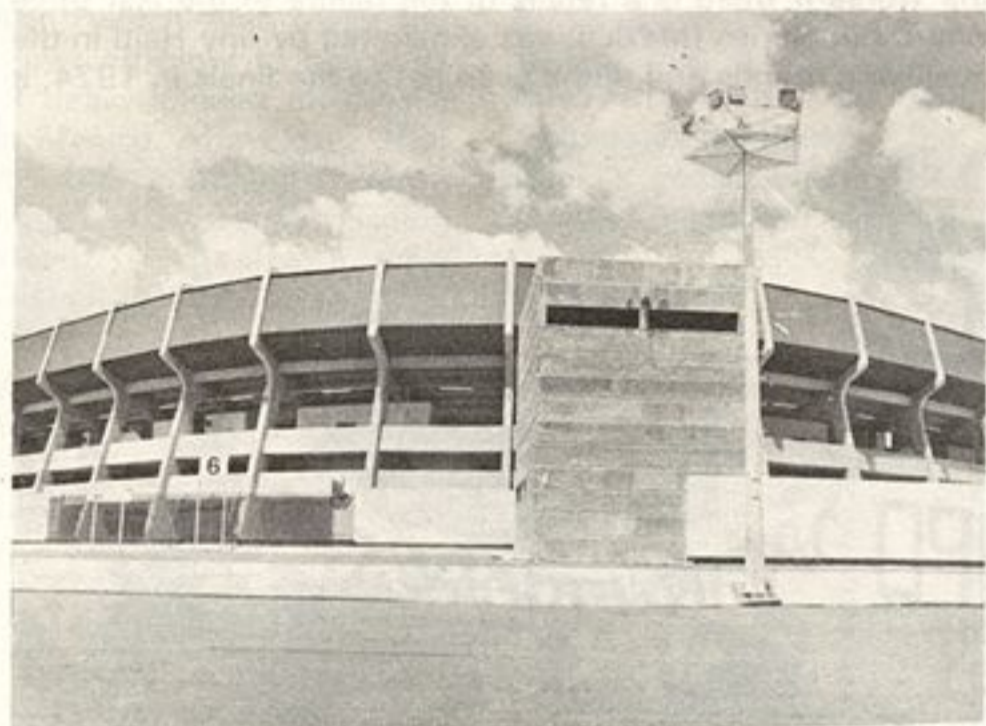


the Mexican government," says Colmenares Paramo. The leeway allowed to FIFA is "a great political risk" because it has been allowed "states of exception" in monetary and fiscal matters, and even in regards to the infrastructure to be used, claims the former vice-president of the National Association of Economists.

FIFA has "demanded more than is reasonable," says former national coach Ignacio Trellez. And in the characteristic roguish spirit that has earned him more than a few enemies in the local sports world, he adds that from a sociological perspective, the World Cup will be "a kind of circus."

As the opening date for the World Cup nears, some worry about a possible social turmoil such as the one that took place on the eve of the 1968 Olympics. Arturo Barcena for one, dismisses the idea. "Nobody is trying to use the World Cup to erase the tragedy of last September's earthquake nor the effects of the economic crisis we're going through. We're all affected by the crisis...it's different from what happened in 1968."

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The Corregidora Stadium in Querétaro. Photo by Renzo Gostoli.

What is certain is that Mexico will go through 30 days of yelling, tears, laughter and embraces. Mexico will once again host an international event that will put us in the global limelight and will attract millions of European and American fans whose affluence and goodwill toward our country is more welcome today than ever before. There is no doubt that as of May 31, the criticism and complaints will die down as thousands in Mexican stadiums and many millions more in front of their television sets yell "Goaaal" in an unparalleled mingling of languages.★

Adriana de la Mora



Foreign Affairs Ministers Sepúlveda and D'Escoto. Photo by Renzo Gostoli.

MEXICO AND CONTADORA

The Contadora Peace Plan is one of the outstanding and least known achievements of Mexico's Foreign policy. Here are some of the reasons why Contadora was instituted and why Mexico defends it dearly.

For the past three years Mexico has been an active force in the Contadora peace process and has used that forum as the most important instrument of its Central America policy. Alarmed by the potential consequences of a regional war on its southern border, the Mexican government has undertaken intensive diplomatic efforts in an attempt to bring peace to the region. Despite these efforts, the Central

American crisis has deepened and the possibilities of a rapid solution seem to be farther off than ever. Even Bernardo Sepúlveda, Mexico's Foreign Minister, has acknowledged that the Central American problem "will be with us for a long time to come."

The principal obstacle facing the policy put forth by Mexico and the other members of the Contadora Group (Venezuela, Colombia and Panama) is the U.S. position on the region. While both Contadora and Washington maintain that their objective is peace in Central America, their respective analyses of the crisis and their proposed methods for resolving it are quite different. For the



Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs Bernardo Sepúlveda. Photo by Renzo Gostoli.

