“Anti-War and Anti-America: Mexico, the United States, and the War in Iraq”
Joseph U. Lenti, Masters Student in History

Last March, international pundits and observers predicted major political and economic fallout from Mexico’s refusal to support the U.S.-sponsored U.N. resolution to militarily intervene in Iraq. Prior to the vote of the Security Council, Mexican president Vicente Fox publicly expressed serious objections to the resolution that proposed to disarm the regime of Saddam Hussein and remove weapons of mass destruction from the nation. Predictably, U.S. officials ignored the concerns of their Mexican colleagues and lobbied for the passage of the resolution unamended. The results of the vote of the Security Council and the subsequent actions taken by the United States have since become the topic of a blistering international debate. The resolution failed to pass, but in spite of the mandate of the U.N. Security Council, President Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq and cited the existence of an “international coalition of the willing.” This American-led coalition, of course, did not include Mexico.

Mexican consent has never been a requisite for U.S. military action, and as modern history has shown, Mexican acquiescence has been almost assumed by U.S. policymakers. What made the most recent events so interesting, though, was that they hinted at a potential change in the nature of U.S.-Latin American relations. Responding to Mexico’s opposition to the war and in anticipation of the recent Special Summit of the Americas meeting were headlines in the New York Times that read: “Latin Lands Don’t Share Powell’s Priorities” (10 Jun 2003) and “Latin Allies (Continued on page 3)
Elections for the office of SOLAS President for the 2004-2005 school year will be held in April. Anyone interested in running must submit a letter of intent by Friday April 9, 2004. Please email the letter to SOLAS President Gulliver Scott at: gulliver@unm.edu or put it in the SOLAS box at the LAII. All other SOLAS positions will be elected next fall.

The position requires 20 hours of work per week throughout the school year and pays tuition for a LAS graduate student who is also a resident of New Mexico. The position also pays $8.00 an hour to a work-study qualified graduate or undergraduate LAS student. The president is responsible for organizing special events and projects, the weekly Brown Bag Lecture Series. The SOLAS president also represents the organization Latin American and Iberian Institute committees.

Candidates letters of intent will be distributed by email to SOLAS members and all students currently enrolled in Latin American Studies are eligible and encouraged to vote. Ballots will be available at the Latin American and Iberian Institute Main Office (801 Yale, NE). Election date to be decided. If you have any questions about the position or the election process, please feel free to contact Gulliver Scott at 277-6847 or gulliver@unm.edu.

Letter From the President

Dear Noticias Readers,

Spring Break is upon us (hard to believe, no?) and I hope it is restful for all of you. Good luck to the Chiapas Delegation and fuerza y animo to those of you studying for comps.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this issue of Las Noticias, in particular editor Sandra Ortsman. It was good to see many of you at our last Happy Hour and I hope to see many more at our next event – look for something on the Friday after Break (26 March). Upcoming SOLAS events will include the painting of a mural in the SOLAS Pod, the Sin Fronteras Film Festival, intramural soccer (now underway), and our regular brown bag lectures. As always, please let me know if you have ideas for events/speakers or questions about SOLAS.

Enjoy the Break!

Gulliver
of the U.S.: Docile and Reliable No Longer.” (14 Feb 2004.) Today, nearly a year after what was considered a pivotal diplomatic clash between the American neighbors, we are forced to wonder how much has really changed in U.S.-Mexican relations. Mexico’s official stance against U.N. intervention and its strong popular opposition to the war in Iraq proved that it was not merely a pawn in international affairs. Yet despite its bold positioning, there continues to be an asymmetrical balance of power in the hemisphere that favors the United States.

