

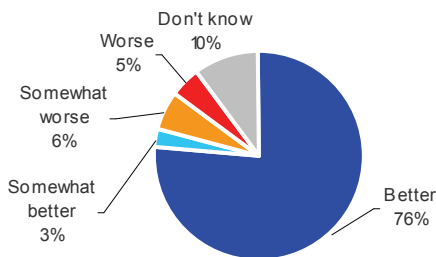
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**Polls**

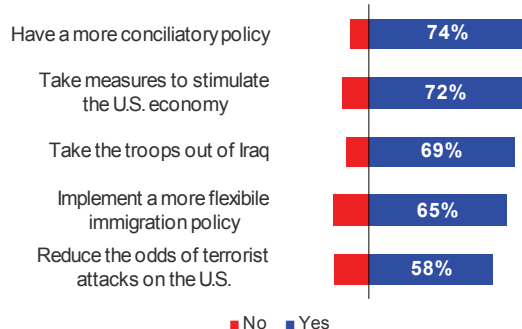
**Enthusiasm for Obama**

An Excelsior/BGC survey (1/19) showed that Mexicans are enthusiastic about U.S. President Obama. Almost 80% said they expected relations to improve compared to the Bush administration. A large majority expected improvements on all U.S. policy fronts, including a more flexible immigration policy. Approval was also overwhelming on Obama's personal characteristics: 86% said he was intelligent (vs. 46% for Bush) and 78% said he would be able to govern (vs. 25% for Bush).

**How do you think Mexico will get along with Barack Obama? Better or worse than with George Bush?**



**From what you have heard about Obama, do you think he will:**



**Key Dates**

- 2/1: Beginning of new Congressional session*
- 4/6: Start of state election campaigns \**
- 4/30: End of regular Congressional session*

*4/29-5/2: Deadline for registering candidates for Chamber of Deputies*

*5/6: Start of federal election campaigns*

*7/5: National congressional, 6 gubernatorial, and 5 other local elections.*

*\* May vary by state*

**Warm Calderón-Obama meeting**

The meeting last week between then President-elect Obama and President Calderón continued a tradition of early meetings between incoming U.S. and Mexican presidents. The two reportedly agreed to "update" and "improve" the NAFTA agreement. President Calderón proposed "building on the FTA" with new measures that "strengthen the scaffolding" already in place. Obama press secretary Robert Gibbs said that the president elect suggested "strengthening the labor and environmental provisions so that they reflect the values that are fully shared by both countries." Gibbs emphasized that reopening the treaty was not on the table, and the first step was to create a consultative group that would review the trade agreement, energy, and infrastructure. The two leaders also pledged cooperation on security issues, including measures to stop the flow of arms from the U.S. to Mexico. Mr. Obama said, "I am not going to leave Mexico to fight alone against drug trafficking." *El Universal* is reporting that former Denver mayor and Clinton cabinet secretary **Federico Peña** will be the next U.S. ambassador to Mexico. (Reforma 1/13, Universal 1/13, 20)

**PAN Central Committee sets rules for picking candidates**

The PAN Central Committee (CEN) announced that it will directly select 194 of the candidates for the 300 directly elected seats in the Chamber of Deputies, "in order to have the best candidates." Candidates for the remaining 106 districts would be chosen in the 'ordinary manner' by local party assemblies. Party President **Germán Martínez** said that the CEN did not yet have a pick for the governor of Nuevo Leon, the most important of the six gubernatorial races this July. (Universal 1/13)

**PT bloc defects to join PRD**

A bloc of 30,000 PT militants announced they were affiliating with the PRD, and denounced PT party leader **Alberto Anaya** for misappropriating funds over 19 years. The bloc also rejected Anaya's assistance for **López Obrador**. (Universal 1/18)

**Ortiz BIS chairmanship complicates Central Bank scenario**

Central Bank Governor **Guillermo Ortiz** was elected to a three-year term as non-executive Chairman of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in Geneva. The appointment depends on Ortiz's continuing as head of Banco de México. Noted columnist **Sergio Sarmiento**: "The honor could prove inconvenient for President Calderón, who has had differences with Ortiz and Banco de México for a long time.... If President Calderón does not reappoint Ortiz as governor at the end of his term in December, Mexico will automatically be losing the chairmanship of the BIS board." (Reforma 1/13)

**Failed State Tag Hits Mexico**

The U.S. Joint Forces Command report discussion on "Weak and Failing States" has continued to draw attention in Mexico. Says the report: "In terms of worst-case scenarios for the Joint Force and indeed the world, two large and important states bear consideration for a rapid and sudden collapse: Pakistan and Mexico. ... The Mexican possibility may seem less likely, but the government, its politicians, police, and judicial infrastructure are all under sustained assault and pressure by criminal gangs and drug cartels. How that internal conflict turns out over the next several years will have a major impact on the stability of the Mexican state. Any descent by Mexico into chaos would demand an American response based on the serious implications for homeland security alone." ([www.jfcom.mil](http://www.jfcom.mil))