

Mexico Bronco: the beheadment of a government

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Back in the days when Salinas was trying to lead Mexico to development and actually managed not only to convince the USA and Canada to sign the NAFTA but also to create an environment of confidence in the future, the reactionary sectors of that most discriminating society sensed the danger of losing privileges to a growing and prosperous middle class thriving outside the usual channels of power of the cacicazgos and the oligarchy of the 300 families and decided to stop the salinist project. The result almost unnoticed was, first, the assassination of Polo Uscanga, young attorney who was a strong candidate to renovate the judiciary system; then, the assassination of Ruiz Massieu, who was going to be almost certainly the head of Congress, and finally the assassination of presidential candidate Colosio, virtual winner of the future elections under the PRI regime. It was expected of the next government to continue the progressive development of a true market economy in Mexico and to follow the salinist project into the future, with a more noticeable social content. Yet a whole government was destroyed even before it ascended to office. The result was the election of Dr Zedillo and the almost immediate December Error which led to the disappearance of 80 billion dollars from the Mexican financial markets and the catastrophic negative supply shock, the unexpected devaluation of the peso, anchor of the whole model, which created the most (for many) deep depression registered in that country. As a result not only the social costs increased more than the spent political capital of the ruling party could afford, but also allowed the old power relationships based on poverty and ignorance to strengthen and instead of the expected redistribution of wealth what was observed was an increase in wealth concentration, particularly after the abuses in the banking and financial systems that originated the chain of frauds that culminated in the stock crash of 97. The PRI lost power and finally after 70 years a new party won the elections. Yet it is still uncertain whether this cahnges will actually lead to greater development. Mexico missed in a depression the years of the explosive growth of the internet and the new e-Mexico initiative seems ineffective to bridge the gap. The new government represents some of the most traditional sectors of society, the Mexican extreme right, and though it is generally considered positive for a country to have political diversity, in a system used to el acarreo (all together), the torta and tamal

operations (mass bribes to support or deny support to candidates) and the chronic ignorance of a people used to the cultura Televisa (bread and circus), plus the concentration of the old PRI segments and the also chronic frustration of the left leave doubts as to the economic and politic future of that country. The emergence of satellite parties, more interested in getting governmental funds than in representing the people, while at the same time bringing an opportunity to politicians without future in the old regime, also point to several pressures and tension that undoubtedly will make the next elections even more important and future defining than the so announced Cambio (change), which apparently til now has been unable to produce real results, but seems more like a constant struggle to convince the people that all goes well without providing the great expectations that the Salinist regime brought about. It must be brought to attention that the chiapanecan rebels are still active though keeping a low level, and apparently other sectors have taken a more activist stance. The next elections will prove to be the key to the future of a country that has lost its political identity to pursue a model internationally acclaimed but that not necessarily conforms to the character and the level of instruction of the people. Fact is police corruption and insecurity are increasing more than decreasing, and the right has, though not readily obvious, a historical vocation toward dictatorship measures. Will it become another 70 years party rule? Will it revert to the fractured PRI to grab the occasion to reaffirm itself in power even aggresively? Maybe a new, more progressive party will be able to grow and lead the country to a new redefinition of its goals and its position in a world where oil will be increasingly less important and water more and more an issue? Or will the left be able to reform itself in a world where socialism as was knows is all but dead and new approaches to a social handling of the economy are called for? Will al the states react with the sme level of maturity? Or maybe the historical fractures will lead to a new, unforeseeable future? Time will tell...