



MEXICO'S 2011 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON POLICY

By George Grayson

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- Mexico's six gubernatorial elections this year will set the stage for the 2012 presidential contest and determine whether the once-dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) can continue its come-back.
- Of greatest importance is the July 3 face-off in Mexico State where Governor Enrique Peña Nieto is determined to name his successor—not only to project his policies into the future, but to gain even more momentum in his race for Los Pinos presidential residence.
- The center-right National Action Party (PAN), which successfully collaborated with the Left to win three governorships in 2010, is seeking to forge a coalition that can defeat Peña Nieto's dauphin; although the president of the leftist-nationalist Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) favors such an accord, self-proclaimed "Legitimate President" Andrés Manuel López Obrador and other key figures are dedicated to thwarting a coalition.
- Surging narco-violence poses a threat to candidates across-the-board, even as Peña Nieto has begun to hint at his approach to fighting organized crime should he capture the presidency.
- During his last months in power, President Felipe Calderón has focused on configuring a "Security NAFTA" to closely integrate U.S.-Mexican initiatives against organized crime so that a future chief executive cannot dismantle the bilateral framework established during his six-year term.

INTRODUCTION

The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which lost the presidency in 2000 after dominating the top spot for 71 years, exuded optimism that bordered on hubris at the beginning of last year. After all, the self-proclaimed "revolutionary party" had increased its seats in the 500-member Chamber of Deputies from 106 members in 2006 to 237 members in the mid-2009 elections; had raised its number of governors to 19 of 32 state executives with victories in Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, and Yucatán, which President Felipe Calderón's National Action Party (PAN) considered its bailiwicks; and had forged an agreement among the top aspirants for Los Pinos presidential residence: the extremely popular Mexico State Governor Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN), 44, über-Senator Manlio Fabio Beltrones, 58, and party chief Beatriz Paredes Rangel, 55, agreed to forgo low blows or *zancadillas* as they pursued their goal.

Paredes went so far as to predict that her party would sweep the boards, capturing the dozen governorships in play. "Since 2007 we are the number-one national political force, and in 2010 we will make straight 'A's, because we will win 12 statehouses," she emphasized.¹

¹. Quoted in "Paredes: en 2010 ganaremos todo," *NoticiasDurango.com*, May 30, 2010.

When the dust settled at the end of the year, the PRI had won nine of these positions. However, pragmatic leaders of the PAN (César Nava Vázquez) and the leftist-national Democratic Revolutionary Party or PRD (Jesús Ortega Martínez) had cooperated to forge several PAN-Left amalgams with President Calderón's blessing. These disparate coalitions achieved success in the PRI's erstwhile strongholds of Oaxaca, Puebla, and Sinaloa; in addition, alliance standard-bearers made robust showings in Hidalgo and Veracruz.

Such defeats and near-losses sounded a wake-up call at the revolutionary party's headquarters where Peña Nieto, eager to project the image of a "New PRI," will install outgoing Coahuila Governor Humberto Moreira Valdés as party president in March, even as Paredes contemplated a bid for mayor of Mexico City, a post she lost to the Left's Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon in 2006.

The flamboyant Moreira, 44, has earned recognition because of his loyalty to the Mexico State governor, his support from fellow state executives, his superb ability to organize the PRI in home stand, and his links to the SNTE Teacher's Union headed by the redoubtable Elba Esther "La Profesora" Gordillo Morales.² To accentuate the passing of the torch to a new generation, the PRI selected as its secretary-general, Cristina Díaz Salazar, 52, the gregarious mayor of Guadalupe, Nuevo Leon, a municipality that suffers acute narco-violence.

The specter of more PAN-Left ententes sparked the main headache for Peña Nieto and Moreira. Their greatest concern focused on Mexico State (Edomex), which embraces the nation's largest pool of voters (15 million), boasts a world-class industrial base, abounds in gubernatorial wannabes, and represents a microcosm of the country—with large cities that border the Federal District (DF), posh suburban neighborhoods, a burgeoning middle class, and zones of severe poverty, including communities of Otomi, Nahuatl, Tlahuica, and other indigenous peoples.

This essay will first explore briefly the state contests, paying particular attention to the Mexico State donnybrook. Secondly, it will discuss the impact of these contests on the presidential race, and finally it will examine the importance of upcoming elections for Mexico's regime and its fight against organized crime.

I. State Elections

Guerrero (January 30):

Contenders

- Manual Añorve Baños, 53, outgoing mayor of Acapulco, who is a strong ally of Manlio Fabio Beltrones and enjoys the backing of "The Better Times for Guerrero" alliance composed of the PRI; the Green Ecological Party (PVEM), a virtual family business run by the González clan;³ and the National Alliance Party (PANAL), founded in 2005 by one of the most powerful union leaders in the Americas, Gordillo Morales.
- Ángel Aguirre Rivero, former PRI interim governor (1996-98), who is supported by "Guerrero Nos Une" ("Guerrero Unites Us") coalition comprised of the PRD; the leftist Workers Party (PT) and the Convergencia Party (PC), both of which have joined forces with the messianic Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), a populist who still claims that fraud produced his thin "loss" to Calderón and continues to barnstorm the country as its "legitimate president."
- Marcos Efrén Parra Gómez, mid-50s, former PAN mayor of Taxco (1996-99), state coordinator for Calderón's campaign, and an official with the Mexican Social Security Institute.

