

VOICES *of Mexico*

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The UN Security Council Perspectives from Mexico

Articles by *María Cristina Rosas,*
José Luis Valdés-Ugalde, *Valeria*
Valle, *Ana Teresa Gutiérrez*
And *José Luis León*

Coup d'état in Honduras

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde

The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Mexico

Articles by *Elizabeth Gutiérrez*
And *Ciro Murayama*

Electoral Education In Mexico

María Macarita Elizondo

The Art of the Missions Of Northern New Spain

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Climate Change and Energy Unavoidable Decisions

Articles by *Andrés Ávila,*
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A Brief History of the Yucatán Peninsula

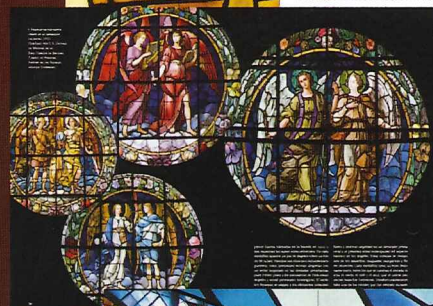
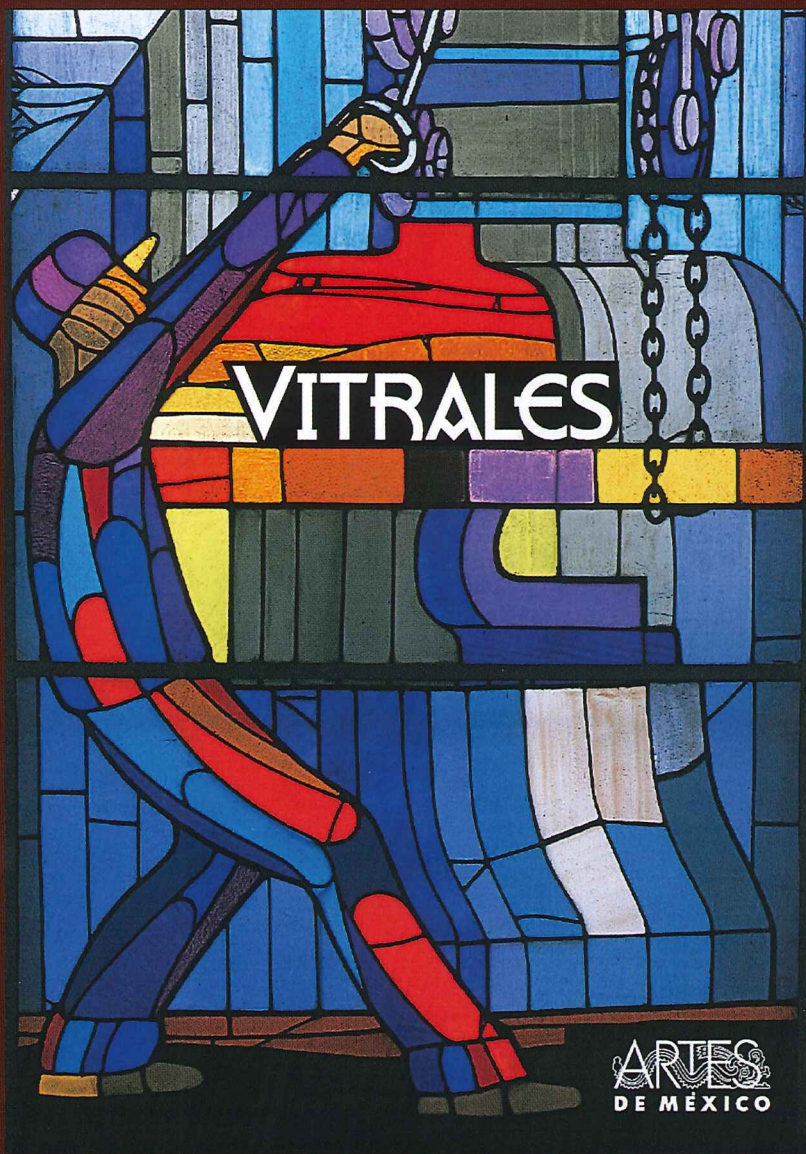
The Underground World Of the Mayan Riviera



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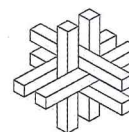
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Elsie Montiel

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Anonymous, *Birth of the Virgin*, n.d.
(oil on canvas). Archdiocese Seminary
Collection, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

Back Cover

Antonio de Torres,
Saint Barbara, ca. 1700
(oil on canvas). Carts Chapel,
Gran Morelos, Chihuahua.

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Elsie Montiel

OUR VOICE

These are times to test President Barack Obama. Several features of his administration suggest a change in the way the U.S. will be implementing its foreign policy. It has been said that a mere change of style in foreign policy is shallow, not a profound transformation; others suggest that Obama's proposed change is only a product of rhetoric and campaign slogans. However, style and narrative matter, and these can be two significant components that contribute to the long-awaited renovation of U.S. international policy. Thus, to what extent can the new style yield the hoped-for outcomes, namely, a real change in the U.S. image abroad, restored international legitimacy, enhanced soft power, reinforced respect for U.S. hard-power resources and, more importantly, a sustainable strategy that allows smart power to put down roots in the American path for the twenty-first century?

So, what is the so-called change of style comprised of? First, it is a change in the mechanisms and paths of action, from unilateral decisions to multilateral channels. It is a move from ideology-based strategies to pragmatic and principle-led decisions. It means a nuance in the use of hard-power resources and a revival of soft-power tools. It can be understood as a pragmatic use of diplomacy and persuasion instead of preemptive action. Notwithstanding the dimension of becoming multilateral—in itself a deep and historical transformation—it may never include an absolute dismissal of manifest destiny, or a unilateral decision to reject Washington's leadership potential. Neither does it mean either a radical modification of top priorities or the subordination of U.S. interests to others'. To be honest, it also means the acknowledgement that the U.S. is not the almighty power that can convince (with carrots or sticks) and intervene without self-defeating consequences. The distribution of power, influence, public global goods, responsibility and interdependence in the twenty-first century reveals a multi-polar (or even non-polar, in Richard N. Haass's terms) international order, where uncontested U.S. hegemony is unsustainable. Thus, success depends, among other things, on the response of the United States' counterparts, allies, partners, critics and adversaries. The rising crisis and development of international and transnational problems will test the strategy's effectiveness.

Six months after inauguration day, Iran, North Korea, the Middle East and even Latin America are sharply challenging Obama's new diplomacy. On Iran, Republican neoconservatives and even Democrats are demanding a tougher stance on the electoral process favoring opposition leader Mir Husein Musavi and against the repressive regime. On North Korea's nuclear threat, the UN Security Council is taking the lead by reaching consensus (China and Russia included) on the political and financial sanctions to be imposed, but any escalation of threats could exert pressure toward taking much more aggressive measures. Taking sides in Iran and favoring preemptive measures in North Korea may reverse the strategy of showing the different face that Washington wants to popularize in the world and thus confirm Osama Bin Laden's recent statement suggesting that Obama is continuing G.W. Bush's policies. Even the coup d'état in Honduras is being used by Venezuela to overtly challenge Obama's decision to distance his administration from the interventionist image. So, how much will Obama be able to stretch diplomacy?

* * *

Beyond Obama's foreign policy challenges, the great expectations he has awakened have led him to take a position on the big global issues. That is why his administration has focused on prioritizing certain problems to be resolved in the medium and long terms: climate change, the environment and renewable energy; international security and human rights; and the financial crisis and reactivating the economy. We have dedicated this issue to these global issues and their impact on Mexico.

There is no doubt that climate change has been one of the banners of the new U.S. presidency. Obama has understood the need to clean up his country's bad reputation in this area, and he has done it by proposing a radical turn in policy. As Edit Antal describes in her article for our "North American Issues" section, he is now attempting to lead global efforts to fight greenhouse gas emissions. Antal also comments on the new administration's environmental plan committed to gradually replacing dirty energy sources for so-called clean technologies. In this same section, Ángel de la Vega examines how Obama's proposed ecological transition is simultaneously a strategy to reactivate the economy and create jobs by developing sustainable technologies. He also analyzes the way in which dirty or non-renewable fossil fuels can contribute to deepening the economic recession in North America. Lastly, internationalist Andrés Ávila offers us a panorama of the existing international climate change regime, pointing out some of the reasons for the Kyoto Protocol's inefficiencies. Among them, he points to the U.S. refusal to sign even though it is the world's largest emitter and the position of some nations categorized as "developing countries" (among them, China, India, Brazil and Mexico), who use the argument of "historical responsibility" to refuse to significantly reduce their own emissions. A post-Kyoto regime then, is urgently needed.

Once again, we dedicate our "Economy" section to the analysis of the impacts of the very profound, complex world economic crisis, which has severely affected Mexico. First, Elizabeth Gutiérrez offers an article about the crisis's regional, local and sectoral effects in the North American Free Trade Agreement area; she concentrates on the analysis of the very negative results for the auto industry in both the region and Mexico specifically, where the drop in production has been almost 40 percent. Ciro Murayama describes the no less worrying panorama of employment. The crisis has devastated employment worldwide, and this is certainly the case in our country, in addition to the fact that the Mexican economy's traditional structural problems—definitely not something that has come from abroad—make implementing policies to reduce and fight growing unemployment more difficult.

In this issue, we look at other global issues from a local perspective. In our "Society" section, Ana Luisa Izquierdo introduces the topic of migration across Mexico's southern border. She clearly underlines the paradox that while our authorities demand fair treatment for Mexican immigrants in the United States, very often they violate and minimize the human rights of Central American migrants who cross the border into our country pursuing the same dream. The relationship between migration and human rights is one of the main concerns of civic movements in the first years of the twenty-first century, as Ariadna Estévez states in her article. She looks at several scenarios in which individual civil rights are violated during migration, among them, the rights to individual security and freedom, the right to decent working conditions, freedom from discrimination, racism and xenophobia, and even the right to life itself.

Two timely issues are examined in our "Politics" section. One is my reflections on the recent coup d'état in Honduras, which includes a look at the frailty of some Latin American democracies that still leads to these kinds of events, sometimes caused—like on this occasion—by democratically elected leaders' being tempted to try to perpetuate themselves in power, and at the main reactions to the event itself, among them, those of the Organization of American States and Washington. The second article, motivated by Mexico's federal mid-term congressional elections, written by María Macarita Elizondo, is about the important issue of education for democracy and electoral training in Mexico. Perhaps the more programs like the one this Federal Electoral Institute General Council member describes are implemented in our countries, the less likely it is that there will be events like those in Honduras.

For the fourth time in history and the second time this decade, Mexico has been elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The importance of participating in this multilateral body is beyond debate. Not only is it possible to contribute pro-actively there to the resolution of the world's main conflicts, but it can also be used to promote our country's agenda in accordance with national priorities. So, we have designed a special section in this issue, "Mexico and the UN Security Council," in which different specialists examine Mexico's performance in the Security Council (SC) *vis-à-vis* its main debates and the five most influential nations represented there, the five permanent members. We begin with an article by Cristina Rosas, who looks critically at the global security issues Mexico has decided to get in-

volved with in its SC activity. Rosas maintains that while not all of them are relevant for our national interests, one is important for us to take a lead on: trafficking in small arms and light weapons, something that affects us severely because of its links to organized crime and drug trafficking. My contribution deals with the United States' probable new role in the SC in light of the new ways forward opened up by the Obama presidency and the recent appointment of Susan E. Rice as the U.S. ambassador. This makes it possible to envision a move from Bush-era unilateralism to multilateral strategies, or, more precisely, from ideology-driven decisions to pragmatic international policies, a change that could benefit Mexico and reinforce its position in the SC as a nation close to the United States. This will also naturally depend, however, on our country deciding to be more pro-active in some of the SC's main priorities, like peacekeeping missions. Valeria Marina Valle's contribution refers to Great Britain and France's joint positions on UN and SC reform. It also analyzes the similarities and differences with Mexico's positions on this issue. Ana Teresa Gutiérrez del Cid looks at Russia's most important positions in the SC in the face of recent important international conflicts. Also, she reflects on some of the agreements the Russian Federation and Mexico have had on the Security Council, like their joint coordination of the fight against international drug trafficking. Finally, the last permanent member of the Security Council, China, is the object of José Luis León's analysis, which defines Chinese diplomacy as "the art of transforming prudence into policy." León argues that some Chinese positions in the SC demonstrate its preference for multilateralism, although without renouncing its right to veto, which it has exercised on several occasions. Although perhaps following the precepts of Confucian thought by emphasizing harmony in its policy in the SC, China also uses power when needed.

* * *

This issue's "Art and Culture" section includes an article about the art of the colonial missions in northern Mexico, one of the least studied, most isolated parts of our country, written by the curator of the biggest exhibition in history on this topic, currently showing at Mexico City's Old College of San Ildefonso. It is followed by an homage to Rolando Arjona, Yucatán-born muralist and painter, who at over 90 continues to give his native land reasons to make it proud. This section closes with an article about one of the phenomena most characteristic of Yucatán's nineteenth century: the emergence of a regionalist discourse expressed through literary journalism, one of whose most visible promoters was writer and jurist Justo Sierra O'Reilly.

After covering the states of Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatán in several past issues, "The Splendor of Mexico" section offers readers a historical vision of the whole peninsula so they can get a glimpse of its common past. Although the aim was very ambitious, we hope that this brief review of the peninsula's Mesoamerican past, colonial history and incorporation into an independent Mexico will help our readers understand the ties that bind its inhabitants together. We are adding a short text about the living Mayan language, reminding us that it is still commonly spoken in the entire peninsula and that its defense is one of the tasks of the heirs to the ancient Mayan culture. Lastly, we present a brief article about the underground world of Yucatán: for the ancient Mayas, it represented the underworld Xibalbá, and for us, a close look at the peninsula's natural riches. The "Museums" section brings us a glimpse of the Museum of the Mayan People of Dzibilchaltún, which in a small space reviews the peninsula's Mayan history.

Our "In Memoriam" section is dedicated to the memory of one of the most respected and admired intellectuals at our national university, professor and writer Alejandro Rossi. Octavio Paz himself said that Rossi was not only one of most cultured and intelligent people he had ever known, but also one of the most generous. In his honor, we publish a short article by writer Juan Villoro, who, in addition to pointing to Rossi's human qualities, offers us a panorama of his brief but transcendental body of work.

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde

Las Honduras abiertas de América Latina*

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde**



Tomas Bravo/Reuters

Supporters of ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya protesting.

Once again we are the world's bad news. In Honduras, gorilla regimes and populist messianism put their seal on the democratic process and a democratically elected political leader. President Manuel Zelaya was deposed, and the countries in the hemisphere and the world came out against this tired, very characteristic way that some

underdeveloped sectors of our Latin American political class have of acceding to power. The international community demanded he be reinstated, that the temporary occupant of his office, Roberto Micheletti, leave and that there be a return to legality —although not so much to constitutional order, since members of the community of nations have their criticisms of this, which in Honduras includes surprising anomalies that are not relevant for the discussion at hand.

What is clear is that we are faced with a regional conflict that offers us lessons on several fronts. Aside from the very justified criticism of the military's illegal involvement in politics, we are again faced with an unfortunate process that has its origins in what has been termed the temptation of the lifelong presidency,

* The author is making an allusion to Eduardo Galeano's book *The Open Veins of Latin America*, plus a play on words with the Spanish word for "depths," which is the same as the name of the country Honduras. The title would translate "The Open Depths of Latin America" but the reference to Honduras is not conveyed in English. [Translator's Note.]

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We are faced with a regional conflict that offers us lessons on several fronts. Aside from the very justified criticism of the military's illegal involvement in politics, we are again faced with an unfortunate process that has its origins in what has been termed the temptation of the lifelong presidency, which has characterized Presidents Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, Rafael Correa and, to a certain extent, Daniel Ortega and Álvaro Uribe.

which has characterized Presidents Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, Rafael Correa and, to a certain extent, Daniel Ortega and Álvaro Uribe. It happens that our political leaders try to use the democratic process to satisfy their undisguised desire to stay in power, and from the beginning of their terms, expressly do everything they can to achieve their goal. Zelaya is no exception, and to a great extent, this led to the crisis that has exposed the primitivism of his country's institutionals as well as those of some others (Venezuela is the most conspicuous case). Confusing democracy with the guarantee of perpetual popularity, they hold on to power and both symbolically and in reality become indispensable, untouchable leaders. They forget how important alternation and the dynamic play of the imagination are for the efficacy and effectiveness of democracy, the basis and obligation for any participant and player in public power. Their democratic legitimacy is, at bottom, demagogic messianism and, in some cases more than others, simulated authoritarianism. Parallel to constitutional reform, they also discipline and standardize the forces of order, mainly the militia—something Zelaya failed fatally at. They tame the judiciary and legislature. And, along the way, they condemn civil society to new eras of abandonment that thrust it into a-critical skepticism, blind subordination and—as we now see—coups d'état inspired in the idea of privileged superiority that could return us to the ignoble authoritarian past that made our hemisphere famous for decades.

I should say, however, that this context of fragile democracies I am describing has also been fertile ground that some have taken full advantage of for deepening this disarray of democracy and demagogically legitimizing their yearnings for eternity. Quite the opposite of benefitting our young democracies, all of this has poisoned the atmosphere and, once again, flooded the

democratic process with ideology. This is mainly the case when we hear the vacuous discourse of the hemisphere's fake democratic left, represented, with the exception of Colombia, by the aforementioned countries.

We will see what happens to Zelaya's attempted return to the Honduran presidency. For now, we can summarize this political operetta in which so many actors have already participated: Barack Obama has managed to demonstrate—successfully up until now—that Washington is no longer the same; that not only is it no longer behind the coup as in the past but that it is on the side of democratic legality, although with the requisite reservations expressed by Hillary Clinton when she stated that there should be no external interference (read Venezuela et al.). The Organization of America States, headed by Insulza, has also shown that it can act effectively to neutralize the democratic retreat and finally be faithful to the democratic mission it has repeatedly betrayed in the past. And, Mexico and other players—Brazil's absence is surprising—have acted with aplomb and firmness in their condemnation of the coup. The question is whether after the unfortunate events, all the actors inside and outside Honduras will recognize and accept these noteworthy changes. If they do, we will have learned the lesson of our history, which more than ever should put the interference and demagogic impertinence of the Group of Four, headed by Chávez, in their place. On every occasion like this, they see an opportunity to play at a little banana-republic war of regional geopolitics with the United States of today! Hopefully, if Zelaya returns to office, he will learn the lesson and reform and reactivate parts of his country's Constitution to perfect its democracy and give him real legitimacy, and not bury it even more in the regrettable condition in which he and his compatriots have subjected it. **MM**

Electoral Education Programs in Mexico

María Macarita Elizondo Gasperin*



Electoral training course for polling place officials.

INTRODUCTION

Mexico's Constitution stipulates that the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) is responsible for carrying out direct, comprehensive civic education.

The political transition in Mexico, whose fundamental reference point was the 1977 electoral reform, definitively marked the nature of our political change, by moving from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one. Over the years, different electoral reforms gradually gave the IFE the faculty to carry out civic education. Civil society in general, as well as the parties and political forces, no longer wanted an elec-

toral body that showed partisanship or political inclinations in its actions. That is why it was necessary for the IFE to take charge of civic education. The institute's two fundamental objectives in fostering civic education, then, point exactly in this direction: to contribute to educating the citizenry and to participate in training for the democratic application of the law.

THE IFE DESIGNS AND IMPLEMENTS CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In 2001, the IFE made a first effort to discuss a civic education strategy that would not be subsumed in the electoral calendar. So, it created a long-term strategy that was con-

* Member of the Federal Electoral Institute General Council.

cretized with the approval of the 2005-2010 Strategic Civic Education Program.¹

2005-2010 STRATEGIC CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAM (PEEC)

The general objective of the 2005-2010 PEEC is to foster coordinated civic education activities that will permit Mexican society to exercise its right to vote and elect its representatives to different public bodies. It also aims to make people aware of their rights as citizens and stimulate constructive participation in government and the administration of justice; to create social gender equality; and to encourage greater social justice.

The lines of action of its implementation in 2006 were the following: respect for basic rights; collective, organized participation; casting a free and reasoned vote; and living together in a democratic society. Since then the program's scope and goals have grown, and it has never stopped its activities.

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND GETTING OUT THE VOTE

The main value to be respected and protected is impartiality in promoting the vote. What the IFE seeks is for citizens to be able to freely exercise their rights, with the appropriate, pertinent information they need. The PEEC criteria for promoting the vote are:

- Impartiality. Voters must not be subject to any kind of intimidation or coercion that could imply the possibility of their vote being endangered or not counted.
- Civic participation. The IFE underlines democratic values and practices that have a repercussion in the quality of our democracy.

CITIZENS' ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAM (PAC)

The PAC seeks to insure that citizens are informed of their political-electoral rights in two very fundamental ways: democracy as a form of government and democracy as a way of living together in society.

The PAC uses different tools that take advantage of the most advanced technology and the following mechanisms: *Boletín Electrónico 2009* (Electronic Bulletin 2009); radio spots; informational articles; multimedia capsules; and the federal electoral process timeline, which includes information about all the activities and scheduling for the 2009 federal and local elections.

THE MEDIA

The IFE has received consensual support from the political parties to carry out campaigns on civic education and promoting the vote. Impartiality in promoting the vote through the institute is essential for the parties.

One of the problems encountered in this is the ever-present possibility of affecting equity in the elections. This is even more of a danger when ideas are not disseminated exclusively through each party or candidate's means, but through radio and television broadcasters.

Civic education aims to make people aware of their rights as citizens and stimulate constructive participation in government, to create social gender equality and to encourage greater social justice.

Aware of this situation and its responsibility in organizing and carrying out equitable elections, since 1993, the Federal Electoral Institute has issued guidelines for broadcasting and covering electoral news and information during the entire process. The most recent are "General Guidelines Applicable for Radio and Television Newscasts for Covering Information or Dissemination of Political Parties' Primary and General Campaign Activities."

The aim is not for the institute to impose any specific line of action or establish any kind of censorship. Therefore, this strategy must be seen solely as another step toward establishing a clear electoral race based on a fair balance of party publicity through the news media.

For their part, the officials of the National Chamber of the Radio and Television Industry of Mexico (CNIRT) have committed themselves to aiding electoral authorities and the federal government in this effort and insuring that their day-

to-day activities respect the agreements signed, thus contributing to the development of Mexico's democracy.

It should be pointed out that equitable dissemination and informational coverage of primaries and general campaigns is absolutely necessary to guarantee that no contender has the advantage over any other. The difference between opinion pieces and informational coverage is also important to note. The former are comments, value judgments or references that editorialize their content, which undoubtedly contribute to enriching the information and offer citizens food for thought. The latter are generally clear, complete descriptions of events, statements and, above all, the proposals and content of the political parties, coalitions and candidates' electoral platforms.

In both cases—but particularly in the case of informational coverage—electoral legislation stipulates and regulates the “right to reply.” The political parties all agree that wrong information can cause negative effects if not cleared up immediately. That is why Article 64, paragraph 3 of the IFE's “Regulation for Access to Radio and Television in Elec-

The elections are directly managed by the public. The work is voluntary since private citizens are asked to participate as polling place authorities, thus guaranteeing impartiality.

toral Matters,” stipulates that in Mexico, requests for clarification must be dealt with swiftly so the audience can see both sides of a single news item.

Regarding candidates' private lives, in our country, expressing ideas is not the object of any kind of legal or administrative inquiry, except in cases of attacks on morality or the rights of third parties or of actions which cause a crime to be committed or disturb the peace. For this reason, the respect for contenders' private activities is unrestricted and must be protected both by the IFE and the CNIRT to the extent that it has no implications for the public interest.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The IFE was a pioneer in Latin America as an electoral authority with the faculty to promote and develop civic education and political culture without benefiting or damaging any political party. This reflects its commitment to impartial civic education to forge citizenship and respect for the law.

The IFE has a structure and a significant budget, plus the ability to cooperate and coordinate institutionally to convene non-governmental organizations, the media and civil society in general to carry out civic education and promote the vote.

The institute has an area specialized in civic education and political culture that does research and sociological electoral and political marketing activities to create and implement different programs in this area. It has a permanent technical team working on designing and establishing specific, concrete programs so the citizenry can receive different messages of support for its political-electoral activities.

One of the IFE's important activities is based on the fact that more than 145,000 polling places are staffed by randomly selected citizens, which means that the elections are directly managed by the public. The work is voluntary since private citizens are asked to participate as polling place authorities, thus guaranteeing impartiality. This kind of electoral administration is a novel type of civic participation for political-electoral systems where distrust prevails, as in the Mexican case.

These civic education and political culture programs help create a culture of trust in Mexican electoral institutions and procedures. It is an ongoing medium- and long-term job that implies the participation of political parties, legislators, the media, academics, non-governmental organizations, opinion leaders, businessmen and women, churches, and a long “et cetera” of others from Mexican society. **MM**

NOTES

¹ See http://www.ife.org.mx/docs/IFEv2/DECEYEC/SeguimientoDeProgramas/DECEYEC-ProgramaEstrategicoEducacionCivica/DECEYEC-peec-docs/peec_2005-2010.pdf.





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The Future of the International Climate Change Regime

Andrés Ávila Akerberg*



Toward a post-Kyoto regime.

The first agreement for regulating international action on global warming was forged at the 1992 Rio Summit, when approximately 180 countries signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Article 2 of the convention states that the objective was “to achieve... stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”¹ The convention went into force relatively easily, because it did not obligate countries to make quantitative commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. However, as we shall see, the fact that they did not make those commitments would become one of the most controversial issues in international negotiations in subsequent years.

It was not until the 1997 Kyoto Protocol was signed that some countries fixed quantitative commitments to lower emissions. However, eight years had to go by for the protocol to go into effect. According to its Article 25, the protocol “shall enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date on which not less than 55 Parties to the Convention, incorporating Parties included in Annex I which accounted in total for at least 55 per cent of the total carbon dioxide emissions for 1990 of the Parties included in Annex I, have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.”² The first objective was achieved rather simply, but it took until 2005 to fulfill the second, when Russia ratified its participation, thus surpassing the 55-percent threshold and making the agreement legally binding for the ratifying parties.

The protocol stipulated that only the Annex I countries would reduce their GHG emissions. The logic for this was due essentially to two international principles: historic responsibility and common but differentiated responsibilities. The first was an argument used by the developing countries to avoid making quantitative commitments. From 1850 on, the United States, Canada and Europe alone were the source of about 70 percent of the world’s emissions, while the developing countries accounted for under one-quarter. Linked to this, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities refers to the idea that it is the developed countries that should assume the responsibility because they have more financial and technological resources. As a result, according to the protocol, the developed countries’ goal for 2008-2012 is to reduce their emissions an average of 5.2 percent, taking 1990 as the base year.³

Since the outset, the Kyoto Protocol has been the object of several criticisms. For a start, it is not self-enforcing, since it not all the actors have ratified it. Since this is a global issue, solving it requires the participation of all countries. That is,

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a ton of CO₂ emitted by Haiti has the same effect as a ton emitted by Germany. Therefore, since only a few countries are obliged to reduce their emissions, there is a great deal of “leakage” in the accord. The United States is the really outstanding country in this category, because, despite being part of Annex I, it never ratified the protocol; this accounts for about a 20 percent leakage of all the world’s emissions. However, another group that is not part of Annex I because they are developing countries (like China, India, Brazil and Mexico), not obliged to reduce GHG emissions despite being the source of a considerable proportion of them. Thus, between 42 and 45 percent of total global emissions —from China and the United States alone— are not subject to any quantitative commitment.

Another criticism of the protocol is linked to the percentage of emissions reduction agreed upon (5.2 percent); in addition to being considered difficult to achieve, this is really minimal.⁴ For example, Nicolas Stern estimates that to reverse the problem, GHG emissions will have to be reduced by 80 percent *vis-à-vis* 2000.⁵

A new round of negotiations began in Bali, Indonesia in 2008 to determine future work around the issue of climate change. Because the Kyoto Protocol lasts until 2012, the Conference of the Parties 9 (COP 9) in Copenhagen set 2009 as the deadline for governments to decide on a new international regime for climate change.⁶ For some time now, different proposals have been formulated about what this new instrument should look like. Today, about 50 proposals have been made, dealing with everything from specific issues like the design of potential commitments by the developing countries to the general analysis of all the components needed for a successful negotiating process.⁷ However, there is general agreement about the essential elements of an effective post-Kyoto climate regime. These can be summarized as follows.

THE SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION

As mentioned above, emission reduction commitments are the sole responsibility of developed countries, although this excludes the main producer, the United States, which has not ratified the protocol. Also, other important GHG generators do not participate, alleging their status as developing countries. In this sense, many of the current proposals hinge on plans involving substantial commitments by countries like China, India, Brazil and Mexico, who together account

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for 27 percent of emissions, of which 20 percent can be attributed to China. However, if we consider emissions per capita, these countries’ levels are much lower than the industrialized countries’.⁸

Getting the developing countries to make quantitative commitments will not be easy. As mentioned above, they defend their position with arguments like the idea of historic responsibility, which lies mainly with the industrialized countries, and point to issues like equity, maintaining their right to development based on burning fossil fuels. Also, they consider it unjust for the international community to demand that they make commitments when the biggest emitter has not assumed its responsibility.

In any case, a plan of commitments for the developing countries would have to be flexible to adapt to these nations’ specific conditions. So, factors like the size of their economies, how they have contributed to the problem historically and their right to development should be taken into account. These countries condition their participation on the industrialized countries’ transferring technology and financing to them to deal with a problem they consider they neither created nor are in a position to ameliorate. The situation is complex. However, we should not underestimate the fact that it will be the poorest countries that will suffer the greatest ill effects of global warming due to their enormous vulnerability and diminished capability to adapt.

U.S. PARTICIPATION

Another issue that must be resolved is the case of the United States, as the main or one of the main GHG emitters —some put China first. Although William Clinton signed the Kyoto Protocol, when it went before the Senate for ratification, the vote was overwhelmingly against. Later, George W. Bush expressed clear opposition to supporting it, a harsh blow to international efforts. Among Bush’s main arguments against making a commitment was that emission-reduction policies would have a heavy impact on the U.S. economy and that

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that if global warming was not halted, it would put species, ecosystems, human infrastructure, societies and housing at serious risk.

other countries with high emissions, like China, should also be required to participate.

However, with Barack Obama's election to the presidency, the U.S. position, at least on the level of discourse, has taken an important turn. Since his campaign, Obama promised that by 2050, his country would reduce its emissions by 80 percent. This is undoubtedly a big step forward. However, even if the current president makes that decision, compliance does not depend on him alone since, at the very most, if re-elected, he will remain in the White House eight years. Therefore, the measures the United States takes in the near future will have to be taken in a way that will guarantee their continuation for the coming decades. Also, we will have to see what position the United States takes during the international negotiations in terms of adhering or not to the post-Kyoto regime. Meanwhile, domestically, several of the states have formulated initiatives to reduce their GHG emissions.⁹

REDUCTION PERCENTAGES

Another issue to resolve is the amount of GHG that must be reduced. If nothing is done, current levels will make the Earth's temperature rise between four and six degrees Celsius by the end of this century. In its Fourth Assessment Report (2007), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that if global warming was not halted, it would put species, ecosystems, human infrastructure, societies and housing at serious risk.¹⁰ Since global warming is irreversible—from 1850 to 2007, the planet's temperature rose 0.7 degrees Celsius, and for this century, the hike is predicted at between 1.6 and 6.9 degrees Celsius—¹¹ countries have generally based themselves on scientific evidence to decide what level of climate change would be "tolerable." There is a certain consensus that 2 degrees Celsius is the maximum tolerable increase, although this is enough to cause certain consequences. However, to achieve this, some studies state that it would be necessary to reach a zero-emissions level between 2050 and 2100.¹²

MEXICO AND THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE REGIME

In 2005, Mexico accounted for about 1.6 percent of the world's emissions, putting it in thirteenth place. Measured per capita, every Mexican emits about 6.2 tons of CO₂ (t CO₂), situating the country near the world average (6.55 tons) and lower than the United States (22.9 t CO₂) and the European Union (10.4t CO₂). However, despite being in thirteenth place and being an OECD member, Mexico has not committed to quantitative emission reductions.

Although Mexico participates both in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and in the Kyoto Protocol, given its status as a non-Annex I country, it is only obligated to publish its "national communication," a document analyzing the country's emissions and activities linked to mitigating and adapting to climate change. Until today, Mexico has published three national communications, and the fourth is expected over the course of 2009. In addition, in 2007, Mexico presented its National Climate Change Strategy, identifying areas of opportunity for mitigating and adapting to climate change, stipulating lines of action for the future. Nevertheless, this document has been criticized for having unclear objectives and action goals. For this reason, in 2009, the 2008-2012 Special Climate Change Program (PECC), which includes 106 objectives and 303 goals that will guide the country's work until 2012, was opened up for public consultation.

