

Sergio Aguayo Quezada

# UPON RUPTURE TOWARD AN AGREEMENT

---

## Opposition parties demand the share of power they believe they have received from society

---

We live in tense and confused times in which any variant of confrontation or negotiation is possible. There are more questions than answers in spite of the fact that we are playing with the future.

Tension is logical because indifference is impossible. At times the desire arises to act impulsively and prove that one is right. Faced with the enormous costs in eliminating those who do not think in the same way, then comes the temptation to reach some type of agreement.

The dichotomy is very generalized. The government, its party and its ideologists are not accustomed to diversity. Made for power and impunity, they respond with an inflexible "we won" attitude to any challenge. They relax and call for a legality and a prudence that they do not cease to abuse. Perhaps they only play with time to wear out the opposition and to wait until their energies are calmed; they have never lacked ingenuity.

In spite of this, the caution and restraint of the actions of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the

government are noteworthy. This, they claim, is due to the strength of the opposition, which is divided over what to do and whom to blame, and due to the widespread feeling of discontent with the PRI which is waiting for more propitious times.

Opposition parties demand the share of power they believe they have received from society. They insist on legality, but they leave their options open. The precedent and the irregularities of this election have made their claims credible. At the same time, they practice the art of staying in tune with the vigorous social mobilization.

The opposition is supported by its traditional grassroots membership and by a citizenry irritated by government corruption, the economic crisis and the surrender of portions of the national sovereignty to foreign countries. The offensive cynicism of the PRI's old guard and the arrogant haughtiness of its young technocrats have also added to the damage.

A situation like this can lead to violence. Nevertheless, there is a question that no one can answer, although many have attempted it. Is society prepared for a confrontation or does it prefer to negotiate? What poll, by what means can we uncover what society wishes?

One thing we know for certain: there are three major political blocs. They are asymmetrical in their power

and internal cohesion, but none of them has the ability, at least in the short term, to eliminate the others.

The relative equilibrium of power would seem to make negotiations appropriate. However, what are they going to discuss? who was elected President? what Congress did the people elect? Are they going to discuss the laws which permitted an election that left everyone dissatisfied?

Questions without answers multiply. Will Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas be vindicated and demonstrate his triumph legally with existing information? What will happen when all peaceful avenues are exhausted and December 1 arrives? Would Cárdenas' coalition and the population in general resist a call for direct confrontation? What would and will happen to the National Action Party (PAN)? How will the PRI react? Will it succeed in recovering and taking the offensive? Will it renounce its devious practices? Will it indefinitely continue to respect a prolonged dissidence that is growing? Will the PRI be able to govern?

### A Country Ready for Change

These are not purely speculative questions, because unless something unexpected develops the government has the power to anoint Carlos Salinas de Gortari as president, even if they have to do it in a half-empty Congress and in a building converted into a bunker.

Independent of the decisions that are gradually being adopted, social mobilization reveals a country ready

---

### Is society prepared for a confrontation or does it prefer to negotiate?

---

for change and perhaps ready to accept negotiations that break the backbone of authoritarianism, that adapt the legal mold to the new political practice and that arrive at a rupture in the system.

In other countries an agreed upon rupture has been implemented. This formula consists of a revolution, that is, a revolution within the framework of legality and within limits accepted and legitimized by the society. This scheme eliminates high-level, secret negotiations.

An agreed upon rupture in Mexico seems possible for several reasons. Widespread social mobilization exists, there is a relative equality of powers and perhaps most important, the proposals made by the three major blocs advocate reforms to the existing order, not its destruction. The point of greatest consensus concerns politics, not the economy. Democracy is demanded more than a radical change in the ownership of the means of production.

An agreed upon rupture, an implicitly difficult concept, confronts a further obstacle in Mexico: the dispute over who will be the next president. If that obstacle can be overcome, the time seems to be right to discuss how to provide for more independent and transparent elections; how to strengthen the legislative and judicial power, the municipalities and the states; how to increase social participation in activities that affect the entire nation, such as democracy in the capital and in the private television concession, Televisa.

This is a difficult moment. The fate of the nation resides in what the three major political blocs and their allies do or let be done. Opposition parties have to balance a respect for the expectations they have created and a fidelity to their promises, with a good dose of realism that allows them to be a viable and united option.

Salinas de Gortari does not only have problems with the coalition of interests that support him, but also with at least half of population who may accept him as the legal president but not as the legitimate president. Perhaps he won, but we will never know, and the

ghost of fraud will always haunt him. His silence, that of an accomplice, does not reduce doubts about the elections in light of the underhanded methods that his supporters used to elect him. Will Salinas de Gortari and his team be able to reform the PRI? Will that be enough? Will he be able to understand that to reach a respectable place in our political history, he will have to help to destroy the system that made him?

Perhaps we shall have an agreed upon rupture and a transition to democracy. Perhaps not. In this least opportune moment, the polling fever has ended. We are left with no indication of the preference of millions of

---

### An agreed upon rupture in Mexico seems possible for several reasons

---



---

### The fate of the nation resides in what the three major political blocs and their allies do or let be done

---

Mexicans who followed these elections with passion and hope. Declarations, marches and opinions allow me to be certain that I am not alone in this desire for change and in this obsessive question: negotiation or confrontation?

How clearly I perceive the dishonest ambiguity of posing the problem and evading the resolution. In January of this year after much deliberation and soul-searching, I decided to vote for Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas for president. Having to put the "X" on the emblem of a party that I did not respect deeply bothered me. At that moment, there was no alternative. At this moment, and for all kinds of reasons, I give a symbolic and individual vote for an agreed upon rupture.

□