

## **Four PRI Governors at Tamaulipas Meeting Agree that NAFTA Has Been "Exhausted"**

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The PRI governors of four Mexican states meeting recently in Tampico, Tamaulipas to discuss a wide-range of topics agreed that NAFTA is exhausted as a source of job growth. They believe that a new agreement is necessary with the U.S. that will include issues such as migration, education, energy and drug trafficking.

At the meeting were Governor Tomás Yarrington Ruvalcaba of Tamaulipas, Gov. Natividad González Parás of Nuevo León, Gov. Enrique Martínez y Martínez of Coahuila, and Gov. Manuel Angel Núñez Soto of Hidalgo.

Proof to them of NAFTA's growing irrelevance is the fact that Mexican economic growth was under 3% during the past four years. Although the four state leaders called on President Fox to launch new initiatives, they themselves have already begun joint programs to push forward development in the areas of energy, security and environment, said Governor González of Nuevo León.

Governor Martínez of Coahuila emphasized that Mexico needs reforms that will allow for sustained development. "We have a gas basin in our region of which we can not take advantage," he said.

The governor of Hidalgo, Manuel Angel Núñez Soto, suggested that a major airport be constructed in Tizayuca, Hidalgo. This would be instead of the new one planned for Mexico City which has been delayed by protests linked to the acquisition of land for the project.

Governor Yarrington of Tamaulipas noted that northeast Mexico has competitive advantages in the generation of electric power and in the production of natural gas. He and the other three governors at the October 2004 meeting want these activities to become a springboard for regional development.

Yarrington also called for greater inclusion of local companies and workers in the region's natural gas projects. The four governors also proposed the improvement of the infrastructure that links the U.S.-Mexico border crossings in northeast Mexico with Saltillo, Monterrey, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro and Mexico City. They want this infrastructure proposal to be included in the working agenda of President Fox's Consejo de Competividad (Competiveness Council).

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