

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. resume	Mrs Figueres, First Lady of Costa Rica (partial) (1 page)	circa 05/1997	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Speechwriting (Noa Meyer Subject Files)
OA/Box Number: 13007

FOLDER TITLE:

The Trip of the First Lady to Mexico, Costa Rica, and Barbados, May 4-12, 1997
(Shipley) [Binder] [2]

2012-0869-S

kc953

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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Divider Title: K

VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY

TO

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

MAY 7-9, 1997

EVENT: Environmental Event

DATE: Friday, May 9, 1997

LOCATION: Baruilo Carrillo National Park

ATTENDEES: Invited guests of the U.S. Embassy and the Costa Rican government.

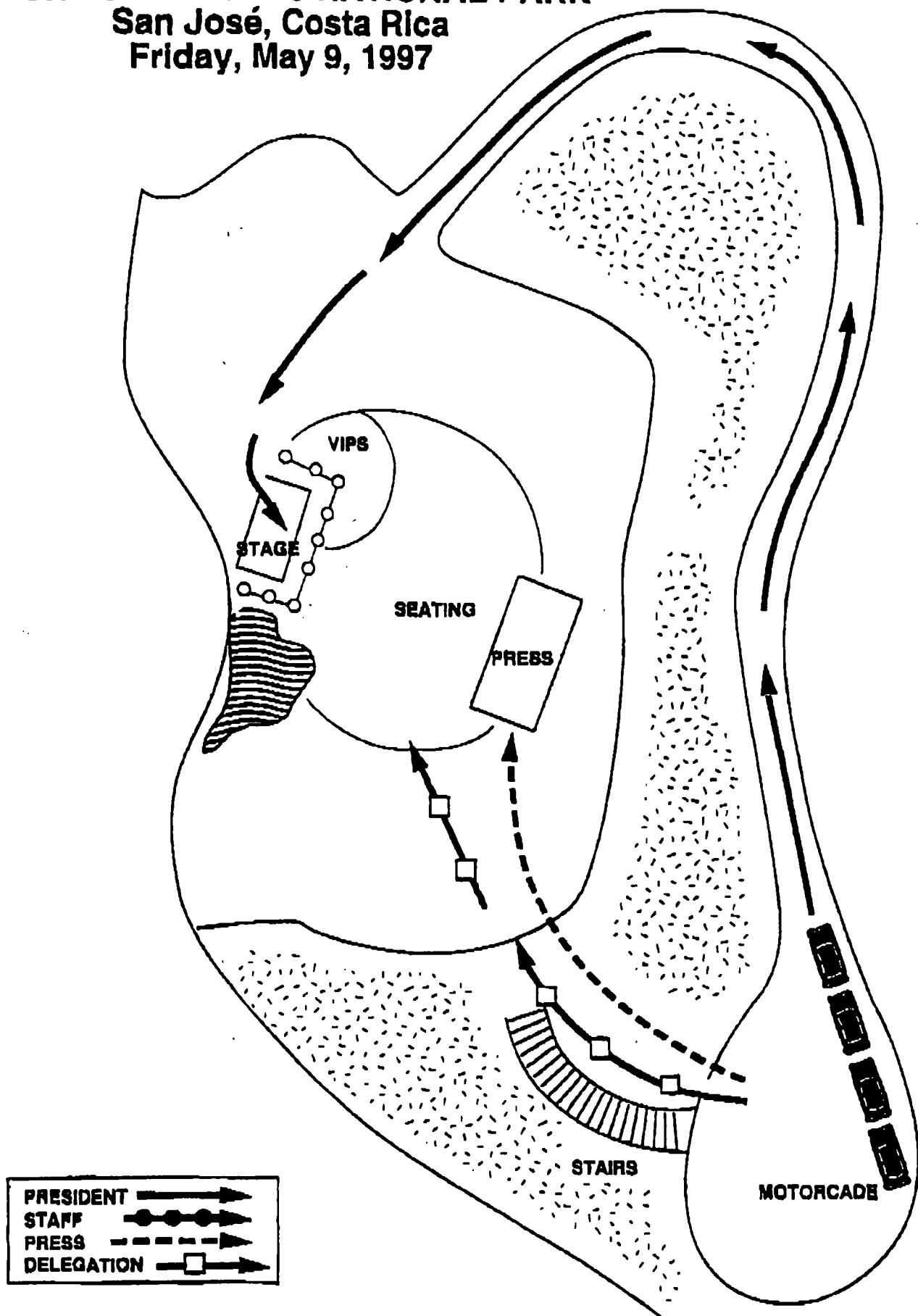
PRESS: Open Press

SCENARIO: THE PRESIDENT and the First Lady arrive at the stage left side of the event site, are greeted by the President and Mrs. Figueres, a scientist TBD, U.S. and Costa Rican Forestry Officials and proceed to the stage. (NOTE: The First Lady and Mrs. Figueres accompany greeters to the VIP section where they join the U.S. Delegation.)

THE PRESIDENT, President Figueres and the scientist are met on stage by a 12 year old Costa Rican Student who makes brief remarks in both Spanish and English. (NOTE: Each speaker will be introduced by an off-stage announce.) The scientist speaks and introduces President Figueres. President Figueres speaks and introduces THE PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT makes remarks and invites Secretary Babbitt and his Costa Rican counterpart to sign a document. Secretary Babbitt and his counterpart proceed to a table to sign the document witnessed by THE PRESIDENT and President Figueres. THE PRESIDENT and the First Lady depart event site.

BAURILO CARRILLO NATIONAL PARK

San José, Costa Rica
Friday, May 9, 1997



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Divider Title: L

VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY

TO

SAN JOSE, COST RICA

MAY 7-9, 1997

EVENT: Embassy Meet and Greet

DATE: Friday, May 9, 1997

LOCATION: U.S. Embassy, San Jose, Costa Rica

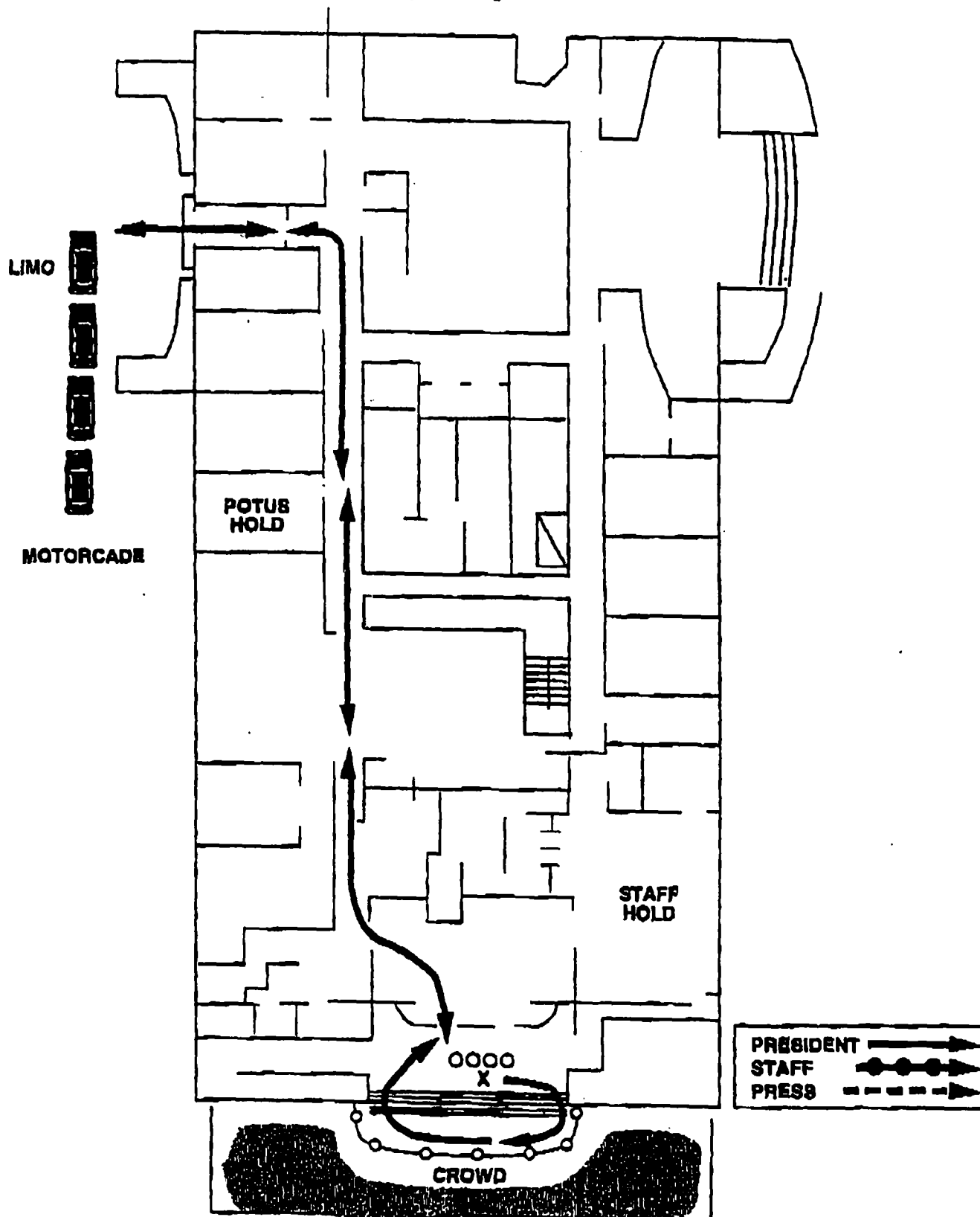
PRESS: Closed

ATTENDEES: THE PRESIDENT, The First Lady, Secretary Albright, Ambassador Peter Jon de Vos, U.S. Embassy employees and their families and Foreign Service Nationals

SCENARIO: Ambassador de Vos will make welcoming remarks and introduce Secretary Albright. Secretary Albright will make remarks and introduce The First Lady. The First Lady will make remarks and introduce THE PRESIDENT.

THE PRESIDENT will make remarks (NOTE: THE PRESIDENT will be speaking from a terrace that is five steps above the audience. There will be a short rope line arranged.)

EMBASSY MEET AND GREET
San José, Costa Rica
Friday, May 9, 1997



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Divider Title: M

VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY

TO

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

MAY 7-9, 1997

EVENT: Departure

DATE: Friday, May 9, 1997

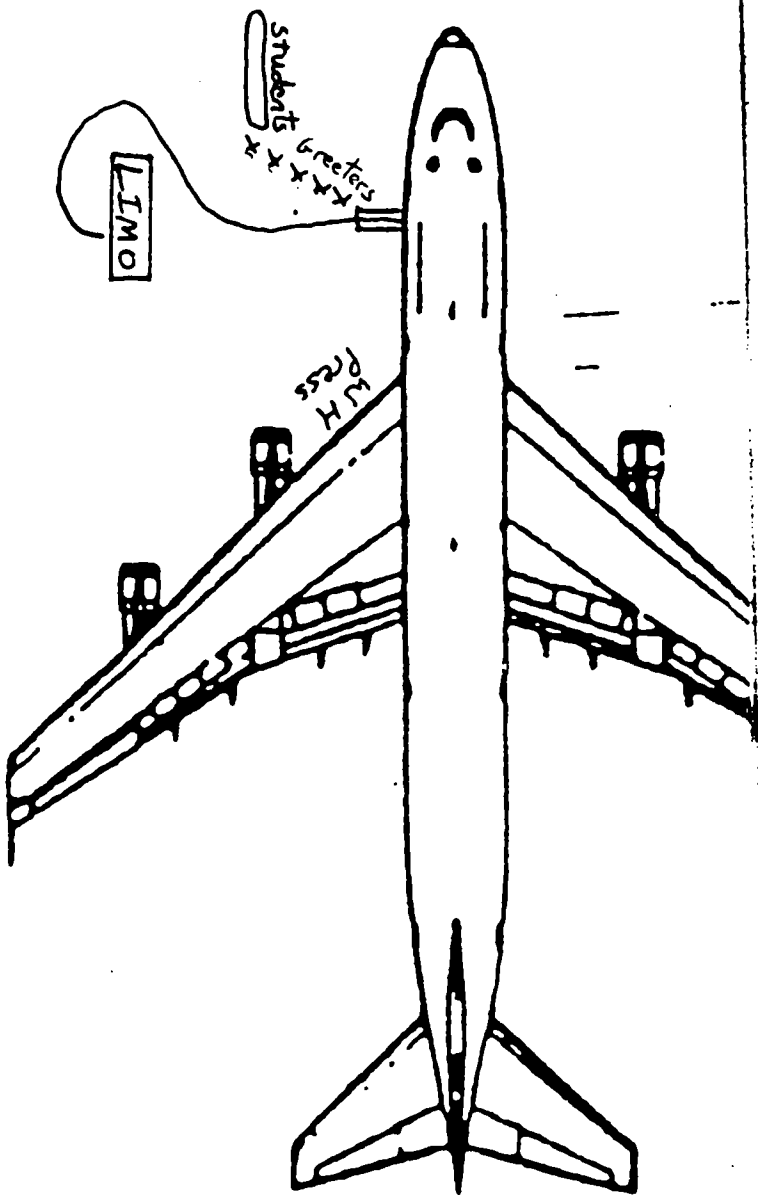
LOCATION: Juan Santa Maria International Airport

PRESS: Open

ATTENDEES: President and Mrs. Figueres, the Costa Rican Delegation, Costa Rican Protocol, Approximately 30 Costa Rican High School students and a small band.

SCENARIO: THE PRESIDENT and the First Lady are greeted at the foot of the stairs by the Costa Rican Protocol and the President and Mrs. Figueres; the band will be playing.

THE PRESIDENT and the First Lady board Air Force One.



Musicians

PRESS

STUDENTS
?

1

5

4

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Divider Title: N

MRS. FIGUEROES

CURRICULUM VITAE

MAY, 1997

Higher Studies

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1992 - 93 | University of Costa Rica
School of Geography and History
B.A. in History |
| 1990 - 91 | Harvard University, Boston, Mass., United States
Studies in Poverty and Public Action
and International Relations |
| 1988 - 90 | University of Costa Rica
School of Geography and History
University Studies in History |
| 1976 - 78 | University of Costa Rica
Law School
University Studies in Law |

Others Studies

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1980 - 1982 | Arquitectonic and Interior Design Course
Esempi School, San José, Costa Rica |
| 1974 - 1975 | Château Mont Choisi
Lausanne, Switzerland
High School Diploma |
| 1970 - 1973 | Saint Clare College
San José, Costa Rica
High School |

Professional Experience

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1992 | Advisor/Researcher - Latin American Research and
Studies Foundation (FEILAT), San José, Costa Rica |
|------|---|

"Un Pueblo en Marcha"

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1991 | Advisor - Vicepresidency, International Forum for Child Welfare (IFCW) Geneva, Switzerland |
| 1976 | Executive and Designer of the Art and Publicity Department, Garnier Publicity, San José, Costa Rica |

Positions Held

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1994 - 1995 | Pro Tempore Secretary of the Regional Commission of Social Affairs (CRASS) |
| 1994 | First Lady of the Republic of Costa Rica |
| 1993 - 1994 | President - Women's Action Committee, National Liberation Party, San José, Costa Rica |
| 1991 - 1993 | President - Figueres Women's Union
San José, Costa Rica |

International Meetings and Conferences

Meeting of the Regional Commission on Social Affairs, within the framework of the XVI Central American Presidential Summit for the approval of the Central American Social Integration Treaty. San Salvador, El Salvador, March 1995

Meeting of the Regional Commission on Social Affairs, within the framework of the XV Central American Presidential Summit for the preparation of the proposal of a Central American Social Integration Treaty. Guácimo, Costa Rica, 1994

Conference on "The Children of the Americas". Symposium of wives of Heads of Government and State of the Americas, organized by Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, First Lady of the United States, within the framework of the Hemispheric Summit of Presidents of the Americas. Miami, Florida, December 1994

Intervention: "A People that Forges Its Own Destiny" as spokeswoman of the First Ladies of Central America

4th. Conference of wives of Heads of State and of Government of the Americas, held in Saint Lucia, October 1994

First Regional Consultative Meeting on Youth Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Interamerican Institute for Agricultural Cooperation. San José, Costa Rica, January 1995

Inauguration of the History Doctorate, University of Costa Rica, San José, May 1995

5th. Conference of wives of Heads of State and of Government of the Americas, Asunción, Paraguay, October 1995

Recognition of the Episcopal Conference of Costa Rica, for the Campaign "For a Life Without Violence", San José, Costa Rica, May 1996

Recognition of the Soka University of Tokio-Japan, for the Campaign "For a Life Without Violence", San José, Costa Rica, September 1996.

Honorary Member of the University Professional Women's Association, San José, Costa Rica, October, 1996

6th. Conference of wives of Heads of State and of Government of the Americas, La Paz, Bolivia, December 1996

UNICEF Communication Award for the Campaign "Por una Vida sin Violencia", San José, Costa Rica, December, 1996

Publications

1995 Weekly opinion column Punto de Vista, at La República Journal

In Costa Rican Newspapers

Numerous newspaper articles on the situation of women, the struggle against poverty and other themes of national interest

In Preparation

"Latin American Democracies. The Challenges of the Third Millennium."

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Organizations

1995	Foundation for the Preservation of the Patrimony of the Presidential House Founding member
1993	The Costa Rica Foundation for Sustainable Development. Founding member and President
1988	PANIAMOR Foundation. Founding Member

Languages

Spanish, English, French

Personal Information

Birthdate:

P6/(b)(6)

Civil Status:

Married to Eng. José María Figueres Olsen,
President of the Republic of Costa Rica

Children:

José María and Eugenia

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Divider Title: O



Inter-American Development Bank

News Release

Press Section, 1300 New York Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. • (202) 623-1414 Fax (202) 769-2835 • <http://www.idb.org>

NR-112/97

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 1997

COSTA RICAN MICROENTREPRENEURS MEET FIRST LADIES FROM CENTRAL AMERICA AND U.S.

The microentrepreneurs who will meet with the first ladies of the countries of Central America and the United States on the morning of May 8, 1997, are in many respects typical of their counterparts throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Although poor in resources they nevertheless manage to provide for their families, employ their neighbors and produce a substantial portion of their countries' productive output on the basis of their energy and initiative.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the largest provider of development financing to Latin America and the Caribbean, has invested more than \$452 million in credit and technical assistance programs for the region's microentrepreneurs since 1990.

In Costa Rica, the IDB has lent \$18.3 million to microenterprises as well as small and medium-size companies through 32 separate operations. An additional \$10 million has been lent for this purpose through a global credit program. The Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), an autonomous fund managed by the IDB, has directed \$3.4 million to Costa Rica's microentrepreneurs in two operations.

Below are basic background information on the eight microentrepreneurs who will participate in the meeting, long with descriptions of the local Costa Rican organizations that have assisted them.

Microentrepreneurs receiving assistance from CREDIMUJER

Glenda Sandoval owns and operates a wedding supplies business that produces dresses, flower arrangements, party favors and related items. Along with her four employees, all of whom are relatives, Sandoval sews and markets her products to clothing stores throughout Costa Rica, while taking direct orders from customers at her home.

Sandoval began her business 20 years ago with a single sewing machine. Today she has four semi-industrial machines in a workshop located in the back of her home. The business has enabled Sandoval to purchase her house in Barrio Cuba, San José, and support her five children, for whom she is the sole breadwinner.

Ana Live Solís Varela is a seamstress in San José's Desamparados neighborhood. She and her nine employees do contract work for clothing stores and custom sewing for individual customers, all out of a workshop in her home. The shop is her family's only source of income.

Laura Bonilla grows and sells orchids. Employing two additional people, Bonilla's orchid business is the only source of income for this divorced mother of two children. She sells her products directly to the public in a small store located in Los Yoses, San José, as well as through special orders. As a result of the success of her business, she has been able to develop a small nursery in Garita, Arajuela, where she also produces vegetative material.

Sandoval, Solís Varela and Bonilla all received business loans from CREDIMUJER, a non-governmental organization in San José that is partly funded by the IDB. An affiliate of Women's World Banking, CREDIMUJER was created in 1984 by a group of Costa Rican businesswomen who wished to extend credit, training and technical assistance to entrepreneurial women in poor urban areas, principally around San José.

