

Police retake Mexican university after 10-month student strike

by Alfredo Corchado
Knight-Ridder Tribune
February 07, 2000

MEXICO CITY — Thousands of unarmed police officers stormed the National Autonomous University of Mexico on Sunday, promptly retaking the troubled university paralyzed by a 10-month-old student strike.

The bold, early-morning raid was conducted with few injuries and little violence, aside from a few minor skirmishes between strike supporters and police. About 2,500 police officers, wearing bulletproof vests and armed with only clubs and plastic shields, participated in the operation. They were accompanied by dozens of human-rights observers.

More than 600 students were arrested in the raid, including key members of a tiny group of self-described anarchists with names like Mosh, the Devil, and the Snake. Known as the Ultras, the radical group had seized control of the campus last April and halted classes for the university's 270,000 students.

Many student strikers were asleep when police moved in. Others were attending an all-night meeting. None offered resistance.

By mid-morning, authorities, who staged the raid under court order, appeared in full control of the sprawling campus as government authorities quickly declared the longest strike in the university's 89-year-old history over.

"A democratic society cannot al-

low the kidnapping of the national university," said Interior Minister Diodoro Carrasco, whose ministry is responsible for domestic security concerns. "Today we have restored the university, so that its destiny can be returned to the hands of the university community. Today we have liberated the university. It's for the well-being of the university. It's for the well-being of Mexico."

President Ernesto Zedillo, in a national address on Sunday, said that a violent clash last week between strike supporters and opponents forced him to act. "This is a historical conquest for all Mexicans," he said.

The student strike began last April after university officials proposed raising student tuition from a few pennies to an estimated \$140 per year. The fee had not changed since 1948. The university later backed away from the tuition hike. But strikers changed their demands and refused to give up the campus or return to classes.

While government officials proclaimed the strike over on Sunday, strike supporters vowed retaliation in coming days. Groups of angry students threw eggs and oranges at the police. Others pushed and shoved, screaming obscenities outside the Mexican Attorney General's office, taking special aim at members of the news media whom they accused of being in cahoots with the government. One anxious mother, Alfa Armendariz, confronted a law-

yer who unsuccessfully tried to visit the detained students.

"Please, Attorney, tell us what can we do so we don't succumb to the evil hands of the government that wants to provoke more massacres and more imprisonments."

"Today we have liberated the university. It's for the well-being of the university. It's for the well-being of Mexico."

-Diodoro Carrasco,
Interior Minister
of Mexico

Armendariz said. "I beg an answer. I beg you as a desperate Mexican mother."

An eerie calm prevailed over the university campus and surrounding neighborhoods. More protests are planned later this week.

It's unclear how long the police presence on the campus will continue or when students will return to classes, said Mexican Attorney Gen-

eral Jorge Madrazo in a televised interview. He said such decisions will come later after a full investigation to determine, in part, the extent of the damages to the university.

University Rector Juan Ramon de la Fuente pleaded for the release of under-aged students and asked for leniency, where possible, for the others.

"I lament that it had to come to this extreme," de la Fuente said.

UNAM stands as a proud symbol of free education for Mexico's masses. Known universally as UNAM, from its Spanish acronym, it is the largest institution of higher education in Latin America. But on Sunday, the campus was in tatters.

Televised images by the Televisa network, which broke the news shortly after 7 a.m., showed a battered, deteriorating university complex, its walls covered in insurrectionist graffiti and drawings of Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, and containing what one TV reporter described as a nest of roaming rats. Police officials said at least 10 marijuana plants were confiscated and other items, including Molotov cocktails, some made with half-empty tequila bottles.

In many ways, the student conflict mirrors Mexico's vast economic and political transformation, revealing the vestiges of its socialist-like past and its unsteady tread toward a new world of globalization. While students initially targeted the university for the tuition increase, they directed

their rhetoric more and more at the concept of a globally intertwined economy and the free-market forces that are changing Mexico to its core.

Forced to compete economically with other nations, the government has been forced to curtail its free-spending ways, impacting dozens of subsidy programs, including education budgets that once guaranteed a virtually free university education to everyone.

The federal government now pays 90 percent of UNAM's \$1 billion annual budget, and university officials had hoped the new tuition proposal would have raised \$84 million, or about 8 percent of that figure.