Regarding the post-Kyoto regime negotiations, Mexico has declared itself a "proactive country willing to build bridges of understanding to facilitate an international accord."¹³ The PECC also states that Mexico would be in a position to commit to reducing its emissions 50 percent (using 2000 as a base year) by 2050, but on the condition that this commitment not be legally binding, that the industrialized countries facilitate financial and technological support and that there be a "global converging accord that would tend to offer a collective solution to the problem of climate change."¹⁴

CONCLUSIONS

Faced with the enormous challenge of global warming, the world does not have the luxury of inaction. Therefore, the current negotiations must yield concrete results reflecting more ambitious emission reduction commitments. Since the problem

is global, the solution must also be global. This means that the United States must assume its responsibility, but also that other countries like China, India, Brazil and Mexico must also participate in the international effort, taking into account their needs. **MM**

NOTES

- ¹ For the complete document, see <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>. [Editor's Note.]
- ² The countries that make up Annex I are those that in 1992 were part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (this excludes Mexico and South Korea, which joined later), together with the so-called economies in transition (the ones that had belonged to the former Soviet bloc). To consult the Kyoto Protocol, see <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.html>.
- ³ The individual goals for each developed countries are listed in Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol.
- ⁴ By 2004, the European Union had reduced its emissions by only 0.8 percent with regard to its 1990 levels, still a far cry from the goal it must meet by 2008-2012. The United States has increased emissions 16 percent. However, the biggest escalations have been by China and India, which have stepped up theirs by 47 and 55 percent, respectively.
- ⁵ Nicholas Stern, *The Economics of Climate Change. The Stern Review* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 223.
- ⁶ To learn more about the COP 9, see <http://www.cbd.int/cop9/>. [Editor's Note.]
- ⁷ Hermann E. Ott, "Climate Policy post-2012. A Roadmap," discussion paper presented at the 2007 Tällberg Forum in Stockholm, p. 29.
- ⁸ For example, every Chinese person accounts for 10 tons of GHG a year; every Mexican, 6 tons; every Brazilian, 5 tons; and every Indian, 2 tons. By contrast, the United States emits 24 tons per inhabitant; Australia, 26 tons; and Canada, 22.
- ⁹ One of these is the Western Climate Initiative whereby seven states in the West of the United States and four Canadian provinces adopt measures to lower GHG. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is an equivalent project by Atlantic states.
- ¹⁰ See http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr.pdf. [Editor's Note.]
- ¹¹ W. L. Hare, "A Safe Landing for the Climate," Worldwatch Institute, *State of the World 2009. Into a Warming World* (Washington D.C.: Worldwatch Institute, 2009), pp. 14-15.
- ¹² D. P. V. Vuuren et al., "Stabilizing Greenhouse Gas Concentrations at Low Levels: An Assessment of Reduction Strategies and Costs," *Climatic Change* (March 2007), pp. 119-159. To achieve stability, annual CO₂ emissions must be reduced to a level equivalent to the natural absorption rate. After stabilization, natural absorption levels will gradually decline because the natural sinks will weaken. This implies that to maintain stabilization, emissions will have to drop to the absorption level of the oceans in coming centuries. Stern, op. cit., p. 223.
- ¹³ Poder Ejecutivo Federal, *Programa Especial de Cambio Climático 2008-2012* (public consultation version, March 24, 2009) (Mexico City: Poder Ejecutivo Federal), available on line at <http://www.semarnat.gob.mx/queessemarnat/consultaspublicas/Documents/pecc/consultac complementaria/090323%20PECC%20vcpc.pdf>, p. VIII.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

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Crisis and Integration in North America Finances vs. Energy and Environment? Implications for Mexico

Ángel de la Vega Navarro*



Toru Hanai/Reuters

The financial crisis originating in the United States has led to another larger crisis that affects production processes linked to growth and employment in several countries and regions of the world. This is important for Mexico's economy, whose gross domestic product (GDP) may shrink even more than in 1995 (-6.2 percent). But the

difference now is that there are no conditions for a rapid recovery like the ones that existed during the 1994-1995 crisis, since the U.S. economy at that time was significantly buoyant and there was a market for Mexican exports and conditions to get capital flowing again. Now, the Mexican economy, finally officially declared in recession in early May, does not have its neighbor to jumpstart it and extricate it from this situation.

An International Monetary Fund analysis developed for the recent G-20 meeting stated that the world economy may decline 1 percent in 2009, the worst drop in 60 years, while that of the United States could decrease -2.6 percent. The

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Decreasing investments may also have an impact on climate change by possibly escalating the amount of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of a drop in fossil fuel prices and the financial difficulties that will affect investment in clean energy technologies.

importance of this plunge, linked to a severe credit crunch, makes it impossible to talk about rapid recovery. In addition, we should look to the lessons of history: recessions are longer and deeper in the United States if they are linked to financial crises and simultaneous recessions in other economies.¹ This year, the economies in the Euro region and Japan will also decline significantly (-4.2 percent and -5.8 percent, respectively). Since 2007, the U.S. banking and financial sectors have been experiencing significant turbulence. Its magnitude and the concerns it raises probably explain the Obama administration's strategies and priorities: he has taken office with new ideas to bring a lasting reactivation of the U.S. economy, which will require important changes in production. It is expected, then, that energy industries will undertake new innovative forms of organization that will contribute to the growth of the economy as a whole, at the same time that they lead to a new energy-environmental paradigm for which the scientific, technical and industrial knowledge already exists.

However, after the collapses of autumn 2008, in the short term, the main problem is the banking and financial system. Given the fear that the United States could undergo a long period of stagnation, as has happened to Japan since the 1990s, the prevailing idea seems to be that the priority is reestablishing the private banking and financial system so credit can flow again, and thus avoid a succession of government stimulus programs that would not contribute to a self-sustained reestablishment of the mechanisms for investment and growth.

The idea that the state must once again intervene has been generally accepted, given the gravity of the crisis, but the debate centers on what kind of intervention it should be. For some, it is only useful for repairing failed mechanisms, not because it can lead to growth, since growth is the result of technological innovation and advancing productivity attributable only to the private sector. Given this perception, the president's office has not clearly said how specific policies can ensure short-term shots in the arm and at the same time create the basis for long-term growth. This can only result from important investments. The problem is that in the immedi-

ate future, what can be foreseen is a sharp fall both for renewable and non-renewable energy sources.² Equipment producers are expected to reduce research and development investments in more energy-efficient models. Decreasing investments may also have an impact on climate change, by possibly escalating the amount of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of a drop in fossil fuel prices and the financial difficulties that will affect investment in clean energy technologies.

It is true that there has been talk about investment in infrastructure, education, health and renewable energy, but the first measures taken illustrate some of the priorities. The stimulus program passed in February 2009 was substantial: US\$787 billion, the equivalent of more than 5 percent of GDP. But its distribution is also significant: US\$45 billion for energy infrastructure and US\$51 billion for tax breaks for the private sector. Added to this is the aim that the financial markets recover rapidly based one way or another on government monies.

Congress approved an 8-percent spending hike for fiscal year 2009; this will create a significant increase in government debt, which will jump from 40 percent to 60 percent of GDP. The aim is to stimulate the economy like several other countries are doing by increasing their fiscal deficits. The problem is that these public resources are flowing preferentially into the financial sector without new rules being put in place to change the behavior that led to the gigantic bubble that sparked the current crisis. To exit from this crisis, many things have to change, but it is not yet clear what kind of new regulations should be put in place to improve the banking and financial system's functioning and to also contribute to reorienting productive structures.

Certainly, realistically, above all when the possibility of nationalizing the banks has been taken off the table, measures should be taken to increase companies' resources, reduce indebtedness and reestablish the financial bases of financial intermediaries and banks. In the current circumstances, the latter seem to be the weak link in the economy, and the prevailing idea is that they should be supported. For that reason, in addition to the US\$700 billion bail-out approved October 3, 2008, the Federal Reserve has committed several billion dollars to guaranteeing against losses from bad quality mortgage assets owned by AIG, Citigroup and the Bank of America. Citigroup alone has received US\$25 billion through the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), US\$20 billion from the Treasury Department's Targeted Investment Program and US\$5 billion from Treasury in support related to losses on assets.

Amidst these investment restrictions and financial constraints, how could the proposals Barack Obama has been making bring about a lasting recovery of the economy? The answers are important for the future of the U.S. economy in the short and long terms, and for the Mexican economy as well, because of the close ties between the two. Since his campaign, Obama has used the example of renewable energy to illustrate his ideas about the new kind of industrial and technological development he proposes with job creation, reduction of CO₂ emissions, lower dependency on oil imports and energy security. When he took office, he made proposals to earmark public spending not only to achieve a short-term reactivation of growth and employment, but also for long-term goals, important among which are those related to renewable energy and the environment. At the same time, he has proposed promoting responsible domestic production of oil and gas, combining greater domestic production with greater oil savings that would also contribute to energy security. To attain this goal, he intends to raise fuel consumption standards and the number of hybrid cars; offer tax credits on the purchase of vehicles that use advanced fuels; and establish national norms for low-carbon-level fuels. Although all their implications are not yet clear, President Obama's new energy policies may have new and important impacts, above all if they translate into a lasting, significant reduction of imports.

In addition to decreasing oil needs and lower consumption because of the recession, the United States will be under more pressure to reduce carbon emissions, as will Canada and Mexico. All three countries would benefit from greater cooperation around issues like energy efficiency, renewable energy, cleaner fossil fuels and energy infrastructure. Not only government agencies or companies could participate in this kind of cooperation, but also research centers, universities and associations linked to renewable energy sources and the environment, among others.

The developed countries must take leadership in the transition to low-carbon economies and their research and development requirements. However, that leadership must not leave out the less developed economies in the region, like Mexico. It is no longer possible to think that every country will be able to resolve everything alone: as Obama himself has said, "We know that we can't afford to tackle these issues in isolation."³ The challenge is to create or bolster institutions regionally and sectorally capable of taking initiatives to cooperate, combining knowledge, technologies and financing.

Since his campaign, Obama has used the example of renewable energy to illustrate his ideas about the new kind of industrial and technological development he proposes, with job creation, reduction of CO₂ emissions, lower dependency on oil imports and energy security.

The possible evolution of U.S. oil policy and its results, above all with regard to less dependence on oil imports, poses challenges for the countries that until now have been its main suppliers, particularly the closest ones like Mexico and Canada. In the case of Canada, its foremost supplier, it will be interesting to see what happens with the oil extracted from tar sands, an important part of its reserves, production and exports. An important challenge is posed here: making sure that the tar-sands production is environmentally sustainable. It produces more greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions than conventional oil and also causes other damage to the environment, like, for example, the enormous expenditure of water and gas it entails. This partly explains why the recently passed U.S. 2007 Energy Bill's Section 526 prohibits federal fuel purchases if their production generates more GHG emissions than conventional oil.

The importance of the Canadian-U.S. relationship, particularly with regard to energy and environmental issues, was shown during Barack Obama's first trip abroad as president. During his stay, he and Canada's prime minister announced the launch of the U.S.-Canada Clean Energy Dialogue, a scientific collaborative effort to develop new technologies aimed at reducing GHG emissions and fighting climate change.

As mentioned above, Obama has formulated interesting proposals about cleaner energy development as an important component of a strategy for overcoming the crisis. He can forge an interesting partnership with Canada, taking into account the two countries' degree of development and integration, since they have already made substantial investments in research for carbon capture. Will this energy-environmental dialogue extend to Mexico, or will the relationship between our country and the United States continue to be marked by issues linked to security, drug trafficking and migration?

With regard to Mexico, in the current conditions (drop in production and the state of reserves, among other things), it is questionable whether the level of oil exports to the U.S. that the country has maintained for decades can be kept up. Analysts consider that Mexico does not have the potential

Mexico must postpone the depletion of its non-renewable energy, reviewing export policy and establishing greater internal efficiency, at the same time that it immediately begins to broaden the role and place of renewable sources.

to autonomously transition toward a more diversified, cleaner energy base. Therefore, the topic of strategies and public policies that it must adopt as a producing country—and eventually as an exporting country—must be broached so that it can transition toward developing alternative fuels. Can the fossil-fuel paradigm, which has marked Mexico's development, be extended and for how long? Can this be done without it having grave consequences when other countries—even ones with similar levels of development, like Brazil—have already made advances in designing strategies and policies that combine the fuel, technological and environmental dimensions?

In orienting itself toward a sustainable, diversified energy future, Mexico faces several deficiencies in the fields of information, technology, research and development and financial resources. On the other hand, it does have the human resources and the potential for technological assimilation and national integration for developing renewable energy sources like wind, solar, mini-hydraulic and bio-mass, all of which require locally manufactured equipment and instruments.

It also exhibits important deficiencies regarding an adequate institutional and regulatory structure; in many cases what is currently in place acts more as a brake. The energy transition is not only linked to knowledge about new fuel sources or technologies, but also to renovated institutional and regulatory frameworks favorable to new developments and opportunities. There has been a lack, for example, of special regimes with guaranteed rates for generating electricity based on renewable fuels. In other countries, regimes of this kind ensure guaranteed access, long-term contracts stipulating terms for connection and payment for transport of electric power (wheeling contracts) and fiscal incentives. Mexico's legal framework is also not apt for plans for distributed or co-generated production based on renewable sources that can connect up with the Federal Electricity Commission or Central Light and Power systems. Among other things, it is absolutely necessary to perfect the long-term contracts and payment conditions that prioritize generation, transmission and distribution of electrical power using renewable sources.

The question is whether Mexico's recent reforms will be able to meet the need to articulate and implement a long-term energy policy with a clear strategic focus. It is true that more financial resources will be put into research and technological development. This is undoubtedly an important step, but it is insufficient, since a new institutional framework adapted to long-range energy, technological and environmental development is also required. It is important to discern the challenges and situate them correctly: Mexico must postpone the depletion of its non-renewable energy, which will continue to be its main source in the coming years, reviewing export policy and establishing greater internal efficiency, at the same time that it immediately begins to broaden the role and place of renewable sources. The need to prevent any drop in investments in hydrocarbons at the same time that investment in alternate sources is not neglected becomes a central concern to ensure that productive capacity is in place when the economy reactivates.

The market and private actors will not be enough to deal with all this in the three countries of North America: the state will have to continue to play a fundamental role. This seems to be clear to President Obama, at least, despite the deficiencies and restrictions of his proposals. The deployment of new energy sources and technologies, for example, depends on the availability of new or revamped infrastructures that facilitate the transition not only to a cleaner, more diversified energy base, but also to a new low-carbon economy. This is a long-term task in which the state will have to assume strategic responsibilities. ■■■

NOTES

¹ About the nature of recoveries according to the type of recession historically speaking, see International Monetary Fund, "From recession to recovery: how soon and how strong," Ch. 3 of *World Economic Outlook*, 2009, available on line at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2009/01/pdf/c3.pdf>.

² OECD/IEA, "The Impact of the Financial and the Economic Crisis on Global Energy Investment," 2009, available on line at <http://www.ilsol24ore.com/art/SoleOnLine4/Mondo/2009/05/Impact-crisis-energy-investment.pdf?uuiid%3D716fe52c-486c-11de-8b93-5eacd5e2fc6c>.

³ See Ross Colvin and Jeff Mason, "Obama reassures Canada on open trade," February 19, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSTRE51G0YM20090220>.

Climate Change and Renewable Energy Technology In the Obama Administration

Edit Antal*



Cheryl Ravelo/Reuters

The United States has lost prestige and leadership capability worldwide on environmental issues because it is the only influential country that has not participated in the climate change regime or committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Today, Europe is heading up actions around this issue, largely due to its having acted jointly as the European Union, thereby increasing its weight globally.

Barack Obama's United States is very interested in changing this state of affairs. The new president's plan seeks to recover his country's prestige, give confidence to the world and regain

leadership in matters of climate change, energy and technology. "If we are to be a leader in the 21st century global economy, then we must lead the world in clean energy technology."¹ Obama is betting on clean energy technology in the short and medium terms to save the United States from the crisis and position it in world competition.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

Europe, for its part, having taken on commitments to reduce emissions, has put in place a series of incentives in the last decade to develop clean energy, like wind, solar and nuclear

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Barack Obama's United States is very interested in changing the current state of affairs.
The new president's plan seeks to recover his country's prestige, give confidence to the world and regain leadership in matters of climate change, energy and technology.

energy. This is responsible for the fact that, today, companies based in the European Union report higher investment levels in new technology and innovation in alternate energy sources than their U.S. counterparts; this sets red lights blinking in the United States in terms of technology competition.

This is the sad state of affairs that the Obama administration has recognized, making it the first U.S. administration in history that has actually presented the problem of climate change as a challenge that will stimulate the development of renewable energy technology. It will be a long-term plan that must nonetheless be implemented immediately because estimates say that fossil fuels will only last about another 40 years. The plan consists of reducing the country's profound dependence on coal, gas and oil by investing enormous amounts in researching and developing the alternative technologies that can be created domestically.

THE PROMISES

As a candidate, Obama announced an ambitious project to deal with climate change. The goal was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 80 percent by the year 2050. He promised to invest the amazing sum of US\$150 billion over 10 years in research on advanced technologies. After he became president, he proposed that Congress double the science and technology budget because, as he warned, the United States is losing the global technology race, particularly with regard to renewable energy.

Along these same lines, he hopes to create five million jobs in the technology sector, a large number of which would be "green jobs," so that in four years, 10 percent of energy would come from alternative sources, and by 2025, 25 percent. In an attempt to reduce dependency on countries and regions in conflict, over the next 10 years, the idea is to save more oil than is currently imported from the Middle East and Venezuela. These measures would not only foster the development of clean technologies and benefit the environment, but would also lessen the risk of serious clashes with other countries that could eventually lead to war.

In addition, the plan would put in place a series of regulations that would reduce the consumption of dirty energy in public buildings, government installations and schools, as well as curtail energy waste through efficient practices. Among other things, this would include generating 25 percent of electricity from other sources, like sunlight and the wind.

To do this, an efficient, obligatory mechanism must be introduced that will punish anyone who increases greenhouse gas emissions and rewards those willing to reduce them. The essence of a system of this kind is known as "cap and trade," and consists of establishing a greenhouse gas emission ceiling for corporations and setting quotas for companies in the most polluting sectors. So, firms that by nature generate emission levels higher than established limits will be forced to buy permits (or what are called allowances) on the market. In other words, the idea is to establish a federal carbon-emissions market.

This mechanism is similar to the one the European Union set up in 2005, which has probably been the main factor that has effectively stimulated the development of new technologies. California and an increasing number of regions throughout the United States have implemented systems of this type in recent years. However, on a federal level, high polluting but politically influential sectors have prevented legislation of this type from being made mandatory

THE FACTS

To attain his ambitious objectives, Obama has created a high-level group of energy, climate and technology advisors. It includes the U.S. secretary of energy; the renowned Nobel Prize winner Steven Chu, one of the most prestigious scientists in the field of climate change; Carol Browner, with broad environmental experience, who was named the president's assistant for energy and climate change, a new position created specifically because of the issue's importance; and climate change expert Dr. John Holdren, named the president's assistant for science and technology and the head of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. This is a post that Republican administrations tend to underestimate; it

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operates under the aegis of the executive branch and functions as a coordinating office.

The appointment of a real authority on the subject, Todd D. Stern, as “climate change czar” underlines how important the issue is to the new administration, even on a foreign policy level.

Another positive sign is that the 2009 budget for energy already includes the implementation of a cap-and-trade system by 2012. Given that this is quite complex, there has to be a series of preparatory measures that have already been included in the budget. This mechanism is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions 14 percent by 2020 and 83 percent by 2050. The recently passed budget earmarks US\$39 billion for research into clean energy technologies, a substantial increase.

April 17 of this year was a memorable day in the history of climate change: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency took the first step toward building a legal system to regulate climate change in the United States by declaring that greenhouse gases are serious pollutants that “endanger public health and welfare.”² If this measure, currently under consultation for two months, is approved, the question of climate change will be officially recognized, with a legal framework that will inaugurate a new era.

This will lead to a series of measures to limit atmospheric pollution linked to climate change; they may be administrative or legislative changes as the Obama administration prefers, according to the results of the consultation. The next step would be to go to Congress to create the cap-and-trade system.

Undoubtedly, the key to effective regulation of climate change is precisely putting in place a U.S. cap-and-trade system. The bill has already been written by Democratic Congressmen Henry A. Waxman (Calif.) and Edward J. Markey (Mass.). Today, it is the subject of lively debate among legislators. The idea is to convince at least 60 of the 100 senators and turn it into law this year.

It is a very complex proposal, but its basic tenet is that by 2012, the government would be able to impose national limits (caps) on greenhouse gas emissions and begin trading pol-

luting permits (allowances) so some polluters will be able to purchase allowances to pay for their emissions either from the government itself or from other corporations. Despite the lack of Republican support at the beginning of the process, the bill's proponents are optimistic about getting the votes they need.

Another important advance in the same direction is the president's recent proposal to create an Biofuels Interagency Working Group. This is good news despite there being quite a bit of controversy about the environmental impact of some biofuels. The new presidential directive specifically supports the use of new generation biofuels like the ones based on cellulose, diesel made from biomass, advanced technologies and other completely new varieties. This measure even seeks to generate technologies that can extract some of the gases emitted from the atmosphere.

Despite being the world leader in biofuel production, the United States has been severely criticized both for offering high subsidies and for using rather old-fashioned traditional technologies that create various problems. For example, in years past, the high subsidy for ethanol production made from corn contributed to increasing the price of corn and creating a scarcity of this basic grain on the world market. International bodies warned at that time that if foodstuff-based biofuel production continued to increase, it could cause widespread starvation worldwide.

If the measures the Obama administration has proposed are put into effect first in the United States, the government would be in a position to take on international commitments and propose a system, treaty or regime to lessen the effects of climate change globally. With this, it would avoid having to attend the global negotiations on climate change at the end of this year in Copenhagen. **NM**

NOTES

¹ “President Obama Announces Steps to Support Sustainable Energy Options,” The White House, May 5, 2009, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/President-Obama-Announces-Steps-to-Support-Sustainable-Energy-Options/.

² See <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/OEF7DF675805295D8525759B00566924>. [Editor's Note.]

Immigration on Mexico's Southern Border

Ana Luisa Izquierdo y de la Cueva*



Marco Polo Guzmán Hernández/Cuatoscuro

Central American migrants very frequently risk their lives.

Down through its history, Mexico's handling of migration along its southern border has been full of paradoxes and contrasts. Migration used to be a natural event that became part of ancient peoples' sacred chronicles; today it is viewed with suspicion and even considered a crime. This is why we have set out to understand the phenomenon to the fullest and approach it with a focus that embraces human rights and puts Latin American brotherhood front and center in national policy.

Because of its geographical location, Mexico has played the role of linking North and South America, Anglo-Saxon America and Latin America, the Protestant and Catholic tra-

ditions. The southern border is 1,138 kilometers long, slightly less than half the length of the northern border. It runs along the states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche and Quintana Roo on the Mexican side, and Guatemala and Belize on the other side. It is Chiapas, however, that receives the brunt of migrant flows because 16 of its municipalities border on Guatemala, while Tabasco and Campeche have two border municipalities and Quintana Roo only one.

In addition to the fact that a central part of our history includes normal population movements, when Mexico became independent, it also developed a great willingness to offer refuge to those who for political or economic reasons needed to leave their home countries.

After all the countries on the continental Western Hemisphere became independent, Spain suppressed the indepen-

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dence movements in the Caribbean, mainly Cuba and Puerto Rico. Metropolis pundits called these uprisings of the Afro-American population “Negroid conspiracies.” Some of their leaders fled to Mexico seeking refuge. Francisco Zarco’s suspicions alerted Mexican authorities to the danger of signing an extradition treaty with Spain, so that, instead, they could guarantee the immigrants complete safety.¹ Mexico was the port of entry for those expelled for ideological reasons. This was when the prohibition of extraditing people persecuted for their political beliefs was raised to the constitutional level (Article 15), a landmark in Mexican history.

On the other hand, different factors contributed to the fact that the first Mexican Congress issued rules for colonization in our country, which at that time, 1822, was twice the size it is now. Those factors include low population density, particularly of mestizo and *criollo* population in certain regions,² Certain theories of progress based on racist prej-

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udices that fostered the idea that the national indigenous population was ignorant, indolent and lazy, while the inhabitants of other countries were supposedly more cultured, industrious and hard-working. (Later, José Vasconcelos’s idea that racial intermingling was the way to development was added to this mix.) In 1863, legislation was adjusted to permit the entry of colonists with the mission of making agriculture flourish. They were given the same legal status as Mexican citizens, with the same rights and obligations.

Our country opened its doors to the Anglo-Saxon population to occupy Texas and Coahuila, giving them the right to land and tax breaks. In the second half of the nineteenth century, taking advantage of Mexican colonization policy, Germans—some from Guatemala—arrived in Chiapas’s Soconusco area, right behind the first U.S. colonists.

Colonization was facilitated by the foundation of companies dedicated to land surveys, attracting colonists with the promise of financial success. In contrast with the northern border, where the Americans came to stay, in the South, their sojourn ended in the first years of the twentieth century. The German presence, by contrast, was longer lasting, although

they did not mix with the local population and preserved their cultural identity as much as possible, thus contributing to marking the social differences among the indigenous, mestizos, *criollos* and the successful foreigners. Their economic activities were concentrated in coffee for export, sugarcane and cacao, as well as the production of rubber and *piloncillo*, a kind of concentrated brown sugar or crystallized molasses.

Another important wave of immigration was headed by Enomoto Takeshi in 1893, symbolic because these were the first Japanese to arrive in Latin America. A pioneering group called the Enomoto Colony was made up of 32 families who settled around Escuintla, Chiapas, in the Soconusco Pacific coast region. Evidently, their undertakings were successful: they started out growing coffee, but then branched out into the silk industry. They diversified and began to open shops and pharmacies; in the countryside, in addition to planting, they went into cattle raising. The Japanese were not as careful to maintain the purity of their identity as the Germans, and today we find people with Japanese last names—mainly in retail and wholesale—who are descendents of those first settlers.

Together with these three waves of immigration, part of Mexico’s policy to achieve a certain idea of progress based on excluding the Mayan peoples was to attract cheap labor to the recently constituted large agricultural holdings. The German, U.S. and Japanese foreigners were the owners and also the administrators and overseers, but it was the indigenous people who actually tilled the land. Clinging to a prejudice that the indigenous were incapable of doing hard labor, the landowners did not allow them to develop and kept them in a very precarious subsistence economy. So, they encouraged the immigration of Chinese labor. The first objective was to build the Tehuantepec railway that would join the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific: to do that, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Compañía Mexicana de Navegación del Pacífico (the Mexican-Pacific Navigation Company) hired 2,500 Chinese laborers.

Although the Chinese were not welcomed with open arms by the general population, they were favored by Porfirio Díaz’s policy and they really knuckled down to the hard labor.³ Once the railroad contracts were over, with a little money in their pockets, they went into the laundry and tailoring businesses, made shoes and clothing and grew vegetables for sale. After a time, they brought their families into the country, increasing Chinese immigration in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In those same years, they began to open other businesses like cafés, restaurants, small hotels, and

department stores; they became importers and were the first to offer sales on credit.

Another wave of cheap labor, Mayas from Guatemala, came into the country to work in agriculture; they came to work in the fields when coffee replaced the cacao and indigo crops. During their stay in Guatemala, German businessmen had gotten used to using indigenous labor, so they encouraged the entry of Mayas from Guatemala's Huehuetenango and San Marcos departments.

Extreme poverty, low productivity in their subsistence farming, high population density, lack of jobs and other calamities, together with low educational levels and the lack of industry in their own country made coming to Mexico attractive for migrants. They also enjoyed certain benefits and sometimes even earned higher wages than at home, even if they were lower than those of most Mexican workers. This kind of servitude is comparable with that of the peons tied to the land in the time of Porfirio Díaz.

These workers entered the country without documentation. This means that illegally recruiting labor, and what is called the "human meat market" established in collaboration with corrupt officials, is almost a century old. While there are still workers laboring under these conditions in our country, their numbers are beginning to dwindle because of the migratory accord now being negotiated. On the other hand, the requirements demanded of the seasonal indigenous laborers are paradoxical because their work has strengthened the regional and export economies by bringing in foreign currency; this means that coming to a fair agreement would be in line with Mexico's policy of offering refuge and contribute to fostering Latin American brotherhood.

On the other hand, there are also examples of Mexico's solidarity: the welcome offered to European Jews during the Nazi occupation and exiled Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, as well as the tolerance of Cuban émigrés.

However, not all peoples have been treated in the same way. A moment that could have reiterated Mexico's fraternal tradition was the policy of admitting political exiles in the 1970s, but the political instability and mass repression in Guatemala caused an exodus of its Mayan population over the border into Mexico. The first wave came through the harsh terrain of the Petén region to Campeche, and then through Chiapas. The first contingent of 500 Guatemalans was stopped two days later when they began to be deported back across the border to Guatemala. This was repeated at least three times, but they kept on coming. By 1983, an estimated 50,000 exiles

were living in 77 Chiapas towns. Essentially, they were seeking safety and trying to get the attention of international bodies. But Mexico was not acting in accordance with the lessons it had learned from its own experience.

The international scandal created by the expulsion of these people alerted the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Mexican Commission for Aid to Refugees (Comar), created to deal with the Salvadoran exodus, began to deal with the problem and debate it publicly, with the support of religious institutions. The first thing this achieved was to stop the mass deportations; second, to begin the regulation of migration; third, the respect for traditional forms of government and setting up job programs, although these were not completely exempt from human rights violations.

Keeping the refugees a few kilometers from the border was felt to be a danger, so the Guatemalans were shipped off to more remote spots, most often using force and violating their

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human rights. A year later, they were relocated in Campeche and Quintana Roo. Some kept up the hope of being repatriated, so enclaves remained in three of the four border states, with some of the refugees participating in work programs, others in official refugee camps supported by national and international aid, and others taking on waged work, although at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* Mexican day laborers and subject to exploitation by bosses.

Once they had organized and designated representatives, they began to negotiate their return with their own government, but proposing that certain rights be recognized: the right to the land they lived on, mainly the land they had ancestral rights to; the right to live under their own forms of government; and the right to be accompanied by the international bodies that had protected them.

The first form of repatriation was individual and voluntary; the governments decided how, who, and how many would return to Guatemala. This process lasted from 1984 to 1998. The year the largest number went home was 1994 when the Zapatista movement began. The second way was the collective, organized return, which ended in 1999: in this case, the

refugees decided where, when, who, how many and how they would go, and arrangements were made jointly by non-governmental organizations and the governments of Mexico and Guatemala. Nevertheless, some opted to stay in Mexico and the government made 25,000 of them naturalized citizens in the late 1990s.

The southern border did not have control stations until the 1990s because a large part of the land that separates us from Guatemala and Belize was only sparsely populated by poor Maya indigenous people. But after it was recognized that Guatemalan soldiers were entering Mexico illegally to kidnap expatriates, Mexican authorities became aware of the need to build roads to insure surveillance and control of the border since it was, of course, a matter of national security. This surveillance became a priority when the Zapatista movement began to develop in those areas, focusing the eyes of the international community on the great poverty and social ine-

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quality prevalent in Mexico. We have also been pressured by the United States to reinforce surveillance of border movements since the September 11 terrorist attacks.

On the other hand, at the end of the 1970s, given the economic situation of Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, Mexico had to deal with another wave of migrants: these countries' "economic exiles," a great many of whom are indigenous, mainly Mayas.

Most of these "economic exiles" go through our country on the way to the United States in search of the "American Dream." They are usually undocumented. A few of them come on their own, and others come in caravans led by human smugglers. Their journey is fraught with danger: they not only lack safe transportation—they often travel hanging from trains, meeting with mutilation and violent death—but they also fall ill and find themselves at the mercy of corrupt immigration officials, who extort money from them, and of thieves and muggers.

Ironically, the departure of the dispossessed from their countries benefits their governments because it prevents social unrest, decreases the pressure on an already weak job market, decreases the amount of public services that have to be provid-

ed and increases liquidity in the economy because of the millions of dollars in remittances they send back to their families.

There are legal barriers to overcome before Mexico can once again welcome those who have escaped from their native lands. As a federation, the central government is the only body with legal jurisdiction to manage the border area: even though the states and municipalities are sovereign, the Constitution prohibits them from signing the international treaties or agreements that would help solve certain immigration problems. A possible solution would be to look to international law, that is, in concert with the Central American governments, comply with and ensure compliance with the treaties that guarantee exiles' human rights.

Mexican solidarity seems to have been lost because our government has been overbearing and engaged in discriminatory, corrupt acts that violate the human rights of the Central Americans who come to our country, something we have condemned when it happens to the undocumented Mexicans who try to cross our northern border.

Migration must be considered a fundamental right of all the world's citizens. For that reason, migrants—even those who come to our land—must be considered trans-border minorities who enjoy an international system that protects their rights. ■■■

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NOTES

- ¹ Francisco Zarco (1829-1869) was a Mexican journalist and historian and a critic of conservative policy. He was minister of foreign relations in the government of Benito Juárez. [Editor's Note.]
- ² "Criollo" in Mexican Spanish refers to people of Spanish, non-indigenous, ancestry born in the Western Hemisphere. They were the highest level of the socio-economic-cultural totem pole, except for the Spaniards themselves. [Translator's Note.]
- ³ President Porfirio Díaz was in power from 1876 to 1911. [Editor's Note.]

Human Rights Violations. The Real Cause of Conflict Involving Migrants around the World

Ariadna Estévez*

Conservative and usually racist political discourse around the world blames economic immigrants for encouraging conflict and even violence. Detractors of migration take as an example the series of disturbances involving the young descendents of Maghrebi immigrants in Paris for two weeks starting on October 27, 2005. However, evidence shows that several forms of human rights violations—from governmental tolerance of xenophobia and labor exploitation to repression of legitimate political activism and racist legislation—are behind conflicts involving migrants not only in North America and Europe, but also in countries like South Africa, Egypt and Malaysia.

