

**Gerónimo Gutiérrez Fernández, *The North American Agenda***

In this essay, Gerónimo Gutiérrez reflects on the future of North America from the perspective of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPPNA). The author highlights the importance of drawing up an agenda that is shared by Mexico, the United States and Canada, the circumstances under which this agenda will evolve, the progress attained and the objectives of the Partnership, which imply greater integration of North America. According to Gutiérrez, the extent to which this integration is achieved will be conditioned by political, economic and social factors in all three countries and their interaction on the international arena. As regards the progress of this integration process—which has directed the consolidation of models of cooperation—the SPPNA represents a new cooperation mechanism that will enable Canada, the United States and Mexico to build on their existing relationships within NAFTA. Gutiérrez concludes that the SPPNA is a realistic and rational cooperation framework that will allow the countries to address the major challenges facing the region in a more effective manner.

**Aldo Flores Quiroga & Ricardo de la Peña Rodríguez, *Mexico's Economic Relations with North America 11 years after NAFTA: An Assessment***

Flores Quiroga and De la Peña Rodríguez take stock of the performance of NAFTA 11 years after the coming into force of the Treaty. They begin by reflecting on the behavior of trade, investment and Mexico's macroeconomic indicators since 1994, setting the stage for a discussion of the pending agenda, new initiatives and the lessons

NAFTA has taught us. In the authors' opinion, the Treaty has been highly effective at boosting trade and investment in the region, although some shady areas still persist, namely the disparities between north and south, which have been accentuated by the lack of mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth and proper financing for infrastructure and human capital in more backward areas. The authors conclude by underlining the public policies Mexico needs to implement to increase growth potential and competitiveness, including the introduction of structural reforms; programs that promote the integration of productive chains; the linking of sectorial integration programs to regional development policies, and improvements in the business environment by strengthening the State of Law. As concerns the trilateral agenda, they emphasize the importance of initiatives within the framework of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, such as the standardization of rules and regulations. The challenge, they say, is to translate the guidelines of this Partnership into concrete actions that encourage greater integration and increase the competitiveness of the region.

***Gustavo Vega Cánovas, *The Management and Resolution of Trade and Investment Differences in the North American Region during the First Decade of NAFTA****

In this article, Gustavo Vega Cánovas analyzes and assesses the performance of institutional procedures for the management and resolution of trade and investment differences during the first decade of NAFTA's implementation. Designed to improve economic relations between Mexico, Canada and the United States, the author takes us back to the criteria used by the three countries to negotiate these institutional mechanisms, underlining the set of principles, standards and rules that the countries agreed to respect and which are set forth in Chapters 20, 19 and 11 of NAFTA. The author then goes on to

analyze the fundamental functions of these chapters and determine how efficient these have proven in light of the innumerable concrete differences the three countries have experienced throughout the first decade of NAFTA in the areas of trade and investment. He concludes that the mechanisms negotiated within the framework of NAFTA have been successful to a considerable extent, but that they also have limitations when it comes to facilitating economic relations between the three nations. Finally, he suggests changes that could be made to these mechanisms, with a view to improving their effectiveness and providing the confidence needed to capitalize on relations between Canada, Mexico and the United States.

**Patricia de los Ríos Lozano, *Intelligence and Security during Bush's Second Administration***

In this essay, Patricia de los Ríos analyses the legal and political aspects of the process that led to the creation of the Homeland Security Department (HSD) by taking a closer look at its objectives, functions and elements of its structure. Created one month after the September 11 terrorist attacks by President George W. Bush with a view to reorganizing the US security system, the objectives of the HSD include: preventing terrorist attacks on the United States; reducing the country's vulnerability to terrorism; minimizing damage and facilitating recovery in the event of a possible attack. The author goes on to point out that, faced with the onerous task of directing such an ambitious project, questions have been raised as to whether or not the HSD is the most effective means of guaranteeing national security in the face of a terrorist threat. She also refers to major changes that have strengthened the Republican position during the second administration of President Bush, causing rifts among the opposition. Finally, as regards the relationship between Mexico and the United States, De los Ríos mentions two new agreements intended

to promote bilateral cooperation in the area of security: a mechanism between the HSD and the CISEN in Mexico, and the US-Mexico Border Partnership.

**Rafael Laveaga, *Myths and Realities of the US Congress: A Mexican Perspective***

Rafael Laveaga exemplifies three myths Mexico has created around its relationship with the US Congress. The first myth relates to the degree of amity or animosity of US congressmen toward Mexico. The author concludes that these attitudes depend more on the political interests of US congressmen than the needs and concerns of our own country. The second myth refers to the amount of attention given to Mexico on the Capitol, which tends to vary according to the electoral priorities of US legislators, their lack of interest and knowledge about the issues on the bilateral agenda, and the handling of information, which is controlled in function of issues that represent a threat to the interests of the United States. The third myth concerns the belief that the level of professionalism within the US Congress is attributable to the reelection system. According to the author, while this system goes some way to ensuring the continuity of the legislator's work, his job is essentially of a political nature, meaning that he does not need to be an expert in his chosen field; hence the importance of staffers, who back legislators and expertly deal with all issues on the legislative agenda. Finally, Laveaga singles out the issues which are currently of greatest interest to US congressmen, such as migration and national security.

**José Luis Valdés Ugalde, *The State of the World and the Second Administration of George W. Bush***

According to Valdés Ugalde, war has once again become a world pattern and part and parcel of the modern diplomatic setup, a state of affairs that contrasts with the recent search for change and consensus through democracy. It is in this context that the United States is situated, for its control of the international arena has been attained through power, the use of force and messianism. The author supports this theory from an historic viewpoint, basing himself on the official discourse of the United States in recent times, especially since September 11, 2001. He believes that the US democratic system is facing a crisis of local and global consensus unheard of since the Viet Nam War and the Watergate scandal. George W. Bush's strategy during the 2004 electoral process, he says, was surrounded by revived conservatism and exacerbated nationalism, where Americanism was postulated as an ideology in and of itself. Valdés Ugalde also mentions the recent appointments of Condoleezza Rice and Alberto R. Gonzales, which, far from favoring ethnic, group or binational interests, represent greater cohesion in the formulation of Bush's foreign policy, given that their views largely coincide with the President's ideological convictions. The author concludes by raising several questions concerning US policy toward Latin America, particularly Mexico.

**Gustavo Mohar, *Mexico and the Migratory Bill of President George W. Bush: An Uncertain Road to be Traveled***

Following his reelection, President George W. Bush reiterated his interest in migratory reform, but according to Mohar, the US President refers to the issue as a general, unilateral reform that does not contemplate Mexico's participation. Nonetheless, it is evident that, due to

the heavy flow of Mexicans immigrants to the United States, these are the people who stand to be most affected by amendments to migratory laws. Given that the exact content of the bill is not yet known, there is great uncertainty as regards its actual repercussions. In this article, Mohar describes the general reform objectives expounded by Bush, such as the temporary workers program, and the issues of security and immigrants without documents. He also speaks of the reactions President Bush's proposal has stirred up in Mexico and in the United States, and provides an overview of the opportunities, challenges, advantages and disadvantages such a bill will create for both countries in the event it is approved by Congress. In the author's opinion, the Mexican government needs to take a firm and active diplomatic stance in defense of the rights of Mexicans who emigrate to the United States.