In spite of growing restlessness by the public and the government about the duration of the strike, officials were reluctant to take the campus by force, fearing a blood bath. In a 1968 incident known simply as the Tlatelolco massacre, soldiers killed hundreds of students, an event that has haunted Mexico for 30 years.

But as the UNAM strike dragged on, some weary officials and political analysts privately predicted that the image of a weak government would harm the chances of the ruling party's presidential candidate, Francisco Labastida Ochoa, in the upcoming national election set for July 2, 2000.

After the raid, public reaction was largely supportive of the police actions. But some questioned the timing of the operation.

"It was about time that the gov-

ernment fought back," said 38-year-old Jorge Pineda Sosa, who worked at a grocery store inside the vast university compound. "I hope that students can now return to class, and we can put this nightmare behind us."

Rosario Sanchez, a travel agent, watched the events unfold on her television. "This is a relief for Mexico, but why now?" she asked. "I think the government did this now to help its losing candidate. This is horrible for Mexico's political opposition."

Last month, a university-sponsored plebiscite, in which students, faculty members, and workers voted, overwhelmingly supported a plan by de la Fuente, the school's rector, to end the strike. The strikers, however, refused to recognize the outcome.

Last week, striker opponents, backed by university police, clashed with supporters, leaving 37 people injured and 248 under arrest. It was the worst violence since the strike began.

A 12-hour negotiating session had ended Friday after both sides accused the other of intransigence. Students had asked for talks to resume Monday, but the university refused.

"Over the months, this cause had lost its legal and constructive direction," said Carrasco, the interior minister. *Mexico City bureau chief Angela Kocherga of KHOU-TV in Houston and news assistant Javier Garcia contributed to this report.*

Bill would ban bets on college, amateur sports

by Rick Alm
Knight-Ridder Tribune
February 02, 2000

Betting on college and amateur sports would be illegal anywhere in the United States under a bill introduced Tuesday, February 1, 2000, by Republican Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas and a bipartisan list of supporters.

If approved, the measure would outlaw any bet placed on a high school, college, or Olympic sporting event — including through Nevada's legal sports betting industry.

Proponents — including Democratic co-sponsor Sen. Patrick Leahy of Virginia and Republican Presidential candidate Sen. John McCain of Arizona — hope a ban will curb point-shaving and problem gambling on college campuses. Opponents say the bill would do no good and might actually hinder law enforcement efforts.

Brownback said the bill was a response to last year's National Gambling Impact Study Commission report, financed by Congress, which recommended a total ban on collegiate wagering.

"This is not about winning and losing," Brownback said in an interview. "The problem is large bets and people approaching athletes about shaving points."

"There have been more point-shaving scandals at our colleges and universities in the 1990s than in every other decade before it, combined."

"For teenagers, sports gambling is the gateway to get into more gambling," Brownback added. "There's a big concern on college campuses."

Leahy said, "A national ban on amateur and college sports betting may help prevent these ravages of sports wagering."

The bill would expand the reach of a 1992 law passed by Congress that

prohibited wagering on all amateur and professional sports except in a handful of states where the activity was already legal — Nevada, Delaware, Oregon, and Montana. In a statement Tuesday, Feb. 1, the American Gaming Association pledged to fight the bill, which it termed it "an ineffective Band-Aid on a campus cancer."

The national casino lobby said the National Collegiate Athletic Association acknowledged widespread betting on its games. The casino lobby urged the NCAA to devise a "long overdue strategy" to clean up the problem without penalizing a legitimate industry.

NCAA President Cedric W. Dempsey endorsed the bill Tuesday, Feb. 1, at a news conference with Brownback and others in Washington.

But Gaming Association President Frank J. Fahrenkopf Jr. said that legal Las Vegas sports books had helped expose collegiate point-shaving scandals by alerting authorities to unusual betting patterns. The NCAA acknowledges it maintains a computer link to Nevada sports books itself to monitor suspicious betting.

Those safeguards would disappear if all betting on collegiate sports was driven underground, Fahrenkopf said.

"The bill introduced today only addresses the narrow legal issue of Nevada's 'grandfather' status" under the 1992 law, he said Tuesday, Feb. 1, "and will not make the slightest dent in illegal sports wagering."

