

April 1 - April 7, 2008

Main Topics

- *Energy reform package expected in 'a few days'*
- *Calderón: reform or catastrophe*
- *PRI: no to demagogy*
- *PRD in tight race with Zimbabwe for longest vote count*
- *Teachers' Union demands income tax exemption*
- *Government reacts to Venezuela's nationalization of cement*

Expectations rose that the government will introduce **energy reform legislation** this week. Héctor Larios, the PAN leader in the Chamber of Deputies, said it was a matter of "a few days." PAN Senate leader Santiago Creel was more circumspect: "I don't want to predict dates, because we are making it a priority to find a majority consensus." (Reforma 4/5)

President Calderón addressed energy reform several times during the week. He said it would be "catastrophic" to ignore the diagnosis of the sector presented by the Energy Ministry because of "fear, political interests, or group interests." He noted, "We cannot continue postponing this discussion; we cannot simply bury our head in the sand and ignore the country's problems." The President called for Mexicans to unite, saying "If we do the right thing, it will be possible to finance the development and prosperity of Mexico's future generations." (Universal 4/4, Proceso 4/3, Presidencia)

Speaking to her party's National Political Council, **PRI party head Beatriz Paredes** said, "The PRI is above the effort by the Right to force, by means of catastrophic diagnoses, anti-historical decisions that alienate the patrimony of the nation." At the same time, she spoke in favor of giving Pemex administrative, financial, and management autonomy. Paredes also proposed creating an independent energy regulator, insulated from political pressures. (Reforma 4/5)

The **PRD** missed its third deadline to announce results from the March 16 **internal elections**. The two principal candidates for party president, Alejandro Encinas and Jesús Ortega have met three times with party officials to negotiate mechanisms for moving forward with the count of votes from disputed polling stations. The process was thrown into further disarray when one of the three members of the PRD electoral commission (CTE) resigned. The party's national commission on guarantees gave the CTE a 48 hour deadline on Saturday to complete the count, saying it would take over the process. Ortega threatened to take the matter to the federal electoral tribunal. (Reforma 4/3-7, Jornada 4/4-7)

Reforma reported that the Ministry of Education agreed to the demand of the **National Teachers' Union** (SNTE) that bonuses, vacation payments, and other benefits be exempt from income tax. Union leader Elba Esther Gordillo denied the story, despite the publication by the newspaper of documents with her signature making the demand. Negotiations on a new contract for the 1.5 million teachers' union members need to be completed before May 15. Gordillo was re-elected president of the SNTE at its annual convention. (Reforma 4/2-4)

The Foreign Ministry summoned the Venezuelan ambassador after Hugo Chavez announced the **nationalization of cement companies in Venezuela**, including Mexico's Cemex. Finance Minister Carstens said, "This is an inappropriate action that does not respect the property or rights of Mexicans. We can only prove this action." The *Templo Mayor* column notes, "The news ... puts in doubt the *calderonista* foreign policy, which gambled on getting closer to Venezuela and Cuba." (Universal 4/4, Reforma 4/5).

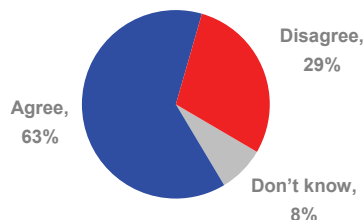
Key Dates

- 07/06/08:** Nayarit state elections
- 09/28/08:** Coahuila state elections
- 10/05/08:** Guerrero state elections

Polls

A *Reforma* (4/2) poll indicates that 63% believe that Pemex should have the ability to make alliances to exploit deep sea reserves; 52% say such alliances would not be privatization; though by 48% to 46% they do believe that they would infringe on national sovereignty. By 44% to 33% they believe that modernization of the country is more important than national sovereignty. Only 24% said they were much or somewhat inclined to participate in the civil resistance called by AMLO.

Do you agree or disagree that Pemex should be able to make alliances with anyone who has the technology and experience to exploit deep sea deposits?



Are you inclined to participate in the civil resistance called by AMLO?

