

As Mexican-president elect prepares to take office

López Obrador backtracks campaign promises, creates new National Guard

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Less than two weeks before Mexican president-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) takes office, he has repudiated the majority of his electoral promises. His administration will accelerate the militarization of the country and intensify the ties between the government and the financial elite.

Last week, AMLO, a supposed “leftist,” announced the creation of a new National Guard as part of the administration’s security plan. During his campaign and in the aftermath of the elections, he repeatedly vowed to take the military off the streets. There is widespread anger at the catastrophic levels of violence that have torn apart Mexican society, with murder rates matching those in war-torn countries. Since the “war on drugs” began in 2006, more than 250,000 deaths and 30,000 disappearances have been recorded by official statistics.

AMLO’s anti-militaristic posturing undoubtedly played a role in his election victory, which earned him the most votes out of any Mexican president in history and his party, the Movement for National Regeneration (Morena), control of both houses of Congress in the July 1 elections.

His phony pledges of breaking with the “repressive strategy” of previous administrations have been fully exposed before he even takes office. In fact, AMLO is doubling down on the militarization of society in preparation for the growth of the class struggle.

The proposed National Guard will initially be composed of 50,000 members of the Army, Navy, and Federal Police and will incorporate new recruits in later years. By 2021, the National Guard will consist of between 120,000 and 150,000 members—increasing the personnel of the Armed Forces by about 85 percent.

AMLO also boasts of closer military ties than his immediate predecessors, former presidents Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto. Neither Calderón nor Peña Nieto succeeded in legalizing the role of the military in domestic operations. The Interior Security Law—Peña Nieto’s highly unpopular attempt at this formalization—was declared unconstitutional by the Mexican Supreme Court last week. Now, AMLO is surpassing these right-wing administrations by seeking to amend the constitution to codify the National Guard into law.

The new administration has also backtracked on other key electoral promises at the behest of finance capital. When the Morena-controlled legislature moved to pass a bill that would cut bank commissions, AMLO quickly declared that he would veto such a proposal. “We are not going to modify the legal framework having to do with the economic, financial and fiscal in this first stage of government,” said AMLO. “There will be no initiative to modify the legal framework of the banks and financial institutions. Did I make myself clear?”

To leave no room for doubt as to who would be shaping the policies of the new administration, on November 16, AMLO announced a new economic advisory council that is entirely composed of executives from Mexico’s most powerful corporations, including Grupo Salinas, Televisa, Banorte and Interjet. In a video posted on social media, AMLO revealed that the group will meet with him every two to three months and was formed at the direct request of the business sector. This move follows similar reassurances to finance capital after his cancellation of Mexico City’s new international airport.

As for the defense of the tens of thousands of Central

American immigrants traveling through Mexico to the US, AMLO promised to uphold “human rights” with one breath and pledged to keep a friendly relationship with the Trump administration on the next. In practice, his role as a junior partner of US imperialism will ensure that the new government will intensify the deportation and abuse of immigrants. In 2018, Mexican authorities detained over 75,000 immigrants from Central America and deported 90 percent, according to government statistics.

AMLO’s promises to repeal the energy reforms have also been long abandoned. In an interview with *Bloomberg*, AMLO’s campaign chief noted that the government “wouldn’t aim for an overhaul of the energy sector, nor any other major constitutional reform in the first three years of his government because he needs to focus on cutting the budget.” AMLO’s chief of staff has noted that the incoming administration will honor the oil contracts signed by Peña Nieto and would not seek to control or subsidize gas prices.

The incoming administration has sought to give itself a “left” guise by holding small referendums on spending projects, such as the so-called “Maya Train” that will link up cities in the southern states of Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Campeche and Chiapas. He has also vowed to remove the most egregious perks for congressional staff, including stipends for gasoline and high per diems on international trips. These moves are a cheap way to try to bolster his “leftist” credentials with the masses. The living conditions of government representatives are never seriously affected, and nothing will be done to fundamentally alter social conditions for the working class.

AMLO’s populist phrase-mongering will soon crash against the realities of the subservience of his policies to the ruling class and the social powder keg that is Mexico.

This has already been revealed in new outbreaks of class struggle, such as the 2017 *gasolinazo* protests against the explosion of gas prices. Half of the Mexican population remains mired in poverty, while the vast share of social wealth held by a very small layer at the top continues to mount.

The recent 2018 *Latinobarómetro* survey revealed that only 11 percent of Mexicans trust political parties, compared to 30 percent in 2006. Eighty-four percent of Mexicans said that they are dissatisfied with

democracy, and 48 percent said that they live in a democracy with “serious problems.”

The July election has handed control of government at all levels to AMLO and Morena. But any popular illusions that they will embark on meaningful attempts to address the social crisis—what AMLO has termed a “fourth Mexican revolution”—will soon be dashed. AMLO will serve his role by cracking down on any independent movement of the working class that threatens to undercut the interests of the ruling class and its banks and corporations. Capitalism today is even more fraught by its own internal contradictions than during the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, when the bourgeoisie unleashed the army on the student movement in Mexico City.

All the pseudo-left parties that called for “critical support” for AMLO bear political responsibility for the crimes that will be carried out by the incoming administration. The International Committee of the Fourth International insists that the only way forward is a decisive break with AMLO and Morena and a fight to unite the international working class under a socialist program.



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