

OUR VOICE

I. At the close of this issue, we are witnessing what seems to be the end of another stage in the anti-terrorist offensive implemented by the United States, Great Britain and their Western allies. In that stage, Kabul was captured and the precarious power structures of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan dismantled. The search for Osama bin Laden and his most important associates in Al Qaeda continues; and the top Taliban leadership is also undoubtedly a target of the Americans. Nevertheless, their capture does not seem a simple matter in the short term.

Certainly, the destruction of the last redoubt of Taliban resistance means the break-up of what is left of that alliance, today repudiated throughout the world, even in the Arab countries. It also makes for a serious problem of global security and, seen from Washington, represents a threat to the security of the West. That is why we are already seeing and will continue to see an even more diligent adjustment in the United States' international security agenda. During this adjustment, all of Washington's friends and allies will be affected. The global order will more clearly than ever be transformed from its very foundations, in its organization and the definition of its priorities. Undoubtedly, this will have an important impact on the domestic agendas of countries like Mexico. In fact, the U.S. internal security agenda has already felt the impact. The series of "patriotic policies" advanced by President Bush appeals to the majority of Americans to fall into line with and obey the new emergency measures implemented by the Department of Justice. Reactions have not been slow in coming and in different parts of the United States, local authorities have refused to detain and interrogate suspicious foreigners simply because they are foreigners. The Justice Department has announced that foreigners who offer important information about terrorism will have their naturalization papers processed on the fast track. This unprecedented measure in the history of U.S. migratory procedures marks the beginning of a radical willingness by U.S. authorities to achieve their goals at any cost. The idea that the enemy is within seems to predominate (as shown by the fact that the 19 September 11 suicide terrorists had been living in the United States for years) and that therefore the attack should have targets within, using highly sophisticated domestic intelligence. This is the origin of the polemic about the implications that these measures will have for civil liberties.

The conflict has marked the world, world public opinion and political agendas. Its effects will be seen in the different regions of the world, mainly the Middle East, the Islamic world as a whole, Europe, North America and Latin America. Its impact on bilateral agendas with the United States is no exception; in this realm, Mexico's bilateral agenda has felt the impact and its most important goals, like migration and integration, have been put off. As a result of these historic changes, undoubtedly, the pivotal points on the research agenda of scholars of world political and economic issues will have to be reviewed and updated. Security, civil liberties, migration, trade, cultural studies, governance, the environment and other points are some of these issues. Certainly, the Center for Research on North America (CISAN) is facing a new moment in its academic commitment within the National Autonomous University of Mexico and Mexican academia as a whole. The new challenge will encourage it to bring its profile up to date in accordance with the drastic changes in the world today. The CISAN's research agenda will attempt to respond to that challenge and bring its specialized, thematic and area studies into line with the new context. The CISAN also understands that in this new era, it must reformulate its relationship with its Mexican, U.S. and Canadian colleagues through new agreements and by strengthening the already existing ties with the most representa-

tive and prestigious Mexican and North American academic institutions that deal with the same topic. This will allow the CISAN to reposition itself in the academic debate and the dynamic of contributing to knowledge, the most important mission of a university research center like ours.

II. The events of September 11 and their repercussions will, in effect, mark new ways forward for international relations and the global economy. In this issue of *Voices of Mexico*, we publish several articles that look at these changes and seek to point out possible future developments in the economy and society in both North America as a whole and Mexico in particular.

We begin our “Politics” section with an article by national security specialist Raúl Benítez Manaut about Mexico’s entry into the UN Security Council at a historic moment in which it will have to face challenges and assume commitments vis-à-vis different nations with regard to the conflict in the Middle East and the war against terrorism. Mexico must continue to transform its traditionally passive stance on international conflicts into an active contribution to deciding hemispheric security policies. In the same section, we present articles about the role that two of the country’s most important social and political actors, unions and political parties, have played in the first year of the Fox administration. Fernando Herrera describes the reasons behind the drop in union membership in Mexico and the unions’ inability to influence national decisions. Political scientist Ricardo Espinoza considers that, more than capitalizing on the political opportunities that any new regimen can offer, the three main political parties have limited themselves to playing a secondary role in the context of a divided government; in both chambers of Congress, where no one has a majority, they have carried on a debate without consensus, paralyzing reforms and affecting governance.

