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## Mexico: Chronology of Major Events, January 1993 to April 1995

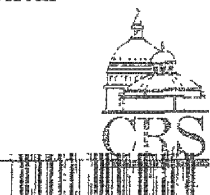
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### SUMMARY

This short report provides a chronology of the often tumultuous events in Mexico from January 1993 to April 1995. In 1993, these events included negotiation of labor and environmental side agreements and approval of the North American Free Trade Agreement. In 1994, these events included the beginning of a guerrilla uprising in January, assassination of a presidential candidate and a key party official in March and September, kidnappings of billionaires in March and April, the election of a new President and congress in August, and serious deterioration of the value of the peso and announcement of an emergency economic program in December. In early 1995, these events included consideration of U.S. currency swaps and loan guarantee agreements, efforts to seize and then to negotiate a settlement with guerrilla leaders, and the arrest of the ex-President's brother and a former Deputy Attorney General in connection with new probes of the assassination cases. The major sources for the chronology are press and wire service reports and government documents.

### CHRONOLOGY

- 01/08/93** --- U.S. President-elect William Clinton and Mexican President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) met in Austin, Texas, and reaffirmed support for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which had been signed by the leaders of Mexico, Canada, and the United States on Dec. 17, 1992, after lengthy negotiations.
- 03/17-18/93** -- The first round of tripartite negotiations on the supplementary NAFTA agreements on labor and environmental issues was held in Washington, D.C.
- 08/13/93** --- Spokesmen for the three countries announced completion of the supplementary agreements on labor and environmental standards.



- 09/14/93 --- Leaders of Mexico, Canada, and the United States signed the supplementary agreements in their respective capitals.
- 12/08/93 --- President Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (H.R. 3450) into law (P.L. 103-182). This legislation had been approved by the House (284-200) on November 17, and by the Senate (61-38) on Nov. 20, 1993.
- 01/01/94 --- The North American Free Trade Agreement entered into force with the United States, Mexico, and Canada as partners. On the same day, guerrillas of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) seized several towns in the state of Chiapas and called for attention to indigenous concerns and the promotion of democracy.
- 03/03/94 --- The Commissioner for Peace and Reconciliation in Chiapas and the EZLN guerrillas announced tentative agreements on a plan for peace, after which the EZLN was to consult with local indigenous communities.
- 03/14/94 --- Billionaire banker Alfredo Harp Helu was kidnapped in route to Mexico City and held for ransom. He was released on June 28, 1994, apparently after payment of a ransom.
- 03/23/94 --- Presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio of the long-dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was assassinated while campaigning in Tijuana, and the peso fell in currency markets. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon, Colosio's campaign manager, was named as his replacement on Mar. 29, 1994. A conspiracy was suggested initially, but two special prosecutors concluded that a single gunman was responsible for the murder. Mario Aburto, the gunman, was sentenced to prison in late October 1994.
- 03/24/94 --- Meeting in special session, the Mexican Senate approved aspects of a new electoral reform, which provides for independent electoral authorities, following action the previous day by the Chamber of Deputies.
- 03/26/94 --- EZLN guerrillas put their forces on "red alert," suspended peace negotiations, and accused the Mexican government of using the assassination of Colosio as a pretext for attacking Zapatista strongholds.
- 04/26/94 --- The United States, Canada, and Mexico established consultative mechanisms and currency swap arrangements, under which Mexico could draw on a \$6 billion line of currency swap credits.

