

## **Editorial Archive 2008**

- **Calderón, Obama and Drug trafficking (In Spanish)**

*El Universal* , Ricardo Alemán, 11/04/08

It is unlikely that President Calderón will receive much U.S. support in the war against organized crime. But the new government of the United States, no matter which candidate wins, cannot distance itself from Calderón's fight. The problem is that few of Obama's advisers believe the Calderón administration's strategy against drug trafficking to be effective.

- **Mexico's spreading drug violence**

*Los Angeles Times* , Pamela Starr, 10/22/08

In the interest of national security, the United States must aggressively police its border with Mexico. But the cause of concern is not the northward flow of migrants and drugs. Rather, our focus should be on the southward flow of arms and ammunition that is fueling an explosion of drug-related violence in Mexico and that could soon threaten U.S. interests.

- **The 2 faces of Mexico: death, corruption amid beauty**

*El Paso Times*, Maria Elena Salinas, 10/21/08

Mexican citizens should not be prisoners in their own homes. They deserve to feel free to enjoy those beautiful beaches and walk the streets of their cities with their families without the fear of being kidnapped or caught in the line of fire in the raging drug wars. Their monuments should be used as symbols of pride, not as stages for protests demanding protection from their government.

- **Will Obama Change NAFTA?**

*Latin Business Chronicle* , Andrés Rozental, 10/20/08

At the end of the day, I predict that although the three governments might well sit down to discuss ways of improving NAFTA, especially as regards dispute settlement and excluded sectors, there won't be either a wholesale repudiation of the agreement, nor any fundamental changes to the environmental and labor side agreements (which is what the Democrats are ostensibly unhappy about).

- **Causa crisis sentimientos aislacionistas en EU (The economic crisis causes isolationist sentiment in the U.S.)**

*La Reforma*, Andrés Oppenheimer 10/03/08

And for Latin America, all of this will be bad news. A world economy that decelerates

will cause a fall of prices of the primary materials that have driven the growth in South America, and a depressed American economy will mean a significant fall in exports and tourism in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. It's easy to be a populist and blame others in times like these, but it is also totally reckless. What we need are leaders that can confront populism and argue that only through greater economic integration will the country be able to sell high quality products to the rest of the world and avoid the loss of millions of jobs in the United States that are continuing to be threatened by the isolationist mood of the country.

- **Llaga expuesta (Open wound)**

*La Reforma* , Sergio Aguayo Quezada, 10/01/08

Meanwhile, Felipe Calderón persists in his calls for national unity without realizing his lean authority. How can he expect the political, social, intellectual left to view with sympathy his call when his government persists in being compliant with the repressors and corrupt members of the old regime? The second of October will not be forgotten, because it won't let us forget and because the same happens with other acts of aggression against human dignity. Our collective memory persists damaged by the cuts inflicted by the repressors of yesterday and their accomplices of today. It is an open wound.

- **Mexican teachers' poor test scores may be good news**

*Miami Herald* , Andrés Oppenheimer, 08/24/08

Many Mexicans reacted with shock and dismay when it was announced recently that nearly 70 percent of teachers had flunked a new nationwide test to measure whether they had the basic skills to be educators. I, for one, celebrated the news. For the first time, Mexico has begun to demand that all teachers who apply for new openings at public schools undergo a nationwide test. And the dismal results of the first such exam of 71,000 teachers on Aug. 11 has led the country to come to grips with the depth of its educational crisis.

- **Trade Deals' Effect on U.S. Immigration a Problem for McCain**

*Mercury News* , Ted Lewis, 07/03/08

During the fierce 1993 fight over its adoption, treaty promoters assured the U.S. and Mexican publics that expanded trade would slow immigration by increasing economic opportunity in Mexico. Sadly, 14 years of NAFTA have shown the opposite: Unauthorized migration from Mexico has doubled. The opening for the candidates is to

explain that both nations have a stake in developing economic opportunities in Mexico capable of sustaining communities and keeping families home.

- **¿Un peligro para EU? (A Danger for the United States?)**

*El Norte*, Javier Treviño Cantú, 06/18/08

At a conference sponsored by the Mexico Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center, participants and speakers alike continually asked who, whether Barack Obama or John McCain, would be more beneficial for Mexico? While the majority certainly believed McCain could provide better perspectives for Mexico, the likelihood of Obama winning the presidency is becoming more likely. The implications this has for the Mexico-U.S. bilateral relation would entail revisions to NAFTA.

