

MEXICO ALERT

Baja California Sur, Guerrero, Quintana Roo, and Hidalgo Gubernatorial Elections¹

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OVERVIEW

- As TV-watching Americans are lasered in on the Super Bowl, Mexican political *aficionados* will be scrutinizing the outcome of gubernatorial contests in Baja California Sur, Guerrero, and Quintana Roo on Sunday—with the election for the Hidalgo statehouse set for February 20.
- The outcome of these important face-offs will influence the strategy and leadership of the major political parties—the PRI, the PRD, and the PAN—that will select new presidents in a few weeks.
- Aspirants to succeed President Vicente Fox are especially interested in the fiercely fought Guerrero showdown. The PRI's Roberto Madrazo wants to keep this conflict-ridden state in his party's column, while Mexico City mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador is eager to demonstrate that PRD-backed candidates can wrestle states away from the PRI.
- In accord with a recent trend, the outcome of several of the February races—particularly, in Guerrero and Quintana Roo—could be decided by the nation's highest electoral court, known as the TRIFE. Even before the lawyers file their briefs, there is a chance of post-election violence in Guerrero and, possibly, in areas of Quintana Roo.

Introduction

Mexico's politicians are in perpetual motion. The three major political parties—the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the National Action Party (PAN), and the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD)—will select new presidents in late winter or early spring 2005.

Contenders to succeed Vicente Fox Quesada in *Los Pinos* presidential residence are seeking to obtain their parties nominations. PRI president Roberto Madrazo Pinto is vying against Senator Enrique Jackson Ramírez and several governors, including Arturo Montiel Rojas (Mexico State) and Manuel Ángel Nuñez Soto (Hidalgo).

In the PAN, Government Secretary Santiago Creel Miranda has squared off against former energy secretary Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, Deputy Francisco Barrio

Terrazas, and former environmental secretary Alberto Cárdenas Jimenez. In the leftist-nationalist PRD, three-time unsuccessful candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas is challenging Mexico City mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Even as López Obrador positions himself for the presidential showdown, he faces the threat of being stripped of his political immunity through a congressional process known as the "*desafuero*." This

¹ Among those who provided valuable assistance to the author are Deputy Samuel Aguilar Solís of the PRI, Lic. Pablo Enriquez of the PAN, former senator Cuauhtémoc Sandoval Ramírez and former deputy Guillermo Flores Velasco of the PRD, Professor Oscar Aguilar Asencio, Lic. Fred Alvarez Palafox, Lic. Manuel Bravo de la Vega, Lic. María Emilia Farías, ASERTUM director general Jorge Alejandro Rojas Torres, and *Reforma* newspaper's star researcher Lic. Guillermo Suárez Santana. This analysis would not have seen the light of day without the extremely helpful guidance and advice of Armand Peschard-Svedrup, director of the CSIS Mexico Project, and his incomparable associate Sara Rioff.

action against him arose because the populist mayor allegedly violated a judicial order against constructing a roadway to a hospital in the upscale Santa Fe area of Mexico City. If the *desafuero* prospers, Attorney General Rafael Macedo de la Concha will press charges against López Obrador; a conviction would bar his pursuing the presidency.

In a warm-up for the 2006 contest, the major parties are also seeking to capture the Mexico State governorship on July 4, 2005. This state not only boasts more voters than any other (8,616,791), but it represents a microcosm of the country—with large cities, middle-

class suburbs, blue-collar neighborhoods, shantytowns, large ranches, peasant farms, and indigenous communities.

Yet four elections precede the Mexico State face-off. These are the hotly contested races in Baja California Sur, Guerrero, and Quintana Roo on February 6. Two weeks later voters will go to the polls in the PRI stronghold of Hidalgo. This *Hemisphere Focus* concentrates on these four elections.

BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR

Elections: Feb. 6: governor, 15 state legislators, and 5 municipal governments
Inauguration of governor: April 1

Incumbent: Leonel Cota Montaño (PRD): born April 14, 1956, Santiago, BCS

Registered voters: 308,919 (51.74% men; 48.26% women); 0.46% of national total (Oct. 2004)

Socioeconomic Sketch of the State

Although its population is small, Baja California Sur has prospered, thanks in large measure to a healthy fishing industry, a plethora of world-renowned tourist resorts such as Cabo San Lucas, and a reputation as the “world’s aquarium.” The state’s relative isolation has also made it a favorite destination for meetings sponsored by international organizations. Tens of thousands of Americans have acquired land and houses in the state, which has hundreds of miles of coastline. “For sale” signs abound, English is widely spoken, and the dollar is used as readily as the peso. After all, Baja California, which was cocooned from the outside world until the government paved a road down the peninsula in the 1970s and 1980s, is more accessible by land for Americans than Mexicans. Although pockets of poverty exist, revenues generated by tourism and new residents have produced jobs, improved the standard of living, and ensured the state one of the highest literacy rates in the nation. If the experience with Acapulco and Cancún is any guide, uncontrolled growth will strain the state’s social fabric and endanger its fragile ecosystem. Speaking in October 2003, Alfonso Gavito, director of a cultural institute in La Paz, the state capital, said, “It’s like 20 years of changes have happened in three months.”²

Gubernatorial Candidates

Alianza Ciudadana por Baja California—PRI-PVEM: Senator Radomiro Amaya Téllez. Born Oct. 7, 1954, Etchoja, Sonora; degree in administration (UNAM); president of the Agricultural Association of the Valley of Santo Domingo (1992-1994) and the Association of Chickpea of the Valley of Santo Domingo (1995); president of the State Sanitation Committee (1992-1996); federal deputy (1994-1997); state secretary general of Government (1999-2000); and senator (2000 to present).

“Coalición Democrática Sudcaliforniana”—PRD-Convergencia: Federal Deputy Narciso Agúndez Montaño. Born Oct. 10, 1958; degree in agricultural engineering (UABCS); candidate of the Workers Party (PT) for mayor of Los Cabos (1996); state leader of PT (1996-1999); mayor of Los Cabos (1999-2002); federal deputy (2003-present).

PAN: Luis Alberto Coppola Joffroy. Born May 29, 1948, Nogales, Arizona (naturalized Mexican citizen); degree in business administration (ITESM) with advanced studies at Harvard Business School; president and director general of an

² Quoted in Tim Weiner, “Americans Stake Claims in a Baja Land Rush,” *New York Times*, October 26, 2003 (Internet edition).

important hotel group and president of the Hotel Association of Los Cabos; vice president for tourism of the Chambers of Commerce of La Paz and Los Cabos; and president of the Patronato del Instituto Tecnológico Regional de La Paz; supporter of the Fundación para la Conservación de los Picudos, an environmental organization.

PT: Alfredo Porras Domínguez. Born Feb. 21, 1957, Ciudad Camargo, Chihuahua; member of the PRI until he jumped to the PRD with Cota Montaña in 1998; the governor named him secretary of government and official mayor of the state; mayor of La Paz (1999-2002); lost PRD gubernatorial nomination and cast his lot with the PT.

Analysis

Thanks to the state's economic growth, Governor Cota Montaña enjoys positive approval ratings from the public, investors, and the business community. Nevertheless, allegations of corruption, misspending of federal funds, and nepotism have hung like a black cloud over his administration. His penchant for nepotism crystallized in the selection of a distant cousin, Agúndez Montaña, as the PRD's gubernatorial candidate. This move so infuriated Senator Amaya—who, like Montaña, used to be a *priísta*—that he bolted the PRD to become the PRI's first external candidate for governor. Because of the nominee's kinship with the governor, PAN president Luis Felipe Bravo Mena and PAN candidate Coppola blasted the selection of Agúndez Montaña as a "hugely immoral act" that treats the people like "conejillo de indias." Its high literacy rate aside, the state boasts no large cities, which are the traditional breeding ground of the PAN. As a result, most analysts consider hotelier Coppola a token or "testimonial" candidate.