But Brownback said he didn't expect the measure to kindle an underground Prohibition Era of sports gambling.

"Legal gambling increases substantially and provides legitimacy to illegal gambling," he said. Outlawing betting on amateur sports will give pause to many, he said.

And Brownback said a stiffer law

might persuade news organizations to stop publishing Las Vegas oddsmakers' college point spread predictions, which he said underpin the illegal bookmaking industry.

"I hope this sends a signal to the public," said Brownback.

It probably won't, said Arnie Wexler, a reformed sports gambling addict, counselor, and national lecturer.

Wexler said the bill "won't hurt." But it also won't curb gambling on campus, which Wexler says is epidemic and getting worse.

"You can find a bookie on a college campus in 20 minutes," he said. "I've worked with young kids who have stolen things, sold their cars to support their gambling habit."

"College athletes caught up in shaving scandals lose their scholarships. I know one who's working in a grocery store today."

"I got a call Monday from [a student bookie] at a school in Florida," he said. "He lost \$3,600 on the Super Bowl. He really liked St. Louis and was giving 8 points."

But St. Louis won the game by 7 points, and the student doesn't have the money to pay off all the bets he was holding.

"There's more than a million kids in this country with a gambling problem who are under 21," said Wexler.

Kansas City has had its share of illegal gambling scandals. In 1975 a federal grand jury indicted 10 men on charges of conducting an illegal bookmaking operation following a five-year sting operation that included FBI wiretaps of area businesses and residences.

Among others, that case brought down the late Nick Civella, longtime boss of the Kansas City mob.

According to news accounts at the time, the tapped telephone call that sealed Civella's fate involved bets on

the 1970 Super Bowl — the year the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Minnesota Vikings.

In 1989, federal authorities raided 28 Kansas City addresses on the eve of the NCAA's Final Four college basketball tournament. That resulted in the indictments of 16 persons in two sports betting rings.

The Missouri General Assembly that same year rejected legislation that proposed converting Union Station to a casino. In 1990 federal authorities raided 11 Kansas City taverns, some linked to organized crime figures, and seized a dozen video gambling machines.

Two years later Missouri voters legalized such devices — and more — when they approved riverboat casino gambling.

Estimates of illegal sports betting in the United States range anywhere from \$80 billion to \$380 billion a year, said the Gaming Association's Fahrenkopf.

Nevada's 145 legal bookies accepted \$2.3 billion in sports wagers during the 12-month period ending Nov. 30, according to the latest state Gaming Control Board reports. The bookies won \$83.4 million on those wagers.

Experts estimate that 25 to 40 percent of the total amount legally wagered in Nevada was on college games and other amateur sports.

Office pools, Internet bookies, and all other non-licensed sports betting in the United States are already illegal under various federal, state, and local laws that are rarely enforced.

But Brownback said even he was reluctant to throw a criminal blanket over friendly bets between co-workers.

"Nobody's going after the office pools," Brownback said. "If there's a way to exempt that from prosecution in this bill, we will."

Bush speaks at college that prohibits interracial dating

by Ron Hutcheson
Knight-Ridder Tribune
February 03, 2000

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Texas Gov. George W. Bush portrays himself as a candidate who reaches out to minority voters, but he was the featured speaker Wednesday, February 2, 2000, at a Christian school that prohibits interracial dating.

Bush's visit to Bob Jones University underscored the lingering complications of racial politics in the South, a vital region for Republicans in national elections. In going to the school, the Republican Presidential hopeful

the Rev. Bob Jones, Sr., a popular evangelist and leader in the prohibition movement, lost its tax-exempt status in the 1970s for refusing to admit blacks. The school has since abandoned its segregationist admissions policy, but continues to prohibit dating by blacks and whites.

In defending the ban on interracial dating, school officials point to the Biblical story about the Tower of Babel, where God divided the tower builders by their different languages. Some segregationists have interpreted the story as a warning against mixing races.

It was unclear if the prohibition applies only to blacks and whites — and not to Hispanics or Asians, for example — and school officials did not return phone calls seeking clarification.

Interracial or cross-cultural dating and marriage is becoming more and more widespread in the United States, particularly in places with diverse populations such as California, Texas, Florida, and New York. Census figures from 1998, the latest available, show that 5.6 percent of married couples in the United States identify themselves as interracial, up from 4 percent in 1990.