- **¿Y la soberanía? (And the Sovereignty?)**

*El Universal*, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, 06/17/08

Former President of México, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, releases his new book “La Década Perdida” (The Lost Decade), and responds to critics over lost of sovereignty during his presidential period by explaining that his government was the first one in the world to impose regulations to the presence of the DEA in another country and to nationalize the fight against drug trafficking.

- **Mexico at the Brink**

*The New York Times*, 06/04/08

The War on Drugs may be fading from memory north of the Rio Grande, but south of the river, bloody battles are threatening to overwhelm Mexico’s democratically elected government. The timid assistance package proposed by the Bush administration and pared down by Congress suggests that Washington doesn’t grasp either the scale of the danger or its own responsibilities.

- **Cortinas de Humo**

*Reforma*, Sergio Aguayo Quezada, 06/04/08

There are links between national security concerns and human rights issues. However, the Minister of Interior, Juan Camilo Mouriño, and the President of the Human Rights Commission, José Luis Soberanes, responded with ambiguity and lack of coordination when it comes to Plan Merida.

- **The Great Immigration Panic**

*New York Times*, 06/03/08

Someday, the country will recognize the true cost of its war on illegal immigration. We

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don't mean dollars, though those are being squandered by the billions. The true cost is to the national identity: the sense of who we are and what we value. It will hit us once the enforcement fever breaks, when we look at what has been done and no longer recognize the country that did it.

- **¿Instituciones o simulaciones? (Institutions or Simulations?)**

*Reforma* , Jorge Castañeda, 05/28/08

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jorge Castañeda, reflects on the weakness of Mexican institutions in the decision-making process vis-à-vis other forms of consensus in light of the Pemex debate.

- **Agenda Equivocada (Flawed Agenda)**

*Reforma* , Lorenzo Meyer, 05/22/08

Mexico's energy reform was proposed by the wrong political actor. President Calderón's energy proposals generate skepticism by providing space for private investments and lend themselves to rejection simply based on their origin. Mexico's left has the legitimacy to promote effective, deep-rooted change and engage in the fiscal reform that is necessary to improve Mexico's run-down oil industry.

- **Reconciliaciones (Reconciliations)**

*Reforma* , Sergio Aguayo, 05/21/08

Some of Mexico's most impacting changes took place when the left and the right agreed on the same objectives. Improving the quality of education in Mexico is an issue in which civil society, of both the left and right and not simply political elites, can unite to transcend ideology and address the poor quality of basic education.

- **The U.S. Role in a Mexico Assassination**

*Wall Street Journal* , Mary Anastasia O'Grady, 05/12/08

One of the drivers of the drug-related violence in Mexico is the United States' constant demand for illicit drugs. The death toll continues to mount among Mexican local, municipal and federal law enforcement officials while a victory in the drug war remains elusive for Mexican society. Americans should give more thought to the violence generated by their high demand, as it continues to tear through Mexico's weak law enforcement institutions.

- **The True Price of Gas**

*The New Republic* , Alvaro Vargas Llosa, 05/06/08

Latin Americans must let go of the notion that state-controlled natural resources strengthen national identity. In particular, Mexicans should relinquish this mentality in

order to allow private capital to enter into the oil industry, enhance production, further increase revenues for the state and fortify the country's ineffective oil company.

- **Mexico's Unfinished Reform**

*Washington Post*, Editorial, 04/19/08

President Calderón has set forth on the daunting task of opening Mexico's economy to more trade and investment by proposing a reform to Mexico's inefficient state-run oil company. His efforts, however, point to the vulnerabilities of Mexico's democracy. Left-wing populists have occupied both chambers of Congress and continue sending incendiary messages to President Calderón's party. Ultimately, the future of Pemex should be fostered through democratic means, not by unruly mobs.

- **Los Bloqueos de López Obrador (López Obrador's Blockade)**

*Asuntos Capiales*, Sergio Sarmiento, 04/19/08

The tactics former presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador is using to force a society to accept a certain position are closer to authoritarianism than democracy. López Obrador cared little about the details of the energy proposal submitted by President Calderón, instead he focused more on mobilizing the masses against "threats to Mexico's sovereignty".

