

Main Topics

- PAN “friendly fire” intensifies
- PRI blocks key Central Bank nomination
- PRListas reject becoming “a party of the left”
- Calderón seeks to redefine role of the North American Development Bank
- New highway program unveiled
- Rescue plan for oil sector

In an interview, Carlos Abascal, Government Minister under President Fox and now secretary general of the PAN, said that Felipe Calderón, “was not the best, but rather the most appropriate person within the party to become the candidate.” Most political analysts interpreted the statement as a **declaration of war inside the PAN** that will last through this year’s national assembly until 2008 when the PAN’s National Committee is renewed. According to columnist Ricardo Aleman, Abascal is “responsible for making sure that his political group gets a majority in the National Committee.” Abascal is close to PAN president Espino who is fighting Calderón for party control. (Milenio 2/27, El Universal, 2/28)

PRI senators blocked Calderón’s choice for Deputy Governor of Banco de Mexico. Carlos Hurtado is a career finance official, serving under both PRI and PAN governments. PRI senators complained about lack of consultation and Hurtado’s alleged failure to control spending when he was Fox’s Undersecretary of Finance. (Universal 3/2)

A PRI special national assembly that was billed as an effort to reposition the party after its poor showing in the July elections was marred by the sporadic attendance of many PRI governors and other heavyweights. **Delegates rebelled against a leadership proposal to define the PRI as a “party of the democratic left.”** The proposal will be taken up again in November. Beatriz Paredes was also sworn in as the new party president. (Universal 3/2-4)

In a prelude to his meeting with President Bush on March 14 in Merida, **Calderón proposed expanding the role of the North America Development Bank, or Nadbank,** which was created in 1994 as part of NAFTA in order to finance projects on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. “I am committed to promoting a reform of Nadbank so that it can channel resources not only to border states but also to other states, especially those that generate the most migrants,” Calderón said. (Reforma 2/27)

President Calderon announced new mechanisms for financing highways as part of his infrastructure initiative. The **government will seek to re-privatize 49 toll highways and bridges** that were built by the private sector in the 1990’s and then nationalized in the wake of Mexico’s 1995 financial crisis. Communications and Transport Minister Luis Tellez said that the government hoped to collect Ps. 275 billion pesos by awarding new concessions, using Ps. 160 billion to prepay the debt incurred in the nationalization and the balance to finance new highways. (El Universal 3/2, 3/4)

During the inauguration of a new US\$250 million production platform in the Ku-Maloob-Zaap offshore field, President Calderón announced elements of a **“rescue plan” for PEMEX.** The company signed an expanded agreement with Petrobras for technical cooperation in deep water exploration and production. Calderón also said that PEMEX “will continue to be owned by the Mexican people.” Energy Minister Georgina Kessel noted, “Given that the time frame for carrying out these projects is between 8-10 years and the level of risk, it is convenient to form technology partnerships with companies that have proven experience.” Calderón also announced increased investment “within the existing legal framework” in natural gas production to reverse growing natural gas imports. (Universal 3/2, Reforma 3/2)

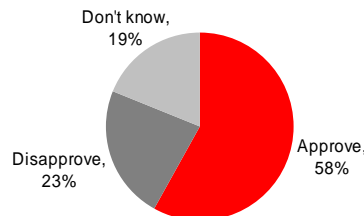
Key Dates

- 05/20/07:** Yucatan gubernatorial election
- 06/2-3/07:** PAN National Assembly
- 08/05/07:** Baja California gubernatorial election
- 11/11/07:** Michoacan gubernatorial election
- March 2008:** PAN National Committee election

Opinion Polls

A Reforma national poll (3/1) provided another view of the public’s positive reaction to the Calderón presidency, giving him a 58% approval rating, and an overall average evaluation of 6.6 out of 10. However, some 34% still believe that the July election was fraudulent.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way in which Felipe Calderón is doing his job as President?



How do you rate Felipe Calderón in each of the following attributes?

