

Alan Stoga, President
Daniel Wilson, Managing Director and editor

Elections

Electoral Balance

The PRI increased its dominance in the six state elections in 2008 (Coahuila, Nayarit, Baja California Sur, Guerrero, Quintana Roo, and Hidalgo), according to a Mitofsky review of the year. The PRD was the biggest loser – especially with its defeat in Acapulco, a traditional stronghold. The PAN was also hit, although it has not had a strong presence in the six states. (www.consulta.com.mx)

	Mayorships	
	2005	2008
PRI	94	116
PRD	67	46
PAN	27	18
Others	6	15

	State Congress seats	
	2005	2008
PRI	85	92
PRD	55	45
PAN	21	23
Others	25	23

Key Dates

2/1/09: Beginning of new Congressional session
7/5/09: National congressional, 6 gubernatorial, and 5 other local elections.
4/30/09: End of regular Congressional session

Calderón announces new economic measures

In a ceremony including most governors, the cabinet, Congressional leaders, and business and labor leaders, **President Calderón** announced a 25-point “National Accord to Support the Family Economy and Jobs.” The program – the third emergency economic program since last March – includes additional infrastructure spending, household support resources, assistance for small business and export-oriented companies, housing finance assistance, and unemployment assistance. The headline measure was a freeze on gasoline prices and a 10% reduction in the cost of cooking gas. According Finance Minister **Agustín Carstens**, the new measures represent an additional 1% of GDP boost to aggregate demand; at the same time, he lowered the official estimate for 2009 GDP growth to zero. Businessman **Carlos Slim** emerged as the biggest cheerleader for the program. He said, “I believe that it was very important that this agreement was signed. It includes all the elements to attenuate the crisis. ... While some details are lacking, the fundamental points are all there.” (Universal 1/8, Excelsior 1/9)

Calderón and Obama meet today

President Calderón is hosting President-elect **Barack Obama** for a lunch at the Mexican Cultural Institute in Washington, their first meeting. Calderón becomes the first foreign leader to meet with Obama since the election, and continues a bilateral tradition dating back to the Reagan-López Portillo meeting in 1981. Calderón will also meet with Congressional leaders and make a courtesy call to the White House. Calderón will be accompanied by his wife, Ambassador **Arturo Sarukhan**, Finance Secretary **Agustín Carstens**, Government Secretary **Fernando Gómez Mont**, and Foreign Minister **Patricia Espinosa**. (Universal 1/11, Excelsior 1/11)

AMLO confidante takes control of Workers Party (PT)

PRD Senator **Ricardo Monreal**, considered one of AMLO’s key allies, became the leader of the PT bloc in the Senate. By joining the PT, Monreal enables the party to keep its minimum quota of five senators and its right to Ps. 300 million in 2009 financing from the IFE. Monreal denied that the resources would be channeled to AMLO. (Universal 1/8-9)

2009 starts deadly

The death toll from drug violence reached 95 in the first 10 days of the new year, after surpassing 5,000 in 2008. A top police official and his bodyguard were assassinated in Chihuahua. Unknown gunmen fired AK-47s and threw a hand grenade into the **Televisa** compound in Monterrey, leaving the message “Stop broadcasting anything about us.” At the same time, the AFI captured Miguel Angel Soto, who was said to be one of the founders of **the Zetas**, the paramilitary wing of the Gulf cartel. (Universal 1/9, Excelsior 1/9-11)

Ambassadors to combat ‘failed state’ image

The President met with Mexico’s ambassadors and called on them to do a better job of promoting Mexico abroad and combating the perception that drug violence is turning Mexico into a ‘failed state.’ “Mexico is going through a process of rebuilding its institutions. I reject the perception that we are massacring the population,” he was quoted as saying. He blamed his predecessor **Vicente Fox** for Mexico’s poor international image. The President said that when he took office, “We found that we stood poorly with Cuba, we stood poorly with the United States, and we stood poorly with Latin America.” (Universal 1/10-11, Excelsior 1/11)