

# Undue Influence

## *The government of Mexico and U.S. immigration policies*

by Allan Wall

Mexico occupies center stage in United States immigration policy. In a visit to Monterrey, Mexico, President George W. Bush declared that “Mexico has a special category and condition as a partner and also as a neighbor of the United States, in the matter of immigration” (*La Reforma*, March 23, 2002). Besides its varied ramifications in domestic policies, immigration from Mexico to the U.S. has, for the first time, become not only a U.S. domestic issue, but a foreign policy issue as well.

Too often, though, discussion of immigration fails to take into account the attitudes toward immigration in sending countries. This is a serious oversight. Immigrants are not blank slates, and they do not migrate in a vacuum. The failure to consider attitudes in the sending country toward immigration, citizenship, and assimilation may cause U.S. policymakers to make grave miscalculations as to the feasibility of future policy in these areas.

This is particularly true in the case of Mexico. The Mexican government has developed a deliberate strategy to influence American immigration policy, increase the number of Mexicans in the United States, slow their assimilation, and retain their loyalty to Mexico. This is no secret conspiracy — Mexico’s leaders speak openly of it.

Any analysis of American immigration, citizenship, and assimilation policy must take such facts into consideration. Failing to do so could be disastrous.

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### How Immigration Is Viewed in Mexico

The U.S. receives more immigrants than any other nation in the world, while Mexico sends more emigrants than any other nation in the world. It would be very surprising if their attitudes were anything but asymmetrical.

Furthermore, a higher proportion of Mexicans than Americans have firsthand exposure to immigration. For many Americans, immigration is a peripheral issue, and they have no firsthand contact with immigrants. In Mexico, on the other hand, the majority of the population has relatives in the United States.

In the U.S., much of the media ignores immigration and its impact while many politicians do not have strong opinions on the matter. In Mexico, the media and political elite are obsessed with it, and their treatment of the subject portrays the United States in a most unfavorable light.

Mexican newspaper readers and television viewers are regaled constantly with descriptions of the ill-treatment of Mexicans in the United States. America’s attempts to control its own borders are presented as “racist,” “xenophobic,” and “anti-Mexican.” The United States is blamed for the deaths of illegal aliens who die crossing the border in the desert, and Mexican politicians have called the border a “slaughterhouse” and a “modern Nazi zone.”

In Mexico, all political parties support increased Mexican emigration to the United States, amnesty, and government benefits for Mexicans in the United States, regardless of migratory status. In fact, very few influential Mexicans publicly acknowledge the right of the U.S. to control her own borders. Mexican illegal aliens “are not criminals,” “they only do work the gringos won’t do,” and “they are obliged to cross the border” — these are common slogans used to justify illegal emigration.

While many Americans are ignorant of, and indifferent to, immigration policy and its implications,

Mexicans are well aware of it. The “anchor baby” policy, which accords automatic citizenship to babies born in the U.S., regardless of the mother’s legal status, is well-known in Mexico. U.S. citizenship is seen as a desirable thing for the benefits it entails — as a means to an end, and not as the irrevocable passage to a new national identity.

U.S. legislation about immigration and controversy over the matter is monitored closely in Mexico. Articles appear in the newspapers discussing immigration proposals in the U.S. Congress, either to restrict or liberalize immigration policy. In the 1990's, California state-wide measures to deny benefits to illegal aliens (Proposition 187) and to abolish bilingual education (Proposition 227) were vociferously condemned by Mexico’s political/media elite, the latter measure being declared “racist and discriminatory” by a committee of the Mexican Congress. Furthermore, American organizations which work for immigration restriction, as well as the views of Congressman Tancredo, are known in Mexico and are reported on in the Mexican media.

No matter what the United States does about immigration, none of this is likely to change in the near future. Both President Fox and the Mexican opposition support the United States opening its borders to Mexico. A dispute this past year between Fox and the Mexican Congress was provoked by the Congress’ accusation that Fox was not doing enough to support Mexicans in the United States. In Fox’s rebuttal to the opposition after the Congress denied him an opportunity to travel to the U.S., he tried to show that his trip would have served the cause by, among other things, visiting U.S. states with a large “Hispanic vote” — implying of course that the Hispanic vote would serve as a tool of Mexican foreign policy.