- **Nostalgia Reaccionaria**

*La Jornada*, Soledad Loaeza, 04/17/08

Mexico's energy reform is a poor excuse for López Obrador supporters to engage in their revolutionary ideals. Their rhetoric, demonstrations, and inability to engage in debate will only increase their risk of losing votes for the PRD. Moreover, it is apparent that López Obrador supporters are not interested in votes. Their recent blockade in Mexico's Congress – further stalling debate on energy reform – shows a lack of respect for division of power and democratic institutions.

- **The Old Heave-Ho for Mexico?**

*The Globe and Mail*, Madelaine Drohan, 04/17/08

As the leaders of the United States, Canada and Mexico gather in New Orleans to discuss NAFTA's future, Mexican leaders worry about the future of the agreement. High-profile individuals, business leaders as well as former political leaders in Canada have more than once considered forcing Mexico out of the tri-part agreement.

- **Playing Monopoly With Mexico**

*Wall Street Journal*, Maria Anastasia O'Grady, 04/07/08

Since President Calderón stepped into office he has promised to bring more prosperity to

Mexico. Yet partisan moves and fears of privatization are thwarting his efforts to modernize the country's state-run oil monopoly, which could fruitfully mitigate Mexico's economic troubles

- **5 Myths About NAFTA**

*Washington Post*, Philippe LeGrain, 04/05/08

As Senator Clinton and Senator Obama endlessly remark about NAFTA's deficiencies, Senator McCain is the only presidential candidate to support leaving the trade agreement unchanged. What's troubling to the Obama and Clinton camps is that they are both adhering to the myths associated with NAFTA in their stump speeches. The reality is: NAFTA has not transformed the U.S. economy, it has not made countless Americans jobless, fixing NAFTA would not be easy, adding labor and environmental regulations would not benefit U.S. workers, and renegotiating NAFTA should not be a priority for the new president.

- **Nationalism, Crony Capitalism May Thwart Mexico's Economy**

*Wall Street Journal*, David Luhnow , 03/28/08

As Mexico's President Felipe Calderón aims to aid Mexico's ailing oil industry by proposing a new energy proposal, nationalism and crony capitalism threaten any efforts to succeed in passing the reform through Mexico's legislative bodies. Mexico's inability to encourage competition in privatized industries has prevented public approval of private or foreign investment. Most Mexicans consider high prices as a result of privatized and corrupt industries.

- **Trade Secrets: The Real Problem with NAFTA**

*The New Republic*, John B. Judis, 03/28/08

During the presidential primary in Ohio, Obama and Clinton continuously criticized NAFTA and remarked about the job losses provoked by the ratification of the trade agreement. They argued they would prevent jobs from heading to Mexico, even though labor officials argue that the greatest threat to jobs in the Midwest is cheap labor in Southeast Asia. If Obama and Clinton are concerned about the negative effects of NAFTA, they should ask farmers and small business owners in Mexico.

- **Actions Spoil Candidates' Claims of Shift to 'Smart Power'**

*Real Clear Politics*, Mort Kondracke, 03/28/08

The three leading candidates for the U.S. presidency have set out to establish a completely different foreign policy approach than President Bush's policies concentrated on the exercise of military power. Although the candidates have been evoking "smart" proposals such as increased foreign aid, comprehensive immigration reform and multilateralism, their actions have demonstrated another tendency. If the candidates are

aiming to move forward using “smart power”, their actions as U.S. Senators should also reflect their statements.

- **La Patria Peligra**

*El Universal*, Jorge Chabat, 03/27/08

In recent months, former presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador has proclaimed that the Mexican nation is being threatened by Calderón’s desire to privatize the oil industry. In a democracy, divergent views are not rare, but the greatest threat López Obrador poses to the Mexican nation is his inability to function within an institutional framework. If López Obrador has a problem with Congress, he should work with members of his party to design a strategic plan that ensures more PRD deputies and senators are elected. Manifestations in Mexico City will not solve this problem.

- **'Mexico Day'**

*Reforma*, Manuel J. Jáuregui, 03/26/08

Yesterday, Mexico's ambassador, accompanied by the CEOs of Mexico's largest companies joined investors at the New York Stock Exchange to celebrate 'Mexico Day'. In this rare moment, Mexico represents a secure port for foreign investment while the usually-strong and powerful North American economy suffers. Mexico should enjoy the glory while it can.

