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## Fidel Castro Temporarily Hands Over Power to his Brother Raúl

*Ana Faya*

The night of July 31, in a surprising announcement made on official TV by Fidel Castro's aide Carlos Valenciaga, the Cuban people and the world were informed that power in Cuba was "temporarily" in the hands of Raúl Castro, the regime's official successor and Fidel Castro's brother. In the Proclamation signed by Castro at 6:22 pm, he informed the Cuban people that he suffered from gastrointestinal bleeding, brought on by stress from recent public appearances in Argentina and Cuba, and should have undergone surgery. "The operation has obliged me to take various weeks of rest, at a remove from my responsibilities and duties," he wrote (*Granma*, 1/08/06).

Although it is still too soon to arrive at conclusions, the text of the Proclamation and the circumstances surrounding the official announcement—made by Valenciaga and not by Raúl Castro, the man now officially in control of the island—raise a number of questions.

According to Cuban laws, and as Second Secretary of the Party, Minister of the Armed Forces, Vice President of the State Council and the Council of Ministers, Raúl is the successor. But, does his brother trust his leadership? Has the post-Castro era begun?

So far, Cuba's succession has been predicted to be, by many analysts, a smooth process, especially after the celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenary of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP) on July 1. New actions were taken at this meeting of top Cuban communists to strengthen the role of the CCP and that of Raúl Castro. Presided over by its First and Second Secretaries Fidel and Raúl Castro, the Plenary designated the members of a newly re-established Secretariat, and as reported by the official daily *Granma* on July 4, the meeting also underscored the role of the Party as Fidel Castro's only "worthy heir."

According to *Granma*, at the meeting Fidel Castro highlighted "the decisive role the Party must play in the current battle being waged by the nation." "The Secretariat is re-established," he said, "at the time the Party needs it most." Created in 1965, abolished by the 4<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1991 and re-established this April, the Secretariat should assist the Politburo as an executive body in the daily work of the Party and be responsible for organizing and ensuring the fulfillment of its agreements. The 12-member body will be led by Fidel Castro (who turns 80 on August 13), Raúl Castro, 75, and the party's Chief of the Organization Department of the Central Committee José Ramón Machado

Ventura, 75. Most of the remaining members are in their 40s and 50s: Esteban Lazo, Jorge Luis Sierra, Abelardo Álvarez, María del Carmen Concepción, Mercedes López Acea, Lina Pedraza, Víctor Gaute, Roberto López and Fernando Remírez de Estenoz.

In regards to Fidel Castro's succession, the Plenary adopted with a standing ovation the words delivered by Raúl Castro in a speech on June 14, when he said that "the special confidence given by the people to the founding leader of a Revolution is not transmitted, as if it were an inheritance, to those who occupy the main leadership posts in the country in the future [...]" "I reiterate what I have affirmed on many occasions: the Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution is solely and uniquely the Communist Party" as reported by *Granma* on July 4 2006. Also, in what seemed a good occasion to send a warning to those in favour of a change toward a democratic rule and also to

all internal secret aspirants to the throne, Raúl said that the CCP was the only legitimate inheritor: "That is what we are working for and that is how it will be, the rest is pure speculation, not to call it by another name" (*Granma*, 4/07/06).

It was under Fidel Castro's leadership that the CCP adopted the above mentioned changes and decisions. However, since the creation of the CCP in 1965 Castro has managed to avoid any collegial leadership while making good use of the party to portray a collective direction that never really existed. So while Fidel Castro seemed to have reinforced his brother's leadership for the near future, he also had suggested in an interview with Ignacio Ramonet a few months ago that young leaders should take over once he is no longer in power (*FOCAL POINT*, April 2006). A skilled politician and conspirator, Castro has always played with all the cards in hand, and in this case, decided to include the Cuban Communist Party's decision on his replacement.

