

## The Fidel and Al show: havoc in the Caribbean

by Dennis Small

Over the past month, Secretary of State Alexander Haig and his bellicose allies in the U.S. government have threatened a naval blockade of Cuba and Nicaragua, a possible direct American military intervention in Central America, or the creation of a surrogate Latin American military force to fight "communism" in the region.

Cuba's leader Fidel Castro has matched Haig's taunts, insults and threats one-for-one. Cuba, a high government representative at the United Nations told the press last month, will answer any possible American military moves in the Caribbean Basin *militarily*.

If this reminds you of a staged duet, you are right. This is the "Fidel and Al Show," an orchestrated affair wherein the Caribbean Basin becomes a Vietnam-style shooting gallery between the U.S. and Cuba. Caught in the crossfire are the countries of the region, whose economies and political systems are being increasingly devastated.

The authors of this dangerous farce are the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and their British intelligence allies, who control *both* Comrades Castro and Haig. The Jesuit strategy calls for depopulating the region, and forcing a military confrontation between Moscow and Washington. Since last December's Cuban Communist Party Central Committee plenum, when Castro consummated his strategic alliance with the Jesuits and the Second International orchestrators of insurgency, he has been fully on that track.

The principal voice raised against this insanity has been that of Mexican President José López Portillo. In a Nov. 20 interview with NBC-TV, the Mexican head of state demanded an end to "this escalation of verbal

terrorism that exists today on both sides," and warned that any armed action would be "a gigantic error against all history." López Portillo repeated this stern counsel to Haig personally, who visited Mexico for 24 hours to exchange views on the Central American crisis. Haig chose to tell his hosts, in the words of Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda, only that "for now, for the moment, the U.S. is not considering intervening militarily in Nicaragua or Cuba." However, he "refused to renounce other measures"—widely interpreted by the press as a reference to a possible naval blockade.

In a Nov. 10 televised press conference, President Reagan, in answer to a question about whether the U.S. planned to intervene militarily in El Salvador or other parts of the region, stated: "We're giving economic aid. I think we should continue to do that. I don't believe this requires in any way, nor have we considered, aid of the kind of actual military intervention on our part."

Yet the very next day, Haig, in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, assumed his most publicly threatening tone to date. Nicaragua's military build-up, he stated, is a threat to "the vital strategic interests" of the United States. U.S. policy, he asserted, is to continue "a kind of psychological warfare against the Cubans and Nicaraguans." Haig's Jesuit-trained adviser on Latin America, Gen. Vernon Walters, eloquently restated this "chicken game" theory of international diplomacy a few days later: "it is constructive ambiguity . . . designed to worry the governments of both countries. Let them worry."

Haig has more than psychological warfare in readiness. Haig ally Jeane Kirkpatrick, the U.S. ambassador

to the United Nations, stated on Nov. 1 that the U.S. is "willing, if necessary, to carry out actions of dissuasion and containment such as a blockade—including mining ports—together with strict economic warfare measures, and ultimately direct action against Cuba." On Nov. 16, Gen. Wallace Nutting, the U.S. General Commander for South and Central America, declared in Panama that "I think military action must be part of the response."

As for Fidel Castro, starting in late July, when the Cuban president launched a ferocious attack on the Reagan administration for being "fascist," Cuba has been on the warpath. Since then the country was placed on full security alert, and there are press reports that Cuban troops stationed in Ethiopia and Libya have been called home to beef up the island's defenses. The most explicit statement of Cuban war-readiness came on Nov. 6 from an unnamed "high official" at the Cuban United Nations Mission, who told the Spanish news agency EFE that Cuba will send troops into El Salvador or Nicaragua to defend the revolutionary movements in those countries, if they are requested following foreign military intervention, whether American or Latin American. Cuba will also challenge any naval blockade around their island, the official said, and added that they view the current situation as already "much worse than the 1961 missile crisis."

### **View from Latin America**

The degree to which Fidel and Al can bring things to the point of actual military confrontation depends in large measure upon how the rest of Latin America responds. Haig strategy here has been twofold: 1) to try to neutralize Mexico's influence by building up Venezuela as America's premier ally on the continent—a point emphasized during Venezuelan President Herrera Campins' recent official visit to Washington (see article below); and 2) get the military governments of Latin America's Southern Cone to commit forces to Central America, or destabilize those unwilling to do so.

Argentina has been the South American nation most willing to enter the fray in the Caribbean, but even in that country Junta President Roberto Viola has reflected pressures from more moderate elements in the country who oppose such a move. But Viola was forced to take a "leave of absence" last week for "medical reasons." There are strong rumors that he will be permanently replaced by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri, who is very close to Haig, and on record favoring Argentine military involvement in El Salvador.

A crucial test of strength will occur on Dec. 2 at the annual meeting of the Organization of American States, where Haig is expected to go down to the wire against Mexico in an attempt to win majority support for some kind of an intervention in Central America.

## **López Portillo: 'Stop the verbal terrorism'**

*On Nov. 20, Mexican President José López Portillo granted an interview to NBC-TV, which was reproduced in the Mexican press the following day. Translated excerpts follow.*

**NBC:** What do you think of possible American interventions in Cuba or Nicaragua?

**JLP:** It would be a gigantic error, an error against history; it would violate the international principles which make us a community, it would be intervention in internal affairs, resolving matters with violence. I would not even dare to think that this could be viable. Mexico, naturally, would defend the principles of international law which govern the lives of civilized countries.