- **Cuauhtémoc**

*Reforma*, Sergio Aguayo, 03/26/08

Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, founder of Mexico's Party of the Democratic Revolution, condemned the election of the party's leadership in a series of written statements. Yet, in the written documents he presented to show his dismay, he included several weak premises. Not only did he exclude himself from what the party should do to behave like a "real" political party, but he also showed that he was out of touch with the Mexican reality.

- **¿Una Más? (One More?)**

*Reforma*, Denise Dresser, 03/10/08

The controversy involving Interior Minister Juan Camilo Mouriño reveals one of Mexico’s most entrenched problems. To not examine the ethical implications of Mouriño’s actions or the conflict of interests involved would signify that his misdeeds were completely acceptable. In functional democracies this would not be accepted. In Mexico, not only is this behavior tolerated or ignored, but it is also normal. President Calderón and his allies should understand what is at play: maintaining a personal ally or the possibility of facing one of the country’s fundamental problems.

- **Wrong About Mexico**

*The Wall Street Journal*, Mary Anastasia O'Grady, 03/03/08

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama's desires to insert labor regulations into NAFTA will prove disastrous not only for Mexico, but for the U.S. as well. The effects of NAFTA have been complex and paradoxical and injecting the trade treaty with "big labor" regulations will further hurt Mexico, a country with already powerful and menacing union leaders.

- **Misconceptions About Mexico Unchallenged**

*Boston Herald*, Jose de La Isla, 03/01/08

While Barack Obama continually proclaims that the U.S. must improve its relationship with Mexico, he fails to recognize issues such as sovereignty and the U.S. role in increasing criminality and corruption. A pragmatic approach recognizes the contributions Mexicans make to the U.S. market every year and the complexities associated with the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship.

- **Mexico Under Siege**

*Wall Street Journal*, Mary Anastasia O'Grady, 02/25/08

It has been nearly 14 months since Eduardo Medina-Mora, Mexico's attorney general, embarked on a quest to tackle powerful drug cartels in Northern Mexico. His most dire attempt to protect Mexico's fragile democracy includes directly attacking the source of economic power of the drug cartels. Mr. Medina-Mora has blocked traditional drug distribution routes, increased security to ports of entry and has brought down several key leaders of organized crime rings. He does, however, advocate for international cooperation and admits that the U.S. should do more to curb demand for illegal drugs.

- **Maleducados**

*Reforma*, Sergio Aguayo, 02/27/08

When President Felipe Calderón stated last week that February 21st would be a milestone in higher education for Mexico, he demonstrated a lack of understanding of the deep-seeded problems of education in Mexico. Calderón's lofty promises need a pragmatic approach that acknowledges education reform is not a simple matter and will require years of changes and improvements.

- **NAFTA Nonsense**

*Real Clear Politics*, Rick Lowry, 02/26/08

Presidential Candidate Barack Obama's recent tirades against NAFTA leave many unanswered questions about his stance on trade. For the past 14 years, NAFTA's effects have been consistently scrutinized and to determine that NAFTA has been a complete



and utter failure would be detrimental to Obama's campaign. Obama should define his stance on NAFTA and trade before attributing U.S. economic failures to a trade deal that has brought significant levels of growth to both countries.

- **Mexico's Coziness with Cuba Strikes Wrong Note**  
*San Jose Mercury News*, Andres Oppenheimer, 02/24/08

By declaring Castro an "outstanding figure" in Latin America and sending his Foreign Secretary to Cuba on bilateral talks, Calderón has sent a mixed message to observers of the country. While leaders around the world proclaimed Castro's resignation as an opening for political liberalization in Cuba, Calderón is using this opportunity to gain political leverage at home that may go astray.

- **Cifras de Pemex**  
*Reforma*, Sergio Sarmiento, 02/21/08

As Mexican legislators debate energy reform, they must consider pragmatic options to invigorate PEMEX. While investments are certainly necessary, legislators should acknowledge that the state-owned company needs to undergo an internal transformation in order to improve its intrinsic inefficiencies.

- **Barack Obama: I Will Repair Our Relationship with Mexico**  
*The Dallas Morning News*, Barack Obama, 02/20/08

A bilateral agenda with Mexico should include border security, comprehensive immigration reform, cooperation on cross-border narcotics issues and must critically reevaluate NAFTA. The U.S. must also help Mexico develop its economy to curb illegal immigration. A strong relationship with Latin America begins with renewed ties to Mexico.

