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Polls

Peña Nieto tops popularity rankings

A BGC Ulises Beltrán survey taken prior to the elections confirms **Enrique Peña Nieto's** position as the Mexican political figure with the highest approval rating, although his name recognition lags slightly behind the President and AMLO. **Beatriz Paredes**, the PRI party president and architect of the election campaign comes in second among *priistas*, while Senate leader **Manlio Fabio Beltrones** lags badly. Among *panistas*, only **Josefina Vázquez Mota**, the former cabinet secretary and likely leader of the PAN in Congress, and Senator **Santiago Creel** ranked highly. The top-ranked *perredistas* are **Marcelo Ebrard** and former Michoacán governor **Lázaro Cárdenas**. **López Obrador's** net approval rating fell from 4.8 in March/April 09 to 4.0 in June. Writing separately about "Golden Boy" Peña Nieto, political scientist **Denise Dresser** finds in him the model for the PRI's election victory: "A carefully thought-out, perfectly planned equation: pretty face + money + broadcast TV + advertising + the PRI dinosaurs = electoral victory." ([Excelsior 7/13](#), [Reforma 7/13](#))

		Name Recog nition	Net positive rating	Approval Index
Enrique Peña Nieto	PRI, Gov. Mexico State	86%	61	7.1
Felipe Calderón	PAN, President	99%	52	6.7
Marcelo Ebrard	PRD, Mayor of Mexico City	77%	39	6.2
Beatriz Paredes	PRI, party president	84%	31	6.0
Lázaro Cárdenas	PRD, ex-Gov. of Michoacán	51%	31	6.0
Josefina Vázquez Mota	PAN, likely head of party in Chamber	48%	21	5.6
Santiago Creel	PAN, Senator	78%	(3)	4.8
Jesús Ortega	PRD, party president	46%	(1)	4.8
Manlio Fabio Beltrones	PRI, Senate leader	40%	0	4.8
Andrés Manuel López Obrador	PRD, '06 presidential candidate	97%	(21)	4.0

(Net positive rating: % approval - % disapproval; Approval index = weighted average score, 1-10 scale)

Key Dates

**8/8-11:** North American Leaders Summit, Guadalajara (?)  
**9/1:** Start of new Congressional session; President delivers *Informe*.  
**10/18:** Tabasco and Coahuila local elections

Narco 'Tet Offensive,' as criticism mounts of government security strategy

The government captured one of the most-wanted members of the *La Familia* cartel, **Arnaldo Rueda**. His arrest set off a furious two-day counterattack by the cartel against at least 14 police and army posts in Michoacán, Guerrero, and Guanajuato that left 5 army and police officers dead and at least 18 wounded; five civilians were also reported killed. Noted columnist **Ciro Gómez Leyva**, "In the war against the narcos, July 11th seems like a kind of Tet offensive, the synchronized, made-for-Hollywood offensive by the ... North Vietnamese army that, despite being characterized as a military disaster, created the perception that the otherwise invincible U.S. army would never win in Vietnam." In a separate development, reacting to the mounting evidence of human rights violations by the Army, *El Universal* asked, in its lead editorial, "Is it time to rethink the drug war?" ([Universal 7/12](#), [7/13](#), [Milenio 7/13](#))

PRI: Wedding symbolizes victory

The wedding of the daughter of **Emilio Chuayffet**, became a symbol for the PRI's return to power. The former governor of Mexico State and Government Secretary under **Ernesto Zedillo** will be the leader of the PRI's delegation in the next Chamber of Deputies. The witnesses of honor were Mexico state Governor **Enrique Peña Nieto** and former president **Carlos Salinas de Gortari**. Also prominent in the 700-guest event was party president **Beatriz Paredes**. ([Reforma 7/13](#), [Universal 7/11](#))

PAN: 'Worst defeat in the party's history'

The PAN started the process of electing a new party leader to replace **Germán Martínez** and rebuild after July 5. Senator **Santiago Creel** published an open letter calling the election "the worst political defeat in the history" of the PAN. He said, "We haven't known how to combat intelligently the old regime.... We should recognize that the old authoritarian system continues in full force, and at times with renewed vigor or - as they say - with a 'new attitude.'...We have protected governors that committed acts that the most basic sense of ethics should have caused us to repudiate and used every legal method to remove them from power.... We have defended union, peasant, and economic groups that are the corporatist, clientelistic, and anti-democratic pillars of the old regime." ([Reforma 7/13](#))

PRD: Seeking internal reconciliation

At a meeting of PRD leaders, party president **Jesús Ortega** retreated from his demand to expel AMLO for supporting candidates against the PRD, while reaffirming his belief that AMLO would never again be the party's presidential candidate. The minutes of the meeting, read by Zacatecas governor **Amalia García**, said, "We believe that everyone is useful, and we will not stay on the route of throwing out or expelling anyone." **López Obrador**, for his part, gave an interview that stopped characterizing the PRD and Ortega's New Left faction as part of the 'mafia' that has kept him out of power. ([Reforma 7/13](#))

Mormon anti-kidnap activist murdered

A leader of the Mormon community in Chihuahua, **Benjamín Le Barón**, was kidnapped and murdered. He had mobilized the community to demand government protection after a plague of kidnappings in the Mormon and Mennonite settlements in the state and after his younger brother was kidnapped in April. The brother was rescued by the authorities, and the Army arrested 25 alleged kidnappers. Benjamín Le Barón's body was found with a note saying his killing was payback for these arrests. The *Bajo Reserva* column noted: "This valiant man declared he would not pay ransom and began a dignified march to demand from state and federal authorities that which every citizen deserves: security.... But yesterday, the hope of this citizen (and of a people) were reduced to ruins." ([Reforma 7/7](#), [Universal 7/8](#))