

PRESENTATION

The peoples of Mexico and the United States, together, share a huge territory. We are inter-connected in a multitude of ways, yet we hardly know each other. This is so because we have such different histories. Mexicans are the descendants of the Mesoamerican and Hispanic civilizations. The Indian was fused with the European over the course of several centuries of colonial domination that began with a violent and rapid military conquest in which the vast majority of our native peoples were bound in slavery and servitude. With this heritage, we developed very different forms of organization and social relations that those developed in the United States. Something so apparent and simple as this, is difficult to understand from either side of our long border that, at once, unites and divides us, and is the only border in the world that joins a First World country with a Third World country.

We tend to see each other through stereotypes. Neither one of us understands the other, and this lack of understanding creates mistrust and fear, adding yet another point of tension to our already confused world. The fact that we are neighbors is an irreversible geographic truth; but this reality doesn't necessarily have to be detrimental to our separate national interests. Being different doesn't mean being enemies, if we can understand the factors that underlie our differences, as well as those things that we have in common.

VOICES OF MEXICO is an attempt to undermine those differences. It seeks to put forth Mexico's view of itself and of the world. Sponsored by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), where the richness and complexity of our national reality are both analyzed and synthesized, this magazine presents a variety of different aspects of that reality: how we see it, how we live it and how we confront it. This means that we will not always be in agreement with the U.S. view on some matters. In fact, it's quite likely that we won't even agree among ourselves from time to time. We are a vast country, heterogeneous and pluralist, in which diverse points of view are voiced and respected. We won that democratic right in the world's first great social revolution of the 20th century. That's why we speak about **voices** of Mexico, because we are many and diverse in our ways of seeing the world. That's why we speak so openly and honestly about those events and places that are undeniably a part of our reality and interests; Contadora is a good example.

But above all else, we hope that from this diversity, this dissonant plurality, we can transmit a harmony which reflects the richness of our nationality. And we hope that these voices will help to make it easier for us to understand each other, to build the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood that our two peoples so desperately need.

Mariclaire Acosta.