Based on the analysis of cases registered by the world press between 2001 and 2008,¹ this article examines eight forms of violence and conflict involving different kinds of migrants (undocumented immigrants, seasonal workers and first- and second-generation documented immigrants) that result from gross human rights violations.

CONFLICTS INVOLVING UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS AND SEASONAL WORKERS

Among the types of conflict involving undocumented and seasonal workers the following can be highlighted:

1. *Disturbances initiated by xenophobic attacks.* It is rarely mentioned that it is the majority rather than the immigrant minority that initiates disturbances and acts of violence. These problems tend to arise where immigration is recent and large. The receiving society perceives immigrants as the root cause of problems that are in reality long-standing and complex, such as unemployment or increases in the crime rate. Some also disapprove of the habits and customs of recently arrived



Marco Polo Guzmán/Cuartoscuro

Undocumented Central Americans in detention in southern Mexico.

immigrants, and confrontations often take on a racist dimension. Examples of such cases can be found in Spain, Japan, Tonga, the United States, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Russia. However, the most tragic example is perhaps that of South Africa where, in May 2008, in the town of Alexandria near Johannesburg, a series of hate attacks on immigrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi went on for two weeks. In that time, at least 24 immigrants were shot, stabbed or beaten to death while hundreds more were injured and a further 13,000 displaced. Immigrants in South Africa have become the scapegoat for the country's economic problems, including a 23-percent unemployment rate, since banks and insurance companies seem to prefer employing immigrant workers, who are better qualified than the local population. These clashes triggered further violence beyond South

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Africa's borders when leaflets were circulated in Mozambique calling for vengeance and a boycott of South African businesses.

2. *Riots and other forms of protest in detention centers.* This is the most frequent type of conflict and the most common forms are riots, hunger strikes, suicide threats and attempted escapes. The frequency of these events is evidence of the fundamental contradiction of keeping people who have never committed a crime in detention, where they would prefer to kill themselves than be deprived of their freedom. People held in these centers are mostly asylum seekers waiting for a court verdict. Most recently, in countries like the United Kingdom, these asylum seekers have been held with foreigners serving criminal sentences; this form of coexistence simply increases the use of weapons among detainees.

The most common reasons for this type of conflict include the imminent deportation of a detainee after awaiting the decision of a judge for a prolonged period (up to three years), notification of rejection of an asylum application, and the suicide of a fellow detainee after being notified of his/her deportation order. In the case of Mexico, detainees rioted in response to overcrowding and living conditions in the capital's detention center. There is also growing discontent concerning the holding of entire families, in particular children who are not even aware of being foreigners; this has led to protests in the United Kingdom, Belgium and the United States.

One of the most dramatic cases happened May 2, 2008, when a youth from Cameroon seeking asylum in Belgium hanged himself in the bathroom of a detention center in the city of Merksplas. He used the sheets from his bed, tying them to the bars on the window. His death sparked a riot among detainees who smashed furniture and other objects during a disturbance lasting several hours. The youth had arrived in Belgium in 2005 and was taken to Merksplas, which houses 150 undocumented migrants from Africa, after being denied asylum. Days prior to the tragic event, while police attempted to put him on a plane to Cameroon, he had resisted with such violence that the captain of the plane refused to take him, leading to his being returned to the detention center

where he committed suicide before the next attempt to deport him, slated for several days later.

3. *The occupation of public buildings.* Because they are not recognized as subjects under the law, there is a trend whereby undocumented immigrants physically occupy public buildings of strategic importance in the receiving country like churches, government offices and restaurants. These kinds of cases have been reported in Spain, Italy, the Cape Verde Islands and France. In Belgium, a group of immigrants staged a series of sit-ins using six construction cranes dotted throughout Brussels. This type of action is not only staged to focus public attention on demands for regularization, but also to protest the exploitation immigrants cannot legally report. The most common reasons for occupation are demands for government protection in the face of abuse and violence from the receiving society; demands to be treated in the same way as local residents; and circumstances related to the right to work (rehiring and regularization of migratory status after the unjustified termination of employment; reporting of employers' tricks who report their irregular status to authorities and thereby avoid paying their wages; drug tests; anonymous calls to immigration authorities; and the dismissal without pay or after attempts to organize a union).

France is notorious for this type of conflict and has witnessed the occupation of restaurants by undocumented migrant workers who were fired after protesting their working conditions. On July 10, 2007, undocumented workers of the fast food chain Buffalo Grill occupied the company's head office in Viry-Chatillon, in southern Paris, after being fired and reported to immigration authorities. The immigrants, the majority Africans, many of whom had worked at the restaurant for years, now face deportation. The previous year an employee had proposed himself as candidate for employee representation and months later his lack of documents was "anonymously" reported to the police who proceeded to inspect the papers of more than 600 foreigners employed by the chain. One group of undocumented workers, supported by the Federation of Business, Distribution and Services, protested the decision by occupying the company's parking lot for a month; this resulted in the regularization of papers for 20 workers.

French-based Buffalo Grill operates roughly 300 restaurants in France, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland and employs more than 6,000 workers. Company executives were investigated in 2003 on charges of involuntary manslaughter after it came to light that the chain had violated the

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ban on importing British beef during the embargo imposed in the wake of the “mad cow disease” scare from 1996 to 2000. Complaints that undocumented workers had lied about their migratory status were disregarded after it was discovered that the immigrants who had been fired from one franchise had been re-hired by others. Since 2005, the chain has formed part of a U.S. consortium that owns a number of hotel chains in Europe. In another more recent case, on September 22, 2008, dozens of African immigrants occupied the famous, traditional Tour d’Argent restaurant, a symbol of Paris, to demand the regularization of the papers of seven workers from Mali who had gone on a hunger strike and been expelled from the restaurant. The owner claimed he was not aware they were undocumented workers.

4. *Riots on northern borders when immigrants attempt to rush across.* In some countries large numbers of migrants congregate at northern borders and using the sheer weight of numbers attempt to rush across. Many are successful but others die in the attempt at the hands of border police. This occurs on highly patrolled borders such as those separating Europe from Africa and is the result of desperation on the part of migrants who have reached a critical point after a long and arduous journey to reach the border—in the case of the border between Morocco and Spain, some sub-Saharan migrants take three years to reach the border and prefer to die in the attempt to cross than return to their countries of origin as failures. The most shocking case was in Melilla, Spain, on September 29, 2005, when six African migrants died at the hands of Moroccan police after trying to scale the fence marking the border between Morocco and Spain. The deaths occurred when 600 migrants rushed the fence in an attempt to enter Spain. Security authorities responded by firing at the migrants, killing some of them as they attempted to jump the fence while others were asphyxiated in the ensuing stampede.

5. *Violent protests against the exploitation of workers and/or government inaction in the face of the problem.* Due to the lack of legal status that limits or impedes strike action, immigrant workers who do not occupy public buildings stage violent protests to demand the following: the regularization of their

migratory status, fair wages and an end to exploitation by employers who they say should face the legal consequences of their actions. This exploitation includes but is not limited to withholding pay and immigration documents from seasonal workers, arbitrary detentions at the workplace and unfair dismissals. These actions have been recorded in the United Arab Emirates, China, Greece and Malaysia. Worker demands are directed at the government, which they call on to protect them from employers’ abuses, and protests erupt into violence when this exploitation reaches a crisis point.

For example, in Dubai on March 23, 2006, 2,500 workers at the Burj Dubai Tower staged a protest demanding a pay hike. The ensuing riot caused damage totaling US\$1 million and began when buses used for transporting workers were delayed. The workers entered offices, smashing computers and files and destroyed a dozen cars and construction vehicles. They stated they wanted a pay hike since skilled carpenters were earning just US\$9 an hour, and unskilled laborers just US\$6 an hour. The construction boom in Dubai provides jobs for poor Asian immigrants who have complained of ill-treatment, poor living conditions and withheld wages. The United Arab Emirates labor minister stated that in 2005, 5,486 complaints concerning unpaid wages were received. Workers often complain that employers “lose” their passports, preventing them from returning to their countries of origin.

6. *Reactions to the repression of peaceful, legitimate demonstrations.* The repression of the right to demonstrate has led many immigrants to respond with the same degree of violence as the repressors. Immigrant demands include respect for labor rights, regularization of their migratory status, an end to impunity for abuses against members of their community and the suspension of their imminent deportation. These protests are due first to governments’ failure to protect them from the abuses of third parties and the fact that immigrants are tired of being placed in extreme situations. For example, in Paola, Malta, on July 27, 2006, 200 undocumented immigrants staged a riot and injured three police officers and two soldiers with stones after being detained on their way to the office of the prime minister. Four immigrants were also injured. The group was intercepted at Paola, near the capital, Valletta, by hundreds of police and soldiers, some of whom were dressed in anti-riot gear. The marchers were protesting the detention of hundreds of immigrants who had been intercepted on their way to continental Europe. Malta detains undocumented immigrants for a period of 18 months to deter illegal immigration.

CONFLICTS INVOLVING RESIDENT
AND SECOND-GENERATION IMMIGRANTS

Disturbances involving first- and second-generation immigrants are fundamentally linked to the formation of ethnic minorities and the social consequences of the exclusion they experience. Ethnic minorities are formed as the result of social exclusion, that is, they are refused citizenship or the chance to fully enjoy their rights or they become involved in a more general rejection of cultural diversity. Immigrants are socially excluded when they concentrate in marginalized residential areas and do work with low social status, and their access to services and rights is limited by their condition as immigrants or their lack of citizenship. Immigrants are commonly poorer, enjoying few opportunities to move up the social scale, and this favors conflict.

Despite the risk of rebellion, it is in the interests of the majority to continue excluding these groups as the dividends are greater. That is, when the majority continues to exclude and exploit these ethnic minorities, those wielding power in society enjoy a higher income through capital gains. In addition, as seen in confrontations between minorities in the United Kingdom and the United States, exclusion can lead these groups to clash with each other over access to resources, such as jobs and the control of criminal organizations. Among the forms of conflict involving first- and second-generation immigrants the following can be highlighted:

7. *Disturbances due to clashes between the majority population and an immigrant minority.* These occur when a crisis is reached in tensions between the majority and minorities, a crisis that may be brought on by the killing of a member of the minority group by police or a civilian member of the majority and the subsequent impunity for the perpetrators. The case which has had the greatest recent impact is perhaps the series of disturbances occurring in Paris over a period of two weeks starting October 27, 2005. The young descendents of immigrants set fire to cars and looted stores after two youths were electrocuted in a power sub-station in the popular immigrant neighborhood of Seine-Saint Denis after seeking refuge there from police. The final damage toll was more than 7,000 cars burned and 2,000 people arrested.

8. *Clashes between two immigrant minorities.* This type of violence is linked to the growing marginalization of ethnic minorities who must compete for resources and territory with equally marginalized groups. One of the most serious cases

is that of Almería, Spain, where on September 6, 2008, African immigrants rioted in Roquetas del Mar after a 28-year-old Senegalese immigrant was murdered. According to witnesses, the African was assaulted by a Roma immigrant while attempting to intervene in a dispute between Africans and Romas. Rioters set fire to two houses belonging to relatives of the alleged aggressor and also to a number of cars.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS,
THE TRUE CAUSE

The analysis of cases reveals that the causes of conflict are generally related to human rights violations in four different contexts. First, immigration policy leading to violations of the right to personal security, individual freedom and life through border controls, detention prior to deportation and increasing rejection of applications for asylum. Second, government tolerance of labor exploitation, discrimination, racism/xenophobia and impunity for the perpetrators of hate crimes and organized crime against immigrants, leading to violations of the right not to be discriminated against, to work and to be protected by the law against racism. Third, repression of legitimate demonstrations leads to the violation of political and civil rights. Finally, socioeconomic exclusion of residents and their descendants leads to gross violations of economic, social and cultural rights.

All these human rights violations affect first- and second-generation documented and undocumented immigrants; although clearly, the most vulnerable are undocumented immigrants and seasonal workers. Nevertheless, this exclusion is a complicated matter and takes on many different forms. ■■■

NOTES

¹ An extensive search of the international press was conducted that turned up over 100 cases. Given that the information depends directly on what the media chooses to cover, it is not possible to establish variables such as the frequency or most common types by country since there is a clear bias for this very reason. However, it can be said that these violent acts occur not only in European countries (the United Kingdom, Spain, Greece, Italy, Belgium, Malta, France and Russia) and the Americas (Canada, the United States and Mexico), but also in Africa (South Africa, Egypt and the Cape Verde Islands), Asia (Dubai, India, China, Japan and Malaysia) and Oceania and the Pacific (Australia and Tonga).

Language
Art

&

Literature
History

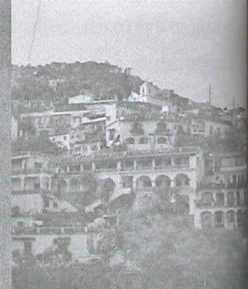
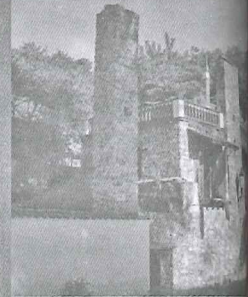
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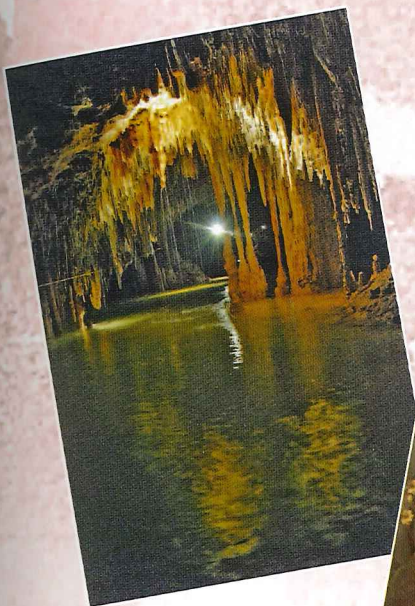
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- **The Art of the Missions**
Of Northern New Spain 1600-1821
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And the Literary Press
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- **The Mayan Language**
Sound of the Souls of Their Ancestors
- **A Voyage Through the Underground World**
Of the Mayan Riviera





Juan Correa, *Saint Francis Xavier Baptising*, ca. 1700 (oil on canvas). Santa María de Cuevas Church Collection. Dr. Belisario Domínguez.

The Art of the Missions Of Northern New Spain 1600-1821

Clara Bargellini*

Beginning in the 1530s, Spanish explorers traveled to the northern reaches of what would become the viceroyalty of New Spain to search for gold and lands to colonize. They were accompanied by Nahuas, Tarascans and other indigenous people, who had ancient roots in the North. Franciscan friars also took part in the expeditions, and before the end of the century, they had founded missions to convert the New Mexico natives to Catholicism. In 1591, the Jesuits arrived in Sinaloa on the Pacific coast. In time, they established a network of missions covering all of northwestern New Spain. By 1750, there were hundreds of missions among the indigenous peoples throughout northern New Spain. The Franciscans were situated to the west and north of Zacatecas, all the way to New Mexico and Texas. The Jesuits were in charge of Sinaloa, Sonora, present-day Arizona, the Sierra Madre and its eastern slopes and Baja California from 1697 onward.



Anonymous, *A pair of burettes with vamish, end of the eighteenth century (silver).* Saint John the Baptist Parish Collection, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

* Researcher at the UNAM Institute for Aesthetic Research and curator of the exhibition. Photos courtesy of the Old San Ildefonso College.

When the Jesuits were expelled in 1767 by King Charles III, the Franciscans remained as missionaries throughout the North. In this last phase, the friars based in the Colleges of *Propaganda Fide* (the propagation of the faith) in Querétaro, Zacatecas and Mexico City replaced the Jesuits in many of the northwest missions and founded new ones in California.

Although the history and characteristics of these missions have been extensively studied from many perspectives, the works of art they hold have attracted surprisingly little attention. Yet all the missions were decorated with paintings, sculpture, furniture, liturgical objects and liturgical vestments. A great

Many of these works were produced by prominent artists in Mexico City and elsewhere in New Spain, while others came from Europe and Asia.



Juan Antonio Arriaga, altarpiece painted with Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Ann, 1740 (oil on canvas). Archdiocese Seminary Collection, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

many of these works were produced by prominent artists in Mexico City and elsewhere in New Spain, while others came from Europe and Asia. Among the missionaries themselves there were cartographers, authors and linguists who left fascinating books and documents —some illustrated— on their experiences. Indigenous artists also participated in making objects and decorating the missions. In short, there are extensive visual remains of a vast spiritual and cultural undertaking that is a crucial part of the history of both Mexico and the United States. The exhibition, “The Art of the Missions of Northern New Spain, 1600-1821,” curated by myself and Michael Komanecky, chief curator

and acting director of the Farnsworth Museum in Maine, is the first to comprehensively explore this little known visual heritage from both sides of the border. Comprised of approximately 130 objects drawn from collections in Mexico, the United States and Europe, it includes many pieces of excellent quality from the missions themselves that have never been seen before outside their places of origin. A fully illustrated catalogue in Spanish and English with essays by an international team of scholars accompanies the exhibition. The subjects explored are: pre-Columbian cultures in the region, the history of missions in northern New Spain, mission architecture, the formal and the-



Juan Antonio Arriaga, altarpiece painted with the Savior and St. Joaquín, 1740 (oil on canvas).
Archdiocese Seminary Collection, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

The exhibit includes many pieces of excellent quality from the missions themselves that have never been seen before outside their places of origin.

matic characteristics of art for and at the missions, the impact of the missions in indigenous cultures and the missions in the art and literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Although the catalogue is the exhibition's more permanent record, the way the objects are displayed also deserves to be remembered. On view at the Old San Ildefonso College in Mexico City from April 15 to August 16, 2009, "The Art of the Missions of Northern New Spain" will also be shown at the San Antonio Museum of Art in Texas, the Tijuana Cultural Center, the Oakland Museum of California and one or two other venues. Each museum will make its own pre-



Horacio Carochi, S. J., *Compendium of the Art of the Mexican Language*. Eusebio Kino Library Collection.

sentation of the objects, of course, but the basic outline was formulated at San Ildefonso: an introduction, two main parts, and a coda, which are explained in this brief essay.

The introduction presents maps, documents and works of art providing basic information about the missions. The maps, both colonial and modern, show the areas covered by the two religious orders and locate the sites of some of the principal missions, especially those represented by objects in the exhibition. The two orders' founders, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius of Loyola, are also introduced. The vastness and variety of the territory covered by the missions are exemplified in photographs of landscapes and architecture taken by Chihuahua's Libertad Villarreal. The remainder of the introduction is about two fundamental conditions of mission work. A selection of books in various languages written by missionaries suggests the communication problem between European and Amerindian traditions. The contradictions of doing spiritual work within the context of the Spanish conquest, based on a providential view of history in which Spain was called upon to protect and spread Christianity, is illustrated in paintings of the death of missionaries and the destruction of missions by angry Native Americans.

The first part of the body of the exhibition is titled "The Dreams of the Missionaries." It delves into the missionaries' personalities, the varieties and



José de la Mota, *Virgin of Joys*, 1711 (oil on canvas). Jesuit House Collection, San Ignacio Saltillo, Coahuila.

A selection of books in various languages written by missionaries suggests the communication problem between European and Amerindian traditions.

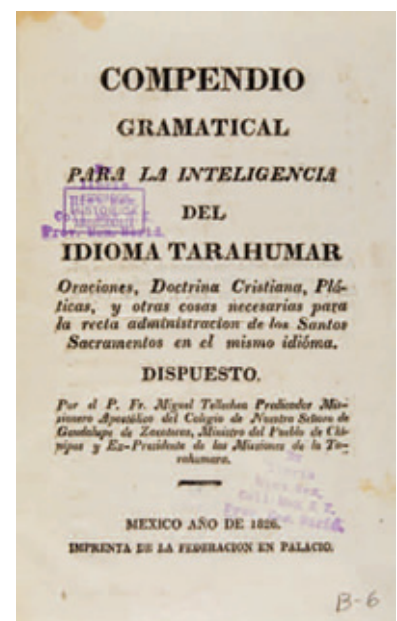
Franciscan works of art often refer to the fact that the friars were the first Christian missionaries in the New World, situating their efforts within a universal history of salvation.



Saint Joseph Recognizes the Innocence of Mary, seventeenth century (oil on canvas). Iberoamerican University Collection, Coahuila.

challenges of mission work throughout the world and the artistic genres in sculpture and painting that presented the missions to the general public of their time. Thus, we see portraits and narrative depictions of specific individuals who were important for mission history in New Spain, such as the Jesuit St. Francis Xavier, who was the model for all Roman Catholic missionaries of the Counterreformation period, and the Franciscan St. Philip of Jesus, born in Mexico City and martyred in Japan in 1597. Franciscan works of art often refer to the fact that the friars were the first Christian missionaries in the New World, and depict allegories and symbols situating their efforts within a universal history of salvation. The Jesuits proclaimed the heroism of their individual saints, pictured as inspired, tireless, triumphant individuals.

The second and principal part of the exhibition displays art works from mission territories. These are shown in a sequence that presents different categories of mission art and its great variety. The first of these is what can be called “missionary images”: images that traveled with the missionaries and were considered miraculous. These paintings and sculptures themselves were thought of as missionaries, because it was believed that they protected Christians and played an active role in converting the Amerindians and sustaining the missions. The crucified Christ predominated among the Franciscans, but all the mission-



Friar Miguel Tellechoa, *Grammatical Compendium for the Intelligence of the Tarahumara Language*, 1826, Eusebio Kino Library Collection, Mexico City.



Luis Barrueco, *Martyrs of Gorkum*, 1731 (oil on canvas). San Francisco Church Collection, Puebla, Puebla.

aries carried with them images of the Virgin Mary, whose comforting presence helped them continue their work. The Jesuits, in particular, introduced European miraculous images, such as the Virgins of *el Pópulo* (the Santa Maria Magiore icon), Loreto, *la Luz* and *el Refugio*. Indigenous groups appropriated for themselves the images of the Virgin and Christ, as well as of some of the saints. They integrated them into their world views, which include masculine and feminine principles that govern life.

The second category of images and objects are those that were used in the liturgy and religious celebrations. Some of these, necessary for saying mass, were essential and precious, often made of silver or luxurious textiles. In time, other objects were added as the missions became more permanent and celebrations were expanded. Many of these objects were imported from Mexico City and other parts of the viceroyalty, while others were made at the missions by local artists with local materials and techniques. Rites and celebrations mark personal and communal time and are associated with the subjects of particular paintings or sculptures. The individual begins life as a Christian with baptism. The community celebrates its patron saints and the liturgical year, divided into two cycles, one centered on the birth of Jesus at Christmas, and the other on his death and resurrection in Holy Week. Two video presentations complement this part of the exhibition: one documents the yearly celebration of St. Francis Xavier at the Jesuit mission dedicated to him in Baja California; the other is of the mission of St. Charles Borromeo, in Carmel, California, where Fray Junípero Serra, founder of the California missions, spent his last years.

The missionaries made every effort to adorn their churches as best they could. There was always some sort of altarpiece to dignify at least the main altar and the representation of the patron saint, and these make up the exhibition's third category of mission objects. When funds were available, carved and gilded altarpieces were purchased in Mexico City or other urban centers



Anonymous, *Pietà* (polychromatic, ornamented wood). Archdiocese Seminary Collection, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

and were shipped to the missions, but most frequently, altarpieces were made up of a central painting or sculpture, framed by various elements. To satisfy the great demand for altarpieces at the missions and elsewhere, some Mexico City artists made imitation altarpieces painted on canvas, which were easy to transport and not very expensive. Famous Mexico City artists also provided other paintings, especially in the eighteenth century, when regular parish life was already established. For example, Juan Correa, Antonio de Torres, Francisco Martínez, Nicolás Rodríguez Juárez, Miguel Cabrera and José de Páez produced significant numbers of works.

Although most of the art in the missions came from Mexico City, the architecture was the work of indigenous people, under the supervision of a missionary or of building specialists from elsewhere. Sculptures and paintings were also made in northern New Spain, and these are another important category of mission art. In New Mexico, for example, and probably also in Sonora, Christian images were painted on animal hides. This was an indigenous tradition turned to Christian use. Sculptures, too, often came from Mexico City, but the new Christians soon learned to use European tools to carve wood to

The introduction presents maps, documents and works of art providing basic information about the missions.



Fernando Consag (Ferdinand Konskak, S. J.) map of California, seventeenth century (engraving, print on paper). Jesuit Archives Collection.



Arellano, *Saint Rosa of Lima* (oil on canvas). Sacred Art Museum Collection, Diocesan Center, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.



Although most of the art in the missions came from Mexico City, the architecture was the work of indigenous people,

Anonymous, *Trinity*, 1711 (oil on canvas). Saint John the Baptist Parish Collection, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

make furniture, altarpieces and images. Sonora boasts stone sculptures probably made by Amerindians. Finally, the exhibition also includes baskets made in California by Chumash artists.

The finale of the exhibition is about the conservation and restoration of the pieces on display. To date, about 70 works been treated and some procedures are still unfinished. The Manuel del Castillo Negrete National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography of the National Institute of Anthropology and History, the Old San Ildefonso College itself and individual conservators have participated in this task, with the support of contributions by the Getty Foundation, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, Protego, A.C. of Chihuahua and a few private individuals. This rescue work must continue, since mission art has largely been ignored in the past.

The exhibition is the result of years of research and work with students of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, supported in part by a university grant. It also received support at different stages of its development from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the School for American Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico and the Terra Foundation. These as well as the lending institutions, and, especially, the Old San Ildefonso College



Anonymous, *chalice*, eighteenth century (silver). Saint John the Baptist Parish Collection, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

made it all possible, even in difficult times. Finally, the constant and generous collaboration of colleagues and friends at universities, museums, cultural institutions and at the missions themselves, both in Mexico and the United States, have demonstrated the necessity and advantages of working together for a better understanding of a common cultural heritage. Previously unknown art works from the missions and fresh, comparative views of mission culture have been presented and published. The exhibition and its catalogue can —and should— now serve as a basis for future work. **MM**



Anonymous, *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, ca. 1700 (polychromatic wood and cloth). Saint Ignatius of Loyola Vizcaínas Museum Collection.



Anonymous, *Saint Joseph's Workshop* (oil on canvas). Archdiocese Seminary Collection, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

Rolando Arjona Amábilis

Pilgrim of Painting

Luis Mendoza*



Artist Rolando Arjona Amábilis is a great man among his equals. He was born to paint March 21, 1920, in the city of Mérida, Yucatán. When he was barely 11 years old, he already knew that his destiny was to be an artist.

His father, Don Manuel Arjona Correa, and his mother, Doña Neri Amábilis Cámara, were able to finance his education until junior high school. After that, he had to fend for himself, which did not prevent him from entering the Fine Arts School founded by General Salvador Alvarado and later finishing his studies at the Yucatán People's School of Art.

* Curator and deputy director of the Cozumel Island Museum.

Note: The names, dates and whereabouts of some paintings illustrating this article are unknown. We include them because of their unquestionable artistic value.



Arjona's art is not artifice.
It contains no incomprehensible metaphors.
It does not speak an impenetrable language.



The Queen, 60 x 80 cm, 2002 (oil on canvas).

This beloved master painter has proudly carried the name of Mexico and Yucatán to the entire world. With firm roots in his homeland, a lover of life and of learning, he has always documented, protected and safeguarded our traditional roots.

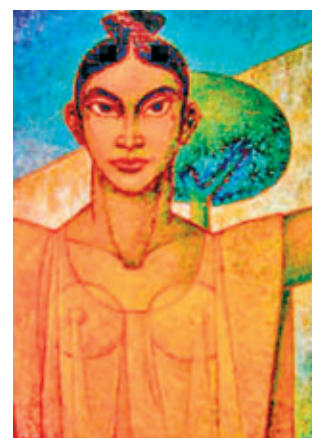
Those who admire him call him “the Pilgrim of Painting,” a well earned title backed up by the awards and honors he has been given throughout his career, both in Mexico and abroad. The most recent was the 2003 Grand Order of National Honor for Creative Merit, awarded at a ceremony in the Manuel M. Ponce Room of Mexico City’s Palace of Fine Arts. His name graces streets and public spaces around the country, as well as the wide boulevard where the Culiacán, Sinaloa bus terminal is situated.

Rolando Arjona is a great muralist and his 95 murals confirm his skill. He arrived already a painter in Mexico City in 1939, at a time when communism and socialism were spreading rapidly, and just a year before Siqueiros would head up a group of men to try to kill Leon Trotsky, living as a political exile in the Coyoacán neighborhood at the time, and when Carlos Mérida and Raúl Anguiano were fighting to export the “Carnivals of Mexico” lithographs. These and many other engravers would inspire him.

In that context, Arjona can be considered the genuine heir to the banner of social commitment that great artists like Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, Fermín Revueltas, Xavier Guerrero and so many others held high. In 1940, when he was only 20, he was already a committed artist who would forge himself like the greats who lived in such a transcendental time for Mexico and the world.



In his work, drawing, color, composition and intention are guided more by feelings than by the intellect.





The First Crossbreeding, 1000 x 400 cm, n.d. (acrylic on metal).



An initiate in monumental art, he would also be influenced by those who were establishing the bases for art's future: Alfredo Zalce, José Luis Cuevas, Fernando Leal, Rufino Tamayo and Francisco Toledo.

Like most muralists, he would also produce small and medium-sized works and contribute illustrations to several popular newspapers. One interesting road he traveled was begun as the artistic director for glass at Mosaicos Italianos, where he would produce more than 4,000 square meters of mosaics. For a time, he was the director of Mérida's State Art Center; and he was one of the founders of Mexico City's Modern Art Museum.

He is generally considered prolific, both in technique and style. He has done figurative, surrealist, expressionist and abstract canvases, as well as landscapes, engravings, mono-types, monumental sculptures, designs in silver and illustrations. He is a sculptor, photographer and heraldist (he designed the crest of the state of Sinaloa and several municipal crests in that state).

His art is not artifice. It contains no incomprehensible metaphors. It does not speak an impenetrable language. In his work, drawing, color, composition and intention are guided more by feelings than by the intellect. And it could almost be said that his personal technique has no defined aim: he paints according to the reaction a topic sparks in him and to the moment in which nature surprises him.

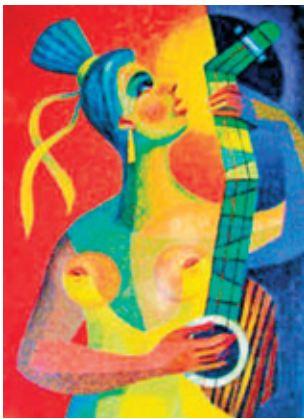


LIFE, WORK AND ART
RETROSPECTIVE, 1931-2009

The most recent homage to the Arjona, celebrating his 89 years, was held in the Cozumel Island Museum. The show sought to summarize—if that were even possible—his life and work with a retrospective collection that begins at the time he started out working as a painter.

Like many painters, whose commitment to their art has not involved merchandizing themselves, Arjona's work is scattered throughout the country, and he himself has little knowledge of where the works are. Nevertheless, based on graphic and visual materials, the show managed to bring together an incredible number of original works, posters, illustrations, graphics and photos of some of his murals. It also includes photographs he has taken at different times in his life, photographs that show a direction, documenting his life and work.

Outstanding among the paintings displayed are *The Body of Christ*, *The Geneoskullogical Tree*, *Homage*, *Off-On Mexico*, *The Hovel*, *Mammees and Mangoes* and an original sketch of the mural called *Codex of the Mex-*



The Hut, 80 x 80 cm, 2005 (acrylic on canvas).



Embracing Saint Carlos, 120 x 90 cm, 2003 (acrylic on canvas).



ican Nation, which includes passages from our nation's history from 1116 to 2009 and continues a line into the future.

Without abandoning his brush as his essential tool, the show emphasizes his dexterity with spatula and fingers, two techniques that few artists have used successfully.

The museographical part of the exposition was supported by research, documentation and a presentation that managed to find just the perfect balance to underline the authenticity, originality and grandeur of Arjona's artistic body of work.

Each stand holding the works represent a door or a window from which his work can be viewed. Their color was that of the *sascab*, that chalky powder that identifies him with his Yucatecan homeland.