Although Amaya has picked up ground, polls have consistently given Agúndez a double-digit lead.³ Cota Montaña, who learned the political tricks of the trade as a *priísta*, will pull out all stops to ensure the victory of his hand-picked candidate—in part, because a thumping victory would bolster his chances to become the next national president of the PRD; and, in part, because he wants to give impulse to the presidential prospects of Andrés Manuel López Obrador. After all, the governor belongs to a five-member committee that is establishing a national citizens' network to advance the candidacy of Mexico City's populist mayor.

The possibility of Cota Montaña—a PRI activist until six years ago—becoming president of their party raises the hackles of many *perredista* veterans, particularly those associated with the moderate "*Chuchos*" faction. In order to place a boulder in the governor's route to the party headquarters, some malcontents may throw their support to PRI hopeful Amaya.

The PRI and PVEM have also gone on the attack against Agúndez. In late January, they brought formal charges against López Obrador for using public funds on behalf of the PRD contender.⁴ In response, Agúndez warned that activists from the D.F. and Mexico State were prepared to invade Baja California Sur on behalf of Amaya. This "red tide" ("*mareja roja*") would use, he claimed, the same kind of dirty tricks that they had employed in PRI campaigns in Tijuana and Sinaloa in 2004.⁵

These activists will have their work cut out for them inasmuch as Agúndez (50%) held a commanding lead over Amaya (31%), Coppola (11%), and Porras (8%), according to a late January poll published by the newspaper *Reforma*.⁶

GUERRERO

Elections: Feb. 6: governor; October 2: 28 state legislators and 76 municipal governments

Inauguration
of governor: April 1

Incumbent: René Juárez Cisneros—PRI (born June 8, 1956, Acapulco, Gro.)

³ Surveys by Mitofsky and Covarrubias placed Agúndez in the lead by 10 and 16 points, respectively; see, Elinio Villanueva, "Demandan a López Obrador en BCS," *El Universal*, January 25, 2005 (Internet edition).

⁴ Villanueva, "Demandan a López Obrador en BCS."

⁵ René Garner, "Prevén en BCS vigilancia extrema," *Reforma*, January 26, 2005 (Internet edition).

⁶ Reforma Group, "Aventaja el PRD de nuevo en BCS," *Reforma*, January 28, 2005 (Internet edition).

Registered voters: 2,039,173 (47.49% men; 52.51% women); 3.04% of national total

Spending limits: \$859,649 (9.8 million pesos) per candidate

Socioeconomic Sketch of the State

Although Guerrero boasts the resorts of Acapulco, Zihuatanejo, and Ixtapa, grinding poverty haunts the overwhelming majority of the state's inhabitants, especially the large indigenous community. Metlatónoc, one of the state's 78 municipalities, enjoys the dubious distinction of being the country's most "marginalized." In fact, Guerrero—along with neighboring Oaxaca and Chiapas—leads the nation in illiteracy, substandard housing, inadequate health care, malnutrition, inferior schools, and other indicia of acute underdevelopment. In the 1970s such conditions gave rise to a guerrilla movement led by Lucio Cabañas, which grew out of his Party of the Poor. The government instructed the military to suppress the uprising, resulting in the death of Cabañas. Late last year, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), singers, and writers unveiled a bust of Cabañas when inaugurating an obelisk and museum dedicated to his insurrection. Tita Radilla, a member of the Party of the Poor and daughter of an activist who disappeared 32 years earlier, lamented the continuation of "poverty, corruption, and injustices" in the state.⁷ It's not surprising that elements of the Popular Revolutionary Army (ERP) and the Insurgent People's Revolutionary Army (ERPI)—violent, well-armed, rebel organizations—operate in the state's scrublands. Not only are the poor numerous, they are also the target of physical attacks by landowners, their security guards, and police.

Gubernatorial Candidates

Alliance "Todos por el Bien de Guerrero"—PRI, PVEM, and PT: Senator Héctor Antonio Astudillo Flores. Born July 3, 1958, Chilpancingo, Gro.; law degree (UNAM); various state posts, including private secretary to the secretary-general of the government (1991-1992), secretary of government (1992-1993); state legislator (1994-1996 and 1999-2000); mayor of Chilpancingo (1996-1999); and senator (2000-present).