**NBC:** What about a possible blockade of Cuba?

**JLP:** Blockades have demonstrated that they are ineffective, merely an irritant, so why not support the other peaceful solutions Mexico has proposed? Is it not reasonable to seek détente in the area? I seriously think it is possible to do so, before resorting to these violent and arbitrary extremes, to search out all reasonable paths first.

As I have repeatedly stated, Mexico is ready to be and could be a good communicator, so why not exhaust that possibility? The word "mediator" has been overused. I don't think we would be a mediator, but a communicator. We could communicate, because we are friends with both [the U.S. and Cuba]. We don't aspire to mediate, either as arbitrators or judges. We would simply put them in contact through a reasonable plan of communication which would enable them to know the problems on both sides. I am convinced that they are not so serious as to be incapable of solution.

If there is patience to listen, I am certain solutions can be found. I don't believe the ideological issues are limiting. The U.S. has magnificent diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, with China. There is active trade. There are no limits. Why not exhaust all possibilities toward understanding the Cuban problem? It is a small country. I am certain that solutions exist.

**NBC:** What is Mexico's stance on the Salvadoran guerrillas?

**JLP:** In the French-Mexican communiqué we said that we are dealing with a "representative political force." I would emphasize that we are not preaching law but stressing facts. This is not a juridical judgment but a political expression. I would like this to be very clear.

To suppose that a political solution can be a formal solution, such as an electoral process which does not consider the protagonists, this is not a political solution. *Poli* comes from the Greek "poly," meaning many . . . Thus, all who participate in a problem must solve it.

**NBC:** Reagan's arms proposal to the Soviets?

**JLP:** Reagan's speech yesterday was for me a cause of great joy. It has been a long time since I have seen such a valiant initiative and I would compare it to Sadat's efforts to solve his problems with Israel. Permit me to congratulate Reagan for that initiative.

This is the road to solving the problem, if both great countries realize that, they will be helping themselves. What greatly concerns me and what is paradoxical is that, while our bilateral relations with the U.S. are splendid, the only problems we have with the U.S. are our criteria, not over fundamental issues but over the methodology required for dealing with the problems of Central America and the Caribbean.

**NBC:** Where does Mexico think the arms in Central America are coming from?

**JLP:** I absolutely do not know where they come from. Surely from somewhere, but I have no idea and I can not tell you what Mexico thinks, because I don't even know what I think.

**NBC:** Please amplify on Mexico's proposal to be a "communicator."

**JLP:** To seek détente, to seek it through dialogue, understanding of reciprocal problems. If we are speaking of Cuba and the United States, why is a solution not sought? What are the problems? Instead of this escalation of verbal terrorism that presently comes from both sides, why not seek communication which makes the problems conscious and which expresses political will? I am convinced that this escalation [of violence] is useful for no one, and that there are other paths. I am convinced of this, and Mexico is ready to do what it can.

**NBC:** Is the U.S. or Cuba blocking a solution more?

**JLP:** I could not say, I am not an expert in these relations; but this is not important. What is important is a good disposition. To erase the past and begin anew before resorting to extremes that can only deteriorate relations in the area.

**NBC:** Are there any other problems you have discussed regarding the Caribbean and Cuba?

**JLP:** What is happening is that the U.S.—I don't know if Canada, possibly Venezuela as well—do not want Cuba included. We feel if Cuba is not included, a very important part is left out, and if the process is not complete there will always be an open or latent problem. I think the entire area should be included.

## Venezuela spreading Club of Rome policy

by Gretchen Small

When Venezuelan President Luis Herrera Campins left Washington following his three-day official visit Nov. 16-18, America's leading newspapers hailed Venezuela as the "premier democracy" on the continent, and the U.S.'s main ally in the area. "Mr. Herrera's views are still closer to those of the U.S. than to Mexico," a *Baltimore Sun* editorial exulted, while the *Washington Post* declared that the Venezuelan President was more "sincere" than the Mexicans, for at least he recognized the dangers of a guerrilla movement developing in his own country.

What the Eastern press was really saying is that Herrera Campins has consistently supported Secretary of State Alexander Haig's genocidal policies in Central America, and—as is widely admitted in the area—served as the "enforcer" of State Department policy upon the Christian Democratic government in El Salvador. But this presidential visit came at an awkward time for Herrera, on the heels of Haig's worst rantings about the likelihood of a direct U.S. military intervention in the region. No one was quite sure what the Venezuelan response to all this would be.

In Washington, however, Herrera Campins obediently kept silent. While he is said to have informed Washington privately not to look for Venezuelan troops to join any intervention force, Herrera Campins made clear he would do nothing to counter Haig's confrontationalist approach.

The payoff for his silence came with the official sale of 20 F-16 fighter bombers to Venezuela, giving it some of the most sophisticated weaponry on the continent, and the word that President Reagan had agreed to pay a return visit to Caracas in early 1982.

Haig has pushed for months for a Venezuelan-U.S. axis in Latin America, principally to counter the privileged relationship between Mexico and the United States built by President Reagan personally. But while the Campins government may be an ally of zero-growth Haig, it is decidedly not of President Reagan nor of the United States. A visit to Caracas could be more dangerous for the President than his July 1981 visit to the British colony of Canada, where a dry run for assassination of Reagan was staged—with the complicity of the Canadian