If the Party is "the major leading power over the State and society" as is stated in the Cuban Constitution—and discussions at the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenary were based on that assumption—why then, does Castro pass power by a Proclamation read by his personal aide, young Valenciaga, rather than his brother, or any other high-ranking Party leader? A Castro reluctant to cede power repeated in the text of the document the word "provisionally" six times, and disregarded governmental structures by passing self-assigned responsibilities under his personal control, like international education, health care and energy plans, to Cuban officials who are close to him even if they have other portfolios in the government or the Party: Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister of Foreign Affairs will be in charge of the plans' funding; Machado Ventura, Chief of the Party's Organization Department will be in charge of the national and international education programs; and Carlos Lage, who is not the Minister of Basic Industries, will be in charge of the energy program.

In terms of succession, a month ago Fidel Castro was playing with cards close to his vest—he referred to his brother Raúl, to a

## MERCOSUR

The 30<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) concluded on July 21 in Córdoba, Argentina with the approval of a 43-point Joint Declaration. The admission of Venezuela—a major producer of oil and gas—as a full member of the trade bloc was of great significance. The emphasis put on social integration by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez led to the inclusion of a commitment to define a common Integral and Productive Social Agenda and to devise a Strategic Plan for Social Action in the final declaration. Calls were also made to put aside internal disputes and stand against US-backed free-market policies. At a gala dinner the previous night, Summit host President Néstor Kirchner had beckoned his fellow Mercosur partners to work on a common agenda.

Cuban President Fidel Castro, a special guest at the Summit, signed an Economic Complementation Accord with Mercosur after three years of negotiations. The accord gives Cuban products preferential access to the Mercosur market and vice versa for Mercosur products to Cuba. The accord has been regarded mainly as a political gesture since it only covers 0.17% of Mercosur's overall trade. In a speech, Castro highlighted the importance of the integration process, and suggested that Latin America should create an entity equivalent to the European Union.

In the final session of the two-day Summit Brazil took over as chair of the 5-member trade bloc. President Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva predicted that following the accession of Venezuela, Bolivia would very soon join them—alluding to Mercosur's campaign to persuade La Paz to move from associate to full member of the bloc.

Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay formed Mercosur in 1991 with the aim of creating a South American common market. Chile and Bolivia became associate members in 1996; procedures to integrate Chile as a full member were suspended after it signed a free trade agreement with the United States in December 2002.

younger generation, and expressed the importance of strengthening the role of the Communist Party. With his Proclamation of July 31, and the manner in which it was delivered to the Cuban people, it seems once again that Castro is unwilling to admit that it is over for him, and intends to remain fully in the game until the very end. Only time will tell if Raúl Castro definitely exerts full control as the successor; if the country will suffer from provisional paralysis until the final fate of Fidel Castro; or if Castro will come back and remain at the helm for some time longer but in a, most likely, diminished capacity. ■

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## The Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba: Oops, They Did It Again

*Dan Erikson*

One of the blessings of private life for former Secretary of State Colin Powell, aside from the lucrative speaking tours and the chance to spend more time with the family, must be that he is no longer obligated to lend his good name to reports like the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba. This exercise, which was first conducted on his watch during the heated presidential election campaign of 2004, resulted in a 423-page blueprint for the future of Cuba. On a political level, the report was quite successful. President George W. Bush won a narrow victory in Florida, and thus the presidency, with the support of hardliners in Miami's Cuban-American community who were enthused about the new measures. On a policy level, however, the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba fizzled—and a newly released version is intended to revive US policy just as Cuba is undergoing a political sea change.