Reagan administration an acceptable settlement can only be reached by exerting strong military pressure on the Sandinista government through the use of counter-revolutionary groups. Contadora, on the other hand, holds that military pressure must be put aside and that a satisfactory agreement can only be achieved through political negotiations. Mexico's participation in

ilateral and isolated manner, deliberately avoiding proselytism. After May 20, 1979 when President Jose Lopez Portillo decided to break relations with the Nicaraguan government headed by Anastasio Somoza, Mexico began to implement a more active foreign policy, defining a clear political commitment and actively lobbying to achieve its objectives. The



Guillermo Manuel Ungo, President of the FDR. Photo by Renzo Gostoli.

Contadora has its roots in the country's long tradition of independent foreign policy, characterized by its commitment to anti-intervention and a people's right to self-determination. Nonetheless, Mexico's growing diplomatic activity regarding Central America has produced important modifications in this tradition. Until 1979, Mexico's anti-interventionist policy was "passive, defensive and legalistic." It was implemented in specific cases as a form of protest and was presented in a un-

French-Mexican Declaration, issued in August 1981, that formally recognized the Salvadorean insurgency, was a further ratification of this new style of Mexican diplomacy. According to some analysts, oil formed the material basis that allowed Mexico to move from its previous foreign policy posture, active, but still quite limited to declarative or rhetorical efforts, to a more aggressive policy based on actions and on Mexico's effective presence in the problem at hand, especially in Central America.

The Effects of the War

Mexico's intensive Central America policy is not only an expression of its anti-interventionist tradition, but is also a response to the country's very specific interests. According to Mexican scholar Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, "the reason for Mexico's involvement is simple and direct: the geographical border for counter-revolution is precisely the southern border with Guatemala." Thus, it can be said that the Central American crisis is a matter of Mexican sovereignty, interests and national security. The Mexican government fears what some investigators have called a "geopolitical cordon" established by the United States.

Mexico's notion of national security is rather distinct from the conception developed by ideologues in the United States. For Mexico, the principal external threat to its internal political order comes from its neighboring countries and not from international Communist infiltration. Thus, a regional war in Central America would reduce Mexico's possibilities of political

independence and thus, its own traditional vision of external security. In addition, Mexico has already felt the immediate effects of the conflict: nearly half a million refugees (mostly Salvadoreans and Guatemalans), constant friction with Washington's policy and ongoing internal political debate regarding the position that the Mexican government should assume toward the regional crisis. Mexico urgently needs peace in Central America. But Mexican leaders know that there can be no peace unless the emerging political forces in Central America are recognized and integrated into the system. These new forces must be taken into account, they reason, because they arose from the real, internal conditions in the countries involved, and besides, the use of force will only push them into the Communist camp. This conception led to Mexico's decision to recognize the Salvadorean insurgency.

A New Diplomatic Style

The Contadora Group was established in January 1983, just one month after



The Peace March in support of the Contadora Group. Photo by Renzo Gostoli.

Miguel de la Madrid became Mexico's president. Making use of this regional diplomatic forum, he has promoted a foreign policy that includes new approaches and tactics, although it retains its continuity with the policies of previous administrations. With Contadora, Mexican diplomacy took on a multilateral approach and was thus obliged to negotiate even its own previously held positions. This has meant that Mexico's Central America policy has become more discreet and that the government has had to moderate its friendly attitude toward the Sandinistas. With the Contadora process, Mexico took on the role of active mediator. It became an intermediary after having been a partisan. One example of this change is De la Madrid's role as the principal promoter of direct talks between Washington and Managua. As Mexico has adopted this more neutral position it has played a very important role in urging the Sandinistas to moderate their political postures. For Mexico, the success of the Contadora peace effort would mean stability on its

southern border and with that, the possibilities of economic development, political pluralism and the exercise of the right to self-determination for Central America. Nonetheless, and despite support from the international community, Contadora has faced serious difficulties, at times to the point that it seemed likely to die. Pressures from Washington, and the intransigence of the Central American governments have impeded the Group's work. Time and again in the last three years it was announced that an agreement was imminent, but efforts have yet to culminate in a signed accord. As 1986 began, Contadora's future seemed somewhat optimistic. The fact that three new governments would be inaugurated (in Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica) opened more room for political negotiation. With the Caraballeda Message and the Guatemala Declaration, the Central American countries and the Contadora support group (Argentina, Peru, Uruguay and Brazil) revived the peace efforts. The normalization of

diplomatic relations between Nicaragua and Costa Rica also helped to create a greater climate of detente and moderation in the isthmus. Nonetheless, as Secretary Sepulveda stated, there are no easy solutions for the Central American crisis. The Reagan administration's insistence on giving military aid to Nicaraguan counter-revolutionary groups pre-

sents a major obstacle to the peace effort. Mexico and other Latin American countries fear that this policy can only lead to direct military intervention in Nicaragua, and that would surely engulf the region in flames and bring to a sudden end the course of contemporary Latin American history.★

Horacio Castellanos Moya

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE, THE CITY REBUILDS

Eight months ago, Mexico City was devastated by a killer earthquake that caused over 20,000 deaths and changed the city's center forever. Both its survivors and the government are rebuilding.

The lives of people in Mexico City were tragically disrupted eight months ago. The initial feelings of impotence and despair soon turned into solidarity and concern. Essential emergency and rescue work was taken up by ordinary people on such a scale that the government recently granted the



"Profits from the World Cup should go to reconstruction". Photo by Renzo Gostoli.