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MEXICAN STUDENT STRIKE APPARENTLY WANING

The four-month-old student strike in Mexico appears nearly over despite hard-line attempts to continue the dispute with the government.

The National Student Strike Council (CNE) voted on 20 November to end the strike, and formal decisions by the individual school assemblies may soon follow. Rising student attendance, especially at the National University, preceded the decision and reflected student concern over the impending loss of a year's credit. The knowledge that the government was prepared to take drastic action, including closing all universities, may also have played a part in the decision. Recent presidential actions suggest the government was lining up support for a decisive stand.

Some of the more radical student groups, especially at the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN), the nation's second

largest school, disagree with what appears to be the general sentiment for a return. "Shock groups," armed with machetes, broke up an attempted meeting at the National University law school on 2 December. Other extremist efforts to continue the strike included an attack on 27 November on students who had returned to class. The attack left one dead and two seriously wounded. This week, students clashed with Mexico City bus drivers over a slight fare rise. Such incidents have provoked general criticism, however, in contrast to earlier public sympathy for the students' cause, and any further violence is unlikely to be coordinated or widespread.

Radicals may desert the CNE--some groups at IPN are planning to form a National Fight Council--but barring a major incident that could rekindle tempers on both sides, most students will probably report back by next week. ~~SECRET~~

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2

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