On the evening of July 31, Fidel Castro passed power to his brother Raúl on a provisional (and perhaps permanent) basis pending the outcome of serious surgery. As a result, it is a particularly timely moment to examine what progress—or lack thereof—has been wrought by recent changes in US policy. In 2004, new US regulations to limit Cuban-American family visits to once every three years (instead of once annually) had some impact, as did cutbacks on academic, humanitarian, and religious exchanges. But these restrictions mainly hurt average Cubans, not their government. New restrictions on remittances forbid US residents from sending money to Cubans who were not direct relatives, thus keeping American dollars out of circulation in Cuba. But this too backfired, since three of the groups that the new US policy was intended to support—pro-democracy activists, small-scale entrepreneurs, and Afro-Cubans—found themselves further constrained by a lack of remittance funds. Meanwhile, direct US support for dissident groups faced a host of logistical and political problems. With a couple of notable exceptions, most leaders of the dissident movement have been nonplussed by the US aid programs. Opposition figures like Oswaldo Payá have maintained cordial but cool relations with the US, while others, like Manuel Cuesta Morúa, have described the US assistance as a "poisonous embrace."

The original Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba did conceive one lasting success, however, by giving birth to a small but increasingly influential mini-bureaucracy within the US State Department charged with hastening the end of Fidel Castro and supporting a democratic transitional government. The position of Cuban Transition Coordinator, first created in May 2004 but left vacant for more than a year, was filled by Caleb McCarry in July 2005. McCarry, who is a former Congressional staffer with solid anti-Castro credentials, coordinated the work of more than 100 participants from 17 federal departments and agencies to produce a new 93-page document about what the US can do to hasten the transition in Cuba and help once that happens. The document was initially due to be released on May 20, which is Cuban independence day, but it experienced some turbulence that kept it from the president's desk for nearly two months before it was finally released on July 10—with a classified annex.

Despite being another step backward for government transparency, the decision to classify part of the report was a shrewd public relations move, because it raises the possibility that there is more to the report than meets the eye. This is significant, because what meets the eye is basically a rehash and mild reshuffling of current policies with a couple new bells and whistles. The new Commission report declares that "this is a time for bold, decisive action and clarity of message." But the proposals fall short. The US\$80 million Cuba Fund for a Democratic Future will continue to line the pockets of Cuban-American groups and the usual "beltway bandits" without having much impact within Cuba. The Department of State proposes to make a "lista de esbirros"—a list of Castro's cronies—in an Abuse Case Evaluation System to deny visas for travel to the US. In addition, an inter-agency Cuban Nickel Targeting Task Force will attempt to track Cuban nickel sales and block importation into the United States. But these actions represent basically old policy ideas dressed up in new garb.

The Commission identified the Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez as a major supporter of the Castro regime, but failed to produce any

ideas to counter this alliance. Even the analysis seems contradictory, such as when the report announces that "Fidel Castro is calling the shots" in the Cuban-Venezuelan relationship, but then goes on to declare in italics that "the weak flank of the Cuba-Venezuela axis is Cuba itself." Meanwhile, the People's Republic of China, which is now Cuba's second largest trading partner and increasingly likely to be a force to be reckoned with in post-Castro Cuba, receives not a single mention.

Still, the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba may be mellowing with age. The first version called for disbanding state security institutions, invoked the desire for "vengeance" by those wronged by the Castro regime, anticipated a turbulent breakdown in state authority, and contemplated evicting Cubans from their homes or charging them rent. The new report takes pains to "explicitly reject the notion of 'witch hunts' in a democratic Cuba against those in government positions." It also highlights the need to "reassure the Cuban people that the US government will not support any arbitrary effort to evict them from their homes." The administration also

## VENEZUELA

From July 21 until August 2, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez was on a world tour that included the Mercosur 30<sup>th</sup> Summit in Argentina, Belarus, Russia, Qatar, Iran, Vietnam, Mali and Benin. While the main objective of the tour was to secure support for Venezuela's aspirations for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, other important items were on the agenda, particularly in Russia where Chávez' visit featured discussions on potential Russian investments in the Venezuelan energy sector—specifically, its participation in the US\$20 billion Gas Pipeline of the South—as well as arms purchase deals.

