

April 22 - April 28, 2008

Topics

- **Schedule for energy debate agreed**
- **Occupation of Congress ends**
- **Opposition promises to step up civil resistance**
- **AMLO declares “I am the movement”**
- **PRD names interim party co-heads**
- **Heads of state defend NAFTA**

The Senate agreed on the format for the **energy policy debate**. The debate will include 20 forums over 71 days, from May 13 to July 22, on 14 separate topics. The agreement was endorsed by all party leaders, including Graco Ramírez, PRD Senator and interim co-president of the party. The negotiators agreed to the opposition’s demand to add two additional topics to the agenda, while the latter dropped their up-front opposition to a special congressional session to vote on the legislation. PRI Senator Manlio Fabio Beltrones said, “All the parliamentary groups ... have agreed that with the signing of this agreement, the normalization of the institutional life of the Senate begins.” (Reforma 4/26)

In a coordinated move, legislators from the Frente Amplio Progresista (FAP) ended their 15-day **sit-in of Congress**, while singing the national anthem and shouting, “We did it.” According to Carlos Navarrete, PRD leader in the Senate, they were liberating Congress after having achieved their goals of organizing a national debate on energy policy. The Senate and Chamber of Deputies will reconvene on Monday in their official chambers. (Universal 4/25)

At the same time, the PRD declared its intent to step up its **civil resistance campaign**, with threats of highway closures, blockades of state congresses, and marches around the country. A second rally, led by Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, in Mexico City’s Zocalo was held on Sunday. El Universal newspaper estimated the crowd at more than 100,000.(Reforma 4/28, Universal 4/28)

A taped conversation between **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** and legislators from the FAP revealed AMLO saying, “For me, the [energy] debate is a joke.... The important thing is to gain time. And, we have won, not because we negotiated, but because we seized the podiums.” AMLO also blasted members of his party for agreeing to the terms of the energy debate and grabbing the spotlight, saying, “I am the movement.” (Universal 4/25, López Dóriga show, Televisa 4/24)

Key Dates

4/30: *End of the regular congressional session*

5/13-7/22: *Energy debate*

7/06: *Nayarit state elections*

9/01: *Presidential In-forme*

9/28: *Coahuila state elections*

Still unable to declare a winner of the March 16 internal elections, the National Committee of the **PRD** named two **interim co-presidents**. Senator Graco Ramírez (representing Jesús Ortega) and Deputy Raymundo Cárdenas (representing Alejandro Encinas) will hold their posts until May 4. The party’s guarantee commission published partial results showing Encinas with a 2% lead over Ortega, based on a count of 84% of the polling places. (Reforma 4/23)

President Calderón met with his North American counterparts, President Bush and Prime Minister Harper, for a two-day **Security and Prosperity Partnership summit** in New Orleans. The heads of state praised the benefits that NAFTA has produced in the three countries. Calderón said the agreement has promoted job growth and rising incomes, while warning that any changes in the agreement could increase the number of Mexican migrants to the United States. Government Secretary Juan Camilo Mouriño and Homeland Secretary Michael Chertoff signed a bilateral agreement for promoting technology sharing to address threats to national security, while little was said about the Mérida Initiative. The 2009 SPP summit will be hosted by Mexico. (Universal 4/22, White House, Presidencia)