Precedents of the Power Imbalance: Economic

The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 represented to some the grand culmination of a long process of increasingly close economic cooperation between Mexico and the United States. But while applauded by some, others felt that NAFTA virtually guaranteed that Mexico would remain in a state of voluntary economic subservience. Those seeking to understand the precedents that enabled the passage of NAFTA often point out that World War II sharply diminished Mexico’s access to foreign markets. In 1938, the major bone of contention between the United States and Mexico was not the morality of a war with Iraq, but rather, crucial economic and political ties between Mexico and Germany. In the immediate years preceding the war, President Lázaro Cárdenas succeeded in keeping Mexico politically neutral, but complex economic alliances and an allied boycott of Mexican oil soon made existing economic partnerships impossible. Things were further complicated when Germany, who had long imported Mexican oil and other raw materials, broke its economic ties with Mexico and sent Mexican government officials scurrying to find new petroleum-hungry markets. New trade agreements were made, but with war, one by one these markets were closed off. As time passed, Mexico was forced to look increasingly to the United States for trade opportuni-
Could you tell us a little bit about your background? Where are you from? What did you do prior to this job?

My background has taken me from eastern United States, where I grew up in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, to Mexico, California, Arizona and now New Mexico. I have also lived in the Midwest, in St. Louis, MO and in Urbana, IL where I have been a history professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and the University of Illinois. I studied history at Smith College (Massachusetts) and Latin American history at University of California, Berkeley and University of California, San Diego, where I received my M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The most formative experience of my life, however, comes from the years I lived and worked in Sonora, Mexico, with the Mexican National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). In Mexico, I did research in archives and oral history and published several books and articles on my own and in collaboration with Mexican historians and anthropologists. During four years I was director of the Regional Center for the Institute in Hermosillo, Sonora. It was an exciting time in which we created a museum on the geography, anthropology, and history of the state of Sonora and helped to produce a five-volume history of the region.

What are you most excited about with the new position?

I am most excited about working with the wonderful staff at LAII and developing proposals for new programs with members of the faculty in different departments and colleges. I see this as a creative position, to build on a solid foundation.

What do you anticipate to be some of the biggest challenges with the new position?

Two important challenges will be to develop common thematic interests for project proposals with colleagues and professionals from different fields. I think that I can work well in this area, because of the cross-disciplinary work that I am presently doing with the Environmental Council at the University of Illinois. A second challenge, that all directors face, is to secure outside funding from national foundations for projects in research and teaching that will enrich the Latin American programs at UNM.

What would you like students to know about you?

I am eager to get to know the students individually and as a group, both undergraduates and graduates, and to hear from them how they would like to strengthen the activities of SOLAS and what the Institute can do to help them in their careers at the University. I am also interested to know what service projects the students are involved in, in Albuquerque and in other communities, and how they might be linked to LAII.

What are your hobbies? Interests outside of Academia?

I love music, play the piano, and when time permits, I like to sing in choirs. I like to walk outdoors and swim for exercise.

Do you have a family?

I have a wonderful family, my husband Ramón Xicoténcatl (Xico) Murrieta, and my sons Daniel and David Murrieta. Daniel currently works in France, as a teacher. David and Xico will join me in Albuquerque, where we plan to move before July 1, 2004.
one another became blatantly obvious. In the opinion of some Mexican officials, who had long been suspicious of U.S. meddling in domestic affairs, a formal Mexican-American military alliance would increase the likelihood of American intervention at home. For U.S. officials, Cárdenas’s refusal to let the United States construct naval and air bases in Mexican ports called into question Mexico’s true allegiances. Though the final terms of the negotiations reveal that an unprecedented level of military cooperation had developed between the nations, there was still no mistaking that Mexico operated independently of the United States in the decision-making processes of war. Regrettably, Mexico’s military independence would not endure beyond Cardenismo. With the election of the U.S.-endorsed Manuel Ávila Camacho, Cárdenas’s distinct Latin American defense approach was shelved and the United States and Mexico entered into their closest military cooperation ever.

New Global Crises and New International Rifts

Public opinion statistics confirm that the war in Iraq has fueled a growing dissatisfaction with the United States among Latin American nations. Region-wide, poll after poll suggests that the United States has now entirely spent whatever amount of sympathy capital it once accrued from the attacks of September 11, 2001. Without question, the war in Iraq was a critical impetus for Latin American anger, but statistics reveal that Latin disapproval of the U.S. began to increase before the start of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. In Argentina and Brazil, two of the region’s most important economic powers, U.S. favorability ratings have been declining steadily for over a decade. In the opinions of these nations, it is not the wars on terrorism that are most repugnant, but rather the banking policies put in place by the U.S. and the IMF. Other recent Latin American criticism has been directed at the United States over its continued political involvement in the region; with schemes in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Haiti being only the most recent examples.