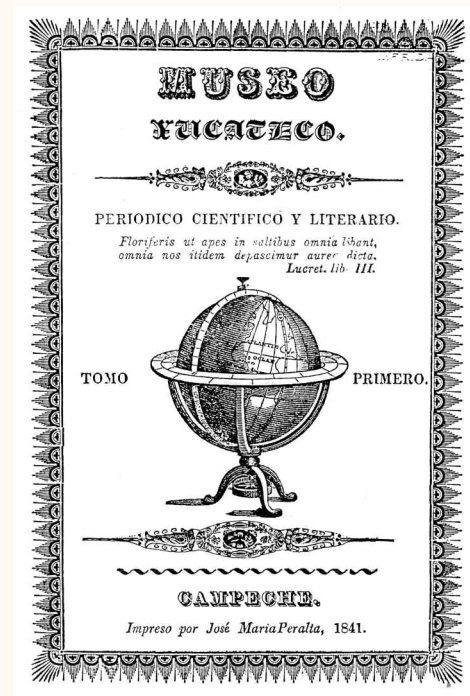
This unique show paid much-deserved homage to an artist who has lived humbly and passionately, a pilgrim who, at the age of 89, firmly maintains his commitments to art and with life. **MM**

Nineteenth-Century Yucatán Regionalism And the Literary Press *El Museo Yucateco* and *El Registro Yucateco* (1841-1849)

Arturo Taracena Arriola*

One of the most characteristic features of the history of nineteenth-century Yucatán is the emergence of a regionalist discourse. Its political expression in the 1840s was the aspiration to independence for the peninsula, and one of its main ideologues was the writer and jurist Justo Sierra O'Reilly. Considered the father of Yucatecan literature, O'Reilly introduced literary journalism to the peninsula when, together with Vicente Calero and Gerónimo Castillo, he founded *El Museo Yucateco* (1841-1842) and *El Registro Yucateco* (1845-1849). As writers, the three subscribed to the literary-political movement called romanticism,¹ which differed from country to country and often even within countries, because its starting point was to conceive of human groups as defined by geographical area, language and historical experience. This idea was not new; it had already been put forward during the Enlightenment. What was new was to think that peoples had a nature that could be explained by their own virtues. Thus, human society was presented as a homeland or nation.²

In that historical context, at the end of the 1830s, newspapers began to come out in Mexico proposing a systematic search for Mexican identity through literature, history and geography.³ It was a cultural undertaking promoting the idea of creating “virtues” to make Mexico a liberal nation with a federalist or centralist republican system. *El Mosaico Mexicano*, then, translated and reprinted articles from abroad, and, as far as was possible, tried to print original articles written by any author who would refer to matters pertaining to Mexico. This vision was surpassed in 1837 with *El Año Nue-*



vo, the official publication of the San Juan de Letrán Academy, which opted for publishing articles exclusively dealing with Mexican issues, written by Mexican authors.⁴

Alonso Sánchez has pointed to the fact that Ignacio Cumplido's 1843 decision to change the name of *Mosaico* to *El Museo Mexicano* meant going from an image made up of little pieces to a space designed to publicly present the sources for the history of Mexico.⁵ Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that there is an immediate precedent for this illustrious editor's initiative: two years before, Sierra O'Reilly had launched *El Museo Yucateco*, which turned out to be an example of the kind of journalism that sought to give credence to the existence of a historical memory and a cultural heritage for a

* Researcher at the UNAM Peninsular Center for Humanities and the Social Sciences (CEPHCIS).

peripheral region of Mexico like the peninsula of Yucatán. The express objective was the need for a regional identity that could direct its political destiny.

Just like the editors of *El Mosaico Mexicano* and *El Año Nuevo* before them, for Sierra O'Reilly and his collaborators, the starting point was the idea that it was fundamental to undertake a "regeneration" in order to eradicate the "partisan spirit" after the federalist victory in the peninsula and the advent of a new administration that launched into re-defining the peninsula's constitutional and territorial framework based on its autonomy from the central government. This is why these journalists insisted on the need for constructing a Yucatecan identity by defining its "virtues" and promoting its historical, cultural and geographical characteristics. To do that, it was absolutely necessary to gather the geographical, economic and cultural data to be able to define the peninsula's history. They considered that it began with the unknown Mayan civilization, followed by the foundational conquest by Francisco de Montejo in the sixteenth century. Also, they thought that Yucatán's territory should include the entire peninsula, and therefore, the El Petén region of Guatemala.

So, in the same way that the nation was being built throughout Mexico, as evidenced in the press from the first half of the nineteenth century, Yucatán also had to visualize its future as a possible "sovereign nation."⁶ So, as businessmen and members of an elite, Sierra O'Reilly and his collaborators thought all projects for change began with communication, and that that was what literary journalism was useful for, an ideal instrument to disseminate the abstract idea of Yucatán as a "country."

In short, an analysis of the content of *El Museo Yucateco* and *El Registro Yucateco* shows how its publishers launched into the "reinvention" of Yucatán recreating the history of the peninsula, both to demand respect for the yearnings for autonomy within the Mexican federalist structure that emerged from the struggle for independence, and to foster the production of proto-nationalist elements of their own, reinforced by the political dynamic in the midst of which independence had been declared in the peninsula in 1821. Therefore, it was indispensable to make the pages of both newspapers "places of memory," that would demonstrate this will to construct politically that identity.⁷

This implied the quest for Yucatán's own historical timeline, based on transcribing colonial documents, publishing geographical chronicles, evoking the biographies of public

Justo Sierra O'Reilly (1817-1861) was born in Tixcaltuyú and died in Mérida, Yucatán. He was a politician, jurist, writer and journalist. He was married to Concepción Méndez Echazarreta, the daughter of the state governor, Santiago Méndez Ibarra. As an editor, he distinguished himself publishing the newspapers *El Espíritu del siglo* (The Spirit of the Century), *El Museo Yucateco* (The Yucatán Museum), *El Registro Yucateco* (The Yucatán Register), *El Fénix* (The Phoenix) and *La Unión liberal* (The Liberal Union). He also published the short novels *El filibustero* (The Filibusterer) and *Doña Felipa Zanabria*; but his main literary works were *Un año en el hospital de San Lázaro* (A Year in Saint Lazarus Hospital) and *La hija del judío* (The Jew's Daughter) and his essay *Los indios de Yucatán. Consideraciones históricas sobre la influencia del elemento indígena en la organización social del país* (The Indians of Yucatán. Historical Considerations about the Influence of the Indigenous in the Country's Social Organization). He translated John L. Stephens' famous book *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*. In the field of politics, he was elected several times to be deputy and, above all, represented Yucatán in the accords with Tabasco in 1841, the Treaties with Mexico (1842), and before the United States in 1847, which he wrote about in his *Diario de nuestro viaje a los Estados Unidos* (Journal of Our Trip to the United States). At the end of his life, he wrote a draft Mexican Civil Code (1859-1860).

El Museo Yucateco (The Yucatán Museum) was printed in Campeche by José María Peralta. It stopped coming out because of the political situation created by General Santa Anna's plans to militarily invade the peninsula in the second half of 1842. This led Sierra O'Reilly to accept working together with his father-in-law, Governor Santiago Méndez

El Registro Yucateco (The Yucatán Register) was printed in Mérida by Jerónimo Castillo Lénard, except the last issues, which were printed in Campeche by Joaquín Castillo Peraza. The outbreak of the Caste War in early 1847 interrupted its publication for two years, which meant that the fourth volume was completed in late 1849 with the last issues.

men and asking that monuments be raised in their honor, as well as resorting to the use of legend and peninsular traditions to produce a literature specific to the region. In addition, they promoted the creation of museums to preserve the testimonies of Mayan civilization, considered an element that differentiated the area from the Aztec civilization, which at that time was beginning to be the cornerstone of Mexican nationalism. In short, both newspapers evidence a regionalist pedagogy destined to harmonize among Yucatecans the ideas

underlying their regionalist vision through essays, novels in installments, and poems dealing with a historically concrete, specific people.

However, Sierra O'Reilly and his collaborators' romantic influence had its limits, since its main characteristic, idealizing the primitive peoples, was biased by the reality of the peninsular ideology with regard to inter-ethnic relations. Thus, although they dedicated a large number of pages to praising the architectural wonders of Chichén Itzá, Uxmal and other Mayan cities and to analyzing their amazing mathematical bases, they ended by defending a historical-degenerative position when they refer to the situation of their indigenous contemporaries. In this view, the "Indians" were not familiar with or had long forgotten the writing and sciences left to them by the great architects of the past. This allowed for the conclusion that they had been enslaved by a Mayan first people who came from outside the peninsula, and for them to be catalogued as an inferior people, which is what they were in the eyes of local hacienda-owners and merchants. That is why since that time, the word "Yucatecans" does not include them, as travelers and foreign scientists of the stature of John L. Stephens and Arthur Morelet would remember. However, for a nation to be viable, it was essential to make the inhabitants homogeneous, at least on the level of discourse. But the bipolarity fostered on the peninsula between "whites" and "Indians" did not permit that.

Parallel to this, events showed that Sierra O'Reilly and his colleagues had to face the social decomposition emerging from the power struggle between the political factions headed up by Santiago Méndez and Miguel Barbachano and, above all, the indigenous irritation over Yucatán leaders' economic and political promises to them to get them to participate in defending their soil from the punitive expedition of Santa Anna's army. In 1847, the Caste War broke out, legitimizing the bipolar ideology, justifying even more the social gap underlying this ethnic bipolarity, at the same time that it put an end to the attempts at separatism by the Yucatán elite, who this time needed support from Mexico City to put down the Mayan rebels.⁸

This situation ended by putting the brakes on the new generation of Yucatecan writers identifying with their elders' project for sovereignty, as would be expressed in the literary newspaper they produced themselves, *Bullebulle* (1847). While they did maintain some of the elements of the regionalist discourse created by *El Museo Yucateco* and *El Registro Yucateco*, they no longer argued for an isolated Yucatán, but



rather for participating in the federalist experiment, and therefore, the construction of the Mexican nation. That would be the role that Justo Sierra Méndez, the son of Sierra O'Reilly, would play at the end of the century. ■■■

NOTES

- ¹ Vicente Calero Quintana, "Literatura. Artículo I. Reflexiones sobre la novela," *El Registro Yucateco*, vol. 1 (Mérida: Imprenta de Castillo y Compañía, 1845), pp. 64-70.
- ² Carl Schmitt, *Romanticismo político* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmas Ediciones, 2001), pp. 71-72 and 110-124.
- ³ In 1835, *Revista Mexicana* and *La Oposición* first saw the light of day; in 1836, *El Mosaico Mexicano* and *El Periódico de la Academia Mexicana de Medicina*; in 1837, *El Año Nuevo* and *El Diorama*; and, finally, in 1838, *El Ensayo Literario* and *El Recreo de las Familias*.
- ⁴ "El Museo Mejicano," *Boletín de Anuncios*, year 1, no. 1 (Mérida, Yucatán), November 21, 1843, as cited in Luisa Fernanda Rico Mansard, *Exhibir para educar. Objetos, colecciones y museos de la ciudad de México (1790-1910)* (Barcelona-Mexico City: Ediciones Pomares/INAH, 2004), pp. 190-191.
- ⁵ Magdalena Alonso Sánchez, "Una empresa educativa y cultural de Ignacio Cumplido: *El Museo Mexicano* (1843-1846)," Laura Beatriz Suárez de la Torre, comp., *Empresa y cultura en tinta y papel (1800-1860)* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora/UNAM, 2001), pp. 529-535.
- ⁶ Tomás Pérez Vejo, "La invención de una nación. La imagen de México en la prensa ilustrada de la primera mitad del siglo XIX (1830-1855)," Suárez de la Torre, comp., op. cit.
- ⁷ Nora Pierre, *Les Lieux de Mémoire: I. La République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).
- ⁸ See *Voices of Mexico* no. 83, particularly the "Museums" section, dedicated to the Museum of the Caste War, briefly explaining the reasons behind the Mayan indigenous movement against the living conditions and exploitation they were subjected to by whites on the peninsula, a war that shook the region for more than five decades. [Editor's Note.]



The Mayan Language

Sound of the Souls of Their Ancestors

Miguel A. Güemez*

Yucatecan Mayan—or just Mayan, as its speakers call it—is one of the most important linguistic groups in the Americas. In Mexico, it is spoken in a vast geographical area covering the states in the Yucatán peninsula (Campeche, Yucatán and Quintana Roo), as well as on the northern border of Belize. This makes it a living, homogeneous language with minimal dialect differences. When the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century, the Mayan language did not disappear or weaken; instead, it survived and coexisted vigorously persisting alongside the Spanish language. The Spaniards themselves had to learn it to be able to communicate with the native peoples and to give names to many of the things they found in nature in the peninsula.

In contrast with other indigenous languages spoken by different ethnic groups throughout Mexico (Tzeltals, Choles, Mazahuas and Purépechas, among others), the Mayan language is used today by more than 500,000 inhabitants from different strata of Yucatan's rural population, not just by indigenous groups. Among its speakers are rich “mestizos” and even *ts'ules*, or rich whites (merchants and landowners). There are also the “mestizos” who work as laborers, craftsmen, businessmen or public employees in the cities; the mestizos from the towns and villages who might be members of *ejido* col-

lective farms, day laborers, owners of small plots of land, teachers, doctors, priests and pastors. Then there are the *mayeros*, or *masehuales*, predominantly mono-lingual peasants living in the southern and eastern corn-producing parts of the state, far from urban centers. In these areas, Mayan functions practically as the official language and is considered of positive value in some sectors of the ruling class. In these towns, there is no stigma attached to the language; it is not looked down upon. The authorities use it both in official functions and at home with their families.

Nevertheless, in most of Yucatán's municipalities, the use of Mayan is increasingly restricted to the family, informal talks with friends in ceremonies, and when agricultural and crafts work is being done.

The Mayan language is expressive, with a rich vocabulary and beautiful syntax. From the morphological point of view, it is agglutinative, polysynthetic and very flexible. When its roots, almost always monosyllabic, are joined together, they make it possible to express entire thoughts in a single word. It abounds with silent consonants; its phonemes are classified as occlusive, fricative, affricate and nasal. Outstanding among them because they are explosive consonants are /ch/, /k/, /p/, /t/ and /ts/. The vowels are the same as in Spanish, but with five different accents: neutral /a/; glottal /a'/; high /áa/; low /aa/, and rearticulated /a'a/. When spontaneously and naturally spoken, Yucatecan Mayan acquires a special glottal, musical quality that has had a great deal of influence in the phonetics of Yucatecan Spanish. **MM**

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A Voyage Through the Underground World Of the Mayan Riviera

Elsie Montiel*



The Yucatán Peninsula is a great plain of chalky rock riddled with caves, with knolls and depressions that never venture more than 50 meters over sea level —the small strip of the Tikul Mountains is the only exception, rising more than 100 meters over sea level. Because of the lack of mountains and hills and the porosity of its soil, rainwater does not form rivulets on the surface, but filters into the subsoil or drips into cracks forming underground deposits and streams, many connected to each other.

With time, in certain places the filtration weakens and erodes the chalky soil until it collapses, revealing

extraordinary fresh, crystalline, blue or turquoise reservoirs, often surrounded by whimsical limestone formations never seen under the open sky. The form and size of these deposits vary: some are open and look like a lake or a mirror-still pool; some are semi-hidden in caverns; some are closed in, usually with small openings through which the sunlight filters; and others can only be reached after a long trip through underground passageways. Common to all of them is the cold water, since it springs from underground deposits, clear and rich in flora and fauna, creating almost perfectly balanced ecosystems.

The ancient Mayas knew these water deposits as *dzonot* (cenotes or sink holes). They were central to their culture because they were the main source of fresh

* Editor of *Voices of Mexico*.

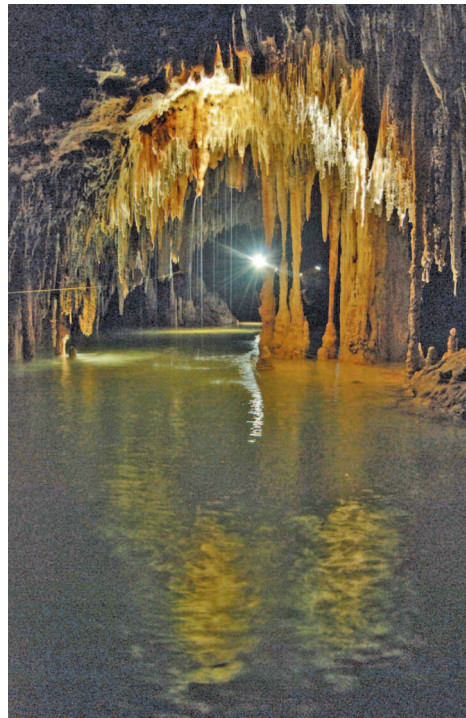
Photos courtesy of Río Secreto S.A. de C.V. <http://riosecretotours.com>



water, but also because they considered them the sacred doors to the underworld, or Xibalbá, the place where life was born, where the dead resided and where only representatives of the gods had access. From the archaeological point of view, *cenotes* have been of great value in the study of Mayan cultures; great cities were built around them; and in their depths, scientists have found offerings, jewelry and the remains of ceramics and utensils that were part of their religious ceremonies. One of the best known *cenotes* is at Chichén Itzá, where untold riches have been found.

In recent years at least 11 caves in central Yucatán have been explored. They had all been purposely modified by the ancient inhabitants to build avenues, temples or tombs; in them have been found human and animal remains, as well as ceramics, and obsidian and flint objects.

Cenotes are a distinctive mark of Yucatán's natural landscape, and their exquisite beauty has made them very attractive for tourism.¹ More and more *cenotes* throughout the peninsula are being opened up to the public, as are the underground caves being discovered. They can be explored without risk, going through their labyrinthine waterways, walking, snorkeling or diving to see the fantastic underwater galleries that took eons to form. Even without attempting to emulate the Mayas' sacred mission, visiting this underground world is always a mystical experience.



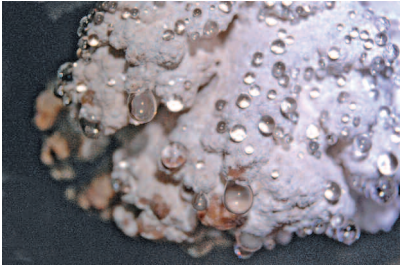
Going down into Xibalbá means facing the darkness, the silence, the damp, the cold water and an almost unreal landscape filled with stalactites and stalagmites that have taken thousands of years to grow and take on their whimsical forms. But we also have to face the fact that we are disturbing an ecosystem that until now had been in safekeeping in the depths of the earth. Touching or breaking a stalactite destroys the labor of centuries. It is said that a stalactite grows on the average 0.13 millimeters (0.005 inches) a year and here we find hundreds of them. The contact of our skin with these underground waters

alters their composition and therefore affects the habitat of those who feed on them. Lamp light pierces the darkness that their inhabitants are accustomed to.

An attempt to resolve the dilemma of whether to open these spaces up simply for the visitors' enjoyment is made by resorting to ecological tourism. Some of the precautions taken include traveling in small groups, wearing special clothing, with specialized guides knowledgeable about the impact of human incursions and banning the use of chemical substances on the skin (creams, lotions, sun tan lotion) and objects that could damage the formations.

This is the case of the company that operates the visit to the so called Secret River in the Mayan





Cenotes are a distinctive mark of Yucatán's natural landscape. They can be explored without risk, going through their labyrinthine waterways, walking, snorkeling or diving to see the fantastic underwater galleries that took eons to form.

Riviera. For an hour and a half, they take us, walking and swimming, through almost a half a kilometer of untold natural beauty, including an explanation of the formations, the composition of the water, and a brief reference to Mayan beliefs about descending into the underworld. As strange as it seems, when anyone paying close attention to their senses rises to the surface, to the familiar sun and air, he or she experiences a sense of purification and rebirth. Perhaps this is how we can ingratiate ourselves with nature for having disturbed her. **NMM**



NOTES

¹ The largest number of *cenotes* is located around Mérida and on the northern coast, while all along the northern Caribbean coast lies a system of underground rivers considered among the world's largest. Mexican and foreign speleologists have explored more than 600 kilometers of galleries and tunnels, with different levels and vertical passages, including five of the world's largest underground caves, formed by variations in the sea level over thousands of years.

NAFTA Economic Crisis and Regional and Sectoral Impacts¹

Elizabeth Gutiérrez Romero*



Rick Wilking/Reuters

Auto manufacturing is one of the hardest hit sectors.

INTRODUCTION

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which recently turned 15, generated not only an important increase in trade and investment flows among its signers, but also quite different effects in each country. The regional impacts associated with integration usually create new imbalances instead of mitigating them, since only some regions manage to successfully insert themselves into the productive chains and improve their capacity to export or be the destination of investment flows from large multinational corporations. These are the regions considered “winners,” since they increase their economic growth rates and job opportunities.

However, the onslaught of the financial and economic crisis that began in the United States demands that we think

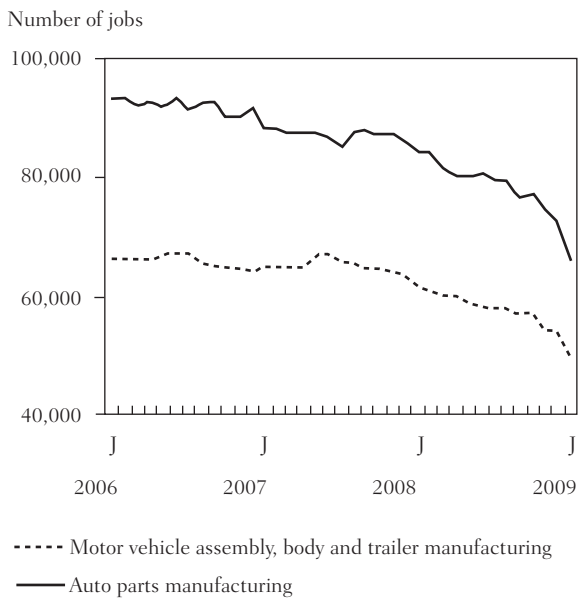
about how determinant the economic relationship is for countries that are highly dependent on another, stronger economy, since the most integrated Mexican and Canadian regions are the ones that are hardest hit by the crisis in the short term. This article studies the conditions of economic articulation between regions and sectors, the crisis and its repercussions.

ECONOMICALLY INTEGRATED REGIONS AND SECTORS

In Mexico, the states that concentrate productive investment, mainly from the U.S., are Nuevo León, Baja California, Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, Sonora, and Coahuila—all border states—plus Mexico City’s Federal District, the State of Mexico, Jalisco, Puebla and Querétaro. These are the “winner” states in terms of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and of

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GRAPH I
EMPLOYMENT IN CANADIAN
MOTOR VEHICLE MANUFACTURING



Source: Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, April 29, 2009, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/090429/dq090429a-eng.htm>.

exporting large volumes of their output. Even before NAFTA, some cities in these states were already important focuses for FDI, but the agreement allowed them to consolidate their position, whether because of their proximity to the United States (which reduces transportation costs), because they had a supply of specialized labor and/or because they were part of industrial corridors.²

In these locations, during the integration process, certain specific industries achieved a level of specialization, which increased their competitiveness and market participation. This is the case of electronic and electrical manufacturing, the auto, autoparts, textile and clothing industries, and sectors that have concentrated FDI since the maquiladora and auto assembly plants were set up, whose products go above all to the United States.

Canada, for its part, has a longstanding, deep trade and productive relationship with the United States. All along its long shared border, there is intense north-south economic activity by adjacent cities and regions. However, manufacturing is concentrated in the province of Ontario, and from there, large volumes are exported to the U.S. market, including processed foods and electronic and computer products, but,

Although the resources involved in Obama's plan are enormous, they may be insufficient for a swift, consistent recovery, which would be bad news for the economies of Mexico and Canada.

above all, cars. Ontario hosts the main auto assembly plants: 12 of them manufacture cars and light trucks (see table 1).

We should remember that a key element in the history of productive and trade integration is the 1965 U.S.-Canadian AutoPact, which structured automobile production regionally and guaranteed Canada's participation both in auto production and trade. Later, the north-south integration was consolidated even more with the 1988 Canadian-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, and then NAFTA in 1994.

REGIONAL AND SECTORAL EFFECTS OF THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS

Although the crisis originally showed up in the sphere of mortgages when thousands of them were issued to purchase houses in risky conditions,³ it spread to the entire financial system because these loans were bought and sold by many financial institutions, banks and insurance companies. For this reason, when the loans could not be collected, the overdue loan portfolio became huge, leading to a crisis.

Dozens of financial institutions went bankrupt. All this contracted credit for many other economic activities, both for consumption and for production. When the demand for goods dropped, so did production, thus increasing unemployment.

Among other measures, just a few weeks after taking office, President Obama sent Congress an economic stimulus package to deal with the domestic economy's difficulties. The debacle originated in the information about the main economic indicators, whose levels were the worst in recent U.S. history.

Among the most important were the marked drop in gross domestic product (GDP), which indicated a recession, and the low consumption of durable goods; the dramatic mortgage situation, defined by foreclosures and a drop in the demand for new homes; banks like Citibank and insurance companies like AIG going under; plus the industrial crisis and that of some very important automakers like GM and Chrysler.

We would have to add to this list the reports about job losses since December 2007 (when the recession began),

TABLE I
MAJOR MOTOR VEHICLE ASSEMBLY PLANTS IN CANADA

LOCATION	PRODUCTS
CAMI Automotive, Inc. Ingersoll, Ontario	Chevrolet Equinox; Pontiac Torrent; Suzuki XL-7, a GM-Suzuki joint venture
DaimlerChrysler Canada, Inc. Brampton, Ontario Windsor, Ontario	Chrysler 300, Dodge Magnum, Dodge Charger Dodge Caravan, Chrysler Town and Country, Pacifica
Ford of Canada, Ltd. Oakville, Ontario St. Thomas, Ontario	Ford Freestar, Ford Edge and Lincoln MKX Ford Crown Victoria, Mercury Grand Marquis
General Motors of Canada, Ltd. Oshawa, Ontario Oshawa, Ontario Oshawa, Ontario	Chevrolet Monte Carlo, Impala Buick LaCrosse (Allure in Canada), Pontiac Grand Prix GMC Sierra and Chevrolet Silverado pickups
Honda Canada Manufacturing, Inc. Alliston, Ontario Alliston, Ontario	Civic, Acura CSX Acura MDX, Pilot, Ridgeline
Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada, Inc. Cambridge, Ontario Cambridge, Ontario	Corolla and Matrix Lexus RX350

Source: Industry Canada, [http: www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/auto-auto.nst/eng/am00767.html](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/auto-auto.nst/eng/am00767.html).

putting the drop at 3.6 million jobs. In fact, in January 2009, when the Obama administration began, the U.S. economy lost almost 600,000 jobs, adding to the 597,000 and 577,000 lost in November and December 2008, respectively.

The US\$787-billion economic package that Congress passed, turning it into the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 last February 17, represents enormous public spending. One third of the package (US\$275 billion) is

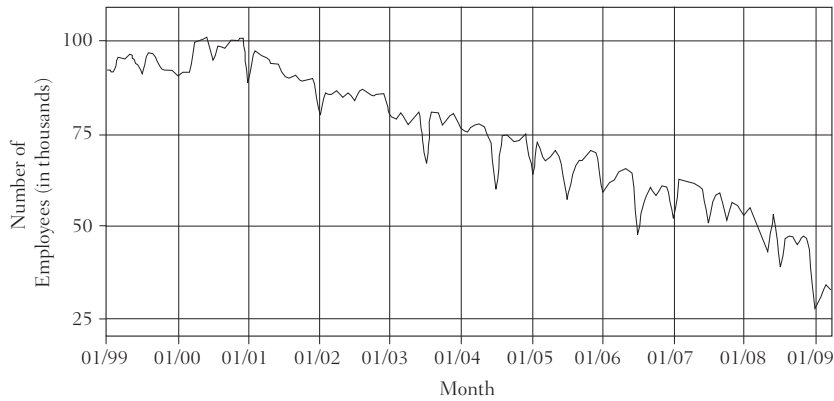
The effects are clear in the manufacture and sale of automobile products in Mexico. The Mexican Automobile Industry Association reported a 46.6 percent drop in production and a 40.7 percent decline in exports.

earmarked for tax cuts, which could potentially stimulate private consumption, and almost US\$500 billion will be spent on infrastructure, energy and educational projects. This law provides higher benefits for the unemployed and low-income persons in health programs.⁴

These proposals have implied an unusual level of state intervention in the economy through public spending as well as control—even if only temporary—over the previously very powerful financial institutions (like Citibank and AIG), and manufactures like General Motors.

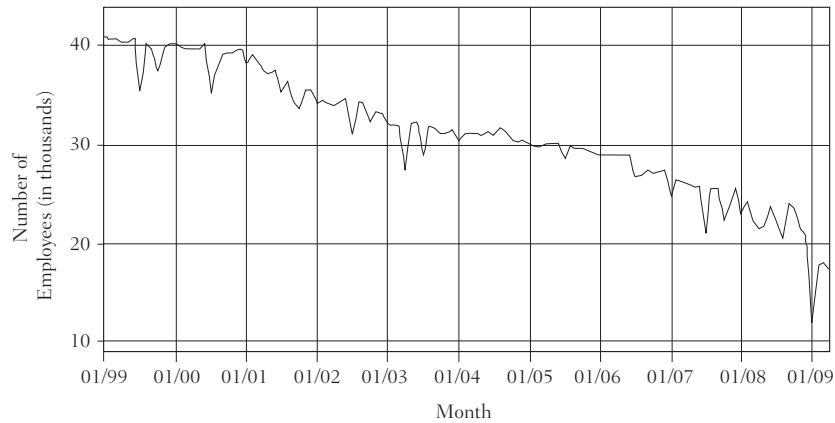
Although the resources involved in these proposals are enormous, they may be insufficient for achieving a swift, consistent recovery, which would be bad news for the economies of Mexico and Canada, both very dependent for trade and production on the United States. As I already mentioned,

GRAPH 2
MICHIGAN: MOTOR VEHICLE MANUFACTURING (ALL EMPLOYEES)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject, <http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet>

GRAPH 3
OHIO: MOTOR VEHICLE MANUFACTURING (ALL EMPLOYEES)



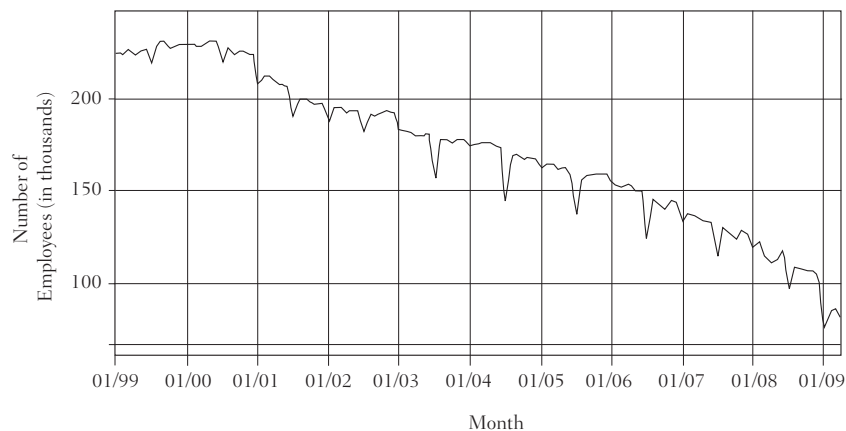
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject, <http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet>.

the impacts of the crisis are bigger for more productively integrated sectors, particularly the auto industry that is going through a profound restructuring. U.S. auto manufacturers have laid off tens of thousands of workers not only in their home country but also worldwide. The government gave General Motors and Chrysler more than US\$17 billion,

forcing them to clean up their accounts, present restructuring plans and, if they could not (as happened with General Motors), declare bankruptcy.

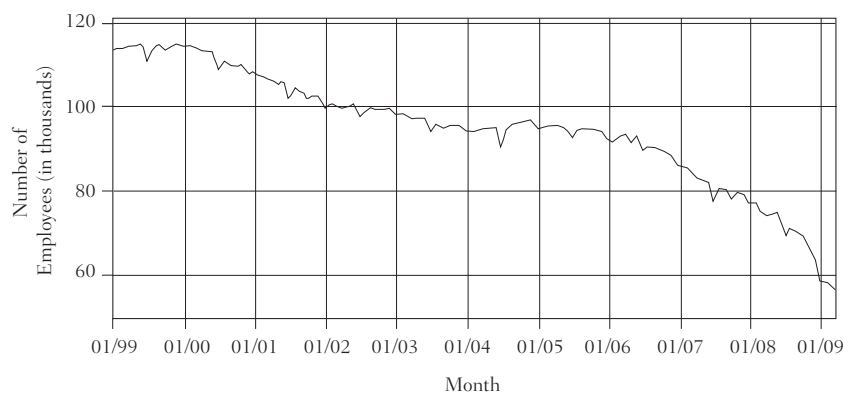
In Mexico, since January 2009, plants on the northern border and in states that produce for export have experienced technical lock-outs. This has been an attempt to stop

GRAPH 4
MICHIGAN: AUTO PARTS
MANUFACTURING (ALL EMPLOYEES)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject, <http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet>

GRAPH 5
OHIO: AUTO PARTS MANUFACTURING (ALL EMPLOYEES)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject, [http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/servlet/Survey OutputServlet](http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet).

a wave of lay-offs that in less than four months have left more than 50,000 people out of work in maquiladoras and the auto industry. The maquiladora plants and export companies on the country's northern border are the ones that have been the most immediately and hardest hit by the effects of the crisis, given the significant reduction in purchase orders,

the credit crunch, the drop in production and the falling sales of basic and durable consumer goods.

The effects are clear in the manufacture and sale of automobile products in Mexico. When the Mexican Automobile Industry Association compared annual figures in April 2009, it reported a 46.6 percent drop in the production of vehicles,

an almost 40.7 percent decline in exports, and a 38.2 percent decrease in automobile sales on the domestic market.

In Canada, the situation is similar: in January 2009 alone, 129,000 jobs were lost. However, between October 2008 and February 2009, the figure comes to 295,000 jobs lost. More than half the job losses were in Ontario, with a particularly serious situation in the southwest, where the auto industry is concentrated.

CONCLUSION

The economic crisis has shown the degree of dependency among regions and sectors because of NAFTA. The impacts have extended to the labor market in all three countries, but in the areas where the auto industry is located, its effects are devastating. Nevertheless, the possibility of once again being

“winner” regions is subject to the capacity of the U.S. economy to recover, which depends on the U.S. government’s plans and programs, and particularly the results of restructuring in the auto industry. **MM**

NOTES

¹ I would like to thank Marcela Osnaya Ortega from the CISAN Computing Department for having looked up and processed the statistical information and graphs.

