

New Bolivian Chief Affirms U.S. Ties

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LA PAZ, Bolivia, Aug. 24—Col. Hugo Banzer Suarez, who assumed the presidency Sunday after a rightist rebellion, said today that his Government would maintain friendly relations with the United States and would not seek to restore ties with Cuba. *

The President said elections for a constitutional government have to wait. At his first news conference since the army rebelled and overthrew General Juan Torres Gonzales, who had been in office 10 months, Col. Banzer said: "My Government is nationalistic, revolutionary and loyal to the fatherland. I

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promised to banish the words left and right."

He said that the nationalization of the Gulf Oil Company would not be reversed. The aim of his Government, he said, is to form a political grouping to achieve nationalist objectives, start a new economic program and bring about social change.

Meanwhile, La Paz was re-

turning to normal. Stores were open but schools remained closed, following a bloody clash at the university yesterday that left 8 dead and some 30 wounded.

Shooting broke out around the university again after midnight and the area remained sealed off by the army.

Reliable sources confirmed that General Torres had taken refuge in the Peruvian Embassy. It is presumed here that Col. Banzer's Government

would grant him safe conduct to leave the country.

The President received the press at his office in the Palacio Quemado. He was dressed in black, as are many Bolivians after the bloody fighting of recent days, which has left 120 dead and 700 wounded.

He spoke easily, emphatically and answered all questions but one—which constitution would his Government guide itself by? The question of the constitution, he said, would be taken

up by the Cabinet later in the day.

The last constitutional government of Bolivia was overthrown by General Alfredo Ovando Candia in September, 1969.

The President said he could not indicate a possible date for presidential elections.

"At the moment," he said, "They are of no interest." He explained that the nation had gone through a chaotic period and that the new Government's

first task was to restore order and get the country moving.

Concerning relations with the United States, the President said: "we will maintain the relations the nation has always had. We are friends traditionally, and we are going to maintain this friendship."

The President's displeasure was obvious each time a question was put to him about Cuba. Bolivia, he said, will not initiate any moves to bring Cuba back into the Organization of American States or other regional Latin-American bodies.

He stressed that Bolivia would maintain her international obligations and that these included agreements with other Latin-American nations on isolating the Cubans.

Can't Forget Guevara

"The Bolivian people cannot forget the invasion headed by Che Guevara," he said, Guevara was killed here in 1967 while leading a Cuban-financed guerrilla operation.

The President said that the Government does not plan to undo all programs of previous governments. He said many measures were irreversible and would be respected, but that others might have to be revised.

"I believe the Gulf case is irreversible, and we are going to respect it fully," he said. The Gulf fields were expropriated in 1969. At the time, the Government agreed to pay Gulf \$78-million in compensation.

Col. Banzer said Bolivia would continue relations with the Soviet Union, which were re-established in December, 1969. The Russians are financing construction of a tin smelter here and have offered to help finance oil exploration and possible a steel mill.

"We will not act with demagoguery," he said. "I am not interested in pleasing anyone."

Political Prisoner to President

Hugo Banzer Suarez

Special to The New York Times

LA PAZ, Bolivia, Aug. 24—Until last Saturday evening, Col. Hugo Banzer Suárez was in police custody and his name was on a list of 60 persons who were to be deported to Chile as plotters against the left-wing regime of Gen. Juan José Torres Gonzales.

With the overthrow of General Torres by rebel army units, Colonel Banzer became the President of Bolivia Sunday by decision of the armed forces. He swore before God and nation and by my honor as a soldier to lead the antileftist regime.

Colonel Banzer's movement into the presidency ahead of various generals reflects the esteem in which he is held in the army, particularly among younger officers, and the key role he played in organizing the uprising that toppled the Torres regime after 10 months in power.

Colonel Banzer's military record includes episodes that his fellow officers mention when they talk about his courage. In addition, he is considered above corruption, a trait that is unusual in the low-paid Bolivian army.

Handling a Crowd

During the administration of President René Barrientos Ortuño, Colonel Banzer was Minister of Education in 1966. One day in front of the ministry there was a turbulent demonstration of teachers demanding a wage increase. "String up Banzer!" they shouted.

Colonel Banzer went from his office into the street alone and entered the crowd. "Let's see who is the brave one who is going to hang me," he said.

The hostility melted and a discussion began in which Colonel Banzer said that wage increases could be granted only by sacrificing a school building program. The crowd dispersed quietly.

In appearance, Colonel Banzer, who is 45 years old, is unprepossessing. He weighs 132 pounds and is 5 feet 5 inches tall. He is referred to as "El Petizo," which means "shorty" in colloquial Spanish.

His dark brown hair is combed straight forward to a fringe over his forehead to hide a bald spot. His cavalryman's moustache seems almost too large for his thin face.

But he smiles easily, has an urbane manner of speaking in a low-pitched voice, and his dark brown eyes command attention.

Full-Time Soldier

Except for his brief role in government, Colonel Banzer has been a full-time military man. After graduating from the military college here as a cavalry lieutenant, he held various army posts, including the command of the important Fourth Cavalry Regiment.

Colonel Banzer received training at a United States Army school in Panama in 1955 and at the Armored Cavalry School at Fort Hood, Texas, in 1960. He later served as Bolivian military attaché in Washington and in Argentina.

During his stays in the United States, Colonel Banzer learned fluent English. He is considered pro-American and is well known and liked by United States military attachés and advisory

officers who have served in Bolivia.

After the death of General Barrientos in a helicopter accident in 1969, Colonel Banzer received a prestigious assignment as director of the Military College. Last October, he was on the losing side in a military crisis in which the President, Gen. Alfredo Ovando Candia, was ousted and General Torres took over with the support of left-wing union, student and army groups.

Began Conspiracy

Colonel Banzer began conspiring with others opposed to the radical politics of General Torres. Last January, he was removed as director of the Military College, and exiled to Argentina. He returned secretly to Bolivia several times and last Thursday was arrested by the political police in Santa Cruz, the capital of the eastern department where he was born on July 10, 1926. The arrest served as a virtual signal for the uprising.

The combat here between

rebel troops and leftist civilian and military units toppled General Torres Saturday night. As soon as General Torres left the Presidential Palace, Colonel Banzer was released by the political police.

"I was well treated," Colonel Banzer said with a smile.

Colonel Banzer's wife, Yolanda Parra, and three of their five children, have been living in Buenos Aires. But an 18-year-old daughter, Patricia, a freckle-faced brunette, who has been studying here, was at the palace as her father took office in a brown suit, red tie and desert boots.

A Family Man

The colonel was described by his daughter as "a father who prefers to be with his family rather than to be going out to fiestas." One of the family treats is a Sunday dinner of locro, a typical dish made with chicken, rice, tubers and dried beef.

Colonel Banzer has been an outstanding horseman and has silver trophies from army competition to show his skill.



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Highly esteemed by the army, particularly among younger officers.

He is also a prolific reader. His tastes range from James Bond to books on Bolivian and Latin-American history, with particular interest in the Mexican Revolution.

Meeting with a group of peasants, the new President said afterward that agrarian problems would have preferential attention in his Government. "Since the peasants are a national majority, they deserve special treatment," he said.