CREDIMUJER works to bring low-income women into Costa Rica's social and economic development process through productive enterprises. In addition to providing training, CREDIMUJER extends loans to qualified women and works to secure investment capital and financing to cover the operating expenses of new enterprises.

Microentrepreneurs receiving assistance by Fundación Mujer

Ruth Moya Matamoros makes women's shoes under contract out of a workshop in her home. She has eight employees and occasionally hires four part-time workers to help fill large orders. Revenue from the shop represents 70 percent of the Moya family income. Moya has received four loans from Fundación Mujer, a local NGO, over the last decade. Her most recent loan, for \$4,400, allowed her to buy shoe-making supplies in bulk, cutting costs and reducing manufacturing delays.

Alejandra Jiménez Fernández designs and sews uniforms for office and factory employees. Along with seven employees, including several family members, Jiménez fills order for local and regional banks, industrial companies and associations. She has received two loans from Fundación Mujer. She used the last one, for \$5,280, to help pay for a vehicle that allows her to deliver finished uniforms directly to her customer, cutting distribution costs. Fundación Mujer also helped Jiménez draw up a comprehensive cost management plan. The business now accounts for 50 percent of the Jiménez family income.

Alice Loaiza Mora owns and operates a bakery in Barrio El Carmen, Cartago. With the help of her sister, her son and 10 full-time employees, Loaiza produces tamales and pastries based on family recipes that are sold nationally through Cosa Rica's biggest supermarket chains. The business represents the sole source of income for Loaiza, who heads her household. Loaiza has received four loans from Fundación Mujer. She used the last one, for \$9,340, to buy a diesel-powered industrial oven and pay for other improvements to the bakery. Previous loans financed better packaging for her products and the purchase of a delivery truck.

Fundación Mujer, an affiliate of the Overseas Education Fund International's Women in Business Program, was created in 1985. It offers credit and a wide range of technical and managerial assistance services to low-income women throughout Costa Rica.

Partly funded by the IDB, Fundación Mujer trains women in agricultural and food-processing activities in rural provinces and in industrial, commercial and service activities in San José and other cities. It also finances businesses run by women through its lending program. Under its Self-Employed Women II program, Fundación Mujer identifies promising businesswomen and conditions loan approvals on a willingness to take a minimum of 15 hours of classes on costs management, accounting and marketing. Classes are also offered to women who do not receive loans.

Microentrepreneurs receiving assistance from ADAPTE

Donald González Matarrita is a shoemaker in the Paso Ancho district of San José. He has a single employee and sells shoes through retailers and directly to customers who visit his shop, which is next door to his house. González learned shoemaking 20 years ago as an apprentice in another shoe shop. His earnings represent his family's only income and have allowed him to pay down his house and workshop.

Zeldy Calderón Jimenez runs a hospital laundry service out of her home. She began soliciting laundry jobs from neighbors five years ago, and eventually won a laundry contract from a local hospital. Now she subcontracts laundry jobs to women in Paso Ancho, where she lives. The service is Calderón's only source of income.

Both González and Calderón received loans from the **Asociación de Ayuda al Pequeño Trabajador y Empresario (ADAPTE, or Association for Assistance to Microentrepreneurs and Workers)**. Created in 1984 by a group of Costa Rican businesspeople who wanted to offer technical, administrative and financial help to small businesses or individuals who lack access to traditional sources of credit, ADAPTE has issued several thousand loans to microentrepreneurs in the industrial, services and crafts sectors. ADAPTE, which is partly funded by the IDB, also offers an extensive entrepreneurship training program to help borrowers manage credit and improve accounting and marketing practices.

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OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC

THE 16 PRIORITY COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

LIAISON FOR SOLIDARITY IN DEVELOPMENT

FOREWORD

The program known as "16 Priority Communities," managed by my Office, is helping to bring about a change in the social action of the government. The emphasis is shifting from the provision of assistance, opening the way for a social policy aimed at empowering communities to develop their own capabilities in order to move forward.

Action has focused on three areas. In the first, diagnoses of and plans for local development are prepared by teams comprising representatives of the community, the government, nongovernmental organizations and private enterprise, who work together to find solutions to the problems encountered.

In the second area, my Office serves as facilitator between government institutions and organized communities in the execution of projects intended to provide appropriate and timely responses to priority needs related to health, education, housing, road construction, community works, training, etc., identified in the diagnoses.

The third area promotes special projects such as institutional strengthening of the County Development Boards, to enable them to monitor and manage the Local Development Plans and the household hydroponics, rural tourism and microenterprise projects.

Action taken to date seeks, first, to do away with the "short-term vision" by developing plans through the year 2005. The second objective has been for these communities to no longer serve as political booty. Thirdly, communities are encouraged to manage their own affairs. These three elements are part of a new way to implement social policy, in which community dwellers move from being passive beneficiaries of projects to becoming active citizens with rights and duties in a context of solidarity in development.

the 16 priority communities program

Much has been accomplished in a short time. However, I am aware that in four years it is impossible to meet all the needs generated over many years in these communities. But I also know that is a first sure step in moving forward and ensuring equality of opportunity for all the women and men of Costa Rica.

*Josette Altmann de Figueres
First Lady of the Republic
Costa Rica*

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A. Introduction

Over the last forty years, Costa Rica has made significant advances in its social development, in health, education, employment, land tenure and access to basic services.

However, this development has not been homogeneous and there are some sectors of the population whose level of social development is below the national average.

Accordingly, within the framework of the National Plan to Combat Poverty, sixteen communities were selected for priority attention by state institutions, through actions that foster community participation.

To coordinate state actions aimed at the most vulnerable communities, the Sixteen Priority Communities Program was created and entrusted to the Office of the First Lady of the Republic.

B. Criteria for Selecting Communities

1. A critical level of poverty, identified on the basis of socioeconomic indicators.
2. The length of time needs have gone unanswered.
3. The availability of resources for the government to take action.
4. The level of community organization.
5. Areas prone to natural disasters, epidemics and/or social unrest.

C. Program Coverage

The Program covers eight rural cantons and eight underprivileged urban areas located in the seven provinces of the country.

Rural Counties: La Cruz, Upala, Los Chiles, Sarapiquí, Buenos Aires, Corredores, Talamanca and Acosta.

Urban Areas: Finca San Juan in Pavas, Tejarcillos in Alajuelita, Los Guido in Desamparados, Las Cloacas in Alajuela, Barrio Limoncito in Limón, Playón de Barranca in Puntarenas, Los Diques in Cartago, and Barrio Corazón de Jesús and Barrio Nazareth in Liberia.

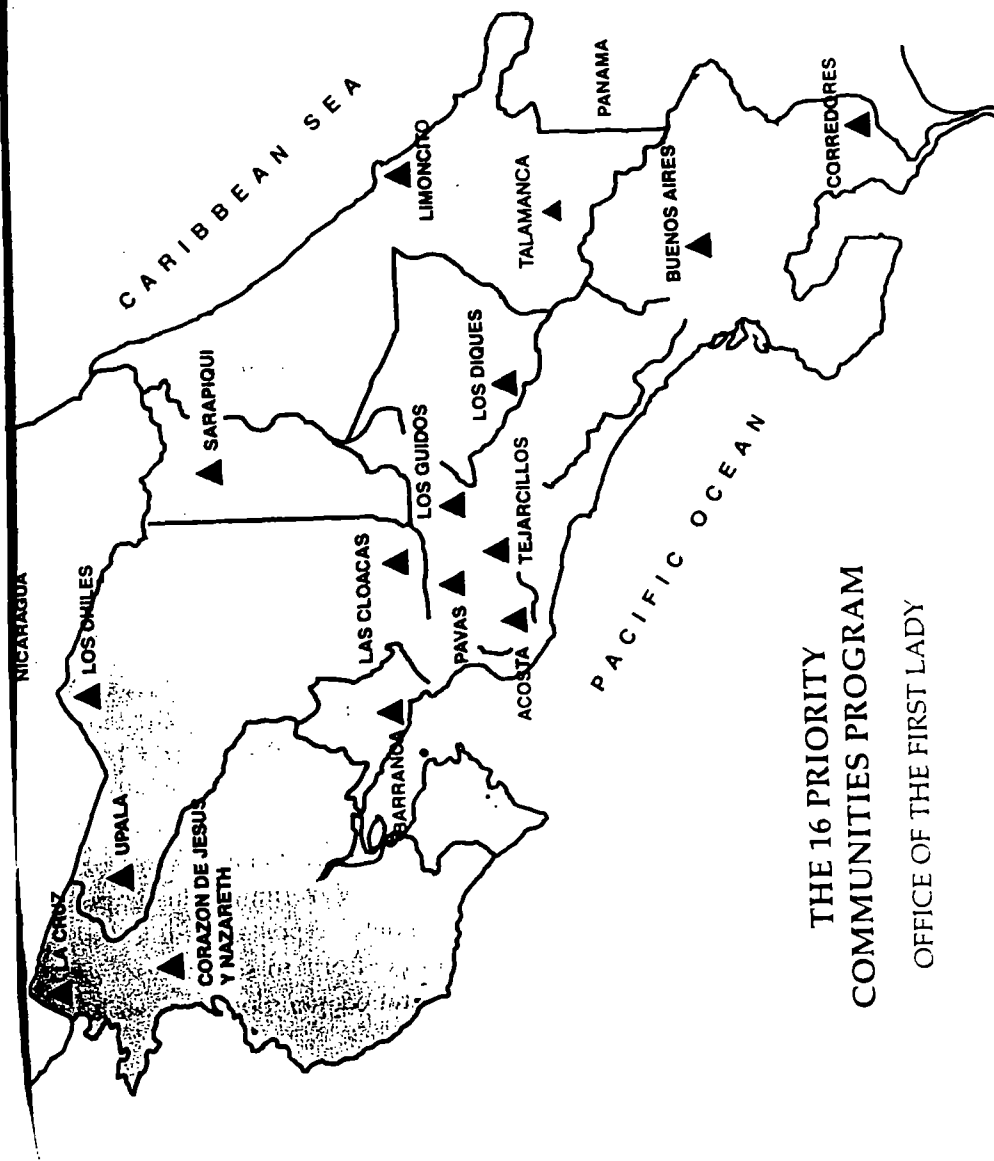
Target Population: The Program benefits approximately 300,000 people.

D. Program Objectives

1. To reduce existing socioeconomic disparities between the population of the sixteen communities and the national average.
2. To promote a new approach to social policy, shifting the emphasis from the provision of assistance to empowering the communities to take charge of their own development.

E. Strategies

1. To promote the provision of sustainable services within a framework of equity, harmony with the environment and broad community participation.
2. To upgrade institutions' capabilities to respond efficiently to community demands.
3. To strengthen the management capabilities of the communities, providing them with the know-how, abilities and skills they need for self-management and solidary development.



THE 16 PRIORITY
COMMUNITIES PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

F. Principal Lines of Action

The goal of the Program is to improve health, nutrition, education, housing and income, and to create the conditions necessary to generate opportunities for gainful employment, develop recreational areas, foster cultural activities, promote the equal participation of women and men, and boys and girls, in opportunities for development, and, above all, encourage community self-management and solidarity.

G. Operating Mechanisms for Action

The Program divides its work into three areas of action:

1. Strategic planning

This area focuses on the preparation of Participatory Community Diagnoses, Prioritization of Needs and Plans for Local Development through the year 2005. These actions are intended to give the communities the tools they need to participate in and promote their own development, regardless of the government in office.

2. Facilitation and coordination of actions

The strategic position of the Office of the First Lady within the Office of the Presidency of the Republic facilitates: a) coordination with more than 20 government institutions, to ensure a comprehensive vision of development in the communities; b) consensus-building between government institutions and the organized communities, to provide timely responses to the needs identified in the participatory diagnoses; and c) efforts to secure resources from international cooperation agencies, bilateral cooperation agencies and NGOs.

3. Promotion of projects

The third area promotes special projects such as institutional strengthening of the Counties Development Boards to enable them to monitor and manage the Local Development Plans. The household hydroponics projects will contribute to improving family nutrition, generating income and fostering self-esteem. Other projects include small-scale production enterprises to generate employment, recycling of household waste, and development of parks for children.

H. Program Follow-Up and Progress Reports

In order to monitor projects executed in the areas of health, education, production, road construction, etc., by government institutions in the priority communities, the Office of the First Lady periodically requests progress reports on these projects.

In addition, in order to monitor the Local Development Plans, a progress reports system has been established. Under this system, representatives of the government, NGOs and community organizations meet periodically to analyze progress in execution and compliance with commitments. These meetings are complemented with field visits, for the purpose of detecting problems and identifying solutions that will make it possible to move forward with execution.

1.

the 16 priority communities program



II. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Area for Strategic Planning

In coordination with the Office of the Second Vice President of the Republic, the Rural Development Program, the Agricultural Development Institute, National University of Costa Rica and other institutions active in the priority communities, the following actions were executed:

- 16 participatory community diagnoses
- 8 local development plans
- training for 160 leaders in participatory planning for local development

B. Area for Facilitation of Actions

Coordination has been facilitated between government institutions and community organizations to ensure that actions are aimed at meeting priority needs. The principal achievements of the government institutions in these communities have been:

Health

- 51 basic teams inaugurated for comprehensive health care (EBAIS), 192,000 beneficiaries
- 4 health clinics
- 21 health centers built
- 3 health centers being built and 3 being upgraded



OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

LIAISON FOR SOLIDARITY IN DEVELOPMENT

Water and sanitation

- 7 water supplies and 18 mini-water supplies
- 19 water supplies and 5 mini-water supplies under construction
- 45,000 beneficiaries
- 1.28 billion colones invested

Educational infrastructure

- 47 new classrooms
- 40 classrooms improved
- 16 teacher's houses built
- 108 million colones invested



Roads and bridges

- 943 km of roads repaired
- 22 bridges built
- 1.073 billion colones invested

Electrification

- 229 km of electric cable installed
- 400 million colones invested

Telephone service

- 52 public telephones installed
- 2,308 new lines (expansion of switchboards)



Community works

- 78 million colones for building community infrastructure

Recreation and training children and young people

- 2,000 children and young people participate in camps, workshops, volunteer work and personal improvement courses.
- 21 million colones invested

Training for women

- 2,772 women received human and technical training (mainly female heads of household).

C. Area for Promotion of Projects

Institutional strengthening

- Training for 30 representatives of the Counties Development Boards and 20 technical personnel from government institutions, in the areas of: preparation of Local Development Plans; project preparation and management; and effective communications techniques.

Household hydroponics

- 89 people from underprivileged urban areas received training for developing projects for hydroponic gardens to improve family nutrition and generate income
- Executed by: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, National University and the United Nations Volunteers Program.

Recycling of household waste

- 45 people received trained in the recycling of household waste. Technical assistance from the Technological Institute and funding from the Joint Social Assistance Institute - IMAS.

Recreation for children

- 21 children's recreation parks installed.
- 33.6 million colones invested.



III. PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

At the Community Level

- Counties Development Boards of La Cruz, Sarapiquí, Talamanca, Buenos Aires, Corredores
- County Commission for the Coordination of Local Development in Los Chiles
- Development Associations of the counties of Upala, La Cruz, Los Chiles, Sarapiquí, Talamanca, Buenos Aires and Corredores
- Community Development Associations of Barranca de Puntarenas, Limoncito in Limón, Las Cloacas in Alajuela, Finca San Juan in Pavas, Los Guido in Desamparados, Los Diques in Cartago, Tejarillos in Alajuelita, Corazon de Jesus and Nazareth in the city of Liberia.
- Organizations of women, young people and farmers.

Government Institutions

Facilitating institutions

Rural Development Program, Secretariat of the Social Council - Office of the Second Vice President of the Republic, Agricultural Development Institute - IDA, IMAS, DIGEPARE

Ministries

Health, Education, Housing, Agriculture and Livestock, Public Works, Environment and Energy, Economy, Labor and Culture.

Autonomous Institutions

Water Supply and Sewage, Housing Mortgage Bank, Costa Rican Social Security Administration, Agricultural Development Institute, Joint Social Assistance Institute, Costa Rican Electricity Institute, National Vocational Education Institute, National Production Council, National Center for the Development of Women and the Family, Development Board for the Atlantic Coast, National Tourism Institute.

Municipalities

International Agencies

European Economic Community, United Nations Development Programme, Inter-American Development Bank, HABITAT

Universities

National University of Costa Rica and Technological Institute of Costa Rica.

It is the heartfelt wish of those of us who work with the Program of the 16 Priority Communities that, regardless of political, corporate or personal interests, the local development plans will be the compasses that guide development in these communities over the next ten years, because with everyone's support, and setting aside short-term views, we will reduce the disparities that exist today and make Costa Rica a just country where solidarity prevails.

Costa Rica
May, 1997

This book was printed at IICA Headquarters in Coronado,
San Jose, Costa Rica in April 1997 with a press run of 150 copies.

OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

LIAISON FOR SOLIDARITY IN DEVELOPMENT

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Divider Title: Q

Maria Eugenia Paniagua Padilla
Vice Minister of Education

Maria Paniagua has been Vice Minister of Education since 1994. She was a consultant to the Interamerican Institute for Agricultural Cooperation's (IICA) training division from 1992-1994. From 1989-92, she was director of the Student Affairs division of the National University of San Diego's Costa Rica campus from. She has served as advisor to the Ministry of Education on several occasions and participated in numerous commissions, including the National AIDS commission. She began her career as an elementary school teacher in 1971.

She holds several degrees. She completed training as a Elementary School teacher by the Normal School of Costa Rica in 1967. She received a Bachelor's degree in Educational Administration from the State Distance University in 1984 and a second bachelor's degree in curriculum from the University of Costa Rica in 1988. In 1992, she earned a M.B.A. from the National University of San Diego's Costa Rica campus. Her thesis was titled "Marketing of Services: A Proposal for Higher Education Organization.

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Divider Title: **R**

EMIL WEINBERG

REPRESENTATIVE, INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK OFFICE
IN COSTA RICA

Mr. Weinberg appointed as the IDB representative in Costa Rica in January 1996.

He has been working in the Inter-American Development Bank in various capacities since joining it in 1966, except for an interlude of one and a half years in the Dominican Republic, where he held a senior position with the Banco de Reserves -- a state-owned commercial bank.

He served two times in the Dominican Republic's embassy in Washington, D.C. as a second secretary (1962-63) and as a first secretary (1965-66).

He studied law in the Dominican Republic (1954-60), where he practiced law (1960-62). He studied economic development at Vanderbilt University (1964-65), and obtained an MA degree.

Born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, Mr. Weinberg lived in Palestine (1944-47), the Dominican Republic (1947-62 and 1979-90), and the United States (1962-79; 1980-96).

He is married to Caroline Thorndike of New York and Baltimore. She has an MA in Theoretical Linguistics from American University (1970) and an MSW from Catholic University (1993), Washington, D.C. The Weinbergs have two sons: Henri Bernard (born 1970) and Michael Emil (born 1975) and a step son Peter Ostreicher (born 1965).