Some influential Mexicans go even further, speaking openly in terms of a *reconquista* (re-conquest). Author and commentator Elena Poniatowska, speaking in Venezuela, applauded a *reconquista* of the Southwest United States (briefly part of Mexico in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century) by means of immigration policy. Mexico’s leading man of letters, Carlos Fuentes, referred positively to a “silent reconquista” of the United States through means of the Spanish language (The *Siglo*, October 20, 2001).

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A Zogby International poll of May 2002 revealed the wide disparity between Mexican and American attitudes toward their common border. A majority of Mexicans polled (58%) agreed with the statement that “The territory of the United States’ Southwest rightfully belongs to Mexico,” while only 28% disagreed and 14% were unsure.

A majority of Mexicans polled (57%) agreed with the statement, “Mexicans should have the right to enter the U.S. without U.S. permission” with 35% disagreeing and 7% being unsure. On the American side, the same poll revealed that 58% of Americans want the government to allow fewer immigrants, 65% are against an amnesty for illegal aliens, and 68% would support the use of the military on the border. It is hard to see how such diametrically opposed attitudes can be reconciled.

### From Embarrassment to Opportunity

There was a time, not long ago, when the Mexican government preferred not to mention nor even to acknowledge the existence of American citizens of Mexican ancestry. Was their existence not evidence that Mexican revolutionary nationalism had failed — the fact that some Mexicans were voting with their feet for the United States?

However, in the waning years of the PRI, (the party that controlled Mexico throughout most of the twentieth century) this orientation began to change. The *pochos* or *chicanos* (slang terms for Mexican-Americans) in the United States began to be viewed not as an embarrassment or a sign of Mexico’s economic failure, but as an opportunity — an opportunity for the Mexican government to gain influence in the United States over migration policy, and thus keep the gates open for continued emigration.

This change in orientation coincided with the rise of multiculturalism and ethnic identity politics in the United States. A number of links already exist between the Mexican government and U.S. Mexican-American and Hispanic activist organizations such as LULAC, MALDEF, and the National Council of La Raza.

The last PRI president, Ernesto Zedillo (president from 1994-2000), understood this change and began to

take advantage of it. Zedillo told the audience at a National Council of La Raza convention that “you are Mexicans too, you just live in the United States.” Zedillo became quite vocal on the question of immigration, in the criticism of any real or imagined injustices of U.S. immigration law, and once declared that “we will not tolerate foreign forces dictating laws to Mexicans,” even though he was speaking of Mexican immigrants in the United States. President Zedillo took an active role in the opposition to Proposition 187, a California referendum designed to cut off benefits to illegal aliens, and was credited by a prominent California politician with the measure’s final elimination.

Zedillo’s efforts, however, would pale in comparison to those of Vicente Fox.

### The Fox Doctrine

The widely-heralded election of Vicente Fox aroused the hopes of well-wishers in Mexico and throughout the world. At last the PRI’s monopoly on executive power had ended and Mexico was headed for greener pastures, or so it was thought.

Fox’s democratic legitimacy gave him a wider scope to continue — and expand upon — the northern strategy utilized by his predecessor. One of his first acts as president was to meet with a delegation of Mexican-American activists.

As a candidate Fox had promised a Mexico in which there would be employment for all Mexicans in Mexico. Simultaneously, however he had called for the eventual opening of the U.S.-Mexican border. Fox’s stated position was that eventually, with the economic development of Mexico, emigration would dry up anyway.

Vicente Fox gave a new impetus to the importance of the relationship with the United States. Not only does he want to keep NAFTA, he wishes to expand its reach. In a recent foreign policy discourse delivered in Spain, Fox shared his vision of NAFTA as a Western Hemisphere equivalent to the European Union, with complete freedom of movement of both goods and laborers between nations.

