

**Miguel Hakim, *Mexico's Association with Mercosur as an Essential Step Toward the Unity of the Americas***

In this essay, the author makes a broad analysis of current conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the historic characteristics of the region as a lead-up to an overview of the process of Latin American unity and some of the mechanisms that have been implemented to promote integration. Mexico, he says, perceives integration in Latin America and the Caribbean as a decision of high strategic value, fundamental to its own foreign policy. Mexico's request to join Mercosur was presented by President Vicente Fox Quesada in July, 2004, and the country will be formally admitted as an Associated State once a free trade agreement has been signed by the parties. Hakim goes on to highlight the importance of Mexico as a means of channeling resources between the north and south of the continent, and the latest political contacts in the country's relations with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Finally, the author makes several comments on the prospects and opportunities that incorporation into this regional bloc will entail for Mexico.

**Oscar Galié, *Mexico's Entry into Mercosur: an Argentinean Perspective***

In view of the challenges of the international agenda, Galié underlines how the governments of Mercosur member countries —Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay— have agreed on the need for a greater level of integration in order to strengthen the internal and external credibility of the project, which, aside from matters of an

economic and commercial nature, implies the forging of new political, social, cultural, educational, scientific and technological ties that will help create a unique regional identity. In the specific case of Argentina, the author points out that one of the main objectives of the country's foreign policy is to make headway in the consolidation of Mercosur as a common market. Mexico's request to join this regional organization, which was immediately accepted by the four Mercosur countries, will come into effect once negotiations on a free trade agreement between both parties have been concluded. In this regard, he acknowledges the enormous potential Mexico's incorporation into Mercosur implies in political, economic and commercial terms. According to Galié, the bilateral economic-commercial relationship between Mexico and Argentina is characterized by a relatively poor performance in the area of trade, despite the significant flow of investment between the two countries. The author believes that a prosperous region can only be built based on development policies designed to effectively improve the economic conditions of Latin American countries and their inhabitants.

**Arturo Oropeza García, *The FTAA and Latin American Integration Mechanisms***

Ten years down the line from the formalization of the launch of initiatives to create the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), Latin America has experienced a series of economic problems, a decline in its development indicators and one of the most severe, deep-rooted structural crises in its history, leaving it bereft of a regional strategy to conduct negotiations in 2005. In addition to the free trade agreements that have been entered into, the author examines the workings of the five main integration mechanisms in Latin America: the Latin American Integration Association, the Central American Integration System, the Andean Community of Nations, the Caribbean

Community and Mercosur. His conclusion is that the 32 countries in the region find themselves in a weak, fragmented position, which does nothing to improve their negotiating power with the United States in the FTAA. According to Oropeza, the future of Latin American integration in the context of the FTAA requires mutual recognition of the complementariness of the countries in the area, by focusing on regionalism as an expression of the maturity and political will so necessary for their development, given that globalization begins within their own borders and implies an historic challenge, which the region needs to be better equipped to take on.

**Antonio Ortiz-Mena L. N., *Origins and Evolution of the G-3 Free Trade Agreement: A Look at Regionalism in Latin America***

In this article, the author analyzes the origins and evolution of the G-3 Free Trade Agreement, with a view to helping us come to a better understanding of this particular integration process. Specifically, the objective of this study is to elucidate the reasons that led to the creation of the G-3 FTA, and to determine if its evolution has lived up to the expectations that gave rise to it. We are provided with the hypotheses of several experts on the causes, origins and dynamics of regionalism, including explanations of strategic interaction, empirical aspects of integration, economic interdependence and the internal economic and political motivations that may emerge in a given country. Ortiz examines the development of trade and investment relations between G-3 FTA member countries from 1995 to date and their implications for Mexico, and rounds up by pointing out some of the challenges G-3 FTA member countries currently face.

**Luis Landa Fournais and Claudia Salgado Lozano, *The Puebla-Panama Plan as a Mechanism for Mesoamerican Integration. What is it, what isn't it and where do we stand?***

In this article, the authors take note of the long history of regional cooperation between the countries of Mesoamerica, which provided a precedent to the Puebla-Panama Plan (PPP) —launched on June 15, 2001 in San Salvador, within the framework of the Extraordinary Summit on the Tuxtla Dialog and Agreement Mechanism—. Luis Landa and Claudia Salgado address some of the myths and realities associated with the PPP, and explain how it functions as a mechanism for dialog between government, business and civil society sectors, aimed at dealing with issues related to cooperation, integration and economic development, including the implementation of projects of regional interest. The PPP, they say, revolves around two strategic focal points: human development, and productive integration and trade, which are in turn divided into eight Mesoamerican initiatives, each of which has been entrusted to one member country. The Plan gives priority to highway infrastructure, energy and telecommunications projects, which are fundamental to the carrying out of projects contemplated in other Mesoamerican initiatives. The authors conclude that the PPP is geared toward fulfilling the Millennium Goals and promoting the productive integration of the region, reason why, among its other objectives, it needs to consolidate its achievements and continue to identify issues that are crucial to the viability and prosperity of Mesoamerican countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Yanerit Morgan Sotomayor, *The 18<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Rio Group and the 14<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit: The Continuity of Summit Diplomacy***

This article discusses the importance of the 18<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Rio Group and the 14<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit, their achievements and the role played at these by Mexico. The author believes that these forums for dialog and agreement have given Latin and Ibero-American States a more relevant presence on an international level, while Summit Diplomacy is an essential tool in the strengthening of ties of cooperation and communication between these countries. She then provides a general description of the issues discussed and the texts produced by both summits, before proceeding to weigh up the achievements of each. The added-value of these summits, she says, lies in the approach they take and the opportunity they offer to create synergies, due to their unique formats and well-defined nature.

**Juan José Campuzano López, *Mexico and Guatemala: From Neighbors to Partners***

In this article, the author takes a closer look at some of the thorniest and most dramatic moments in the history of relations between Mexico and Guatemala, from the days of Mexican President Manuel Ávila Camacho right through to the official visit to Guatemala of March 3, 2004, spearheaded by the leader of Mexico's current administration, President Vicente Fox Quesada. Any reflection on the future of this bilateral relationship, he says, should include issues related to the border, migration, trade, investment and cooperation. Campuzano then proceeds to comment on the extensive network of agreements, such as the Free Trade Agreement, entered into by Mexico and Guatemala, mechanisms that have helped transform the perspective of this relationship from one of mistrust to one where

willingness to dialog and cooperate on the challenges and common agendas of both countries prevails.

**Jorge A. Schiavon, *Cohabiting in the Security Council: The War on Iraq and its Bearing on Relations between Mexico and the United States***

This article analyses the Mexico-United States bilateral relation in the Security Council of the United Nations (2002-2003), inserting it within the wider context of the bilateral relation. It explains how Mexico has changed, due to the democratic and economic transitions in the country, from an isolationist, legalist, and reactive foreign policy to a more participative, pragmatic, and proactive one, while the United States has changed, because of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, from a foreign policy of benign hegemony to one of hegemonic preponderance, which has hardened its position within the multilateral international organizations. Based on it, the paper argues that this combination will lead to diplomatic clashes between the two countries in the Security Council, especially regarding the war against Iraq. However, this will only have minor consequences in the management of the bilateral agenda due to the strategic importance in terms of security of Mexico for the United States and the deep and increasing interdependence between the two countries.