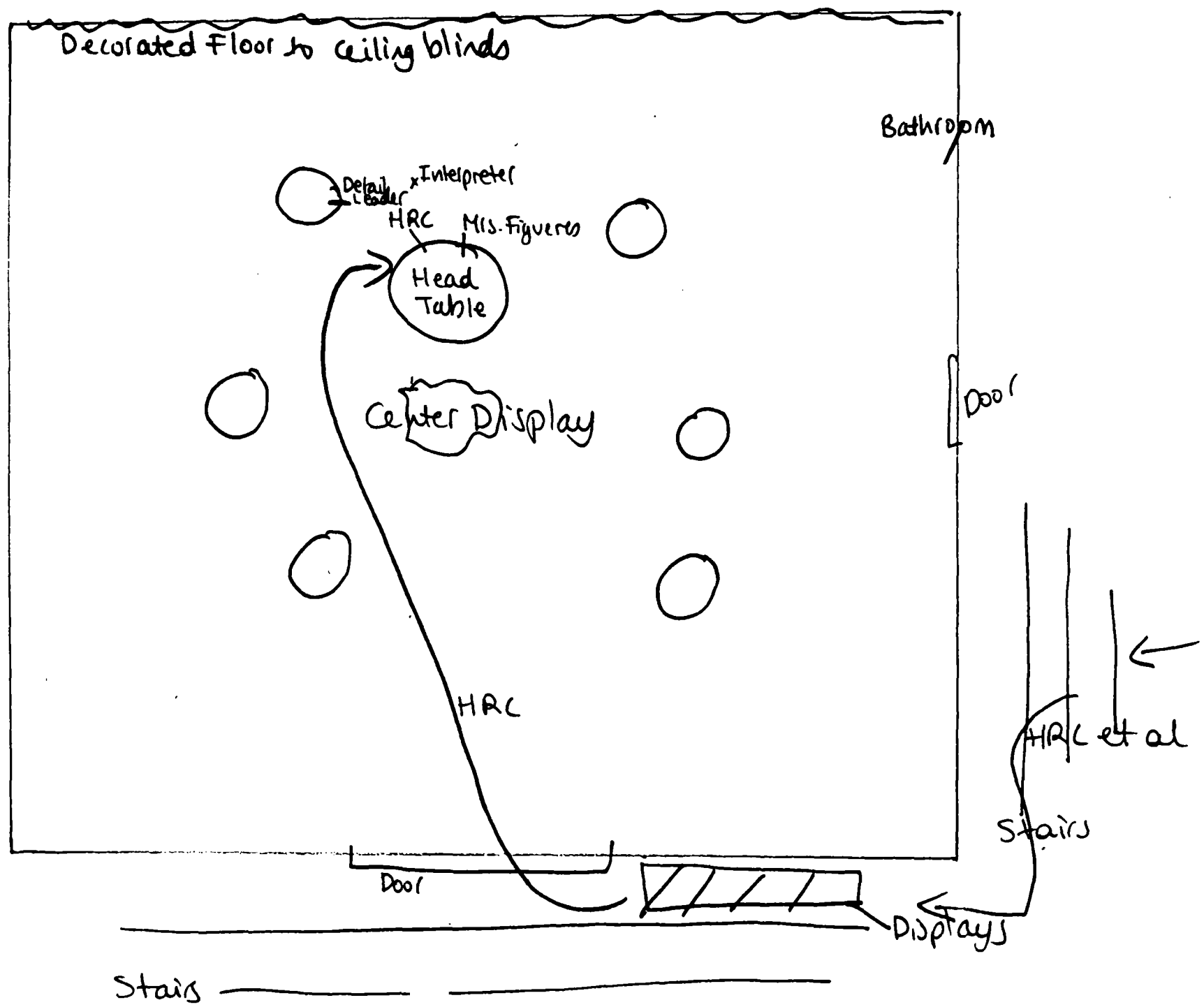
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Divider Title: S

Pueblo Antiquo
Lunch



Diaⁿ 5/2/97

Eduardo Doryan Garron
Minister of Education

A specialist in technology, energy policy and economic development, Doryan was formerly a Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Costa Rica. Doryan served as Vice Minister of Science and Culture during the administration of former President Oscar Arias (1986-90). He has also been President of the Organization of American States (OAS) Permanent Consultation Council in Education, Science and a member of the National Council on Scientific and Technological Research (CONCIT).

Doryan is the author of numerous academic and scholarly papers. During the administration of former President Luis Alberto Monge (1982-86), he co-authored Costa Rica's National Science and Technology Plan. He is a committed environmentalist. A 1995 survey of business persons and professionals rated Doryan as the most effective member of President Figueres cabinet, giving him a nearly 70 percent approval rating.

Doryan received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from University of Costa Rica in 1973. He attended postgraduate studies at the University of Statchclyde in Scotland. He has a Master's degree in Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Economic Policies from Harvard University. Doryan is the son of former second vice president Victoria Garron (Arias Administration). He is 45 years old, is married and has one son. He speaks English.

MEMO

To: Pat Halley, White House Staff
From: Mark Wenner, Inter American Development Bank
Subject: Biographies of Microentrepreneurs Making Testimonials at Forum, May 8th
Date: May 6, 1997

Alba Argentina Xicara Chojolon

Dona Alba is an Indian female from Quetzaltenango, Guatemala with 4 children and limited schooling. She received her first loan of US\$166 in 1992 from a U.S. Agency for International Development supported microfinance program called FUNDAP. She has consistently expanded her business which consist of selling sewing supplies through 18 short-term working capital loans. Her current loan is US\$3,336. Monthly family income has tripled from US\$250 in 1992 to US\$764 in 1997, creating employment for one daughter and her previously unemployed husband. Family welfare and stability has been significantly improved. All four children are enrolled in school and she has been able to purchase the locale of her business.

Henry Guerrero

Henry Guerrero is a 27 year old organic farmer with a sixth grade education who lives in Alajuela Province in Costa Rica. In 1988, after his father expressed concern about his repeated intoxications with agrichemicals, he took a series of courses in organic vegetable farming offered by a Japanese specialist, that culminated in certification as a Paratechnical in Organic Agriculture in 1995. During the same time he applied the techniques learned on his farm. Between 1991-96, he dramatically increased production with the help of financing from a cooperative, supported by the Inter-American Development Bank, COOPEBRISAS R.L.. Two years ago, he secured a contract with Ortifruti S.A., a produce wholesaler, that supplies organic vegetables and fruits to three leading supermarket chains in the country: Pali, Rayo Fresco, and Mas por Menos. His achievements have been so recognized that he also works as an instructor for the University of Costa Rica and as an organic agriculture extension agent for COOPEBRISAS.

Berta Esmerlda Alarcón

Mrs. Alarcón is a Salvadorean 37 year old mother of three. In 1988 she obtained a US\$200 working capital loan from Financiera Calpia S.A., an Inter-American Development Bank supported microlender, for a street stand business, dedicated to selling shoes and clothes. Over time she has been quite successful, increasing yearly income from US\$4,000 in 1988 to US\$50,000 and converting herself into a leader of an organization of street venders. The welfare of her three children has been greatly improved through her microenterprise activities.

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Divider Title: T

HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE -- BIOGRAPHIES OF PARTICIPANTS

INSTITUTE STAFF

SONIA PICADO is the Costa Rican Ambassador to Washington. She is Vice President of the IIDH Directive Council and former Executive Director of IIDH. She is also former Vice President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and former Dean of the Law School at Costa Rica University.

JUAN E. MENDEZ is the Director of the IIDH and an Argentine lawyer. He is former Executive Director of Human Rights Watch Americas. He is the author of several publications on the Protection of International Human Rights and has pleaded before the Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

GILDA PACHECO is a Costa Rican psychologist. She is a University researcher on issues of Central American migration and social discrimination. She has been a consultant to various regional and international organizations such as CSUCA, ACNUR and UNESCO. She is currently the Coordinator of the Gender and Human Rights Program of the IIDH.

PARTICIPANTS

DR. VICTORIA MARINA DE AVILES is a Salvadorean lawyer. She is a former prosecutor for the defense of children's rights. She is a counsellor at the Supreme Court, President of the Central-American Council of Human Rights Prosecutors. She was named by UNESCO as Latin American Representative for the Celebration of International Women's Day. She was awarded the Citizen's Merit Award by the Democratic Civic Center C.C.D.

SONIA CANSINO is a Salvadorean Sociologist and a women's rights activist. She has advised international agencies and organizations. She has experience working with human rights and women's rights NGOs. She represented the IIDH at the International Conference on the Rights of Women in Beijing. She has published articles on women's political and civic participation as well as an essay on "Transition and Citizenship of Women in El Salvador."

MARIA EUGENIA MIJANGOS is a Guatemalan lawyer. She is the coordinator of the Women's Human Rights branch of the Center for Legal Action in Human Rights. She founded the Women's branch of the Civil Society Assembly and the Civic Political Forum of Women. She is a consultant on the Theory of International and National Organizations. She represented the IIDH at the International Conference on the Rights of Women in Beijing.

PATRICIA RIOS HERRERA is Nicaraguan. She is a Chief Technician in Business Administration. She is Assistant Director of the Center of Integrated Services for SIMUJER. She is the Coordinator of the Maria Cavalleri Network for Women's Health which falls under the Latin American and Carribean Women's Health Network. She participated in the national initiative for the International Conference on the Rights of Women, in the Precom Subregional Centroamerican Conference, in the Precom Subregional Latin American Conference and in the International Conference for the Rights of Women in Beijing.



The Trip of The First Lady
to
Mexico, Costa Rica
and
Barbados

May 4 - 12, 1997

BACKGROUND ON MEXICO



U.S. Department of State

Background Notes: Mexico, April 1997

Released by the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs.

OFFICIAL NAME: United Mexican States

PROFILE

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 1,972,500 sq. km. (761,600 sq. mi.); about three times the size of Texas.

Cities: Capital--Mexico City (15 million, 1990 census). Other cities--Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla, Leon.

Terrain: Coastal lowlands, central high plateaus, and mountains up to 5,400 m. (18,000 ft.).

Climate: Tropical to desert.

PEOPLE

Nationality: Noun and adjective--Mexican(s).

Population (1997 est.): 95 million. Annual growth rate (net): 1.8%.

Ethnic groups: Indian-Spanish (mestizo) 60%, Indian 30%, Caucasian 9%, other 1%.

Religions: Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 6%, other 5%.

Language: Spanish.

Education: Years compulsory--12. Literacy--89%.

Health (1996 est.): Infant mortality rate--30/1,000.

Life expectancy--male 70 yrs., female 76 yrs.

Labor force (33 million): Agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing--26%. Services--24%. Commerce--24%.

Manufacturing--15%. Construction--6%. Transportation and communication--4%. Mining and quarrying--1%.

GOVERNMENT

Type: Federal republic.

Independence: First proclaimed September 16, 1810; republic established 1824.

Constitution: February 5, 1917.

Branches: Executive--president (chief of state and head of government). Legislative--bicameral.

Judicial--Supreme Court, local and federal systems.

Political parties: Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN), Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), Labor Party (PT), and several small parties.

Suffrage: Universal at 18.

Administrative subdivisions: 31 states and a federal district.

ECONOMY

GDP (1997, proj.): \$370 billion.

Per capita GDP (1997, proj.): \$3,911.

Annual real GDP growth (1997, proj.): 4.5%; (1996): 5.1%; (1995): -6.2%

Avg. annual real GDP growth (1989-94): 3%.

Inflation rate (1997, proj): 18%; (1996): 28%.

Natural resources: Petroleum, silver, copper, gold, lead, zinc, natural gas, timber.

Agriculture (5.8% of GDP): Products--corn, beans, oilseeds, feedgrains, fruit, cotton, coffee, sugarcane, winter vegetables.

Industry: Types--manufacturing (22% of GDP), services, commerce, transportation and communications, petroleum and mining.

Trade: (1996, Bank of Mexico): Exports--\$96 billion: manufacturing 84%, petroleum and derivatives 10%, agriculture 5%, other 1%. Major markets: U.S. (84%), Europe (4%), South America (4%), Canada (2%).

Imports--\$89.5 billion: intermediate goods 80%, capital goods 10%, consumer goods 7%, other 3%.

Major sources: U.S. (76%), Europe (9%), Japan (5%), Canada (2%) (1996, U.S. Department of Commerce). Imports from U.S.--\$56.8 billion. Exports to U.S.-- \$73 billion.

Average exchange rate (1996): 7.60 pesos = U.S. \$1.

PEOPLE

Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world and the second-most populous country in Latin America after Portuguese-speaking Brazil. About 70% of the people live in urban areas. Many Mexicans emigrate from rural areas that lack job opportunities--such as the underdeveloped southern states and the crowded central plateau--to the industrialized urban centers and the developing areas along the U.S.-Mexico border. According to some estimates, the population of the area around Mexico City is about 20 million, which would make it the largest concentration of population in the world. Cities bordering on the United States, such as Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez, and cities in the interior, such as Guadalajara, Monterrey, and Puebla, have undergone sharp rises in population.

HISTORY

Highly advanced cultures, including those of the Olmecs, Mayas, Toltecs, and Aztecs, existed long before the Spanish conquest. Hernando Cortes conquered Mexico during the period 1519-21 and founded a Spanish colony that lasted nearly 300 years. Independence from Spain was proclaimed by Father Miguel Hidalgo on September 16, 1810; this launched a war for independence. An 1821 treaty recognized Mexican independence from Spain and called for a constitutional monarchy. The planned monarchy failed; a republic was proclaimed in December 1822 and established in 1824.

Prominent figures in Mexico's war for independence were Father Jose Maria Morelos; Gen. Augustin de Iturbide, who defeated the Spaniards and ruled as Mexican emperor from 1822-23; and Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana, who went on to control Mexican politics from 1833 to 1855.

Santa Ana was Mexico's leader during the conflict with Texas, which declared itself independent from Mexico in 1836, and during Mexico's war with the United States (1846-48). The presidential terms of Benito Juarez (1858-71) were interrupted by the Hapsburg monarchy's rule of Mexico (1864-1867). Archduke Maximilian of Austria, whom Napoleon III of France established as Emperor of Mexico, was deposed by Juarez and executed in 1867. General Porfirio Diaz was President during most of the period between 1877 and 1911.

Mexico's severe social and economic problems erupted in a revolution that lasted from 1910-20 and gave rise to the 1917 constitution. Prominent leaders in this period -- some were rivals for power -- were Francisco I. Madero, Venustiano Carranza, Pancho Villa, Alvaro Obregon, Victoriano Huerta, and Emiliano Zapata.

The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), formed in 1929 under a different name, continues to be the most important political force in the nation. It emerged as a coalition of interests after the chaos of the Revolution as a vehicle for keeping political competition in peaceful channels. For almost 70 years, Mexico's national government has been controlled by the PRI, which has won every presidential race and most gubernatorial races.

GOVERNMENT

The 1917 constitution provides for a federal republic with powers separated into independent executive, legislative, and judicial branches. In practice, the executive is the dominant branch, with power vested in the president, who promulgates and executes the laws of the Congress. The president also legislates by executive decree in certain economic and financial fields, using powers delegated from the Congress. The president is elected by universal adult suffrage for a six-year term and may not hold office a second time. There is no vice president; in the event of the removal or death of the president, a provisional president is elected by the Congress.

The Congress is composed of a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies. Consecutive re-election is prohibited. Senators are elected to six-year terms. Implementing constitutional changes made in 1996, for the first time on July 6, 1997, 32 of the 128 seats in the Senate will be elected by proportional representation from party lists on a national basis. With this change, some states may have more Senators than others. The 32 Senators elected in 1997 will only serve three-year terms, in order to bring the entire Senate back into the same cycle in the year 2000. Deputies serve three-year terms. In the lower chamber, 300 Deputies are directly elected to represent single-member districts, and 200 are selected by a modified form of proportional representation from five electoral regions created for this purpose across the country. The 200 proportional representation seats were created to help smaller parties gain access to the Chamber.

The judiciary is divided into federal and state court systems, with federal courts having jurisdiction over most civil cases and those involving major felonies. Under the constitution, trial and sentencing must be completed within 12 months of arrest for crimes that would carry at least a two-year sentence. Practice often does not meet this requirement. Trial is by judge, not jury, in most criminal cases. Defendants have a right to counsel, and public defenders are available. Other rights include defense against self-incrimination, the right to confront one's accusers, and the right to a public trial. Supreme Court Justices are appointed by the President and approved by the Senate.

National Security

Mexico's armed forces in 1995 numbered about 175,000. The army makes up about three-fourths of the total. One year of limited training is required of all males at age 18. Principal military roles include national defense, narcotics control, and civic action assignments such as road-building, search and rescue, and disaster relief.

Principal Government Officials

President--Ernesto ZEDILLO Ponce de Leon

Foreign Minister--Jose Angel GURRIA Trevino

Ambassador to the U.S.--Jesus SILVA-HERZOG Flores

Ambassador to the United Nations--Manuel TELLO Macias

Ambassador to the OAS--Carmen MORENO de del Cueto

Mexico maintains an embassy in the United States at 1911 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20006 (tel. 202-728-1600). Consular offices are located at 2827 16th St. NW, 20009 (tel. 202-736-1012), and the trade office is co-located at the embassy (tel. 202-728-1686).

Consulates general are located in Chicago, Dallas, Denver, El Paso, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, San Antonio, San Diego, and San Francisco; consulates are (partial listing) in Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Philadelphia, Seattle, St. Louis, and Tucson.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon was sworn in on December 1, 1994, as the President of Mexico. A trained economist with degrees from Yale, Zedillo served as Secretary of Programming and Budget and Secretary of Education in the Salinas Administration prior to being elected.

President Zedillo continued the process already underway of opening Mexico's political system,

reforming the justice system, curtailing corruption, strengthening the fight against narcotics trafficking, and furthering Mexico's market-oriented economic policies. A severe financial crisis occupied much of the Zedillo Administration's attention in 1995-96, creating a need for difficult emergency economic stabilization policies and intensified longer-term economic restructuring. Significant progress has been achieved in some areas.

Political Scene

Unexpected and traumatic events in early 1994 convulsed the Mexican political scene. In January 1994, peasants in the state of Chiapas briefly took up arms against the government, protesting alleged oppression and governmental indifference to poverty. The government and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) have negotiated on topics such as granting greater autonomy to indigenous peoples since then, reaching several partial accords. There have been no clashes since the government's unilaterally declared cease-fire in 1994, and the two sides remain committed to a negotiated peace settlement.

In March 1994, PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio was assassinated. In September 1994, PRI Secretary General Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu was also assassinated. Although the gunmen in both murders and co-conspirators in the Ruiz Massieu murder were tried and convicted, the Mexican public is not satisfied that all the truth behind these crimes has been uncovered.

Investigations into the murders resulted in the apprehensions in February 1995 of a second gunman in the Colosio murder, the arrest of the brother of former president Carlos Salinas as a suspected mastermind behind the second crime, and the filing of charges in March 1995 against the brother of Ruiz Massieu for obstructing investigations into the murder. Additional charges, including illegal enrichment for amassing multi-million dollar fortunes in overseas bank accounts, were filed against both men and investigations were widened to include their associates.

This has led to a flurry of public scandals regarding supposed attempts at obstruction of justice and allegations of major corruption in police, judicial, military and other authorities, as well as big business, including allegations of ties to narcotics trafficking. The atmosphere of scandal around former President Carlos Salinas has turned him into something of an arch-villain in the popular mind.

A new group of uncertain origin and size, the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), made its appearance in southern Mexico on June 28, 1996. The Government considers the EPR a terrorist organization and has vowed to bring the group to justice. This and the assassination of senior law enforcement officers by suspected drug traffickers in northern Mexico also has contributed to increased attention and concern over public safety.

Recent Elections and Electoral Reform

A record 78% of registered voters cast ballots in the August 21, 1994, elections. Election officials declared Zedillo of the PRI the winner with 49% of the vote, followed by National Action Party (PAN) candidate Diego Fernandez de Cevallos with 26% and Cuauhtemoc Cardenas of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) with 17%. Despite isolated incidents of irregularities and problems, there was no evidence of systematic attempts to manipulate the elections or their results, and critics concluded that the irregularities which did occur did not alter the outcome of the presidential vote. Civic organizations fielded more than 80,000 trained electoral observers; foreigners -- many from the United States -- were invited to witness the process, and numerous independent "quick count" operations and exit polls validated the official vote tabulation.

These extraordinary electoral observation measures were needed to overcome public suspicions that electoral fraud might be committed. Over the years, the PRI has relied on extensive patronage and massive government and party organizational resources to maintain its continuance in power. In many cases, the party has been accused of fraud. However, as numerous electoral reforms implemented since 1989 have aided in the further opening of the Mexican political system, opposition parties have made historic gains in elections at all levels. Most of the concerns shifted from fraud to campaign fairness issues.

In 1989, the PAN became the first opposition party to win a state governorship (in Baja California.) The PAN now governs four states: Guanajuato, Baja California, Jalisco, and Chihuahua. The party has also won a number of mayoral races, especially in urban areas. In recent years, however, controversies regarding state electoral results and/or campaign practices in Yucatan, Tabasco and elsewhere have pointed out the need for electoral practices to catch up with reformed electoral laws in some areas of the country.

