

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"When they divide that oil lease money up among us, I hope it is proportional to our time in school and not the number of grade points that we have."

Rebels making battlefield gains

El Salvador coalition cracking

by John E. Newhagen
United Press International

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — A power struggle between the partners has paralyzed El Salvador's fragile coalition government and threatens to undermine the war against increasingly aggressive leftist rebels.

The 60-seat Constituent Assembly came to power last March 28 with a mandate to write a new constitution and govern until this constitution was put into effect. Many called this the first free election in El Salvador in 50 years.

The U.S.-backed Christian Democrats won 42 percent of the vote for the largest single block in the Assembly, but the ultra-right National Republican Alliance, known as Arena, wound up controlling the body by winning the support of two other conservative parties.

Arena leader Roberto d'Aubuisson's sudden rise to power from the underground, where he fled after being charged with plotting a coup, stunned Salvadorans.

But d'Aubuisson, elected as Assembly president, has antagonized his coalition partners and key members of the military by relentlessly pushing his rightist views, which include suspending land reform and purging officials suspected of liberal tendencies.

The Christian Democrats, considered moderates by U.S. policymakers, began organizing a "Democratic Center coalition last fall. By luring two deputies from the Democratic Action Party and four from the National Conciliation Party into their camp, they gained a paper majority

of 31 Assembly votes.

Serious cracks began to appear in d'Aubuisson's coalition before Christmas. He threatened to resign on several occasions and no longer is in control. The decision-making process of government is in stalemate.

"D'Aubuisson forgot the small parties," said Christian Democratic floor leader Julio Rey Prendes.

The Arena party has thrown roadblocks into the path of a new constitution, fighting any hint that power in the future may be shared with leftists.

Many Salvadorans wonder if the first draft of the constitution can be finished as scheduled by the end of March.

Defense Minister Jose Guillermo Garcia has been shaking up the military command for three months, purging officers believed to be Arena supporters.

That nearly backfired in January when he ordered Lt. Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa, a close friend of d'Aubuisson, transferred to a diplomatic post in Uruguay.

Instead, Ochoa and his Cobra battalion rebelled and demanded Garcia's resignation for mishandling the war.

A compromise was reached and Ochoa left the country for assignment in the United States, but the army has remained split.

With politicians and army officers bogged down in acrimonious debate, rebels have shown more strength than imagined, overrunning a major city, Berlin, in early February, and cutting off another one, Suchitoto, later in the month.

This drive convinced Western sources that the army will face a morale crisis if major changes are not made.

But the civilian government strung in the rightist-moderate has not been able to assert its strongest force in the country's military coup of 1979.

Garcia has so far opposed change in his conservative view that emphasizes fixed troop and cumbersome 2,000 to sweeps that guerrillas easily opposed to aggressive small favored by American military.

The United States, which has in nearly \$1 billion in aid and past three years, is growing impatient with the stalemate on the field.

Secretary of State George Shultz Feb. 16 ruled out talks with the just days after a "working" approved by Assistant Secretary Thomas Enders was leaked to calling for a "two-track" policy pursuing negotiations with the reporting the Salvadoran war.

Congressional critics have their opposition to U.S. assistance. Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., is pushing for cutting off aid to El Salvador to money down a rat hole.

Negotiations in any form acceptable to d'Aubuisson surely provoke his withdrawal of government coalition, triggering downfall and demoralizing the even more.

Make a good offer on barrels of oil

by Art Buchwald

You can't believe what disarray the oil-producing nations are in until you visit an open market oil bazaar and see for yourself. I went to one last week to buy a barrel for Valentine's Day.

A sheik from Kuwait was singing, "Oil for sale, oil for sale. Sweet crude oil for sale."

"How much is it?" I asked.

"Thirty-four dollars a barrel. But since it's Valentine's Day I'll let you have it for 32."

I was about to taste it, when a man grabbed my arm, and pulled me into his tent. "That man is a thief. Here, try this delicious Libyan oil." He handed me a tin cup.

"Very tasty," I said. "How much for a barrel?"

He smiled. "Thirty dollars. We're having a Kaddafi Day Founders' Sale."

"I'll be back," I promised him.

I walked along the dusty streets of the bazaar as Nigerians, Saudi Arabians and oil merchants from Qatar all implored me to buy their products.

