

Main Topics

- PAN moves up date for electing new party leader
- Under Secretary for North America speaks about Plan Mexico
- Twin arrests enhance drug fighting credentials
- SCT postpones auction of new TV licenses

Key Dates

- 10/14/07:** Sinaloa state elections
- 11/11/07:** Michoacán gubernatorial election
- 11/15/07:** Budget approval deadline
- 12/07:** PAN elects party president
- 03/08:** PRD elects party president

The PAN's National Council—meeting for the first time since being elected by a party congress in June 2007—approved by vote of 270-3 a proposal by party president Manuel Espino to move up the **date for electing a new PAN leader**. The Council will elect a new president before year-end, instead of March 2008. The specific date is expected to be set next week. There are two declared candidates: Calderón ally Germán Martínez, who resigned as Secretary of Public Function last month, and Gerardo Priego, a former federal deputy from Tabasco. Espino could seek re-election, but has not tipped his hand. In other National Council actions, the group allied with Calderón won control of more than 30 internal commissions. Espino allies gained control of 10, and allies of Santiago Creel won control of another 10. (Reforma 10/8)

Carlos Rico, the undersecretary for North America in the Ministry of Foreign Relations previewed the **U.S.-Mexico "Joint Strategy to Fight Crime,"** which he said would be completed within the "next 10 days." One portion of the agreement is an affirmation by each country of their commitments, in terms of fighting organized crime, with the U.S. committing to control drug consumption, arms trafficking, and the trafficking in chemical precursors. "Arms trafficking from north to south is fundamental for us and also for [the U.S.] since they feed the criminal organizations. ...Another subject was ephedrine, since it arrives in Mexico via Long Beach." A second part of the agreement is bilateral cooperation, based on a technical analysis of the requirements for strengthening of Mexico's crime fighting agencies. The scope includes surveillance aircraft, training, technology transfer, intelligence sharing, and operational coordination. He emphasized that Mexico will receive only material support, not cash, and "we will not accept the presence in our country of U.S. military officials or agents." Rico said the two-year plan will have a budget of between US\$1-1.4 billion, subject to U.S. Congressional approval. (Reforma 10/4, Universal 10/5, www.sre.gob.mx)

The government arrested Sandra Ávila Beltrán, aka "Queen of the Pacific," and her lover the Colombian Juan Diego Espinosa Ramírez, aka "El Tigre," on the same day. President Calderón celebrated the twin **drug trafficker arrests**: "With actions such as these ... we are closing the door to criminal organizations and preventing drugs from getting to our children." (Reforma, 10/3)

In an interview, Secretary for Communications and Transportation Luis Téllez said that no local or regional **TV licenses** would be auctioned in 2008. The Ministry will focus instead on pending telecommunications licenses. Later, speaking at the inauguration of the annual meeting of the radio and TV industry chamber, Téllez said that there was real competition in the radio and TV industries and denied that there were monopolies in the sector. "The government recognizes the efforts made by this sector in promoting culture, education, and entertainment, and we want to continue making sure this happens," he said. He added that a legal framework needed to be developed before the government could authorize new concessions. (Reforma 10/3, 10/8)

Election Results

Voters in Chiapas elected 118 mayors and 40 state congress deputies—24 by district elections and 16 by proportional representation. Voters in Oaxaca elected mayors in 152 towns. (Mayors of another 418 municipalities are selected according to traditional "usages and customs.") In both states, the PRI continued as the dominant force. The PRD did capture the state capital of Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutierrez. (Universal 10/8, www.iee-chiapas.org.mx, www.iee-oax.org.mx)