The arms deals include an order for 24 Sukhoi SU-30 fighter jets to replace Venezuela's ageing fleet of US-manufactured F-16s, the purchase of 53 helicopters as well as training for Venezuelan pilots. Chávez also began negotiations to build a factory in Venezuela to manufacture Kalashnikov AK-103 assault rifles and ammunition under license. Last year Venezuela placed an order for 100,000 of these rifles. According to the head of Russia's arms export agency, Sergei Chemezov, the arms deals between the two countries were worth more than US\$3 billion over the past 18 months.

The US called on Russia to revise the arms deals with Venezuela. According to a US Department of State spokesperson, "the arms purchases planned by Venezuela exceeded its defensive needs and are not helpful in terms of regional stability" (*Reuters*, 25/07/06). The US has already banned its companies from selling arms to Venezuela, cancelled maintenance contracts and blocked the deals of third countries when the equipment involved had US components.

released a 2-page "Compact with the People of Cuba" that promises US economic and technical support in exchange for democratic opening. A "peaceful" transition, however, still appears to carry a low priority. The term "peaceful, democratic change" is used only once, in reference to Venezuela's opposition to this process.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba has become a way for the US government to occupy itself and placate the Miami constituency while waiting for Fidel Castro to succumb to old age. On the verge of turning 80, the grizzled Cuban leader may or may not be on the verge of complying. The next version of the Commission will probably be rolled out during the summer of 2008, in time for the US presidential election cycle—irrespective of whether it is Fidel or Raúl Castro at the helm of Cuba. It is, of course, possible that Fidel Castro will not succeed in his efforts to outlast the presidency of George W. Bush. But the policies of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba will have little to do with Fidel Castro's passing—and may end up prolonging the Raúl Castro's stay in power. ■

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## The New Peruvian Scenario

*Aldo Panfichi*

In the wake of Alan García's electoral victory, Peru has been experiencing one of the most peaceful transfers of power in its recent history. Surveys show that the majority of Peruvians are enjoying moments of relative calm and moderate optimism regarding the immediate future. In fact, the transition holds few surprises, there is consensus among the elite on the need to maintain economic growth and implement distributive policies, and the expected protests due to the close electoral results and confrontational discourse of losing candidate Ollanta Humala are notable for their

absence. Despite this unusual mood among Peruvians, a new political scenario is taking shape, leaving two questions to be answered: What will be the political and economic orientation of Alan García's government, and what type of political opposition will this government face?

There are various signals to take into account regarding the new administration. At the regional level, Alan García's visits to Presidents Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva and Michelle Bachelet show a desire to build a relationship of economic complementarity with Brazil and Chile while seeking to contribute to the strengthening of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and curb Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez' aspirations to regional influence. According to spokespeople from the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) these measures are aimed at creating the necessary conditions to convert Peru into a regional hub vis-à-vis Asia's powerful economies. Doing this however, does not only require the country's mining, energy and port potential, but also the promotion of free trade agreements and the political and social stability that the aprista government can offer to investors. The success or failure of this strategy will depend greatly on what happens with these last factors.

On the domestic front, the message to the nation with which Alan García inaugurated his second mandate shows the new government's desire to fight against the lack of confidence and the crisis of legitimacy of the state and political system through a policy of fiscal austerity that involves important cutbacks in the salaries of the president, ministers, congress people and civil servants. The austerity policy aims to counter the widespread perception of waste and frivolity in public spending that citizens associate with politicians—a perception that is rather well exploited by anti-system candidates. However, the political system's lack of credibility also originates in the state's limited capacity to implement public policies aimed at resolving the problems that affect the population most intensely. Due primarily to good prices on raw export materials the new government will find the resources necessary to develop redistributive policies in the tax coffers, but it will also need human resources to ensure sound public management. The Peruvian state has historically been weak and public management has not been one of its strengths. Therefore the challenge President García is faced with is to substantially improve public management while applying a tough austerity policy.