² See José Gasca Zamora, “Una década de impactos regionales y territoriales del TLCAN en México,” Monica Gambrell, ed., *Diez años del TLCAN en México* (Mexico City: CISAN-IEC-Facultad de Economía-UNAM, 2006).

³ The loans were linked to a sub-prime rate, called that because it was lower than the preferential rate, creating a high-risk situation, since mortgage-holders did not always have a job in the formal sector or had even had their ability to pay investigated.

⁴ For a summary of the law detailing areas and amounts of investment, see <http://www.communityinvestmentnetwork.org/nc/single-news-item-states/article/stimulus-bill-summary-american-recovery-reinvestment-act-of-2009>.

REVISTA MEXICANA DE

POLÍTICA EXTERIOR

85

FEBRERO 2009

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SRE

The World Economic Crisis And Job Loss in Mexico

Ciro Murayama*



Oscar Alvarado/Cuartoscuro

The crisis has caused unprecedented unemployment levels.

THE RESULTS OF *LAISSEZ FAIRE* IN THE FINANCIAL MARKET

Toward the end of last winter, the teacher of the psychophylaxis course my wife and I were taking asked me how it was possible for the world to sink into a profound crisis in only a few months if people were basically continuing to do the same kinds of things. How could an economy that was working fine be in such difficulties a short time later? This may well be the kind of questions millions of people the world over are asking themselves.

My answer was —and is— that what appeared to be working so well actually was not. Quite to the contrary, the crisis we are now experiencing has been gestating over sev-

eral years. Let us see: in contrast to the blips in the 1980s and 1990s, the epicenter of the global crisis was the central economies, particularly the United States, and not the emerging economies.¹ What was happening in the United States? For a long time, household consumption increased more than incomes, and that could not continue forever. The purchase of homes, cars and even non-durable goods expanded more quickly than the value of domestic production. As Table 1 shows, private consumption surpassed gross domestic product (GDP), which is why the U.S. trade deficit was the largest in absolute terms of any economy in history.

Now, the imbalances in that economy were not only due to the behavior of individuals, but also that of the government. The ill-conceived adventure of the war in Iraq, together with the tax cut fostered by the Bush administration deteriorated U.S. public finances, creating a public deficit of US\$10 trillion by the end of 2008, the highest in world history.²

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The growth in consumption in the U.S. was achieved through debt to a financial system that loaned out money without due caution: you want a new house but you don't have any property to put up as collateral or savings in the bank or even a job? Don't worry. The new financial instruments make a mortgage possible. Once the house was purchased with the mortgage, it belonged to the bank until the debt was covered over the next few years. But meanwhile, the mortgage-holding bank sold that asset—the amount of the debt owed—to another financial company and presented it as a safe investment because it had a piece of real estate to back up the outlay. Then, the institution that had repurchased the asset bundled it together with other similar assets and in turn sold it at a profit to another financial institution somewhere else in the world. And on and on.

In the end, the value of the house originally sold to an insolvent client had been used to create a bubble on the basis of which shareholders from very different nations thought they had safeguarded their savings, which seemed to be giving them profits over the average of successful businesses worldwide. When it was discovered that those assets were backed by homes owned by insolvent debtors, the dream fell apart: the purchasers of the homes could not pay their mortgages, and the many owners of the assets could not collect. And this set off a domino effect that exposed the existence of financial assets with no backing all over the world, the so-called toxic assets.

Without healthy financial institutions and, what is more, with banks that distrust their counterparts and their customers' ability to pay, credit contracted all over the world, affecting production and, with that, employment, household demand and general economic activity. In a very short time, the crisis originating in the financial sector became a debacle in the real economy (see table 2).

The crisis occurred in a context of deregulation and a lack of public supervision of the financial sector. This dereg-

TABLE 1
U.S. MACROECONOMIC INDICATORS

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008
GDP ¹	3.7	2.9	2.8	2.0	1.6
Domestic demand ¹	4.4	3.0	2.6	1.4	0.1
Private consumption ¹	4.7	3.0	3.0	2.8	0.5
Public spending ¹	1.7	0.3	1.6	1.9	2.5
Gross capital formation ¹	6.1	5.8	2.0	-2.0	-2.7
Current account balance (exports-imports) ²	-4.4	-5.9	-6.0	-5.3	-4.6
Public balance (taxes-spending) ²	-3.8	-3.3	-2.2	-2.7	-4.1

Source: Table developed by the author using figures from the IMF document *World Economic Outlook*, April 2009.

¹ Percent variation *vis-à-vis* the previous year.

² Percent of GDP.

TABLE 2
EVOLUTION OF WORLD GDP 2007-2010 (ANNUAL VARIATION)

	2007	2008	2009	2010
World	5.2	3.2	-1.3	1.9
Advanced economies	2.7	0.9	-3.8	0.0
United States	2.0	1.1	-2.8	0.0
Euro area	2.7	0.9	-4.2	-0.4
Newly industrialized Asian economies	5.7	1.5	-5.6	0.8
Emerging and developing countries	8.3	6.1	1.6	4.0
Brazil	5.7	5.1	-1.3	2.2
Mexico	3.3	1.3	-3.7	1.0

Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook*, April 2009.

ulation first started out under the administrations of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain,³ and continued under the Republican administrations in the U.S. during the first eight years of the twenty-first century.

The absence of the public sector accentuated the private sector's excesses, and different historical experiences show that when a flaw in the market combines with failings in the public sector, the effect on the march of the economy can be the absolute worst.

MEXICO'S CRISIS DID NOT COME FROM ABROAD

While the economic crisis is global, Mexico has fewer prospects for growth than other countries in Latin America. The crisis in Mexico occurred after a period of low economic growth. This implies at least two things: one, that our capacity for growth was already in decline before the world crisis broke out, and two, that Mexico has a weaker response capability in the face of adversity. Why is this?

Just as the causes of the global crisis can be found in the way the world economy has operated in recent decades, in the case of Mexico, the answers can also be found in some of the economic policy decisions that affected the fabric of national production over the last two and a half decades.

A succinct review of the aggregates that make up a national economy can explain why the crisis is so severe in this country and why a change in the design of economic policy is necessary to overcome it. The GDP of an economy, that is, national income, is made up of sales—which at the same time are purchases—by families (private consumption, which we will call C), companies (purchases of machinery, buildings, vehicles, etc., that we will call I for investment), the government (which invests in public works and makes social expenditures, and we will abbreviate G), as well as the purchases foreigners make of what the country produces (exports, or X) minus the purchases the country makes from foreign producers (imports, M). This can be summarized in the equation $GDP=C+I+G+X-M$.

Now, we should analyze what is happening to the variables on the right side of this equation.

Consumption. In Mexico, consumption depends in great measure on households, whose income depends on jobs. This expenditure can also happen by going into debt. In a scenario in which the capacity to create well-paying jobs is fragile, and in which the banks increase their commissions charged on consumption to cover the difficulties they have in collecting debt, households will necessarily have less available cash for spending, and therefore, private consumption in Mexico does not have a solid basis to sustain itself over time. An additional factor is that in certain regions of the country, consumption was shored up by family remittances sent by migrant workers in the United States. However, money transfers of this kind are dropping because of the contraction of the U.S. economy. These factors have joined together in such a way that, from the time the crisis broke out in the United States in October 2008 until December

of that year, private family consumption in Mexico decreased 1.3 percent.⁴

Investment. Without investment, there can be no economic growth. Total investment in the Mexican economy went from the equivalent of almost one-fourth of GDP in the early 1980s to one-fifth today. According to the National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI), gross fixed investment (gross formation of fixed capital) was 12.1 percent lower in real terms in February 2009 than in February 2008.⁵ It should also be noted that the reduction in foreign direct investment (FDI) worldwide will have the effect that foreign capital will not be available to make up for the contraction of national investment.

Public spending. Mexico has historically had very low tax revenues: in its best years, it hovers around 15 percent of GDP, one-third of which is from oil earnings, whose price is declining. States' ability to intervene in the economy depends on their capacity to amass resources. Mexico has a public expenditure capacity as a percentage of GDP that is less than half the average of the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Low tax revenues are a weak flank of the Mexican economy, perhaps the gravest side, and are not attributable to the global crisis.

The external sector. Mexico went from being one of the world's most closed economies to one of the most open. While it is not viable to think about a return to protectionism; with NAFTA, more than 90 percent of Mexican exports go to the United States, which implies that the economic cycle of our neighbor to the north is a determining factor for what happens to our economy. At the same time, Mexico is more dependent on imports, to the point that one-third of everything offered the consumer comes from abroad. This means that one-third of spending in Mexico does not translate into earnings for national producers.

Mexico is thus very vulnerable to external economic zig-zags; plus, the scant cohesion of its domestic market means that it does not have sufficient tools to reverse the recession by broadening out domestic demand.

THE JOB CRISIS

One peculiarity of the current crisis is its enormous capacity for destroying jobs on a world scale, so that the gap between employment and output has grown. In previous recessions, fulltime jobs declined less than output; but today, the

opposite is happening. If this trend continues, it is feasible that employment will continue to fall after the official end of the recession.

This characteristic of the current crisis may be a reflection of flexibility policies implemented in the labor market in different countries over the last two and a half decades, which have created conditions for layoffs. So, when faced with a drop in sales, companies immediately lay off workers, “externalizing” or transferring the costs of the recession to them.

In the United States, for example, the depression has destroyed more than five million jobs since December 2007. The unemployment rate reached 9.4 percent in May 2009, the highest level in a quarter of a century, while in the Euro area it was 8.2 percent, the highest since the creation of the single currency. In Japan, it is expected to oscillate between 4.1 percent and 5.8 percent in 2009.⁶

For developing countries, the news is no more encouraging: the drop in trade and their exports will destroy jobs. Analysts estimate that there will be 32 million more unemployed in these countries, of whom 20 million will be migrant workers laid off in China, which will naturally cause the informal economy and poverty to grow.

Given this panorama, the International Labor Organization (ILO) suggests it will be necessary to create almost 90 million net jobs in 2009 and 2010 to absorb the workers who are entering the labor market and avoid a prolonged employment gap.⁷

In the case of Mexico, between October 2008 and April 2009, around 600,000 jobs (77 percent of which were permanent posts) in the formal sector were lost, while the reduction in manufacturing was 55 percent (see graph 1). This is the largest number of jobs lost in national manufacturing in all the time since the statistics began being gathered.

The INEGI’s official open unemployment rate for the first quarter of 2009 surpassed the most pessimistic predictions: 2,288,000 people are actively looking for work and cannot find a job.⁸ The figure is unusual because Mexico had never registered such massive unemployment: this is more than twice the number of unemployed registered at the beginning of the decade (1,290,000 more, or 130 percent). It is 540,000 more people than what this federal administration inherited, but during the course of Felipe Calderón’s tenure in office, so far, the number of unemployed has grown 31 percent.

Of the entire work force, 5.1 percent is unemployed, a larger percentage than in the first quarter of 2008, when it

When the term “unemployment” is used, it does not include workers in the informal sector or people with very precarious jobs. This means that families’ insecurity in Mexico is much graver than the unemployment rate seems to indicate.

was 3.5 percent. Even so, the figure is far from a clear expression of what is actually happening in the field of employment in Mexico: it is enough for a person to have worked one hour a week for him or her to be considered “employed.” So, activities like watching over cars in the street or helping sales in street markets on the weekend are sufficient for a person not to be counted as unemployed. Therefore, when the term “unemployment” is used, it does not include workers in the informal sector or people with very precarious jobs. This means that families’ insecurity in Mexico is much graver than the unemployment rate would seem to indicate.

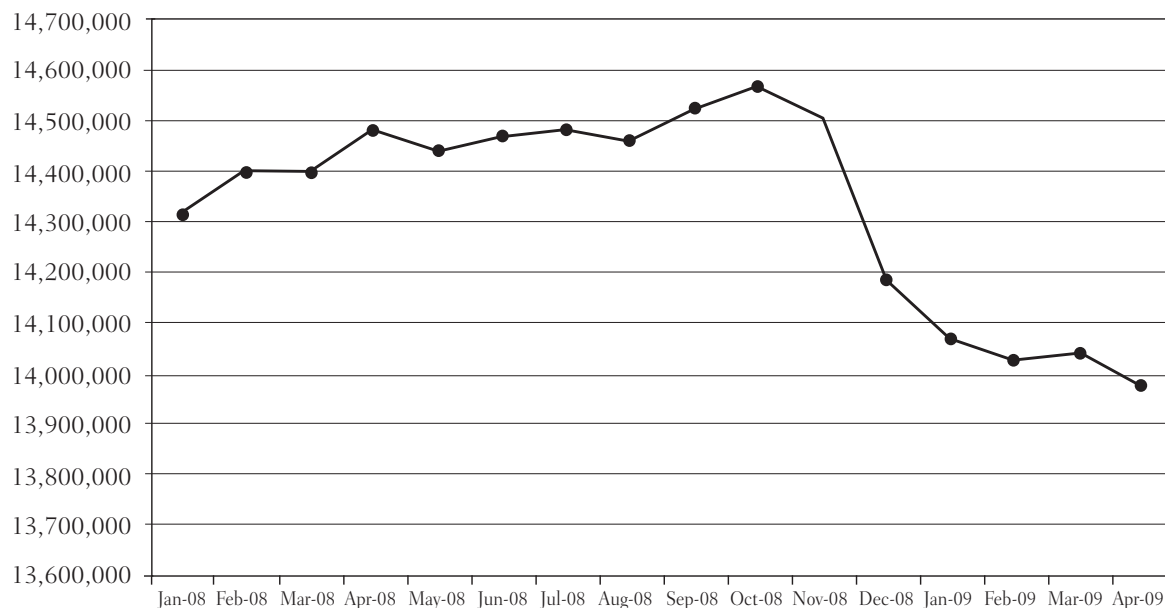
For all these reasons, it does not matter that Mexico formally has a lower unemployment rate than that of developed countries, because, in addition, those countries often have unemployment insurance. This means there is an institutional safety net that has been built to soften the negative effects of recessions.

The number of people officially recognized as openly unemployed in Mexico represents 16 percent of the formal workers registered with the Mexican Social Security Institute, which offers us an alternative indicator of the real dimension of formal unemployment. In any case, the proliferation of open unemployment indicates that our economy is incapable of creating jobs and, what is worse, that in recent months, it has been swiftly destroying them.

Unemployment not only affects the thousands of young people of working age who have to contribute to the family income, but also to a great extent involves people with experience in the labor market: of the 2.3 million unemployed, 2.08 million, that is 91 percent, have work experience. Of those, 1,217,000 (53 percent of the total) lost their jobs or their contracts ran out, and in 108,000 cases, these are people who had to close their own business.

Unemployment does not affect those with higher levels of schooling less: 31 percent of those who are openly unemployed (700,000) have high school or university educations, while 10 percent of the total (227,000) did not finish grammar school; and almost two-fifths of the unemployed (870,000) finished junior high school.

GRAPH 1
FORMAL EMPLOYMENT IN MEXICO (JANUARY 2008-APRIL 2009)



Source: Developed by the author with data from the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS).

These figures confirm that during employment crises like the one we are experiencing, jobs in the most dynamic areas of the economy, where the worker's schooling may be more important when hired, begin to be eliminated. This means that at times when job loss becomes generalized, high educational levels are no guarantee of keeping a job.

CONCLUSION

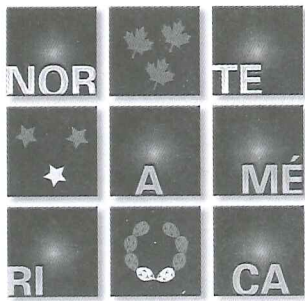
The world economic crisis began in the U.S. financial sector, but swiftly spread to the real economy. It emerged in a context of financial deregulation, state withdrawal from the economy and a lack of global economic coordination. It is necessary to return to the regulation of financial market functioning and build a new international financial structure.

For its part, Mexico cannot wait to grow again until the U.S. economy recovers. In the first place, because that recovery is still uncertain and remote. In the second place, because eventual U.S. recovery would not necessarily imply more growth for Mexico, since the Mexican export sector has few domestic productive chains and new actors in the world economy, especially China, have displaced Mexico in the U.S. market.

Worldwide, the crisis is proving to be unusually capable of destroying jobs. The same thing is happening in Mexico where, in addition, most of the population works in the informal sector. This means that the country must explore a growth strategy that will create jobs. Since consumption, investment and exports are far from dynamic enough to be able to pull the rest of the economy along behind them, Mexico's public sector has the responsibility of breaking the deadlock by increasing public spending and investment. **MM**

NOTES

- ¹ A. García Mora, "Una crisis diferente," *Nexos* 363, March 2008.
- ² J. Stiglitz and L. Bilmes, "The \$10 trillion hangover: Paying the price for eight years of Bush," *Harper's Magazine*, January 2009.
- ³ E. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1994), pp. 248-249.
- ⁴ INEGI, "Oferta y demanda global de bienes y servicios en México durante el cuarto trimestre de 2008," Aguascalientes, May 2009.
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- ⁶ "The jobs crisis," *The Economist*, March 12, 2009, available on line at http://www.economist.com/printedition/displayStory.cfm?Story_ID=13278305.
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NORTEAMÉRICA
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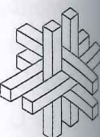
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Chip Eas/Reuters

For the fourth time in history and the second time this decade, Mexico has been elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The importance of participating in this multilateral body is beyond debate. Not only is it possible to contribute pro-actively there to the resolution of the world's main conflicts, but it can also be used to promote our country's agenda in accordance with national priorities. So, in the following pages, different specialists examine Mexico's performance in the Security Council *vis-à-vis* its main debates and the five most influential nations represented there, the five permanent members.

Mexico and the UN Security Council

María Cristina Rosas*

Mexico is a founding member of the United Nations. Very early on, in 1946, it became a member of the UN's main body, the Security Council (SC). However, almost four decades had to pass before it served again as a non-permanent member from 1980 to 1981. The third time was also almost 20 years later, from 2002 to 2003. Today, Mexico is again a non-permanent member in this 2009-2010 term, breaking with its sporadic participation, given that for the first time it is occupying a seat twice in less than a decade.

Disarmament, particularly the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, is an issue that goes along with Mexico's domestic needs. This is why its inclusion on Mexico's agenda for the Security Council is completely justified.

The SC is responsible for maintaining international peace and security and can even use force against those who transgress against world order. It has 15 members, five of whom are permanent and have the right of veto (the United States, the Russian Federation, Great Britain, France and the People's Republic of China). The other members represent the different regions of the world and participate for two years. In addition to Mexico, today's non-permanent members are Austria (until 2010), Burkina Faso (until 2009), Costa Rica (until 2009), Croatia (until 2009), Japan (until 2010), Libya (until 2009), Turkey (until 2010), Uganda (until 2010) and Vietnam (until 2009).

The world has changed significantly since the UN was founded, and in the twenty-first century, those changes are

even more dizzying. The relative certainty of the Cold War international agenda gave way to an unpredictable situation in which the United States, emerging victorious in the East-West conflict, is far from being the leader country that can guarantee peace and security. The September 11, 2001 attacks demonstrated the vulnerability of the planet's most powerful nation, alerting it to the importance of reinforcing international cooperation to deal with new challenges. One of the results of 9/11 is the primacy the fight against terrorism is given in the SC, to the detriment of other issues that are just as dangerous—or even more dangerous—for international security. Resolution 1373, passed September 28, 2001, catapulted terrorism to the category of “the main threat to international security,” considerably reducing the attention paid to other risks.

It is in this framework that Mexico is participating as a non-permanent SC member for the second time this century. The particularity of the Mexican presence, both in the 2002-2003 period and today, is that it deliberately sought to be a part of the select group of nations that have been part of the UN's highest body—suffice it to mention that of the 192 member states, 74 (38 percent) have never managed to participate in the SC. This is a privileged position, from which the most should be garnered for Mexico's national interest, including taking full advantage of the experiences that make it possible for it to contribute to international peace, security and cooperation in accordance with its foreign policy principles.

MEXICO'S SECURITY COUNCIL AGENDA

The agenda Mexico prepared for its tenure on the SC for 2009-2010 focuses on four issues:

- Traffic in small arms and light weapons
- Improving the situation in Haiti
- Strengthening mediation in conflict resolution, and
- Protecting children in armed conflicts (child soldiers).

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Chip East/Reuters

Mexico's UN Ambassador Claude Heller, acting in his role as president of the Security Council.

If we assume that a country's foreign policy is closely linked to its domestic policy, this is only the case with regard to the first point mentioned above. The illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons is a problem that directly affects national security because of its clear relationship with organized crime, particularly drug trafficking and the growing violence the country is experiencing. In addition, most small arms and light weapons circulating in Mexico enter the country across its border with the United States, a situation denounced several times by President Felipe Calderón (and his predecessors) to U.S. authorities, and very recently, to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other high Obama administration officials.

This issue is part of the disarmament agenda that Mexico's foreign policy has long advocated. The Mexican government's outstanding role in nuclear disarmament during the Cold War's dizzying arms race headed by the United States and the Soviet Union is still remembered today. The Treaty of Tlatelolco went into effect 40 years ago on April 25, 1969, as a result of pioneering negotiations to ban nuclear weapons in a large inhabited region and was also a model for the articulation of new nuclear-weapons-free zones.

When the Cold War ended, the community of nations understood the importance of working to ban small arms and light weapons, the ones most used in world conflicts. Without denying the threat to the planet of weapons of mass destruc-

tion, which continues to concern Mexican diplomacy, small arms and light weapons are a major problem. They are military-grade weapons responsible for at least half a million fatalities a year worldwide—estimates come to one weapon for every 12 persons on earth. They have been used in 46 of the 49 armed conflicts registered in different parts of the world. In addition, 90 percent of fatal victims were civilians, and of those, 80 percent were women and children. Another problem is that there are three times as many small arms and light weapons in the possession of civilians as in government arsenals. For that reason, the Mexican government promoted the Interamerican Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials within the Organization of American States, which went into effect July 1, 1998.

In the 1990s, Mexico also promoted an initiative originally raised by non-governmental organizations concerning the eradication of anti-personnel landmines, ratifying the Treaty

Given that one of the Security Council's central issues is the operation of peacekeeping missions, it is very important for Mexico to define a policy in this area instead of postponing the debate.

of Ottawa on June 9, 1998. More recently, it played a fundamental role in the creation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which has already been ratified by the Mexican Congress. This makes it clear that disarmament, particularly the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, is an issue that goes along with Mexico's domestic needs. This is why its inclusion on Mexico's agenda for the SC is completely justified.

Without denying their importance, clearly the other issues Mexico is promoting on the SC are more or less alien to the national agenda. Haiti is a country with which Mexico has diplomatic relations, although bilateral links are reduced to limited cooperation, for example, like Mexico's electoral assistance through the Federal Electoral Institute. The issue of child soldiers seems to be a particularly grave challenge in countries in Africa, where different circumstances, including low life expectancy, foster involving children as combatants in the continent's many armed conflicts.

Finally, mediation for conflict resolution is crucial, although it is not clear if Mexico is giving it so much importance during its SC participation as an alternative to the pressures the country frequently faces to commit troops to UN peacekeeping operations. This is the case because, since the end of the Cold War, the SC tends to emphasize the creation of peacekeeping missions to deal with world conflicts, apparently neglecting other options it has, like mediation, diplomatic efforts and even sanctions. Peacekeeping missions are expensive and require increasing numbers of civilian and military personnel, making UN calls for countries like Mexico to commit troops more frequent. These pressures increase with Mexico in the SC, given that one of its fundamental tasks is to decide about the creation, duration and mandate of these missions. Therefore, to a certain extent, it is logical that Mexico would emphasize diplomatic efforts and political negotiation for dealing with violent conflicts instead of *a priori* deciding to create a peacekeeping mission.

TOWARD A BETTER SECURITY COUNCIL AGENDA

If Mexico aspires to sitting more frequently on the Security Council, it must clearly define what the advantage would be for national interests. Naturally, this presupposes defining the national project and, for example, visualizing what the country would be like in 2050, or even beyond. The national project would help ensure that when each administration presents its development plan, it be in accord with a master plan. This would give continuity to foreign policy. It would also avoid improvisation and ensure that the opportunities that present themselves by being in forums as important as the SC are fully taken advantage of. A national project like this in no way contradicts the principles of Mexican foreign policy. On the contrary, it ensures projecting them better.

Once a national project is defined, Mexico could take many foreign policy actions that would position it better to promote its national interest and also generate leadership on the international scene. Among others, it should ponder the following:

- Better planning for its participation in the SC, both in terms of regularity and the issues to be dealt with;
- Identifying “niche agendas,” that is, international policy topics that Mexico could appropriately handle with the concurrence of other interested nations;
- Having greater dialogue both with permanent and non-permanent members of the SC, inside and outside the forum. The current dialogue with Great Britain, for example, has been very useful to Mexico, above all because of the importance of being closer to a country so close to the United States. This experience should be repeated with other nations like France and Russia. It would be unacceptable for Mexico not to swiftly reverse the deterioration of its relations with China, which has happened above all during the Vicente Fox and current Felipe Calderón administrations, due to issues that were not on the top of the bilateral agenda. Mexico cannot give itself the luxury of having serious clashes with any country, much less the People’s Republic of China.
- Given that one of the SC’s central issues is the operation of peacekeeping missions, it is very important for Mexico to define a policy in this area instead of postponing the debate. The risk it runs is that if it becomes politically unacceptable for the international community that Mexican troops do not participate in the peacekeeping missions, a precipitous decision may be made that would not be duly thought out.
- The same can be said of SC sanctions, about which Mexico has no specific policy;
- Given that Africa is one of the world’s most conflictive and impoverished regions, Mexico must make a concerted effort to improve its relations with the countries of that continent. Many SC resolutions refer to the diverse crises in Africa, and, if Mexico maintains only a marginal diplomatic representation there, it is leaving itself open to not having the information needed to make decisions. The same is true for the initiatives it promotes through the General Assembly, because Africa has 53 of the 192 votes there, and that is where, among other things, non-permanent SC members are elected.

As suggested above, occupying a non-permanent Security Council seat is a privilege of only a few countries. Therefore, participation in this important body must be planned and be part of promoting national interest, which is defined, in turn, as part of the national project. The twenty-first-century world demands that nations engage in activism because the problems they face are increasingly transnational, and only concerted action will contribute to their

solution. Mexico is a developing country with limited room for maneuver. Therefore, it has in the multilateral institutions the valuable opportunity to forge joint positions and agendas that are important both to it and to other nations.

It is in Mexico's interests that the world be more peaceful and prosperous, but that interest will not materialize by working sporadically with or isolated from the community of nations. **NM**

UN Security Council Is the U.S. Playing at Multilateralism?

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde*

The pledge for multilateralism is the defining feature of Barack Obama's foreign policy as the newly elected president, and it has been used to indicate a radical shift from the George W. Bush administration: a fresh start for the U.S. in the world. The forty-fourth president's personality, beliefs and political career allow him to aspire to effectively launch such a campaign. So far, Obama's multilateralist strategy has been well received by international leaders and an important share of international public opinion; however, every single move is being tested and questioned, and not every initiative —bilateral or multilateral— can be considered totally successful. In this regard, the United Nations (UN) Security Council becomes an interesting arena for observing the United States' "new" behavior and, most importantly, for analyzing the international response and the construction of areas of opportunity for cooperation between permanent and non-permanent Security Council members, Mexico among them. In this sense, it can be argued that Washington's willingness is about to be tested in this very important arena.

As exclusive and outdated as the Security Council is, it remains a fundamental UN body, a sounding board for the U.S. position in the world and a mirror of power distribution among the countries represented. Although unreformed, the Security Council still plays a role, especially in defining positions on the issues that top the international security

agenda: North Korea's nuclear threat, the Arab-Israeli conflict and, of course, humanitarian aid. In order to understand the scope of U.S. action in the Security Council and its grand strategy's trends and risks, it is necessary to analyze the evidence of Obama's approach to the UN and his possibilities for success in a worldwide perspective.

THE MULTILATERAL PLEDGE

During the first months of his administration, Obama has established clear differences with George W. Bush in terms of approach, mechanisms and commitments on foreign policy. On this point, the most eloquent document is the USUN Progress Report: "A New Era of Engagement: Advancing America's Interests in the World" issued by the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Dr. Susan Rice.¹ In this document, the administration makes a clear, direct statement in favor of multilateralism and cooperation by recognizing that the U.S. cannot deal on its own with the threats of the twenty-first century and that the rest of the world cannot succeed without U.S. involvement. In this framework, diplomacy regains a paramount place in foreign policy strategy, and pragmatism overtakes ideology as the main guideline for decision making. The apparent dismissal of ideological tendencies is coupled with a steady attachment to principles. Actually, the debate between former Vice-president Dick Cheney and President Obama on closing Guantanamo illustrates perfectly the opposition between ideology and principle-led foreign policies.²

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Mike Segar/Reuters

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

During his first week in the White House, President Obama restored the UN ambassador's post to cabinet rank and appointed Susan E. Rice. This appointment has several meanings and is crucial for understanding the new administration's position on the UN and its performance in the UNSC, especially if compared with the hardliners John Negroponte or John Bolton, U.S. ambassadors to the UN during the Bush administration.

Negroponte represented the U.S. in the UN during the worst episode of unilateralism. Even though he did not have as strong an ideological identification as Bolton, he was criticized for his involvement in the Iran-contra affair, and his complicity in covering up and implicit fostering of human rights violations during his term as U.S. ambassador in Honduras (1981-1985). He will be remembered as the U.S. ambassador who had to persuade Security Council members to support the Iraq invasion in 2003, and later, as the first U.S. ambassador in post-Saddam Hussain Iraq to cover up the implications of military involvement.

Bolton represented the bitterest kind of radical neo-conservatism and was widely known for his open dismissal of the United Nations, his pledge to withdraw from it and his public statement that the 38-floor UN building was a nuisance. His appointment was not confirmed by the Senate and made a mockery of the UN's authority for the U.S. It should be mentioned that Bolton actively participated in the design of the Project of the New American Century, a neo-conservative initiative that profoundly delineated George W. Bush's foreign policy agenda. Current Vice-president Joseph Biden replied to his nomination saying, "I have always voted against nominees who oppose the avowed purpose of the position for which they have been nominated."³

Rice has had a sound career as an expert on international organizations, peacekeeping operations and weak states. It was thought that her focus on weak states and African affairs would move her away from the priorities of the U.S. security agenda.⁴ However, her expertise on these matters may bring a deeper understanding of the problems that have dominated the discussion about peacekeeping operations and humanitarian crisis relief. This assumption is based on her constant recall of the links between security and development and the risks that weak states represent for world peace in terms of democratic institutions and severe underdevelopment. Her position on Darfur sparked polarized reactions since she supported a tougher response to the alleged genocide by recalling

The new era of engagement initiated by Obama has the aim of overcoming the shameful episode between Bush and the United Nations during the debate on the war on Iraq.

It can be understood that this new era of engagement initiated by President Obama has the aim of overcoming the shameful episode between President Bush and the United Nations during the debate on the war on Iraq, by ensuring that the UN is a unique forum for conflict resolution, despite recognizing its limitations. This public acknowledgement is a radical shift from the arrogant, imperialist image that the invasion of Iraq sparked. This kind of rejection of self-assumed imperial faculties may seem unreal, dishonest or merely rhetorical. However, if analyzed through the lens of this strategy, it is pragmatic if the ultimate objective is to enhance U.S. leadership and regain the international legitimacy the previous administration lost. Is there evidence to support the discourse? This remains to be confirmed, since North Korean nuclear threats may pose an important challenge to the Security Council and Obama's multilateral pledge. One example of the commitment is the intention to gain a seat on the recently created UN Human Rights Council, severely criticized by the previous administration for an alleged bias against Israel.

the principle of the “responsibility to protect” in order to avoid another Rwanda. For some hardcore realists, responsibility to protect is just a modern label for intervention, and for advocates, it is the essence of collective security. In this regard, some are concerned about her possible inclination to militarist solutions in the case of humanitarian crises.⁵

Over the past eight years, the regrettable Iraq episode has been by far the worst moment in relations between the international community represented in the UN and the U.S. So, since unilateral action consolidated as the preferred U.S. foreign policy path and disregard for multilateral institutions became so entrenched during the Bush administration, it is difficult for Obama to be convincing about his pledge to multilateralism and the diplomatic resolution of conflicts.

PRIORITIES: CHANGING CONTINUITY

Within the Security Council, the issues will remain basically the same: non-proliferation, humanitarian crises, peacekeeping operations, etc. However, the approach may change according to the Obama administration’s priorities and its mechanisms for action. He has a stronger position on Darfur and the prosecution of Omar Al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court. On peacekeeping, one assertion deserves to be included in the analysis because of its pragmatism: peacekeeping operations are seen as critical for managing international crises while inaction or military intervention are considered ineffective.⁶ On this issue, we see a strong argument, more objective and rational than others based on principles: “UN peacekeeping is also cost-effective for the United States; instead of paying 100 percent of the costs for an unilateral deployment, the U.S. pays about one-fourth of the costs for UN peacekeeping, with other UN members collectively sharing the burden for the rest.”⁷ This is the most objective explanation of why multilateralism is preferable in that it is not only financially effective, but also—and more importantly—in terms of political costs, alliances, trust and international image. For instance, in Iraq and Afghanistan, the UN is playing a major role in conflict resolution and assistance to the internally displaced population and capacity building for consolidating a democratic state.

