

Main Topics

- *Supreme Court to debate constitutionality of 'Televisa Law'*
- *PAN and PRD congressional leaders join criticism of the law*
- *Pemex chief describes his 'new business model'*
- *Calderón launches new social program for the elderly*
- *PRI attacks government on Yucatán elections*
- *Pension reform law protestors paralyze Mexico City*

The Supreme Court announced that it will dedicate the week of May 14 to analyzing in chambers the constitutionality of the Radio and Television Law (popularly known as the “Ley Televisa”) passed by Congress last year. The draft decision, prepared by one of the Court’s 11 ministers, argues that Article 28 of the law, which grants radiofrequency concessions without auction to incumbents, is unconstitutional. The following week, the Court will hold a public session on the law. The Supreme Court can invalidate a law with a minimum of 8 votes. (Reforma 5/4)

Santiago Creel, the PAN leader in the Senate said, that the Ley Televisa “guarantees the privileges of those who currently have an oligopoly” and was approved in a “climate of pressure.” “Submitting [the law] to the candidates and the parties for their approval, while they were in the middle of negotiations for advertising time...is not the manner to approve such a law,” he said at a CSIS conference in Washington. PRD congressional leader Carlos Navarrete added, “Everything in Mexico has changed ... but there is resistance to changing the old rules of the game of the groups in power.” (Universal 5/3)

Pemex head Jesús Reyes Heróles elaborated the ten elements of the “new business model” for the state oil company that he first announced in March. Among the changes, he called for a different financing mechanism that was not tied to the vagaries of the annual public sector budget, greater operating flexibility and accountability, a union agreement with more job flexibility, a focus on customer care, operating improvements that could yield US\$1 billion per year in savings, authorizing Pemex to operate outside Mexico, allowing the private sector in non-core activities such as operating oil pipelines, and securing sufficient resources to ensure the company’s medium term viability. He estimated that Pemex needed to have US\$33 billion per year in resources for investment and operating expenses, US\$5 billion more than currently (or about 1.2% of GDP). He emphasized that his initiatives could all be done within the existing constitutional framework, but that some of the necessary legislation probably could not be tackled until after the 2009 mid-term elections. (Speech to the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, New York, 5/4)

President Calderón announced a social program that will give Ps. 500 per month to persons over 70 years old who live in isolated areas. The program is expected to benefit more than one million adults living in communities of fewer than 2,500 inhabitants. (Reforma 5/2)

The PRI leadership denounced alleged interference by the federal government in the Yucatán state elections (May 20) and the other 13 state elections this year, and threatened to stop co-operating with the government. PAN president Manuel Espino dismissed the allegations as “typical of a party that is on the verge of losing.” A Universal poll shows a tight race for the Yucatán governorship, with Ivonne Ortega of the PRI getting 48.5% of voter preferences versus 45.5% for Xavier Abreu of the PAN. (El Universal 4/27, 5/4, Proceso 5/3)

Opponents of the Federal Pensions law enacted in March mobilized tens of thousands of public sector union members in Mexico City. The protesters created considerable disruption with marches, school strikes, street blockages, and the closing of toll roads. The dissident teachers union, CNTE, announced the start of an “indefinite” national strike and said it will shut down some 50,000 schools, mostly in the greater Mexico City area. (Proceso 5/1-2, Universal 5/7)

Key Dates

- 05/20/07:** *Yucatán gubernatorial election*
- 06/2-3/07:** *PAN National Assembly meets*
- 08/05/07:** *Baja California gubernatorial election*
- 11/11/07:** *Michoacán gubernatorial election*
- 03/08:** *PAN elects new party president*

The Toll of Narcoviolence

On the anniversary of the Battle of Puebla (5^o de Mayo), President Calderón called for national unity in the fight against organized crime, saying, “Mexico is stronger than any enemy.” During the week, five soldiers were killed in an ambush in Michoacán and the police chief of Cancún was wounded in an assassination attempt. According to Reforma there have been 758 gangland style killings reported in the year to date, including 71 in the past week. (Reforma 5/4-5)

Deaths from organized crime violence, January 1 – May 3, 2007