- **Regresiones (Regressions)**  
*Reforma*, Sergio Aguayo Quezada, 02/20/08

The report released by Human Rights Watch vindicated the suspicions that Mexico's National Commission for Human Rights is failing and reversing the progress made in the past 16 years of human rights laws. Problems with human rights in Mexico persist and are arguably worsening, but Mexico's Senate dismisses the claims in the report and refuses to move forward to make the appropriate amendments to improve these deficiencies.

- **Pais o Colonia (Country or Colony)**  
*Reforma*, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, 02/18/08

The potential of oil in Mexico is extensive. The government should take advantage of this

resource to generate a plan for national economic development that includes industrialization and the creation of more job opportunities. Since 1983, Mexico's neoliberal administrations have ruined the industry with attempts to privatize Pemex. The plan we propose includes neither foreign investment nor private national investment, but would cut spending in the current account and in government operations to invest public money in the exploration of new oil fields. Our alternative plan for energy reform demonstrates that Mexico can improve its inadequate oil sector without a return to colonial-style dependence.

- **La Desconfianza (Distrust)**

*Proceso*, José Gil Olmos, 02/13/08

The image and credibility of Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute are dismal. The damage caused by former leaders of the agency such as José Woldenberg and Luis Ugalde should not be repeated by the new appointee. Leonardo Valdés Zurita will have to restore the reputation of the agency by acting independently and showing a willingness to represent the public. As the head of this agency, he must demonstrate a firm resolve to combat the powers that wish to disrupt Mexico's feeble electoral process.

- **The War on Drugs Starts Here**

*New York Times*, 02/13/08

In October, the Bush administration announced a \$1.5 billion aid package to help Mexico fight drug gangs, but shortly after also proposed budget cuts for drug prevention programs. Although teenage drug abuse in the U.S. has decreased since 2000 for certain drugs, drug abuse among adults is increasing. If the U.S. aims to help Mexico fight drug-trafficking, the administration needs to slow the flow of money and arms to its Southern neighbors as well as establish programs that lower the demand for drugs.

- **Calderón en Nueva York (Calderón in New York)**

*La Crónica de Hoy*, 02/12/08

President Calderón's visit to the U.S. is marked by his desire to reveal Mexico's clear position on bilateral problems such as migration and drug-trafficking. The U.S. and Mexico must work in a coordinated approach to solve these problems and reconcile aspects of their long and complex relationship.

- **Nafta is a Sweet Deal, So Why Are They So Sour?**

*New York Times*, 02/11/08

With the removal of trade barriers on sugar and corn, both U.S. and Mexican agricultural producers are enraged about the negative effects this could have on their industries. Yet, farmers in both countries are failing to see the large benefits of open export markets. The challenges Mexico faces with rural poverty need to be confronted by government

officials in order to provide support for small farmers and create jobs for growing rural populations in urban areas.

- **Las Boletas (The Ballots)**

Sergio Aguayo

*Reforma*, 01/16/08

Fundar, a civil society organization that analyzes information related to government programs, is developing a study aimed to investigate the results of the 2006 elections. The organization filed a law suit against IFE (Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute) demanding access to the 2006 presidential election ballots. By obtaining access to this information, Fundar plans to determine whether the 2006 elections were indeed fraud-free and simply marked by a poor loser, or if they were the product of corrupt government officials. During the past six years, significant progress has been made in the realm of transparency, and a refusal by

- **Mexico in the U.S. (México en EUA)**

Luis Rubio

*Reforma*, 01/20/08

Perceptions of Mexico in the United States have turned highly negative despite constructive diplomatic relations between the two countries. Given the historic, cultural, economic and political differences among the two countries, building a relationship with the U.S. has never been an easy task for Mexico. Mexico-U.S. relations are complex and have become intertwined with U.S. domestic policies principally after large waves of Mexican migration into the United States. The answer lies in altering perceptions and creating confidence in the bilateral relationship.

- **Xenophobia from the Left (Xenofobia de Izquierda)**

Enrique Krauze

*Reforma*, 01/20/08

The recent appointment of Juan Camilo Mouriño to Mexico's Interior Ministry received significant outcries from members of the leftist press who question the legitimacy of Calderón's selection. At the forefront of the controversy is Mouriño's birthplace (Spain), despite having Mexican citizenship and living in Mexico since the age of seven. These xenophobic claims stand in contradiction to the immigrant roots of many Mexicans, particularly Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and especially in light of the xenophobic claims against Mexicans in the U.S.