After September 11 migration from Mexico to the United States will be linked as never before to the issue of national security. Three important scholars have contributed articles on the effects of the attacks on the bilateral migration agenda. Mónica Vereá writes in our “Mexico-U.S. Relations” section about the consequences for the debate among U.S. political players. There are already signs, she warns, of a toughening up of laws and policies with regard to the entry of undocumented migrants. Miguel Ángel Valverde Loya analyzes the possibilities of the migratory accord that was brewing in the days prior to the attacks, warning that today it is more than ever necessary to move forward in precise regulation of migration based on what he calls the “minimum common denominator” in both countries’ interests. Lastly, in the “United States Affairs” section, Simone Lucatello contributes an article comparing European and U.S. migratory policies over the last five years, venturing some considerations about their immediate future in light of the new situation.

The medium- and long-term economic effects of the attacks are not yet clear, but they will probably be as profound as the short-term effects. In our “Economy” section, four contributors present their thinking about the current recession and the impact of the attacks on the economy. Elaine Levine shows how the tragic events have spurred a recession that was already underway; the unhappy coincidence makes it difficult to tell which effects are due to the deceleration and which to September 11. What is clear, she says, however, is that those hardest hit in the United States will be, as always in crises, the lowest income groups. Arturo Guillén shows how the current crisis can be explained by the structural contradictions in the U.S. economy and the failure of the so-called “new economy” based on today’s flagging technological, capital-intensive industries. This crisis has deepened internationally since the terrorist attacks, constituting the first major setback for the globalizing model. In his article, Pablo Ruiz Nápoles reviews the immediate effects of the attacks for the U.S. economy, as well as the main measures taken to fight them. The three authors agree that the Federal Reserve has implemented mistaken, or at least insufficient, policies to try to shore up the markets by simply lowering interest rates without risking other more decisive measures.

The section concludes with an article by energy expert Rosío Vargas, who analyzes the geopolitics of oil and natural gas, both in the Middle East and other areas, U.S. policies and concerns and the role of Mexico as a strategic supplier of its neighbor to the north before and after September 11.

In this issue of *Voices of Mexico* we have presented initial reflections by different Mexican analysts and researchers. Naturally, the speed of the changing circumstances means that some of the figures and predictions in these articles become dated very quickly. Nevertheless, we think that most of the conclusions and analyses are valid for trying to understand how the new century will unfold and its effect on Mexico.

III. The identity of Quebec as a founding people that shares the histories and policies of the British empire and French immigrants is the matter that occupies Canadian researcher Claude Couture, who, in “Canadian Issues” offers us a review of the academic literature and debates sparked by the dual condition of French Canada, that of being simultaneously a colonized and colonizing people.

In our “Science, Art and Culture” section, we present the art of Gabriel Macotela, a Mexican artist recognized for his controversial proposal of transcending the canons of the visual arts to experiment in merging painting with non-traditional media. Art critic Luis Rius Caso contributes an article about Macotela. The section concludes with an article by Mexican scientists Víctor M. Toledo and Leonor Solís, who demonstrate how science can be practically applied to alleviate social problems. The “Water Forever” program implemented in the Mixteca region, where water has been scarce and expensive, combines advanced technology and traditional water management while fostering community participation to promote sustainable development.

In this issue, we have dedicated our “The Splendor of Mexico,” “Museums” and “Ecology” sections to Querétaro, a state whose historic, artistic, cultural and social wealth has not been widely disseminated despite its proximity to Mexico City. Historian David Wright describes both the myth and the historical evidence that points to three separate foundations of the beautiful city of Querétaro in the sixteenth century.

Other articles present Querétaro’s Sierra Gorda to us in all its diversity and grandeur. Archaeologist Margarita Velasco describes the pre-Hispanic settlements of Ranas and Toluquilla, with their mining-based civilization which disappeared before the arrival of the Spaniards. Architect Jaime Abundis tells us about the difficulties of the Franciscan friars who left their mark on five missions nestled in the mountains, whose magnificent facades and majestic cloisters are well worth a visit. The “Ecology” section presents the Sierra Gorda Ecological Group’s efforts to preserve and maintain the biosphere reserve in the Sierra Gorda mountains, the only reserve to be managed by a non-governmental organization. Lastly, in “Museums” we present a brief article about The Querétaro Art Museum in the state capital, whose permanent collection of colonial paintings is one of the country’s most valuable.

Eduardo Vázquez Martín is one of Mexico’s young poets who has best expressed the feelings of our contradictory, overwhelming times. The image of the man who threw himself from the Twin Towers inspired him to write an unsettling poem that we publish here in our “Literature” section in both Spanish and English.

“In Memoriam” pays homage to one of the most brilliant jurists that the National University and Mexico have ever produced, Don Andrés Serra Rojas, a professor always admired and loved by generations of Mexican attorneys. In addition, after the close of our edition, one of the most important men of letters and Mexican culture of the last century died. *Voices of Mexico* regrets the death of Juan José Arreola, to whose friends and family we offer our most sincere condolences. In our next issue we will pay him the homage he deserves.

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