Analysis: This race pits two PRI dinosaurs against each other. Aguirre Rivero, whom Peña Nieto initially endorsed, dropped out of his party's race at the eleventh hour when it became evident that he could not win its nomination. He resurfaced as the PRD-PT-PC contender. Both men have blemished political records: the former replaced as governor his ally Rubén Figueroa Alcocer,⁴ who was forced to resign in mid-1995 in the wake of the Aguas Blancas massacre in which 17 protesting peasants

² . Senator Beltrones, one of the nation's most savvy politicians and a rival of Peña Nieto's for the presidency, could have won the PRI leadership post had he declared his candidacy in mid-2010; however, he was blindsided by Peña Nieto's ability to mobilize support for Moreira, especially among recently elected governors.

³ . Jorge González Torres, a former PRI activist, founded the party in 1991; his son, Sen. Jorge Emilio González Martínez, known as the "El Niño Verde" ("The Green Child"), now controls the non-ideological PVEM, which enters alliances to advance its economic and political interests.

⁴ . The notorious Figueroa has cast his lot with Añorve Baños.

were killed and 21 injured. The latter, as mayor of Acapulco, has seen the so-called “Pearl of the Pacific” suffer acute pollution, ubiquitous street crime, and escalating narco-violence. On January 8, 2011 gunmen killed 25 people in Acapulco, decapitating 15 of the victims.

A poll published on January 24 in *El Universal* newspaper found Aguirre Rivero (50 percent) leading his cousin, Añorve Baños (43 percent), with Parra Gómez far behind (7 percent). In his race to succeed Calderón, Peña Nieto faces a win-win situation in Guerrero. Although Aguirre Rivero competed as an opposition candidate, he profited from EPN’s early endorsement and will throw his weight behind the Mexico State governor next year;⁵ Añorve Baños, for whom EPN campaigned in the run-up to the January 30 contest, will back his party’s presidential nominee.⁶

Meanwhile, the two camps are exchanging charges. Aguirre Rivero’s team claims that the PRI mayor of Chilpancingo, the state capital, was involved in thrashing his campaign workers and supplying public vehicles to Añorve Baños operators. For their part, Añorve Baños’ cadres accuse rivals of illegally distributing a plastic card or “*la cumplidora*,” (roughly “the fulfillment”), which supposedly entitles recipients to social benefits.⁷ They also accused the PRD of murdering the PRI’s representative in the small town of El Paraíso on January 24, according to *CNN Mexico*.

Baja California Sur (February 6: Governor, 21 state legislators, and 5 mayors):

Gubernatorial Contenders

- Luis Armando Díaz, mid-40s, former secretary of government; backed by the extremely unpopular outgoing governor Narciso Agúndez Montaña, the PRD, and the PT.
- Marcos Antonio Covarrubias Villaseñor, 43, federal deputy elected by the PRD who accepted the nomination of “The Alliance is With You” comprised of the PAN and the local, leftist Party of the Socialist Revolution (PRS).
- Ricardo Barroso Agramont, 30, former PRI state president and grandson of former Governor Félix Agramont Cota, who is running under the banner of “United for Baja California Sur” comprised of the PRI and the PVEM; on January 12, Martín Inzunza Tamayo, nominee of the Convergencia Party threw his modest support to Barroso.
- Blanca Esthela Meza Torres, 54, Teacher, activist in the SNTE, and endorsed by PANAL.

Analysis: PRD Governor Narciso Agúndez Montaña has presided over a regime suffused with labor controversies, nepotism, and narco-trafficking. Overwhelming local opposition greeted his attempt to impose as his successor Government Secretary Luis Armando Díaz. Major publications have linked the shadowy Armando Díaz, allegedly born in El Salvador, to Teodoro “El Teo” García Simental. El Teo, who was arrested near the southern tip of the state where his gang received planeloads of drugs to smuggle into the U.S. border, stands accused of murdering 300 foes, many of whom he beheaded, hung their bodies from bridges, or dissolved in caustic soda. He took hefty ransom payments from the families of kidnapped Tijuana entrepreneurs.

In light of the blatantly venal Agúndez Montaña administration, the PAN selected Covarrubias, who leads the field in recent opinion surveys: in early December, GEA-ISA found Covarrubias (44 percent) ahead of Diaz (33 percent), Barroso (20 percent), Meza (1.5 percent), and Inzunza (1.5 percent); and a Testa Marketing poll released in early January mirrored these results: Covarrubias (47 percent), Díaz (23percent), Barroso (14 percent), Meza (3 percent), and Inzunza (1 percent)—with 7 percent not responding.

Former Governor Leonel Cota Montaña, an ally of López Obrador, resigned from the PRD—in part, because he crossed swords with Agúndez Montaña, his cousin, whom he placed in the governorship and subsequently attempted to manipulate. Specifically, Cota Montaña unsuccessfully sought the PRD nomination for outgoing Los Cabos mayor, René Núñez Cosío. Also vying for the candidacy was Cota Montaña’s sister, retiring La Paz mayor Rosa Delia Cota Montaña, who reportedly had stashed some \$380,000 in a San Diego bank and was involved in questionable financial schemes.⁸

⁵ . This situation is analogous to 2010 gubernatorial elections where a former *prístas* won thanks to opposition backing. For instance, Peña Nieto entourage expects the new state executives in Sinaloa (Mario “Malova” López Valdés) and Oaxaca (Gabino Cué Monteagudo) to line up behind its candidate.