With respect to the opposition, the latest events illustrate the crumbling of the alliance that supported Humala's candidacy. In effect, the official electoral results had just been released when the candidate to the Vice Presidency in the Humala alliance resigned from the Peruvian Nationalist Party (PNP) accompanied by several other recently elected parliamentarians. Shortly thereafter came an announcement of the formation of Kuska Perú, a new party that boasts the membership of coca-grower leaders, some of whom were elected as parliamentarians with the nationalist coalition. Lastly, Humala publicized the breakdown in the electoral alliance between Union for Peru (UPP) and the PNP, and the fact that each of these organizations will present their own candidates in the upcoming regional and municipal elections, set to take place in November of this year.

The rapid collapse of this electoral alliance demonstrates the fragility of mass movements that build around *caudillo* candidates who seek to represent the poor and the excluded. The possibilities of electoral success attract and pull together an infinite number of groups behind their candidacy, networks and individuals with distinct agendas and interests. Nevertheless, once the possibilities of success dissolve, loyalties break apart and readjustments take place depending on the advantages of maintaining or abandoning the initial project. The proximity of regional and municipal elections speeds up this process and individual and group calculations prevail. Consequently, it is likely that the social and political forces that gathered together behind the nationalist candidacy will fragment even further.

In this process, what becomes of the citizens who voted for Humala? Nationalism temporarily offered an anti-system political identity to numerous poor citizens who do not feel represented by the traditional parties and live primarily in the regions where the war against the Shining Path was fought, in the coca leaf-producing valleys, and in provinces where violent social conflicts have taken place. Now, who will represent these citizens? One possibility is that Humala will manage to rebuild his forces and form a more solid political organization. What is most likely, however, is that it will dissolve into a disperse group of social stakeholders who favour confrontations in the streets to get themselves heard and prefer to snatch their sectorial demands from the government.

This last scenario would seem to be ideal for García, since it would allow him to govern without a solid political opposition that could demand changes in the new government's economic policy, something which, ironically, seems to delight certain sectors of the economic elite and the political right.

Nevertheless, recent history shows, particularly during the administration of Alberto Fujimori, that the absence of an effective opposition to check and balance the actions of political

authorities can take us along the dangerous precipice of authoritarianism. ■

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## Uribe's Second Term: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

*Ana María Bejarano*

On May 28, President Álvaro Uribe obtained an indisputable second mandate from the Colombian electorate: 7,363,297 votes (62%) in the first round, 40 points ahead of the next most popular candidate, Carlos Gaviria (from the newly created leftist Alternative Democratic Pole, PDA) who obtained 2,608,914 votes (22%). It is relatively easy to explain why a solid majority of Colombians favoured the president's re-election: after suffering from a virulent internal conflict for decades, Uribe's heavy-handed policies delivered a speedy recovery of most indicators related to internal security: the number of killings and kidnappings dropped significantly; and attacks from both guerrillas and paramilitaries against small rural hamlets also declined. For the first time in decades Colombians feel free to travel out of the cities thanks to the strong presence of the armed forces along the country's main roads and highways. At the same time, in part due to this renewed sense of internal security, but also to higher international prices for commodities, the economy has witnessed a steady recovery from the low point of the late 1990s when it suffered from the worst economic recession in a century. It is not surprising therefore, that Uribe garnered 25% more votes in 2006 than he had obtained in 2002.

This is undoubtedly a turning point in Colombian politics: Uribe is the first president to be elected for a second term in more than a century, as immediate re-election was banned in the early 1900s. The fact that he got away with amending the constitution to favour his own re-election is a measure of the political power he has managed to marshal. But it does not stop there. He also mustered a significant amount of congressional support during the March elections: four pro-Uribe parties—the traditional Conservative Party (PC) and three newly created ones: Social National Unity Party (Partido de la U), Radical Change (CR), and Wings-Team Colombia Movement—obtained comfortable majorities in both chambers of Congress. A former Liberal, Uribe has also astutely played a “divide and conquer” strategy vis-à-vis the Liberal Party (PL), with dire consequences for the latter: historically a dominant party in the Colombian political landscape, it obtained a dismal 12% in the recent presidential election, a distant third from the victor, and lagging far behind the PDA.

