STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF MEXICO FOR 2010

BY

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THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF MEXICO FOR 2010

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ABSTRACT

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Nowadays, Mexico is experiencing deep changes, originating first due to the end of a political regime that governed the country most of the last century and, second, for its integration within the new world order that is affected by globalization. Together with the transformation to new political system, Mexico is experiencing dynamic changes in its national security system which is necessary in order to analyze and determine what form this matter will framed in the new political system, and what effects it will have in its internal and external relationships.

Since President Vicente Fox began his mandate, he has carried out various actions to strengthen the national security of Mexico, which is visualized as a transition from a totalitarian regime to a democracy, and will have as a source of sustenance a juridical framework that will foster increasing of concern about national security among Mexican society. It will also give Mexican national authorities a better decision-making process to maintain and promote national interests in a better way.

In this moment of Mexican definition, national security receives more attention by various actors; it is passing through decisive stages, which seek to a establish a new integrated national security system that can participate in the coexistence between Mexican society and its leaders during the 21st century.

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THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF MEXICO FOR 2010

The subject of the national security for any country is of extreme importance since this term defines how each nation maintains its values and protects its interests.[1] For Mexico the concept of national security arose with the necessity to protect its territory from the invasions that took place during 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. This led to the creation of diverse pacifist doctrines that developed through its history.[2] But through time, the concept of national security expanded from protecting the Mexican territory from external invasion to also including an internal one that also posed a risk to its existence and development. So it is the case, that in Mexico they were developed within what today is known as national security, the concepts of external security and internal security. In order to understand the current status of national security in Mexico, it is necessary to analyze two aspects: first the democratic transition in process, which originated with the end of the old political system (directed by the party in power for 70 years[3]), and second, the current inclusion of Mexico in a globalized world that began with the end of the Cold War.[4]

This essay intends to analyze and project the course that the national security of Mexico will follow in the year 2010, when the democratic transition of the country will be complete, and new domestic and international rules will be in effect. The national security of Mexico is in a transformational process, moving from a narrow model, to one that is broad, where it shall connect the national security decisions of the president with the people, through the Congress, and with a judicial sustenance that at the present time is in a developing stage.[5]

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN MEXICO

The previous political system began with the creation of a political party in 1929; its aim was to avoid armed struggles between diverse groups. This situation hindered stability and peaceful conditions necessary for development. These difficult circumstances were at last overcome, with the creation of a powerful presidential system (with democratic characteristics), but it was incomplete.[6] That is to say although the three branches of a real democracy existed, the Executive had dominance over the Legislative and Judiciary, unlike the balance of powers of a true democracy. If we make an account of the previous political system, it had successes and errors throughout 70 years of existence. It saw the development of institutions, the expropriation of the natural resources, the problems and confrontation during the World War II, the establishment of civilian control of the military, the difficulties of the Cold War, and

democratic opening and inclusion of the country in the current world order, where it now transfers power in an open and pacific manner.[7]

The previous process can be considered within the cycle of a political regime, that in its beginnings managed the pacification of the country, providing it with political viability, achieving at the end a coherent nation for the protection of its interests in the international and domestic arenas. However, various problems convinced many of the need for a total democracy, with an open political system, balance between the three branches of government, and political, economic and social development.[8]

In the previous political system, the president dictated the national security of Mexico, like other fields of the national life, without having real influence by the legislative and judicial branches.[9] Here it is important to establish, that although the concept of national security was materialized by the concepts of external security and internal security, the term "National Security" was not used.[10]

In 1980s Mexico began experiencing a democratic opening; on 1 December 2000, through democratic means, Vicente Fox Quezada, (Candidate of National Action Party (PAN)) took the presidential power. This marked the decline of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) regime, which had remained in power for most of the last century.[11] Along with the gradual democratic opening of the 1980s, there also emerged a new culture of national security that is the basis of the national security system of Mexico for the 21st century, and the new political system that will prevail in Mexico. The above events have been distinguished by the inclusion of national security issues in the respective national development plans of the presidents in turn, from president Lopez Portillo to present President Vicente Fox. During this period Mexico saw the creation of the national security cabinet, the creation of high-level military schools, such as the National Defense College and the Naval Advanced Studies Center (along with the novel participation of military and civilian personnel), and the creation of the Investigation and National Security Center.[12]