Alliance "Guerrero Será Mejor"—PRD, Convergencia, and Partido Revolucionario del Sur: Ex-Acapulco mayor Carlos Zeferino Torreblanca Galinda. Born March 14, 1954, Guadalajara, Jalisco; degree in accounting (ITESM); owner of Operadora Togonal; director of Canaco; founder (1987) and director (1990) of Coparmex in Acapulco; federal deputy (1994-1997); and mayor of Acapulco (1999-2002).

PAN: State Legislator Porfiria Sandoval Arroyo. Born Sept. 15, 1955, Placeres del Oro, Gro.; degree in surgery and pediatric medicine (IPN); active in the Sociedad Médica de Tierra Caliente, la Asociación de Mujeres Médicas del Estado de Guerrero; and Colegio de Médicos Cirujanos de Tierra Caliente; numerous professional awards; mayor of Arcelia, Gro.; campaign coordinator for PAN candidates for the Chamber of Deputies and governors of Guerrero; PAN national councilor; and state legislator.

Analysis

Guerrero's gubernatorial election will be the most fiercely fought of the month. Astudillo Flores enjoys the unified backing of the PRI's old-guard leadership—namely, Governor Juárez Cisneros and former governors Rubén Figueroa Alcocer and Ángel Aguirre Rivero. They reached an agreement on his candidacy in the so-called pact of Huitzucó. This accord specified that Senator Héctor Vicario Castrejón would become state party president and former deputy Manuel Añorve Baños would serve as the campaign's general coordinator.⁸ PRI president Roberto Madrazo has also backed Astudillo with personal appearances and resources. In addition, Astudillo benefits from the excellent reputation of his father, a medical doctor who worked among the poor. Another physician, PAN candidate Porfiria Sandoval Arroyo, has admitted her campaign is on life support. On January 23, she said: "Yes, the conditions are extremely difficult, and we have no real possibility [of winning], but it's certain that we are waging a strong campaign, without substantial economic

⁷ Quoted in Juan Cervantes Gómez, "Organizaciones realizan homenaje al líder guerrillero Lucio Cabañas," *El Universal*, December 3, 2004 (Internet edition).

⁸ Cuauhtémoc Sandoval Ramírez, "En el 2005, Guerrero será mayor," *El Sur*, December 24, 2004, disseminated by author, who is an active member of the PRD.

resources.”⁹

Supporters of Torreblanca point to a medley of reasons why they think their candidate will win: (1) although the standard bearer of a PRD-dominated coalition, he is a political independent at a time when parties are in bad favor with Mexican voters; (2) as a highly successful businessman, he defies the typical image of a PRD politician as a leftist firebrand; (3) he was a highly successful mayor of Acapulco, which boasts 25 percent of the state’s more than 2 million registered voters; (4) in 1999 outgoing governor Juárez Cisneros (415,877 votes) barely defeated a quirky PRD candidate, Félix Salgado Macedonia (401,635 votes), and opponents (393,325 votes) fared better than PRI candidates (376,492 votes) in 2002 local elections; and (5) the PRD is going all out to win this election to show that the party can succeed and to boost the presidential chances of Mexico City mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Former Zacatecas governor Ricardo Monreal Ávila, a member of a five-person committee established to create a national citizens’ network for López Obrador, has functioned as the PRD’s delegate to Guerrero and virtually moved to the state to assist Torreblanca.

It appears that López Obrador, who devoted himself to the Chontal Indian community in his home state of Tabasco, has garnered the attention of indigenous groups in Guerrero. On January 21, representatives of organizations that embrace Mixtecos, Nahuas, Amuzgos, and Tlapanecos in Guerrero, indicated that they would not form part of the PRI’s “green vote” this year. In a meeting with Torreblanca, they stated that theirs would be “a vote of hope” in order to “change the history of Guerrero.”¹⁰ The first reference dovetailed with López Obrador’s having labeled himself “a small ray of hope” and the Federal District “the city of hope.”