Whatever the sources of Latin American anger toward the U.S. may be, Americans today must consider how this resentment will impact hemispheric relations – in particular, how this resentment will impact U.S.-Mexican relations. Recent public opinion polls show that only about 60% of Mexicans today view Americans favorably. Though these ratings have been dropping steadily since beginning the war in Iraq, they remain far higher than those in the region’s other major industrialized nations. In February, Americans were shocked and outraged at the response of Mexican soccer fans at an Olympic qualifying match with the United States who derisively chanted “Osama, Osama” at the conclusion of Mexico’s 4-0 win. This response in Guadalajara caused some to wonder “Will We Be Booed?” (Newsweek 23 Feb 2004) at this summer’s Olympiad and an American journalist to predict that “Anti-U.S. Jeers Have a Past and Probably a Future.” (New York Times 14 Feb 2004) Far more disturbing, than the potential jeers of raucous sports fans, however, are the results of a 2003 opinion poll that revealed 50% of Brazilians were disappointed the Iraqis did not mount a more vigorous defense against the American invasion.

Powerful anti-American sentiments and sharp criticisms from Latin American nations have caused some to conclude that Latinos are less sympathetic than other peoples for America’s problems with terrorism. Such a conclusion, it appears, is not supported by statistics. Declining favorability ratings that preceded September 11 suggest that in terms of intra-hemispheric relations, issues of global terrorism and regional security are far less important that issues of economy and trade. More than in any other case, though, September 11 has impacted U.S.-Mexican relations – particularly, in regards to issues of immigration. Today, it is clear that the unprece-
dented atmosphere of cooperation and partnership that existed on issues of immigration prior to September 11 has yet to return. Recent meetings between Vicente Fox and George W. Bush have centered on Bush’s recent overtures on immigration policy, but while Bush’s proposal to give millions of legal Mexican immigrants in the United States temporary legal status has been praised by Fox, others, including members of the Hispanic Congressional Caucuses, have assailed it as merely an election year tactic with no realistic prospects for passage.

Conclusion

It has yet to be determined what actual impact Mexico’s refusal to support the United States on the invasion of Iraq will have on immigration policy. Economically and militarily, though, it appears that a distant war has done little to impact U.S.-Mexican bilateral relations. Even since the onset of war in Iraq, the U.S. remains the destination for 90% of Mexican exports. Furthermore, there have been no significant breaches in military policy between the nations in the last year. Of the numerous factors that have maintained these constancies, none are more important than the economic treaties and agreements enacted in recent years. Each of these agreements, NAFTA in particular, have increased economic ties between the nations, and these ties, to the detriment of Mexico, have proven to bind unconditionally. As a result of the power imbalance that continues to exist today, Mexican leaders are inordinately restricted in political and economic negotiations with their U.S. counterparts.

Vicente Fox’s public statements of last March pleased the Mexican populace but did not have the political effect he had hoped for. Despite feeding into growing anti-American sentiment in Mexico, the president’s National Action Party saw virtually no gains in July’s mid-term elections. Many in Mexico demanded more serious retaliatory measures from their government. Fox’s public opposition to U.S. activity in Iraq was brave, but ultimately ineffective. In 1938, the bold actions of Cárdenas to expropriate U.S. petroleum assets became the watershed moment of his presidency and succeeded to save Mexico from total economic collapse. Now, to the dismay of Mexico, President Fox has no comparable leeway in his operations. Though Cárdenas could have never imagined the economic and political constraints under which current policymakers in Mexico operate as a result of NAFTA and other binding treaties, it would certainly dishearten him to know the extent to which Mexico’s foreign policy has become intertwined with U.S. factors. In today’s climate of inter-American relations, Mexicans, Brazilians, Argentines, Chileans, and others in Latin America might have to accept that although they are overwhelmingly against the U.S. war in Iraq, their government has little realistic recourse but moral objections.