- 04/26/94 --- Angel Losada Moreno, the vice chairman of the supermarket chain, *Grupo Gigante*, and the son of the chain's chairman, was abducted in Mexico City and held for ransom. He was released on Aug. 5, 1994, apparently after the payment of ransom.
- 04/28/94 --- Tijuana police chief Jose Federico Benitez was shot and killed, in an incident that some linked to the Colosio assassination because of his questioning of the official investigation.
- 06/11/94 --- The Zapatista guerrillas announced that they were rejecting the government's March plan for peace, and called for a new national dialogue to achieve democracy, liberty and justice for all Mexicans.
- 08/21/94 --- Mexicans voted massively in presidential and legislative elections. PRI candidate Zedillo won with 50% of the valid votes. Fernandez de Cevallos of the National Action Party (PAN) followed with 27% and the Cardenas of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) trailed with 17% of the vote.
- 09/28/94 --- Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, Secretary General of the PRI, was shot and killed outside a hotel in Mexico City. The gunman, Daniel Aguilar Trevino, was captured at the scene, but implicated several others, including a jailed convict and a congressman who remains at large.
- 11/23/94 --- Deputy Attorney General Mario Ruiz Massieu resigned from his post and from the PRI, claiming that PRI officials and Attorney General Humberto Trevino were obstructing investigation of his brother's September 1994 murder.
- 12/01/94 --- Ernesto Zedillo was inaugurated as President of Mexico, promising to continue his predecessor's economic policies, and to promote democracy, judicial reform and peaceful settlement in Chiapas.
- 12/08/94 --- Eduardo Robledo of the PRI was inaugurated as Governor of Chiapas, despite opposition demonstrations and threats from the Zapatista guerrillas.
- 12/19/94 --- Zapatistas announced a mobilization and control of 38 communities. Despite the government's quick reassertion of control, the Zapatistas actions prompted a run on the peso.
- 12/20/94 --- Mexican officials devalued the peso approximately 15% and then were forced to let it float, with the peso losing a total of 40% of value within a few days, and falling even more thereafter.

- 12/29/94 --- President Zedillo replaced his Finance Minister and announced an emergency economic plan, subsequently explained in more detail on Jan. 3, 1995, which included wage and price constraints, austerity in government spending, accelerated privatization of government entities, and an \$18 billion currency swap arrangement (half from the United States) from international sources.
- 01/12/95 --- The Clinton Administration proposed \$40 billion in loan guarantees for Mexico to end the currency and stock market crises in Mexico and in other Latin American and emerging markets.
- 01/31/95 --- President Clinton announced that he was withdrawing the \$40 billion loan guarantee proposal, and would provide \$20 billion in swaps and securities guarantees on his own authority, along with increased international support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).
- 02/09/95 --- President Zedillo ordered the arrest of Zapatista leaders in Chiapas, but on February 14, he called off the offensive and called for renewed peace talks.
- 02/12/95 --- The opposition PAN won the gubernatorial election in the state of Jalisco, with 56% of the vote, compared to 36% for the long-ruling PRI.
- 02/21/95 --- The \$20 billion loan guarantees agreement between the United States and Mexico was signed.
- 02/25/95 --- Mexican Attorney General Antonio Lozano announced that a second gunman was involved in the March 1994 assassination of PRI presidential candidate Colosio, and revived the conspiracy theory relating to the murder.
- 02/28/95 --- President Clinton certified in accordance with the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988 that Mexico was cooperating on drug control efforts, but he mentioned continuing problems.
- 02/28/95 --- Raul Salinas, the ex-President's brother, was arrested for involvement in the September 1994 assassination of PRI official Francisco Ruiz Massieu. Subsequently, ex-President Salinas withdrew as a candidate to head the World Trade Organization (WTO), went on a hunger strike to clear his name of responsibility for political assassinations and Mexico's financial difficulties, and left Mexico for the United States.

- 03/03/95 --- Former Deputy Attorney General Mario Ruiz Massieu, who headed the investigation of his brother's September 1994 assassination, was arrested in Houston, Texas, for failure to declare his currency holdings to U.S. Custom's officials. Mexican officials were seeking his extradition on grounds that he covered up Raul Salinas' involvement in the September assassination and may be linked to the Gulf Cartel of drug traffickers.
  
- 03/03/95 --- The Mexican government took over the company which owns the eighth largest bank, *Banpais*, because of poor management, irregularities, and lack of reserves.
  
- 03/08-09/95 -- The Mexican Congress approved the \$20 billion U.S. aid package. It also approved the Law for Dialogue, Conciliation and Dignified Peace, President Zedillo's proposal for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Chiapas.
  
- 03/09/95 --- Finance Minister Guillermo Ortiz announced a revised economic program calling for a 50% increase in the value added tax (from 10% to 15%), increased fuel prices, tight monetary policy with high interest rates, and reduced government spending.
  
- 03/29/95 --- Zapatista guerrillas proposed wide-ranging peace talks in Mexico City, rather than Chiapas, with participation from all political groups.
  
- 04/09/95 --- Government and Zapatista representatives met in Chiapas and signed an accord to begin peace negotiations on Apr. 20, 1995.
  
- 04/10/95 --- Luis Miguel Moreno, Mexico City's transport director, was found shot to death in his office, 48 hours after he shut down the city's largest subsidized bus system while transit union leaders were being investigated for diversion of government funds to private purposes.