Just as Iran emerged recently as Obama’s first foreign policy crisis, North Korea may become the first test for his multilateral strategy within the UN. It took a lot of time and diplomatic effort to adopt Resolution 1874 (with the approval

of China and Russia) to tighten political and financial sanctions against that country. Although not as tough as the United States and Japan wanted, it triumphed over China’s concern about reducing commercial exchanges with North Korea, an eventual regime collapse in its neighboring country and the possibility of having a U.S. military presence on its border. It is a considerable improvement if compared with the weak presidential statement the Security Council issued in April condemning the missile trials. A victory for the Obama presidency, indeed, regardless of the ongoing concern about resolution enforcement.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEXICO

Traditionally, cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico has been carried out in the shadow of bilateral relations. Some-

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times agreement on the bilateral seems to be conditioned to acquiescing on the multilateral, and this undermines Mexico’s possibilities of playing an alternative role *vis-à-vis* the U.S. In any case, the bilateral is unquestionably ubiquitous, and Mexico’s limitations in terms of its lack of an agenda for expressing rhetorical advocacy for international activism increase the effect of the bilateral burden. On the operational front, Mexican activism can only seem to be exercised within the framework of international organizations, with the Security Council as one of its most preferred arenas. It is debatable whether Mexico should pin all its hopes on the Security Council; however, there are some areas where it may find resonance with the U.S. for cooperating and enhancing its activism.

First, the U.S. wants to improve the decision-making process for renewing peacekeeping operation mandates and adopting new ones. Mexico could be an important contributor for capacity building, transparency and accountability activities. Nonetheless, this demands that Mexico define its position on peacekeeping operations, something that has apparently begun to move forward with its recent

Mexico is immersed in a war against drugs that is at least yielding a bilateral commitment to contain organized crime. In this regard, Mexico and the U.S. can promote sharing best practices at the Security Council.

decision to participate with the U.S. in UNITAS military operations. The problem with Mexico's ambiguity stems from its dogmatic attachment to foreign policy principles—particularly non-intervention—as the relatively essential substance of its foreign policy agenda, which has hindered its international maneuvering on humanitarian crises. If Mexico is willing to participate more actively in the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, it must jettison dogmatic obstacles that do not contribute to making peace sustainable.

Second, Haiti, as described in the report on a new era of engagement, is a weak state close to home for both the U.S. and Mexico. In April, Mexico convened and chaired the debate on the situation in Haiti; it is the shared responsibility of the U.S. and any other representative in the hemisphere to take the lead on humanitarian relief to the island.

And third, Mexico is immersed in a war against drugs that—successful or not—is at least yielding a bilateral commitment to contain organized crime. In this regard, Mexico and the U.S. can promote sharing best practices at the Security Council level to consolidate international efforts against transnational crime. The Mexican emphasis on establishing a regional approach to arms trafficking as a condition for extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) is a translation of this area of opportunity.

In the end, there are multiple paths to enhancing cooperation among Security Council members. The Obama administration is still on the way to consolidating both its foreign policy strategy and its mechanisms for action in cases of international crisis. There may be several reasons to ques-

tion whether President Obama and Ambassador Rice will succeed in advancing U.S. interests solely through diplomatic avenues, moving away from interventionist, hard-power tools. This relatively pessimistic—and undesirable—scenario will depend on the direction that events in Iran, North Korea, the Middle East, among other regions, take. It is certain that multilateral pragmatism will be the U.S. administration's most likely approach in the UN; with this approach, the chances for Mexico and the U.S. to become closer in multilateral forums increase. Nevertheless, it is clear that U.S. diplomacy will move forward whether non-permanent members decide to share leadership or not. Whether multilateral pragmatism—à la Obama—will be useful for consolidating Mexico's activism abroad is a matter of its initiative and policy definition. ■■■

NOTES

- ¹ Progress Report: United States Mission to the United Nations, "A New Era of Engagement: Advancing America's Interests in the World", U.S. Mission to the UN, April 29, 2009, available on line at http://www.usun.newyork.usmission.gov/press_released/20090429_082.html.
- ² On the one hand, Dick Cheney remains firm in justifying the means by a greater end, criticizing Obama's decision on security as phoney moralizing, driven only by a hunger for international applause that leaves the U.S. partially exposed to further threats. On the other hand, Obama has underscored the need to uphold what he thinks are the fundamental American values because they are what strengthen the country and keep it safe and because acting on principle will not foster anti-American attitudes that could evolve into terrorism.
- ³ Brooke Lierman, "Who is John Bolton?" *Center for American Progress*, March 7, 2005, available on line at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2005/03/b252671.html>.
- ⁴ Susan Rice and Stewart Patrick, *Index of State Weakness in the Developing World*, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2008).
- ⁵ "The New Team: Susan E. Rice," *The New York Times*, November 7, 2008, available on line at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/us/politics/06rice.html>.
- ⁶ "Gentle Questioning for U.N. Nominee," *The New York Times*, January 15, 2009, available on line at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/16/us/16webrice.html>.
- ⁷ Progress Report: United States Mission to the United Nations, op. cit.



France and the United Kingdom on UN Security Council Reform¹

Valeria Marina Valle*

After coming out on the winning side of World War II, France and the United Kingdom became two of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. This gave them veto power and the prestige of belonging to the club of the great powers. However, with time, both came to think that the Security Council did not reflect the distribution of international power and to support the possibility of increasing the number of permanent members and revising its functioning.

The aim of this article is to discern whether these two members have changed their position in the face of a possible UN reform and to examine their attitude in 2008 and 2009. It also analyzes the implications for France and the United Kingdom of transforming the Security Council. Finally, it will look at Mexico's position regarding the reform in order to see if it has any points of agreement with the French and British position.

THE FORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

Toward the end of World War II, the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union agreed to adjust their military alliance, known as the United Nations, to turn it into an international organization by creating a council for maintaining international peace and security that would reflect the outcome of the war. In that security council there were permanent seats, including those of France and China, and they were about to give another to India. Thus, the main victors of the war turned into the five permanent members.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REFORM

The need for a reform of the UN, beginning with its Security Council, which was born with 11 members (five permanent and six non-permanent ones), has been discussed for decades. However, there were no changes until 1963, when, as the result of the end of colonialism, the General Assembly decided to increase the number of non-permanent members from six to ten, beginning in 1965.

This reform did not satisfy most of the member states. In fact the UN continued to grow: from 113 members in 1963, it went to 152 in 1979. In that same year, a group of countries—the majority were so-called developing nations—requested an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent Security Council (SC) members to 21, changing over to a system of equitable geographical distribution.²

In 1989, Brazil's President José Sarney proposed creating a new category of permanent members without veto power, and presented his country's candidacy for this kind of membership. But he was not taken into account. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, new states emerged that became UN members, bringing the total to 188.³

The first concrete SC reform initiative was made in 1991, with a proposal presented by India. From that time on, the General Assembly began to study the possibility of increasing the number of SC members; it created a Working Group on the topic that began operating in 1994. However, no agreement has been reached until now about how many and who the new members would be or how they would be chosen. In 1994, the group was unable to make recommendations based on any agreement. Shortly thereafter, Japan started an open campaign to be admitted as a permanent member, and Germany followed suit.

On March 20, 1997, the Malaysian ambassador and president of the General Assembly presented a proposal known as the Razali or "2+3" proposal, wherein two developed

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countries (the most widely accepted candidates were Germany and Japan) plus one state from every developing region would be added. After this proposal, on July 17, 1997, U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson admitted for the first time the possibility that the permanent members could accept a reform proposed by the Working Group. However, the United States never officially declared its support. The only permanent member that came out in favor of it was France.⁴

In Latin America, the “natural candidate” was Brazil because of its geographical size, population, economic weight and history of cooperation with the UN. Mexico and Argentina joined forces to present the proposal that the three countries be represented in the SC, rotating to occupy a single seat. This idea generated a lot of debate, which died down when the possibility arose of including two representatives from Latin America.⁵ However, since the proposal

The French and British position on an eventual reform of the Security Council is presented jointly. They have also come to a consensus about transforming other international bodies, among them the G-8 and the World Bank.

seemed unviable, it was left pending and the differences in positions and formulas for an eventual reform persist.

So, what should the profile of a permanent member be? The debate emerged when the growing economic power of Japan and Germany was pointed out, since there are also other candidates, like India, which was on the verge of being made a permanent member in 1945, and Brazil. The same is true of Nigeria and South Africa. There is talk of a permanent position for the European Union, but in that case, France and the United Kingdom would have to give up their vetoes. On the other hand, in light of the conflicting positions of the members of the European Union about the war in Iraq, it is clear that the European Union does not have a common foreign and security policy. In 1997 and 1998, Italy's Ambassador to the UN Paolo Fulci headed up a group of developing countries called the Coffee Club, opposed to the Razali Plan.⁶

In March 2005, a high-level panel presented the proposal of two possible systems for reform: Plans A and B.⁷ Plan A proposes six new permanent positions without veto

power and three new non-permanent positions to last two years each, assigned by region. Plan B proposes no new permanent positions, but would create a new category of eight positions with a mandate renewable every four years, and one with a non-renewable mandate, also distributed by regions.

Inside the UN, various groups have formed around different proposals:

1. The Group of Four (Germany, Brazil, India and Japan), which supports the creation of nine new permanent positions;
2. The Group of Like-Minded Countries “Uniting for Consensus,” which is against creating new permanent positions;⁸ and
3. The Group of Friends, which until now has not come out with a position on Security Council reform, but rather has promoted reforms on other issues like development, the use of force and human rights, among others.⁹

FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

The French and British position on an eventual reform of the Security Council is presented jointly, although their individual positions actually do differ on one point. They have also come to a consensus about the possibility of transforming other international bodies, among them the G-8 and the World Bank. On February 19, 2009, France supported the launch of intergovernmental negotiations for Security Council reform. It also favors increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent seats, supports the candidacy of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan as new permanent members, proposes increasing Africa's presence, particularly as permanent members, and the candidacy of an Arab country as a permanent member. This is the point on which it does not agree with the United Kingdom, which does not specify whom it would include.¹⁰

Given this impasse, both countries have stated their support for an intermediate proposal, and on March 27, 2008, they proposed:

1. The creation of a new category of non-permanent members who would have a longer mandate (more than two years), subject to reelection; and
2. The possibility of transforming the category of new non-permanent members to eventually make them permanent.¹¹

A year later, during the March-April 2009 UN General Assembly, intergovernmental negotiations were carried out dealing with five issues: the category of the members (what kind of members would increase in the council), the right to veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Security Council as well as its working methods and relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly.¹²

THE FRENCH/BRITISH POSITION COMPARED TO MEXICO'S

Mexico's position on the possibility of Security Council reform can be summarized in four points: first, our country wants to see a UN General Conference held to deal with the reform; second, the goal would be a comprehensive reform and not one limited to the Security Council; third, priority must be given to the debate about how the council would have to operate before thinking about the characteristics of its members; and four, no reform should be approved that includes new permanent members, and any reform should increase the number of members based on a system of regional representation with the possibility of members who have played their role very well on the council being eligible for immediate reelection to the seat.¹³

For Mexico, it is difficult to clash with the positions of the United States, and for that reason, it has little room for maneuver.¹⁴ However, Mexico's position on UN reform is opposite to that of its northern neighbor, which is not interested in changing the status quo in order to not lose its privileges. With regard to its relationship with the United States, the same is true of the United Kingdom, which generally supports its ally, France, which, in turn, has shown itself to be more independent.

In short, the Mexican position is different from France and Britain's in that it does not support the creation of new permanent SC seats. However, it does agree with some points of the new intermediate position, although it is unlikely that Mexico would support the candidacy of new permanent members, unless it were among them.

Security Council reform would mean that France and the United Kingdom would have to share their privileges, but it should be underlined that they have the power to negotiate with those who aspire to the permanent seats. It is important to analyze what relationship France and the United Kingdom have with the G-4 and what negotiations

they have already held. On the other hand, it would be interesting to study in depth what kind of relations France and the United Kingdom have been developing with Germany, Brazil, India, Japan and Africa in order to see what they are offering in exchange for supporting their candidacies. ■■■

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¹ This article was presented at the conference "Mexico in the UN Security Council: The Agenda and the Permanent Members," at the UNAM's CISAN, May 13, 2009 in Mexico City.

² For a detailed explanation of the 1979 reform proposals, see E. Zawels, *Hacia un sistema de seguridad colectiva para el siglo XXI. El Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU en la década del 90* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 2000), pp. 192-194.

³ In September 1999, the total number was 188. In 2009, there are now 192 member states.

⁴ Demitris Bourantonis, *The History and Politics of UN Security Council Reform* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁵ R. Daló, "La reforma del Consejo de Seguridad: motivos y alternativas posibles desde la perspectiva argentina," *Relaciones Internacionales* 16, vol. 9 (December-May 1998), p. 53.

⁶ This group had 15 members in 1997, and by 1998, it already had 50.

⁷ The panel was made up of a group of experts from different countries, among them the Brazilian João Clemente Baena Soares. See the document on line at <http://www.un.int/mexico/a59565esp.pdf>.

⁸ This group includes Argentina, Algeria, Colombia, Spain, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistán and the Republic of Korea.

⁹ This group is made up of Germany, Algeria, Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Spain, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Singapore and Sweden.

¹⁰ On its official website, the United Kingdom's Mission to the UN only refers to its support for permanent membership for the G-4 and Africa. See *The UK Mission to the UN, International Institutional Reform*, available on line at http://ukun.fco.gov.uk/en/uk-at-un/thematic-issues/institutional-reform/international_inst_reform.

¹¹ See <http://www.franceonu.org/spip.php?article3768#Textes-de-refer-ence>.

¹² See <http://franceonu.org/spip.php?article3768>.

¹³ Alejandro Basáñez, Mexico's UN Mission Press Attaché explained these points in an interview in New York on May 10, 2005. The Mexican position has been maintained. About Mexico's official position, see "Documento de posición de México en el Sexagésimo Tercer Período de Sesiones de la Asamblea General de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas," available on line at <http://www.sre.gob.mx/onu/>.

¹⁴ Valeria M. Valle, "La reforma del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU: la posición de Brasil y México," *Comercio Exterior* 10, vol. 55 (October 2005), pp. 861-873.

Russia's UN Security Council Agenda

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Last May 1, Russia assumed the presidency of the United Nations Security Council in accordance with the norms of the alphabetical rotation established by member states.

The UN General Assembly's sixty-third session called on member states to participate more internationally. This is very important for the Russian Federation (RF) because after the Soviet Union disintegrated, the RF said it wanted the UN to have more of an impact on solving recent international conflicts and regulating security.

The Russian government has also emphasized the need for a multi-polar world order, as opposed to the last Bush administration's Project for the New American Century (PNAC) that advocated U.S. unilateralism.¹ Russia's position is that the UN has demonstrated its effectiveness in using political-diplomatic instruments to resolve world conflicts, a view that coincides with Mexico's tradition. This capacity is very important for Russia in the face of regional crises inside its territory, which is why it considers it fundamental that UN efforts be coordinated with regional and sub-regional bodies to bring about peace. The RF systematically participates in favor of preserving the UN's central role in collective peace-keeping and international security efforts.

A second issue on its agenda is its position *vis-à-vis* UN reform, which it considers positive and indispensable for guaranteeing increased effectiveness in preserving its inter-governmental character.

Russia thinks that the Security Council should be more representative, but without affecting its ability to function. The RF has proposed that if no agreement is reached among the proponents of different models for broadening out the Security Council, an intermediate solution would be a limited increase in the number of non-permanent members, who would have longer tenures and could be re-elected.

Another important agreement between Mexico and Russia is their interest in strengthening the UN's central role in



UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

coordinating the fight against drug trafficking in the following ways:

1. Toughening up international control over traffic in the precursors of synthetic drugs.
2. Ending the use of the internet for drug trafficking.
3. Creating an optimal international system for fighting drug trafficking that will be able to respond appropriately to emerging challenges. For Russia, the case of Afghanistan needs urgent attention because it is the world's leading opium producer (93 percent). This is why the RF has proposed creating a UN-coordinated supervisory body with the participation of Afghanistan's neighboring states.

In the Middle East, Russia underlines the importance of renewing the Palestine-Israeli dialogue to come to a favorable agreement. It is for the creation of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state that will be able to make peace and establish security with the state of Israel.

One particularly burning issue for the RF are the so-called "frozen conflicts" of the former Soviet Union. The Russian position is that they should not be politicized; the position of the GUAM group (Georgia, the Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) is the opposite. Mexico, for its part, has maintained its traditional policy favoring dialogue for resolving these delicate conflicts.

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While Russia presides over the Security Council, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon must prepare a report to the council that must include proposals for renewing the UN observation mission in Georgia and Abkhazia, in accordance with SC Resolution 1866, passed February 13, 2009.² The resolution stipulates that by June 15, 2009, the secretary general must propose the legal format for the UN mission in those areas of the Caucasus. After Georgia's August 2008 attack on South Ossetia and Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia's independence, the UN observers' mission in Georgia officially changed its name to the "UN Mission" without specifying a geographical area.

This conflict is central to Russia's agenda because Ossetian civilians and Russian peacekeepers were wounded or killed during the Georgian government's attack on Tskhinvali, South Ossetia's capital, at midnight August 7, 2008.

Nevertheless, Georgia's Ministry of Foreign Relations denied that the Russian peacekeeping forces had been attacked. Then, the Georgian high command announced that there would be no peace talks, and Georgia began an attack on the government and the Republic of South Ossetia.³ In response, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin labeled the massacre genocide and went to the North Ossetia capital, Vladikavkaz, to organize aid to the South Ossetian refugees.⁴ Putin also called into question whether South Ossetia could be legally reintegrated into Georgia after the attack, thereby paving the way toward recognizing it—as well as Abkhazia—as an independent republic.

The conflict had been "frozen" since the disintegration of the USSR and the 1992 Ossetian war of resistance and was rekindled after Georgia applied for entry to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) at its last summit in Bucharest in April 2008, where member nations stated that both the Ukraine and Georgia may be admitted. The conflict broke out when Georgian President Mijail Saakashvili decided to attack South Ossetia, setting off the massacre mentioned above.

After consulting Russia's National Security Council, the Kremlin decided to intervene militarily. According to the Stratfor Center, the precedent of Kosovo's independence proved that Russia had no diplomatic clout in Europe at all. Being forced to retreat from South Ossetia, a border territory where it had troops stationed, would be the latest in a series of humiliations.⁵ But this time, Russia's answer was unequivocal: it not only rejected Georgia's offensive against South Ossetia, but attacked Georgian military objectives

built with NATO assistance in the city of Gori and other key points in Georgia like the port of Poti, to prevent weapons deliveries to the Georgian government.

Stratfor also cites Putin's statements to the effect that it had been a strike against Euro-Asian equilibrium that resulted from a complex Georgian calculation that, in addition to being a "murderous provocation," had electoral ramifications since, in the heat of Russia's reaction to Tbilisi, then-candidate John McCain's ratings in the polls rose four points against Obama's.⁶

Another geopolitically important event followed this attack: Poland and the United States signed an accord to set up U.S. anti-missile defense installations on Polish soil at a time when relations between Moscow and Washington were very tense because of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. In response, Russian ambassador to NATO Dmitri Rogozin declared that this accord confirmed that the system was aimed against Russia.⁷ Putin, for his part, stated in the city

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of Sochi that Russia would be forced to make a military response to NATO's deployment of missiles near its borders, since that was yet another step toward scaling up pressure against Russia. In Putin's opinion, references to certain countries as potential dangers—this is the case of North Korea and Iran—are foolish.⁸

European mediation helped resolve the crisis. Immanuel Wallerstein stated that Russia essentially controls Western Europe's gas supply and that it is not by chance that it was President Sarkozy of France, not Condoleezza Rice, who negotiated the truce between Georgia and Russia. Wallerstein continued to say that the truce contains two essential concessions on the part of Georgia: it committed not to use any kind of force against South Ossetia, and the accord contains no reference to Georgian territorial integrity.⁹ However, Russia reacted to this conflict with a strategic vision dubbed the "Medvedev foreign policy doctrine," based on five points, outstanding among which are:

1. Russia recognizes the primacy of the fundamental principles of international law.
2. The world must be multi-polar. Domination is something we cannot allow. We do not accept a world order in which a single country makes all the decisions, even if it is as serious and influential as the United States. A world of this kind is unstable and threatened by conflict.

In his speech about Georgia's attack against South Ossetia, Dmitri Medvedev stated that in the future, "it depends not only on us but also on our friends and partners in the international community. They have a choice."¹⁰ Stratfor's head of geopolitical analysis, George Friedman, thinks that this provides a basis in doctrine for intervening in these countries if Russia perceives an attack on its interests. According to Friedman, when Medvedev states that Russia has a special interest in certain regions, it is referring to the area of the former Soviet Union.

Thus, incursions by third parties to attempt to undermine pro-Russian governments in this region would be considered threats to Russian interests. Therefore, the Georgian conflict would not be an isolated incident, since Medvedev had stated that Russia was immersed in a geopolitical redefinition of the regional and global international system. In short, Russia is restructuring relations in this geographical area that it calls "abroad, but close to home," whose center is Moscow.

On the other hand, the European Union will have neither the military weight nor the determination to confront Russia. What is more, the Europeans are heavily dependent on Russian natural gas, something that will continue in coming years,

while Russia can survive without selling it to them. This means that the European Union is not a substantial factor in the equation, nor does it seem it will become one in the future. **MM**

NOTES

- ¹ Created in 1997, PNAC is an initiative of the New Citizenship Project. Its aim is to promote U.S. world leadership and hegemony through different actions, including war. A large part of its ideas and members are associated with the neoconservative movement, which is why its ranks have included well-known Republicans like former President George W. Bush. *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol is PNAC president. Its leadership has seven permanent members, plus a group of directors. For more information, see <http://newamericancentury.org/>. [Editor's Note.]
- ² See <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9594.doc.htm>. [Editor's Note.]
- ³ "Tskhinvali is closed," declared the Joint Peacekeeping Command Major General Marat Kulakhmetov, August 8, 2008. See www.iraq.mirror.world.ru, p. 3.
- ⁴ "Departamento de Estado: en Georgia recae parte de la responsabilidad," available on line at www.iraqwar.mirror.world.ru, p. 1.
- ⁵ See several articles published on the Stratfor website at http://www.stratfor.com/node/22361/archive/sf_sitrep?page=121, August 10, 2008. Also, John Saxe-Fernández, "El Cáucaso: polvorín estratégico," *La Jornada*, August 28, 2008, <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2008/08/28/index.php?section=opinion&article=028a1eco>.
- ⁶ Vladimir Putin, "Geopolitical Diary: Decision Time in South Ossetia," available on line at www.stratfor.com/geopolitical_diary/geopolitical_diary_decision_time_south_ossetia, August 8, 2008, p. 3.
- ⁷ According to Rogozin, Poland and the United States' signing of the DAM Accord confirms that the anti-missile shield is aimed at Russia. See Russian News and Information Agency, Novosti, September 15, 2008.
- ⁸ Interview with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin broadcast by Al Jazeera television network, September 28, 2008.
- ⁹ Immanuel Wallerstein, "Ajedrez geopolítico: el trasfondo de una mini-guerra en el Cáucaso," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), September 15, 2008, available on line at <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2008/09/13/index.php?section=opinion&article=032a1mun>.
- ¹⁰ The five points, plus Medvedev and Friedman's opinions can be consulted in George Friedman, "The Medvedev Doctrine and American Strategy," September 2, 2008, available on line at http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/medvedev_doctrine_and_american_strategy. [Editor's Note.]

A Prudent Power? China in the UN Security Council

José Luis León-Manríquez*

Two events in the 1970s frame the current importance of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly. In

1971, when what was then called *détente* began, China established relations with the United States and became a member of the UN, occupying the Security Council seat that had been filled by Taiwan since 1949. When Mao Zedong, the historic leader of the Chinese revolution, died in 1976, the Asian giant had already recovered the centuries-old status as a

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great power that it had lost in the middle of the nineteenth century.

This political power would soon be complemented with the development of impressive economic capabilities. Starting in 1978, the People's Republic of China, guided by Deng Xiaoping, began an ambitious —albeit uncertain— experiment of reforms to its productive structure, anticipating the frustrated Soviet *perestroika* by quite a while. In a short time, the changes in China's economic structure improved its productive efficiency and insertion into international markets. Thanks to these reforms, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, China became the world's third largest economy, following only the United States and Japan, and displacing Germany and England. According to the consulting firm Goldman Sachs, China could displace the United States as the world's main economy in the next three or four decades. More modest and accustomed to thinking in terms of very long historical periods, the Chinese often say that this process could take 100 more years.

Beijing will be a central force in the coming years that will contribute to slowing or accelerating changes in the international system and, with that, inside the United Nations.

In any case, it is undeniable that the conjunction of political-diplomatic muscle with economic strength makes Beijing a rising world power. What is more, China is a latent super-power with political, diplomatic, military and even ideological power vectors that could eventually position it as the only nation capable of representing a force for equilibrium in the face of the United States' questioned hegemony. Therefore, Beijing will be a central force in the coming years that will contribute to slowing or accelerating changes in the international system and, with that, inside the United Nations.

Multilateralism is one of Beijing's central foreign policy concerns. But with regard to this issue, like others, the leadership bases itself on a form of pragmatic nationalism that has eliminated all ideological or doctrinaire considerations. While in the 1950s and 1960s, China sought to export revolution, today, it prefers to export its goods to international markets. This interest seems to be due to a determination



David Gray/Reuters

to maintain stability in the national and international conditions that have made its successful growth strategy possible. At the same time, it is attempting to strike a balance in the face of the uneven social growth brought on by economic growth.

CHINA AND MULTILATERALISM

The new China is navigating through the world trying to replace its fire-breathing-dragon image with the warm presence of the panda. The idea of “peaceful ascension” (*heping juequi*) articulated by the authorities and conceived in think-tanks close to the government states that the country's growth should not be seen as a threat to the world. Using a key concept from Confucius's thought, repudiated in the past by Maoism, today the official discourse emphasizes harmony. The China of today and tomorrow, they assure, will avoid repeating the mistakes made by Germany and Japan, the powers that emerged at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. The message seems to be that though Beijing will not be passing out flowers like 1960s San Francisco hippies, it will also not destabilize an international system from which it has obtained very concrete benefits.

In the construction of China's foreign policy discourse, the concept of multilateralism is a much more effective tool, also backed up by historical evidence. While the People's Republic of China was excluded from the UN system as a collateral effect of the Cold War, the Maoist strategists led the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. China then considered itself —as it continues to— a developing country, despite its flirtations with the group of the world's more industrial-

ized nations (the G-8). To paraphrase the José Martí of “Guanamamera,” although with greater and greater ambivalence, China wants to throw in its lot with the poor of the Earth.

China’s close relations with the peripheral countries were one of the factors that, with time, facilitated its reincorporation into the UN and the resulting expulsion of Taiwan. As a member, Beijing has used the multilateral expedient as a pillar of its foreign policy. In the post-Cold-War period, China considers that the world is moving toward a multi-polar international order and that globalization and technological progress are contributing to decentralizing power. According to its vision of the world, in 20 years, a unified Europe will have matured as a power capable of countering the might of the United States. At the same time, countries like Russia, Japan, India and China itself will have reached the status of world powers. In this perspective, for the People’s Republic of China, Washington’s long-term declining hegemony is inevitable, although it takes no action to precipitate it.

If the world’s future is multi-polar, in China’s view, then, it would be a good idea to increase the role of multilateral bodies in global diplomacy to its full potential. In this sense, the UN General Assembly is a particularly good place for the exercise of Chinese diplomacy. Through delicate, continual diplomacy, Beijing has managed to consolidate a wide network of relations with the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, with which it is also linked through growing economic relations. The Security Council is another sphere of expression for Chinese foreign policy.

ON THE ART OF TRANSFORMING
CAUTION INTO POLICY:
CHINA IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Since its reincorporation into the UN system as one of the five permanent members, China has exhibited quite a moderate position in the Security Council. It has used its veto rights only six times since 1971. In all these cases, its main motivation has been the defense of its own interests more than a desire to play a hegemonic role. In 1972, it vetoed the admission of Bangladesh to the UN. That same year, in accordance with the USSR vote, it blocked a resolution about the ceasefire for the Six-Day War in the Middle East. In 1997, it vetoed the establishment of a mission to verify the ceasefire in Guatemala, since the latter still has relations with Taiwan. In 1999, also because of the “Taiwan factor,” China

refused to authorize extending a peacekeeping mission in Macedonia. In January 2007, together with Russia, it vetoed a resolution that called on the government of Myanmar to free all its political prisoners, improve its human rights record and initiate dialogue with the opposition. The joint Moscow-Beijing position was the first multiple veto in the council since 1989. In July 2008, just like old times, both powers once again joined forces to veto a Security Council resolution placing international restrictions on the free transit of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and some of his collaborators, freezing their bank accounts abroad, and levying a weapons embargo on their country.

It is true that the People’s Republic of China was absent from the Security Council for more than two decades. However, its half dozen vetoes are frankly modest compared to the 18 times France has used its right of veto, or the United Kingdom’s 32 times, the United States’ 82, or the Soviet Union/Russia’s 123 times. As can be deduced from its behav-

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ior in the council, in matters that represent a potential conflict with other members, China prefers to abstain and use the veto very little.

This prudence, however, should not be interpreted as synonymous with innocence. In fact Beijing’s positions in this decade’s main international conflicts clearly illustrate its aforementioned nationalism and pragmatic defense of its national interests. For example, in the face of the invasion of Afghanistan after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, China voted for an international coalition led by the United States. At the same time, it took advantage of that situation to characterize Muslim separatism in the Xinjiang region as terrorist. China presented itself as another victim of terrorism and argued that, since Afghanistan was one of its neighbors, it could do no less than support the fight against this same phenomenon within its own borders.

Beijing’s apparent support for U.S. positions would begin to reach its limits in 2002 and 2003 around the issue of the

war in Iraq. From the start, China insisted that the resolution of the conflict be discussed in the Security Council. On November 8, 2002, the council passed Resolution 1441, calling on Baghdad to allow rigorous UN inspections and threatening Iraq with “serious consequences” if it did not fulfill its disarmament commitments. However, the resolution did not imply the automatic use of armed force against Iraq. In March 2003, Washington ordered the use of force against the Saddam Hussein regime with no further consultations. During the crisis, China supported France and Russia’s position favoring continued weapons inspections in Iraq. Despite expressing its opposition to the use of force, it was careful not to openly declare that it would veto a resolution on this backed by Washington. If the vote had final-

ly been taken, China might have abstained as it did during the first Gulf War in 1991 and not used its veto.

Chinese diplomacy has not shared Washington’s enthusiasm for forcing Iran to cancel its nuclear program. Its lack of support for the U.S. position on Iran is not only based on principle: China imports one-third of the oil and gas it consumes, and almost all of that comes from the Middle East. China’s main oil supply lines in the region are Iran and the United Arab Emirates, which partially explains its attitude. In addition, in the 1990s, China provided Teheran with inputs to facilitate uranium enrichment. It is no surprise, then, that with regard to Iran and Iraq, China’s position is much closer to Russia’s—and even France’s—than to the United States’. **NMM**

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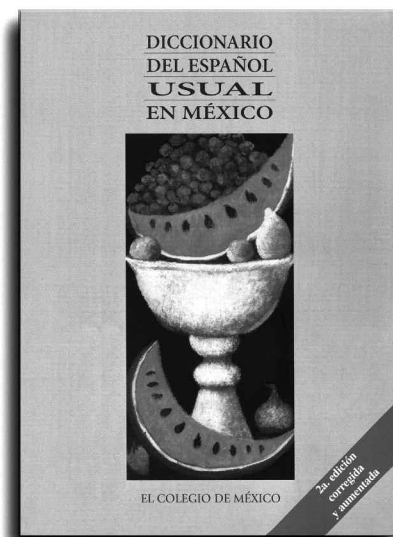
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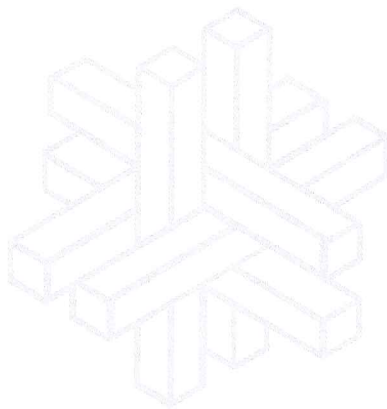
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Esta segunda edición, corregida y aumentada del *Diccionario del español usual en México* presenta, con precisión, rigor y originalidad el vocabulario culto, muchos términos científicos y técnicos correspondientes a los usos mexicanos, una multitud de voces, significados y giros coloquiales y populares —como no lo ha hecho ningún otro diccionario del español—, buena cantidad de regionalismos y varias decenas de miles de ejemplos tomados del uso real de los mexicanos. Está dedicado al ciudadano medio y al joven estudiante, que requieren una fuente de consulta fidedigna e independiente, actualizada y atenta a la rica variedad de las formas de hablar de los mexicanos.



