

# Current democracy efforts in mexico essay sample

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



The country which is now Mexico is a history of struggle of its people dating back as early as the 16th century when the Spaniards colonize the Yucatan and Aztec tribes ( Mexico: History of Struggle, n. d.) The paper reported that in 1521, after two years of intense fighting, Tenochtilan which became Mexico City fell into Herman Cortes and the Mayon people were conquered by Henadez de Cordova. The two Spaniards headed the expedition until 1540 when majority of Northern Mexico was colonized. According to the paper, Aztecs and Mayon people were oppressed by the Spanish colonizers for 300 years until they unsuccessfully revolted in 1541. The Spanish colonizers converted the indigenous tribes to Christianity so that they can easily loot their wealth on the pretext that the wealth will be offered to God. The paper reported that the colonizers confiscated vast tracts of land from the tribes and created plantations of wheat, sugar and corn for export thus enriching Spain. It was in the 19th century per report of the paper that threats to Spanish colonizers began. In 1810, the first bloody revolution happened followed by two other uprisings until 1823 that Mexico became a republic after a military rebellion. In 1845, U. S. -Mexico war resulted to annexation of Texas, Utah, Nevada, California, New Mexico and Colorado to the USA.

The paper continued by saying that despite the new constitution enacted by President Benito Juarez in 1857 to abolish colonialism, no land reform was made and the Mexican people continue to live in poverty up to the monopolistic 30 year reign of the Porfio Diaz in 1876 that resulted to a revolt in 1910. It is an accepted fact that up to this 21st century, majority of the Mexicans are still oppressed people wallowing in pool of poverty and facing a never ending struggle for a taste of real democracy as evidenced by

outlawed Zapatistas and EZLN (Brief description of Mexico's current development status , 2007) The U. S. and Mexico share a common border and whatever uncertainties in Mexico will affect USA as Mexico is also a major trading partner. It has been the policy of the US to lend a Current Democracy Efforts in Mexico 2 helping hand to Mexico to the point of providing financial assistance to solve its domestic problem. But despite the assistance from US, Mexico remains impoverished.

Expert analysis revealed that the assistance from US did not satisfactorily solve the problems for the reason that the real cause is not addressed and the assistance is merely for cosmetic effect to cover its economic opportunistic motive. This paper aims to analyze the successes and failures of the U. S. activities in Mexico to promote democracy and offer a policy analysis and direction to make the US involvement a win-win scenario for both countries. The U. S and Mexico are just adjacent countries and as such domestic developments in the latter is of interest to the former. This is due to the fact that Mexico is the largest trading partner of U. S. and the country has replaced the Middle East as the principal source of oil for America ( Hannon , 1984). The author reported that about 82% of Mexico's import is being supplied by the US. Mexico ranks third in volume of international business for the U. S.; Japan and Canada being the other leading countries. It is for this reason that economic situation in Mexico directly affect the US economy.

Although US cannot directly mingle with the economic affairs of Mexico, the US made it a point that its role is to ensure a politically stable, economically

active and viable Mexico. The author revealed that as of 1984, the US has invested about \$7 billion in Mexico to ensure healing of the wounds inflicted by the US-Mexico war in In addition, continuance of extensive trade and protection from the effects of political unrest in other Central American countries were also desired. The first of the US activities in Mexico to assist the country and promote democracy was documented by Hart in 2002 in his book *Empire and Revolution*. It was in 1883 during the reign of Porfirio Diaz when Mexico arranged a meeting with prominent American politicians and Current Democracy Efforts in Mexico 3 industrialists in New York. The agreement was that the U. S. will build the Mexico's railway system and assist in privatization of the countryside and development of Mexico's vast natural resources to develop the economy which during that time is in financial chaos due to the \$70 billion outside debt of Mexico.

This debt was incurred by the previous administration due to its protective stance of not letting any outside investors do business in Mexico which is more of a socialist approach. The agreement opened the doors of Mexico to free trade and foreign investment which the US will be benefited in terms of attractive return on investment. This was done by the US which at that time is basically protecting Mexico from European investors. The author reported that the result of US assistance is fivefold increase in Mexico's gross national product and American colonization of the country which left the poor campesinos or farm workers still poor and strip of their ancestral lands. The author further stated that Mexico became the laboratory of American foreign policies which later on was adopted by the US in promoting business and democracy not only in Latin America but also in Europe, Middle East, Asia

and the rest of the world. The author further concluded that the result of American oppression is the creation of the Zapatistas, a peasant organization operating in Chiapas and other rural areas of Mexico.