Of these mentioned facts, the most important was the creation of the National Security Cabinet at the beginning of the government of president Carlos Salinas de Gortari.[13] This was a new institutional effort that attempted to coordinate actions of diverse executive agencies. Up till now, this structure did not go beyond National Security issues based on the structure of the public administration, constituted with the head of State and his cabinet, and integrated by the secretaries in charge of the different aspects of the national development. President Vicente Fox is granted constitutional control of the country, with a democratic opening in process and a

national security system emerging, and it is his responsibility to foster them to achieve complete conformation with those two concepts within the framework of a modern democratic state.[14]

> "Accord to the journalist Ana Luisa Garcés in her article, "Pide Krauze cambio urgente" (Krauze requests urgent change), "Mexico, this determined one, is in a fight against time to be modernized in all the environments: political, economic, juridical and cultural, although this problem concerns the whole world."[15]

PRESIDENT VICENTE FOX AND THE SUBJECT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

President Vicente Fox, during his presidential mandate has set four main goals to strengthen and transform the national security system; these are: (1) To deal broadly with the subject about national security in the National Development Plan 2001-2006; (2) To create at the beginning of his administration the position of national security advisor; (3) Designate within the Secretaries of the National Defense and Navy, senior military officers with ample knowledge in the subject of national security; (4) Designate a high level commission to evaluate the organization and operation of the Investigation and National Security Center (Centro de Investigation y Seguridad Nacional, CISEN) .

The present government considers that, in the past, the definition and defense of the principle of national security was, in truth, incompatible with the essence of a modern democracy. On the one hand, its strategic definition, as well as its political practice (the respect of citizen rights and liberties) was inconsistent. The concept and the practice of national security were subsidiaries of the security of the State that, in the context of the Mexican political system, was equivalent to the security of the regime, the protection of its particular interests and the permanence of power. The absence of a normative framework concealed a high degree of discretion in the strategy for the defense of national security, and unfortunately, important decisions derived from this challenging situation.[16]

The current government believes that to correct the errors of the past, and to fortify the national security of Mexico, it must develop the following strategies:[17]

- Conceive the national security using broad vision to anticipate and face the situations that threaten the peace, the use of the legal order, the well-being and the physical integrity of the population, and that put at risk the permanence of the institutions or harm the integrity of the territory.
- Give coherence, unity and amplitude of vision to the strategy of national security, to elaborate updated definitions of interest and national security that are identified with the intentions of the new democratic adjustment of the country, and to subordinate the apparatus of intelligence to the governmental controls and the legal regime.

- Develop a doctrine that guides the identification, prioritization, and evaluation of those factors that can put the national security at risk and that offer an effective protection defense against the risks and threats to the vital interests of Mexico.

When President Fox took presidential office, he created several instances of coordination to guide the efforts of the different governmental dependencies. It is the case that these actions created greater order and respect, especially through the creation of a National Security Advisor, and selecting Adolfo Aguilar Zinser for this new position, which served there from 1 December 2000 until 14 January 2002 (he is actually as Mexico's representative on the Security Council of the United Nations).[18] The President also personally coordinates the National Security Cabinet and the Secretary of Governance serves in his absence.

