

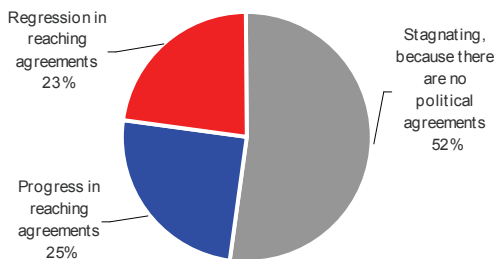
Alan Stoga, President
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Polls

Disenchantment with democratic institutions

Nexos magazine commissioned a national survey to measure attitudes toward harmony and discord in politics and society. The survey found that Mexicans value concord highly, and reject most forms of political violence or confrontation. However, the majority do not feel that political efforts directed at harmony are working. "They value the intent, but not the results." Respondents gave low marks to the ability of Mexican politicians to work in a pluralistic, democratic environment. (Nexos 2/1)

How do you view Mexico from a political perspective?



On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate Mexican politicians, in general, with respect to:



Key Dates

1/31-3/11: Federal 'pre-campaign' period
3/14-29: Major parties select candidates for Congress
4/6: Start of state election campaigns *
4/30: End of regular Congressional session

4/29-5/2: Deadline for registering candidates for Chamber of Deputies
5/5: Start of federal election campaigns
7/5: National congressional, 6 gubernatorial, and 5 other local elections.

* May vary by state

Last Congressional session before elections inaugurated

The new congressional session, which runs from February 1 to April 30, formally opened. Legislators from the three major parties then headed to separate retreats to map out strategies for the last session before the July elections. (Reforma 2/2)

Teachers Union negotiations begin

The Ministry of Education (SEP) and the Teachers Union (SNTE) led by **Elba Esther Gordillo** started negotiations on a new labor agreement. Gordillo started the negotiations by ignoring **Josefina Vasquez Mota**, the Secretary of Education, and sending a list of demands directly to President Calderón. Gordillo's letter said that the Ministry's "evasions" are "numbing the possibility of solidifying the collective, coordinated effort and putting at risk the change that is required to improve educational quality." The union's demands include resolution of what the union says are failed government commitments, giving 25,000 temporary primary teachers permanent positions, and 45,000 additional hours for secondary school teachers. (Reforma 1/30, 2/1)

New security plan previewed

Justice Minister **Eduardo Medina Mora** briefed members PRI congressional leaders on a new security plan that will focus on the border regions. According to **César Duarte**, the president of the Chamber of Deputies, the new plan will focus on reducing violence, money laundering, drug trafficking, and arms trafficking on the border in cooperation with the United States. The program is expected to be announced in the coming days. (Reforma 2/1)

French scientist dies after airport assault

In another high visibility crime, a French biotechnology researcher working in Mexico City died four days after being shot in the head during a robbery. Christopher Aurger's car and driver were intercepted by three vehicles on an expressway after leaving Mexico City International Airport where he had exchanged foreign currency at an exchange house. The authorities said there have been a number of similar robberies of exchange house customers in recent weeks, and they suspect that the robbers are getting tips from *casa de cambio* employees. The police arrested three suspects. (Reforma 1/27, Universal 2/1)

Chronicles of Narnia casualty of security environment

After months of preparation, the producers of the third film installment of the *Chronicles of Narnia* scrapped plans to film in Rosarito, Baja California, because of concerns about security. The filming, which was due to start in February, will probably be moved to Australia. The producers said they investigated all alternatives to keep the movie in Mexico, including flying the cast back to San Diego every night, but viewed the risks as too great. (Reforma 1/31)

Supreme Court report hits Peña Nieto and Medina Mora

A Supreme Court ruling on human rights violations during the military-police crackdown in the town of Atenco in May 2006 takes to task State of Mexico Governor **Enrique Peña Nieto** and Attorney General **Eduardo Medina Mora**, who was then the Secretary for Public Security in the Fox administration. The report says the operation – which started as an effort to shut down an unlicensed flower market – was executed in an "excessive, disproportionate, inefficient, unprofessional, and indolent" manner. One child was killed, hundreds were injured and arrested, and numerous sexual assaults by security personnel were reported. (Reforma 1/28)