The expectation is that during the coming four years Uribe will deliver more of the same: a tough stand against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a softer hand for the paramilitary armies—with which he has been negotiating for the past three years—and a close relationship with

the United States in matters related to drugs, security and trade. This strategy, which so far has produced visible results, has a few blind spots and a number of serious weaknesses. The first obvious blind spot lies in the belief that strengthening the state's coercive power is enough; while increasing the size of the armed forces may be necessary to win the fight against the FARC, and having a police presence in every single municipality has probably contributed to lowering the levels of criminal violence, Uribe's approach has suffered from a particular blindness to the fact that a democratic state needs to elicit voluntary consent as much as it relies on imposed obedience. To gain its subjects' hearts and souls, the Colombian state also needs to build roads, deliver prompt and fair justice, hire more doctors and teachers, provide a measure of social justice and protect its citizens across all regions and sectors of society.

Uribe's second blind spot is related to negotiations with the paramilitary forces. The government has entered a big gamble: by arguing that this is a significant step towards ending the internal conflict, Uribe has opened wide the door for the social, legal, and political reincorporation of a myriad of regional private armies, which are mostly financed with drug monies and have committed some of the most atrocious war crimes during the past two decades in Colombia. Faced with a dilemma between peace and justice, Uribe's government placed its bet on peace—at the expense of justice. However, given the enormous social, political and economic power accumulated in the hands of the paramilitary commanders, the President's gamble might in the end produce a tragic outcome: by legalizing their fortunes and recognizing their political influence, Uribe may have sacrificed both justice and the prospects of a long term, sustainable peace.

The third blind spot of Uribe's political project is the absence of a clear strategy to reduce the extreme levels of inequality that characterize Colombia's society. On the contrary, his recent proposal for a tax reform, which cuts corporate taxes and extends the socially regressive value-added tax to all consumer products, indicates a blatant disregard for the fate of the poor. Uribe's

“democratic security” strategy may have cornered the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN): but the war will not be won definitively until the gulf that separates the poor from the rich, especially the rural poor from the thriving urban elites, has been significantly reduced.

Finally, the most visible weakness and perhaps the most vulnerable element of Uribe’s strategy is its extreme reliance on the United States for all kinds of support. At this point in time, with a costly military involvement in the Middle East and congressional elections looming large in the horizon, it remains uncertain whether the US Congress will continue to sustain the levels of military aid with which it has showered the Colombian government for the past five years. With regards to the fight against drugs, Colombia has firmly endorsed the US anti-narcotics strategy, with dire consequences for the coca-growing population and little results in the way of actually reducing the traffic in narcotics. Finally, Colombia signed a free trade agreement that may open doors for the increased exchange of goods and services between the two countries, but fails to offer protection for the most vulnerable, thus

ratifying the obvious asymmetry of power between the two partners.

High levels of internal support plus the open and strong backing of the White House are the two pillars on which Uribe’s government stands. The two might prove to be less solid and long-lasting than expected, however. The newly re-elected President hence might have to reconsider his long-term strategy. ■

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## El Nuevo Escenario Peruano

*Aldo Panfichi*

Luego de la victoria electoral de Alan García, el Perú vive una de las transferencias de poder más tranquilas de su historia reciente. Las encuestas revelan que la mayoría de los peruanos disfruta momentos de relativa calma y moderado optimismo sobre el futuro inmediato. En efecto, la transferencia tiene pocas sorpresas, existe consenso entre las elites sobre la necesidad de mantener el crecimiento económico e implementar políticas distributivas, y brillan por su ausencia las movilizaciones que se esperaban por lo ajustado de los resultados electorales y el discurso confrontacional del candidato perdedor Ollanta Humala. No obstante este inusual estado de ánimo entre los peruanos, un nuevo escenario político se va configurando, siendo dos las interrogantes a dilucidar: ¿cuál será la orientación política y económica del gobierno de Alan García? y ¿qué tipo de oposición política deberá éste enfrentar?

