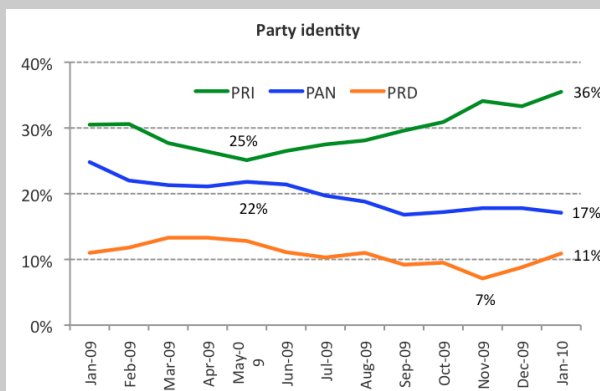
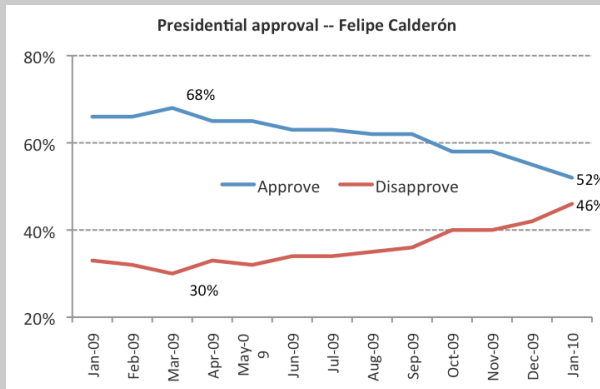


Alan Stoga, President
Daniel Wilson, Managing Director and Editor

Poll

Presidential approval slips further

The monthly Mitofsky survey shows a further slip in President **Calderón's** approval numbers to 52%, the lowest of his presidency. The disapproval rate also reached a new high of 46%. In terms of party identification, the PRI continued to gain ground since last summer's elections, with an overall identification rate of 36%. The PAN has remained stable at 17-18% since last fall, while the PRD has bumped up off its lows to 11%. Asked about the country's principal problems, 70% identified economic issues (the highest in this government), and only 23% said security issues. (www.consulta.com.mx)



Key Dates

- 2/22-3:** Rio Group summit, Cancún
- 4/30:** End of congressional session
- 5/16:** Yucatán elections
- 7/4:** Elections in 13 states
- 9/1:** Presidential *Informe*; start of fall congressional session
- 9/15:** 200th Anniversary of Independence
- 10/3:** Chiapas elections (possible)
- 11/15:** 100th Anniversary of the Revolution

Gómez Mont resigns from PAN ...

Government Secretary **Fernando Gómez Mont** resigned from the PAN (but not from the government) in protest of the party's alliance with the PRD to contest the governorship of Oaxaca. Gómez Mont has been publicly critical of the prospective PAN-PRD alliances for the past month. At the meeting of the PAN central committee, Gómez Mont made a plea to reject the alliance, but the CEN voted 40-0 to go forward. The Secretary's resignation letter to party leader **César Nava** said he was resigning for "reasons that I cannot disclose for professional discretion." The press is reporting, however, that Gómez Mont had given his word to PRI leaders that the PAN would not ally with the PRD in Oaxaca, in return for the PRI's support for the tax increases in the 2010 budget. Gómez Mont, like President **Felipe Calderón**, is the son of one of the founders of the PAN. (Excelsior 2/11, Universal 2/11, Reforma 2/11)

... but reaffirms loyalty to President

Gómez Mont stressed on several occasions that he would continue to work for the President's agenda, even after his break with the party. "President Calderón and I are in constant communication; we each have our own points of view. He is the President, and I am the Government Secretary, and I serve the President," he said at a law forum. His resignation reverberated within the party. Former president **Vicente Fox** and former party president **Manuel Espino** said Gómez Mont did the right thing. Former presidential candidate **Diego Fernández de Cevallos** said the PRD and PAN were irreconcilable on fundamental issues such as abortion and gay marriage. Fernández said the PAN could beat the PRI on its own, "if we have leaders of stature who behave in ways that merit respect."

Nonetheless, the PAN National Council endorsed the electoral coalitions already approved by the central committee. Absent from the Council meeting were President Calderón, Fox, Espino, and congressional leader **Josefina Vázquez Mota**. While a number of current PAN senators voiced support for keeping Gómez Mont in the cabinet, there is constant speculation of how long he will remain in the cabinet. President Calderón has avoided comment on the controversy. (Universal 2/12)

President goes to Juárez to announce new security strategy ...

President **Calderón** travelled to Juárez to unveil a new security initiative for the troubled city. His speech outlined a four point program: reinforce the security presence in the city (including reversing [plans announced last month](#) to redeploy the military from the city to rural areas of Chihuahua); cleaning up the local police and municipal authorities; new social programs to fight poverty, provide better local medical care (including addiction services), and more schools and athletic facilities; and increasing citizen participation. He was accompanied by first lady **Margarita Zavala**, **Gómez Mont**, Chihuahua governor **José Reyes Baeza**, Juarez mayor **José Reyes Ferriz**, and six other cabinet secretaries. Subsequently, the President announced he would return this week to followup on the initiatives. (Reforma 2/11)

... but receives rude welcome from family members of victims

While the President gave personal condolences to the family members of the victims of the massacre of school children, he was also given a rare show of public disrespect. Six mothers of the victims stood and turned their backs on the President as he spoke. **Luz María Dávila**, who lost two two sons, addressed the President: "I cannot bid you welcome. I can't believe that you called my sons gang members; they were students and worked. I want you to take your words back. Put yourself in my place. If you had lost a son, you would turn every stone to find those responsible. I don't have the means to do that. Don't nod your head, do something! Juarez is in mourning! We want Juárez as it was before, not a bloodbath." Outside the convention center, riot police held protestors at bay. (Universal 2/12, Reforma 2/12)