(Continued from page 5)
Who is the U.S. to be Accusing Cuba and Venezuela of Destabilizing Democracy?

Justin Delacour, PhD Candidate in Political Science

Since the days when Thomas Jefferson declared that “America has a hemisphere to itself,” U.S. meddling in the internal affairs of Latin American countries has become so routine that U.S. media tend to either ignore such meddling, take it for granted, or accept U.S. policy-makers’ rationales for it.

When the Bush Administration recently accused Cuba and possibly Venezuela of working to destabilize democratic governments in the region, mainstream English-language reporters failed to note the irony that Latin America has been subjected to a litany of U.S.-sponsored campaigns to destabilize democratic governments. During the Cold War, these campaigns contributed to the rise of authoritarian governments throughout the region, leaving an enduring legacy of military repression against civilian populations. In 2002, the Bush Administration attempted to revive this ugly legacy, lending support to a failed right-wing coup against Venezuela’s democratically-elected government. Evidence is now emerging that the Bush Administration has also aided Haiti’s right-wing opposition in the ousting of that country’s democratically elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide.

Were it not for the corporate media’s casual acquiescence to U.S. meddling in Latin America, the Bush Administration’s flagrant hypocrisy would be roundly ridiculed.

National Endowment for Democracy: Meddling is Job One

A report published by the Interhemispheric Resource Center aptly sums up the connection that emerged between the U.S. government and Venezuela’s political opposition to President Hugo Chávez: “millions of dollars in U.S. taxpayer money that funded groups opposed to Chávez during the years preceding the April coup—often in disguised ways.” Indeed, between 2000 and 2001, the misnamed National Endowment for Democracy (NED)—a quasi-governmental foundation funded by the U.S. Congress—more than tripled its funding to Venezuela, from $257,831 to $877,435. Most of the money went to opponents of the Chávez government.

The NED’s senior program officer for Latin America and the Caribbean attempted to defend the increase in outlays to Venezuela’s opposition on grounds that Chavez and his supporters had restricted press freedoms and sought to suppress growing dissent against the government’s policies. But if the Chavez government had been so repressive, how did the country’s business-led opposition manage to not only retain control of most major media but also to unabashedly promote opposition activities on television, radio and in the press?

If the NED was so concerned about protecting political freedoms, it is hard to imagine why it would aid Venezuela’s political opposition. During the brief coup, even anti-Chávez correspondents in Venezuela could not help but be astounded by the opposition’s distorted notion of democracy. A week after the aborted coup, correspondents Phil Gunson and David Adams reported that the social elite of Caracas had shouted “¡Democracia, Democracia!” as the de facto government led by the businessman Pedro Carmona closed down the country's democratically-elected congress.

The story is almost identical in Haiti. According to Heather Williams, a professor of politics at Pomona College, the Republican-backed arm of the NED has been providing Aristide’s opposition with three million dollars a year. Clearly, the Republicans have a strange conception of democracy. According to Williams, Aristide’s opposition has never even garnered the support of 20 percent of the population, as opinion polls conducted by the U.S. have shown. Apparently the Bush Administration has no problem with the fact that Guy Phillippe, an avowed Pinochet supporter and former member of the repressive forces of the Raoul Cedras dictatorship, led “rebel” forces against Aristide. Just how exactly does aiding an avowed backer of dictators and turning over the country to an opposition that counts on the support of less than one-fifth of the population have anything to do with democracy?

The fundamental hypocrisy implicit in the

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Who is the U.S. to be Accusing Cuba and Venezuela of Destabilizing Democracy?
Justin Delacour, PhD Candidate in Political Science

(Continued from page 7)

NED’s foreign activities has sparked criticism from disparate ideological sources. “What might the reaction be here if the British government funded an effort to improve the Democratic Party’s get-out-the-vote operation in Florida?” asks The Nation’s David Corn. “How would Americans feel if the Chinese arrived with millions of dollars to support certain candidates deemed friendly to China?” asks the maverick Republican Congressman Ron Paul.