Monreal became embroiled in the “dirty war” that has characterized the run-up to the election. The PRI claims that he helped distribute some 70,000 shirts in behalf of the “Guerrero Será Mejor” candidate. The party also alleged that PRD mayors in Acapulco, Zihuatanejo, Iguala, Petatlán, Teloloapan, Chilapa, and Coyuca de Benítez have funneled public monies into Torreblanca’s war chest.

Torreblanca’s team has its own complaints. They insist that the governor used \$140,000 in state funds to purchase 20 vehicles for Astudillo’s entourage. It also argues that the PRI hired Venezuelan political consultant Juan José Rendón to provide advice to its campaign. The PRI denied hiring Rendón, who had worked for Venezuelan politicians Carlos Andrés Pérez and Hugo Chávez.

The PRD complained loudly when 20,000 members of the SNTE teachers’ union suspended classes for 100,000 students on January 21 in order to participate in a PRI rally.¹¹ At this gathering, Astudillo, who enjoys the full backing of SNTE leader Elba Esther Gordillo, promised the teachers an end-of-year bonus equal to 90 days pay and more scholarships for their students. PRD senator Demetrio Sodi de la Tijera accused Astudillo of waging “a campaign based on insulting economic gifts.”¹²

A month ago, commentators were confidently saying that Torreblanca could “win with his eyes closed.” Yet the PRD hasn’t evinced the unity enjoyed by Astudillo’s forces, and Torreblanca has spurned the party logo in favor of a “Z” on his campaign materials. At the same time, a huge influx of resources by the PRI has changed the momentum of the campaign. As a result, state PRI leader Vicario claims that his party’s candidate has overcome a 19-point deficit in public-opinion polls to overtake his opponent. This may or may not be true, but Astudillo was gaining speed coming down the home stretch. A *Reforma* poll taken in mid-January showed Astudillo (50%) with a narrow lead over Torreblanca (48%)—with 12 percent of the respondents undecided.¹³

As a result, the horse race may culminate in a photo-finish—with the loser mounting demonstrations to protest alleged

9 Quoted in Jesús Guerrero, “Reconoce PAN posible derrota en Guerrero,” *Reforma*, January 24, 2005 (Internet edition).

10 Quoted in Misael Habana and Jesús Saavedra, “Indígenas de Guerrero afirman que cambiarán la historia de la entidad,” *El Universal*, January 22, 2005 (Internet edition).

11 Only some 5,000 teachers showed up for the meeting; see, Jesús Guerrero, “Dejan por Astudillo a 100 mil sin clases,” *Reforma*, January 22, 2005 (Internet edition).

12 Quoted in Guerrero, “Dejan por Astudillo a 100 mil sin clases.”

13 Grupo Reforma, “Empatados por Guerrero,” *Reforma*, January 31, 2006 (Internet edition).

fraud. On January 26, Torreblanca asserted that the PRI had spent \$23.7 million (270 million pesos) or 30 times the legal limit for the campaign. Should “massive fraud” take place, the Guerrero Será Mejor nominee warned that the people would respond in a “virulent manner.”¹⁴

In contested outcomes last year, losing gubernatorial candidates sprinted to the Tribunal Federal del Poder Judicial de la Federación (TRIFE), the country’s highest electoral court, in hopes of reversing the results. In light of Guerrero’s tradition, post-election violence may precede the filing of legal briefs.

QUINTANA ROO

Elections:	Feb. 6: governor, 16 state legislators, and 8 local governments
Inauguration of governor:	April 5
Incumbent:	Joaquín Hendricks Díaz (PRI): born Nov. 7, 1951, Chetumal, QR
Registered voters:	620,895 (51.63% men; 48.37% women); 0.93% of national total (Oct. 2004)
Spending limits:	9.37 million pesos (\$830,000) for each coalition

Socioeconomic Sketch of the State

Tourism, agriculture, and forestry dominate the economy of Quintana Roo, which is home to Cancún, Mexico’s most visited resort city. The state’s three international airports (Cancún, Cozumel, and Chetumal) facilitate tourism, as does a four-lane highway between Cancún and Mérida, the capital of neighboring Yucatán state. The state’s ports—Isla Mujeres, Puerto Juárez, Punta Sam, Cozumel, Playa del Carmen, Chetumal, and Puerto Morelos—receive scores of ships, which accommodate 1.38 million passengers and 6 million tons of cargo annually.

