

## New York Times Fooled by Mexican Populist Demagogue

In 2006 Mexico averted what would have been a disaster for Mexico, the United States and Latin America. Felipe Calderon of the PAN party narrowly defeated Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador or AMLO of the PRD party in one of the closest and most amazing national elections ever held in the Western Hemisphere. In January 2006 AMLO was ahead in the polls outdistancing his nearest rivals by two to one; an insurmountable lead in a three party race. Through a series of incredible political blunders and what was later determined to be pure arrogance, AMLO saw his lead diminish to the point where he narrowly lost the July Mexican presidential election to PAN candidate Calderon. Unwilling and unable to accept his defeat, Lopez Obrador cried foul and blamed his loss on corruption including his own party's corruption. AMLO blamed everything and everyone on his loss except himself. Instead of accepting the voter's decision he called the newly elected government "illegitimate" and himself "legitimate". After the election, Mexicans began seeing the true nature of Lopez Obrador and his messianic complex. Lopez Obrador ordered election protest tents to be set up on some of Mexico City's busiest avenues. An estimated 5,000 workers lost their jobs due to street closings. True to form, AMLO acted as if he didn't care, he only cared about himself. Within six months his popularity had descended to single digits. Many Mexicans that had voted for him admitted they had made a mistake by hoping that the "Messiah" would come. No such luck. The New York Times article "Mexico's Politics, Oil Mix" by reporter James C. McKinley, Jr. stated that because of the debate over Mexico's oil problems AMLO's fortunes were rising once again. Perhaps this was wishful thinking or ideology at work but whatever it is it is simply not true. The article inferred that rank and file Mexicans would stand up to "selling out" the nationalized oil company PEMEX to foreign oil companies. The current PEMEX crisis is available crude oil reserves are falling and it is estimated they will be depleted within ten years. There are other oil reserves but these reserves are much deeper in the Earth and require advanced technologies that Mexico does not have. PEMEX needs to develop or acquire these technologies in order to do the deep drilling and stay in business. AMLO has been against the use of any foreigners in PEMEX. In essence, his position is that it is better for PEMEX to go down than to sell it out to foreigners; sort of "if I can't have my cake you won't either." The Times neglected to also state that to many Mexicans PEMEX is not a source of national pride. In many Gulf Coast regions outdated equipment and pipes are leaking and causing environmental disasters; in fact, this is a regular occurrence in AMLO's home state of Tabasco. Corruption is endemic in PEMEX and in the labor union. In the town in Veracruz where we are from, a corroded pipe ruptured dumping thousands of gallons of crude directly into the local river. It is not that PEMEX is for all Mexico and Mexicans either. In our little town they still pump 20,000 barrels of crude daily yet the local elementary school, built by PEMEX, does not have a functional bathroom; just 20 or 30 barrels of oil would build a new one. Where is AMLO when the schoolchildren need him? PEMEX may help fund the government but the benefits do not trickle down. AMLO has capitalized on this fact and exploits the resentment many Mexicans feel toward their government. But as President Felipe Calderon recently stated, running out of oil is simply not an option. What the New York Times totally neglected to say is that AMLO is currently in the process of destroying his own party, the PRD. The recent national PRD party elections pitted AMLO's chosen ally against his rival for party president. The apparent result is that both sides were so corrupt that the national party elections most likely will have to be annulled. Regardless of what happens, the PRD party is splitting wide open and AMLO cannot blame the rupture on anyone else. When your own people are proven to be corrupt it's very hard to point the finger at others. This is AMLO's leftist, populist legacy yet the New York Times article states "The leftist leader has skillfully used the issue to catapult himself back onto center stage in national politics after a year of remaining on the fringes." Simply baloney and not true. AMLO and his fractured, decaying party have been center stage in Mexican headlines for the past year. Since clearly half of his own party does not support him, why would the New York Times call him a "skillful leader"? Maybe it would be helpful and a good idea for the New York Times to take a real look at Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and not just report what they would like to believe.

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