⁶ . Anove Baños twice visited Toluca to curry favor with EPN.

⁷ . Jesús Guerrero, “Acusa PRD a Edil de agresión a líder,” *Reforma*, January 18, 2011; “Ven delito de Aguirre con reparto de tarjeta,” *Reforma*, January 17, 2011.

⁸ . Pedro Juárez Mejía, “Investigan a Hermana de Cota Montaña en BCS, exige PANAL,” *La Crónica*

After Agúndez Montaña rebuffed this suggestion, Cota Montaña obtained the PRI-PANAL nomination for the mayorship of Los Cabos, a tourist Mecca where the ex-governor has lucrative investments in real estate and tourist facilities.

Coahuila (July 3: Governor and 25 state legislators):

Gubernatorial Contenders

- **PRI:** Rubén Moreira Valdés, 47, brother of outgoing governor and the nominee of the PRI, PANAL, PVEM, Social Democrats, and local Primer Coahuila Partido.
- **PAN:** Guillermo Anaya Llamas, 42, Senator, and former federal deputy, state legislator, and mayor of Torreón who will seek to form a coalition.

Analysis: Coahuila is a bastion of PRI strength. The outgoing state executive not only overcame mounting narco-trafficking (especially in the Torreón and the Laguna region), and the naming of public projects for family members to choose his brother Rubén to succeed him. Respondents to a 2008 survey named him, along with his counterparts in Sonora and Colima, as one of the most trusted governors in the nation. Five of 10 individuals interviewed said that, if he were their neighbor, they would leave the keys to their houses with him.⁹

He succeeded by spending lavishly on highly publicized programs in community development, senior citizens' care, recreation, transportation, and education as part of "The Government of the People," as he labeled his regime. His brother Rubén took charge of organizing the PRI by issuing plastic credentials to party members, which earned them holiday gifts, birthday greetings, access to concerts, and other benefits. Poor *priistas* received cards with which they could buy groceries, clothing, and other necessities. A former teacher, the governor earmarked 2,157,000 pesos (\$180,000) for the "*Seguro Escolar*" program, which provides health insurance to one million students, teachers, administrators, and other educational personnel. This initiative won praise from his SNTE leader Gordillo, who sometimes looked askance at the governor's appointments.¹⁰

When PAN legislators chastised him for "populism" and "disdain for democracy," he accused three of their leaders—Senator José Guillermo Anaya Llamas, Senator Ernesto Saro Boardman, and then-PAN National President Manuel Espino Barrientos—of links to drug cartels. Although refuted by federal authorities, such charges epitomized his hard line toward the National Action Party that he has toughened since becoming PRI president.

At his direction, Coahuila's legislature became the only one in the nation to reject a national political reform, which required unanimous support of the states.

The governor sought to project the image of an impeccable father and faithful husband. Yet in October 2006, he divorced Irma Guerrero Prado and three months later proposed to Eréndira Loza Contreras, a sub-secretary of education. The pliable state legislature played cupid by reducing from two years to one the period between divorce and remarriage. Then, in December 2007, the governor married Vanessa Guerrero Martínez in a lavish ceremony witnessed by former President Carlos Salinas, Senator Beltrones, and former Mexico City acting mayor Rosario Robles Berlanga, and *EL Universal* president Juan Francisco Ealy Ortiz, among others. The nuptials took place in the flower strewn, candle-lit ruins of the St. Bernard mission, just south of the border town of Piedras Negras.

The groom displayed his fancy dance steps at the wedding, just as he does at public events. Such flashiness appeals to the populace, as does Moreira's use of colloquial expressions. When Mexico City suspended scholarships to students in Saltillo, he said: "*Qué poca madre tiene la Federación*"—in essence, "To hell with the Federal Government."

Mexico State (July 3: Governor):

Possible Contenders (Registration is open)

www.cronica.com.mx/nota.php?id_notas=343260; and Claudia Benassini Félix and Arturo Caro Islas, *Medios Mexicanos*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, January 4, 2011.

⁹ The Gabinete de Comunicación Estratégica carried out the "Encuesta Nacional 2008, Gobierno, Sociedad y Política"; see "Moreira entre los gobernadores más confiables," *El Universal*, June 5, 2008.

¹⁰ Gordillo, who seeks total control over public education, was not amused when the governor placed his siblings in key educational posts: (1) Carlos Ariel Moreira Valdés at the head of SNTE's Local 5 in Saltillo before taking over Local 38 in Torreón; (2) Rubén as subsecretary of educational planning and secretary of Public Education and Culture; and (3) Elisa Moreira Valdés as director of teacher pensions and retirements in the secretariat of Public Education and Culture

Analysis: This is the “mother of all elections” in 2011. As mentioned earlier, a PAN-Left coalition could give the PRI and its allies a run for their money and, possibly, derail Peña Nieto’s juggernaut. In late January, the most likely anti-PRI nominees were PAN’s Felipe Bravo Mena, 57, a veteran politician who most recently functioned as Calderón’s private secretary, and the PRD’s erstwhile interim DF Mayor (2005-06), Senator Alejandro Encinas Rodríguez, 56.