In 1998, school officials threatened to arrest a gay alumnus for trespassing if he came on the grounds, prompting a demonstration by gay rights activists.

The university's mission statement declares that the rules guiding student life flow from a literal interpretation of the Bible — "whatever the Bible says is so." The school's goal is to produce graduates who are "Scripturally disciplined; others-serving; God-loving; Christ-proclaiming; and focused above."

Despite its sometimes controversial policies, the university is familiar turf to Republican Presidential candidates. At least two of Bush's rivals, publisher Steve Forbes and radio commentator Alan Keyes, are expected to visit the campus and its 5,000 students before South Carolina's Feb. 19 primary. Keyes is African American.

"Republicans and Democrats have been going to that campus for years," said former Gov. David Beasley, a Bush supporter. "They're good folks, they're good people, and they have strong views that they don't play politics with. They're not trying to impose that view on any of the candidates running for office."

A spokesman for Bush's chief rival, Sen. John McCain of Arizona, declined to say whether McCain would accept an invitation to the campus.

"Sen. McCain does not support that policy or that viewpoint," spokesman John Weaver said of the interracial dating ban.

"... they have strong views that they don't play politics with. They're not trying to impose that view on any of the candidates running for office."

-former South Carolina Gov. David Beasley, Bush supporter

reached out to southern conservatives at the possible risk of alienating moderates, independents, and voters of color in other parts of the country.

The visit was viewed as politics as usual in South Carolina, where racial tensions are focused on the Confederate battle flag that flies over the state capitol. Even the NAACP took a pass when given the chance to comment on the Texas governor's appearance at the school.

At a news conference after his speech, Bush said he opposes the ban on interracial dating, but said he sees no conflict between his visit and his inclusive campaign message. Bush often presents himself to voters as a candidate who can appeal to all races and ethnic groups.

"I went there to see 7,000 people. I went there because I was invited to go," he said. Bush's speech replaced the normal Wednesday chapel service, which is mandatory for students.

Although Bush's visit to the racially separatist campus did not cause any noticeable backlash, the school and its policies have stirred passions in the past.

The university, founded in 1927 by

Kissinger cancels speech at U. of Texas after threat of protest

by Julie Chen
Campus Correspondent
University of Texas at Austin
February 03, 2000

AUSTIN (TMS) — Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger cancelled an appearance at the University of Texas at Austin Tuesday evening after UT police and the Secret Service warned of potentially violent protests.

"I regret the circumstances that have caused the cancellation of this year's Harry Middleton lecture created by [Lady Bird] Johnson and any embarrassment suffered by this great former first lady and valued friend,"

Kissinger said in a statement released Friday, January 28, 2000.

Student activists and some faculty leaders felt Kissinger, who also served as national security advisor during the Nixon administration, was unworthy of an invitation to visit the campus as a distinguished speaker. They criticized his winning of a Nobel Prize despite his alleged clearing of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet from human rights violations and fueling of the genocide in East Timor and Cambodia, among other reputed war crimes.

The university is now embroiled in a tennis match of blame: who is at fault for the cancellation?

"It's a prevarication on [the University's] part that safety was an issue," said Romi Mahajan, a Radio-Television-Film graduate student involved. "We were unhappy that [Kissinger] was invited, but once he was invited, we just wanted to engage him in dialogue."

The cancellation is the university's fault and jeopardizes free speech by blocking access to the exchange of discourse, Mahajan said.

UT's chancellor and president filed the following joint statement Monday, Jan. 31: "The two of us agree that there were legitimate concerns over public safety and over the ability of Dr. Kissinger to deliver his remarks.

These are the basic facts of the matter. We see nothing to debate."

"I was pretty disappointed when I heard, but I empathize with [the school's] decisions," said Ryan Lambert, an economics senior who had gotten free tickets to the sold-out appearance two weeks ago.

Opposition to Kissinger's arrival was expected, and the LBJ School should have been capable of arranging for such momentous visits by public figures, Lambert added.

This is not the first time Kissinger has elicited such critical student objections. Sixteen years ago, the UT campus police arrested 53 people who protested his visit to the university.