

engagement in the extensive trade in drugs, which extends to the security forces at virtually all levels; and that the crisis in the economy and in legitimacy has renewed and reinforced a variety of forces for change within and far beyond the state which make consensus extremely difficult to achieve, are expressed in simmering and often violent civil conflicts in a number of states, and which have the potential to explode and undermine order and confidence still further. In terms of everyday life the sense of insecurity is embodied in a rising crime rate, sections of the country where kidnappings for ransom are endemic and a difused sense of increased violence and threat of violence, symbolized by the increased presence of the military in various parts of the land.

B. 2 Current Context

This authors brief exploration of five Mexican states (including the Federal District) and review of the Mexican daily press for a month yielded the following global highlights of the current moment in Mexico:

* *the 'telenovela'*: who needs fiction when magic realism unfolds daily in the press, television and in courts in Texas. The unsolved murder of former Guerro state governor, PRI Secretary General and former brother-in-law of the President, Jose Francisco Riuz Massieu, the engagement of his brother, former Attorney General, Mario Riuz Massieu, in illicit profits from the drug trade, the alleged involvement of ex-President Salinas' brother Raul in the murder, the accusations of his ex-secretary and his father's ex-secretary about family engagement in the drug trade and the relationship of all this to the wealth, power and corporate manipulations of ex-President Carlos Salinas while in and out of power, are a fairly constant feature of the daily media in Mexico. The effect is not only to make the exiled President an unpopular and "seriously flawed" figure, but to deeply undermine confidence in his successor and most of those governing the state/party structure. The matter remains current with the revelation that the U.S. Justice Department is investigating Raoul Salinas and others on charges of money laundering and the use of Mexican government institutions for that purpose.

* *the drug trade and the crisis around "certification"*: U.S. fixation with its drug problem and the international implications of its drug policy together with the loud echoes from Congressional posturing and threats on all sides kept the Mexican press, government and legislature in turmoil for several weeks. Accusations in the New York Times about the drug trade involvements of two state governors (Sonora and Morelos), cessions of Mexican sovereignty permitting freer access and activity by U.S.D.E.A. agents on Mexican soil and the upswell of interest in the Texas-based trial of Mario Riuz Massieu combined to keep the pot boiling. Symbolic of the depth of corruption was the escape of a leading narcotrafficker who simply seems to have worked out of police custody, a couple of hours before President Clinton's announcement of Mexican certification, and the arrest of first one and then another prominent General for engagement in the trade. The loud debate over certification and its implications -- including injury to Mexican sovereignty and national pride -- from time to time touched not only on the peculiar schizophrenia of U.S. concern with Mexico, but on the seemingly useless existence of the NAFTA agreements. While the latter might be understood to be the beginning of a new relationship of confidence and respect, the U.S. certification debate indicated no respect, little understanding and little affection for Mexico. The passing of the certification moment, no more than the visit of President Clinton