During 1995-96 the political parties negotiated constitutional amendments to address electoral campaign fairness issues, which passed unanimously. In these negotiations, the parties were supported by consultations with civic organizations. It proved a disappointment when implementing legislation could not also be passed by consensus due primarily to disagreements over levels of public funding for political parties. The package of laws passed by the PRI majority in congress did include, however, major points of consensus that had been worked out with the opposition parties. The thrust of the new laws is to have public financing predominate over private contributions to political parties, to tighten procedures for auditing the political parties, and to strengthen the authority and independence of electoral institutions.

Even before the new electoral law was passed, opposition parties have obtained an increasing voice in Mexico's political system. While the ruling PRI still has substantial majorities in both houses of the Mexican Congress, 40% of its Chamber of Deputies and 33 of 128 senators were members of opposition parties. The PAN -- the largest opposition group -- rules over 37% of the country at the state and local levels.

The court system was also given greatly expanded authority to hear civil rights cases on electoral matters brought by individuals or groups. In short, a serious effort was made to "level the playing field" for the parties.

On July 6, 1997, all 500 members of the Chamber of Deputies and 32 members of the 128-member Senate will be elected. Also, an election will be held for the first time to choose the Mayor of Mexico City (to be known as the "Chief of Government of the Federal District"). This official was previously appointed by the president. Elections for state governors, state congresses, and/or for town mayors will be held in 11 states.

Other Reforms

To help reorganize the Mexican justice system, President Zedillo appointed as Attorney General a respected member of the opposition PAN party, the first time an opposition member has held a cabinet post in Mexico. (Attorney General Antonio Lozano was dismissed in late 1996 amid controversy regarding investigations into prominent murder and corruption cases.) Constitutional and legal changes were adopted to improve the performance and accountability of the Supreme Court and the Office of the Attorney General and the administration of federal courts. The Supreme Court, relieved of administrative duties for lower courts, was given responsibilities for judicial review of certain categories of law and legislation. A variety of laws was also passed in 1995-96 to help control organized crime.

Although the constitution provides for three branches of government, the Mexican presidency traditionally occupies a dominant position. In order to overcome this "presidentialism," the Zedillo Administration has sought to develop a greater role for the Congress, notably by inviting the participation of a multi-party legislative commission in the Chiapas peace negotiations and seeking congressional approval of the financial assistance package signed by the U.S. and Mexico in February 1995. The judicial reforms mentioned above are in part designed to allow the judicial branch of government to become a more effective counter-weight to the other two branches. The Zedillo Administration has also promoted a "New Federalism" to devolve more power to state and local governments, starting with pilot programs in education and health.

Education

Although educational levels in Mexico have improved substantially in recent decades, the country still faces daunting problems. Education is one of the Government of Mexico's highest priorities and it has increased the education budget 7.2% over 1996 to \$15 billion for 1997 -- one-fourth of the total budget.

Education in Mexico is also being decentralized from federal to state authority in order to improve accountability.

Education is mandatory from ages six through 18. The increase in school enrollments during the past two decades has been dramatic. By 1994, an estimated 59% of the population between the ages of six and 18 were enrolled in school. Primary (including preschool) enrollment in public schools from 1970 through 1994 increased from less than 10 million to 17.5 million. Enrollment at the secondary public school level rose from 1.4 million in 1972 to as many as 4.5 million in 1994. A rapid rise also occurred in higher education. Between 1959 and 1994, college enrollments rose from 62,000 to more than 1.2 million.

Although education spending has risen dramatically, given increased enrollment, a net decline occurred in per student expenditures. The Mexican Government concedes that despite this progress, 2 million children still do not have access to basic education, and hopes to provide access to half of those children by the year 2000.

ECONOMY

Sustained economic growth is vital to Mexico's prospects for a successful evolution to a more competitive democracy. Mexico's level of economic prosperity has a direct, though proportionally smaller impact on the U.S. as it affects trade and migration. In recent years Mexico has sought economic prosperity through liberalization of its trade regime. In January 1994, Mexico joined Canada and the United States in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which will phase out all tariffs over a 15-year period. Four months later, in April 1994, Mexico joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Mexico was the first Latin American member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), joining in 1993, and in January 1996, became a founding member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Mexico's NAFTA membership helped the Mexican economy grow by 3.5% in 1994. Following the December 1994 devaluation of the peso, however, Mexico experienced a severe financial crisis that also threatened the stability of other emerging market economies, especially in Latin America.

The United States responded by leading a group of international lenders in making available to Mexico over \$40 billion in international financial assistance, including \$20 billion from the United States. This action helped stabilize the Mexican economy, allowing Mexico to repay the loans to the United States more than three years ahead of schedule and with \$580 million in interest.

In 1996, Mexico's economy grew over 5%, recovering from the recession more briskly than anticipated. Inflation fell, unemployment fell and the peso stabilized. Mexican real GDP is expected to grow about 4% in 1997.

Although the 1995 recession was severe, with real GDP falling 6.2%, tough stabilization measures averted an even more serious collapse and brought about a rapid recovery. NAFTA contributed to the process of adjustment by enabling Mexico to reduce its current account deficit through increased exports rather than through slashing imports from the United States, as it had following the 1982 debt crisis.

Trade

Mexico was the United States third-ranked trading partner in 1996, accounting for 9% of U.S. trade. In 1996, U.S. \$56.8 billion in exports to Mexico were almost equal to our exports to Japan, even though the Mexican economy is just one-seventh the size of Japan's. The United States was Mexico's predominant trading partner, accounting for 84% of Mexican exports and 76% of Mexican imports. The chief U.S. exports to Mexico were motor vehicle parts, office equipment, and agricultural products; the top imports from Mexico included petroleum, cars and coffee. The United States in 1996 was the source of 60% of all direct foreign investment in Mexico.

U.S.-Mexico trade increased during NAFTA's first three years. In 1996, U.S. exports to Mexico were up 36% and U.S. imports from Mexico were up 80% over 1993 levels. Cyclical economic factors, rather

than NAFTA, caused a trade deficit in 1995 and 1996; strong growth in U.S. demand, along with the Mexican recession and devaluation of the peso, increased U.S. imports while slowing growth in U.S. exports.

NAFTA eliminates restrictions on the flow of goods, services, and investment in North America. In addition to phasing out tariffs, NAFTA eliminates, as far as possible, non-tariff barriers and promotes safeguards for intellectual property rights -- patents, copyrights, and trademarks. The pact also includes provisions on trade rules and dispute settlement, and its parallel labor agreement seeks to ensure full protection of workers' rights.

Through its supplemental environmental cooperation agreement, NAFTA marked the first time in the history of U.S. trade policy that environmental concerns have been addressed in a comprehensive trade agreement. The pact also serves as a basis for enhancing ongoing U.S.-Mexico cooperation on a host of other issues that do not respect national borders.

Agriculture

Mexico's agrarian reform program began in 1917, when the government began distribution of land to farmers. Extended further in the 1930s, this cooperative agrarian reform, which guaranteed small farmers a means of subsistence livelihood, also caused land fragmentation and lack of capital investment, since commonly held land could not be used as collateral. This, combined with poor soil, several recent years of low rainfall, and rural population growth, has made it difficult to raise the productivity and living standards of Mexico's subsistence farmers.

Mexico's agricultural sector continues to experience heavy debt problems, even as the government seeks to foster a shift to a market-oriented and competitive farming industry. High interest rates for loans have compounded the difficulty for producers, and the 1994 peso crisis exacerbated the decline in productivity. According to the Mexican Government's office of statistics, agriculture accounted for 5.8% of GDP in 1996.

In an effort to raise rural productivity and living standards, Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution was amended in 1992 to allow for the transfer of communal land to the farmers cultivating it. They then could rent or sell it, opening the way for larger farms and economies of scale. By early 1996, however, only six farmers' cooperatives had voted to disincorporate. Since communal land use is formally reviewed only every two years, privatization of these communal lands may continue to be very slow.

In the past, the government encouraged production of basic crops such as corn and beans by maintaining support prices. In order to rationalize its agricultural sector, Mexico is phasing out its support price scheme. Corn production dropped in 1995 and 1996 as more was imported. The government in 1996 crafted federal-to-state agreements targeted at each states' most urgent needs, with the goal of increasing the use of modern equipment and technology in order to increase per-acre productivity.

In addition to this new initiative, the government is continuing PROCAMPO, the rural support program which provides the approximately 3.5 million farmers who produce basic commodities - about 64% of all farmers - with a fixed payment per hectare of cropland.

Manufacturing and Foreign Investment

Mexico's manufacturing sector in 1996 accounted for 22% of the GDP and 21% of employment in the formal urban economy. Manufacturing grew 11% after having declined 5% during Mexico's recession in 1995.

The industrial sector as a whole, which along with manufacturing includes construction, electricity and mining, grew 10% in 1996, following a drop of 8% in 1995. Construction rebounded with 11% growth after declining 23% in 1996.

In December 1993, Mexico passed a new foreign investment law which promotes competitiveness and established clear rules for the entry of international capital into productive activities. The law also permits foreigners to own non-residential property in the "restricted zones" - within 100 kilometers (62

miles) of the border and 50 kilometers of the coasts. Residential property in these zones still must be acquired via a trust through a Mexican financial institution. Total new direct foreign investment in 1995 was \$7 billion, down from \$11 billion in 1994. Direct foreign investment of at least \$8 billion is widely expected to have taken place in 1996, although the final tallies have not been released.

Transportation and Communications

The Zedillo Administration is continuing the previous government's modernization of infrastructure and services, deregulation and development of more efficient transport systems, and increased privatization. Mexico's land transportation network is one of the most extensive in Latin America. More than 4,000 kilometers (2,400 miles) of four-lane highway have been built through government concessions to private sector contractors since 1989. The 36,000 kilometers (22,000 miles) of government-owned railroads in Mexico are currently being privatized through sale of 50-year operating concessions. The Northeast railroad, Mexico's primary freight carrier, was privatized early in 1997 for \$1.4 billion. Another significant section, the Northwest railroad, will be privatized by mid-1997.

Tampico and Veracruz, on the Gulf of Mexico, are Mexico's two primary seaports. Recognizing that the low productivity of Mexico's 79 ports poses a threat to trade development, the government has steadily been privatizing port operations to improve their efficiency.

A number of international airlines serve Mexico, with direct or connecting flights from most major cities in the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and Latin America. Most Mexican regional capitals and resorts have direct air service to Mexico City or the United States. Airport privatization, based on the successful experience with ports, should begin by the end of 1997.

Mexico has taken significant steps to modernize its telecommunications system. A key element was the privatization in 1990 of the national telephone company, Telefonos de Mexico (TELMEX), which was sold to a consortium of Mexican investors, Southwestern Bell, and France Telecom. This privatization has meant an increased rate of infrastructure enhancement. In addition, eight regional companies are providing cellular telephone service to various parts of Mexico, resulting in a dramatic expansion of cellular telephone users. Two larger communications satellites have been ordered to replace the two now in use. The government has also opened the telecommunications sector to greater foreign investment. Starting in 1997, long-distance telecommunications service will be a much more competitive industry in Mexico, with nine consortia (two of them having significant fiber optic systems of their own) giving Telmex strong competition for the customer base.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Government of Mexico has sought to maintain its interests abroad and project its influence largely through moral persuasion. In particular, Mexico champions the principles of non-intervention and self-determination. In its efforts to revitalize its economy and open up to international competition, Mexico has sought closer relations with the U.S., Western Europe, and the Pacific Basin. While the United States and Mexico are often in agreement on foreign policy issues, some differences remain--in particular, relations with Cuba. The U.S. and Mexico agree on the ultimate goal of establishing a democratic, free-market regime in Cuba but disagree on tactics to reach that goal.

Mexico actively participates in several international organizations. It is a supporter of the United Nations and Organization of American States systems and also pursues its interests through a number of ad hoc international bodies. Mexico has been selective in its membership in other international organizations. It declined, for example, to become a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Nevertheless, Mexico does seek to diversify its diplomatic and economic relations, as demonstrated by its accession to GATT in 1986; its joining APEC in 1993; becoming, in April 1994, the first Latin American member of the OECD; and a founding member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1996. Mexico attended the 1994 Summit of the Americas, held in Miami, and agreed to assume responsibility for coordination of the agenda item on education.

U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS

U.S. relations with Mexico are as important and complex as with any country in the world. A stable, democratic and economically prosperous Mexico is fundamental to U.S. interests. Our relations with Mexico have a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans -- whether the issue is trade and economic reform, drug control, migration, or the promotion of democracy. The U.S. and Mexico are partners in NAFTA, and enjoy a rapidly developing trade relationship.

The scope of U.S.-Mexican relations goes far beyond diplomatic and official contacts; it entails extensive commercial, cultural, and educational ties, as demonstrated by the nearly 290 million legal crossings from Mexico to the United States in fiscal year 1995. In addition, more than half a million American citizens live in Mexico. More than 2,600 U.S. companies have operations there, and the U.S. accounts for 60% of all foreign direct investment in Mexico. Along the 2,000-mile shared border, state and local governments interact closely.

Since 1981, the management of the broad array of U.S.-Mexico issues has been formalized in the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission, composed of numerous U.S. cabinet members and their Mexican counterparts. The Commission holds annual plenary meetings, and many sub-groups meet during the course of the year to discuss trade and investment opportunities, financial cooperation, consular issues and migration, legal affairs and anti-narcotics cooperation, cultural relations, education, energy, border cooperation, environment, labor, agriculture, health, housing and urban development, transportation, fisheries, tourism, and science and technology.

A strong partnership with Mexico is critical to controlling the flow of illicit drugs into the United States. The U.S. has certified Mexico as fully cooperating in this effort based on an unprecedented level of cooperation on counternarcotics and Mexico's own initiatives in fighting drug trafficking. This is the best way to ensure that Mexico's cooperation and anti-drug efforts grow even stronger.

During 1996, the U.S. and Mexico established a High-Level Contact Group (HLCG) on narcotics control to explore joint solutions to the shared drug threat, to coordinate the full range of narcotics issues and to promote closer law enforcement coordination.

The United States and Mexico have a long history of cooperation on environmental and natural resources issues, particularly in the border area, where there are serious environmental problems caused by rapid population growth, urbanization, and industrialization. Cooperative activities between the U.S. and Mexico take place under a number of agreements such as:

A 1944 treaty creating the International Boundary and Water Commission, which has a wide range of responsibilities for solving U.S.-Mexico water and boundary problems such as distributing the waters of the Colorado River and the Rio Grande between the two countries; jointly operating international dams and other joint flood control works along boundary rivers; and solving border water quality control problems. Since the early 1980's the IBWC has focused on border sanitation and groundwater resources.

The 1983 La Paz Agreement to Protect and Improve the Border Environment.

The 1993 North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation, created under NAFTA by the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, to strengthen environmental laws and address common environmental concerns; and

A November 1993 agreement between the U.S. and Mexico, also under NAFTA, establishing the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC) which works with local communities to build or upgrade environmental infrastructure such as wastewater treatment plants, drinking water systems, and solid waste disposal facilities; and the North American Development Bank (NADBANK), which leverages private sector capital to finance border environmental infrastructure projects certified by the BECC.

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EDUCATION

Resolving Mexico's daunting problems in general education services for children and teens is one of the Mexican government's highest priorities.

Budget increases: The Mexican government has increased the education budget 7.2% over 1996. Total education expenditures will exceed 15 billion dollars for 1997, which is one-fourth of the total federal budget.

Education reforms: Beginning in the 1980's, major reforms included the transfer of school administration from the federal to the state level and transforming teacher training institutions into higher education institutions. The curriculum has also been updated, the school year increased to 200 days, and local and state boards of education have been created to increase participation.

Problems persist: The educational budget increase for 1997, however, does not make up for steep declines in per student expenditures from 1980-95, which fell 43% over that period. The government publicly concedes that two million children do not have access to basic education, and hopes to provide access to half of those disenfranchised children by the year 2000. In addition, of 15.5 million Mexicans between the ages of 15 and 24 in 1995, only one in five had access to high school and/or college.

Literacy and educational levels: About two-thirds of Mexican children drop out of school by age 15. As a result, only about 15% of the population has more than a high school education -- less than Ecuador, Bolivia, and Cuba (all around 20%), and only one-fifth the rate of the U.S. (76%). In smaller communities (less than 15,000 inhabitants), 24% of teenage and adult women are illiterate, as are 33% of indigenous children. Educational levels also suffer at the high end of the scale: there are only 5,868 research scientists in Mexico -- a mere 0.006% of the population -- and their number has declined in each of the last four years.

Talking Point:

- o I applaud the large increases made in the educational budget by the Zedillo administration.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

The Mexican Constitution establishes full equality between men and women but inequality between the sexes persists.

Evolving roles: Since the 1980's, women have been increasingly involved in the work force, higher education, and public life. Traditional groups claim, however, that this is eroding the family. Motherhood and family care are culturally perceived as women's primary roles, creating conflicts for and about women who are active outside the home. A more progressive position prevailed among the official Mexican delegates at the Beijing Conference.

According to a recent survey, 64% of Mexican women believe that inequality exists between the sexes. They identified "machismo" (the culture of male domination) as the biggest obstacle to equality, and named discrimination in the workplace as the biggest problem that women face.

Women hold 2 of the 19 Cabinet posts (Silvia Hernandez, Secretary of Tourism, and Julia Carabias, Secretary of the Environment); there have been 2 women governors in the 1990's (Dulce Maria Sauri, Yucatan, and Beatriz Paredes, Tlaxcala). There are 67 women in the 500-member federal Chamber of Deputies and 16 women in the 128-member federal Senate.

Work: Women's participation in the work force has increased significantly, from 18% in the 1970s to about 33% today. However, women tend to be concentrated in lower-level jobs: 96.6% of domestic workers are female, compared to 19% of managers and executives. Considerable attention has been focused on reports of discriminatory and abusive treatment of low-paid women workers in border maquiladora industries.

Education: Primary school enrollment is almost universal and there are no significant differences between girls and boys. From the age of 10, however, the school attendance of girls begins to decline compared with that of boys, and the differences become more accentuated the higher one goes on the educational ladder. Female post-secondary school enrollment was 83% that of males for the period of 1990-1993.

Health: Abortion is not legal in Mexico. It is the most divisive women's health issue confronting policymakers. In a recent poll, 43% of women surveyed accepted abortion only in some cases, 28% did not accept it under any circumstances, and 25% felt that it should be up to the woman involved to choose. Women represent 16.3% of the total of newly-reported AIDS cases.

Talking Point:

- o I am pleased to see the advances made by Mexican women in their evolving roles in society, and your government's support for women's issues in international fora.

MEXICO AND THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

Mexican participation: Mexico was an active and positive participant in the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Silvia Hernandez, Minister of Tourism, led the delegation. Other prominent members included Olga Pellicer and Aida Gonzalez, former and current representatives, respectively, to the UN Commission on the Status of Women; and Dulce Maria Sauri, a former state governor and current head of Mexico's national program for women.

Amb. Pellicer chaired the contact group that drafted the Declaration that precedes the Platform for Action. (The U.S. was successful in ensuring that "women's rights are human rights" was included in the Declaration, and Mexico was supportive.)

Mexico played a key role in including progressive language in the Platform for Action on measuring and valuing unwaged work, on girls' education, and on ensuring that the Fourth World Conference on Women built upon the World Conference on Human Rights and the International Conference on Population and Development, particularly in regard to the universality of human rights, women's human rights, and reproductive rights.

Mexico had included NGOs on previous world conference delegations. However, at Beijing, for the first time, Mexico included both progressive and conservative NGOs on its delegation, which one delegate admitted was quite a challenge.

