

NEW PRESIDENT FOR MEXICO

Ricardo Beas -- June 2012

I was raised in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. In Mexico, as is well known now, when the political party PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, established 1929) reigned in Mexico, pretty much for 70 years, they won all elections, from the president of the country to the mayors of each town, with a couple of exceptions (Ernesto Ruffo Appel won the first non-PRI state governorship in Baja California in 1989).

In August of 1968, when I was 11 years old, they held state and local elections in Baja California. I remember it well because my oldest brother Pedro Octavio was assigned to a voting booth and he had been making a commotion stating, like many others I heard, that this time it seemed almost sure that the opposing political party PAN (*Partido Accion Nacional*, established 1939) would win some elections, I believe in particular for mayor of Tijuana (Luis Ernesto Clark was the candidate).

That evening I went to the voting station with my family to pick up my brother and I remember that at around the same time they closed the polling booths the electricity went out throughout the city, and I believe in other areas of the state as well. They were out for a while. As a result of that, it was determined by the state's electoral commission (in collusion with the federal government) that because there could have been possibilities of fraud that the Tijuana mayoral elections would be canceled; but there was no second round of voting, instead, they installed their own candidate, of the PRI, of course.

In the US we have two political parties, Democrats and Republicans; in Mexico, the PRI and PAN used to represent that same type of system, except that in Mexico we also had probably between 3-6 other quasi-parties whose members also appeared in voting ballots. These parties had their own candidates, but sometimes also named PRI candidates as their own.

In 1981 the Mexican peso lost its well established exchange rate of \$12.50 pesos per dollar and fluctuated between \$22 to \$70 pesos by February 1982 (at the end it went up to about \$3,000 pesos per dollar, at which point the government erased three zeros [1993, then called New Pesos], from which rate it devalued further up to today's rate of \$14 pesos per dollar). Mexico was turned into a *maquiladora*, new cheap labor, on the Mexican side of the border. Imagine the pain and suffering that resulted from the devalued purchasing power of Mexico's working class.

Finally, after the devaluation happened, it seem that the people would no longer take it and it appeared that the PRI's presidential candidate Miguel De La Madrid would loose the presidency, and thus, the PRI would loose control of the nation.

What happened? In that election for the first time that I know of the PAN did not have a presidential candidate, and all the other three to six parties also had De La Madrid as their candidate - in other words, there was no other candidate from any other party. Of course, De La Madrid won, and thus the PRI remained in control of the presidency and country until 2000.

In 2000, PAN candidate Vicente Fox easily won the presidency. How was that possible without a revolution? Look at the contrast, compare all I described above, a party that had full control of the whole country, that had done many horrible things to maintain control, and all of a sudden, on the Sunday when the presidential elections were held, at about 7:00 PM PST I saw on TV sitting PRI president Ernesto Zedillo concede that Fox had won, and the votes had not even been completely counted throughout the nation. Nobody could believe it!

As a side note, as I'm writing this blog, researching and verifying dates and info I came across some statements that said that Zedillo (PRI) "has been a leading voice on globalization." And so has Fox (PAN).

When looking at all these events from a local, as well as a global point of view it all makes perfect sense to me (you know me, New World Order view. By the way, Globalization is its synonym).

Since 9/11 (2001), the US, together with other world powers, has launched a War On Terror that has no boundaries. The US government is not only attacking people or governments that are planning on doing the US harm (or at least supposedly), but they are attacking, directly or indirectly, certain governments with the excuse of helping them become democratic (by the way, as used by me, government is not synonymous with the people it purports to represent).

How about Mexico? Although a supposed democracy, only the PRI won all elections for 70 years. Mexico needed to have an image of also being a true (sic) democratic nation, else the US would have to put them in the same list of corrupt governments abusing its citizens, and thus "entitled" for military intervention (by the way, the US also flies drones in Mexico). And with the gains from the opposing PAN candidates, those behind the PRI needed to develop a diversionary, divisive strategy of "apparent" change to be able to remain in control.

Comes in the PRD (*Partido de la Revolucion Democratica*) in 1989, a new national political party, made up of, guess who? Members of the PRI of course! It was spearheaded by Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, well established PRI member and son of PRI president Lazaro Cardenas (under the PRI predecessor party name of *Partido de la Revolucion Mexicana*). This was done to counter the national sentiment which was now turning to the PAN as a viable option to end the PRI's years of corruption. Now there would be three alternatives, three ways to divide the vote.

Unfortunately, once the PAN took the presidency, although there were some palpable changes, things seemed to continue in the same direction, at least from a macroeconomic and globalization standpoint, if not the continued sacking of Mexico's economic resources and government corruption. By the way, the PRI has always retained full control of both federal legislative bodies.

So now Mexico has three primary parties, the PRI loses to the PAN and Mexico is now in appearance a true democratic nation.

This tells me that, as in the United States, all political parties in Mexico, regardless of their apparent differences, are controlled and manipulated by the same people that control each country's economy ("supposed" differences between party policies and doctrines notwithstanding).

