

OUR VOICE

Both the Asian Pacific Economic Coordination (APEC) forum in Los Cabos and the Mexico-U.S. binational conference in Mexico City last November show once again Washington's preeminence in world decisions. They also demonstrate that the United States is using the multilateral and bilateral economic spheres—the latter of fundamental importance for Mexicans—as the launching pad for its anti-terrorist offensive at the expense of trade and political relations with its main partners. This offensive is focused on Irak and supposedly the defense of U.S. security against Al Qaeda's threats of aggression against Western targets. It also has a direct impact on the interests of countries like Mexico that once again will have to wait for strategic bilateral negotiations until Washington's hegemonic demands have been satisfied. For Mexico, this disadvantageous situation is not a small matter; it means an important delay for the issues of greatest concern on the bilateral agenda, and a relative change in the traditional terms of being neighbors with the United States.

Due to the fact that historically, relations with the United States have had a critical effect on many aspects of our national political and economic life, this impasse will influence—as it already has begun to—Mexico's political debate. Certainly, since September 11, Mexicans are more divided than ever about relations with the United States. They have seen how, after the democratic elections of 2000, but above all since the tragic terrorist attacks against the United States, the possibilities for a substantial negotiation have been categorically stymied. In the framework of the anti-terrorist struggle and given the U.S. refusal to offer clear perspectives of potential results on issues such as migration, trade, the environment, etc., let alone definitive solutions, the perception is growing among the public, even the most tolerant and inclusive parts of the public, and among sectors of the political class, that the efforts of the democratic political process and the strategic idea Mexico has put forward of drawing closer to the United States have been useless.

On the one hand, the historic change of July 2000, which put into office the first democratic government in Mexico, has not been enough for Washington to change its policy toward our country, thus contributing to the consolidation of that political change. All this supports the hypothesis, widespread in different academic sectors, about Washington's disinterest in Mexican democracy. On the other hand, this liability in bilateral relations has levied a political cost on the country. If we accept that the advance of democracy is evidence of Mexico's political modernization, something of the utmost importance in both Latin and North America, and that the strategic drawing closer to Washington was a very big political wager domestically, the United States' indifference to these efforts have already had serious implications both for the legitimacy of the administration of President Fox (who regrettably has been unable to deliver effective results based on this strategy), for the internal political process and for the medium-term continuity of the very policy of drawing closer to the United States that so intelligently and rationally the administration had proposed. With things this way, the costs have been high and Washington's responses very unsatisfactory when negotiating some terms of the bilateral agenda. We shall have to wait for our neighbor to resolve its pending business with Irak and, with that, ensure that it maintains the absolute unipolar control that it has exercised since the end of the Cold War.

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However, not everything can wait even from the point of view of U.S. interests. Proof of this are the great power's constant pressure and invitations, not only to Mexico but to the entire community of nations, to join its strategies and actions against terrorism and in favor of its national security, understood as the axis for world security. Despite this, Mexico has not acted unconditionally, divorcing itself from its own interests and principles and subordinating itself to its powerful neighbor, as some voices in the country have insinuated. This can be seen in Mexico's attitude in the UN Security Council with regard to the discussion

about Iraq, an issue on which it had notable differences with the United States, as Raúl Benítez Manaut explains in his article in this issue's "Politics" section. Benítez Manaut also argues that these differences will not have a negative impact on Mexico's bilateral relations with the United States.

In this section we offer our readers an analysis of an issue that U.S. foreign policy has stressed since September 11: smart borders, supposedly the best solution for guaranteeing the creation of a security perimeter for the United States, but which has undoubtedly affected important interests of its neighbors. For the case of Mexico, we have a detailed analysis of the implications of some of the actions included in the smart border strategy for the country as a whole and the border area particularly; specialist José Luis Piñeyro alerts us about the negative repercussions for migration, employment in the maquila plants, tourism and even remittances from Mexican emigrants. Alicia Fuentes clearly and succinctly explains the development of the strategy and the concept itself from its inception after September 11, as well as some of the measures and actions implemented both for and by Canada and Mexico.

We conclude this section with an article by Carlos Casillas about the first trends for the July 2003 federal elections; he analyzes scenarios for Mexico's governability in the first federal elections after the transition to democracy.

One of the new administration's pending tasks is the definitive solution of the conflict in Chiapas, which emerged together with the North American Free Trade Agreement January 1, 1994, and which nine years later has still not found its way toward negotiations, much less consensus. In our "Society" section, three undisputed actors in the conflict (the government commissioner for peace and an unquestioned pioneer of democracy in Mexico, Luis H. Álvarez; the former bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas and well known social fighter and defender of indigenous rights, Samuel Ruiz García; and the former electoral councillor and current minister of the interior of the state of Chiapas, Emilio Zebadúa) present their points of view and explain the reasons why they think it has not been possible to move forward in the peace process. The three also describe the actions that they have each carried out in their own fields over the last year to try to unravel the problem.