Many PRI foes savor an alliance that would mobilize middle-class votes from PAN’s “blue corridor” around Mexico City (Huixquilucan, Tlalnepantla, and Naucalpan, etc.) plus Metepec and Toluca with the PRD’s “yellow corridor” (Chalco, Nezahualcóyotl, Iztalupa, etc.) to defeat Peña Nieto’s dauphin. Such a setback, they reason, would slow the governor’s momentum toward the presidency, encourage Beatriz Paredes, Manlio Fabio Beltrones, or even Moreira Valdés to toss their hats into the ring, and pave the way for a member of the PAN or PRD, possibly as a coalition figure, to prevent the PRI’s come-back.

Rumors abound that Peña Nieto’s detractors might turn to an independent candidate. Often mentioned are Dr. Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez, the distinguished rector of Mexico’s National Autonomous University (UNAM) from 1999 to 2007, and enormously successful businessman Alejandro Martí, who founded the SOS anti-crime foundation after his 14-year-old son was kidnapped and killed in 2008. Yet, De la Fuente does not reside in Edomex, and Martí has absolutely no experience in the electoral arena.

Josefina Vázquez Mota, 50, a PAN leader in the Chamber of Deputies and a former cabinet member, would make an attractive compromise. She has repeatedly demurred in hopes of becoming her party’s presidential competitor.

Although the PAN and PRD party chiefs favor a coalition, a medley of factors militates against such a gambit. First, Encinas, a devotee of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, is unpopular with the Mexico State PRD President Luis Sánchez Jiménez and other state party notables. He is also anathema to most *panistas*. After all, he still refuses to recognize Calderón as the nation’s legitimate president. Opponents claim that the Encinas also fails to satisfy the five-year residency requirement to seek the statehouse.¹¹

Second, Bravo Mena raises hackles on the Left because of his conservatism and resolute devotion to Catholicism. Among other posts held, he was Mexico’s envoy to the Vatican from 2005 to 2008.

Third, López Obrador, who begrudgingly backed several PAN-Left alliances last year, is totally opposed to such a strategy in Edomex. He can block the entry of the Workers’ Party (PT) and Convergencia Party (PC) into such an arrangement. The victory of a leftist in Edomex would further deflect attention from AMLO, while attenuating the influence of a man who believes he has been called to uplift the *jodidos* (abused ones).¹²

Fourth, ex-President Carlos Salinas (1988-94), who advises Peña Nieto, may still exert influence over the PT and PC. He financed the creation of the Workers’ Party in 1990 to siphon votes from the PRD, and he named Dante Delgado Rannauro, now a senator and Convergencia big shot, to the governorship of Veracruz (1988-92).

Finally, at the behest of the Edomex governor, the state legislature passed the so-called “Peña Law,” which prohibits multiple parties from each putting up a common candidate. The measure, supported by the PRI, PVEM, PANAL, Convergencia, and Social Democratic parties and opposed by the PAN and PRD, makes it virtually impossible to defeat the PRI without forming a coalition behind a single nominee.

In the traditional style of the revolutionary party, EPN is playing his cards close to his vest regarding his choice of the PRI standard-bearer. Five names dominate most short lists:

- Eruviel Ávila Villegas, 40, mayor of Ecatepec, a city of one million contiguous to the D.F. and a formidable campaigner;
- Alfredo Mazo Maza, 35, mayor of Huixquilucan whose father and grandfather governed the state;
- Ricardo Aguilar Castillo, 40, state party president, who is an excellent political operative;
- Luis Videgaray Caso, 42, MIT-educated technocrat close to former Finance Secretary Pedro Aspe Armella; a member

¹¹ . As in other states, governors wield great influence with electoral authorities. It would be in EPN’s interests to encourage the Mexico State Electoral Institute (IEEM) to register the candidacy of Encinas, who did unsuccessfully sought the Edomex governorship in 1993.

¹² . See George W. Grayson, *Mexican Messiah: Andrés Manuel López Obrador* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

of EPN's inner circle;¹³ and chairman of the Budget Committee in the Chamber of Deputies; and

- Ernesto Nemer Álvarez, 49, leader of the Edomex state legislature.

In the absence of a PAN-Left amalgam, any of these men could succeed Peña Nieto. One might bet on Nemer whose major liability is his links to former governor Emilio Chuayffet Chemor (1993-95), who is not close to EPN. At the same time, Chuayffet could bring into Peña Nieto's entourage, the extremely capable and highly respected César Camacho Quiroz, who governed the state between 1995-99.

Although a terrific vote-getter, Ávila Villegas lacks the upper-middle class, European background that the Mexico State establishment prizes, as the late Governor Mario Ramón Beteta confided to me during one of our many conversations.

Mazo Maza, has the reputation as a "*Junior*"—that is, a young man who likes the fast lane.