Fox has shown a great political interest in Mexican residents of the United States, regardless of their citizenship or legal status. Such an interest far surpasses the ritual Mexican denunciations of bad treatment of illegal aliens. Fox intends to govern not only the Mexicans resident in the U.S., but even American citizens of

Mexican ancestry. He also views the Mexican-American (and Hispanic) vote as a tool of Mexican foreign policy. Fox’s cabinet also reflects such an orientation.

### The Fox Doctrine in the Fox Cabinet

Far from being a simple rhetorical device utilized by Vicente Fox, his attitudes toward U.S. immigration policy are shared by his cabinet members:

#### FOREIGN MINISTER JORGE CASTAÑEDA

In 1995, Mexican pundit Jorge Castañeda published an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* entitled “Ferocious Differences.” This piece was quite frank in spelling out the fact that the white Mexican elite utilizes emigration as a safety valve. Castañeda described the perception of the average American’s powerlessness against mass immigration when he wrote: “Some Americans ... dislike immigration, but there is little they can do about it.”

Ever since being appointed as Fox’s Foreign Minister, Jorge Castañeda has spearheaded the diplomatic efforts to liberalize U.S. immigration law by aggressively pushing for a bilateral accord which would, in effect, remove immigration from being a domestic American policy issue to being a bilateral one. On April 18, 2002, Castañeda declared in San Francisco that immigration was the linchpin of U.S.-Mexican relations, and that “short of reaching an agreement on that front, it will be real difficult for U.S.-Mexican relations to move forward.”

Castañeda, fluent in English and quite familiar with the American scene, has no qualms about openly interfering in U.S. internal politics. In June of 2001, he spoke to the annual convention of LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), an organization composed of American citizens of Latin American ancestry.

Speaking to the assembled LULACers, the Mexican foreign minister attacked U.S. immigration policy, blaming it for deaths of migrants in the desert. He called for migration talks leading to an amnesty, and, according to the *Houston Post* (June 27, 2002), Castañeda “noted that by lobbying local governments in the United States, the Mexican government has managed to make it easier for illegal immigrants to live a more normal life.”

According to *The News, Mexico* (June 28, 2002) Castañeda “urged LULAC convention-goers to lobby U.S. legislators to push for immigration accords.” Here

was a Mexican foreign minister on U.S. soil giving political instructions to American citizens.

In January of 2003, Jorge Castañeda resigned as foreign minister and was replaced by Luis Ernesto Derbez. At his presentation ceremony Derbez commended Castañeda for influencing the United States to accept “the migratory issue as a matter of shared responsibility” and promised to work toward the promotion of high emigration and the attendant meddling in U.S. politics. In other words, the substitution of Derbez for Castañeda promises no change whatsoever in the Fox Doctrine.

#### INTERIOR MINISTER SANTIAGO CREEL

Interior Minister Santiago Creel has also proclaimed that migration is the most important bilateral issue and has demanded an immigration accord: “the agenda between both countries must contemplate ... the migratory issue as the principal issue, the fundamental issue” (*Notimex*, April 18, 2002).

#### LABOR SECRETARY CARLOS ABASCAL

Labor Secretary Carlos Abascal has negotiated an accord with U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao to limit the reach of a Supreme Court ruling denying back pay to illegal aliens, and has denounced the same ruling in an international forum. Abascal is on record as demanding that Mexicans in the U.S. have the same labor rights as Americans (*La Jornada*, May 12, 2002), a noble-sounding principle, which in practice serves as another impediment to deportation.

#### ERNESTO RUFFO

The new office of Commission for Northern Border Affairs was created by Fox, and Ernesto Ruffo was named to head up that department. Secretary Ruffo’s attitude toward the border was expressed in his advice to would-be illegal crossers: “If the border patrol finds you, try again.”

#### THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MEXICANS ABROAD

Upon taking office, Fox also established the Office of Mexicans Abroad, headed by dual citizen Juan Hernandez. This office was designed to act as a liaison between the Fox administration and the “23 million Mexicans in the U.S.” The office was in existence from 2000 to mid-2002, when, as a result of Mexican cabinet turf war with Jorge Castañeda, Hernandez lost his position and his office was terminated. The office was replaced with a new department, the National Council for

Mexican Communities Abroad, which includes nine federal dependencies. The goals are the same, however.

In Fox’s address at the council’s inaugural ceremony (August 6, 2002), he included among its beneficiaries “persons of Mexican origin” in the U.S., which means, of course, American citizens of Mexican ancestry.

The executive arm of the Council is the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, headed by another dual citizen, Candido Morales.

(Hernandez was born in the U.S. and acquired dual nationality at birth, while Morales was a Mexican immigrant who became a U.S. citizen but is now considered a dual citizen of both nations.)

### Mexican-Americans Viewed as Tools of Mexican Foreign Policy

It’s natural to assume that citizens of immigrant-sending countries would have some kind of interest in American citizens whose descendants came from their own country. Italians and Germans, for example, realize the contributions made by Italian and German immigration to the United States.

The Mexican government’s interest in U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, however, far transcends simple sentimental interest. The Fox administration views American citizens of Mexican ancestry as tools of Mexican foreign policy. The days in which the Mexican government ignored *pochos* or *chicanos* are over. Mexico’s media/political elite now sees them as an opportunity to expand their influence in U.S. politics, to use it as a lever to gain influence in migration and trade issues.

President Zedillo understood this possibility, and made a start in achieving it. But President Fox has made it a major plank of his platform.

An editorial by Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, then an independent Mexican senator, laid out a strategy in an editorial dated May 5, 2000, entitled “La Noche de La Migra” (“The night of the migra”). Writing in the aftermath of the Elian Gonzalez case, Aguilar Zinser took up a common complaint among Mexico’s media/political elite — what they see as the inordinate influence of the Cuban-American lobby, of whom Aguilar Zinser wrote, “the Cuban-Americans have given a great demonstration of their force ... we Mexicans have never been able to show the same vigor.” Why? According to Aguilar Zinser:

*The primary cause is the low political participation of the Mexican-Americans. This fact is not the product of a cultural predisposition, but of a reticence of Mexicans here to act politically in the United States and to make our cause that of those who go... The respect of the human rights of our fellow Mexicans in the United States should be the cause that unites the efforts of Mexicans on both sides of the border.*

In a Mexican election year, Aguilar Zinser gave his suggestion:

*In a democratic regime, it should be the Mexican government itself that captains this cause, despite the costs to the bilateral relation that the present regime denies to assume. The political hierarchy of the matter must be elevated and converted into the first priority of our exterior policy. For that, the numerous instruments that the American political system offers must be utilized, just as the Cubans of Miami do.... For the national interest, we must find allies in the American political system. These potential allies are in the liberal democratic axis, among the unions, the civil rights organizations and the social movements.*

In other words, Aguilar Zinser proposed the influence of American internal politics as the primary goal of Mexican foreign policy, and linked the Mexican-American community to the Mexican government.

Several months later, Vicente Fox was elected president of Mexico, taking office in December. Fox chose Aguilar Zinser as his first national security adviser. (Due to an intra-cabinet turf war with Jorge Castañeda, Aguilar Zinser is currently Mexico's UN representative).

President Fox openly spoke out for an American option from the beginning. Calling for open borders and expressing solidarity with Mexican immigrants in the United States, Fox has cultivated links with Mexican-American organizations in the U.S. to enlist their support of his migratory agenda with the United States.

In the recent constitutional conflict between President Fox and the Mexican opposition, Fox was denied permission to visit the United States. Accused by Congress of failing to sufficiently support Mexican migrants in the U.S., Fox turned the tables and accused

the opposition of the same. His trip had been important in the defense of Mexicans in the U.S., asserted Fox, because for one thing, the states he'd planned to visit are important in the "Hispanic vote." This, of course, demonstrates that Fox sees the "Hispanic vote" as a tool of Mexican foreign policy. (Although technically "Hispanic vote" and "Mexican-American vote" are not identical, they are often used interchangeably in Mexico).

It goes without saying that Fox's strategy is offensive to patriotic Americans of Mexican ancestry, who have no desire whatsoever to take orders from the Mexican government. But they are not the problem. The problem is that newer immigrants, brought up under the new paradigm and encouraged by both the Mexican government and American multi-cultural activists, will be more and more likely to accept this mentality.

## Over 20 Million Mexicans in the United States?

According to an official CONAPO (National Population Council) report: as of 2000, there were approximately 8.5 million Mexican-born persons residing in the United States. The report continues, "If Americans of Mexican origin are added to the total population of Mexican-born residents of the United States, it is possible to affirm that in the United States there are 23 million persons with close blood ties to our country."

President Vicente Fox, delivering a speech in Madrid, Spain, entitled "Mexican Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" stated that "The density and complexity of the issues of our bilateral agenda with the United States ... has a particular dimension for the presence of large Mexican communities settled in that country, more than 20 million Mexicans."

Fox's figure of "over 20 million Mexicans" is clearly equivalent to that of "23 million Mexicans" of the CONAPO report (see above), and includes both Mexican citizens and American citizens of Mexican ancestry.

Fox continued by referring to Mexican government efforts in the behalf of Mexican immigrants, including illegal ones:

*In the last few months we have managed to achieve an improvement in the situation of many Mexicans in that country, regardless of their migratory status, through schemes that have permitted them access to health and*

*education systems, identity documents, as well as the full respect for their laboral and human rights.*

Here Fox refers to the efforts of the Mexican government to acquire government benefits for Mexican immigrants as well as to prevent their deportation, through use of the “consular cards” (more on that later) and other tactics.

The “20 million Mexicans in the U.S.” figure has gained currency and is quoted without question, not only in the Mexican media, but in the U.S. media as well.

## Dual Citizenship

Dual citizenship is another aspect of today’s immigration /assimilation situation that the American political class prefers not to deal with. There are already millions of U.S. citizens who are also citizens of other nations. In the case of Mexico, dual citizenship has the potential to become a major problem. The number of those already eligible numbers in the millions, dual citizenship is easy to achieve, the Mexican government now encourages it, and the U.S. government has no objections.

The State Department certainly is not concerned about dual citizenship: “Under U.S. Department of State policy, being a national of another country is not, in and of itself, an expatriating act.” In the oath of allegiance, however, a new American citizen states: “I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, to whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen...” The clear terms of the naturalization oath argue that U.S. citizenship, whatever today’s State Department might say, is not meant to be shared with that of another nation. A “rank absurdity” is what Theodore Roosevelt called “dual citizenship,” which, beside its enormous potential for conflicts of interest, is incompatible with the concept of equal justice under the law.

Until quite recently, Mexico felt the same way, rejecting out of hand the concept of dual nationality. As part of the sea change which took place during the Zedillo administration, however, a move to change the law was made in 1997 (taking effect in 1998). Articles 30, 32, and 37 of the Mexican Constitution were amended to make dual nationality possible, so that now a Mexican emigrant would not lose his Mexican citizenship

even if he became an American citizen.

Certainly dual citizenship existed before this constitutional change. There have been double citizens of the United States and Mexico for some time. One reason is the desirability of U.S. citizenship as a means to an end, and Mexican families have been known to take their pregnant women to the U.S. to give birth, so that under the current interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment the child would be an American citizen.

Nevertheless, dual citizenship was still not recognized by the Mexican government until the amendments of 1997. The intention of the amendments was, according to the Mexican Department of Legislative Documentation, to prevent Mexicans living in the United States from losing their Mexican nationality if they became American citizens, so that “those who opt for a non-Mexican nationality can fully express their rights in their place of residence...”

After the new law took effect, one of those who announced his attention to apply was Oscar de la Hoya (The *Siglo*, October 20, 1999), American boxer, born in the U.S. of Mexican ancestry. In de la Hoya’s statement explaining why he desired to be a citizen of Mexico, the reader can detect the strange ambivalence that would inspire a successful and wealthy American to adopt a foreign nationality:

*I have always said, I am proud of my Mexican blood and although I was born in East LA, my family is from Mexico and it would be an honor to be considered Mexican because I have grown up and I have felt like a Mexican in every way. To be a Mexican citizen is something I have always wanted to be. I respect this country a lot because it gave me many opportunities, but the people who support me are Mexican...*

(The boxer’s bus is emblazoned with both a Mexican and an American flag.)