Farmers and growers concentrate on raising sugar cane, jalapeño chiles, watermelons, rice, papaya, onions, mangos, bananas, tomatoes, and pumpkins. Honey is often an ancillary item. Also important is the harvesting of valuable tropical hardwood trees, the planting of chicle, and the production of natural vegetable coal.

The state’s educational, health-care, and nutrition levels slightly exceed the national average.

Gubernatorial Candidates

Alliance “Somos la Verdadera Oposición”—PAN-Convergencia: Senator Addy Cecilia Joaquín Coldwell. Born Aug. 24, 1939, Chetumal, QR; director of promotion, sales, and public relations for hotels in Cozumel (1976-1980); state president of DIF, Fonapas, and other social organizations when her brother Pedro Joaquín Coldwell served as governor (1981-1987); president of DIF in Benito Juárez (1995-1996); senator (2000-present); and, after losing the gubernatorial nomination, resigned from the PRI in Oct. 2004.

Alliance “Somos Todos Quintana Roo”—PRD-PT: Cancún mayor Juan Ignacio “Chacho” García Zalvidea. Born Feb. 15, 1957, D.F.; degree in veterinary science (UNAM); post-graduate studies at UNAM and University of Georgia; PAN federal deputy (2000-2002); and mayor of Cancún, elected on PVEM ticket (2002-present).

Alliance “Quintana Roo es Primero”—PRI-PVEM: Federal Deputy Félix Arturo González Canto. Born Aug. 23, 1968, Cozumel, QR; degree in economics (ITESM); coordinator of advisers for the Center of Economic and Financial Information at ITESM (1990); foreign trade adviser to the president of Canaco in Cozumel (1992); treasurer of Cozumel (1993-1994); director general of the State Housing Institute in Chetumal (1994); secretary general of the local government

¹⁴ Quoted in “Advierte Zeferino reacción virulenta,” *Reforma*, January 26, 2005 (Internet edition); see, also, Jorge Ramos and Juan Cervantes, “Gasta priísta millones en su campaña, acusa PRD,” *El Universal*, January 26, 2005 (Internet edition).

of Cozumel (1996-1998); mayor of Cozumel (1999-2002); various party posts, including finance secretary (1992) and state president of PRI (2002); and federal deputy (2003-present).

Analysis

Addy Joaquín Coldwell's leaving the PRI after losing the nomination complicates the task for Governor Hendricks to vouchsafe the election of his favorite son González Cantú. The PRI is the only party that boasts electoral machinery throughout the state. However, Senator Joaquín Coldwell, who is especially strong in the state capital of Chetumal, has been campaigning for six years. Her family is widely known in the state where her brother held the governorship in the 1980s. To win statewide, she must mobilize the sizeable number of *panistas* in Cancún. To do so, she has circulated campaign material in the form of a comic book that contains a picture of Joaquín Coldwell with President Fox¹⁵ from whom most PAN candidates have shied away.

PRD-PT's nominee "Chacho" García Zalvidea can expect his slice of the vote to shrink in Cancún, where he has served as an extremely controversial mayor. For instance, he inflated the city's payroll from 2,000 to 5,000 people, while spending lavishly on school supplies, medicine, and equipment for residents. In mid-July 2004, hundreds of municipal employees, angry over delays in salary payments, attacked city hall, shattering windows, battling police, and chasing the mayor from the building. The head of the local chamber of commerce said that the city was tumbling into chaos with the possibility of no services and no public safety.

Alarmed at the possible breakdown of law and order in the Caribbean's largest tourist center, the U.S. State Department and the Canadian Foreign Ministry issued a travelers warning for the city.¹⁶ Only a decision by the National Supreme Court of Justice prevented opposition members of the state legislature from booting Chacho from office on charges that he had misappropriated public funds. García Zalvidea has also lost credibility because he has stood for election as a member of three different parties: first the PAN (federal deputy), then the PVEM (mayor of Acapulco), and now the PRD-PT "Quintana Roo es Primero" alliance.