Aguilar Castillo, in the words of Edomex-watchers, needs seasoning and is not yet tough enough; and

Videgaray, who would make an ideal nominee, seems destined to head a top economic ministry should Peña Nieto garner the presidency. In such a case, he would have to vacate the governorship after little more than a year.

Nayarit (July 3: Governor, 30 state legislators, and 20 mayors):

Possible gubernatorial competitors

- PRI: Senator Raúl Mejía González, 58, former mayor of Tepic and brother-in-law of outgoing Governor Ney González Sánchez.
- PRI: Senator Gerardo Montenegro Ibarra, 44, former Federal Deputy and Secretary-General of Local 20 of the SNTE
- PAN: Deputy Ivideliza Reyes Hernández, 32, founded PAN in Yesca where she was elected mayor.
- PRD: Martha Elena García de Echevarría, 65, ex-wife of the enormously wealthy former governor, entrepreneur Antonio Echevarría Domínguez (1989-2005)
- PRD: José Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo, 46, his party's leader in the Chamber of Deputies and an outspoken advocate in favor of nacro-Deputy Godoy Toscano's holding his congressional seat.

Analysis: Once a quiet, peaceful Pacific Coast state—a "Mexican Switzerland," in the view of one analyst--wedged between Sinaloa and Jalisco, Nayarit has become a killing field as the Sinaloa Cartel fends off its enemies. In addition, corruption suffuses the regime of Ney Gonzalez, who mainly governs from the Pacific resort of Nuevo Vallarta. Still, the governor controls the PRI machinery and is expected to deploy it in behalf of his brother-in-law Senator Mejía González. Two developments could impede such an anointment: SNTE leader Gordillo rolling up her sleeves in behalf of Montenegro Ibarra; or the PAN, which possesses one deputy seat (Ivideliza Reyes Hernández) allying with Deputy Martha Elena García de Echeverria, who is flush with resources. The PRD's Acosta Naranjo, whose already shadowy reputation has worsened over his support for Julio César Godoy Toscano, whom the Attorney General's Office has accused of ties with La Familia Michoacan drug cartel and money laundering. Acosta Naranjo has said that he would endorse Garcia de Echevarría if she had the most support. There is no model candidate competing for the governorship; yet, popular antipathy for the corruption and drug gangsterism under González Sánchez combined with the possibility of an opposition alliance could prove vexing for the PRI.

Michoacán (November 13: Governor, 40 state legislators, and 113 mayors):

Possible Gubernatorial Contenders

- PRI: Víctor Manuel Silva Tejada, mid-50s, president of the Association of ex-presidents of the PRI's State Committee;

¹³ . Other members of the inner circle include former Governor and political mentor Alfredo del Mazo Mazo González, Private Secretary Erwin Lino Zárate, Government Secretary-General Luis Miranda Nava, and Social Communications Director David López Gutiérrez; at the penumbra of this inner circle are Ernesto Nemer and Ricardo Aguilar.

former federal deputy; close to Peña Nieto;

- **PRI:** Fausto Vallejo y Figueroa, 61 , thrice mayor of Morelia, the state capital; studied in France; lives a relatively austere life;
- **PAN:** Luisa María “Cocoa” Calderón Hinojosa, 54 , entered politics before her brother, the president; has held seats in the Senate, Chamber of Deputies, and state legislature; considered to belong to conservative wing of the party, but has maverick tendencies; bore a child out of wedlock whose father was a Polish member of the Solidarity Movement.
- **PRD:** Senator Silvano Aureoles Cornejo, 45, former federal deputy identified with campesinos and indigenous communities via the Unión Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autónomas (UNORCO); not a good campaigner; and
- **PRD:** Enrique Bautista Villegas, early-50s, state legislator; former government secretary for Governor Lázaro Cárdenas Batel (2002-2008); economist; aguacate exporter; early PRD member who ran unsuccessfully for the PRD gubernatorial nomination against incumbent Leonel Godoy Rangel; friendly with the Cárdenas family.

Analysis: In recent years, Michoacán has endured a hair-raising surge in drug-related murders. La Familia Michoacána, a criminal syndicate specializing in importing precursor drugs and manufacturing and selling methamphetamines into the U.S. market via Baja California and Sonora, has become a virtual parallel government in many municipalities of the *Tierra Caliente*.¹⁴ Exacerbating the violence has been La Familia’s no-holds-barred battle against the even more blood-thirsty Zetas for control of the port of Lázaro Cárdenas, a major entry point for drugs.

Evidence that the state executive’s half-brother, Godoy Toscano, is heavily involved with La Familia has spurred a drive to oust him from Congress. This cause célèbre has damaged Governor Leonel Godoy’s reputation, and his endorsement of any candidate to succeed him would be “the kiss of the vampire.” Thus, he is not overtly campaigning for his presumed favorite Senator Aureoles Cornejo. The Cárdenas clan, one of the country’s most powerful political families, may back Bautista Villegas in the state that gave birth to the PRD. Many *perredistas* hope that former Governor Lázaro Cárdenas Batel, who has been conducting research in Washington, D.C., will accept the PRD national presidency to bring cohesion to what is less a political organization than a collection of tribes.