In "Economy," we offer the reader an interesting article by expert Enrique Dussel about the development of the maquiladora industry for export in Mexico's North. Dussel analyzes the question both from the point of view of its structural impact on the economy and the social consequences of this strategy for development based on exports. We also include a rigorous analysis by economist Enrique Pino about the role that the re-privatized banking system has played in recent years in the Mexican economy; not only has it not effectively fulfilled its classic social role of financing businesses and individuals through loans, but it has also had to be bailed out by the government and saved from bankruptcy at an extremely high cost for the public. The banking system, argues Pino, far from being the driving force behind national development, has been an obstacle, and everything indicates that this will continue with the sale of Mexico's largest banks to foreign capital.

The recent U.S. elections show where the new concerns of the American public lie: they center on national security and the inviolability of the country's territory, two certainties that the terrorist attacks shattered. This is why the Republicans won an unequivocal victory, as did to a certain extent President Bush, who has thus become the champion of the struggle for ensuring the safety of Americans at all costs. We present articles by two different specialists on the November 5 election results: César Pérez analyzes the elections in light of a critique of a dysfunctional electoral system that fosters only minor adjustments, not truly structural or profound changes, almost regardless of the results. From that point of view, he also looks at the participation of the Hispanic caucus in both houses of Congress. Patricia de los Ríos looks at the new balance of forces both in the federal legislature and the governors' mansions. The new situation is undoubtedly unbalanced since the balloting gives the president *carte blanche* to implement his policy practically unchecked.

"United States Affairs" also includes an article by Celina Bárcenas looking at the U.S. Northeast, the third in a series about the Hispanic market in the United States. Political scientist Cecilia Imaz contributes on an issue that is an example of the transnational nature of politics today and of the complexity of the inter-

action between the United States and Mexico: the influence of Mexican migrants to the United States on local political power in Mexico.

The "Canadian Issues" section is also dedicated to an analysis of smart borders, with an article by researcher Teresa Gutiérrez-Haces who takes a historical look at the role of the border and trade relations with the United States in the construction of the Canadian identity and the determination of its political life. Based on that background, she examines the consequences for Canada of having accepted the implementation of a smart border strategy with the corresponding cost of subordination to U.S. geopolitical interests.

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Our "Art and Culture" section presents the work of an important Chihuahuan artist, Mauricio Gómez Morin, whose graphic proposals seduce the viewer through the imaginary worlds they represent, the mastery of his technique and the versatility in the media he has chosen to express himself: painting, etching, illustration and even collage, among others. Margot Crucet contributes an article that takes us through the different times and places merged in the artistic proposal of Ernesto Ríos, a member of a generation of young photographers who combines traditional media with modern technological tools to construct his own interpretation of the world and himself. And finally, we journey through the unknown world of the multiple collections and varied objects gathered over a period of 450 years in the life of our National Autonomous University of Mexico, with the exposition "Unknown Worlds: Marvels and Curiosities of the UNAM," displayed in the Old College of San Ildefonso, a landmark in our institution.

"The Splendor of Mexico" takes us to Chihuahua, our country's largest state, bordering on the United States, to discover that the North was also home to important pre-Hispanic peoples, as Arturo Guevara introduces us to the Paquimé culture and the imposing constructions of Casas Grandes. Claudia Molinari guides us to the nomadic and sedentary groups that peopled the territory when the Spanish arrived and their fierce resistance to the invaders' customs and traditions. The Tarahumara of today were forged as a people in that colonial struggle that finally pushed them into the majestic mountain ranges to reorganize their lives away from the military and cultural control of the new owners of the land. Karla Muñoz reminds us that this struggle also involved groups of missionaries who, dedicated to spreading the Gospel despite the violent rejection of the local indigenous groups, set up innumerable missions in Chihuahua, some of which are part of the state's cultural heritage. Finally, the pacification of Mexico's North could not be understood without including the presidios; in our "History" section, architect Luis Arnal brings us a description of the role these forts played, manned by soldiers paid by the Crown or by civilians who sought protection against the attacks by nomadic indigenous groups like the Apache or Comanche.

In "Museums," María Luisa Reyes Landa takes us to the city of Chihuahua to visit the Museo Histórico de la Revolución (The Museum of the History of the Revolution), dedicated to one of the most famous and controversial figures of our revolution, General Francisco (Pancho) Villa.

We dedicate the "Ecology" section of this issue to the Chihuahuan sand lizard, an animal endemic to that state's desert, whose study offers scientists important clues about this species' ability to adapt to changes in habitat.

The new Chicano literature, the product of authors who migrated to the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, is the subject of the essay by writer and literary critic Bruce Novoa. Based on the work of Carlos von Son, a short story of whose we also publish, he explains why he holds that this literature renews the genre and at the same time does not fit the pattern of his more assimilated Chicano colleagues.

Our "In Memoriam" section pays tribute to historian and Mexican film critic Emilio García Riera, a modest man, fiercely dedicated to his work and to whom we owe the most exhaustive history of Mexican cinema.

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde