



Latin America  
Working Group  
Education Fund

## **Latin America News & Views**

*An occasional series of viewpoints from the Latin American press*

### **Latin American Reaction to the Secure Fence Act**

“Convinced that cooperation and dialogue should prevail in order to find just and balanced solutions to the phenomenon of international migration, the heads of state and governments of the Ibero-American countries consider that constructing walls is a practice that is incompatible with friendly relations and cooperation among states. The construction of walls doesn’t stop undocumented migration nor the trafficking of migrants... it incites discrimination and xenophobia and favors the formation of trafficking groups that endanger people... We express our profound concern at the decision adopted by the United States government to build a wall on its border with Mexico, which constitutes a unilateral measure contrary to the spirit of understanding that ought to characterize attention to common problems between neighboring countries...” —**Declaration signed by 22 foreign ministers at the Iberoamerican Presidential Summit**

Montevideo, Uruguay, Nov. 3, 2006, [http://www.ateiamerica.com/pages/cumbre\\_montevideo/documentos.htm](http://www.ateiamerica.com/pages/cumbre_montevideo/documentos.htm)

"As a country, we join in the serious questioning of the construction of walls to address migration" —**Chilean President Michelle Bachelet**

“President Bachelet Attends 16<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Leaders’ Summit, Presidency of the Republic of Chile, [www.Presidencyofchile.cl](http://www.Presidencyofchile.cl)

“Besides being a bad signal, it doesn’t have any practical utility” —**Secretary General of the OAS Jose Miguel Insulza**

“Cumbre Iberoamericana rechaza el muro de EU,” *El Nuevo Diario*, Managua, Nicaragua, Nov. 6, 2006

Border barriers “denote a lack of solidarity” — **Honduran President Manuel Celaya**

Associated Press, “Latin American Leaders at Summit Blast U.S. Plan for Fences on Mexican Border,” *International Herald Tribune*, Nov. 5, 2006

“When my generation was studying at university, we felt sad that it seemed unthinkable that the Berlin Wall would fall, and when it fell we were very happy; at that moment we thought that the world would never again have these walls.” — **Colombian President Álvaro Uribe**

“El Presidente Álvaro Uribe rechazó la construcción de un muro entre Mexico y E.U.,” *El Tiempo*, Bogotá, Colombia, Nov. 5, 2006

“It is shameful for the United States and it demonstrates an incapacity to see the situation of migration as a shared responsibility. If this was a decision based on the elections, well, with sinning comes penance.” — **outgoing Mexican President Vicente Fox**

“Fox dice que es una verguenza,” *El Universal*, Mexico, Oct. 27, 2006

“It is a deplorable decision by the Congress and the United States to go forward with the decision to build a wall. Nothing is solved by this.” — **incoming Mexican President Felipe Calderón**, “Fox dice que es una vergüenza,” *El Universal*, Mexico, Oct. 27, 2006

“For six years the Mexican government carried water for Republican policy towards Latin America. And then they paid Fox with a wall of steel and cement.” —**Mexican PRD politician Ricardo Monreal**

“Levantarse la barda en la frontera norte, recurso electoral de Bush: senadores,” *La Jornada*, Mexico, Oct. 5, 2006

“Between friends there shouldn’t be a wall.” —**Mexican PRI politician Emilio Gamboa**

“Fox dice que es una vergüenza,” *El Universal*, Mexico, Oct. 27, 2006

“The Mexican government expresses its deep concern and vigorous rejection of the building of physical barriers on the border between Mexico and the United States. These measures hurt the bilateral relationship overall, go against the spirit of cooperation needed to guarantee security on the common border, create a climate of tension in border communities and create differences instead of similarities between both countries.” —**Mexican Gov’t. Foreign Relations Ministry** September 28, 2006, <http://www.sre.gob.mx/press/b200.htm> .

“The seven billion dollars that the wall of lies will cost would serve much more effectively, in addressing illegal immigration, if instead of being squandered on a cement fiction that will soon have more holes than a swiss cheese, it was spent on factories or credits to create jobs on the other side of the border.. But all this belongs to the realm of reality and it is well known that human beings—even the gringos, who pride themselves on being so pragmatic—often prefer the magic of fiction to the crudeness of life as it is...” —**Conservative Peruvian columnist and novelist Mario Vargas Llosa**

cited in Jefferson Morley, “Tensions in Latin America Over a Wall, a U.N. Seat and a Chunk of Land,” World Opinion Roundup, [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), Oct. 26, 2006

“We are facing a myopic and biased decision, which will complicate the relations between the United States and Latin America, which will feed the arsenal of professional anti-Americans and which will affect the image of the superpower in our hemisphere and elsewhere. Why, then, has the decision been taken? Unfortunately, for short-term electoral gain....” —**editorial, *La Nación*, Costa Rica**

“Una decisión miope,” Oct. 29, 2006

“Building a border wall between the United States and Mexico will encourage migration to shift to states like Chihuahua, which could permit organized crime to increase in this part of the country.” —**Director of the university and research institute Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Jorge Santibáñez Romellón**

Rosa María Méndez Fierros, “La Valla provocará el éxodo hacia Chihuahua, preven,” *El Universal*, Oct. 26, 2006

“You shouldn’t take the wall totally seriously, because it’s obvious it responds to a certain electoral current in the United States that feels threatened by a very substantial cultural change,”—**Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, Liberty and Democracy Institute**

“Economistas condenan legislación estadounidense,” *El Universal*, Mexico, Oct. 27, 2006

“The wall isn’t only a sign of disrespect and superpower arrogance, but also a way of wasting money.... Nothing will detain a hungry man. I’ve already heard that there are Colombians building ladder factories.. and others, Harry Potter invisibility capes...”—**Colombian columnist Luis Noé Ochoa**

“Como México sí hay dos? El muro en la frontera mexicana, una afrenta a América,” *El Tiempo*, Colombia, Oct. 27, 2006

“It’s absurd... How much money they are spending on this instead of using it for a real development plan.... And it was unanimous...” —**Mexican actor Gael Garcia Bernal**  
“Indigna muro a Gael,” *El Universal*, Mexico, Oct. 28, 2006

The wall is “shameful.... Fox should do his job....” —**Argentinian soccer star Diego Armando Maradona**

“Crítica al muro de EU y de paso a Vicente Fox,” *El Universal*, Mexico, Oct. 28, 2006

“Aren’t there already enough deaths in the desert for Bush?” —**Mildred, Central American migrant en route through Mexico**

Alberto López Morales, *El Universal*, Mexico, Oct. 28, 2006

“The wall isn’t a solution. We came from Guatemala, because there isn’t work, so there’s the answer, let Bush’s government talk with our governments and let them put up factories and give us work” —**Isabel, Central American migrant en route through Mexico**

Alberto López Morales, *El Universal*, Mexico, Oct. 28, 2006

**By: Lisa Haugaard and Patrice Mobley, November 20, 2006**