Follow-up: Although Mexico did not announce any commitments at the Conference, Mexico has instituted a follow-up mechanism to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. About a year ago (early 1996), Dulce Maria Sauri, was chosen to head a National Program for Women in the Ministry of the Interior, which, among other things, will help resolve cases of discrimination against women. The Ministry has just released a report on how national and state laws comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

TALKING POINTS:

- o We enjoyed working with Mexico at the Beijing Women's Conference. We appreciated Mexico's active and positive participation, particularly in the discussion on measuring and valuing unwaged work, and on women's human rights and reproductive health.
- o We are interested in the work of Mexico's National Program for Women, in the Ministry of the Interior. We hope that the U.S. and Mexico can work together in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

1ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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February 4, 1997, Tuesday

LENGTH: 749 words

HEADLINE: WOMEN-LATAM: SLOW HEADWAY TOWARD EQUALITY

BYLINE: By Zoraida Portillo

DATELINE: LIMA, Feb. 4

BODY:

Latin American women's groups have found it slow going coordinating with governments, official agencies and mainstream society their efforts to implement the agreements made at the 1995 Fourth World Conference of Women held in Beijing.

A recent gathering in Lima, sponsored by the Flora Tristan Center, analyzed the progress that had been made in Latin America and the Caribbean 15 months after Global Women's Conference. Delegates also discussed the ways in which the accords contained in the Global Action Platform were being implemented.

Ana Isabel Garcia, Costa Rican coordinator of the Offices of Latin American and Caribbean Women, said some progress had been made in gender initiatives in such areas as violence and the environment. But in the majority of cases these were limited to the populations of small areas and the initiatives lacked overall coordination.

Gloria Ayala, of the National Directorate for Equity for Colombian Women, said that not all governments and organizations from civil society pursued the goal of gender equality in the same way.

"There exists a widespread culture of discrimination and subordination. Many governmental ministries as well as public agencies do not properly value the central importance of gender issues and continue financing small scale projects as a means of 'helping' women," Ayala said. "Furthermore, the problematic human rights situation in each country restrains the implementation of the Global Action Platform."

Garcia explained that in order to overcome this situation it was necessary to devise strategies that did not merely reaffirm rights, but had a national scope that could be undertaken by governments, to united diverse political forces, mainstream society and non-governmental organizations.

Other delegates spoke of the need for women to proceed from participatory democracy to representative democracy.

"If we follow the current trend, half-a-century will pass before we achieve equity," declared Virginia Vargas from Peru, the former Latin American Coordinator of the Beijing Conference and current director of Flora Tristan Center. She deplored the low percentage of women who occupy positions of public rank in the Latin American region.

Arising from this situation was the suggestion to deepen efforts to achieve quotas that assured a minimum representation of women in governmental operations and in the various political parties.

According to U.N. statistics women occupy between four and nine percent of parliamentary and municipal positions in the Andean region. These percentages decline when the position of women is considered at the ministerial level.

Dulce Maria Sauri, of the National Program for Mexican Women, said that her country displayed one of the highest percentages of parliamentary representation by women: 14 percent. But, she added, since 1953 when women were given the vote, only six women have ever headed a government ministry.

Monica Munoz, a representative of United Nations' Office for Women for the Andean Region, said that her office pays special attention to women's access to political power in the area due to the fact that there is such scant participation in public life. The conference also heard that violence against women was still a grave problem throughout the region.

Munoz pointed out that in the Ecuadorean capital of Quito, where acts of aggression perpetrated on women filled police charge sheets, "some 17.5 percent of daily police charges are cases of aggression against women, 82 percent of which take place in the home. The perpetrators are either husbands or live-in partners."

Lilian Celiberti, from Uruguay, urged that the movement not to remain on a merely legal and political plane, but rather to go on to create genuine mechanisms to mobilize the women's movement and other grass-roots organizations.

Celiberti declared, "What must not happen is what has taken place in Uruguay, where the government and the political system together believe that the problems of women have been resolved, simply because they have their civil rights...these rights are manifest only at the legal level which, while important, isn't everything since the same rights get distorted in practice."

The Lima meeting set down guidelines for action that would enable organizations that work with women to make particular policy applications that "harmonize with the particular reality in each country."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 5, 1997

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HEADLINE: Women demand fair share of the economic pie at global summit

BYLINE: McClean, Marva

BODY:

Women demand fair share of the economic pie at global summit.

"Let's talk money. Let's talk big money," implored Vice President Speciosa Wandire-Kazibwe of Uganda in her opening address at the third Global Summit of Women which sought to bring together female leaders from around the world to consider new ways to promote economic empowerment.

The summit, held at the Hotel intercontinental Jan. 9-12, had the participation of such dignitaries as Daisy Avance-Fuentes, Member, House of Representatives, Philippines; Jeannine Horowitz, U.S. National Liaison, Program Bolivar, Japan; Barbara Blum, President, Adams National Bank, USA; Sen. Gwendolyn Tonge, Antigua; and Betty Freidan, Co-Founder and first president of the National organization for Women (NOW).

They spoke in strong, clear voices, their tones passionate, a symphony of accents and languages, on topics such as "Expanding Women's Access to Financing," "Opportunities of Women in International Trade," "Media Influence in Shaping Images of Women" and "The Global Economy: Trends and Challenges Facing Women."

Despite the need for interpreters, despite variations in the topics of presentation, the voices of change focused on one signal theme; how women can secure a fair share of economic and political power in the national and global economy.

The Uganda vice president offered one strategy: work in cooperation with men to promote affirmative action. She urged women not to ostracize the male in their pursuits but to recognize the benefits to be derived from having them as allies.

"Men, and indeed the world, are realizing now that it makes economic sense to promote women. Let's seize these opportunities and devise strategies to make this climate work on our behalf," she asserted.

She urged the audience to consider ways to push for global networking among themselves and to offer mentoring for women with potential to become leaders.

Those views were strongly echoed by Rebecca Grynspan, Vice President of Costa Rica, in her closing remarks on Sunday. She urged women to avoid confrontation in the workplace and, instead, use their creative energy to nurture a climate

of persuasion based on clear principles. Women, she said, should prepare themselves physically and intellectual for leadership.

She said that the pursuit of equality and empowerment should be a deliberate and concise plan incorporating five principles. Chief among them, she said is a commitment to education, including the use of technology which allows women to use time more creatively and, ultimately, to be more productive and competitive.

"We must prepare ourselves to move from grassroots involvement to the seat of power. Women must not fear politics but must become proactive in assuming a seat in the political framework," she said.

Through the summit, one question kept repeating itself: Why do men advance faster than women? Perhaps in answer to this question, the powerful gathering of women entrepreneurs, scholars and politicians was unanimous in recommending change. Recommendations included an audit of their intellectual resources, that they operate with a deliberate plan to meet the requirement for success.

As part of this strategy, Irene Ntividad, director of the summit, said, in closing that the group will set up a global network to continue to exchange ideas, do business among themselves and remain "habitually critical" of the world economic order, seizing all available opportunities to demand that women's contribution be recognized and fairly rewarded.

"We will move from volunteerism, from marginalization, to economic empowerment that we so rightly deserve," she declared to resounding applause from the audience.

ETHNIC-GROUP: African/Caribbean

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: April 7, 1997

POPULATION ISSUES

The Government of Mexico has supported population activities since the 1970's, and the current Zedillo administration has maintained that commitment despite the recent economic crisis.

Falling fertility rates: Mexico, with a population of approximately 95 million, has a total fertility rate of 2.8 children per woman. This has decreased from about 6 children per woman in the mid-1970's. Even so, the population is expected to double within 32 years. The contraceptive prevalence rate has increased from 13% in 1973 to a current rate of 56% of all married women of childbearing age using modern methods of contraception.

Policy: The Mexican Constitution affirms that each person has the right to decide freely on the number and spacing of their children. Mexico's National Population Program supports a comprehensive reproductive health approach, birth spacing, gender equity, and strengthening of the family. Some 95% of family planning and reproductive health services are funded through the regular government budget.

U.S. assistance: The U.S. has historically been the major donor assisting Mexico's population program. In the past decade, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided an estimated \$10 million annually, representing 15.5% of the total funds for family planning in Mexico during this period. In 1996, USAID contributed \$12 million.

USAID assistance has focused on expansion and improvement of family planning services, including training, information, education, and communication activities, primarily in Mexico's poor southern states and marginal neighborhoods of Mexico City and its metropolitan areas. Informed consent concerns have been raised recently in both the Mexican and U.S. press regarding alleged coercive family planning practices. Each case is treated seriously, and steps are taken to solve this problem through medical arbitration, criminal punishment of offenders, and improved counseling and informed consent procedures.

Talking Points:

- o I commend Mexico for its long-standing commitment to reproductive health and family planning which helps Mexican women space births, prevent maternal deaths, avoid unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions, and protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases.
- o I am pleased to learn that Mexico is one of the world leaders in implementing the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action, with government institutions and NGOs providing family planning services within a reproductive health framework.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Children under the age of 18 make up over 40% of Mexico's population. Major children's issues are health, street children in Mexico City, and child labor.

Health: Mexico has been successful in improving children's health, but needs continued support of research and intervention programs to address problems in specific sectors of the society and in various regions of the country. From 1980 to 1995, overall infant mortality rates dropped about 56% -- due to almost universal vaccination coverage, improved health education and sanitation. Mortality from preventable diseases such as polio, measles, and diphtheria is now almost non-existent. Mortality from diarrhea diseases has been cut over the period by 85%.

However, infant and child health problems are still prevalent in indigenous communities. States with large indigenous populations have infant mortality rates double the national average. Infectious diseases in these communities continue to be an important cause of death, and diarrhea disease mortality rates are 74% higher than the national average.

Nutrition also continues to be a problem for infants and children of both the general and indigenous populations. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) classifies Mexico as "lacking adequate strategies" to combat malnutrition among children, and reports that 30,000 children die each year of causes related to malnutrition.

Street children: More than 13,000 children live on the streets of Mexico City, many the victims of family violence. The children themselves often become involved with alcohol, drugs, prostitution, and petty thievery. While the government and NGOs conduct a number of programs for street children, corrupt police exacerbate the problem by pressuring children to commit petty crimes and extorting profits from them. The National and Mexico City Human Rights Commissions have programs designed to protect children's rights, and Mexico City has expanded housing and services for homeless children.

Child labor: The International Labor Organization has reported that 18% of Mexican children 12 to 14-years-old work. This problem is worst in agriculture, small companies, and the informal economy. The Mexican government has increased obligatory schooling to nine years and made parents responsible for their children's attendance.

Talking Point:

- o I commend the efforts Mexico is making to improve the lot of its children in the face of economic stringency.

UNCLASSIFIED

HEALTH ISSUES

Health statistics/risks: Infant mortality fell 55% between 1960 and 1995, with a current rate of 17.5 per 1,000 live births (U.S. rate: 8.0/1,000). The maternal mortality rate was 110 per 1,000 live births (1992) (U.S. rate: 7.9/1,000). Chronic and degenerative diseases displaced communicable diseases as a cause of death among Mexican adults; the three leading causes of death among men are heart disease, accidents, and cancer. The leading causes of death among preschool children in 1990 were intestinal infectious diseases, measles and accidents. Air pollution in the Mexico City area has reached alarmingly high levels, although lead levels in the air have been reduced.

U.S.-Mexico health cooperation: A Health Working Group under the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission (BNC) focuses on five priority areas: women's health, smoking (with an emphasis on adolescents), immunizations, migrant health and aging. Preferring to work through existing mechanisms, Mexico does not favor establishing a new border health commission as authorized in U.S. legislation.

Tobacco use prevention: Mexico is particularly interested in the President's tobacco initiative related to young people and the recent implementation of FDA regulations requiring identification for the sale of tobacco to adolescents (those under 18 years of age).

Immunization: The U.S. and Mexico are exploring joint sponsorship of national immunization weeks to focus attention on the need to immunize children.

Environmental health and migrant health: The U.S. and Mexico will initiate joint research to study the pesticide exposure and adverse health effects in young children. For the U.S., children of migrant farm workers who work in the fields along with their families are at highest risk.

Women's health issues: Following up on the Cairo Population Conference, Mexico is interested in cooperating with the United States on breast cancer awareness, domestic violence, life cycle changes, and smoking by adolescent girls.

Talking Point:

- o For both our countries, children are our most precious resource. In partnership, we can better approach our public health challenges, including providing our children a choice "not to smoke," ensuring they are well immunized against disease, and protecting them against harmful environmental effects.

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USAID ASSISTANCE

The USAID program in Mexico is focused on four general categories: health and family planning, the environment, economic growth, and development of democracy.

Health and family planning: This has been the largest component of USAID support, averaging \$10 million a year. Mexico's family planning program, with USAID assistance, is one of the success stories of the hemisphere, with the annual population growth rate dropping from 3% in the mid-1970's to the current 1.8% net population growth. Given the success of the Mexican population program, the present level of USAID assistance will not be needed by the end of 1998. USAID is expanding its support of HIV/AIDS prevention activities, with \$1.2 million projected for 1997.

Environment: The environmental sector is the second largest area of concentration for USAID, with \$5 million projected for 1997. Critical areas covered include mitigation of global climate change (GCC), forest and biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, energy conservation, and alternative energy sources. Current NAFTA-related environmental activities address international air and water pollution issues.

Economic growth: Current USAID programs are focused on activities which will help stimulate the Mexican economy from within. USAID will be collaborating with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to help increase effective grassroots citizen participation in the selection, design and implementation of \$15 million in IDB-financed microenterprise projects. These projects will create income and employment opportunities in low-income areas of Mexico that are a major source of illegal migration to the U.S.

Democracy and human rights: USAID provides assistance to NGOs for campaign and election observation activities. New activities will help Mexican NGOs in preventing pre-election fraud and voter coercion, and assist small municipalities with good governance initiatives. USAID will also support several Rule of Law activities which will strengthen Mexico's internal justice reform initiatives, including a judicial exchange program, development of a model alternative dispute resolution system, and improved court administration. In human rights, USAID assistance will help develop a program under which law students will provide legal services to the poor.

Talking Points:

- o I am pleased that USAID assistance has made a difference in Mexico, especially in the population planning success story.
- o We look forward to good results from microenterprise loans to generate growth where it is needed most, among the poorer segments of the population.

USAID: Family Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean

In Central America and the Dominican Republic countries, the average number of children per woman (total fertility rate) is about 3.4. Guatemala has the highest total fertility rate in the entire sub-region at 5.2. Costa Rican women have an average of 3.1 children in their lifetimes, representing the lowest fertility rate in Central America followed by the Dominican Republic with a fertility rate of 3.3.

For the Caribbean region, the average total fertility rate is 2.8 children. Haiti is the outlier in this region, with an average of 4.8 children born per woman on average. On the other end of the spectrum, Barbados has a total fertility rate of 1.6 children. Jamaica's rate is closer to the sub-regional average at 3.0 children.

On average, 61% of the Central American population use some form of contraception. The highest total contraceptive prevalence is found in Costa Rica at 76%. While Guatemala has the highest fertility rate noted above, it also has the lowest utilization of family planning methods for the entire sub-region at 31%. Approximately half of all Nicaraguans (in union) are using contraception (47%).

The average rate of contraceptive prevalence among the countries in the Caribbean is 60%--very close to Central America. Sixty-seven percent of Jamaicans are using contraceptives. On the other extreme, Haiti has a low rate of 18% of their population practicing family planning. However, this represents an increase from 7% in 1991. The Dominican Republic and Barbados have more than half of their population using contraception (56% and 54% respectively).

USAID programs in individual countries focus activities in counseling, education and training of health workers as well as providing contraceptives and support for management improvements for service delivery. In 1996, USAID provided contraceptives valued at approximately \$25 million for Central America and the Dominican Republic.

USAID provided approximately \$8 million worth of contraceptives to the countries of the Caribbean in 1996.

USAID/LAC Regional Population, Health and Nutrition Programming
The Health Services and Policy Interventions Program

This area of USAID's work is designed to address USAID's health priorities articulated in March 1994 (family planning, child survival, maternal health, and STDs/HIV). Budget and staffing realities have forced USAID/LAC to focus the program on four key components: vaccinations (including measles elimination), maternal mortality, integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) (diarrhea and acute respiratory infections), and health sector reform to foster equity of access to basic health services.

Using the successful approaches to regional activities of the two prior, five-year, LAC Regional Accelerated Immunization Projects (both implemented by PAHO), the present programs will provide resources for regional activities to assist LAC country programs to provide more effective delivery of selected health services and policy interventions.

1. Vaccination Component
(including measles elimination)

The regional initiative to eliminate measles from the Hemisphere was approved at the Pan American Sanitary Conference in September 1994. PAHO has estimated that \$53 million in donor funds are needed for a 5-year regional effort, in addition to the funds countries will need to expend on their own programs. USAID plans to contribute up to \$8 million; PAHO will provide \$9.8 million; and PAHO has pledges of \$1 million from Spain and \$2.2 million from the IDB.

a. Related Country-specific Programming

USAID missions in 8 countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru) include significant programming in support of vaccination activities designed to protect infants and children from 6 major immuno-preventable diseases: tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, polio, and measles. These programs are implemented through a variety of public and private service providers. USAID mission personnel participate actively in the country Interagency Coordinating Committees organized by Ministry of Health national program directors, comprised of all organizations implementing and supporting vaccination programs in the countries. PAHO serves as the Secretariat for the ICC in most countries.

b. Regional Programming

USAID/LAC awarded \$1.9 million in FY 96 to PAHO as the first installment of a 5-year grant of up to \$8 million to fund regional activities supporting country vaccination programs.

This follows 2 previous 5-year grants to PAHO in support of regional vaccination activities. Prior grants focused on polio eradication in the context of overall vaccination coverage improvements. This grant will focus on measles elimination in the context of sustaining vaccination coverage and programs.

The primary results of this component are:

- 1) improving the policy environment for vaccination activities, especially involving the private sector;
- 2) improving vaccination services delivered by public and private institutions; and
- 3) improving surveillance of measles in the region.

2. Maternal Mortality Component

The Ministers of Health of the Americas approved a Regional Plan for Maternal Mortality Reduction in the Americas in 1990. There has been some progress, but no significant improvement in the region overall. At the Miami Symposium, there was an agreement to draw attention to the problems of maternal mortality because of its strong linkage to the well-being of women and children.

The World Summit for Children established a goal of reducing maternal mortality by one-half from 1990 levels by the year 2000. This goal was re-iterated at the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and at the Summit of the Americas (Miami, 1994). This followed early efforts to draw attention to this problem by the World Bank's Safe Motherhood initiative in the late 1980's.

a. Country-specific USAID programming

USAID has an outstanding family planning program active in 13 of the 16 countries where we work in LAC (only Guyana, Columbia and Panama do NOT have USAID family planning programs among our presence countries). These strong family planning programs are a major contributor to reducing maternal mortality in the hemisphere, but more direct actions to reduce maternal mortality have been neglected until the last few years, when mission programs in a few countries (notably Bolivia and Guatemala) began incorporating them into their PHN programs.

b. LAC Regional programming

As a component of the Health Services and Policy Interventions Strategic Objective, LAC/W intends to provide a total of approximately \$2.5 million over the next five years to PAHO and Global Bureau cooperating agencies to reduce maternal mortality in LAC. The focus will be on regional actions to

support first-level emergency obstetric care in 11 target countries, the 10 countries with the highest maternal mortality ratios (Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay) plus the Dominican Republic.

These regional activities will maximize impact of our resources by reinforcing country programs using relatively simple technologies that can be administered at the lowest level of referral in the health systems in LAC.

Regional maternal mortality prevention activities will be implemented by a strategic alliance between PAHO, which has influence with political and technical decision makers in LAC, and USAID cooperating agencies, which are at the cutting edge of technical innovation in this relatively new intervention. The Maternal Mortality Grant was signed with PAHO during the Sixth Conference of First Ladies of the Americas on December 4, 1996. The partners for this initiative have begun the active process of jointly planning the first year's activities.

The results this component will achieve are:

- 1) increased capacity of PVO networks and Ministries of Health to identify and respond to community needs for emergency obstetric care;
- 2) improving emergency obstetric care through use of standards and protocols (not including transfusions and cesarean sections) at first level of referral health facilities¹, and
- 3) improving the policy environment for first-level emergency obstetric care (permitting nurse-midwives to administer oxytocin, for example).