A man wearing a sombrero said, "Senor, please, would you like to buy this 1983 vintage which just came out of an offshore well off Venezuela?"

"Is 1983 a good year for oil?" I asked him.

"It's nouveau oil. The weather was just right for pumping it out of the sea. You can refine it today."

"How much is it?" I asked.

"If you promise not to tell anyone I will sell you a barrel for \$29," he said.

"That's \$5 below the OPEC price."

"I spit on OPEC. They are all double-crossers, and they are undercutting me all over the bazaar. I have a family to feed and that is why I am sacrificing my oil at cost."

"I'd like to think about it," I said.

As I walked farther down, a man in a sombrero standing in an alley called to me. "Psst, amigo, are you looking for some fast action?"

"It all depends on what you have to offer."

He showed me a photograph of a barrel of Mexican oil.

"I give you her for \$27 and will throw in the transportation for free."

"She's very beautiful," I said. "But how do I know she's the real stuff?"

"He will guarantee that you won't be disappointed." The Mexican pointed to a nervous man wearing a pin-striped suit, a white shirt and a Harvard School of Business tie.

"Tell him, Thomas, how great my oil is."

"She's everything he says she is," pin-stripe assured me.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I am from the Chase Manhattan Bank, and he's into me for \$6 billion. Buy his damned oil and give me a break."

"I really didn't want to spend that much," I said.

"I say, old chap," a fellow in a morning coat who looked like a floorwalker at Harrod's said, "I'd be very careful of those Latin cutthroats. Could I interest you in some very fine British petroleum from the North Sea? It's certified by the Royal Family."

"How much?"

The British never haggle over price when it comes to oil. "Twenty-five dollars — take it or leave it."

"Twenty-three dollars," I said.

"I'll make it \$24 and arrange to have your picture taken with Princess Diana's baby."

"I guess I can't do better than that."

"Yes, you can," an Iranian oil merchant said, pulling me into his hut.

"What's your price?"

"Are you an American?"

"Of course," I said.

"Then I will give you this barrel for \$20."

"Why so cheap?" I asked.

He put his arm around my shoulder and whispered, "We Iranians and Americans have to stick together."



Four cartons and seven packs ago

by Dick West
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Contrary to the laments of one protest group, the anti-smoking campaign in this country has not reached the point where puffing is permitted "only in the shower with the water running."

At least not yet.

There's no gainsaying, however, that smoking proscriptions have become stringent enough to incite protests by tobacco libertarians who claim their right to light up is being trampled.

Thus far, these stirrings of discontent are hardly more noticeable than the faint odor of Uncle Harry's cheap cheroots emanating from Aunt Maude's living room draperies when they first come back from the cleaners.

The voice of rebellion may be only a "festo" (half of a manifesto) issued by a militant organization calling itself The Outcasts of Smoker Flat.

Or it may take the puny form of a guidebook listing restaurants where cigar smokers are welcomed, and presumably treated as first class citizens.

Nor is there any convincing evidence that the protest movement will escalate into a full-scale revolt. Most smokers, apparently, still feel self-conscious about offending the nostrils of abstaining seat mates and others in the vicinity. Hence, they accept public banishment meekly, sneaking a few puffs as allowed.

Indications that smokers are beginning to resent segregation are, nonetheless, unmistakable. And it behooves any honest observer of incipient social trends to take notice of the malcontents before they begin striking back.

The author of the aforementioned "festo," one Nick Bourne of Moorestown, N.J., assured me he had no connection with the tobacco industry.

He said his decision to organize The Outcasts of Smoker Flat was a result of irritation caused by "No Smoking signs poking me in the eye."

"Prohibition is the word of the day," Bourne complains. "The smoker is becoming an outcast. Some even propose that all smokers be exiled to Cleveland. Others are for dividing the country into two parts: Non-smokers only allowed east of the Mississippi and smokers re-

stricted West to compete with the of the smog-smothered cities.

Well, it is one thing to feel being victimized by a ruthless and quite another thing to make action effective.

Perhaps smokers should campaign to require that cigarettes more quickly than current burn.

Development of self-igniting cigarettes is being pushed for reasons. But that need not be impetus.

Non-smokers say the most fumes are those emerging from when butts have not been snubbed out. If cigarettes had fed on to keep them lit, it would some of the pressure on smokers.

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