The Zapatistas is regarded as an underground guerilla group fighting for land reform and genuine democracy for all of Mexicans even up this present century. It can be noted from available documents that the US assistance policy towards Mexico and other economically and militarily weak countries is dominated by economic considerations and maintaining social and political stability. The US claimed that they are doing this to promote democracy and sovereignty of the country being assisted. In 1994, the US exports of goods and services to Mexico grew four folds from \$12. 3 billion in 1986 to excess of \$50 billion in 1994 resulting to a trade surplus of \$1. 3 billion (U. S. Department of State Fact Sheet, 1995). The Fact Current Democracy Efforts in Mexico 4 Sheet also revealed that the reason for this growth in Mexican economy is due to its restructuring that involved trade and investment laws liberalization thus reducing gradually its dependence on revenues from exported petroleum products.

Mexico is a contracting party of General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) in 1986, joined the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in 1993 and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1994. All of this contributed to growth of Mexican economy, the Fact sheet further reported. Due to the positive impact of trade liberalization, in 1993, Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the US hoping that further economic development of the country will ensue.

Under the NAFTA, the worker's right will be safeguarded together with democratic resolution of employee-employers conflict. Initial result of NAFTA as revealed by the Fact Sheet indicated a 23% trade growth between US and Mexico compared to only 13.4% in 1993 with GATT and OECD. On the benefit side of the workers, Hart (2002) reported that the Mexicans working in US manufacturing companies in Mexico side of the border were offered much lower rate than their counterparts in same industry inside the US territory. This caused labor unrest and illegal migrants to US increased. At the height of this economic recovery, an economic crisis happened in December 1994 which started with the Mexican peso devaluation.

This resulted to severe economic destabilization of Mexico and US being the biggest exporter to Mexico will also be affected. More and more businesses are closing daily and unemployment flared up again brought about by unhealthy competition from cheap US goods exported to Mexico. The Fact Sheet further reported that the unemployment rate caused the uncontrolled illegal migration of Mexican workers to the US in search of jobs. The crisis caused a global alarm among the economists of developed countries and an international effort was generated with the leadership Current Democracy Efforts in Mexico 5 of the US. In February 1995, the US and Mexico signed an agreement to a \$20 billion support package from US Treasury Department to stabilize exchange rate and maintain an orderly economic situation in Mexico. During the signing, the Fact Sheet reported that the US keep on reiterating that the support package will minimize influx of illegal immigrants from Mexico thus preventing them from dangers of human rights violation in

border crossing to the US; in effect, promoting democracy apart from getting the Mexican economy on track again.

The Fact sheet never mentioned anything about the effect of the support package to alleviate the plight of the lowly Mexican workers. Another foreign policy of the US is its cooperation with Mexico on illegal drugs. The support of the US is in its joint task forces that target big drug lords, money laundering and related precursor chemicals. Both countries according to Fact Sheet are developing modern initiatives to arrest fugitives, recover stolen vehicles, illegal arms sale and corruption within the government system. The Fact Sheet did not mention the amount contributed by the US to counter illegal drugs trade but mentioned that the illegal drug initiatives was wholly financed by Mexico since 1993. Initiatives previous to that were all supported from US funds in terms of army training and provision for intelligence and mobility of the forces. The Fact Sheet reported that " Mexican law-enforcement officials seized more than 247 metric tons of cocaine, made more than 100, 000 drug-related arrests, and eradicated 147, 000 hectares of illicit drug crops opium poppy and marijuana during 1989-94. In 1994, Mexican , seizures of heroin, marijuana, and precursor chemicals increased." (Fact Sheet, Illegal Drugs, 4th par.).

The fact that is very noticeable here is the absence of activities related to eliminate poverty which stem from oppression of the Mexican masses and leading to increased drug trade to earn money and feed the family. Current Democracy Efforts in Mexico 6 Political stability of Mexico is one of the policies being considered supporting by the US. If the voting population feels,

there is irregularity in their vote casting and counting, social unrest will follow and this will affect the economic stability of the country causing distrust in the government and the officials running it. If there is distrust coupled with oppression, then the exercise of democracy promotion is a failure. The US government supports the fully participatory type of democracy. To this effect, during the 1994 elections, the US provided not less than \$1.5 million to Mexico through USAID for election-related programs. No other information is available as to how the money was allocated to activities which are election-related. The election in 1994 resulted to overwhelming victory of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which left the Mexican masses in silent protest, The Fact Sheet reported. In the Presidential election held on July 2, 2006, the declared winner Felipe Calderon won by just 0.56% over his opponent Andres Abrader (Brief description of Mexico's current development status. 2007).

This winning margin according to the Brief description cast doubts on supporters of the losing candidate and resulted to request of vote recount. The election court ruled out that the cheating charges being thrown to elected president Calderon were without basis. This left the Mexican population completely polarized. The elected president was immediately congratulated by US notwithstanding the result of the ongoing investigation to the dismay of the Mexican masses. Once again, they feel that their rights were trampled upon not by their fellow Mexicans but by an alien country who supported by funding the election of the new president who is their choice. It is quite visible here that the support of US is hinged on the philosophy that if they invest in something, there must be a substantial return. In this case,



from their funds, they manipulated the vote counting, declaring void those ballots for the other candidate and consider the ballots for their bet although in reality it is void per report of the Brief description article.

