

Narco-terrorists plan explosion in Mexico as election nears

by Cynthia R. Rush and Carlos Méndez

When the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) attacked several municipalities in the southeastern state of Chiapas in Mexico on Jan. 1, 1994, *EIR* warned that this narco-terrorist offensive constituted a grave national security threat not only to Mexico, but to the United States as well. Today, that warning is even more valid, as the EZLN and its collaborators in the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), as well as among the rest of the pro-terrorist left, threaten to use the Aug. 21 presidential election as the trigger for *nationwide* insurgency modeled on the Chiapas events. Official Washington, which is obsessed with whether to invade Haiti, would do well to refocus its attention on the far more dangerous Mexican situation.

In June of this year the EZLN escalated its offensive against the Mexican government. It first rejected the government's peace proposals and then presented President Carlos Salinas de Gortari with a list of unacceptable demands: that Salinas resign and a transitional government be set up; that the EZLN be granted belligerent status; and that a national constituent assembly be held to rewrite both the national and the Chiapas state constitutions. EZLN leader "Sub-Commander Marcos" warned that rejection of these demands would lead to a long and bloody civil war.

As if in unison, Marcos and PRD presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas also threatened that unless the Aug. 21 elections were clean, the population would "rise up" against the state. What they mean by "clean," however, is that the ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) *must lose*, and hand power over to the opposition; for them, any other result would constitute irrevocable proof of fraud, and a pretext for unleashing armed conflict.

Cárdenas is already telling supporters at electoral rallies that the government is preparing to steal the vote just as it did in 1988, but that this time things "will be different." At a rally on July 6, he said that "we are the force with the best capacity to mobilize. . . . What comes or doesn't come, depends on what happens on Aug. 21." According to the July 15 *Christian Science Monitor*, the PRD has rejected an official audit of electoral lists, which found 98% accuracy, saying instead that the lists have a 20% corruption factor—a claim which can obviously be used to discount any electoral result on Aug. 21.

A coordinated offensive

Mexico's narco-terrorist apparatus intends to use the weeks remaining before Aug. 21 to plan for post-election violence, with obvious support from outside the country as well. On July 22-24, the São Paulo Forum, the umbrella group of Ibero-America's narco-terrorist parties set up by Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party in 1990, held a continent-wide conference of center-left mayors in Durango, Mexico to discuss "municipal autonomy." The mayor of Durango belongs to the pro-Cárdenas (and pro-terrorist) wing of the Mexican Workers Party, and all of Mexico's other pro-EZLN leftist parties were scheduled to be represented. Cárdenas himself was expected to be the central figure at the conference.

Following this, on Aug. 6-9, the EZLN will convene a National Democratic Convention which, under the guise of launching a "national dialogue of progressive forces," will further plan the dismemberment of Mexico's national institutions. In attendance will be every extremist element in the country, from radical gays to communist splinter groups, to the Marxist Theology of Liberation and its "indigenous" and "peasant" offshoots.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas told *La Jornada* that the EZLN convention "is important because it shows that those who took up arms, who found that path the only means by which to make themselves heard, today say that the solution to the country's problems will be found in a clean and transparent election. This is an important position, and I would hope that the convention, regardless of who participates . . . contributes to the holding of a clean and credible election."

Financing subversion

It's no surprise that on July 11, the EZLN officially invited schismatic bishop Samuel Ruiz of San Cristóbal de las Casas in Chiapas to participate in its convention and to continue to serve as "mediator" with the Salinas government. Ruiz, a leader of the Theology of Liberation faction of the Catholic Church, has for years used his base in San Cristóbal to organize insurgency with a network of catechists and foreign priests, and is viewed as the chief orchestrator of the Jan. 1 EZLN assault.

On July 11, Gen. Ramón Mota Sánchez (ret.), president

of the congressional defense commission of Mexico's Chamber of Deputies, identified Ruiz as the recipient of foreign "humanitarian" financing which was then channeled into subversive activities. Mota said that he possesses evidence that the EZLN received financing from the Catholic organizations Adveniat and Misereor, as well as from the Spanish Basque narco-terrorist group ETA. Mota said that, according to intelligence reports, there are between 100 and 150 members of ETA currently in Mexico.

