

# Will Mexico's PRI Become a Whorehouse?

by Ruben Cota Meza

If the current president of the Mexican PRI, Roberto Madrazo Pintado, is successful in forcing his policy changes on that political party, the chances are that Mexico will sink still further into the destruction and chaos that have characterized the past quarter-century.

The PRI, which ruled Mexico for more than 70 years, until it lost power to the right-wing synarchist National Action Party (PAN) in the year 2000, made a fundamental change in its party action program during the party's national assembly, held the first week in March. That change removed a paragraph which had banned foreign investment in the Mexican energy sector (a Constitutional mandate, in any event), and took a strong stand reaffirming the State's dominion over national resources, and in particular, over Mexico's hydrocarbon wealth. In its place, the PRI adopted an ambiguous statement that opens the door to the possibility that the PRI—previously the fiercest defender of the nation's right to its own natural resources—will modify Mexico's 1917 National Constitution, to once again allow the exploitation of those resources by foreign interests.

The founding of the PRI, and the national governments through which it governed from the 1920s until 2000, was largely the result of three historic episodes in Mexico's battle to establish itself as a republic, dedicated to the attainment of justice for its people. Those three episodes were: first, Mexican independence from Spanish colonial rule in the early 19th Century; second, the Reform and the battle led by Benito Juárez against French intervention, against the empire of Maximilian of Hapsburg, and for the restoration of the Republic in the mid-19th Century; and third, the bloody Mexican Revolution against the system of virtual serfdom and against the so-called economic "modernization" of dictator Porfirio Díaz in the early 20th Century.

The state's dominion over the natural resources of the soil and subsoil, established in Articles 27 and 28 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution, and the oil expropriation decreed in 1938 by President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), represent the essence of those historic battles. And it is against the very existence of the Mexican Republic, and of its right to use its natural resources, that both national and foreign interests have joined forces throughout Mexico's history, to threaten the viability of the nation itself. The PRI's surrender of its long-cherished defense of that national character, threatens to throw open the doors to such foreign enemies, and to turn the



*The Congressional attempt to break the Constitutional defense of Mexico's national oil company Pemex, coincided with "energy NAFTA" looting plans being circulated in the United States ahead of the Crawford "NAFTA summit."*

PRI into the vehicle of its own destruction.

### **Pressure for Mexico to Loot Itself**

The PRI's suicidal turn is in response to a tremendous escalation in pressure on Mexico by the Bush Administration in Washington, and by the international financial institutions for which the United States serves as policeman (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and so on). Driving them is the same desperate insolvency that is behind their efforts to steal the Social Security funds of the United States itself.

Bush, Mexican President Vicente Fox, and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin will be meeting on March 23 at Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas. One of the main agenda items that Bush will impose there will be the necessity for Mexico to "open up" its energy sector to foreign investment. To prepare for that meeting, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice travelled to Mexico in mid-March, to discuss how NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Association) could be expanded into a full "North American Economic Community" which, among other things, would encompass energy.

Another element of preparation for the Crawford meeting included a March 3 *New York Times* article, which publicized the campaign of Pemex director Luis Ramírez Corzo to "modernize" the Mexican state oil company, by allowing "risk contracts" and other forms of foreign investment. Still another was the article by former Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda and former California Pension Investment Unit director, Nathan Gardens, which was published in the *Financial Times* of London on March 8. Castañeda, better known by some as "Wall Street's Fair-haired Boy," is currently a Presidential contender for 2006.

In the *Financial Times*, Castañeda proposes the establishment of a North American Energy Security Fund, which would channel financial resources from U.S. pension funds

into buying the bonds of this new fund. These bonds would then be used to double Mexico's oil production—and export it all to the United States. Castañeda's bonds would be backed, of course, by the future sale of Mexico's oil.

### **Senator Bartlett Fights the PRI 'Transvestites'**

It is the allies of the international bankers within the PRI, who are encouraging PRI President Madrazo's sell-out plan. PRI Senator Manuel Bartlett Diaz, in an emotional speech before all the delegates of the PRI assembly, said that the enemy is also within the PRI. "Those who vote to abandon the explicit defense of the Constitution," he said, "are in favor of foreign interests. . . . If today we allow these neoliberals and sellouts encrusted within the party, to assure that we do not approve the defense of the Constitution of the Republic, we will have surrendered the party, and we will have lost the defense of national sovereignty. Do not allow this to happen!"

Senator Bartlett warned that if the PRI's conservative elements succeed in this, they will have eliminated the party's essence. The PRI would no longer be a nationalist party of the people. Bartlett identified this effort to destroy the PRI with former Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who turned the PRI into the PAN's tail, and who, together with former President Ernesto Zedillo, pushed the PRI to the right.

Later, Bartlett denounced Madrazo as an anti-nationalist, an opportunist, and a hypocrite who seeks to stay on the good side of the businessmen and the multinationals, by offering them access to strategic sectors of the economy, and who, together with the PANista Government Secretary Santiago Creel, believes that the multinationals are the ones who are going to determine the 2006 vote, by choosing the person who is most sympathetic to their interests, and who can promise them the best deal.

In other words, Bartlett is describing how the PRI is rapidly becoming a brothel of transvestites, who are offering themselves to whomever is able to pay and will give them a new house—in this case, the presidential house.

Bartlett's strong attacks have forced Madrazo and his transvestites onto the defensive. For example, Manlio Fabio Beltrones, current president of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, tried to justify what happened at the assembly by insisting that it did not mean "that we are going to support the privatization initiatives of Zedillo or of the PAN." And Madrazo himself declared that what the PRI assembly had approved was only "deeper reflection" on how to support the energy sector, and to discuss it with freedom and democracy.

Bartlett's response to all this was to say that such denials that privatization is on the agenda is just designed to fool PRI members. What is clear in all these verbal attacks and counterattacks, is that the PRI sector linked to Madrazo is sending a message to foreign interests and to their partners inside Mexico: Put us back in the Presidency, and we get you the oil that you lost more than a half century ago.