Mexican public opinion attributes the short duration of the national security advisor in this position to the lack of law to sustain him in his task to coordinate the actions over the matter,[19] but in spite of the commentaries against him, he left an important legacy in the draft of a national security law (which he gave to the President of the Republic), that: (1) Reforms to the constitution, to give Congress specific powers in the subjects of national security and to define the constitutional authority of the President the Republic in the matter; (2) Contains a title of preliminary dispositions, which includes a definition of national security and the relative concepts to this; (3) Proposes mechanisms for the President of the Republic (with consultant ship of the National Security Advisor and with the authorization of Congress) to issue declarations concerning any event that may affect the stability, the well-being of the population or the good order of the country; (4) Specifies the mechanisms so the President of the Republic can make decisions with a clear definition of the lines of command and authority, within the framework of a system of coordination headed by the Secretary of Governance; (5) Establishes the functions of the bodies of information, intelligence, and the legal requisites to which must adjust its activity; (6) Proposes the establishment of a juridical regime of responsibilities and controls for the CISEN, and under the governmental secretariat; (7) As a complement to such draft several initiatives are included to reform the federal penal code, the federal code of penal proceedings, the organic law of the judicial power, the organic law of the General Congress of the Mexican United States, and an the organic law of public administration.

In relation to the Secretaries of the National Defense and the Navy,[20] is important to establish that they are graduates of the Mexican National Defense College, where they achieved a master degree in defense and national security, being the first who were recognized in the armed forces and in the academic realm as experts in national security; so both serve with high qualified secretaries of state as members of the cabinet of national security, a situation

which allow them to advise the President of the Republic on the subject. In this sense Sergio Aguayo reiterates that:

> "The secretary of National Defense was the ideal selection to occupy the position in the current moment. He is a military officer of educated and open mind that understands the importance of modernizing the institution to which he serves. It is evident that the armed forces preferred to maintain stability and wait for the opening of the political system. History does not have contemplations and it measures the size of the personages for their capacity to react to unexpected challenges."[21]

The evaluation process of the CISEN,[22] was accomplished between 8 January and 2 of April 2001, by a high level commission consisting of Secretaries of: Governance, National Defense and Navy, Public Security, the Attorney General of the Republic, the Chief of the President's office for governmental innovation, the national security advisor, and the legal advisor for the federal executive. The commission decided that CISEN had an institutional weakness, due to the lack of an adequate juridical framework, with no one to regulate, enable and limit its actions.[23]

NATIONAL SECURITY TRANSFORMATION IN MEXICO

As already explained, Mexico's national security system is in a process of transformation, going from a quite reduced structure to a larger one. The current national security system is based on the National Security cabinet; it consists of the President of Republic, the Secretaries of Foreign Relations, Governance, National Defense, Navy, and the Attorney General. CISEN's Director General acts as technical secretary. This model is a basic structure of public administration and not a permanent component dedicated for the research and planning based on issues of national security within the different fields of the power;[24] likewise, concerning the juridical aspect, it is based on the precepts already established and mentioned in the 1917 Constitution, but missing a specific law that can support it. There are various government offices in Mexico that produce intelligence, like the National Defense Secretariat and the Navy Secretariat within the military and naval aspects, and the Attorney General Office and the Federal Preventive Police for the various aspects of organized crime. However, the only one specialized institution able to run a civilian intelligence service for ensuring national security is the Investigation and National Security Center (CISEN). An important feature of the actual intelligence system is that its lacks a law to regulate the gathering and handling of the information, such as is done in other countries.[25] Actually, it requires more democratic reform.[26]

The broader model that is being attempted includes: direction, advisement, consultation, execution, investigation and study organizations. These will be managed like a permanent

agency, organizing its structure based on the next model: (1) Head of the nation, the one who is the National Leader, in charge of guiding all the national security issues (President of the Republic); (2) An incidental consultant agency to the Chief of the State, integrated with a small group of government officials, who are in charge of external and internal policy, military policy, economic policy and under one secretary, (today's national security cabinet.); (3) A permanent government organization fully dedicated to researching and analyzing national security issues, reporting to the national security advisor. This advisor will have a permanent group of specialists representing all strategic disciplines. A second component to be integrated with this high-level analysis core, are specialized researchers and technicians experts on the various areas related to national security.[27]

From the already mentioned model we can take that the new national security system must have the followings sub-systems: (1) Juridical-conceptual: mission, national security definition, national objectives, legal fundaments and political constitution; (2) National security policy: national security policy and national security doctrine; (3) National security strategy: strategic concept, national security planning, national power and national security strategies, and; (4) National security structure: chief of the state, advisement and consultation agency, planning, analyzing and intelligence agency, and execution agencies.[28]

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE.

