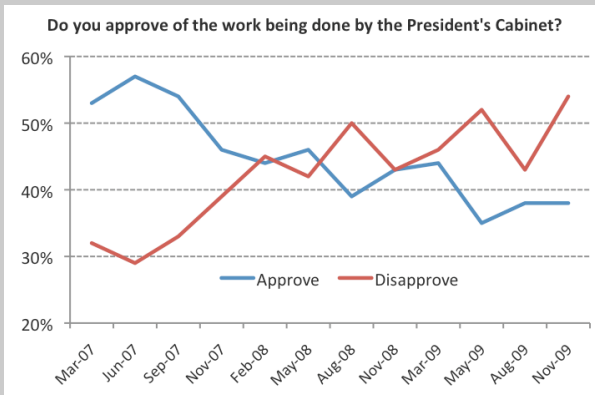
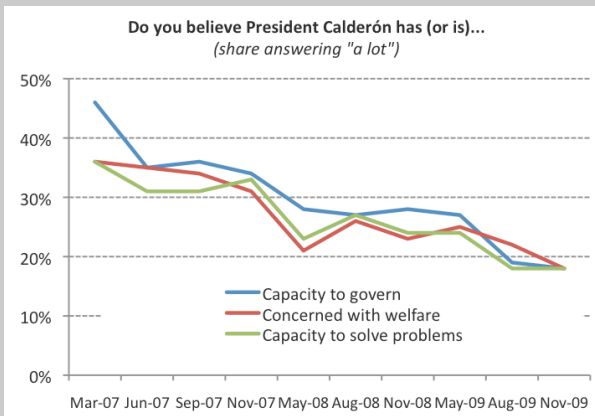


Alan Stoga, President
Daniel Wilson, Managing Director and Editor

Polls

Presidential approval plunges

A series of polls show that various measures of approval of **President Calderón's** government have fallen sharply in the wake of the new taxes imposed as part of the 2010 budget. The quarterly **GEA-ISA** poll has presidential approval falling to 52% (matching the low of this government), while those disapproving rose to an all time high of 46%. Only 18% believe "a lot" that the government is able to solve problems or govern effectively. Those disapproving of the cabinet's work have increased to 54%, compared to 38% approving. Our blog has summaries of the [Reforma](#) and [Mitofsky](#) polls.



Key Dates

- 12/15:** Likely end of congressional session
- 12/31:** Term ends for Governor of Banco de México
- 2/1/10:** Start of new congressional session
- 5/16:** Yucatán elections
- 7/4:** Elections in 9 states
- 10/3:** Chiapas elections

PRD national congress a 'farce'

Without the presence of either **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** or **Cuahtémoc Cárdenas**, the PRD held its 12th national Congress, which was billed as a refounding of the party. Party president **Jesús Ortega** sought to shepherd through an agenda that included opening the door to electoral alliances with the PRI and PAN, and greater internal democracy to reduce the power of the party's notorious ideological 'tribes.' Most outside commentary was acid: "Nobody can deny the good intentions, but neither can they deny that the new PRD is a Frankenstein. ... What's left of the PRD is hardly a party, not at all revolutionary, and years from being the light of democracy," wrote columnist **Ricardo Alemán**. ([Universal 12/7, 12/7](#))

Official in witness protection program killed

A key informer in the Ministry of Justice's witness protection program was gunned down in a Starbucks in Mexico City. **Édgar Bayardo** had been a top official in the Federal Preventive Police, an informer for the U.S. DEA, and in the service of both the **Amado Carrillo** and the **Beltrán Leyva** families. He played a role in the October 2008 arrest of **Jesús "El Rey" Zambada** and the dismantling of Zambada's network. Bayardo's killing follows the apparent suicide of Zambada's son while also in the witness protection program. **Carmen Aristegui** writes that the two deaths "have set off a crisis of credibility and suspicion about [the witness protection program] and in general about the entire Public Security and Justice systems in this country." ([Excelsior 12/4, Reforma 12/4](#))

More drug violence rocks Nuevo León

A shootout at a major intersection in the Monterrey suburb of Juárez left at least 12 dead, including a leader of the **Los Zetas** paramilitary gang who was believed to be behind the November assassination of the police chief of the neighboring suburb of García. Hours later, an armed gang attacked a police detention center in another suburb and freed 23 suspects, including 15 alleged members of Los Zetas. ([Universal 12/5](#))

Deadline approaches for nominating Central Bank governor

Breaking a long silence, Banco de Mexico governor **Guillermo Ortiz** said he would be willing to serve a third term as head of the bank: "If the President and the Congress think that I can continue to be of service, I will do so with great pleasure; I will never say no to Mexico," Ortiz said. The President is expected to make his nomination, which must be ratified by the Senate, this week. **Calderón** has been believed to have a clear preference for putting **Agustín Carstens** in the central bank, with **Ernesto Cordero** taking over at the Ministry of Finance. However, as columnist **Salvador García Soto** noted, the trial balloon of Cordero's name "was not well viewed by Congress—particularly by the PRI Senate delegation—or by influential Wall Street voices who lack knowledge of the current Minister of Social Development." ([Universal 12/3, 12/5](#))

New Supreme Court ministers ratified

The Senate ratified by wide margins the two new Supreme Court ministers proposed by **President Calderón**. **Arturo Zaldívar Lelo de Larrea** is a professor of constitutional law at the Escuela Libre de Derecho, from which Calderón graduated. **Luis María Aguilar** has been a federal judge since 1985. ([Universal 12/1](#))