Current Democracy Efforts in Mexico 7 After thorough discussion of the US activities to promote democracy in Mexico, it is quite clear that the effort and funds misfired and hit the wrong target. In the first US involvement just after the Civil War in 1883 during the reign of Porfirio Diaz, it is very evident that the purpose of US in developing the Mexican infrastructure and railroad system is to speed up its conquest and colonization of Mexico in order to enrich themselves at the expense of the oppressed Mexican masses. The free trade and legalization of investments of foreign nationals resulted in stripping away of the rights of the oppressed masses to till their lands and developed their wealth. The US cleverly exploited the vast natural resources of Mexico thru partnership with local entrepreneurs who were the ones much benefited than the owners of the land themselves. The law of capitalist society is very evident here and once again proven that those who got the money and capital got also the influence and the power as well to make more wealth. It could have been much better if the land was not sold to Americans and instead just rent it for a certain number of years.

Once again it was proven that really Mexico is a history of struggle. On the \$20 billion support by the US to check the unstable economic condition in 1994 brought about by the devaluation of the Mexican peso, this US initiative is geared to financiers and businessmen to stabilize the exchange rate and did not trickle down to the benefit of the masses who at that time is

experiencing unemployment due to closure of businesses that were not able to compete with the cheap goods and services being exported by the U. S. It could have been much better if the support package is spent on increasing wages of workers in companies in Mexico which is very low compared to US standard and increasing health benefits as part of the package when Mexico signed the NAFTA. Doing these might have prevented the rise of illegal migration to US, a problem that the US also considered as a pressing one. Increasing the wage of workers will put them in a position to buy more products from the US thus encouraging Current Democracy Efforts in Mexico 8 economic stability of both countries and reducing anxiety of citizens which can lead to higher productivity.

In checking the proliferation of illegal drugs in both countries, it was learned that the support of US is in terms of army training and supply of warfare materials. The trained Mexican army was then more used for quelling the underground peasant movement seeking genuine political reform and democracy in rural Mexico like Chiapas where human rights violation reports abound. This resulted to a more dissatisfaction of the masses and increase in number of member and supporters who themselves were once a victim of human right abuses. These human rights abuses could have been prevented if the drugs trade and use was made legal. The right to vote and choose the right leader according to one's belief and conscience is a fundamental human right. Many countries were economically destabilized because the citizenry don't believe that their leader is the right one. The practice of US in financially supporting their own choice of candidate cannot be kept secret from the citizenry as in the case of the present Mexican president.

From the current political situation in Mexico, it appears that President Calderon is not the popular choice. The thought of ballot count manipulation perpetrated by the US lingers in the mind of the majority. Thus the exercise of democratic right to vote was not achieved successfully and this leads to a very delicate polarization of the citizenry. The US support should be channeled through a non-government organization proven by the citizenry to be neutral. The support should be spent on modernization of the electoral process and not on funding campaign expenses of any candidate. There should be public accounting of the expenses to erase the doubts and suspicion of the voting population which is very common in a democratic society. For check and balance, observers from the funding country and witnesses from other Current Democracy Efforts in Mexico 9 countries should be invited to personally check the progress of campaign sorties, voter's turnout and vote tallying.

The Brief Description of Mexico's current development status (2007) revealed that " Mexico is undergoing several changes on a social, cultural, economic, and political area. These changes have an unequal impact on different social groups and levels, regions and sectors in the country" (1st par.). The paper revealed that according to 2006 UNDP Annual report, Mexico reached in 2004 a level of development with Human Development Index (HDI) of 0. 821 ranking the country as number 53 in the world. The paper further revealed that this score doesn't hold true for the whole Mexico for the reason that the development efforts of the government is not equally distributed and the gap continues widening with time. The UNDP report further revealed that Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas have similar HDI as Iran,

Kyrgystan and El Salvador while Nuevo Leon has similar index as developed countries. This inequality in the development effort and in the distribution of public assets broaden the gap of rich and poor in a national and local level. The paper added that " Poverty in rural areas has proliferated enormously in Mexico because agriculture has been tossed aside inasmuch as national development.

The destruction of the agricultural sector is a consequence of several structural adjustment and free trade policies. "(5th par.). From this information, it appears that territorial inequality in terms of getting support from the government is the main cause of poverty in Mexico. There is more people in extreme poverty in rural areas than in urbanized localities. From the above information, it is advisable to ensure that financial supports should reach the rural areas through non-government organizations. Doing so will prevent corruption and develop the feeling of true democracy as support is channelled to where it is really needed. This move will surely result to a desirable win-win situation between US and Mexico.

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