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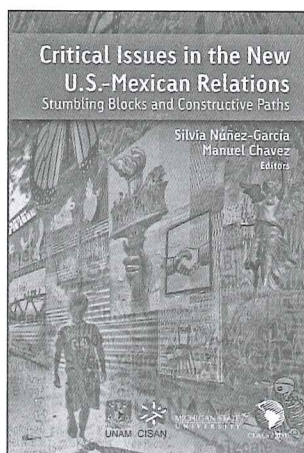


CISAN

p u b l i c a t i o n s

**Critical Issues in the New U.S.-Mexico Relations
Stumbling Blocks and Constructive Paths**

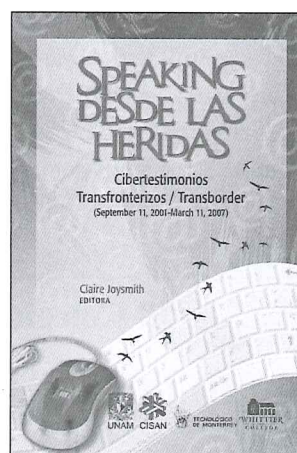
Silvia Núñez-García and
Manuel Chávez editors



This work's multidisciplinary approach provides a broad spectrum of analysis: it not only deals with issues that have caused frequent tension on the bilateral agenda such as migration and the economic impact of maquiladora plants, but also other, more recent topics. Among these are national security, the adjustments the international situation demands of both countries' foreign policy and the role of the mass media. It also covers contemporary issues like the emergence of new transnational actors and the regulation of genetically modified organisms.

**Speaking desde las heridas
Cibertestimonios**

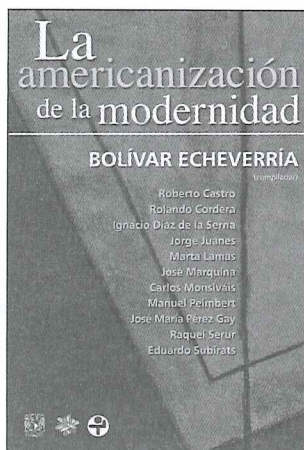
Transfronterizos / Transborder
September 11,
2001-March 11, 2007
Claire Joysmith, editor



After the 9/11 attacks came turmoil and desolation, and later, reflection. This book takes a critical, creative, razor-sharp, profound look at the results of the latter. It offers the reader reflections and retrospectives distilled over a period of five to six years, using the very malleable, unpredictable discursive method of testimonies.

La americanización de la modernidad

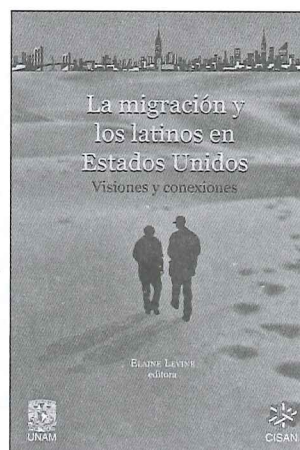
Bolívar Echeverría, compiler



This book brings the reader articles dealing with something both the general public and academic circles are very concerned about: a certain "distress" about what seems to be the unsustainable nature of the way people live today. The kind of civilization that creates this distress is "capitalist modernity," in its specific form of "Americanization."

La migración y los latinos en Estados Unidos.

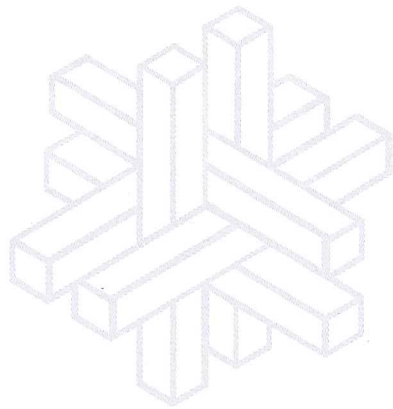
Visiones y conexiones
Elaine Levine, editor



This book answers questions on a topic we know very little about: what happens to migrants once they cross the border? What are their lives like? What is their work like? What problems do they face? What are their options and plans for the future? A many-sided vision that examines the vicissitudes of their journey and the conditions of their stay there as well as of their possible return. Outstanding academics from both Mexico and the United States with extensive experience in fieldwork and information from original sources make it an undeniable contribution.

For further information contact

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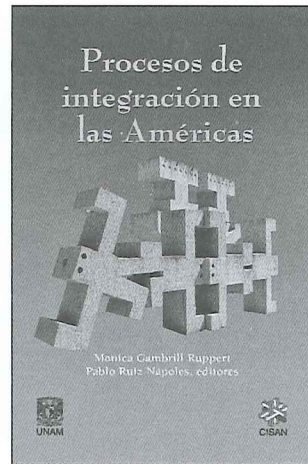
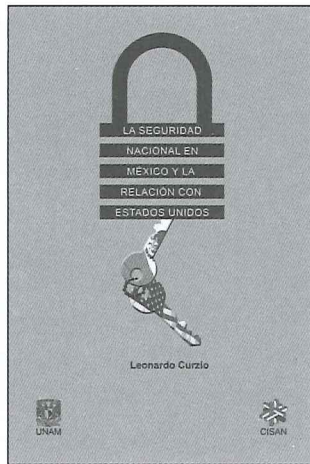


CISAN

p u b l i c a t i o n s

Seguridad nacional en México y la relación con Estados Unidos
Leonardo Curzio

The classic national security paradigm must be reinterpreted in the light of the changes both in Mexico and the world. For the last 20 years, Mexico has gone from being an inward-looking economy to one of the world's most open, though very dependent on the United States; it has stepped up emigration so that, today, unprecedented millions of Mexicans live and work in the U.S.; and in terms of security, it has become part of the equation of security in North America. For all these reasons, we have to review our suppositions and doctrine in this area.

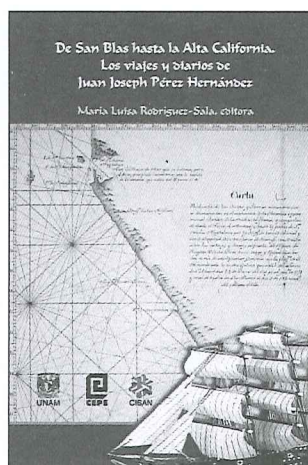
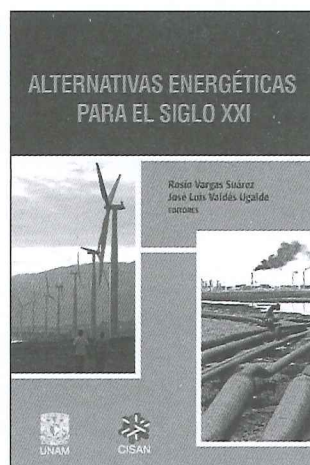


Procesos de integración en las Américas
Monica Gambrell and Pablo Ruiz Nápoles, editors

This book studies the intensification of integration processes in the Americas. Based on a huge amount of empirical data, the articles seek to show the impact of integration in regionalization processes. They deal with topics like the theory of the new regionalism as a tool to study recent integration processes; the specificities of Tamaulipas-Texas transborder cooperation; the inconsistencies in official data gathering that make it difficult to ascertain the real magnitude of trade among the NAFTA countries; and Venezuela's contribution to Andean integration.

Alternativas energéticas para el siglo XXI
Rosío Vargas and José Luis Valdés-Ugalde, editors

This book deals with a vital issue for the world today: the search for energy alternatives to compensate for the imminent scarcity of traditional sources, particularly oil and gas. Based on specialized studies warning that current rates of oil consumption will exhaust known reserves in about 40 years, the authors offer a panorama of the international oil situation, emphasizing the growing importance of natural gas and other renewable energy sources, as well as the obstacles and perspectives these new options face.



De San Blas hasta la Alta California: los viajes y diarios de Juan Joseph Pérez Hernández
María Luisa Rodríguez-Sala, editor

This book deals with the vicissitudes and feats of Juan Joseph Pérez Hernández, a Spanish Royal Navy seaman in charge of the maritime exploration of the northern part of the New World in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The author explains that the ultimate reason for these travels was to be found in the policy and aspirations of two European empires, the Spanish and the Russian. The Spaniards wanted to consolidate and expand their territories in these northern latitudes in the face of the threat of the penetration through trade and settlement by the nascent Russian empire.

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- *Yucatán*
Thirty Centuries of History before the Spaniards
- *Colonial History of Yucatán*
- *Yucatán after Independence*
How the Peninsula Was Divided



Yucatán

Thirty Centuries of History before the Spaniards

Adriana Velázquez Morlet*



Yucatán-Labná



Yucatán-Dzibilchaltún

When people think about the ancient Mayas, they usually conger up the traditional image of peaceful, wise men dedicating their time to astronomy and mathematics, the great builders and artists. But the history of the pre-Hispanic Mayan world on the Yucatán Peninsula is enormously complex and still far from being completely understood. The term “Maya” involves elements united by common roots, but diversified down through its long history and over the vast territory they settled.

THE MAYAN LANDS

The peninsula’s Mayan civilization developed over a little more than 175,000 km² that included what are now Yucatán, Campeche and Quintana Roo. Researchers have divided this area into three: the plains of the North, the Puuc mountainous region and the southern lowlands. These differences contributed to enriching the Mayan culture and creating successful subsistence strategies over the centuries.

* Director of the Quintana Roo National Institute of Anthropology and History Center.
Photos by Elsie Montiel



Yucatán-Sayil



Yucatán-Kabah



Yucatán-Uxmal



Yucatán-Ek-Balam



Campeche-Balamkú

ORIGINS

Little is known about the first Mayan ancestors. Research shows that 12,000 years ago, the peninsula was a plain similar to Africa's, covered by now-extinct animals. Its first inhabitants, very different from historical Mayas, hunted some of these animals and explored the caves in the Tulum area —then dry, but now flooded— in search of temporary shelter, water and a place to bury their dead.



Campeche-Calakmul

THE FIRST VILLAGES

Initially, the region's inhabitants set up small camps that they struck to search for food. This way of life made them familiar with the developmental cycles of the animals and plants and led them to start manipulating them for their own purposes. So, by around 2800 B.C., they were already cultivating maize, and by 900 B.C., in places like Komché, Yucatán, they were raising platforms with small temples where they buried important personages.

In the pre-classical period, the Mayas developed the essential concepts of their view of the universe and the divine nature of their rulers, who became the *raison d'être* for their largest construction projects. Starting in 600 B.C., cities like Dzibanché and Ichkabal in southern Quintana Roo, Calakmul in Campeche, and Dzibilchaltún in northern Yucatán already had rather important structures. At that time, the founda-

tions of Mayan world view was already the divine power of their rulers, based on their claim to a mythological genealogy that gave them the sacred right to exercise power. This is why the representation of the divine lords in great stucco masks placed on the basements of the pyramids became the way to express the kings' power and authority. Beautiful examples of these decorations have been documented in Calakmul, Chakanbakán, Edzná and Acanceh.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF MAYAN POWER

The final years of the pre-classical period (approximately 200 B.C.) saw the burgeoning divine dynasties become all-powerful, each establishing its own political territory. From then on, war and high-level alliances would be the constant in the dynamics of Mayan politics.

Throughout the early classical (A.D. 200-600), Mayan civilization on the peninsula became notably complex, with great cities and enormous buildings in the Petén style, like the ones in Calakmul, Dzibanché, Kohunlich, Ichkabal, Nadzcan, Becán, Oxkintok and many others. Of course, the Mayas were not cut off from what was going on in other regions like Central Mexico, where Teotihuacan exerted immense territorial



Campeche-X-puhil

In the pre-classical period, the Mayas developed the essential concepts of their view of the universe and the divine nature of their rulers, who became the *raison d'être* for their largest construction projects.



Campeche-Chicanná



Campeche-Edzná

dominance. However, despite the many elements present in the iconography of the time, there is no reason to think the Teotihuacan culture dominated the peninsula. The use of those elements was surely due exclusively to their political and symbolic value and to the prestige that their use represented. The fall of Teotihuacan around A.D. 650 sparked profound transformations in the political geography of Central Mexico. However, in the Mayan area, this was the time of greatest population growth, which led to innovative architecture, specifically with the emergence of the Río Bec, Chenes and Puuc styles and their exquisite edifices.

In the late classical period, the giant masks stopped being used and the construction of stelae and stone altars became generalized. On them, inscriptions referred to the kings as *Ahaw* (“noble” or “lord”), and to the cities, the seats of royal power, as *K’ul Ahaw*, a name for a godly place. The lords were sometimes given the title of *kaloomte’* (“supreme lord of war”) after victories in their frequent military clashes. In most cases, royal succession among the Maya was defined through the paternal line, but there are cases known in which, faced with the absence of a male heir, this rule was broken and a woman was made queen.

Historical inscriptions show us the complex political relations the Mayan kings established, but offer little infor-



Campeche-Becan

mation about the way of life of anyone who was not part of the nobility. Excavations in the residential areas of Calakmul, Kohunlich, Cobá or the Puuc cities show that their inhabitants may have organized themselves in neighborhoods, each with its own temple and ruled by a minor lord who was in charge of coordinating the group's activities.

The cities of the classical period were the combination of a viable locale, with high ground and good drainage, surrounded by fertile lands and water sources, and a design linked to the social order and the Mayan ideas about the sacred universe, which gave every element of the urban landscape a cosmological significance. All the elements of the city (plazas, stelae, temples) reproduced the sacred primary landscape (jungle, mountains and caves). In their own way, the humble peasants of the surrounding areas also replicated this vision of the universe in the *cenotes* (sink holes), caves and hills of the jungle.

We are far from understanding how the political and economic inner workings of the classical Mayan world broke down around the ninth or tenth century, the moment traditionally known as the “Mayan collapse.” It seems to be a fact that the royal authority of the great cities had seriously deteriorated, which leads us to think that their

Around the tenth century, Chichén Itzá was competing with the powerful city of Cobá for control of territory and resources. The tension among Uxmal, Chichén Itzá and Cobá led to wars and the breakdown of existing alliances.



Quintana Roo-Cobá



Quintana Roo-Tulum

The cities of the classical period were the combination of a viable locale, with high ground and good drainage, surrounded by fertile lands and water sources.

powerful lords were dethroned. However, evidence also shows that the cities were not abandoned and that their inhabitants continued living their daily lives, invading the old ritual spaces to turn them into dwellings, re-utilizing the sacred monuments for simple building materials. The Mayas did not disappear, but their society did enter into a process of transformation that would lead to new political and economic structures.



Quintana Roo-Tulum

Meanwhile, in the northern part of the peninsula, the rulers developed more successful strategies that apparently centered on government structures with non-permanent members. In the Puuc region, splendid constructions began to be built that portrayed divine power differently, and they abandoned the use of stelae and inscriptions. In the eastern part of the region, Chichén Itzá began to develop, becoming an enormous city, perhaps at the start as an ally of the Puuc, but later acting on its own.

Around the tenth century, Chichén Itzá was competing with the powerful city of Cobá for control of territory and resources. The tension among Uxmal, Chichén Itzá and Cobá led to wars and the breakdown of existing alliances. The

rulers of Chichén may have found the Chontales from what is now Tabasco to be good allies, and together created a new regional order that allowed them to accumulate unprecedented power in the Yucatán Peninsula after A.D.1000.

The consolidation of Chichén Itzá as the victor was the first time in Mayan history that a single city had concentrated control over an enormous region, developing at the same time a vision of the world that included very innovative political and religious ideas. While this was happening in the spheres of power, the peasant communities continued life without major changes; although some activities like salt gathering and fishing became more important, the dwellings of ordinary people at that time were practically identical to those from previous periods.

Chichén Itzá was the most powerful capital of the post-classical Mayan world until almost A.D. 1200, when its highly centralized power structure broke down, incapable of containing the conflicts among the kin groups of the city's *multepal* or "governing boards." The ethno-historical stories that have survived mention the migration of those kin groups, some to nearby places like Mayapán, and other to far-off lands like Tayasal in Guatemala, where they founded a new city which resisted even the European conquest.

Mayapán is a replica of Chichén Itzá: its buildings are very similar and there is a clear intention of perpetrating the old order. However, the success of the walled city of Mayapán was ephemeral. Chronicles say that it was destroyed in 1441, when the alliance among its governing kin groups broke down. Whether this story is true or not, the fact is that archaeological research seems to point to its being destroyed at that time.

DECADENCE?

After these events, the Yucatán Peninsula fragmented politically into 16 autonomous provinces, the *kuchkabalooob*, some of which became very rich and relatively powerful thanks to their control of the salt-producing regions and the coastal ports. Tulum, Xcaret (Pole), Xamanhá (today Playa del Carmen), Xelhá and Ichpaatún, among others, are some of the most important port cities of those late-period times, some of them walled, others concentrated in clusters lining the coast. These were the settlements the Spanish voyagers sighted when they arrived at the peninsula's east coast in 1517. From that time on, history would be different. **MM**



Yucatán-Chichén Itzá

Photo taken from www.yahoo.com

Chichén Itzá was the most powerful capital of the post-classical Mayan world until almost A.D. 1200.



Yucatán-Chichén Itzá

Photo taken from www.yahoo.com

Colonial History of Yucatán

Sergio Quezada*
Silvana Hernández Ortiz**



Elsie Montiel

Today's city of Campeche was founded in 1541 by the Spanish conquistador Francisco the Montejo and his son.

The Yucatán peninsula was discovered by Europeans when Francisco Hernández de Córdoba arrived in 1517, but it was not until 1527 that Francisco de Montejo, the Elder, attempted to conquer it for the first time. In late 1530 or early 1531, he tried again but was repulsed by the indigenous three years later. It was in 1541 when, together with his son —also named Francisco de Montejo— that he founded the town of San Francisco de Campeche. Later, on January 6, 1542, they founded the city of Mérida, and in May 1543, the city of Valladolid near the port of Conil. But,

since the site was unhealthy, in spring 1544, they moved the town to the pre-Hispanic capital of Sací. Finally, that same year, the conquistadors founded the town of Salamanca near the Bacalar Lagoon. Nevertheless, the Spanish presence was tenuous; in late 1546, the eastern Mayans rebelled against them, but were defeated. It was in March 1547 that most consider that the process of colonization properly began.

The native Mayan population was scattered, so the first activity of colonization consisted in congregating it, but not without meeting with resistance. This task was taken on by the Franciscans, the order that had the monopoly on evangelizing the Yucatecan Mayans. By 1560 they had already organized approximately 165 towns like Izamal, Maní, Tizimín and Calkiní. Simultaneously, they fostered what were called

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“community boxes”: wooden boxes with three keys where they kept money to support the schools of the faith, where the children went to learn to read, write and sing.

At the same time, crown authorities began to change the new political structure by organizing the municipal council (*cabildo* or *cuerpo de república*). To do that they appointed local indigenous leaders or *caciques* as governors; they also appointed sheriffs, scribes and stewards. Colonization seemed to

The discovery of idol worship convinced the crown authorities that the Mayan elite still had influence, prestige and political power among the population, so they decided to replace the indigenous governing *caciques* with other indigenous. The indigenous nobility resisted these new appointments and complained to the Crown. Although the demographic crisis caused by the epidemics of plague, smallpox, measles and murine typhus complicated the situation for the Mayan nobil-



Portrait of Francisco de Montejo, The Young, at the Government's Palace in the city of Mérida.



Façade of the Montejo's residence, now a bank, also in Mérida.

The native Mayan population was scattered, so the first activity of colonization consisted in congregating it, but not without meeting with resistance.

move forward without a hitch, but in May 1562, when Friar Diego de Landa, then provincial head of the Franciscan order, found idols and skulls in a cave near the town of Maní, he ordered indigenous leaders, principals and teachers from the doctrine schools to be detained and tortured, accusing them of encouraging and officiating idol worship. On July 12, he held an auto-de-fe, a huge gathering at which the indigenous were forced to confirm their Catholic convictions.

ity, as the eighth decade of the sixteenth century began, its resistance to the creation of the *cabildos* was patently clear.

In 1583, Diego García de Palacio, a judge of the Courts of New Spain, put an end to the period of the great political realignments after the conquest by ordering that the indigenous *cabildos* be made up of a governor appointed by the colonial authorities, two mayors, four councilmen and a steward. He assigned their functions and ordered that half these posts should be held by non-noble indigenous, called *maceguals*, who thus were promoted to positions of power and given economic privileges.

The economic obligations forced on the Mayas were innumerable. The most important were tribute and alms, known from the seventeenth century on as *obvenciones*. The *reparti-*



The Izamal Monastery, one of the most important Colonial missions in Yucatán.

miento de bienes was another, which consisted of forced indebtedness for a certain amount that they paid back with cotton blankets and wax. They were also forced to buy bulls of indulgence from the Holy Crusade to raise money to pay for the wars against the Moors. And, of course, they had to labor as servants in the homes of the Spaniards.

Throughout this period, the Spaniards gradually began to appropriate the indigenous lands, to found modest cattle ranches. This would be their most important economic activity, the production of meat and suet destined for the consumption of the Spaniards living in the province, since Yucatán was far from New Spain's main trade routes. These ranches also cultivated corn and produced honey.

Beginning in the second third of the seventeenth century, Yucatán's colonial institutions began to show their limitations. Pirates arrived on the east coast of the peninsula and the Términos Lagoon to try to exploit the *palo de tinte*, or logwood. The Spanish authorities were faced with indigenous resistance movements from the town of Tipú in the southeast of the peninsula, forcing them to abandon the town of Salamanca de Bacalar and fostered the British occupation of what is now Belize. In addition, the Mayas' obligations spurred them to emigrate toward the southern part of the peninsula to escape colonial domination. They also sought refuge in other

indigenous towns or on the Spaniards' cattle ranches, where they were exempt from their tributary obligations.

In Spain, meanwhile, things were changing with the ascent of the Bourbons to the throne. The dynasty decided to restrict the power of the corporations (the Church, the *cabildos*, religious orders, consulates) because it thought they put the brake on political and economic development. Between 1770 and 1789, the Crown incorporated the province into the free trade regime, expropriating the community savings funds and the *encomiendas*,¹ and suppressed the *repartimientos de mercancías*.

The most important reform was the 1786 reorganization of the political and administrative apparatus that divided the Viceroyalty into intendencies and sub-delegations.

Yucatán became an intendency, divided into 13 sub-delegations. In 1787, Lucas de Gálvez was appointed the first intendente, and in 1789, the Crown named him governor and captain general, which remained the top posts in the province until independence.

With the Bourbon reforms and the expansion of markets stemming from the industrial revolution, the Yucatecan criollos intensified their appropriation of indigenous lands. The cattle ranches expanded and became farming-ranching haciendas, making their owners the most powerful social, polit-

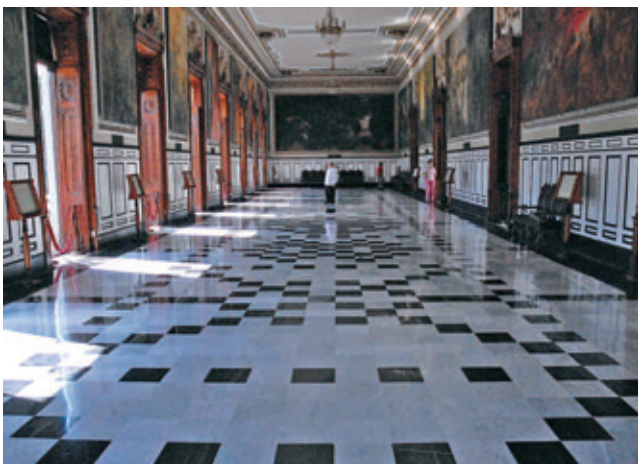
ical and economic group in the region. Yucatán possessed extensive stands of *palo de tinte* or logwood, used for making dye for the textile industry and incorporated it into the European market. However, cheaper English cotton weaves flooded the provincial market, destroying the Mayan textile production that had been exported to New Spain. This led them to begin to manufacture sisal sacks and to weave palm leaves into hats for the New Spain market.

These were the economic, administrative circumstances of the Yucatán Intendency when the French army invaded Spain in 1808. Given the vacuum of power, the Supreme Governing Central Council of the Realm convened an extraordinary session of Spain's Cortes or legislature in Cádiz and asked every province to send deputies. Yucatán sent Miguel González Lastiri, who returned in late July 1812 with seven copies of the Constitution. In the face of pressure from the Liberals grouped together in the association of Sanjuanistas or constitutionalists, and with the opposition of the *serviles* or absolutists, on October 14, 1812, the province swore to uphold it. The important thing about this new Constitution is that it made the indigenous citizens and suppressed the Crown's tutelage that compelled them to comply with religious and economic obligations like going to mass, accept-

ing Church doctrine, practicing the sacraments and performing personal service both for private individuals and institutions. In February 1813, the political head of the region relieved the Mayas of the obligation to perform these services and to pay *obvenciones*, measures which were enthusiastically received by the Mayas and opposed by the *serviles*. The Constitution established a new, three-level political and administrative arrangement: the political head of the region, the provincial chamber of deputies and the constitutional city councils that replaced the old *República de Indios*.² The king appointed the political head, and the citizens indirectly elected the deputies and directly elected the councilmen.

With the liberation of Fernando VII, the absolutist regime was reinstated, and on July 23, 1814 the chamber of deputies and the city councils were dissolved and the *Repúblicas de Indios* reinstated, while the *serviles* incarcerated the main Sanjuanista leaders. The priests forced the Mayas to pay their back *obvenciones* and reestablished whipping, which had been banned in 1761. The restoration also marked the end of freedom of the press established in the 1812 Constitution.

In 1821, all the Franciscan monasteries were secularized, but the indigenous continued paying the *obvenciones* and maintaining the Catholic Church for several decades.



The History Room at the Government Palace in Mérida, Yucatán.



The mural depicting the burning of the idols by Friar Diego de Landa.

Elsie Montiel

Rubén Vázquez

This political atmosphere prevailed until 1817 when the Sanjuanistas were freed and organized the first lodges to conspire against absolutism. The arrival from Spain of a group of officers and émigrés with liberal ideas consolidated the lodges in the city of Mérida and, possibly, the ones in other towns like Valladolid and Izamal, except in the port of Campeche, where the absolutists dedicated themselves to wiping them out. Despite the persecution, the political, social, ideological and cultural changes sparked by the movement of Cádiz had already taken root in the Yucatecan mentality. In this atmosphere, news arrived to the province that the Spanish liberals had forced Fernando VII to swear allegiance to the Constitution of 1812. Yucatán, despite the opposition of the absolutists, also swore to the Constitution, reinstating the constitutional city councils and the provincial chamber of deputies.

With the return to constitutionalism, the *Repúblicas de Indios* and the *Tribunal de Indios* (Court of the Indians) were suppressed. In 1821, all the Franciscan monasteries were secularized, but the indigenous continued paying the *obvenciones* and maintaining the Catholic Church for several decades.

Given the distance that separated Yucatan from the parts of Mexico convulsed by the war of independence from Spain, the province's transition to independence was peaceful. It was sufficient for the political head of the region to be inform-

ed on September 15, 1821 that the independence forces were in Tabasco to convene that very day a session of the chamber of deputies and another of the Mérida City Council to be able to make the decision. With the presence of the colonial bureaucracy, its military commanders, the ecclesiastic authorities and representatives of the liberals, constitutionalists and *serviles*, the province proclaimed its independence.

The first eight years of independence were politically calm in Yucatán. The peninsula's criollo elite was able to build the first institutions of a federal regimen and peacefully begin independent life, although their concerns revolved around the terms under which Yucatán would become part of the budding republic: how it would participate in the integration and formation of the new nation-state. **MM**

NOTES

¹ The *encomienda* was trusteeship labor system instituted by the Spanish Crown in its colonies whereby up to 300 indigenous people were put under the "care and spiritual guidance" of the *encomendero*, who could command their labor in exchange for his military protection and Catholic teachings. [Editor's Note.]

² The *República de Indios* (Republic of Indians) was part of an autonomous political-social entity linked to the Crown under the Spanish Empire called the Indian Political Society. The other part of the society was the *República de Españoles* (Republic of the Spaniards). [Editor's Note.]



The Open Chapel in Dzibichaltún's archaeological site shows how far the Franciscan went in their efforts for colonizing and congregating the indigenous population.



Yucatán after Independence How the Peninsula Was Divided

Justo Miguel Flores Escalante*

At the dawn of Mexico's independence, the province of Yucatán covered the entire peninsula. During the colonial period, it had come under the legal jurisdiction of the Audience of Mexico, although its highest official, the governor and captain general, operated autonomously from the viceroy of New Spain in matters of the militia and public administration. In the absence of the governor and captain general, the mayor of Mérida took charge of the administrative functions and the king's resident lieutenant in Campeche, the military ones.

For the first half of the nineteenth century, Yucatán's three main cities were Mérida, the administrative capital and the most densely populated; walled Campeche, the main port and richest city; and Valladolid, which commanded the

densely populated eastern part of the peninsula. From the time of Spanish domination and during the nineteenth century, these cities' local governments (*cabildos*) and elites competed and made alliances with each other to gain political control of the region.

In September 1821, news arrived to the port of Campeche about the advance of the Trigarante Army and the signing of the Treaties of Córdoba agreeing on independence from Spain. On September 13, the mayor and deputy political head of the area, Miguel Duque de Estrada, the City Council, the king's lieutenant and the military commanders of the port city came out for the independence of Yucatán from Spain, calling on the provincial authorities in Mérida to join them in their proclamation.

For his part, Juan María de Echeverri, governor and captain general of Yucatán, met with the Provincial Deputyship and Mérida's main officials to declare the independence of

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Photo this page: Detail of the Ateneo Peninsular building, in Mérida, Yucatán.



The city of Campeche historic center.

On October 1, 1841, a resolution was passed favoring complete independence from Mexico and creating the Yucatecan nation. The proclamation was stopped in the local Senate.

Yucatán. That was on September 15, but the declaration of independence was cautious because it did not include Yucatán's integration into the new Mexican state pending the outcome of the independence movement in New Spain. Campeche's *cabildo* pressured the provincial authorities to make independence effective; it joined the Mexican Empire, and on November 2 managed to get the Yucatán Provincial



The city of Campeche's Cathedral.



The San Miguel Fort, one of Campeche's landmarks is now a museum.

Photos this page by Elsie Montiel

Deputyship to issue a decree about this. Echeverri resigned from his post arguing that his loyalty to the Spanish government was incompatible with a break with Spain. The peninsula was left without its highest official. This led to clashes between the authorities of Mérida and Campeche; therefore, Augustín de Iturbide, who consummated independence and was declared emperor of Mexico, sent Melchor Álvarez as military commander and interim head of Yucatán's executive.

When Iturbide fell in 1823, the Provincial Deputyship came out in favor of Yucatán becoming a federal republic and joining Mexico only if the country did likewise. The provincial body gave way to the first Constituent Congress, which met from 1823 to 1825. The Yucatán legislature suspended the national decree ordering a declaration of war on Spain in 1823, arguing that it would affect trade with Cuba—still a Spanish colony—and that the central authorities would not guarantee the defense of the peninsula in case of a Spanish attack nor pay for its cost.

Conditioning entry into the new Mexican nation and delaying the declaration of war on Spain caused the Yucatán Constituent Congress to be seriously questioned. The Campeche City Council and authorities declared themselves in rebellion. The legislature tried to offset these unfortunate events by naming Campeche-born Francisco Antonio de Tarrazo governor. However, the conflicts continued, so the central government sent Antonio López Santa Anna as general commander to Yucatán to try to resolve them.¹ In the end, López de Santa Anna occupied the executive and published the first local Constitution in 1825. Finally, national and internal pressure forced Yucatán to declare war, Santa Anna was recalled from the peninsula, and José Tiburcio López occupied the governorship from 1825 to 1829.

López had serious conflicts with José Segundo Carvajal, the general commander of Yucatán, about the costs of maintaining national troops. This, together with political instability in central Mexico, was the cause of the Campeche garrison coming out in favor of centralism in 1829. The movement was successful in the peninsula and turned it into an island in the middle of the Mexican Federal Republic. Nevertheless, it did not mean its separation from the nation: even though they wanted the entire nation to adopt a central system, they accepted implementing any general measure as long as it did not contravene the system itself. The isolation did not last long; given the failure of its representatives and the national pressures, in 1831 Yucatán returned to federalism. Political skirmishes would continue under the federal system. In 1833, Juan de Dios Cosgaya and Santiago Méndez were elected governor and vice-governor, respectively. But Francisco de Paula Toro, Yucatán's general commander, and the Campeche City Council defeated them after only a year in office. Later, the *cabildos* of Mérida and the walled city of Campeche declared themselves in favor of the Central Mexican Republic, which was established in 1839.

The unhappiness of the elites and the general populace about the control over trade, men being drafted into the army, payments to the central government and conflicts with general commanders over their involvement in local politics produced the federalist movement headed by Santiago Imán in Tizimín in 1839. Valladolid and Mérida authorities joined the revolt in favor of the adopting the federal system in the peninsula and throughout Mexico. When they succeeded, federalism was reestablished in 1840. From then until 1857, the governorship alternated mainly between Santiago Méndez and Miguel Barbachano, who were political enemies: the former led the power groups in Campeche, and the latter, the groups in Mérida.

The peninsula recovered sovereignty over internal issues like trade, political administration and the organization of troops, and the Mexican federal Constitution of 1824 and the local Constitution of 1825 were restored. The Yucatán Congress took important measures: it passed a Constitution advanced for its time (1841) and dealt with demands about the control of regional commercial activity, opposition to the draft, appropriate payments to national coffers, and the return to federalism as conditions for rejoining the government of Mexico.

