

## Dateline Mexico by Frank Roncalli

### Kidnaping by the Thornburgh Doctrine

*Washington is now hiring kidnapers in other countries, when foreign laws stand in the way of "justice."*

Washington officials and U.S. government agents are bragging that the U.S. Justice Department arranged for the April 3 kidnaping, on Mexican territory, of a Mexican doctor, Humberto Alvarez Macháin, and his transfer to El Paso, Texas, where he was turned over to agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Alvarez is accused by the Justice Department of involvement in the 1985 assassination of DEA agent Enrique Camarena in Mexico, and he was clearly kidnaped in such an illegal manner in order to bring him to trial on May 1, when the first trials in the Camarena case are scheduled to begin in Los Angeles.

Mexicans were shocked. As the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior* wrote on April 16, "The intervention on Mexican territory, once again, is extremely dangerous for the sovereignty of the nation."

The Bush administration, under the so-called Thornburgh Doctrine, has asserted that Washington has the right to violate the laws of other countries, as well as its own, in actions abroad. Indeed, with such illegal actions, the laws and constitutional guarantees of Mexico are being replaced by open interventions by foreign police.

U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh hailed the Alvarez kidnaping on April 17 as an appropriate response to Mexico's claim to sovereignty. "Mexico can continue exercising its sovereign right to not extradite nationals who accused of crimes committed on U.S. territory," Thornburgh said, but "we, as you

know, have had very little difficulty throughout the years in securing the arrest of Mexican suspects who face charges the United States, using a great variety of methods other than simple extradition."

Kidnaping could be ordered in any country which "like Mexico has adopted the position that its nationals are not subject to extradition," he added.

U.S. media have reported that Washington paid a team of Mexicans \$100,000 to carry out the kidnaping. While some claim that those Mexicans were simply mercenary bounty-hunters, Alvarez's lawyer Robert Steinberg told the press that when the kidnapers arrived at Alvarez's house, they flashed badges of the Federal Judicial Police, a dependency of the Mexican Attorney General's office, and told him that he was being arrested for carrying out an illegal abortion. He was then transferred to Ciudad Juárez, and turned over in El Paso.

The facts at hand tend to confirm Steinberg's report that the kidnapers were agents of the Federal Judicial Police (PJF).

The head of the anti-drug division, Javier Coello Trejo, was in Ciudad Juárez the first four days of April, without any explanation. In Mexican political circles, Coello is considered a "gringos' man" who is carrying out everything that the Bush government requests on the drug front, even if this includes violations of human rights and constitutional order.

Coello has been accused of total lawlessness by diverse governmental authorities here. For example, several

weeks ago, four members of his team of personal bodyguards were accused by more than 10 women of mob rape. His bodyguards have subsequently been arrested, despite Coello's protests.

Last year, Coello accused Panama's Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega of engaging in smuggling of pharmaceuticals on Mexican territory. The investigation was carried out personally by Coello. That dirty little maneuver collapsed, however, when the PJF proved unable to produce any piece of evidence to back up the charge.

The Salinas government has put up few obstacles to the blatant foreign intervention, because it hopes that by docilely following Washington's wishes in drug-trafficking policies, it may receive economic concessions from the Bush administration. Faced with chaos in the cabinet due to the failure of government plans and the Brady debt renegotiation scheme to relieve the debt burden, the Salinas government has become increasingly subservient to Washington.

That was further confirmed by a report in the *Los Angeles Times* April 11, that a U.S. government P-3 plane carrying radar and electronic surveillance equipment overflew Mexican airspace in pursuit of a small Colombian plane believed to be carrying cocaine. When the plane reached an area of Mexico bordering on the United States, the P-3 advised the PJF, and requested that they stop the traffickers.

The article claimed that the overflight of Mexican airspace was legal, because President Salinas de Gortari had authorized, at the beginning of this year, that "planes equipped with radar fly over Mexican territory in anti-drug missions." Salinas, however, neither consulted nor informed anybody in Mexico of said authorization.