Sobre el nuevo gobierno existen varios indicios a tomar en cuenta. En el ámbito regional, las visitas de Alan García al Presidente Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva y a la Presidenta Michelle Bachelet muestran la voluntad de construir una relación de complementariedad económica con Brasil y Chile, al tiempo que buscan aportar al fortalecimiento de la Comunidad Andina de Naciones (CAN) y frenar las pretensiones de influencia regional del Presidente Hugo Chávez de Venezuela. Según voceros de la Alianza

### MEXICO

According to Mexico’s Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) the results of the July 2 presidential vote were: Felipe Calderón (National Action Party, PAN), 35.89%; Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Coalition for the Well-Being of All), 35.31%; and Roberto Madrazo (Alliance for Mexico), 22.26%.

However, the validation of Mexico’s presidential election and the official announcement of the President-elect await the decision of the Federal Electoral Tribunal (TEPJF), in light of the 231 non-conformity suits (challenges to electoral results) filed by the Coalition and the 133 suits by the PAN. On July 31, the TEPJF publicized the criteria it will use to review suits related to the presidential election. In a document signed by all seven judges, the TEPJF stated that it would analyze the 231 suits filed by the Coalition individually and not as a lot. The Tribunal will study whether a recount of the votes in the electoral districts under dispute should proceed. It also stated that a full recount of the votes could only take place as an extreme measure and if sufficient irregularities were found in the tally sheets.

Legal analysts have interpreted this as an attempt by the Tribunal to rule out the possibility of annulment of the election, while leaving the door open for a partial recount of the votes (*El Universal*, 01/08/06).

Meanwhile, supporters of the Coalition and demonstrators have blockaded vehicular transit in Mexico City’s downtown since July 30 demanding a total recount of the votes of the presidential election. According to the PAN, these demonstrations not only disturb life in the city but also seek to influence the decision of the TEPJF.

The Tribunal has until August 31 to resolve all challenges filed and until September 6 to validate the election and declare a President-elect.

Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), estas medidas buscan crear las condiciones para convertir al Perú en un puerto regional de cara a las potentes economías asiáticas, pero para ello no basta el potencial minero, energético y portuario del país, sino también el impulso a los tratados de libre comercio, y la estabilidad política y social que el gobierno aprista pueda ofrecer a los inversionistas. Del destino de estos últimos factores dependerá mucho el éxito o fracaso de esta estrategia.

En el ámbito doméstico, el mensaje a la nación con que el Presidente Alan García inauguró su segundo mandato muestra la voluntad del nuevo gobierno de luchar contra la desconfianza y la crisis de legitimidad del estado y el sistema político, mediante una dura política de austeridad fiscal que implica recortes significativos en los salarios del presidente, ministros de estado, congresistas, y funcionarios públicos. La política de austeridad busca neutralizar la extendida percepción de dispendio y frivolidad en el gasto público que los ciudadanos asocian con los políticos; una percepción que es aprovechada bastante bien por candidaturas anti-sistémicas. Sin embargo, la falta de credibilidad del sistema político también se origina en la poca capacidad del estado de llevar adelante políticas públicas dirigidas a resolver los problemas más sentidos por la población. El nuevo gobierno encontrará en la caja fiscal los recursos necesarios para desarrollar las políticas distributivas, debido sobre todo a los buenos precios de las materias primas de exportación, pero necesita de los recursos humanos necesarios para llevar adelante una buena gestión pública. El estado peruano es históricamente débil y la gestión pública no es una de sus fortalezas. Por lo tanto el reto que enfrenta el Presidente García es mejorar sustancialmente la gestión pública al mismo tiempo que impone una dura política de austeridad.

