

Main Topics

- *Beltrones says Pemex needs 'second expropriation'*
- *Calderón outlines three scenarios for oil*
- *Leftist alliance promises blockades of strategic installations*
- *Police explore bomb blast links to drug traffickers*
- *Calderón sees better relations with next U.S. administration and Congress*
- *PRI sweeps Hidalgo*

Key Dates

- 02/24/08:** *Flag Day, beginning of opposition protests*
- 03/16/08:** *PRD elects party president*
- 03/18/08:** *Anniversary of nationalization of oil*
- 07/06/08:** *Nayarit state elections*

Different political actors staked out positions in the **energy reform** debate during the week.

In a *La Jornada* interview, **Manlio Fabio Beltrones**, the PRI Senate leader, said that what was needed was a “second expropriation” to enable Pemex to become “a public enterprise, with management autonomy, and not lashed to the government and the Ministry of Finance.... No one wants Pemex to continue as is: plagued by inefficiency, corrupt, opaque, and without transparency in the management of its contracts.” He also said that Pemex must first be modernized before allowing private sector participation. “Our model does not seek private investment or privatization. We seek strategic alliances that could allow Pemex to acquire technologies either by purchasing them or through joint projects.” Beltrones also said it was up to the executive to submit a proposal. (*La Jornada* 2/11)

Energy Secretary Georgina Kessel said the government will present a reform to Congress in March that “will seek to strengthen Pemex...to allow Pemex to have more flexibility to explore and produce in deep waters,...but oil will continue to be the property of the Mexican people.” At a press conference in Los Angeles, **President Calderón** said that he saw three scenarios for Pemex. The first would be to leave the company as is, and accept the consequences of declining production. The second would be for the government to provide more resources to Pemex. The third would be to analyze what other state-owned companies have done to increase their exploration capacity. He emphasized that he would respect any decision made by Congress, but explained that “if Congress decides to provide more resources to the company, it must also specify from where the resources will come from: education, health, agriculture, or security.” (*Proceso* 2/14, www.presidencia.gob.mx)

Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, the new coordinator of the Frente Amplio Progresista, the alliance of the PRD, PT, and Convergencia, announced a series of blockades of “strategic installations” across Mexico starting on February 24, and threatened “legislative paralysis” to block an energy reform. Former PRI Senator **Manuel Bartlett** joined Muñoz Ledo and offered his support to block reforms. (*Reforma* 2/14)

Mexico City police officials said the one person killed in Friday’s mid-day **bomb blast** near police headquarters was carrying the device. The person has not been identified, but officials speculated that the bomb was meant as retaliation for the local police’s seizure of more than US\$60 million in drugs and a heavy weapons arsenal from the Sinaloa cartel in recent days. The police are also saying that the woman who was badly burned in the explosion was part of the plot. (*Universal* and *Reforma* 2/16-18)

President Calderón concluded his **five-state tour to the U.S.** with optimism for improved bilateral relations. “I believe that the renewal of the U.S. government represents a singular opportunity to improve our relations and to put on the table our common problems and our willingness to find joint solutions,” he said in Los Angeles. The President also expressed his concern over increased anti-immigrant sentiment, and met with approximately 60 leaders of migrant communities in the U.S. whom he asked for advice on the government’s strategy towards migration. (*Universal* 2/15)

Election Results

The PRI retained its solid lock on the **Hidalgo state congress**, winning all 18 direct elected seats according to preliminary results – the identical result as in 2005. Its share of the vote was 52%, including the districts where it was allied with the PVEM. Both the PRD and PAN filed protests for ballot theft and other irregularities in an election marked by a low—38%—participation rate. (www.ieehidalgo.org.mx, *Reforma* 2/18)