A *Reforma* poll conducted in mid-January found González Canto (46%) running ahead of García Zalvidea (29%) and Joaquín Coldwell (25%).¹⁷ If the PRI candidate's lead holds up, he will do better than Henricks Díaz whose victory margin was nine percentage points.

HIDALGO

Elections: Feb. 20: governor and 29 state legislators; Nov. 13: 84 municipal governments

Inauguration of governor: April 1

Incumbent: Manuel Ángel Nuñez Soto: born Jan. 30, 1951, Actopán, Hgo.

Registered voters: 1,545,855 (47.76% men; 52.24% women); 2.31% of national total (Oct. 2004)

Socioeconomic Sketch of the State

Its proximity to the Federal District aside, Hidalgo remains a predominately agricultural state with 61.3 percent of the population engaged in farming, raising livestock, or producing dairy products. Governor Nuñez Soto has done a masterful job attracting investment, but industry, which accounts for 15.8 percent of employment, commerce (5.7 percent), and services (11.6 percent) still lag behind the countryside in generating employment. The small city of Tula is home to an old but important Pemex oil refinery. However, the state is one of the country's leading producers of manganese, zinc, lead, copper, limestone, cement, silver, and gold.

¹⁵ Cristina Pérez, "Destaca Addy relación con el Presidente," *Reforma*, December 4, 2004 (Internet edition).

¹⁶ "The Cancún Scandal," *Mexico & NAFTA Report*, August 10, 2004 (Internet edition).

¹⁷ Grupo Reforma, "Aventaja PRI en Quintana Roo," *Reforma*, January 28, 2005 (Internet edition).

These precious metals notwithstanding, deep pockets of underdevelopment riddle the state. The 200,000 native inhabitants, who suffer a disproportionately high level of poverty, live in the Mezquital Valley, the sierra, and the Huasteca region. Mexicas, Nahuas, Otomies, and Tepehuanes dominate the indigenous communities and speak their aboriginal languages.

Gubernatorial Candidates

PRI: Federal Deputy Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong. Born Aug. 5, 1964, Pachuca, Hgo.; studied government and metropolitan and regional administration (INAP, Toluca, Mexico State); Institute of Social Sciences (UAH); electoral coordinator in the municipalities of Nicolás Flores (1985), Tlaxcoapán (1987), Yahualica (1987), and Tetepango (1988); technical secretary for the State Electoral Commission (1988-1989); PRI delegate in Huautla (1990); electoral adviser to state PRI (1990); electoral coordinator for Pachuca (1991); chief administrator of Pachuca (1991-1993); and federal deputy (2003-present).

PAN: Senator José Antonio Haghenbeck Cámara. Born June 7, 1955, Tehuacán, Puebla; degree in surgery (Universidad La Salle), as well as diploma programs in parliamentary law, federalism and reform in Mexico State, politics, and social and economic policy.

PRD: Former senator José Guadarrama Márquez. Born Dec. 16, 1948, Zimapán, Hgo.;¹⁸ studied geography (University Autónoma de Tlaxcala); joined PRI in 1967 and held numerous party posts, including official mayor, secretary general, and interim president in Hidalgo, delegate in Michoacán and Yucatán, and secretary of political operations and adjunct secretary general of the national party; undersecretary of government, and secretary de Audiencia y Acuerdo Público, and secretary general of government in Tlaxcala; mayor of Jacala, Hgo; federal deputy (1982-1985 and 1991-1994); and senator (1994-2000).

PT: Arturo Aparicio Barrios. Born July 16, 1965, Mexico City; PT state party president.

Analysis

Deputy Osorio Chong's closeness to Gov. Nuñez Soto ensured him the PRI nomination. Nuñez Soto controls the party's apparatus as did his predecessors in the statehouse, Jesús Murillo Karam (1993-1999) and Adolfo Lugo Verduzco (1987-1993). This means that the PRI nomination is tantamount to victory in Hidalgo.

The absence of major cities in Hidalgo makes the candidacy of Senator Haghenbeck a Sisyphean task.