President Calderón’s sister, Luisa María has made clear her intention to seek the PAN nomination for the statehouse. She is a seasoned politician, a respected office-holder, and a superb campaigner. The problem is her brother’s sagging popularity. As is the case with other candidates, she must continually worry about assassination, a growing threat to Mexico’s politicians.¹⁵

Assuming Peña Nieto’s train is accelerating in November, he will determine the PRI’s nominee. His reported choice is Víctor Manuel Silva Tejeda; still, Morelia’s extremely popular mayor, Fausto Vallejo y Figueroa, has been currying favor with the Edomex governor.

The dynamics of the preceding contests, the standing of Calderón later in the year, the evolving economic picture in this poor state, the activities of La Familia and other cartels complicate the panorama in Michoacán. In the final analysis, the PRD, which commands the state’s most formidable party structure, will be the party to beat.

II. Impact of State Elections on the 2012 Presidential Contest

Success in winning the Edomex gubernatorial face-off would impel Peña Nieto’s drive for Los Pinos. Although power has flowed to governors during the Vicente Fox (2000-06) and Felipe Calderón (2006-12) administrations, Mexico’s Executive Branch exerts enormous influence, especially if legislators resonate with the president. The inability of PAN chief executives to cut deals with the PRI represents one of their most salient shortcomings. If elected, EPN should benefit from a PRI-dominated Congress. The likelihood of his being more effective than his predecessors has swollen the ranks of his supporters. Governors and interest groups that back his candidacy appear in Figure 1 and 2.

¹⁴ . This region, which embraces the Southern half of the state, is contiguous to Colima, Jalisco, Guerrero, and Mexico State; it is known for producing sorghum, melons, mangos, sugarcane, lemons, and marijuana; see, George W. Grayson, *La Familia Drug Cartel: Implications for U.S. Mexican Security* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010).

¹⁵ . In addition to the PRI candidate for governor of Tamaulipas, 11 mayors were killed during the first 10 months of 2010; see Anne-Marie O’Connor and William Booth, “Mexican Mayors Becoming Casualties of Drug Wars; Many Towns without Leaders,” *Washington Post*, October 3, 2010. The total of mayors killed in 2010 reached 14—with at least three executed in the first two weeks of January 2011; see, Nick Valencia, “Three Mayors Killed so Far this Year,” *CNN*, January 15, 2011.

Figure 1: Relative Closeness of Selected Governors/Governors-Elect to Enrique Peña Nieto

State	Governor	#1	#2	#3
Aguascalientes	Carlos Lozano de Torre		X	
Campeche	Fernando Ortega Bernés		X	
Coahuila	Rubén Moreira Valdés (overwhelming favorite to win July 3 election)	X		
Colima	Mario Anguiano Moreno		X	
Durango	Jorge Herrera Caldera	X		
Guerrero	Manuel Añorve Baños or Angel Aguirre Rivera	X (No matter the winner)		
Hidalgo	Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong Francisco Olvera Ruiz (April 1)	X		
Nayarit	Ney González Sánchez	X		
Nuevo León	Rodrigo Medina de la Cruz	X		
Oaxaca	Gabino Cué Monteagudo (won as anti-PRI candidate)			X
Puebla			X	
Quintana Roo	Roberto Borge Angulo (April 5)	X		
San Luis Potosí	Fernando Toranza Fernández	X		
Sinaloa	Mario López Valdés		X	
Tamaulipas	Egidio Torre Cantú	X		
Veracruz	Javier Duarte de Ochoa	X		
Yucatán	Ivonne Ortega Pacheco	X		
Zacatecas	Miguel Alonso Reyes	X		

Based on author's interviews with Edomex watchers, January 5 to 12, 2011.

Figure 2: Important Players Who Support Gov. Enrique Peña Nieto

Organization/Group	Key Contact (S)	Position
Roman Catholic Church	Mons. Carlos Aguiar Retes	Bishop of Texcoco and President of the Mexican Episcopal Conference (CEM)
	Mons. Francisco Robles Ortega	Cardinal of Monterrey
	Mons. Onésimo Cepeda Silva	Bishop of Ecatepec
Jewish Community	Dr. David Korenfeld Federman	Secretary of Water and Public Works (Edomex); former mayor of Huixquilucan (2003-06)
Greek Orthodox Community/Lebanese Community	Orthodox Archbishop Antonio Chedraoui	
Televisa	Emilio Azcárraga Jean	Chief Executive
Teachers' Union (SNTE)	Elba Esther Gordillo Morales	"Moral Leader"
Oil Workers' Union (STPRM)	Carlos Romero Deschamps	Secretary General
Chamber of Deputies (approximately 100 members)	Francisco Rojas Gutiérrez	Leader of PRI Deputies
	Luis Videgaray Caso	Chairman of Budget Committee
Senate	Carlos Jiménez Macías and approximately 15 more	
PRI's Popular Sector (CNOP)	Emilio Gamboa Patrón	Secretary-General
PRI's Labor Sector (CTM)	Deputy Armando Neyra Chávez	Secretary-General of the Union of Bottling Workers of the Mexican Republic (STERMCTM)
PRI's Peasant Sector (CNC)	Senator Heladio Ramírez López	Former Governor of Oaxaca (1986-92) and ex-leader of the CNC
Business Leaders in Edomex	Consejo Coordinador Empresarial del Estado de Mexico (Virtually all major business interests in the state)	Francisco Funtanet Mange, President
Business Leaders at National Level	Carlos Hank Rhon Many others	Chairman of Board, Grupo Financiero Interacciones