3. Integrated Management of Childhood Illness Component

Worldwide, some 12 million children die each year before they reach their fifth birthday. Approximately 565,000 of those deaths occur in Latin America, and to a large extent are preventable. The majority of these deaths are attributable to diarrhea, pneumonia, measles, malaria, and malnutrition, or a combination of these conditions.

Building on past experience and lessons learned from disease-specific control programs, the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with UNICEF, has developed an integrated approach to the assessment, classification, treatment, and counseling of sick children and their caretakers. This approach

¹These are facilities with 24-hour care.

is known as Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), and forms the basis for new treatment guidelines at first-line health facilities. IMCI provides for integrated case management of the most common childhood illnesses (acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, malaria, measles, and malnutrition) which in the past were generally considered and treated separately. PAHO estimates that these conditions are responsible for the majority of child deaths in Latin America.

a. Country-specific USAID Programming

Country-specific programming for the IMCI strategy in the eight LAC child survival emphasis countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti) are in various stages of development. Country programs will be more fully defined as the strategy takes hold in the region and Mission programming is developed for supporting this technology.

b. LAC Regional Programming

In response to this challenge in Latin America and the Caribbean, representatives from PAHO, USAID, and the Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival (BASICS) Project collaborated on the design of a five-year, \$5 million Latin America regional strategy to improve health services in order to reduce child mortality and morbidity by attacking these main causes of disease.

The results this component will achieve are:

- 1) Country leaders have information for IMCI adoption;
- 2) Participating countries have plans and strategies in place for introduction and implementation of IMCI;
- 3) Countries capacity to implement IMCI is improved; and
- 4) Monitoring and evaluation used to adjust IMCI program plans.

4. Health Reform Component

a. Country-specific USAID Programming

Most USAID PHN programs in LAC already include some aspects of health sector reform, such as fostering an increased role for the private sector, improving financing of health care so that subsidies can serve the poorest, and improving effectiveness and efficiency of care.

b. LAC Regional Programming

This component has been collaboratively developed by PAHO and the USAID/Global Bureau's Partnerships for Health Reform and Data for Decisionmaking projects and is in the stage of final approval. It will focus on developing and testing tools and

methodologies; making information readily available; monitoring reform and results; and sharing of experiences between countries. Target countries will be the 13 countries where USAID has active PHN programs in LAC.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Regional and bilateral United States initiatives, led by USAID with the assistance of several other U.S. federal agencies, are working with Central American counterpart organizations in both the public and private sector to foster sustainable development. USG funding in Central America under both regional and bilateral assistance programs totals \$200 million in FY 1997 (\$46 million for regional and \$154 million for bilateral programs).

In the area of the environment, ongoing regional USAID sustainable development cooperation and activities are institutionalized in CONCAUSA, the U.S.-Central American Agreement, which was signed at the Miami Summit in December 1994. CONCAUSA seeks to conserve the region's rich biodiversity, strengthen environmental legislation and compliance, improve environmental protection standards, reduce environmental contamination, and promote clean efficient energy use. USG funding in support of CONCAUSA totals \$26.5 million over five years.

USAID also supports a number of other Central American regional programs focused on economic growth and trade, democracy and human rights, health, including HIV/AIDS prevention, and education policy. The distinctive feature of the regional programs is that they are carried out with regional Central American institutions and seek regional approaches and efficiencies to complement national and global activities.

USAID maintains bilateral economic assistance programs in five of the Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Panama; the programs in Costa Rica and Belize were closed last year). The USG, through USAID, has funded special peace and reconstruction programs in El Salvador and Nicaragua and now in Guatemala. In addition, ongoing sustainable development programs focus on alleviating poverty and promoting economic growth, fostering democracy and respect for human rights, increasing access to quality integrated health care services, and promoting effective and sustainable natural resources management.

Regional and bilateral efforts in environmental protection and sustainable natural resource utilization reinforce the objectives in other sectors (governance, health, economic development, education), as well as benefit from initiatives in those areas. The sustainable use of the region's agricultural, forest, and coastal resources, along with the conservation of its extensive biodiversity, contributes significantly to the region's economic development (including from exports and eco-based tourism). Strengthened environmental standards and enforcement, and the adoption of pollution prevention and energy efficient technologies in the region improves the competitiveness of CA industries, and contributes to improved health and the well being of the region's populations. The active engagement of civil

society in policy formulation, investment decisions, implementation of environmental programs, and the resolution of natural resource conflicts reinforces and builds upon democracy and governance programs. Environment and sustainable development themes are increasingly integrated into basic education programs.

Examples of bilateral environmental programs that have achieved significant development impact include: sustainable forest management (Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica), biodiversity conservation and eco-tourism (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama), environmental education and awareness (El Salvador, Costa Rica), sustainable agriculture (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala). Environmental efforts in Panama are helping to protect the Panama Canal Watershed in order to maintain the viability of the Panama Canal due to its crucial importance for international trade.

Regional Collaboration on Sustainable Development

Central America provides a unique and commendable model of effective regional collaboration on environmental protection, economic integration, and related development issues. The USG is proud to be a partner with the Central American countries in advancing sustainable development for the region's current populations and future generations.

Importance of Sustainable Development in Central America

- alleviates poverty and contributes to economic development by providing viable investment and employment opportunities
- reduces human health threats related to environmental contamination
- increases trade with the U.S. and provides investment opportunities for U.S. companies
- protects biodiversity that has regional and global importance
- contributes to a reduction in global warming
- enhances political and social stability within the region
- reduces prospects for illegal activities, including drug trafficking and illegal migration to the U.S.

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Mexico and U.S. Development Cooperation

Program Scope: A small USAID Office was re-opened in Mexico in 1977 after discontinuation of the bilateral program in 1968. For greatest outreach and sustainability, USAID-funded activities are carried out through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Various U.S. Government agencies are partners in many activities. The USAID program is focused in four global categories which directly affect the future of both Mexico and the United States: health and family planning; environment (global warming and biodiversity preservations); economic growth; and democracy.

HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING: This has been the largest component of USAID support, averaging \$10 million a year. Mexico's family planning program, with USAID assistance, is one of the success stories of the Hemisphere, with the annual population growth rate dropping from 3 percent in the mid-1970s to the current 1.8 percent net population growth. Given the strong and continuous leadership and commitment by the Mexican government to its population program and its success in providing family planning services, the present level of USAID technical and programmatic assistance will not be needed by the end of 1998. Current USAID funding also is helping NGOs to prepare for full assumption of responsibility for self-sustaining programs after 1998. Recent support, focussed on expanding access to quality family planning services in rural and peri-urban areas, is being successfully undertaken by our Mexican partners. We are entering a new phase of collaboration, encouraging other developing countries to learn from Mexico's experience. Among the issues of immediate concern to the U.S. being addressed with USAID assistance are activities carried out in the poorest regions of Mexico, where the birth rate remains high. Education of Mexico's large adolescent population, many of whom will have to migrate to find work in order to support young families is emphasized. With USAID assistance, Mexico is reaching these young people to promote responsible family planning which, in turn reduces the economic necessity to seek work outside Mexico.

HIV/AIDs incidence among the 2 million workers who cross the U.S. border annually is an increasing concern. USAID is expanding its support of HIV/AIDs prevention activities, with \$1.2 million projected for 1997. These activities are concentrated in areas which receive the most transient labor migration from Central America (e.g., Chiapas, Oaxaca, Michoacan), and are providing education in the need for, and methods of, protecting against HIV/AIDs.

ENVIRONMENT: Mexico has been designated as a key climate change country by the U.S. Congress as well as a mega-biodiversity country, and the environmental sector is the second area of concentration for USAID, with \$5 million projected for 1997. Both "green" and "brown" issues are covering an array of activities in critical areas, such as mitigation of global climate change (GCC), forest and biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, energy conservation, and alternative, sustainable energy sources. The primary GCC emphasis has been on the reduction of CO2 emissions which contribute to global climate change; activities to reduce deforestation and to promote efficient use and conservation of energy resources. An integrated sustainable development approach is being implemented in protected areas and buffer zones to protect forests,

conserving natural resources and foster economically and environmentally sustainable development activities. Energy objectives are being accomplished through the promotion of demand-side management, integrated resource planning and the promotion of renewable energy technologies, trade and development. Current NAFTA-related environmental activities (implemented in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency and other U.S. agencies) address international, cross-border endangered species, air and water pollution issues. A Mexican Conservation Fund was established with \$20 million in funding from USAID and \$10 million from the GOM, to provide sustainable funding for biodiversity conservation. Activities under this fund are implemented by Mexican NGOs in partnership with major U.S. environmental NGOs, such as The Nature Conservancy.

ECONOMIC GROWTH: The presence or lack of broad-based economic opportunity for the citizens of Mexico will define the country's future and relations with the US for decades to come. Past USAID efforts have focused on efforts to harmonize rules and regulations to facilitate and expedite implementation of NAFTA; and provide technical assistance in specific areas, such as cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican Government agencies on general patent searches, violations of intellectual property rights laws and the sharing of data base materials to facilitate U.S.-Mexico trade. Current initiatives are focused on activities which will help stimulate the Mexican economy from within, including the creation of economic opportunities in the poorest areas of Mexico. To that end, USAID will be collaborating with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to help increase effective grass-roots citizen participation in the selection, design and implementation of \$15 million in IDB-financed microenterprise projects. These projects will create income and employment opportunities in low-income areas of Mexico, which are presently a major source of illegal migration to the US.

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: One of the Administration's top policy goals is successful democratization of Latin America. President Zedillo also has made democratic and Justice sector reform a centerpiece of his administration. Mexico is undergoing a major political opening which is greatly increasing pluralism, and providing a greater voice to citizens. Modest USAID assistance will help the Mexicans carry out their difficult and sensitive process of democratic reform. USAID's assistance to NGOs for campaign and election observation activities will continue. New activities will help Mexican NGOs develop techniques to prevent pre-election fraud and voter coercion, and assist small, poor municipalities assume greater responsibility for honest and transparent management of the public interest. USAID will support several Rule of Law activities which will strengthen the Mexican's own justice sector reform initiatives, and help meet priority U.S. objectives in criminal and counternarcotics law enforcement. A judicial exchange program is underway which will bring senior Mexican and U.S. jurists together to discuss issues of common priority, and help the each of them to identify elements of the others justice system which could be adapted to their own needs. Additional activities will include development of a model Alternative Dispute Resolution system, caseload management and improved court administration.

These will help the overburdened Mexican courts to handle serious criminal and counternarcotics cases more expeditiously, with far greater transparency than is presently possible. In the area of human rights, USAID assistance will help Mexican law schools and NGOs develop a program under which law students will provide legal aid services to the poor as part of their legal training.

Poverty

Mexico is characterized by widespread and extreme poverty. Before the most recent 1994 economic crisis, the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) estimated 36 percent of the population, 34 million people, lived in poverty. One-third, 11.3 million, lived in extreme poverty, with incomes less than the cost of an even minimally adequate diet. Mexico's reported per capita income (\$2,762 in 1995) is extremely misleading. It reflects a tiny band of export oriented activity, mostly confined to the maquila industries along the northern border. The majority of Mexicans do not benefit from this sector of the economy.

Most of Mexico's poor live in rural areas and are heavily concentrated in the four southern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero and Michoacan where 65 percent of the population is below the poverty line. This percentage has been rising. These states, which make up only 15 percent of the total population, contain over half the population living in extreme poverty. These states also have the highest concentrations of indigenous people and the poverty rate among the indigenous communities of these four states is an alarmingly high 80 percent. These states are the principal source of illegal migrants to the U.S., because they offer few opportunities for the impoverished majority.

The disastrous effects of the peso crisis of 1994 (during which an estimated one million jobs were lost) on many Mexicans live on. Wealth continues to be highly concentrated, some estimate just 5 percent of the population controls 90 percent of the wealth.

Pervasive poverty, particularly in the rural areas, has led to increasing urbanization of Mexico and increasing concentrations of the poor in urban areas, particularly in metropolitan Mexico City. Mexico now is 70 percent urban and even before the 1994 crisis the urban population below the poverty line had increased from 20 percent in 1970 to 30 percent in 1992.

The urban poor overwhelmingly earn their living in "informal sector" activities, with neither the legal protection nor the social services which come with formal employment. Most are self-employed working on the public streets. Thirty-five percent of informal workers in Mexico are women.

Mexico prides itself on an extensive social service system to help mitigate the consequences of poverty. But with a large population and a severely slashed public sector budget resulting from the 1994 financial crisis, social services are greatly reduced with devastating consequences for the poor. On average, adult Mexicans have 6.4 years of formal education; while the majority of people living below the poverty line receive only one to two years of schooling. Twenty-three percent of children are stunted due to nutritional growth retardation (as high as 35 to 40 percent in southern, mostly indigenous states), and one-third have diets deficient in micronutrients, making them susceptible to infectious diseases.

Press Qs & As

Q: Given the importance of Mexico to US foreign policy, why is USAID assistance so relatively modest?

A: First, USAID assistance to Mexico needs to be put into context. Our relationship with Mexico is a "mature partnership". Mexico manages and pays for most of its own development programs. What they cannot finance internally receives substantial loan support from large multilateral donors, e.g. the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Second, the Mexicans want a full working partnership with the United States, not a classic aid donor-aid beneficiary relationship. When USG assistance is perceived as useful, the Mexicans often pick up all funding responsibility as soon as possible, reducing the actual cost of our assistance programs.

One cannot judge from USAID's annual funding levels the actual extent and effectiveness of the program. Given the availability of other funds, and the Mexicans' own considerable management ability, the USAID role is neither that of financier, nor manager of major projects. Rather, it is one of introducing new ideas and American technology to provide a catalyst for highly capable Mexican organizations, e.g. NGOs, to develop and carry out their own programs. A case-in-point is the new democracy program under which USAID will provide very modest amounts annually, but achieve far-reaching impact and leverage substantial other donor resources to meet our objectives.

The funding mechanism selected also affects our bottom line. In 1996, for example, USAID provided a large, one-time contribution (\$19.5 million) to be matched by the Mexican Government, to create a self-sustaining trust fund for future environmental conservation. This will support years of activities without any recurring claims on US development assistance.

In the case of family planning, the USG contribution has been substantial (approximately \$10 million per year) over the past 2 decades. USAID resources have helped create one of the most successful population programs in the Hemisphere. But the Mexican Government and participating NGOs have reached the point where they can carry the programs without further USAID involvement, or they can purchase any further technical assistance necessary. Therefore, the USG will phase out of population funding in 1998.

Press Qs & As

What assistance is USAID providing in support of Mexico's electoral, judicial, legislative and/or decentralization reforms?

Mexico is going through an unprecedented process of democratic opening and reform. This is one of President Zedillo's top priorities, and considerable progress already has been made in areas such as electoral reform, decentralization of governing authority to the state and local levels, justice sector reform, and reducing the power of the Presidency in favor of strengthened checks and balances between the three branches of government.

USAID began support for Mexico's democratic opening by financing NGO training and deployment of election observers. The presence of observers has meant that elections in recent years have been generally open, free, and fair, and this is leading to a far more pluralistic system. USAID will continue support for election observation, and add support for Mexican NGOs to develop methods of preventing pre-election fraud and voter coercion.

In support of President Zedillo's justice sector reform, USAID has launched a judicial exchange program. This will bring together leading Mexican and US jurists to discuss topics of mutual priority, and some of the difficult issues confronting both justice systems, e.g. counternarcotics, criminal and commercial law enforcement. The exchange program will help Mexican and U.S. judges understand each other's legal system better, and will help the Mexicans to identify practices and procedures which could be adapted to improve their own system.

USAID also will help the Mexicans improve the efficiency of their court system. Under one activity, USAID will support development of a new Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism which could handle non-criminal cases through mediation, and reduce the current, overwhelming caseload backlog. Assistance will be provided to the Federal Judicial Council which was charged with streamlining and modernizing court administration. USAID's activities complement those of other U.S. agencies which are working to strengthen Mexico's counterdrug and criminal law enforcement by creating an efficient, effective court system to handle new and important cases.

The Mexican Government plans to issue a new policy decentralizing authorities and limited additional federal revenues from national government to the state and local levels. But many local governments (particularly in the poorest states to the south) are unprepared to handle their new responsibilities. USAID will support Mexican NGOs which train municipal officials in good governance, accountability and basic functions such as budgeting and programming for public works. USAID will also collaborate with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to strengthen local citizen participation in the selection, design and implementation of income-generating microenterprise projects in selected southern states.

Press Qs & As

What mechanisms does USAID have in place to assure support actually is received by the intended beneficiaries?

- USAID assistance is subject to all the reviews and oversight applicable to federal programs, e.g., internal financial analysis and review by the Inspector General and General Accounting Office. In addition all USAID assistance is channeled through U.S. federal agencies, and Mexican and U.S. nongovernmental organizations, all of whom must meet stringent management and financial safeguards before receive USAID resources and that must meet annual accounting and financial reporting requirements, i.e., no USAID funds go to Mexican government agencies or public officials."
- As indicated by the firing of 1,200 police and other officials over the past year, the recent dismissal of the director of Mexico's National Institute to Combat Drugs, Mexican authorities are starting to take measures to address their corruption problems.

CONCAUSA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

General:

- The USAID regional program is providing core support to CONCAUSA (Conjunto Centro America-USA) that has significantly reinforced the leadership of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) in environment and sustainable development initiatives. Positive change has been achieved in environmental legislation; six new protected areas have been created; a highly unique spirit of regional collaboration has resulted in the incorporation of environmental factors into important decisions in both the public and private sectors.

Biodiversity (\$ 1.8 million USAID funds spent to-date)

- Central American countries have ratified international and regional treaties on climate change (joint implementation), biodiversity, forestry, and transportation of hazardous waste.
- In March 1997 the C.A. Ministers of Environment achieved consensus on guidelines for definition of the C.A. Protected Area System. These will be submitted to C.A. leaders for their approval.
- CCAD and national governments are endorsing delegation of authority to indigenous groups for the control of coastal and other productive resource areas.
- 13 grants have been provided to NGOs and communities in Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama for implementation of local environmental action plans and resolution of environmental problems in cross-border areas.
- Multi-lateral donors are coordinating for biodiversity activities under shared regional objectives, including the establishment of the C.A. Ecological Corridor ("Paseo Pantera").
- Electronic links with U.S. and C.A. biodiversity conservation organizations have been established to enhance information exchange, access and analysis among governments and NGOs.
- CCAD is leading the definition of a united C.A. position on climate change.
- Six new protected areas have been created.

Environmental Legislation and Pollution Prevention (\$ 1.6 million USAID funds spent to-date)

- The recently-established network of C.A. Environmental Law Organizations is training C.A. judges, advocates, NGOs and business associations in environmental law.
- Regional pollution prevention networks have been established to address solid waste and waste water management, and safe use of pesticides. These networks are resulting in environmentally-sound decisions, including investment in solid waste management. (For instance, as a result of USAID intervention with EPA technical assistance, the city of San Salvador decided not to invest in a municipal incinerator).

- National legislatures have begun passing environmental laws and regulations with the assistance of the CCAD Environmental Legislation program and the network for environmental law and enforcement comprised of government officials from all 7 C.A. countries.
- Waste water regulations have been approved in Belize, Honduras and Nicaragua, air contamination laws/regulations have been approved in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama, and several similar laws are in preparation.
- Pollution prevention and environmental action plans at the municipal level in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama are being achieved through technical assistance and community empowerment processes.
- Parameters and procedures for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are being established and standardized regionally. The use of EIAs is being increasingly mandated throughout the region.

Energy (\$1.2 million USAID funds spent to-date)

- Two regional seminars on "Preparation and Negotiation of Electric Power Purchases from the Private Sector" were held in Guatemala (June 1995) and Panama (February 1996).
- A regional workshop on Joint Implementation for reducing atmospheric carbon was held in June 1995 in Costa Rica.
- Technical assistance was provided for implementation of power sector regulatory reform in Guatemala (ongoing since early 1996), and in El Salvador and Nicaragua (ongoing since October 1996).
- Financial support has been provided for sixty renewable energy projects including hydro, wind, and biomass energy generation.
- The Environmental Enterprises Assistance Fund and its subsidiary partially funded by USAID, Empresas Ambientales de Centro America, were awarded a \$10 million multi-donor funded credit line to establish the Environmental Financing Corporation. The corporation will provide investments in environmental and energy businesses and projects in Central America.