The PRD candidacy of former senator Guadarrama raised the eyebrows of political cognoscenti in the state. As a PRI dinosaur, Guadarrama gained a reputation for corruption. He allegedly made a fortune as head of the quasi-state (paraestatal) Patrimonio Indígena del Valle de Mezquital y Huasteca Hidalguense. In this post, he "generated agrarian conflicts in order to resolve them."¹⁹ He also has a reputation for aggressively suppressing political opponents on the left.

Two factors explain the PRD's nomination of Guadarrama. First, he is rolling in money. This will enable him to run a well-financed campaign. Second, while having no chance of winning, Guadarrama should increase the PRD's vote in the state, which could help López Obrador's campaign for Los Pinos next year.

Conclusions

Several conclusions flow from this examination of the four upcoming state elections. First, PRI president Madrazo wants to continue winning elections in order to obtain his party's nomination. Since taking the party's reins in 2002, *priistas* have won 10 of 17 gubernatorial contests, while boosting their number in the Chamber of Deputies from 208 to 223 members in 2003.

¹⁸ Cristal and Acero, who write the "Buenos Días Hidalgo" column, claim that Guardarrama was born in Tijuana, Baja California; see *La Crítica Política*, January 3, 2005 (Internet edition).

¹⁹ Deputy Samuel Aguilar Solis, interviewed by author, January 13, 2005, Mexico City.

Second, Hidalgo governor Nuñez Soto is striving for a landslide for his hand-picked successor Osorio Chong. He wants to keep the statehouse in PRI hands in order to carry out ambitious projects like the Tizayuca airport, industrial, and commercial complex. Above all, he wants to revive his presidential campaign. Although extremely effective, articulate, intelligent, and cosmopolitan, the state leader has yet to reach double digits in preferences for the PRI nomination, according to public-opinion surveys.

Third, after a series of setbacks, the PRD wants to demonstrate that it can not only hold on to Baja California Sur, a state that it currently governs, but that it can wrestle Guerrero away from the PRI. With López Obrador gearing up to run for president, the PRD desperately wants to dispel the rumor that his party, while strong in the capital, has limited appeal elsewhere. Some Mexico watchers regard the Guerrero contest as a warm-up match for next year's presidential "Super Bowl"—with the major exception that Madrazo has been a player in the state, while López Obrador has remained in Mexico City.

Fourth, Cota Montaño, the outgoing Baja California Sur governor, also seeks a decisive victory for his cousin-candidate. A triumph is important to strengthen his chances to become the PRD's national president in March and, in this post, assist the march to Los Pinos of his ally, López Obrador. The moderate Chuchos and supporters of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas oppose Cota Montaño's candidacy for the leadership position. Normally, divisions in the PRD ranks in the state would militate against party unity in the upcoming gubernatorial and presidential races. However, most PRD chiefs, who see a real possibility of winning the presidency with López Obrador, seem reconciled to Cota Montaño's taking their party's helm.

Fifth, should legal problems prevent López Obrador from becoming his party's standard-bearer, the PRD may have to consider "Plan B"—namely, a substitute candidate. Former Zacatecas governor Ricardo Monreal Ávila and Deputy Manuel Camacho Solís have made no secret of their readiness to play this role. Thus, both are working hard to ensure their party's success in the upcoming gubernatorial contests—with Monreal playing an especially visible role in Guerrero.

Sixth, the TRIFE may ultimately decide the outcome of several of the February races. That parties take their post-electoral disputes to a federal electoral court rather than to the streets represents a democratic advance. It would also follow the pattern established in gubernatorial elections held last year in Oaxaca, Puebla, Sinaloa, and Tlaxcala. Still, it will be difficult to avoid violence in Guerrero if Astudillo and Torreblanca finish within several points of each other.

Finally, Guerrero and Quintana Roo may provide laboratories for a PRI experiment in how to capture the presidency. Their approach seems to be to so contaminate the electoral ambiance with negative campaigning that relatively few people cast ballots. In that case, some PRI leaders believe that participation by their hard-core supporters—the so-called *voto duro*—will allow the party's candidates to win.

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