Former Governors	Natividad González Parás Jesús Murillo Karam Juan S. Millán Lizárraga Eugenio Hernández Flores Arturo Montiel Rojas and other former governors of Edomex	Nuevo León Hidalgo Sinaloa Tamaulipas
Former Presidents	Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-94) Vicente Fox Quesada, an ex-PAN chief executive (2000-06), who has crossed swords with Calderón, has openly praised Peña Nieto, who publicly visited Fox's Guanajuato ranch "to seek advice" on social programs	An important behind-the-scenes participant in EPN's campaign
Media Consultants	Liebano Sáenz Ortiz and Federico Berrueto Pruneda	Gabinete de Comunicación Estratégica (GCE)

Peña Nieto benefits from divisions within both the National Action Party and the Left. The PAN is torn between Calderón-style moderates and traditionalists, who resent the president's coziness with stalwarts in such PRI corporatist groups as the SNTE Teachers' Union and the STPRM Petroleum Workers' Union not to mention the quest to strike deals with the Left. In the recent election for the party's 40-member National Executive Committee, *calderonistas* won 19 seats and conservatives picked up 13 seats. Secretary General Cecilia Romero Castillo wasted no time in rejecting an accord with Encinas. "We must have a PAN candidate for the Government of Mexico State with or without an alliance. In short, this is my intention and conviction."¹⁶

In January Calderón shuffled his cabinet with the apparent intent of promoting the presidential candidacy of Finance Secretary Eduardo Cordero Arroyo, 42; meanwhile, political operator Juan Molinar Horcasitas stepped down as Secretary of Communications and Transportation, presumably to coordinate Cordero's campaign. Two Cordero allies were elevated to cabinet portfolios: Dionisio Pérez Jácome (Finance) and José Antonio Meade (Energy).¹⁷

Other possibilities for the PAN nomination are Deputy Vázquez Mota, Social Development Secretary Heriberto Félix Guerra, 50, Labor Secretary Javier Lozano Alarcón, 48, Education Secretary Alonso Lujambio Irazábal, 48, and Senator Santiago Creel Miranda, 56. Although Creel fares best in opinion polls, he lost the presidential nomination to Calderón in 2006 and there is bad blood between the two men. Extreme conservatives are touting the possible candidacy of Jalisco Governor Emilio González Márquez, who insists that the distribution of condoms inspires promiscuity.

A wild card would be the entry of former Senator Diego "El Jefe Diego" Fernández de Cevallos, 69, into the contest. On December 20, 2010, the iconic PAN curmudgeon gained his freedom from kidnappers who had seized the Santa Claus-bearded politician in mid-May. The affluent politician/lawyer's family reportedly paid millions of dollars in ransom. Upon his release, he told reporters: "My attitude is well-defined, to live for the future without fear, without cowardliness, without arrogance, but with clarity of purpose and with bravery." He went on to quote Don Quixote, who said that "my ornaments are weapons; my relaxation, the fight; my bed, the hardest rock; my life, always to fight."¹⁸ In all likelihood, he won't seek the presidency, but he could run for Congress and play a pivotal role in the PAN's selection of its nominee for the Number One position.

¹⁶. Claudia Benassini Félix and Arturo Caro Islas, "Veta Cecilia Romero a Encinas," *Medios Mexicanos*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, January 2011.

¹⁷. Enrique Quintana, "Coordenadas/por qué los cambios," *Reforma*, January 17, 2011.

¹⁸. George W. Grayson, "Hope for Mexico's ruling party in 2012," *San Diego Union Tribune*, December 23, 2010.

Both Mexico City Mayor Ebrard and López Obrador seek to hoist the banner of the Left in 2012. The former's chances depend on unifying the PRD, which is riven between moderates known as "Los Chuchos" and firebrands associated with former AMLO shadowy cabinet member René Bejarano Martínez and his equally opportunistic wife Delores Padierna Luna. Should the PRD align behind Ebrard, AMLO is likely to run as the candidate of the PT or Convergencia or both.

The disarray in the PAN, accentuated by popular discontent with the Calderón and his predecessor, Vicente Fox Quesada (2000-06) have redounded to Peña Nieto's advantage, as has the internecine warfare within the Left. It is far too early to pick a winner as was evident six years ago when Calderón held low single-digit ratings in pre-presidential polls. Nevertheless, surveys emphasize that the *mexiquense* is the man to beat.

A survey taken between November 18 and 22, 2010, showed Peña Nieto as the PRI-PVEM nominee (41.9 percent) trouncing the PAN's Cordero (12.2 percent), and López the united Left's López Obrador (14.9 percent). The Mexican governor (40.2 percent) fared equally well against Cordero (12.6 percent) and the united Left's Ebrard (13.4 percent).¹⁹

In any case, the PAN and the PRD will excoriate Peña Nieto, who thus far seems shielded by Teflon. They will zero in on ties to Carlos Salinas, as well as links to his hugely corrupt predecessor, Arturo Montiel. Attacks will also focus on the Midas-sized war chest that he has amassed, his sweetheart relationship to the TELEVISA media conglomerate, government contracts awarded to cronies in the business community, and his extravagant life style epitomized in his November 2010 made-for-media marriage to glamorous television actress Angélica Rivera, known as "La Gaviota" ("The Sea Gull").