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Exerpt from Distant Neighbors (A Portait of the Mexican)

- A. Riding

I

The Mexicans

I

Amidst the noise and fumes of Mexico City, there is a quiet square where the modern Foreign Ministry building and a sixteenth-century Spanish Colonial church look onto the remains of the pre-Hispanic pyramids of Tlatelolco. The government has named it the Plaza of Three Cultures to venerate Mexico's mixed-blood heritage, or *mestizaje*. In front of the church, a plaque carries these simple but moving words: "On August 13, 1521, heroically defended by Cuauhtémoc, Tlatelolco fell into the hands of Hernán Cortés. It was neither a triumph nor a defeat: it was the painful birth of the *mestizo* nation that is Mexico today."

Yet, the birth pains of the new *mestizo* race are not over. More than 460 years after the Conquest, neither the triumph of Cortés nor the defeat of Cuauhtémoc has been properly assimilated, and the repercussions of that bloody afternoon in Tlatelolco continue to be felt. Today, in strictly ethnic terms, 90 percent of Mexicans are *mestizos*, but as individuals they remain trapped by the contradictions of their own parentage. They are the sons of both Cortés and Cuauhtémoc, yet they are neither Spanish nor Indian. They are *mestizos*, but they cannot accept their *mestizaje*. As a nation too, Mexico searches endlessly for an identity, hovering ambivalently between ancient and modern, traditional and fashionable, Indian and Spanish, Oriental and Western. And it is in both the clash and the fusion of these roots that the complexity of Mexico resides.

The Mexicans have no difficulty in understanding each other. They do so through the secret codes—the customs, language and gestures—that they learn unconsciously from childhood, accepting the consistency of their inconsistencies as part of an established pattern which they are merely repeating. Yet they anguish when it comes to explaining themselves. They realize that they are different—not only from Americans

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and Europeans but also from other Latin Americans—but they seem unsure why. Poets, novelists, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists have been called on to define “Mexicanness”—or *Mexicanidad*—but even they become dizzy trying to distinguish the “masks” from the “real” faces of the Mexican personality. There is a magical, almost surreal air about the Mexicans that refuses to be captured. Still more frustratingly, when it is trapped by a description, it disguises itself as a caricature.

The key lies in the past, a deep subconscious past that stays alive in Mexicans today. It is a continuous past, but not a consistent past. In it, Mexicans must conciliate being conquered and conqueror, retaining many of the racial characteristics and personality traits of the Indians and even glorifying their pre-Hispanic heritage, while speaking Spanish, practicing Catholicism and thinking of Spain as the mother country. As a society, the legacy of the past is no less overwhelming. On the ruins of a long line of theocratic and militaristic empires, Cortés imposed the values of a profoundly Catholic and intellectually repressed Spain. The Conquest therefore reinforced a powerful tradition of political authoritarianism and divine omnipotence that to this day resists the incursions of Western liberalism.

Other countries of Latin America were also conquered and colonized by Iberia, but with different results. The sparsely populated colonies of the Caribbean and Atlantic coasts were shaped by migrants from Europe and, later, by slaves from Africa. In the countries of Central America and the Andes, where large Indian populations survive, pure-blooded Europeans still comprise the ruling classes. Mexico alone is truly *mestizo*: it is the only nation in the hemisphere where religious and political—as well as racial—*mestizaje* took place; it has the only political system that must be understood in a pre-Hispanic context; and its inhabitants alone are still more Oriental than Western. In few countries of the world are history, politics and social structure so mirrored in—and a mirror of—the character of its people.

At times, it seems as if the Spaniards took over the bodies of the *mestizos* and the Indians retained control of their minds and feelings. In the end, mind prevailed over matter. Most Mexicans are meditative and philosophical, they are discreet, evasive and distrustful, they are proud and consumed by questions of honor, they are forced to work hard but dream of a life of leisure, they are warm, humorous and sentimental and occasionally also violent and cruel, they are enormously creative and imaginative yet impossible to organize, they are internally set in their ways and externally anarchic. Their relationship with each other—and

with society as a whole—is guided by tradition rather than principles, pragmatism rather than ideology and power rather than law.

Perhaps the strangest contrast is the ritual and disorder that seem to coexist within the Mexican, yet this too illustrates the predominance of the spiritual over the material. A powerful religiosity, adherence to traditions, a ceremonious mode of behavior, the formality of language, all involve caring for the emotional and spiritual side of life. The mechanical efficiency, punctuality and organization of an Anglo-Saxon society, in contrast, seem purposeless. What counts to the Mexican is what he is rather than what he does, the man rather than the job: he works to live and not the inverse. He can deal with external chaos if his spiritual concerns are cared for, but he cannot allow his identity to be obliterated by man-made forces. Rather, he interprets the world in accordance with his emotions. In an environment of apparent disorder, he can improvise, create and eventually impose his own personality on events. And in the end, in the name of expressing his individuality, he contributes to disorder.

This basic attitude is evident in all facets of life. The Mexican is not a team player: in sports, he excels in boxing but not in soccer, in tennis but not in basketball. He finds it difficult to subscribe to any ideology that demands strict coherence between his ideas and his actions. Even legal rights must often be filtered through the discretionary power of individuals to become personal favors. And while a Mexican's influence may be derived from his political position, he exercises it as a projection of his personality. Perhaps recognizing that some substitute for self-discipline and respect for the law is needed to make society function, he also accepts the dictates imposed by an authoritarian ethos. Thus, from family to nation, the rules that operate are virtually tribal. If he wishes to belong and benefit, those rules must be respected.

Carrying the accumulated beliefs, customs and passions of centuries, the Mexican possesses enormous internal strength. And just as this expresses itself in a metaphysical sense of solitude, it also erupts in almost uncontrolled creativity. The temples, sculptures, jewelry and pottery bequeathed by the pre-Hispanic civilizations belong to an unbroken tradition of artistic expression. Today, not only Indians but also *mestizos* remain extraordinary craftsmen in a tradition that still regards a punctilious sense of detail and design as more important than mass production. Their weaving, their pottery, their metalwork and woodwork all carry their distinctive personal imprints. Their defiant use of colors—wild pinks, purples, greens and oranges—is no less original, reflecting both the real and the paper flowers that decorate their lives. The endless variety

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and careful presentation of Mexican food provide an arena that combines ritual and improvisation. And Mexicans burst into song at the least provocation.

Even the Western sense of time has been resisted by Mexicans. Cultures that view birth as a beginning and death as an end can have no sense of a living past. For Mexicans, neither birth nor death is seen to interrupt the continuity of life and neither is considered overly important. In songs, paintings and popular art, death is even mocked. On the Day of the Dead each November, Mexicans crowd the country's cemeteries, carrying flowers and even food and drink to the graves of their ancestors, much as the Aztecs did. Belief in communion with the dead is widespread, not in a psychic or spiritualist sense or as a function of a Christian faith in the afterlife, but simply as an outgrowth of the knowledge that the past is not dead.

Conversely, the future is viewed with fatalism, and as a result, the idea of planning seems unnatural. If the course of events is predestined, Mexicans see little reason to discipline themselves to a routine. Businessmen gamble on large, fast profits rather than long-term expansion of a market, individuals prefer spending to saving—they may save for a fiesta but not for a bank—and even corruption reflects the concept of seizing an opportunity now and facing the consequences later. In government, planning bureaus have long existed, but their plans belong to the realm of fantasy, serving as idealistic expressions of goodwill rather than sets of objectives that must be achieved. Ambition, in a meritocratic American sense, barely exists outside the urban middle classes. The Mexican may work as hard as his Indian forefathers, but he dreams of emulating his Spanish ancestors, who arrived to conquer and not to labor: the image of success is more important than any concrete achievement.

Time itself involves rules that must be defied. On a daily basis, punctuality seems unimportant, since nothing enjoyable or important now is worth truncating for the sake of a future appointment: arriving an hour or more late for a dinner party does not merit an apology; to the contrary, it is arriving on time that is considered rude. From a senior official to a neighborhood plumber, appointments may be made with little expectation that they will be honored, and little offense is taken when they are ignored. The practice of absenteeism after a weekend is even institutionalized in "San Lunes"—"St. Monday"—which by itself is considered sufficient explanation. Logic often does not apply: a maid may leave a job the day before her wage is due for no better reason than *ganas*—that she felt like it. The *mañana* syndrome is therefore not a symptom of chronic inefficiency or laziness, but rather evidence of an entirely differ-

ent philosophy of time. If the past is safe, the present can be improvised and the future will look after itself.

Thus, the disasters that befall Mexicans are not major disappointments, because they are considered unavoidable. *Ni modo*—meaning “tough luck” or, more literally, “no way” that a setback could have been averted—is the traditional response to failure or accident. Physical defeats even serve to enhance the value of spiritual victories and underline the supremacy of soul over body. The fatalism is familiarly Indian. The pre-Hispanic civilizations would seek “signs” to the future in the behavior of Nature—or their gods—but in no way did they feel able to influence events. In the post-Colonial period, the Virgin of Guadalupe played the same role, providing the hope of miracles but engendering no bitterness if petitions went unanswered. “Until now, Mexicans have only known how to die,” Samuel Ramos wrote darkly in his classic *The Profile of the Mexican and His Culture*, in the 1930s, “but it is time for them to acquire the knowledge of life.”

In reality, the country's own historical record of defeats and betrayals has prepared Mexicans to expect—and accept—the worst. The official heroes—from Cuauhtémoc to Emiliano Zapata—have invariably been murdered, while the ideals enshrined in laws and constitutions have been universally betrayed. “The hero's tomb is the cradle of the people,” the poet Octavio Paz wrote in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, his controversial analysis of the Mexican personality. And he added: “We are nihilists, except that our nihilism is not intellectual but instinctive and therefore irrefutable.”

It was the very first “defeat” of the Conquest that enabled the Spanish colonizers to inculcate a sense of ethnic inferiority in the Indians. Inherited by the *mestizos*, this led to a form of racism that is manifested to this day in disdain for pure Indians and special respect for *güeros*, or whites: to be accompanied in public by *una güera*, a blond woman, is considered by many men to be the height of status. More important, this also led to self-denigration and insecurity, which were in turn hidden, though not obliterated, by the masks of *machismo* and bravado behavior. Imitation—first of Spaniards, then of the French and, more recently, of Americans—provided additional protection, and even innate pessimism served as a defense against disappointment. The Mexican thus flees from a reality that he cannot handle into a world of fantasy where pride, idealism and romance can safely flourish and passion dominates reason.

Beyond the cautious ceremoniousness of the Mexican, there hides great warmth and humanity. The extended family is the principal safe haven where emotions can be shown without risk, where unquestioning

loyalty is guaranteed, where customs are maintained. Within the family are included the key figures of the *compadre* and *comadre*, the godparents of a child. The Mexican also feels strong ties to his barrio, or rural village, where the rules are familiar and the threats minimal. Even among casual acquaintances, he seems almost anxious to lower his defenses, to share in a degree of trust. Once an emotional bond is established, once a *cuate*—literally, twin—relationship exists, he is open and generous, willing to confide and hospitable to extremes. All he asks is that his sincerity be reciprocated. To invite a stranger to his home becomes an act of great symbolism: he is showing the real face of how he lives by sharing the intimacy of his family.

The Mexican male's insecurity is best illustrated by his constant fear of betrayal by women. A contemporary anthropological explanation remains appealingly neat: Mexico's *mestizaje* began with the mating of Spanish men and Indian women, thus immediately injecting into the male-female relationship the concepts of betrayal by women and conquest, domination, force and even rape by men. Just as the conqueror could never fully trust the conquered, today's *macho* must therefore brace himself against betrayal. Combining the Spaniard's obsession with honor and the Indian's humiliation at seeing his woman taken by force, Mexico's peculiarly perverse form of *machismo* thus emerges: the Spaniard's defense of honor becomes the Mexican's defense of his fragile masculinity.

In practice, this takes the form of worship of the female ideal, exemplified by the image of the long-suffering, abnegated and "pure" Virgin of Guadalupe and personified by each Mexican's own mother, who is seen as the giver of life and therefore incapable of betrayal. Conversely, the wife, who as an object of sex is considered an aberration from feminine perfection, must be humiliated, since a husband's faithfulness or excessive affection would imply vulnerability and weakness. Mistresses provide the man the opportunity to conquer and to betray in anticipation of betrayal. The wife's resentment toward her husband is then translated into smothering love for her son, who in turn elevates her to the status of female ideal but adopts his father's example as a husband.

Whether or not this neo-Freudian analysis is wholly valid, the male-female relationship in Mexico is often marked by tension and distrust. Like men, women therefore also spend most of their time with members of their own sex, not least their *comadres*. Contact with men is too complicated to be casual, and even at social gatherings a woman will either cling to her husband or gather with a group of other women. Women, too, are thus assigned a ritual to which they must adhere, acting

as mothers and homemakers and suffering enormous social and family pressure when they decide to seek careers. But in both cases they remain the pivot of the family, the most reliable point of reference in a society where the phenomena of illegitimate children, broken homes and absentee fathers are widespread.

While seeking points of security, the Mexican lives much of the time introspectively. For this solitude and self-restraint, the *fiesta* provides a vital catharsis. The excuse could be a religious or patriotic occasion, a birthday or a saint's day or perhaps one of myriad special days: mothers, fathers, children, *compadres*, teachers, builders, postmen, taxi drivers, garbage collectors, secretaries, soldiers and many more all have a day assigned to them for the receipt of presents and *abrazos* and the organized pursuit of happiness. Firecrackers, trumpets, songs and shouts break the inner silence of Mexican men. Then, unlocked by alcohol, sentimentality, self-pity and frustration pour out, usually channeled harmlessly into popular songs* that articulate the bitterness of unrequited love and the honor of violent death and at times expressed in unexpected outbursts of aggression.

The Plaza Garibaldi in Mexico City, with its crowded bars and mariachi musicians, is a monument to this instinctive psychoanalysis, where Mexicans go to bare their hearts and weep over what they see. "The *fiesta* is at once sumptuous and intense, lively and funereal," Octavio Paz wrote. "It is a vital multicolored frenzy that evaporates in smoke, ashes, nothingness. In the aesthetics of perdition, the *fiesta* is the lodging place of death." Getting drunk is itself a ritual, an opportunity to express love and hate. Mexicans even refer, only half jokingly, to the four stages of a *borrachera*, or binge, among friends: toasts to their friendship; reminders of past offenses; criticism of the clergy and the government; songs and folkloric dances. Without the release of the *fiesta*, Mexican society would be more unstable and unpredictable.

II

The high walls that surround most Mexican homes, including frequently those of the poor, serve as both real and symbolic frontiers of security and authority. When the Mexican male steps outside them, he acts as if confronting a hostile society with which he feels minimal solidarity. The concept of commonweal barely exists and community approaches to

*The lexicon of such songs is rich, but one illustrates their mood: "Life is worth nothing / Nothing is what life's worth / It always begins with crying / And crying is how it ends / So that's why in this world / Life is worth nothing."

shared problems are rare. In the countryside, the determination of peasants to farm their own tiny plots condemns them to perpetual poverty. Efforts to organize voluntary work to build a school or a health clinic invariably fail. In urban areas, strewn garbage, undisciplined traffic and acute air pollution are functions of this same social egoism. Even among the wealthy, the idea of supporting charities is alien, with the result that many orphanages in Mexico depend entirely on contributions from the foreign community.

Society as a whole functions through relationships of power, while individual rights are determined by levels of influence. With all intimacy shielded by masks of formality, Mexicans seem like actors, constantly adapting their roles to circumstances without risk of spiritual exposure or commitment. They also perform against an invisible background of latent violence that discourages explosions of temper or frustration: since the consequences of a test of wills can be bloody, confrontation is avoided and conciliation becomes second nature. The poet Andrés Bello once contrasted the attitudes of Spaniards and Mexicans: "The Spaniard speaks axiomatically, bossing and ordering, while we are always seeking concord when we discuss—you're half right and I'm half right." Even in the madness of Mexico City's traffic, horns are rarely blown and insults only occasionally exchanged because many drivers still carry weapons in their glove compartments. In politics, this attitude is still clearer: fear of another revolution keeps the negotiating spirit alive.

Reluctant to risk emotional contact, Mexican men touch each other physically in a familiarly Latin way, automatically shaking hands or, more intimately, walking arm in arm. Women also kiss each other upon introduction and whenever they meet. The principal ceremony is the embrace, and since the purpose is mutual reassurance rather than pledge of friendship, it follows a strict pattern. First comes the handshake, followed by the *abrazo* and two hearty coordinated back slaps and, finally, a second handshake and shoulder slap. Even this ritual involves social perils. An attempt to embrace a superior who resists the gesture is considered a humiliation; a voluntary *abrazo* from a boss, preferably in public, is to be celebrated. Above all in the world of politics, the quality of embraces is scrutinized for evidence of favor: on numerous occasions each year, politicians—men and women—will line up for hours in the hope of receiving an *abrazo* from the President.

Status and appearances are crucial throughout society. The poor spend ostentatiously to hide the "shame" of their poverty, going into debt to pay for village fiestas, lavish weddings, birthday parties and funerals. Among the more affluent, similar symbols proliferate. An ex-

pensive present reflects the wealth of the donor as much as the importance of the recipient. Men wrestle for the privilege of picking up the check in a restaurant, while the American practice of "going Dutch" is considered offensive. In public life, perhaps the most valued evidence of status is an entourage of underemployed aides and bodyguards. They may carry out such chores as whispering telephone messages and opening a way through traffic bottlenecks for the *jefe's* dark limousine, but their principal function is simply to constitute a retinue. In government circles as in families, *machismo* can almost be measured by the number of dependents.

The use of titles reinforces the sense of hierarchy that pervades society. Titles of nobility were banished by the 1910 Revolution, but new ones appeared. Such titles as *Don* and *Doctor*, commonly used in other Latin American countries, are seldom encountered in Mexico. But at lower levels of the bureaucracy and in business, to be a *licenciado*, or university graduate, in itself implies a sphere of influence and requires the wearing of suit and tie as evidence of clout. Academic achievement is less important than social style, and not a few self-confident politicians assume the title *Licenciado* without possessing a degree. More subtly, the head of an office is referred to, not as *Licenciado* So-and-So, but as *El Licenciado*, as if no other existed. At more senior levels of power, the President or a minister is known simply as *El Señor*, a title which normally means "Mr." but preceded by the definite article becomes "The Lord" in a manorial or religious sense and is the most deferential form of reference. The title *Maestro* has several functions. A plumber, painter or carpenter will expect his skills to be recognized in this way, but many senior officials consider it important to give classes at the university, if only to be addressed as *Maestro*—teacher—by both their students and their former students.

Formal and obscure language is probably the Mexican's prime weapon of self-defense. Using seemingly meaningless words and phrases, he can protect his emotions, avoid the risk of committing himself and even lavish praise without feeling servile. The concept is simple: language has a life of its own, almost as if words rather than people communicated with each other. Even pre-Hispanic paintings illustrated conversation by means of balloons hovering detached in front of the speakers. Empty promises and outright lies come easily since the words have no intrinsic value of their own. Excessive frankness or directness is considered rude, and even substantive discussions must be preceded by small talk about family or political gossip. Language serves as the neutral ground on which people can relate without danger of confrontation.

In public life, the independence of words is crucial since senior officials expect to be flattered. The talents attributed to each President—while he is in office—verge on the ridiculous. Yet the flock of acolytes surrounding each *jefe* are not expected to justify their servility after the official leaves power; rather, they simply transfer their praise to the next *jefe*. The rhetoric used by officials to discuss public issues is, still more bemusing. Any aspiring politician can launch into oratory at a moment's notice with the intention of crowding the air with fine words and phrases rather than elucidating. Since the use of direct language would imply commitment, much of the official discourse is conceptual, defending principles and values that most governments in practice ignore. Electoral platforms are built around grandiose phrases sustained by wishful thinking. Myriad messages—from the nationalist pontifications of historical figures to direct moral admonitions—are painted on walls as if they have the power to influence the ordinary Mexican's thinking.

