

Main Topics

- More Mouriño contracts with Pemex disclosed
- Attorney General and Congress both open investigations
- PAN governors back embattled Government Secretary
- Mexico and Cuba take steps to mend relations
- Electrical workers strike averted
- PRD elects AMLO ally Alejandro Encinas as new party president

Key Dates

- 03/18/08: Anniversary of nationalization of oil
- 07/06/08: Nayarit state elections
- 09/28/08: Coahuila state elections
- 10/05/08: Guerrero state elections

The PRD disclosed two more Pemex contracts executed by **Juan Camilo Mouriño** on behalf of a family-owned company during the last government. Mouriño then made public a total of 7 contracts that he executed between 2000 and 2004, and said that it is the responsibility of the authorities to determine whether he committed any crime. Eduardo Medina Mora, Mexico’s Attorney General, said, “We will conduct the investigation with great care, as we do in all cases.” He added that he was not aware that Mouriño had violated any law and said that a magistrate would have to carry out an investigation. (Reforma 3/11-12)

In a reversal, the PRI, PAN, PVEM, and PANAL voted to create a six-person **congressional commission** to investigate the Mouriño contracts. The PRD, PT, and Convergencia—which had originally demanded a congressional investigation—walked out and will not participate in the commission, saying that the procedures were *ad hoc*. (Universal 3/14, Reforma 3/14)

Ruth Zavaleta, the PRD president of the Chamber of Deputies, demanded Mouriño’s resignation: “If the Secretary acknowledged that he signed [the contracts] while being a public official...for ethical and moral reasons, independent of the legality, he must resign.” After a lunch at Los Pinos, seven **PAN governors expressed their support** for the Government Secretary, saying “No federal official or institution should be disqualified without a prior judicial investigation.” Although President Calderón hosted a lunch, he has not made any public statement on the matter. (Reforma 3/12, Proceso 3/13)

As part of President Calderón’s initiative to restore normal bilateral **relations with Cuba**, Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa made an official two-day visit to the island. “Your visit marks a singular moment in history for both countries. It is the result of substantial progress in a process of repairing relations,” said Felipe Perez Roque, Cuba’s Foreign Minister. The two governments agreed to reactivate bilateral consultative mechanisms including migration, investment, and trade that had been “paralyzed.” Espinosa did not, however, meet any Cuban dissident groups, breaking a tradition that started in 1992 under President Zedillo. (Universal 3/14)

Members of the Electrical Workers Union, SME, working for Luz y Fuerza, the state-owned electricity company for the Federal District and the State of Mexico reached an 11th hour agreement on a **new wage package**, averting a strike. The parties agreed to a 4.25% wage increase, plus additional benefits of 2% for transportation and an additional 2% employer contribution to the workers’ savings fund. The union had been demanding 16% wage increase plus another 8.5% in perks. The government agreed to absorb the unpaid debt to the social security system and build new power plants at a cost of approximately Ps. 5.2 billion. The union agreed to liberalize job rules and to freeze employment levels. Luz y Fuerza is generally considered the worst of the government parastatals, with poor service, massive featherbedding, and chronic financial losses. (Universal and Reforma 3/16)

Election Results

In a polarized environment marked by charges of party rule violations and an ‘inflated’ list of party members eligible to vote, the **PRD elected Alejandro Encinas** as its new president. Exit polls carried out by Mitofsky gave Encinas, who was backed by Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a 6% point lead nationwide over Jesús Ortega. The margin of victory was secured by huge majorities in the Federal District, where both Encinas and AMLO were mayors. Full results are not expected for several days, and Ortega has not yet conceded. (Universal 3/17, www.consulta.com.mx)

Mitofsky exit poll: PRD presidential election