Sobre la oposición los últimos acontecimientos muestran el desmoronamiento de la alianza que sostuvo la candidatura de Humala. En efecto, apenas se conocieron los resultados electorales oficiales, el candidato a la Vice Presidencia de la fórmula de Humala renunció al Partido Nacionalista Peruano (PNP) acompañado de algunos otros parlamentarios recién elegidos. Poco después se anunció la formación de Kuska Perú, un nuevo partido que cuenta con la participación de líderes cocaleros, algunos de los cuales fueron elegidos parlamentarios por la lista nacionalista. Por último, Humala hizo público que la alianza electoral entre Unión por el Perú (UPP) y el PNP se había roto, y que cada una de estas organizaciones tendrá sus propios candidatos en las próximas elecciones regionales y municipales a llevarse a cabo en noviembre de este año.

El rápido colapso de esta alianza electoral muestra la fragilidad de movimientos aluvionales que se construyen alrededor de candidaturas caudillistas que buscan representar a los pobres y excluidos. Las posibilidades de éxito electoral atraen y cohesionan detrás de esta candidatura a un sinnúmero de grupos, redes e individuos con distintas agendas e intereses. Sin embargo, una vez que las posibilidades de éxito se diluyen, las lealtades se resquebrajan y se producen reacomodos en función de las ventajas de permanecer o abandonar el proyecto inicial. La cercanía de las elecciones regionales y municipales acelera este proceso y los cálculos personales y de grupo se imponen. En consecuencia, es probable

que las fuerzas sociales y políticas que se agruparon detrás de la candidatura nacionalista se fragmenten aún más.

En este proceso ¿cómo quedan los ciudadanos que votaron por Humala? El nacionalismo ofreció provisionalmente una identidad política contestataria a numerosos ciudadanos pobres que no se sienten representados por los partidos tradicionales, y que residen mayormente en las regiones que fueron escenario de la guerra contra Sendero Luminoso, en los valles productores de hojas de coca y en provincias donde han ocurrido violentos conflictos sociales. Ahora ¿quién o quiénes van a representar a estos ciudadanos? Una posibilidad es que Humala logre reconstituir sus fuerzas y construya una organización política más sólida. Lo más probable, sin embargo, es que se diluya en un conjunto disperso de actores sociales, que prefieren la confrontación en las calles para hacerse escuchar y “arrancarle” al gobierno sus demandas sectoriales.

Este último escenario pareciera ideal para García, ya que le permitiría gobernar sin una oposición política articulada que pudiera exigir cambios en la política económica del nuevo gobierno; algo que, irónicamente, parece entusiasmar a ciertos sectores de la elite económica y la derecha política. Sin embargo, la historia reciente muestra, en especial durante el gobierno de Alberto Fujimori, que la ausencia de una oposición efectiva que sirva como freno y contrapeso a las acciones de las autoridades políticas, puede llevarnos por el peligroso despeñadero del autoritarismo. ■

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## PUBLICATIONS

**The Impact of "Populism" on Social, Political, and Economic Development in the Hemisphere***By Vladimir Torres*

The paper examines the definitions of populism and neo-populism, the challenges of Canada vis-à-vis neo-populism in Latin America, and discusses why and how to contribute to deter it.

**The Privatization of Foreign Development Assistance***By Carlo Dade*

The private sector is the largest funder of direct poverty alleviation and development assistance. The paper examines sources of private sector funding—FDI, remittances and CSR programs—and argues for changes in the culture and institutions of Canadian development agencies to enable cooperation with the private sector.

**Report: "Supporting Afro-Latino Communities, Is There A Role for Canada?"**

Summary of discussions and policy recommendations from the first meeting held in Canada on Afro-Latino communities. With presentations by the World Bank, IDB, the US government and Afro-Latino leaders, the report calls for Canada to become involved in supporting work with Afro-Latino communities.

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