Permanent agencies exist within the existing structure; some of them besides performing their normal functions are used for national security tasks (for example: Ministry of Interior, International Affairs Secretariat, National Defense and Navy Secretariats and the General Attorney Office). The national security process has two aspects, first, it is focused on the gathering of information and intelligence production. Much contradictory data is being collected and very few government officials analyze it and try to make projections, something quite difficult because of the wide variety of issues and normal complications when trying to assemble data logically (especially when it depends on persons, opinions and different judgments). The second aspect is reflected in the national security actions that a new structure will have to perform, using the different elements of the power (politics, economic, social and military), where it is quite evident that there is a lack of coordination, too many unilateral policies, and strategic operations hampered by corruption (ones that generally are aborted during their accomplishment).[29]

ADVANTAGES OF THE NEW SYSTEM.

By having a permanent organization in charge of the management, control, coordination and advisement tasks of national security issues, there will be better planning and research for handling national security issues using the elements of national power, and integrated with a security advisor under direct control of the President. This committee of selected analysts will be responsible for proposing and planning the policies and strategies of national security to the chief of state. It will be better able to obtain information, produce intelligence, both for serving the needs of the President, and to conduct strategic planning and research for the security advisor.

The new national security system will have great strength and genuineness because it will demonstrate competence in its purposes, organization, and function, both from the person in charge of it (president), the government and society, all legitimized through the promulgation of the proposed law. The Mexican legislative chamber, where society has its representation, will approve this and where all state levels take part and have opinions about what national security is and what it represents.[30]

During the old political order the President sent and the Congress accepted, the Secretaries of State were the ones who in fact legislated. What the new political conditions of the country demanded is that the laws (mainly those that reflect major reform and have difficulty achieving consent) need not be elaborated a priori and in an isolated way by some Secretary of State, but rather they will be the product of a gestation process generated by the constant and direct communication among the legislators, their teams of professionals, the officials, the executive's experts, and consultation with the organizations of the interested civil society.[31]

NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE NEW ACTIVISM OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEXICAN RELATIONS

> "During the last years, the international order has seen deep changes, determined to a great extent by the dissolution of the bipolar situation that has repercussions on the balance of the global power and because of the fast process of worldwide economic globalization. Facing these circumstances, the Mexican foreign policy acquires new importance and meaning, becoming a fundamental element, not only to protect the national sovereignty and security, but also to foster and underpin the Mexican socioeconomic development. Here is the importance of the new boost to the diplomatic work delineated by the government to extend, deepen, and institutionalize relations with other nations and to promote and successfully protect the country's interests abroad."[32]
>
> —President Vicente Fox.

Mexican foreign policy has been directed based on the principles written in the Constitution, which are the product of historical experience. Actually, a new activism of Mexican diplomacy has developed. This change is marked by its geostrategic position, concerns, diplomatic tradition and development needs that now force Mexico to perform a central and active role in the new international architecture. The Mexican diplomacy of the new century looks not only to be a central instrument for the preservation of sovereignty and national security, but also tries to foster and underpin the socioeconomic Mexican development.[33]

General principles of Mexican foreign policy focus on protection and promotion of its fundamental concerns, which in a general way are the following: Assure its national security and territorial integrity not be affected or threatened as a result of changes or events taking place outside of it; To assure that sovereign nature of decisions taken by the Mexican State concerning its internal governance and its relations with the rest of international states are not to be constrained by interests or positions of other states; Take advantage of its natural resources, to assure that the state can decide ways to use and conserve them depending on the needs and priorities of the country; to find and foster opportunities to promote its integral, sustained, and sustainable development, by means of actions with other nations or regions of the world.[34]