When a real political message must be conveyed, it is usually disguised in a secret code that foreigners, even Spanish-speaking foreigners, must struggle to decipher. Presidents may refer to "emissaries from the past" or "external mirrors." The head of the ruling party once viciously attacked "those who from dark cabals establish shameful alliances that the people reject," a reference that only a handful of politicians could understand. (He was referring to a meeting between conservative opposition politicians and United States diplomats.) At times, the chosen words may even contradict the intended meaning, leading the uninitiated to the wrong conclusion. On other occasions, a strong denial—"There is no crisis"—serves to confirm official recognition of a problem. The country's newspapers generally contribute little enlightenment: they usually avoid the perils of analysis and in-depth reporting by publishing endless interviews, while more pertinent political columns frequently require decoding before they can be comprehended.

Caution is the norm. When Mexican officials are invited to speak abroad, no amount of tough questioning will elicit admissions of failures of the system. Even Mexican historians, political scientists and sociologists are reluctant to be frank in public, and some avoid appearing on a podium with opposition politicians intent on embarrassing the regime. Because of the risks involved in defining oneself, most important academic treatises about Mexico have been written by foreigners. Yet this entire ritual serves an important political purpose. It provides a smoke screen behind which real power can be exercised while the illusion of a political debate is preserved. And although each President can determine

the ideological tint of his administration, the unchanging rhetoric gives continuity to the system, if only by perpetuating its myths.

The language of public life essentially mirrors the language used by Mexicans in their day-to-day relationships. It is a language of formality in which endless subtleties can be hidden. Some ornate phrasing is used unconsciously. A child is taught to introduce himself by giving his name and adding *para servirle*, or "ready to serve you." A Mexican will refer to himself in the third person as *su servidor*, or "your servant." He will describe his own home as *su casa*, or "your house," to which a mumbled *gracias* is expected. But among close friends, the language is enormously flexible. There are words for all seasons, and talking—wittily and cynically—is what counts. (The *mitotero*—someone who literally creates myths or stories to inflate his own importance—is particularly mocked if he can be exposed.) Meanings are tucked between lines, in pauses, emphasis or intonation, even in odd sounds or gestures. Jokes are usually self-mocking or derogatory about Mexico in general, while close friends will constantly joust verbally with each other. Many words from Nahuatl—the language of the Aztecs—have been assimilated into Spanish and carry special significance, while *jeux de mots*, biting sarcasms and sexual double entendres are scattered through conversation, with some highly charged words used in a dozen different ways.

One word in particular, *chingar*, dominates the vernacular of curses and serves almost as a pivot of the conversation of lower-class urban men. Meaning literally "to rape," its weighty significance has been traced to the Spanish conquistador's taking of the Indian woman who became the original *chingada*. The traditional Spanish expletive *hijo de puta*, or "son of a whore," therefore became in Mexico *hijo de la chingada*, or "son of a raped woman." Endless variations on the concept have since emerged. The climactic insult of *chinga tu madre*, or "rape your mother," is invariably a prelude to violence, while *vete a la chingada* is the local variant of "go to hell." A *chingadazo* is a heavy physical blow, and a *chingadera* is a dirty trick. A Mexican can warn, jokingly or threateningly, *no chingues*, meaning "don't annoy me," and if he loses out in some way, he will admit that *me chingaron*. It is high praise to describe someone as *chingón*—that is, he is clever enough to *chingar* others—although an irritating person is *chingaquito*.

Many words are juggled with a similar spectrum of meanings, although few more than *madre*, or mother, rich in psychosexual and religious connotations. *Nuestra madre* refers to the Virgin Mary, yet, puzzlingly, the word is usually used negatively. The insult of *chinga tu*

madre can be reduced to *tu madre* with little loss of intensity, while *una madre* can mean something is unimportant and *un desmadre* converts a situation into chaos. A *madrazo* is a heavy blow, a *madreador* is a bouncer or hired thug and *partir la madre*—to “divide” the mother—means to shatter someone or something. A person with *poca madre*—“little mother”—is without shame, a *toda madre* is equivalent to a superlative and *me vale madre*—literally, “it is worth mother to me”—means “I don’t give a damn.” A son will use the diminutive form *madrecita* to address his own mother, but *mamacita* is a vulgar street comment to a passing girl or a term of endearment for a mistress. In contrast, the father figure—*el padre*—plays a lesser linguistic role. A *padrote*, or “big father,” is a pimp, while something that is excellent is *muy padre*. Perplexingly, a mother will call her young boy *papito*, “little father,” and her husband *mi hijo*, “my son.” In these endless linguistic contortions, the Mexican’s fascination with detail and obsession with nuance are constantly satisfied.

III

The past remains alive in the Mexican soul. Not all Mexicans of all regions and all classes are alike: in the provinces, they resent the imposition of what they consider the Aztec-rooted *mestizo* culture, and the middle-class minority struggles to shake off the past, sacrificing the present for a future of Americanized values and rewards. History, revised and adjusted to suit contemporary needs, is therefore mobilized to maintain the cohesion of modern society. When ancient and modern clash, emotions invariably favor the past. In late 1983, the mayor of Mexico City was forced to cancel plans to build a subway line under the capital’s main plaza after angry protests from other government departments that construction would destroy hidden remains of the Aztec Empire: the only surprise was that the mayor had lacked the sensitivity to avoid the controversy. Compared to the past, urban planning is unimportant.

History is also actively promoted. There are statues galore, streets around the country are named after past—including pre-Hispanic—heroes and historic dates, while the entire calendar is peppered with occasions to be celebrated. On March 18, the anniversary of the nationalization of Mexico’s oil industry in 1938, Mexico recalls its patriotic valor in standing up to pressure from the United States. May 5, the anniversary of the battle of Puebla, when a French occupation force was temporarily defeated in 1862, is used to reaffirm the country’s determination to defend

its territory. The entire month of September is given over to ceremonies commemorating Mexico's independence from Spain.

Even the official past remains highly topical. Interviews and columns in the press will often discuss "news" a half-century old. In 1983, the government financed a weekly supplement, distributed free with all newspapers, which reprinted selected articles from the period between 1910 and 1970. Posters of a long-deceased former President may suddenly appear in subways above some conceptual political phrase. Some symbols are taken from pre-Hispanic times: in 1978, a new monument to policemen and firemen who died in the line of duty comprised a statue of Coatlicue, the goddess of death, with a fallen Aztec warrior at her feet. Key figures of Mexican history have been divided into good and evil and, in a distinctly Oriental fashion, are used to personify such concepts as heroism, nationalism and revolutionary ideals or, alternatively, cowardice, treason, greed and repression.

Contemporary politicians commonly "adopt" a spiritual mentor from the past. In the early 1970s, President Luis Echeverría Álvarez held up as his political model the late General Lázaro Cárdenas, who in the 1930s had carried out a major land reform and expropriated foreign oil companies. Through frequent tributes to Cárdenas, Echeverría sought to associate himself with the former President's image as a strong nationalist and loyal friend of the peasantry. Upon taking office in 1976, President José López Portillo expressed identification with Quetzalcóatl, the mythical pre-Hispanic "White God" known as the Plumed Serpent. Years earlier, he had written a book about Quetzalcóatl, which was immediately reprinted and translated, and he even named his official aircraft and bus after the legendary god. President Miguel de la Madrid in turn let it be known that José María Morelos, one of the leaders of Mexico's fight for independence early in the nineteenth century, was his favorite historical figure. As the author of Mexico's first draft constitution, Morelos is a symbol of respect for law, a quality which De la Madrid wished to emphasize.

Many of those now on the same side of history fought each other viciously in their lifetimes. During the 1910-17 Revolution, Emiliano Zapata rebelled against Francisco I. Madero, and Venustiano Carranza persecuted Francisco "Pancho" Villa, but all four names are now listed together in gold letters in the Chamber of Deputies. The past, though, is not always forgiven. When in 1925 President Plutarco Elías Calles moved the remains of Mexico's Independence heroes to a new monument, he excluded the bones of Agustín de Iturbide, who finally won the war against Spain in 1821, because he still represented conservative Ca-

tholicism. In 1977, the veteran Communist leader Valentín Campa launched a campaign to have the muralist Diego Rivera expelled from the local Communist Party—twenty years after his death. Rivera's purported offense was to have flirted with Trotskyism, yet Campa's real purpose was to use the trial as the occasion to denounce the growing penetration of the party by Eurocommunist ideas. Recognizing his "Stalinist" motives, less orthodox Communists then blocked Campa's move.

One explanation for this constant reliving of the past is that honor and glory must somehow be extracted from the dizzying array of defeats and humiliations suffered by Mexicans since the Conquest. So often, those who fought on the side of "good" were vanquished, but their principles can be vindicated decades or centuries later. Typically, the Child Heroes of Chapultepec are remembered for resisting United States troops in 1847, although they died and the United States subsequently seized half of Mexico's territory. Conversely, uncomfortable features of Mexican history can be quietly buried and forgotten. Mexicans prefer to ignore evidence that their Aztec ancestors practiced cannibalism. History textbooks gloss over the entire Colonial period as well as the territorial losses to the United States, the French occupation and the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship in the nineteenth century, choosing to concentrate on the "glorious" pre-Hispanic civilizations, the fight for Independence and the achievements since the Revolution.

Extraordinary passions can be stirred by historical controversies. In 1983, the National University planned a production of a play entitled *The Martyrdom of Morelos*, by Vicente Leñero. In view of De la Madrid's fascination with Morelos, the presentation was presumed to be simple cultural opportunism. But the play revealed that, while being tortured prior to execution by a Spanish firing squad in 1815, Morelos betrayed the names, strategies and troop strengths of other key rebel commanders. Before the opening night of the play, university authorities intervened to suspend rehearsals, worried not only about offending the President but also about denigrating an immaculate hero. Assorted civic associations then mobilized to defend "the honor and glory" of Morelos, a leading politician devoted an entire speech to praising the "founder of the nation" and excoriating his critics, a controversial actor playing the part of Morelos was replaced and the producers took precautions against violent protests when the play was eventually opened to the public.

Even more dramatically, the final battle between Cortés and Cuauhtémoc is still being fought, usually as part of Mexico's continuing struggle to come to terms with its *mestizaje*, but occasionally as a symbol of

the confrontation between the Third World and "imperialism." Today, the vanquished has become the victor: since the Revolution, Mexican history has been reinterpreted by nationalists, with Cuauhtémoc presented as the hero and Cortés as the villain; and in Diego Rivera's post-revolutionary murals, Cuauhtémoc is shown as an idealized youth, while Cortés is portrayed as a syphilitic hunchback. On such an emotionally charged subject, the past will not lie peacefully: most recently, the dispute moved into the arena of bones and statues.

Upon his death in Spain in 1547, Cortés' remains were returned to Mexico and placed in the wall of the Hospital de Jesús, which he had founded. The bones were then forgotten until rediscovered in the 1940s. Almost immediately, Cuauhtémoc's bones were also "discovered" in the small town of Ixcateopán in Guerrero state, and although two scientific commissions could not verify their authenticity, they were enshrined in a glass case in the local church. In 1975, President Echeverría appointed a new commission to study the bones, this time driven by even loftier motives. "In the bold fight waged by the Third World to end the process of colonialism imposed by the world powers," he explained, "Cuauhtémoc is the germinal antecedent that began the organized resistance against colonial dependence and exploitation." To authenticate Cuauhtémoc's bones, it seemed, was to legitimize the "struggle" of the Third World. Only after Echeverría left office did the commission dare announce that the identity of the bones in Ixcateopán could still not be confirmed. On the anniversary of Cuauhtémoc's death each year, officials still stand before the bones and pronounce nationalist speeches.

President López Portillo was immensely proud of his Spanish heritage, and in 1981 he reopened the Cuauhtémoc-versus-Cortés controversy by personally unveiling a bust of the Conquistador in the Hospital de Jesús. Until that time, there was only one known statue of Cortés in Mexico—in the Casino de la Selva in Cuernavaca. The following year, another monument to Cortés was placed in the main square of the Mexico City neighborhood of Coyoacán. Dedicated to Mexico's *mestizaje*, it showed Cortés and his Indian mistress, La Malinche, sitting behind their young *mestizo* son, Martín. But as soon as López Portillo left office, it was removed, to the delight of local nationalists. Justifications for the censorial measure kept the issue alive. "Cortés represents military conquest and genocide," one historian, Gastón García Cantú, noted. "In my view, no conqueror deserves a statue. And the idea of recognizing Cortés as the founder of our nationality is a profound and reactionary mistake." Another prominent writer, Gutierre Tibón, argued that Cortés deserved a statue, although he conceded that "Mexico's spiritual climate does not

yet permit it because Mexicans have still to strike a balance between Cuauhtémoc and Cortés."

This ambivalence has continued to affect Mexico's relations with Spain. The Spanish Civil War, viewed in Mexico as the struggle between progressive good and fascist evil, enabled Mexico to give particular vent to its resentment toward Spain for its colonialist past. Not only did President Cárdenas support the Republican cause and, subsequently, give asylum to thousands of refugees, but successive Mexican governments refused to recognize the Franco regime. General Francisco Franco, it seemed, had come to personify Cortés, who could thus be symbolically punished. When diplomatic relations were restored following Franco's death, however, the main celebration was in Mexico and, soon afterwards, President López Portillo trekked to the Navarre village of Caparrosa, where his forefathers had lived.

Mexico's relationship with Spain will always be passionate. Debates still rage over whether the Conquest destroyed civilization or barbarism, whether Aztec human sacrifices were any worse than the Spanish Inquisition, whether the country's endemic corruption has pre-Columbian or Spanish roots, whether bureaucracy was an import from Spain or a natural product of Indian ritual. Today, Mexicans resent the arrogance of many Spanish migrants, with their well-earned reputation for "exploiting" local workers, but they feel drawn to all things Spanish, from singers and bullfighters to food and wines. At a national level, even though Mexico is today richer, more populous and more influential than Spain, it continues to look, perhaps subconsciously, for the mother country's approval. During a visit by Spain's Prime Minister Felipe González in June 1983, De la Madrid could not resist pointing to the significance of holding their official dinner in the Plaza de Tlatelolco, "a place that recalls the lights and shadows of our conscience" and "synthesizes the twin columns, Indian and Spanish, that explain and determine our being."

The individual insecurities of ordinary Mexicans frequently become shimmering images reflected by the country as a whole. Nowhere is this more evident than in Mexico's almost aggressive sense of nationalism. The threats, attacks, invasions and occupations that have come from abroad since the time of Independence are more than sufficient to justify Mexico's unspoken xenophobia. Yet nationalism also reflects the country's continuing feeling of vulnerability and, like *machismo*, it serves as a mask both to hide internal doubts and to display external self-confidence. Mexico's nationalism is therefore not ideological but rather part

of its survival instinct. And every government since the Revolution has bolstered the twin pillars of nationalism—strengthening a sense of national identity at home and stressing the country's independence abroad—as a way of consolidating its own power.

The mirror of Mexican nationalism today is no longer Spain or even France, but exclusively the United States. Even here the faces that Mexico shows to its neighbor are not consistent. There is resentment bequeathed by the loss of so much territory in the nineteenth century and by U.S. military interventions as recently as 1916. There is resistance to the oppressive weight of continuing U.S. political and economic influence in Mexico. There is intellectualized contempt for the materialistic culture exported by the United States. And there is the reassuring belief that "clever" Mexicans can always outwit "naïve" Americans. But among ordinary Mexicans there is also admiration for the United States and, above all, for its organization, honesty and affluence. And they happily watch American-made television programs, adopt American consumer tastes and prefer imported or contraband goods from north of the border to locally made products.

While much of Mexico's foreign policy is dedicated to exhibiting the country's independence from the United States, governments also tap the unifying resource of patriotism to keep alive a sense of nationhood. Inheriting a severe economic crisis in December 1982, President De la Madrid ordered that the national anthem be played at midnight on all radio stations and at the end of the day's programming on television: one television channel preceded the national anthem for several weeks with recitations of a poem entitled "Mexico, I Believe in You." All ministries or government departments were instructed to hold regular ceremonies honoring the Mexican flag. Through a decree aimed at "reaffirming and strengthening devotion to national symbols," the government also organized a competition of poetry and prose dedicated to the national flag and the national anthem.

At a cultural level, it has been more difficult to prevent erosion of formal "Mexicanness," although one interesting attempt in 1982 involved a Commission for the Defense of the Spanish Language to combat incursions by 'anglicisms. Above all in Mexico City, restaurants and shops had discovered that foreign names were good for business, resulting in the likes of Shirley's, Paco's and Arthur's. The commission declared war on the apostrophe—which does not exist in Spanish orthography—as the principal symbol of cultural infiltration. Radio and television spots also mocked those who said "bye" instead of *adios* or

called themselves Charlie instead of Carlos. Lines from poems paying homage to the Spanish language were added to existing propaganda decorating walls around the capital. But nationalist contradictions continued to surface: one reference to the "immortality" of Spanish was altered with spray paint one night, with the word "Spanish" replaced by "Nahuatl." Soon afterwards, a Council to Defend Indigenous Languages was formed.

Just as alcohol melts the mask of *machismo*, it is during moments of crisis that the country's endemic self-doubts become visible through the screen of nationalism. The myths of progress and hope sustained so avidly in public suddenly give way in private to a self-defeating cynicism and exaggerated self-deprecation. Former President López Portillo, who claimed insight into the *mestizo* nature of the Mexican psyche, once addressed himself to this mesmerizing nihilism, trying vainly to break the trance. "Frequently, we Mexicans are given to underlining our defects," he said. "Perhaps because of the dark paths of our Indian roots, we like to tear ourselves apart, to sacrifice ourselves. It's an activity that many Mexicans seem to enjoy—to denigrate ourselves, to tear ourselves in pieces, to admit we have all the defects in the world. We have a right to do so. We have many rights. But we also have a right to agree, a right to underline the positive, the right to say we have done something well and will do it still better."

Just three months after he spoke, the Mexican economy collapsed in disarray and released a new flood of pessimism. The financial crisis was serious, but the psychological response was more dangerous. Many Mexicans resigned themselves to the demise of the entire system and, in panic, acted accordingly. Others seemed consumed by the sheer drama of the occasion, as if the futility of rules and plans was being proved. Among the urban middle classes, the crisis revealed that the internal conflicts over *mestizaje* had now been complicated by the competition between Mexican and American ways of life. For the newly affluent, the preceding four-year boom had seemingly placed the American way of life within easy grasp. When the bubble burst, their minimal nationalism was exposed. The reaction of poor Mexicans, in contrast, was less hysterical. Since the economic boom had brought them few benefits, their expectations had not been inflated and their stoicism remained largely intact.

Not for the first time, a principal obstacle to rebuilding the economy was the perception that Mexicans had of themselves. To be positive was to have hope and risk betrayal. And even though Mexico has enjoyed enviable political stability for over six decades, the memory of a past that seemingly repeats itself conspired to preserve self-doubt. The choice

exists with individuals as with nations: some meditate on past misfortunes, others overcome setbacks and never look back. Mexico and the Mexicans seem unable to detach themselves from a past to which they still belong. Preferring to look back, they have ample material on which to contemplate: in the history of Mexico as perceived today lies the past that overshadows the present and continues to shape the future.

3

Southern Mesoamerica

The Maya of Yucatan

Of the nearly five million people who are called Maya, the largest single group belongs to the Yucatan Peninsula, which is divided among the Mexican states of Campeche, Yucatán, and Quintana Roo and the northern parts of Guatemala and Belize. These Yucatec, or Maya of Yucatan, number approximately three quarters of a million. They live in towns and villages and in the state capital of Mérida, the region's principal city.

The Yucatec are deeply conscious of their past. They are proud to live in proximity to such archaeological sites as Uxmal and Chichén Itzá, and a few villages still keep copies of the old manuscripts known as the Books of Chilam Balam, containing fragments of ancient myth, history, and prophecy. If the Chilam Balam can no longer be read and consulted in Mérida, city dwellers can at least keep in touch with Yucatec customs and the Yucatec language by tuning in the daytime television series called *Volvamos a nuestras raices mayas* (Let Us Return to Our Maya Roots).

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