

CIA Issue in Mexican

Rightists Blamed for Bombings

By Marlise Simons
Special to The Washington Post

MEXICO CITY—In Mexico, where appearances invariably deceive, "futurism" is not a new form of artistic expression. Nor is it a growing fascination with the 21st century.

"Futurismo," as it is called here, is an immensely complex political happening, lasting at least nine months, and ending only when the next president of Mexico is named. Students of Mexican politics like to compare the mysteries of this process to that of the Vatican choosing a new pope.

But if "futurismo" in the past has made for circumspect lobbying, intriguing dinner conversation and a few isolated acts of violence, the current episode—now four months under way—is becoming less ceremonious. According to high government officials, some right wing pressure groups are intent on creating a climate of confusion, terror and instability to strengthen their demands for a more conservative successor to President Luis Echeverria.

In recent weeks, according to the officials, "futurists" have triggered 12 bomb explosions, killing five and wounding 23 persons, launched an unprecedented rumor campaign to incite the urban poor against the government, and staged an unusual public battle between the government and conservatives over newly introduced school books.

The bombs killed and maimed bystanders in San Luis Potosi and also heavily damaged banks, and government and private offices in Mexico City and Oaxaca. At first, police grabbed and tortured members of the Communist Party and leftist students, but eventually they were released.

A well orchestrated rumor campaign was launched in working class areas of Mexico City and almost all provincial capitals. Suddenly the word spread that government health teams on their annual vaccination tour against diphtheria and polio, were really out to "sterilize children."

The effect was dramatic. Thousands of terrified parents kept their children at home for almost a week and accused the government of wanting to "castrate" the poor, physically and politically.

For the public, the origin of these events has been shrouded in mystery. But the country's long phobia about U.S. intervention has led to a wave of declarations and press articles seeking to blame the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency for "bombing, rumor-mongering and destabilizing."

The current textbook battle, however, is less anonymous. Conservative groups, ostensibly led by the National Parents' Association, accuse the government of subverting youth by introducing new 6th grade textbooks on sex education and political philosophy.

To understand how all these events are part of "futurismo" requires monitoring the subtle power struggle going on within the main interest groups inside and outside the government.

Mexican politics is dominated by the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) which rules in the name of the principles of social justice of the Mexican revolution. But in practice this hermetic political machine responds to no specific ideology, but rather to the more concrete pressures of the country's main interest groups.



LUIS ECHEVERRIA
... attacked by students

Because this political bureaucracy, in power for 46 years, is all powerful, it feels little need to disclose most of its decisions—or indeed how it reaches them. And the public, along with the press, is reduced to following politics through speculation.

One of the greatest mysteries is how the next president is picked. Some analysts believe the outgoing president simply chooses whomever he wants, but a more general view is that the incumbent president makes his selection only after consultation and possible compromise with the country's main interest groups, such as the political elite, labor, big business, the military and intellectuals.

Whatever the inside machinations, by late summer the PRI is expected to nominate the next president. A Mexican president's powers vastly exceed those of a U.S. president, except that he cannot succeed himself after his six-year term.

Since Mexico's 1976 presidential elections serve only as a public ratification of the official candidate, the forth coming nomination therefore is crucial.

Campaign

President Accuses U.S. Agency

By Marlise Simons
Special to The Washington Post

MEXICO CITY, March 17 —Mexican President Luis Echeverria and members of his Cabinet have accused the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency of organizing Friday's disturbances, in which the president was verbally and physically attacked and finally driven off the campus of Mexico's National University.

On at least four occasions during the disturbance, the president called the increasingly abusive student audience "young fascists, manipulated by the CIA."

The following day, in a clear reference to CIA intervention in Chile, the president told a large political gathering that Mexico "will not tolerate that chain of events which produced the overthrow of (Chilean) President Salvador Allende."

Since then, six Cabinet members, other high officials and newspaper columnists have joined the president in directly or indirectly blaming "U.S. imperialism" and the CIA for stirring up unrest and blocking the president's attempt to make peace with the student movement.

Foreign Minister Emilio Rabasa declared, "We must assume that the CIA operates in all of Latin America, unless there is proof to the contrary." He added the warning that if any diplomat turns out to be connected with Friday's disturbances, Mexico will "immediately take action against him and expel him from the country."

When asked today to comment on the barrage of accusations against the United States, U.S. Ambassador Joseph John Jova said he could "affirm categorically that there was no involvement of any agency of the

U.S. government in the regrettable incident involving President Echeverria at the National University." Embassy officials said they did not know whether Washington would formally protest the accusations.

Political observers here wonder whether the government will conduct a full-scale investigation that might disclose CIA connections among students, or whether the CIA is being used as a scapegoat to eliminate the suggestion that Echeverria's attempts to reform the system are rejected by leftist student groups.

The direct abuse shouted at the president and the subsequent throwing of bottles and stones, one of which slightly wounded Echeverria's forehead, are almost unprecedented in this country where a president is publicly treated with great reverence.

Paramilitary groups of left and right traditionally operate in Mexican universities to further the interests of national political lobbies, and both sides are thought to receive financial support from outside sources.

As more information about CIA operations in Latin America is being publicized, Mexicans are increasingly blaming the agency for internal political disturbances.

This is the first time the Mexican government has so openly and fiercely accused the CIA, known to have here one of its largest stations in the hemisphere.

So far the government has offered no evidence to substantiate its charges, and Cabinet members have only explained that Echeverria's "anti-imperialist and nationalist policies" have provoked last week's CIA actions."