September, during a political meeting to accept the PAN's Presidential nomination. Fox—who is a New Age-type neo-liberal, and the preferred candidate of Wall Street and the City of London—paraded around with the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and threatened to use as his electoral slogan, "Long Live Christ the King."

These are the banners used by the Cristeros, during the bloody internal war of the 1920s and '30s, which left thousands dead and a deeply divided and traumatized Mexico in their wake. To revive these slogans today, as part of a Presidential campaign, is the best way to divide Mexicans between "Masons" and "Cristeros," and to plunge the nation into civil war—as in East Timor.

It is notable that Mexico City Cardinal Norberto Rivera denounced Fox for trying to politicize the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, saying that she belongs to all Mexicans and is the only one who unites us.