Questions will also arise about the state government's handling of "La Marquesa Massacre," which took 24 lives in cartel violence in September 2008, and the Paulette case, which involved the mysterious death of a mentally ill 4-year-old who belonged to a prominent Mexico State family.

III. The Upcoming Election and the Fight against Crime

Drug capos are scrutinizing the political scene. The slaughter of public officials, mostly mayors to this point, sends a version of the Biblical message: "'Render to Caesar [the state] the things that are Caesar's, and to God [capos] the things that are God's.'" In other words, politicians should stick to their own electoral activities and leave narco-trafficking to the cartels. The criminals displayed their chutzpah in murdering the PRI mayor of Zaragoza, Coahuila, after he had attended an event celebrating Moreira's registration for party's presidency.²⁰

Clearly, the syndicates don't want the Mexican state to "fail." Such a disaster would spark U.S. military involvement in their country. Evidence of this approach appears in the acute difference between murders in Mexican border towns and their twin cities north of the Rio Grande. Rather the cartels seek "dual sovereignty"; that is, their own regime parallel with the elected one so that can maximize their earnings without fear of interference from legitimate office-holders.²¹

Should Peña Nieto enter Los Pinos, how will his policies differ from those of Calderón, who has generally deployed large military-federal police units against criminal organizations and celebrated the capture of key Mafiosi as if they were trophies?

The PRI has repeatedly urged less reliance on the armed forces and greater emphasis on civilian law-enforcement agencies. The only problem is that Mexico has never had honest, effective national police, and Calderón's efforts to create a force from scratch have foundered. Federal lawmakers and other politicians have opposed a single federal law-enforcement agency like Chile's *Carabineros*, preferring, at best, 32 separate forces that would be under the jurisdiction of ever-more powerful governors, the country's new viceroys.²²

Vagueness has characterized Peña Nieto's anti-crime policy. He does speak in terms of establishing a special anti-narcotics police. No doubt he would rely heavily on the two most effective cartel fighting units: the Navy's Marines and the Public Security Ministry's Special Support Force, known as "Copes" and headed by General Rafael Cruz López.

In a recent essay in the *Financial Times*, the governor emphasized the imperative to implement a "National Strategy to Reduce Violence" with one specific goal: "to bring down the number of murders, kidnappings and extortions significantly in the next

¹⁹ . Household survey taken by Berumen & Associates with a 95 percent confidence level at +/- 3.2; see Carlos Ordóñez, "PRI encabeza intención de votar para 2012 con 27%," *El Universal*, December 6, 2010.

²⁰ . "Encuentran ejecutado a Alcalde Coahuila," *Reforma*, January 8, 2011.

²¹ . Historian Crane Brinton introduced the concept of "Dual Sovereignty" in his classic, *Anatomy of Revolution* (Rev. ed; New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

²² . On the expanding role of governors, see George W. Grayson, "Mexican Governors: The Nation's New Feudal Lords," Task Force Policy Papers, Center for Hemispheric Policy, University of Miami, 2010.

five years.” This plan, he wrote, embraces four pillars: (1) raising tax collections to expand health care, pensions, unemployment benefits, while introducing all-day schooling; (2) professionalizing and making more efficient the judiciary based on open trials and a police force “to replace the mishmash of small, weak and easily corruptible municipal forces whose existence simply plays into the hands of organized crime; (3) concentrating on the most turbulent communities that are most vulnerable to outbreaks of violence, as well as “areas in and around the main drug-trafficking routes”; and (4) encouraging more efficient intelligence sharing and joint information-gathering with Colombia, Peru, and the United States.

He concluded with the admonition: “The challenge of reducing violence and increasing stability to guarantee the lives and freedoms of everyone will take a long time and considerable effort. But that is no excuse for turning our backs. The only solution to the problem is rebuilding the state to make it efficient in a global and democratic context.”²³

The generalizations and clichés in his article aside, it carries none of Calderón’s blistering criticism of Washington for failure to curb both drug consumption in the U.S. and the flow of arms southward. The omission signals a readiness to continue, if not strengthen, bilateral cooperation. Not only is Peña Nieto concerned about his own country’s crisis, but also the influx of arms, narcotics, and illegal immigrants through Central America into Mexico.

Even as the Mexico State executive reaches out to Uncle Sam, the PAN administration is engaged in a “Security NAFTA.” Just as President Salinas strove to knit together the North American economies so that they could not be disentangled by a successor, Calderón is moving to cement bilateral law-enforcement and military cooperation so that they cannot be dismantled in the next sexenio. The question is: Will Mexico’s elite, which has largely been missing in action outside the North, commit itself to uplifting the “have nots” and fighting organized crime to convert Peña Nieto’s encouraging rhetoric into reality?

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²³ . Enrique Peña Nieto, “How Should Mexico Deal with Violence?” *Financial Times*, January 6, 2011.