It should be pointed out that in the second congressional session, on October 1, 1841, a resolution was passed

favoring complete independence from Mexico and creating the Yucatecan nation. The proclamation, approved by the majority of deputies, was stopped in the local Senate by Santiago Méndez and the Campeche power groups. The regional government sought to negotiate its demands with the national government, and Mexico City commissioned Yucatecan Andrés Quintana Roo to begin talks with the authorities in his home province. Out of those talks came accords stipulating that the central government would give Yucatán more of a say in handling commercial taxes and local troops in exchange for its recognition of central authorities and breaking off relations with Texas. The political figures of the time called these negotiations the "Treaty of December 1841," which was never ratified by the Mexican Congress.

The lack of an understanding between the national and regional governments led to an armed conflict in late 1842 and the first few months of 1843. The central authorities sent troops to subdue the peninsular dissidents, but the expedition failed to take Campeche and Mérida, which led to the capitulation of the federal troops. Even after this armed clash and the advantage gained by the Yucatecans, the local government decided to enter into talks with the national officials to get recognition of the demands previously put to Quintana Roo in 1841. The federal government recognized these Yucatecan demands in the so-called "Treaties of De-

In 1847 look place the uprising of the Mayas in eastern Yucatán known as the Caste War. The confrontation was devastating. In the long run, it lead to the territorial division of the peninsula.



Painting by Rolando Arjona Amábilis depicting the indigenous obligations to the haciendas

ember 1843” and the regional elites accepted coming back into the central administration’s fold in 1844.

Nevertheless, the Yucatecan negotiations were unfruitful in the national legislature from 1844 to 1845. The federal legislators argued that treaties were only signed with other sovereign nations and that the Yucatán peninsula was part of Mexico, not an associate nation. This led to a new break under the administration of Miguel Barbachano. Later, when Barbachano entered into negotiations with Santa Anna to fight the Americans in exchange for the central government’s recognition of his governorship, a revolt broke out in late 1846 in Campeche declaring Yucatán neutral in Mexico’s war with the United States. This movement was headed by Domingo Barret and Santiago Méndez. The peninsula maintained its autonomy from the general government without declaring complete independence from the Mexican nation.

In 1847, things would change with the uprising of the Mayas in eastern Yucatán known as the Caste War. The confrontation was devastating. The rebel indigenous laid waste to important towns like Valladolid, Tizimín, Tekax and Ixamal, and destroyed a large part of the peninsula. The Yucatán elites requested help from the United States, Spain and England in exchange for local sovereignty; that is, they tried to annex themselves to these countries or become their protectorate. In the United States and Spain, at least, the lack of a formal declaration of emancipation was one of the obstacles to intervening in the region. Given the rejection of the great powers, the Yucatán government resorted to the Mexican authorities, who sent resources to repel the Mayan rebels. In return, Yucatán rejoined the nation unconditionally in 1848.

Miguel Barbachano governed the peninsula until 1853. After a period of national political instability because of the Ayutla Plan, under the banner of which the liberals defeat-



Rubén Vázquez

The city of Mérida’s Cathedral.

ed López de Santa Anna in the national government, in Yucatán, Santiago Méndez took office at the head of local government (1855-1857). Méndez and his power group imposed Pantaleón Barrera as governor in May 1857, sparking serious protests by different sectors in Campeche.

On August 7, 1857, the local deputy from the Campeche district, Pablo García, together with Pedro de Baranda, Santiago Martínez, Tomás Aznar Barbachano and other figures from that walled city made a public statement calling for Barrera’s removal. The movement led to the governor being deposed and the split off of the district of Campeche, turning it into a state. On May 3, 1858, the Yucatán and Cam-



Elsie Montiel



Rubén Vázquez

Views of the Mérida’s historic center, the Cathedral and the Government’s Palace.



Elsie Montiel

Fernando Castro Pacheco, *The Caste War*, 1973-1979, mural at the Government's Palace in Mérida, Yucatán.

peche authorities established the borders. The western part of the peninsula, including Carmen, Seybaplaya, Campeche, Hopelchén and Hecelchakán (Dzitbalché, Bécab and Calkiní) would form a new state. Efforts in the federal Congress to get the new state recognized were successful. In accordance with the national legislature's commission on constitutional points' decision, President Benito Juárez decreed the creation of the state of Campeche on February 19, 1862. On April 29, 1863, Juárez ratified this decision given the approval of the majority of Mexico's local Congresses.

In the long run, the Caste War would bring another territorial division in the peninsula. The struggle hit high points in its first years, but later, it would retreat to the southeastern part of the region, where the rebels maintained autonomy until the early twentieth century. In the late nineteenth century, Porfirio Díaz's national government fought them by establishing settlements in this area: this is how Payo Obispo, today Chetumal, was founded in 1898. The national army made several forays against the rebel indigenous and defeated them at Chan Santa Cruz —today Felipe Carrillo Puerto— in 1901.² Díaz proposed creating the territory of Quintana Roo to better control this part of the peninsula, and the federal Congress approved it. The president made it official on November 24, 1902.

However, the territory of Quintana Roo would change several times. In 1913, the Venustiano Carranza government

annexed the eastern part of Yucatán and then returned it to Quintana Roo in 1915. In 1931, Pascual Ortiz Rubio published the constitutional reform that would completely eliminate Quintana Roo, turning the north over to Yucatán and the south to Campeche. When the inhabitants of Chetumal protested and enlisted the support of Lázaro Cárdenas, they managed to abrogate the constitutional reform and get Quintana Roo reestablished in 1935. Finally, with congressional approval, President Luis Echeverría Álvarez decreed the creation of the state of Quintana Roo on October 3, 1974. This would be the definitive political delineation of the peninsula, although the social and cultural links that still join all its inhabitants cannot be erased. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Antonio López de Santa Anna was born in Jalapa, Veracruz in 1784. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Santa Anna, a military man, was president and national leader of Mexico several times. He was a player in key moments in Mexican history, for example, independence, the U.S. annexation of Texas and the 1846-1848 war with the U.S. In addition, he was national chief executive when the Yucatán authorities broke with the central government from 1840 to 1848. For more about this figure's participation in the events of Yucatán, see Eligio Ancona, *Historia de Yucatán*, vol. 3 (Mérida: UDY, 1978).

² The Caste War was one of the longest, most violent indigenous resistance movements in the history of the peninsula. The Mayas were fighting for autonomy and better living conditions. See the articles about Felipe Carrillo Puerto and the Caste Museum in *Voices of Mexico* no. 83 (September-December 2008). [Editor's Note.]

The Museum of The Mayan People In Dzibilchaltún

Elsie Montiel*



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Elsie Montiel



Elsie Montiel

The open-air room and the first indoor room display objects from various archaeological sites and different historical periods.

The archaeological site at Dzibilchaltún, 20 kilometers from the city of Mérida, has a small museum whose aim is to give the visitor a general idea of Mayan culture down through history. This is actually quite ambitious if we take into account the innumerable vestiges left by the Mayan peoples who inhabited the entire Yucatán peninsula during the Mesoamerican period, the transformation and mixture of that lega-

cy during the conquest and colonization, and the way in which they were integrated as a culture and social group into the Mexican nation from the time of independence from Spain until today.

However, the museographical discourse on display in its rooms somehow managed to establish a thread that runs through it all, carrying us through different facets of the Mayas' presence in the peninsula and identifying for us different substantive moments in their history there. The permanent exhibition, which covers the pre-Hispanic

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era to the twentieth century, is made up of archaeological, historical and ethnographic materials, objects for use in daily life and rituals, like ceramics, carved stone, stelae, civic and religious sculptures, clothing and textiles.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DZIBILCHALTÚN

Some great Mayan urban and religious centers, the seats of powerful lords, had been abandoned

Having a site museum here implies the recognition of how important this urban center was for the ancient Mayas. The first studies of the area revealed vestiges from all the periods of pre-Hispanic Mayan history, indicating that the area was uninterruptedly inhabited for thousands of years, making it one of the longest continuously inhabited urban centers in Mesoamérica.² The name Dzibilchaltún (“place where there is writing on the flat stones”) refers to one of the most important finds at the site: the stelae and tiles found during the archae-



Photos: this page by Rubén Vázquez

We find a typical Mayan village dwelling, built using traditional construction materials and techniques.

long before the Spaniards set foot for the first time on the peninsula in the second decade of the sixteenth century. This was not the case, however, of Dzibilchaltún. Although its decline had begun from the early post-classical period, due, among other things to the Chichén Itzá's military expansion, it was still inhabited when the Spaniards arrived. They must have considered it important for their colonization and indoctrination efforts, judging by the open chapel or *capilla de indios* they built in the middle of the Central Plaza and which still stands in the archaeological site.¹

ological excavations. The stelae, with their *bas-relief*, some of which are on display at the museum, are one of the forms of sculpture done by Dzibilchaltún inhabitants during the late classical and terminal periods. Until now, 12 or 15 of them have been found, but many are incomplete, broken or just fragments.³

A WALK THROUGH THE MUSEUM

We begin in the open-air room of monoliths, displaying original pieces from the north of the penin-

sula, among them a Chac Mool from Chichén Itzá. The first room indoors welcomes us with a mural summarizing some of the characteristics of the area and its cultures. In different showcases and on pedestals and platforms that allow us to view them from close up, we find stelae, sculptures, ball game markers, clay figurines, containers and many objects from various archaeological sites representing different historical periods, from the pre-classical to the post-classical. These objects speak to us of the daily life, world view and skill of the original Mayan peoples.

The next room is dedicated to Dzibilchaltún. Among the most important visual experiences is the explanatory mural with a site map, plus some tiles decorated with graffiti found during excavation. This room holds seven little clay figurines that almost run the risk of going unnoticed. They were found inside one of the main buildings—probably an observatory—giving it its name: the Tem-

ple of the Seven Dolls. Every year, on March 21 and September 21, thousands of visitors come to the site to witness the moment at which the sunlight pours through the openings in the wall at dawn, producing the impression of a great mask of fire.

Another common practice in Dzibilchaltún was burying human remains under the floors of the dwellings. The visitor can observe one of these tombs under the floor, covered with glass.

A figure-covered stone threshold takes us into the colonial period in the next room, where religious art objects, columns, paintings and wooden sculptures speak to us of the new customs and beliefs imposed on the arrival of the conquistadors. Following chronologically, we move through post-colonial life with objects used daily that refer us to aspects of economic and social life. For example, a selection of textiles demonstrates the wealth and color of textile production; a few coins remind us of the era and splendor of sisal production, when



Eise Montiel

Threshold to the Colonial period room.



Rubén Vázquez

A selection of textiles demonstrates the wealth and color of textile production; a few coins remind us of the era of sisal production.



Rubén Vázquez

Religious art objects depict the Colonial period.

a large part of what is today the state of Yucatán was planted with what was dubbed “green gold.” Further on, once again in the open air, we find a typical Mayan village dwelling, built using traditional construction materials and techniques from the region. Its interior shows the simple, Spartan way of life: earth floors, hammocks, a table with a few kitchen utensils, a few chairs and a small altar are almost all there is. The open-air kitchen and the simple tools for grinding and preparing food are another demonstration of how they responded to the needs imposed by the region’s climate.

The museum visit ends here. Visitors continue along a path to see the buildings excavated until

now in the archaeological site, a little better prepared to discover what it has to offer them. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Rubén Maldonado, “Dzibilchaltún: A Mayan Regional Center,” *Voices of Mexico* 84 (January-April 2009), pp. 94-98.

² “El museo del pueblo maya de Dzibilchaltún,” available online at http://www.yucatan.com.mx/especiales/museos/museo_dzibilchaltun.asp, accessed June 14, 2009.

³ Maldonado, op. cit., p. 95.



Museo del Pueblo Maya
 (Museum of the Mayan People)
 Zona arqueológica de Dzibilchaltún Chablekal, Yucatán, C.P. 97310 (20 kilometers north of Mérida on the highway to Progreso at the turnoff to the Chablekal police station)
 Telephone: 01 (999) 911-069
 Open to the public: Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Admission: Mex\$49



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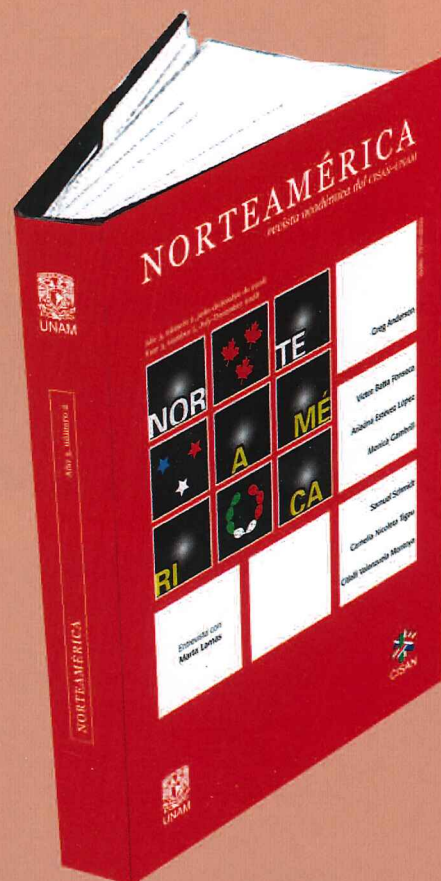
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Alejandro Rossi

The Generous Writer

(1932-2009)

Juan Villoro*

Born in Florence in 1932, he was baptized in the church where Giotto built his bell tower. His mother was Venezuelan, descended from General Páez.¹ He liked remembering his ancestry in the chaos of Mexico City, where he came to study philosophy with José Gaos.²

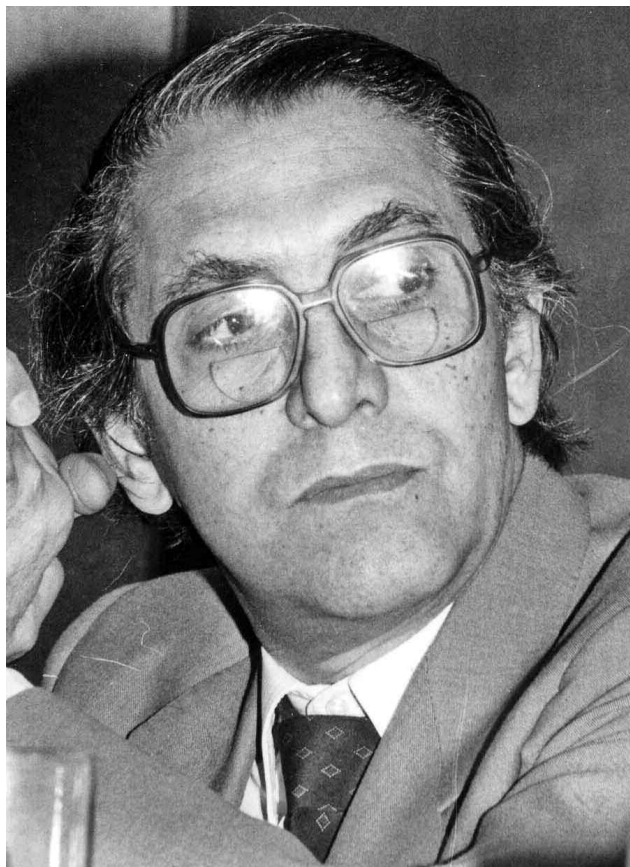
The grand passion of his life was the adjective, the descriptions that pin things down. When he would see himself in photographs, he would say, “I look like a pharmacist being punished,” or, “Here I look like a chiromancer gone mad.” He once said that a colleague looked like “a broken frog.” Even though no one had ever seen a broken frog, it was a perfect description. Far from any tedious desire to offend, he understood others as rough drafts to be refined.

It is not by chance that his first book was a meditation about words: *Lenguaje y significado* (Language and Meaning). Then he mixed reflection with tense, lively prose in the books *Manual del distraído* (Manual of Someone Distracted) and the short stories in *La fábula de las regiones* (The Fable of the Regions).³

His greatest artistic achievement was conversation on an extremely wide variety of topics: tennis, the intrigues of Vaticanologists, the TV series *24*, a poem by Montale. He dominated the room in social gatherings, but he listened with interest. If he got bored, he would take out coins and fondle them, a habit he had seen in a philosopher at Oxford.

He liked to read in the wee hours, when everyone else was already asleep, and he felt “like a cork in the water.” He enjoyed telephone calls, but put them off with impulsive protocols. You had to call him several times, and then he’d say, “What a bore!” and talk for two hours.

He loved women’s smiles and the elegance of their bearing. He liked to buy himself fine clothes and wear them out, with the lack of fussiness of someone uninterested in those



DINF-UNAM

things. He was very handsome, but he made funny faces for photographs; he wore glasses that didn’t suit him; he mussed his hair intentionally.

He felt he deserved awards, among other things because he criticized himself ruthlessly when he was down. He didn’t have a massive readership, but he received singular letters: an old warrior had discovered philosophy in *Lenguaje y significado*; a theologian was so dazzled by *El cielo de Sotero* (Sotero’s Sky) that he wanted to re-baptize the author in a “good-sized tub.” One time, he went to a bar with Guillermo Cabrera Infante, and some fans came up to him who didn’t know the Cuban writer. “That’s why you don’t write more,” said Cabrera Infante, “You’re doing just fine like this.”

* Mexican writer.



Faithful to his sign of the zodiac, Virgo, he was hypercritical and felt “mistreated by the stars.” In vain he searched for an astrologer who could give him cosmic optimism.

He helped others in a complex way: looking for work, scholarships and improbable publications for them. He knew that generosity was a technique, not a sentimental consolation. Once he got something, he expected gratitude.

He admired people who knew how to apologize, particularly in a country where admitting a mistake is worse than making one. “Recognizing a mistake is not a moral defect,” he used to say. Asking for forgiveness seemed to him to be an exalted form of loyalty. He was polemical but not vengeful: “It’s no use imitating what you repudiate.”

He didn’t believe in grandmothers’ wisdom, the culture of Mom’s gentle “double-boiler” cooking, but he liked to create his own home-style mythologies: one o’clock in the afternoon was tequila time by the sun, and to go out on the highway, you had to eat a plate of papaya.

For him, the barbershop was a counterweight to the dentist. He was delighted when the master of the scissors would say, “How fast your hair grows!” after being with the doctor who would say to him, “How badly they’re treating you!” The barber compensated for the dentist in the same way that the chef compensated for the waiter. He was faith-

ful to the dishes from some restaurants, but pitiless with those who served them. Then, he would leave a munificent tip.

He always gave to beggars (“Charity won’t save the world, but it does help these poor devils.”), and he was irritated by itinerant salesmen.

“I started smoking because of loneliness,” he used to say, justifying the cigarettes he would firmly chomp down on. The best one was the first one in the morning, after his shower, with a damp towel around his shoulders. His father had smoked with no ill effects. “I thought I was the same,” he said during the hard years of emphysema.

I met him in my childhood. I came from a background where men and boys didn’t express their affection. In him, everything was passion, laughter and outrage. I found out something about myself that was hard to recognize: the possibility to love like he did, to the point of adoration. That’s how he loved Olbeth, his wife, his children, his grandchildren, his fast friends.

Alejandro appreciated the fact that in “Retrato de un amigo” (Portrait of a Friend), Natalia Ginzbur extolled Pavese based on their day-to-day dealings. He knew that description was a form of loving.

He accepted his fate serenely. “I’m like a planet going out,” he would say, resigned to his end, though never stopping being interested in what was going on in the world.

For 40 years I visited him with the same joy with which I would have visited the Beatles in Abbey Road. But I was always late. A little while ago I was on time, and he didn’t wait for me. “There are certain virtues you shouldn’t acquire too late,” he said. That was his last lesson.

“Good-bye, dear,” he used to say when leaving, with the smile of someone who knows he’s not leaving.

He hasn’t left. **NM**

NOTES

¹ Venezuelan General José Antonio Páez (1790-1873) was three times president of his country and one of the most outstanding fathers of Venezuelan independence. [Editor’s Note.]

² José Gaos y González Pola (1900-1969) was a Spanish philosopher exiled in Mexico after the Spanish Civil War. He took out Mexican nationality in 1941 and was a professor at the UNAM from 1939 to 1969. [Editor’s Note.]

³ Alejandro Rossi, *Lenguaje y significado* (Mexico City: FCE, 1969); *Manual del distraído* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1978); and *La fábula de las regiones* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1998). [Editor’s Note.]

Reviews



Estudios de Cultura Maya, vol. XXXI

(Mayan Culture Studies, vol. 31)

Maricela Ayala Falcón and Roberto Romero Sandoval, eds.

Institute for Philological Research (IIFL)/UNAM

Mexico City, 2008

This volume of the magazine *Estudios de Cultura Maya* includes seven articles, a formerly unpublished text and three book reviews. They deal with history, epigraphy, archaeology, linguistics and social anthropology, spanning pre-Hispanic, colonial and modern times.¹

The article that opens this issue, “La composición dinástica de Yaxchilán durante el reinado de Yaxuun B’ahlam IV” (The Dynastic Composition of Yaxchilán During the Reign of Yaxuun B’ahlam IV), by María Elena Vega Villalobos, analyzes the socio-political organization of the Mayan city of Yaxchilán. Based on the new epigraphic readings, specialists have understood how the Mayas documented their relations with other cities and the way in which power was distributed

Estudios de Cultura Maya, vol. XXXII

(Mayan Culture Studies, vol. 32)

Maricela Ayala Falcón and Roberto Romero Sandoval, eds.

Institute for Philological Research (IIFL)/UNAM

Mexico City, 2008

Volume XXXII of *Estudios de Cultura Maya* is a valuable instrument for approaching Mayan culture from the standpoint of poetry, linguistics, archaeology, anthropology, history and society. It includes articles by Mexican and foreign specialists who have tried to understand this civilization’s complexity through the prism of their respective disciplines. The result is a rich, interesting, polyphonic academic product that can satisfy the reader’s curiosity by delving into different aspects of this culture. Its articles range from studies on the role of elderly women in the pre-Hispanic Mayan world, to the acoustical strategies of the archaeological sites we are all familiar with like Palenque, Chichén Itzá or Tulum.

among the different lords' dominions. These findings also reveal the titles other figures used that had gone unregistered until now.

Thus, Vega Villalobos's article deals with part of Yaxchilán's written history, particularly during the government of Yaxuun B'ahlam IV (ca. A.D. 752-768), better known under the name of Bird Jaguar IV. The texts written during his reign illustrate the political scene and its actors by showing us the new political order that began to be set up in the Usumacinta region and other Mayan cities.

Carlos Humberto Herman contributes the article "Las etapas constructivas de la Plaza A del Grupo 3D-XIV o Zona Norte de Tikal, Petén, Guatemala" (The Constructive Stages of Plaza A of Group 3D-XIV or Northern Zone of Tikal, Petén, Guatemala). He presents the 1980s archaeological reports about this area of Tikal that until now had gone unpublished. This valuable information tells us more about the political-religious group settled to the north of the Main Plaza, a group or lineage that the author argues shared power with the Mak'ina group during the early and late classical periods.

These reports reveal the exact location where the "Tikal Man" was discovered, the only sculpture found in the city. Its shoulders and back are finely decorated with a long hieroglyphic text, and since its head is missing, it very probably was the object of vandalism in the pre-Hispanic era. Some authors suggest that it is a representation of the ruler Chak Tok Ich'aaik I or II, who governed between A.D. 350 (?) and A.D. 378.

The article "Aspectos corporativos de la persona (personhood) y la encarnación (embodiment) entre los mayas del período Clásico" (Aspects of Personhood and Embodiment among the Mayas of the Classical Period), by Susan D. Gillespie, analyzes the Mayas' two political-economic strategies. In Mesoamerica in general, there were two opposite strategies: the network or exclusionary strategy, in which power is exercised by individuals, and the corporate type, in which power is shared among large corporate groups. Gillespie argues that the Mayas of the classical period opted for the network strategy, while in Teotihuacán, the corporate strategy was implemented.

Evidence that the Mayas used the network strategy is based on the emphasis these peoples put on the representation of kings, their elaborate burials and the construction of palaces. However, the anthropological sources that analyze the concept of personhood show the ongoing difficulty for distinguishing between individuals and groups, and casting doubt on the usefulness of the network/corporate dichotomy.

The issue opens with an article about the archaeological finds by the Mexican Atasta Flores and the Slovenian Ivan Šprajc in southern Campeche. Both men worked for seven seasons from 1996 to 2007 in the Calakmul biosphere reserve, which had not been extensively explored since the 1930s. Their explorations led them to identify and map 65 previously totally unknown sites and relocate others. The project attempts to reconstruct the temporality of the settlements and the political relations based on stratigraphical and architectural studies and epigraphical findings.

Readers interested in archaeology will enjoy the essay "Arqueoacústica maya" (Mayan Archaeo-acoustics). The team that authored this research is made up of Clara Garza, Andrés Medina, Pablo Padilla, Alejandro Ramos and Francisca Zalaquett, all academics from different disciplines, which has made for extremely interesting results in their work on the acoustical phenomena produced in the structures at Mayan sites. The study analyzes the acoustical qualities of some of the rooms in Mayan palaces and of some musical instruments. For example, the fact that researchers found whistles buried at the base of certain structures, like Temple III at Palanque, plus the capacity of its rooms to raise acoustical frequencies show that this was probably a place well suited for putting on performances or dancing and singing. Another interesting example is a structure in Tulum, where the wind warns of hurricanes by making a specific whistling sound when it passes through a cylinder and stone ring, functioning as the first "storm warning" in history.

The last phenomenon the authors studied closely was a sound like a bird's, called "the tail of the quetzal," produced when you applaud in front of the main stairway of the castle of Chichén Itzá. Today, tour guides amaze visitors with what has come to be called "acoustical tourism."

Spanish historian Rocío García Valganón delves into the function of elderly women in Mayan culture. According to her analysis, elderly women have not been studied much. García states that in the 1940s, researchers began to be interested in the presence of elders in Mayan graphics; they identified old gods in the codices, in particular the Becabes and the goddess of the moon. This led to other studies about the aged in traditional cultures.

The rise in the mean age of the world's population and the increasingly important role played by the elderly led to many more studies and symposia about aging. Since the 1960s and 1970s, there have also been more studies about elderly gods in Mesoamerica and their symbolic value associated

my. Gillespie examines how large corporate groups are embodied in their kings —the Mayan rulers of the classical period personified their royal houses. She goes on to point out the potential diversity of the components of personhood, and concludes that researching the embodiment of personhood, singular and plural, may prove to be a more productive strategy for exploring diversity in the different representations of the human body —or its absence— in Mesoamerica.

Guillermo Bernal Romero analyzes the inscription on the ear plugs that were part of the funeral dress of the most important ruler of the Mayan city of Palenque: K'inich Janahb'-Pakal. Bernal Romero's reading of the text proposes that it alludes to two deities associated with rain and lightning, Chaahk and Yopaat, closely related to each other and to the god K'awiil. An interesting piece of information the author found on the inscription is that the ear plugs were given in tribute by O'-Kan, a dignitary from a foreign locale called Lah, politically affiliated to the dominion of Piedras Negras. To conclude, the author proposes the possibility that these ornaments were part of a larger lot of jadeite pieces used for Pakal's funeral attire.

"Excavations at Río Bec, Group B, Structure 6N-1, Campeche, Mexico," by Prentice M. Thomas and L. Janice Campbell, recovers the archaeological field research done at Río Bec in 1976, which netted three important finds: first, that Structure 6N-1 was built and inhabited in the late classical period; probably it was a dwelling for the elite that functioned at the same time as a public space. Second, the inhabitants of Río Bec made structural changes in the building, among them adapting the twin towers. And third, the archaeological evidence reveals that Structure 6N-1 remained in use until the terminal classical period.

The next article is "Ciudades mayas preclásicas, raíces y evolución: el Preclásico Medio en Cuello, Belice" (Pre-classical Mayan Cities, Roots and Evolution: the Middle Pre-classical in Cuello, Belize). Author Norman Hammond presents the archaeological evidence found at one of the earliest sites in the Mayan area: Cuello. Without any doubt, Hammond's archaeological work is very interesting because he is one of the few who has extensively excavated a middle pre-classical site (700-400 B.C.), and because he collected data about the population's lifestyle, its natural surroundings, crops, food and even how it made *amate* paper, used by the city to record its symbols. All this evidence indicates that it was a stratified society, whose upper echelons had access to exotic products imported from far-off regions.

with power, like the creator gods, the smoker god and Teotihuacán's old god of fire. The idyllic vision of the Mesoamerican world is a recurring theme, in which supposedly there was great respect for the elderly.

García's conclusion is that even though there are many contemporary studies about old gods, there is no specific interest in female Mayan figures. Even though some studies about Mayan goddesses do exist, most of them focus on comparisons between men and women and concentrate on what was going on in Central Mexico.

Mexican anthropologist Ana Rosa Duarte Duarte contributes an article analyzing the representation of current Mayan identity in *Sáastal: los hijos de la Santa Gracia* (*Sáastal: The Children of the Holy Grace*), a 55-minute fiction video. The film was conceived as didactic material for learning Yucatecan Mayan, but as the research advanced, it became more complex, depicting the drama of a rural Mayan family's daily life as it deals with the threats of globalization, modernization and different "civilizing" policies. The emphases are on planting, self-sustaining consumption and the children's education according to Hispanic cultural models. For the author, coexistence with Western culture has fostered the construction of "soft identities," that is, identities that fluctuate according to the circumstances of interaction with different subjects from the same community or from outside it. According to this visual document, in the current identity, self-sustaining consumption coexists with consumerism, Mayan with Spanish, and modernity with the conservation of traditional values.

The last section of this issue is made up of three articles inter-related because of their linguistic, rhetorical focus. The first is the result of extensive research by French ethnolinguists Aurore Becquelin and Cédric Becquey who study parallelism in Mayan poetry, that is, the repetition of grammatical structures and parallel lexicons, such as in the case of the verses "I made them dance in the clarity of the earth, I made them dance in the clarity of the world."

The object of the essay is to study the frequency and function of parallelism in Mayan poetry in light of the analysis of texts like *Rabinal Achí* or *Chilam Balam* or others of a ritual, contemporary nature. The use of parallelisms in rhetoric can be found from the classical period until our time in all the variations of the Mayan language family, testifying to this artistic body of work's exceptional capacity to preserve discursive strategies. The authors argue that this technique is the expression of a binary vision of reality, also evident in the culture's iconography.

Caroline Cunill, in her article “La alfabetización de los mayas yucatecos y sus consecuencias sociales, 1545-1580” (Teaching Yucatecan Mayas to Read and Its Social Consequences, 1545-1580), deals with the repercussions of Yucatán Mayas learning the Western alphabet in the early years of colonization. From the very first, the Mayas tried to adapt to their new circumstances to defend their economic, political and cultural interests. The Franciscans, for their part, learned Yucatecan Mayan and organized schools to teach the indigenous not only Christian doctrine, but also how to read and write. The Mayas learned the new language swiftly because during the pre-Hispanic period they had developed logo syllabic writing, and because the elite sought to preserve its position within colonial society. According to Cunill, the Mayan indigenous were perfectly aware that knowledge of alphabetical writing would allow them to aspire to certain posts in Spanish society of the early colonial period.

Lastly, I must congratulate Dr. Maricela Ayala for her fortunate decision to open a new section in the magazine dedicated to recovering previously unpublished Mayan research materials, like the work of Heinrich Berlin, a pioneer of Mayan epigraphy. His article “El texto del sarcófago y su relación con otros textos palenquinos” (The Text of the Sarcophagus and Its Relationship to Other Texts in Palenque) is an invaluable piece in the study and deciphering of Palenque’s Mayan rulers. ■■■

Roberto Romero Sandoval

Co-editor of the magazine

Estudios de Cultura Maya

IIFL Center for Mayan Studies of UNAM

NOTES

¹ This volume is available on line at <http://www.filologicas.unam.mx/indices/estculmay31.htm>. Volumes 27, 28, 29, 30 and 32 are available at <http://www.filologicas.unam.mx/indices/estculmay.htm>. I would like to thank Sergio Reyes Coria for uploading these volumes to the internet, the Institute for Philological Research (IIFL) Publications Department, particularly Eliff Lara Astorga, for editing this publication, and Samuel Flores Osorio for his excellent cover designs.

French linguist Valentina Vapnarsky also studies parallelism. Her essay deals not only with its occurrence in phrases or adjoining verses, but also with its role in the profound framework of ritual texts. This study starts off with a rigorous analysis of a ritual dialogue among Macehual Mayas from Quintana Roo during the Saint John the Baptist pilgrimage. It confirms that the parallelisms not only have an aesthetic or poetic purpose, but that they are strategies for discursive organization.

The last article is a linguistic-poetic study by Mexican linguist Lucero Meléndez Guadarrama of four of the “Songs of Dzitbalché.” The author does a new transcription and modernization of the *corpus* in Yucatecan Mayan, which allows for new interpretations of the text and a greater understanding of its poetic structure. She underlines the importance of doing new translations of the indigenous writings and rigorous studies of the language and its resources in order for Spanish speakers to be able to appreciate its rhetorical proposal.

The issue closes with reviews of three works. *Tortuguero, una historia rescatada* (Recovering the History of Tortuguero), by epigrapher Alfonso Arellano, published in 2006 by the Center for Mayan Studies (CEM), is reviewed by Martha Iliá Nájera. Tomás Pérez reviews *Tabasco, antiguas letras, nuevas voces* (Tabasco, Ancient Letters, New Voices), edited by Mario Ruz in 2005 and also published by CEM. And finally, Antonio Benavides reviews *Introducción a la arquitectura maya* (Introduction to Mayan Architecture) by Gaspar Muñoz Cosme, published in Valencia in 2006 by Biblioteca TC General de Ediciones de Arquitectura. ■■■

Michela Craveri

Co-editor of the magazine

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