Both Mota and fellow PRI congressman Cuauhtémoc López, who represents San Cristóbal in Chiapas, charged that the German charity Adveniat, with an annual budget larger than that of Unesco, has funneled money to the EZLN through the Bartolomé de las Casas Human Rights Center in Chiapas, run by Samuel Ruiz. "These funds have not been used to help the Indians, but have in large part been channeled into training, maintaining, and purchasing equipment for the guerrillas," according to press coverage of the charges.

General Mota's call for an audit of the finances of the San Cristóbal diocese was called "pertinent" by Father Luis Fletes Santana, the vicar of the Mexico City Catholic archdiocese, who insisted that Ruiz doesn't act in the name of all Mexican bishops. The general's accusations were also echoed by Javier López Barragán, bishop of Zacatecas, who charged that several ecumenical Catholic groups in Europe, particularly in Holland, were financing the Chiapas guerrillas. When asked whether it were possible that Ruiz's diocese could have been financing the EZLN, Bishop López Barragán, president of the church's Doctrine of the Faith Commission, replied, "In this life, anything is possible."

Ruiz and his defenders responded to these charges by demanding proof and accusing Mota of slandering him. The government's new peace commissioner, Jorge Madrazo, who replaced Manuel Camacho Solís, urged Mota to "reconsider" his charges, which he labeled "adventurist." Madrazo also stated that "there is nothing to lead us to believe that Bishop Samuel Ruiz has participated in actions to arm the EZLN."

But General Mota calmly responded, "I don't have to give names of organizations. What I said is more than sufficient for all Mexicans to concern ourselves with the problem [EZLN's funding] and to try to reach the truth. I have a great deal of information, and it is neither false nor slanderous." He stressed the importance of "clearing up this matter, especially in light of the call for the National Democratic Convention, which clearly identifies the EZLN's purpose of destabilizing the country."

On July 12, the president of the lower house's justice commission, Juan José Castillo Mota, warned that the House intends to fully investigate "the orchestrators of the armed conflict in Chiapas . . . for which it demands that the San Cristóbal diocese explain how it has spent money received from abroad."

Pope's voice is heard

Pope John Paul II has also placed considerable pressure on Samuel Ruiz, and made known that he views Ruiz's activities less than favorably. During a visit to Rome at the beginning of July—Mexican bishops make such a trip every five years—Ruiz met with the pontiff and told the press that the pope was pleased with his work in Chiapas and his efforts to mediate between the EZLN and the government. Reality proved otherwise. Ruiz failed to report that the pope only spoke with him for five minutes, compared to a meeting held with his colleagues which lasted for over 30 minutes.

Moreover, in a July 5 address to the group of Mexican bishops, the pope chastised Ruiz, although without naming him directly. "Today more than ever, Mexico needs peace with justice, reconciliation, and rejection of every temptation of violence," he said. "Armed violence is not only a mistaken road, but the greatest of evils, as the history of recent conflicts sadly demonstrates."

Speaking directly to the Mexican Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II stated that "while it is legitimate and sometimes even necessary for bishops to illuminate all areas of society's and man's life with the light of the Gospels, we cannot forget, as the Vatican II Council teaches, that the mission conferred on the church by Christ is not of a political, economic, or social order, but rather religious and moral. Actions or words which are only an expression or ideological promotion in no way contribute to communion or reconciliation." The pope called on Mexico's bishops to show "prudence" in their activities—an undisguised allusion to Ruiz. "This is a difficult hour, but also a hopeful one for Mexico," the pontiff said. "This is a time of profound national reconciliation, especially among the beloved communities of Chiapas."

Ruiz has disregarded the pope's message, however. On July 15, he shared a podium with the EZLN's "Marcos" at a seminar on "democracy" held at Mexico's National Autonomous University. Although Marcos was speaking by video, the two delivered virtually the identical message. Ruiz said that "the armed uprising in Chiapas does not free the country from social eruption, given the history of injustice in Mexico." He said that this is already manifest in the growing turbulence in the states of Jalisco, Michoacán, and Guerrero—three states named by the Salinas government as having been penetrated by "armed groups"—but that in Chiapas "the topsoil is very thin and less resilient because of extreme poverty."

"Marcos" stated that the EZLN had no desire to impose candidates in the upcoming Aug. 21 elections, but rather "aspires to be an element of warning to avoid the imposition of the ruling party and of electoral fraud." According to the July 18 *New York Times*, Marcos recently told the daily *La Jornada* that "there are armed groups in various parts of the country" and that violence would erupt if there is not enough progress in creating a "democratic opening" in Mexico.