MEXICO TODAY

Country's Future Holds Promise, Pe most advanced nations it in America—Mexico is all industrially geared to tak vantage of new markets may be opened to the soit the Latin Common Market comes into being.

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY JEXICO CITY — Mexico's are is fraught with peril as

re kiew of the problem for sident Gustavo Diaz Ordaz a the Party of Revolution in Institutions is how to avoid other clash with restless mg Mexicans, at least until ki can select a president for axt year's almost automatic ctory. Six prominent men are been mentioned and the losed-door selection process already under way. The leading candidate is seyear-old Minister of Government Luis Echeverria, a PRI wheelhorse. His cabinet tooth has often been a stepping stone to the presidency and makes him one of the most influential men in Mexico.

Another outbreak of violence between young students and a process.

between young students and security forces, however, could eliminate Echeverria as

Until the bloody clash last

autumn in the capital between the army and demonstrators, Alfonso Corona del Rosal, regent of the federal district was regarded as the frontrunner. But Corona holds the rank of major general as well as the title of "licenclado" (lawyer) and because of his soldier background, insiders feel the 63-year-old mayor of Mexico City is no longer in the running.

Dr. Emilio Martinez Manautou, secretary of the presidency and personal physician to the president, is as close to the incumbent as any man. He is only 50 and his role as a close presidential adviser makes him a prime candidate. But Mexicans are sensitive about what they call "continuismo" and this may erase Martinez

and this may erase Martinez from the list.

Foreign Minister Antonio Carrillo Flores is brilliant and popular but he himself believes he became too identified in the public mind with the United States during long service as ambassador to

washington.
Finance Minister Antonio Ortiz Mena probably will be the victim of a Mexican tradition against selecting the nation's top money man for the presidency. The rationale is that a finance minister inevitably is too closely identified ably is too closely identified with vested interests and for-

eign investors. Two dark horses are Gil Preciado, minister of agricul-ture and former governor of the state of Jalisco, and Antonio Rocha, former attorney general and now governor of San Luis Potosi.

Decision Awaited

PRI's decision probably will be known by September or Oc-tober. Barring highly unlikely intervention by the armed forces, whoever PRI selects will become Mexico's presi-

dent next year.
PRI, which is the same thing as saying the govern-ment of Mexico, now must walk a tightrope between the angry students on one side and the resentful army on the other. The prognosis is that Mexi-co will be able to avert anothconfrontation like that of last October and preserve ci-

vilian, consensual succession. If government officials have any idea what to do about the frightening birth rate in the Catholic country, they are not divulging it. Mexico will not openly espouse birth control or family planning. It can only

try to restructure the nation to accommodate a population that can more than double it-

that can more than can more self every 20 years.

The trust now is to attr foreign investment, new ind try and ever more tourists create jobs both in busin and service-type jobs for millions coming of age every year.

One such idea involves huge Prudhoe Bay oil field in Alaska. The new super-tankers are too large for the Panama Canal. Planners are thinking of shipping the Alaskan oil south to Salina Cruz on Mexi-co's west coast and piping it across to the Gulf of Mexico at the narrow waist of the Isthmus of Tehauntepec.

the Mexican port at Guaymas a route cheaper for Arizona shippers than to California

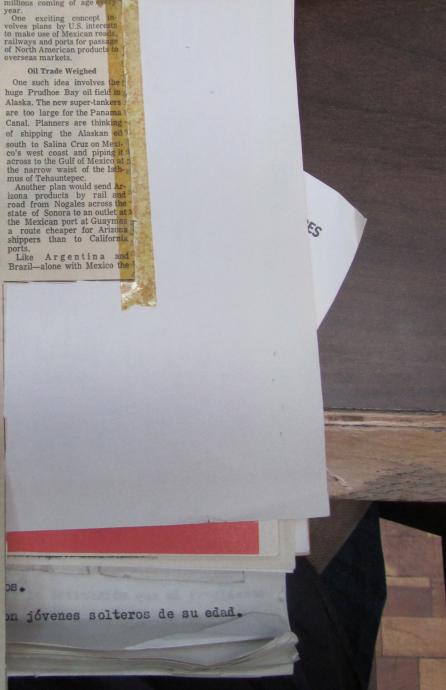
progress that the Guatemalans and some other Central Amer-icans have fallen into the habit of calling Merico the "colos-sus of the north."

If Mexico's birth rate was as manageable as its stable currency, balance of payments, economic growth and international credit rating. Mexico would be in excellent.

is a mark of Mex

condition. Foreign Minister Carrillo Flores, an eternal optimist, made the point this way when asked if it disturbed him that Latin America was far down on the U.S. list of priorities.

"Not at all," he laughed.
"Would it disturb me if my
doctor told me I was low on
his list of priorities?"



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