The next time the mainstream media decides to cover the Bush administration’s accusations that Cuba or Venezuela are working to destabilize democratic governments in the region, one would hope that the media might at least consider mentioning the United States’ own sordid record of destabilizing democracies in the hemisphere.

Given that George W. Bush proudly proclaims the bible to be his favorite book, perhaps he should consider rereading Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, in which he declares the Golden Rule: “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

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Artwork by Naomi Gabriela Maita Schwartz
PhD Candidate in Latin American Studies

Top Painting: Mother Universe Giving Birth
Left Drawing: Otavaleno Pair

March 8th is International Women’s Day
UNM Visibility and Voice
First Annual Women of Color/ Mixed Heritage/ Ethnicity/ Race Conference
March 26th and 27th, 2004 University of New Mexico
Keynote Speaker: Cherrie Moraga
Get involved: wocmxher@unm.edu
Alternative Spring Break Trips in Latin America

Election Observers in El Salvador

Rebecca Shreve, masters in LAS and Mialynette Victorazzo, bachelors in Political Science are off to El Salvador on an Election Observation Mission through el Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad (Center for Exchange and Solidarity, CIS). CIS is a Salvadoran-based human rights organization that supports the observer mission with training, community outreach and government interaction. Shreve and Victorazzo will focus their activities in San Salvador, with the potential of traveling to various other municipalities.

The March 21st elections will determine the next five-year term president and vice-president. Currently, the right-wing, U.S. supported ARENA party holds the presidency, and has for more than a decade. Some polls indicate that the left-wing FMLN (Frente Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional) might win this year’s elections, a change that would have profound effects on Salvadoran society and politics.

Shreve and Victorazzo hope to support the democratic process through observation and public reporting of their findings. They are part of a larger effort to ensure free and fair elections, and that the political will of the Salvadoran voters is upheld. This trip will also provide primary research for research projects that each is involved with. They look forward to sharing their experience with the SOLAS community.

Participatory Planning in Chiapas with the Zapatistas

Fernando Bejar, masters in CRP, Joanne Bejar, community member, Javier Benavidez, masters in CRP and PA, Byron Bluehorse, masters in CRP, Marjorie Childress, masters in CRP, Hilda Gutierrez, masters in LAS, Michael Montoya, bachelors in CRP, Sandra Ortsman, masters in LAS and CRP, Mikaela Renz, masters in CRP, and Silvia Soto, masters in LAS make up the UNM Delegation to Chiapas.

The Delegation will travel to the Oventik Zapatista Caracole (cultural encounter space) to meet with Zapatista community leaders and dialogue about grassroots, participatory community organizing. They will visit with women from the Zapatista women’s weaving cooperative, health promoters at the Guadalupana Clinic, education promoters at the ESRAZ autonomous secondary school, and members of the internal Junta for Good Government.

The Delegation hopes to develop a solidarity connection with the Zapatistas and bring back new organizing skills to Albuquerque. Delegates will present about their experience at a SOLAS Brown Bag.

The Delegation would like to thank all those who have supported their fundraising efforts including the GPSA GRD fund, the LAII, the CRP GSA, SOLAS, the Rio Grande Brewery, and all those who attended their events.

Postcards are still on sale for $1.00. Proceeds support the Delegation to Chiapas. To buy yours, contact: sandrita@unm.edu.
SOLAS Community Celebrations

Felicidades
SOLAS Treasurer
Priscilla Olmos and
Aaron Anaya
on their engagement!

The couple will marry
July 3, 2004

We are so happy for you!

APPLY NOW
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FILM FESTIVAL 2004
SATURDAY APRIL 24: 2004
at the guild cinema in albuquerque, nuevo méxico, aztlán.

Sin Fronteras Film Festival 2004 is a media festival created to showcase the works of socially conscious independent video and filmmakers from across the Américas.

Check the SOLAS Sin Fronteras Website for more information:
http://laii.unm.edu/sinfronteras
or email sandrita@unm.edu