The current government of Mexico perceives that a new international system is in the process of formation, defined no longer by old geopolitical and ideological conflicts, but by more oblique and complex forces, likewise the main features of this new system are its growing control of common interests and principles of all humanity, beyond nationality and culture, and on the new world, stability and prosperity of each region will depend on its ability to promote worldwide and regional strategies that transcend national borders and traditional sovereignty notions. In the same way, the current government considers that it has the option of getting involved in the definition of this new world order, but also to resist old patterns, where Mexico was subjected to what others decided. However, its function as a connecting country, its tradition related to foreign policies issues, its large and distinguished diplomatic experience, its innovating capacity and democratic legitimacy provide it with the tools to be one of the leaders to assist in redefining the rules of coexistence among nations.[35]

An indication of the new foreign policy activism of Mexico is its inclusion on the U.N. Security council for the term 2002-2003.[36] Mexico was also the headquarters for the international conference on finance for development in March, 2002. Likewise, this year it will be the headquarters for the Asia Pacific Cooperation Mechanism (APEC), as well as for the

summit of the European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean in 2004, and the Summit for the Americas in 2005.

The performance of Mexico in the UN Security Council and other activities in the international environment involved certain risks. However, when assuming them, Mexico also has the possibility of strengthening its sovereignty and advancing its national interests significantly.[37]

THE ARMED FORCES IN NATIONAL SECURITY

> "The Mexican army is part of the change and progress process promoted by our Supreme Commander. This change is not at all a personal or a group issue, it is a State purpose, and the Congress is the proper body to determine its organization and functions. Mexico can count on its soldiers under any circumstance, and that is what matters. That is our commitment and our strength."[38]
>
> —General Gerardo C. R. Vega Garcia, National Defense Secretary.

The Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces is the President of the Republic,[39] who delegates the command of the Army and Air Force to the National Defense Secretary (currently a general). Likewise, he delegates the command of the Navy to the Navy Secretary, who is an Admiral; In the Mexican Armed Forces there is not a unified command for the three services, like in other countries, nor a civilian National Defense Secretary. In the same way, there is not a Joint Chiefs of Staff that coordinates the three services. This does not mean that the Mexican Armed Forces are not subordinated to civilian authorities, nor that they are regulated by a juridical order separating them from the political scope. Despite the special organization of the Mexican Armed Forces, there is a firm subordination to the civilian power and to the people's will. This is evident with the military subordination to the civilian presidents of the former political system. During the 1980s, while in many Latin American countries there were coups by the Armed Forces to overthrow civilian governments, in Mexico, the Armed Forces remained loyal to the civilian power. Other evidence is that in the democratic transition process (during the passing of power from the past political system to the current Fox government) the Mexican Armed Forces remained subordinated to the elected President, as the Mexican constitution establishes.[40]

During the last political system, the Armed Forces as well as other institutions, were not supervised properly by the legislative or judicial powers, only the Executive power had direct control over them. But nowadays, at the same time that the country is going through a democratic transition, the Armed Forces are also subjected to the process of a full democracy,

in which they will have to report to the legislative and judicial power (and in the same way that it had performed before the national executive power). In this new political system, the Armed Forces are gradually being opened to such supervision, as well as to the society and public opinion.[41] Currently the balance of powers within Mexico, dictates that the responsibility for the employment of the armed forces is divided among the three branches. The new political system will force all the civil and military institutions to report to the people through the Union Congress. At any moment the citizens, through elections, will reward or punish the different parties for their way of ruling, a procedure not permitted in the last political system.

The Mexican Armed Forces (within the scope national security) have the responsibility to protect the country, which is its primary mission, but at the same time within these functions perform civil actions and provide support to the civil authorities, such as follows: (1) Defend the integrity, independence and sovereignty of the Nation; (2) Guarantee the interior security; (3) Assist the civil population with public needs (4) Perform civic actions and social works that add to progress and development; and (5) In case of disaster, give assistance for maintenance of order, protecting people and properties, and the reconstruction of the affected zones.[42] It should be noted that the various functions, which Armed Forces perform, originated during Mexico's history and, second, the socio-economical situation of the country, compels the military to serve in social causes and the development of the country.

Currently , the tasks performed by the armed forces, that have a strong impact on national security are: Fighting drug trafficking, assisting people in case of disaster (Plan DN-IIIE, Which the Secretariat of National Defense applies for help to people in the event of disasters, in coordination with the civil authorities) and combating insurrection;[43] The first task is assigned because of the great power of penetration and the weakening of the elements of power: political, economical, military and social,[44] since illegal activity has the capability of corrupting public officials and affecting all of society. It also causes health problems and, in some cases, creates a "drug trafficking" culture in specific communities, where people listen to music which refers to the most famous drug traffickers and worship religious images supposedly protecting drug traffickers.[45] The assistance to the civil population, in case of disaster, is based on Mexico's geographical position, which makes it the object of constant and difficult natural phenomena, which destabilizes the country or, at the very least, an important region. This poses a great risk to national security.[46] Insurrection is another risk to national security, caused by dissatisfied and insurgent armed groups that have declared war on the Mexican State and the Army, resulting in a dormant danger that can unbalance the country.[47]

In accordance with the surveys, and in spite of the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre (the Brigade Blanca) and the corruption of officials in the fight against the drug traffickers, the Mexican society considers the Army one of the most reliable public institutions.[48] Thus, the people maintain faith in the ability of the military to reflect national values and protect their interests.

The Armed Forces and Foreign Affairs Secretariat, in comparison with other Mexican civil institutions, are organizations which have a strong structure that allows them to develop professional people,[49] a situation that has assisted it in maintaining the support of civilian institutions in fulfilling its functions. The military forces participate in combating forest fires and in foresting activities (Secretary of the environment and natural resource's function), social labor (Secretary of Social Development's function), fighting drug trafficking (Attorney General's office of Justice's function), public security (Secretary of public security's function), security to strategic facilities and other related activities (other state organizations' functions). Over the last few years, Mexico has provided assistance to people outside Mexico when natural disaster struck countries in Latin America. The Armed Forces performed Plan DN-IIIE, supporting Guatemala, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Cuba and Colombia. These acts enabled Mexico to strengthen the links of cooperation with those countries and at the same time, protect its national security, which would be affected by massive migrations of people affected by such phenomena.

Concerning the deployment of Mexican troops outside the country, Mexico has been carefully protecting its foreign policy that is against interventionism and for the peaceful solution of controversies. With the exception in the mentioned cases and its participation in World War II (integrating as a symbolic part of the allied countries[50]), Mexico has refused to be part of multinational forces or coalitions. Nevertheless, today the local and international changes cause Mexico to begin debating its possible participation in peacekeeping operations, integrating multinational forces or joining a coalition.[51]

PROJECTING MEXICAN NATIONAL SECURITY FOR 2010

Mexico's democratic transition and progress influence the consolidation of its new national security system. We see the establishment of new rules for Mexico, in its domestic realm as well as international.[52] The three branches of power have a very loaded agenda and the transformation of the country moves gradually, as it has been happening since the 1980´s. Likewise, the subject being studied is changing slowly, anticipating that a big boost is given to its transformation with the enacting of the corresponding law.[53] In relation to this, the next expected step is that President Fox will present the new law to Congress, which it will have to

review and hopefully pass, introducing supplements and modifications if need be, then returning to the president, for final approval. Determining the exact date for the end of this process it is hard to establish due to multiple factors. However, this law should be passed by the second period of the Fox's administration, during the LIX legislature of the deputy chamber[54] (2003-2006). That is because, until now, the LVIII legislature (2000-2003) had not received the corresponding law initiative from executive. The legislature is saturated with other important law initiatives and only has three session periods to fulfill its constitutional functions.[55] The political parties will be reluctant to act before the crucial federal election of the 2003, which will have a big impact on the structure of Congress.[56]

The Congress has become an impressive force with the arrival of the opposition to the legislative environment and represents the great strength of the future power of Mexico. The balance of the other powers of the union is a real and immediate concern of the political forces.[57]

A New Mexican National Security System may be established that during the second part of President Fox's mandate (2003-2006). According to the Constitutional mandate, this subject will be a matter of great reflection and actions by the different national actors. But, in accordance with the characteristics of the Mexican political transition, one could argue that such time must be conceived as the "assimilation period" of the system, since the new rules will require time to be understood, accepted and fully used. In the last years of the Fox presidential mandate significant national security decisions should be made under the new design being created, but the most important decisions will be put aside for the next six year administration, where the new President will have to foster a national debate on key decisions for the future of Mexico, such as the Mexican military participation in peacekeeping operations or any other activity in the international scope (not separating all this from its foreign policy principles).[58] The integration of joint general staff (unifying the Armed Forces) and the possible designation of a civilian official as the National Defense Secretary (integrating the Armed Forces) is another issue. On the other hand, Mexico should be capable of solving domestic interest challenges through a better decision-making procedure, which would have a long-term vision to achieve the desired development of the country and to combat other risks to national security (drug trafficking, organized crime, terrorism, insurrection, etc.).

For the year 2010, Mexico will have defined the new political and national security systems, with which it will face the 21st century, having, by then, the new rules well established. It will use the elements of the national power to protect and achieve its national interests, both in the local and international environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Mexico exists in a historical moment where internal changes are combined with the evolving international system, and has the opportunity to establish strong institutions which should help it to solve many of its needs and, at the same time, take an important international position to advance its ambitions.[59] Thus, all the changes and modifications that are required are crucial; it must structure a national security system for the proper employment of its national power elements, both in its domestic and international arena.

Democratic cultures as well as national security issues are topics that in Mexico were not understood or assessed according to their real magnitude by the people in general. The creators of the national policies have the obligation to establish structures to consolidate these concepts, and they have to extend them to the people from which participation will fortify the system and make them part of the daily life.

President Fox has had the vision to transform Mexico's National Security, searching to connect it to the people through the corresponding legislative framework (to have a legal support), which would connect the aspirations of the Mexican population with the decisions made by the leadership.

This new National Security System to be implemented in Mexico should have, as a primary feature, a permanent body in charge of advising the executive in the decision-making process, particularly where the interests of the country could be affected, thus eliminating any improvisation or ad hoc arrangements that are ineffective and inefficient.

The new protagonist or position that Mexico is acquiring globally expands the decision-making and postures that are required by the Mexican State. An effective National Security System can respond to the policy demands that the country must expect in its growing international relationships.[60]

This incipient world role necessitates a Mexican Armed Forces that can change and continue being a strong pillar of national security. Its characteristics and abilities serve the national interest, and compensate for the shortcomings of other institutions. Through its active participation its performance will be open to society's critics, and to the supervision of Congress, which should gradually assume more responsibilities over the activities that such Armed Forces will have to accomplish.

For a country with the political, economic, and social characteristics of Mexico, drastic change is bad because it may bring great instability.[61] Thus, it would be difficult to excel. A gradual political transformation is a strategy that over time has achieved good results. That is

why it is reasonable to project that, in the coming years, there will be important but gradual changes that will strengthen the democracy and national security of Mexico.

RECOMMENDATIONS

President Fox must soon present the new national security law bill to the National Congress, so that the lawmakers (house of deputies) can begin the revision and present it to the LIX legislature, who will have to consider this law (all the aspects that require a legal review of such volume).

Once this new national security system has been established within the Fox government, one of its first tasks is to carry out a study to regulate the participation of the Armed Forces in international operations, taking in account that Mexico must not separate the military from its foreign relations policy.[62] In spite of historical reluctance to act internationally, Mexico has to consider that its national interests will be greatly benefited by the participation of Mexican troops in specific peace operations or humanitarian aid, or by protecting its territory from terrorists or other non-state actors.

The Federal Government (2006-2012) should analyze the internal structure of the new national security system, with the adequate approbation of the society, reviewing civil-military relationships.[63] Likewise, it should consider the possible creation of a joint staff of the Mexican Armed Forces. Such a joint military system can make the best use of the military as an element of national power.

Within this new national security system, the Mexican Government must make the necessary plans for achieving "National development",[64] and confronting all threats to national security, such as drug trafficking, terrorism, and organized crime. By utilizing military power more efficiently and effectively, Mexico can expand democracy, improve stability, achieve greater international standing, and continue to develop economically.

Word count: 6014

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