Coming back to our present time, it seems that the PRI is ready to take control again. Pretty much everyone I talk to on both sides of the border shows a dislike for the PRI's presidential candidate Enrique Pena Nieto and yet several news programs (notably from major TV network Televisa in Mexico and TV Azteca in the US) show him ahead of the pack. After its notorious past, could the PRI take the presidency back?

Human nature is interesting. I remember everyone saying when I was growing up in Tijuana how corrupt the PRI/government was, and yet, most of us wished we knew someone in government, preferably a relative, that could help us obtain easily government permits, even driver's licenses, or hoped that we had someone's name we could mention in case some crooked cop stopped us while driving for no reason to try to get a bribe (this also still happens, unfortunately). And many were hoping for *un hueso* (a bone), where some known politician gives you a government position so you too could assist in the sacking of public coffers.

Looking at the existing Mexican presidential candidates for the 2012 election, I don't know who I would recommend, but there has to be a national consensus, as in the US with the Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party movements, that corruption simply cannot continue on the same path, from a national level, as well as the globalization trend that Mexico is following. Governments must be held accountable to its citizens, else, we are simply serfs to be dealt with and manipulated, or eliminated.

To close let me share with you some interesting facts I found the other day while I was researching the history of the owners of Tijuana's Agua Caliente Casino in the early 1930's, courtesy of Wikipedia. It relates to this blog. Just following the money:

--- Casino Agua Caliente

The Agua Caliente Casino and Resort opened in June 1928 in the Mexican city of Tijuana, Baja California. It was a lavish resort that included a casino, spa, championship golf and tennis facilities, its own airstrip, and lots of entertainment. Stylistically, the resort was an amalgam of Mexican colonial, California mission, and neo-Islamic designs that ranged from mosaic minarets, to cozy guest bungalows, to steaming Turkish baths. It was designed by 19-year-old architect Wayne McAllister and built by Baron H. Long, Wirt G. Bowman and James N. Crofton. Some sources note the fourth partner was Abelardo L. Rodriguez, Military Commander and Governor of Baja California, and future Mexican President.

--- Abelardo L. Rodriguez

Abelardo Rodriguez Lujan, commonly known as Abelardo L. Rodriguez was the interim president of Mexico from 1932-1934. He completed the term of Pascual Ortiz after his resignation ... He also lengthened the presidential term length from four to six years.

--- Pascual Ortiz Rubio

Pascual Ortiz Rubio was a Mexican politician. He was born in Morelia, Michoacan ... He served as president from 1930 to 1932 ... However, Rubio was an ineffective leader. Alleging excessive interference in his presidency by former president Plutarco Elias Calles, whom Rubio demonstrated independence from while in office, and still seriously shaken by an attempt on his life at the very start of his mandate, he resigned the presidency on 4 September 1932. He was succeeded by interim president Abelardo L. Rodriguez.

--- Plutarco Elias Calles

Plutarco Elias Calles was a Mexican general and politician. He was president of Mexico from 1924 to 1928, but he continued to be the *de facto* ruler from 1928 to 1935, a period known as the *Maximato*. Calles is most noted for a fierce oppression of Catholics that led to the Cristero War, a civil war between Catholic rebels and government forces, and for founding the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party, or PNR), which eventually became the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which governed Mexico for more than 70 years...

The Maximato was a period in the historical and political development of Mexico ranging from 1928 to 1934. That period was named after Plutarco Elias Calles, who was known as the *Jefe Maximo* of the Revolution. Elias Calles was president in the period 1924-1928, but in the next six years, there were three presidents, all of them subordinate to a lesser or greater extent to Calles. The presidents and their respective mandates, are the following:

- Emilio Portes Gil (1928-1930), was designated by Congress to replace the president-elect Alvaro Obregon, assassinated before taking office.

- Pascual Ortiz Rubio (1930-1932), elected to complete the term but resigned.

- Abelardo L. Rodriguez (1932-1934), was designated by Congress to substitute Ortiz Rubio.

... Calles supported land reforms and promoted the ejido as a way to emancipate campesinos, but no large tracts of land were redistributed under his presidency nonetheless. Calles founded several banks in support of campesinos as well as the Banco de Mexico, Mexico's national bank.

--- Banco de Mexico

The Bank of Mexico (*Banco de Mexico*), abbreviated *BdeM* or *Banxico*, is Mexico's central bank, monetary authority and lender of last resort (RB note: as is the Federal Reserve in the US and is also privately owned). The Bank of Mexico is autonomous in exercising its functions, and its main objective is to achieve stability in the purchasing power of the national currency.

--- National Palace of Mexico

The left-hand panel is dedicated to early and mid-20th century, criticizing the status quo and depicting a **Marxist kind of utopia**, featuring the persons of **Plutarco Elías Calles**, **John D. Rockefeller**, Harry Sinclair, William Durant, **J.P. Morgan**, **Cornelius Vanderbilt** and **Andrew Mellon** as well as **Karl Marx**.

What is the relationship between these supposed US capitalists, Karl Marx and socialism? ... Something surely to think about, and another story.

Enjoy!