At the time of the amendments, a distinction was made by some apologists between Mexican “nationality” and Mexican “citizenship.” The argument was that an American citizen could obtain Mexican nationality and not Mexican citizenship, and that the former does not give the individual the right to vote in Mexico.

This explanation may be reassuring to some, but is of little value. The real distinction between Mexican

nationality and citizenship is that citizenship constitutionally refers to those of Mexican nationality who have arrived at the age of 18 and are in full exercise of their rights as Mexicans, of which voting is the prime example. (Mexican Constitution, Articles 34, 35, and 36).

The plain fact is that there is nothing in either Mexican law or American law that can prevent dual citizens from voting in both countries. According to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, “Mexican citizens living in Mexico who are also dual nationals enjoy the same voting rights as other Mexicans.” An article in Mexico’s *Universal* stated that one of the advantages of double nationality was “to exercise the right to the vote.”

Already there has been some dual voting by dual citizens who have voted in both countries, but it’s not yet a widespread phenomenon. It could become one though if Mexican electoral law is changed; there are proposals to amend Mexican election law enabling millions of Mexicans living in the United States to vote.

According to one calculation, if the law were amended today, there would already be eleven million individuals currently residing in the U.S. automatically eligible to vote in Mexican elections. This figure of eleven million of necessity includes some who are also American citizens. (see Conapo population figures, above).

An attendant proposal for Mexicans in the U.S. to vote is to designate electoral districts in the United States. California, for example, might have seats in the Mexican Congress, specifically representing Mexicans (including Mexican-Americans ) residing in the state of California.

### Meddling Consulates

A consulate is designed to represent a foreign government before both the citizens of the host country and those of its own. Americans applying for permits in Mexico are sometimes required to process paperwork in a Mexican consulate in the U.S.

The activities of Mexican consulates in the U.S., however, have greatly expanded in recent years. No longer do they simply represent Mexico. The forty-eight Mexican consulates in U.S. territory frequently function as centers of political activity which serve to impede assimilation of Mexican immigrants and thwart the application of U.S. immigration law.

Here are some examples:

Proposition 187 — The Mexican consulate in Los Angeles, California helped organize a demonstration in 1994 to protest Proposition 187, a state referendum seeking to deny benefits to illegal aliens.

Flag Day — On February 26, 2002, the Mexican consul general of San Jose, California, visited a school in Salina, California, for an observance of “Mexican Flag Day.” The Consul General, Marco Antonio Alcázar, spoke to a group of fifth and sixth-graders, the majority of whom were of Mexican ancestry. Alcázar told the students that “This is exciting because there are many children in this city who were born in the United States, whose parents are Mexicans, and these children have the opportunity now to enjoy two different nationalities and be proudly American and proudly Mexican.” Following the speech and flag presentation, Alcázar donated two more flags and Mexican textbooks to the school.

The line between actions sponsored by Mexican consulates and those of American Hispanic organizations is steadily blurring. The activism of Mexican consulates is frequently indistinguishable from that of U.S. organizations with which they cooperate.

In Houston, for example, the Mexican consul has joined a consortium (which includes representatives of the U.S. Department of Labor, EEOC and MALDEF) to “educate and counsel immigrants who believe they’ve been discriminated against, haven’t been paid the proper wages or are having immigration problems (*Houston Chronicle*, April 3, 2002). A Mexican article reporting the visit of the director of the Mexican “Program for Mexican Communities Abroad” to Texas, underscored that one of the goals of Mexican consulates is to “form a common front that represents ... the interests of the Hispanic community” — clouding the distinction between the interests of the Mexican government and Americans of Hispanic ancestry.

In San Francisco we have the “Golden Rules for Undocumented Immigrants.” Appearing on the San Francisco-based website (December 28), written by an employee of the Mexican embassy in San Francisco, the “Golden Rules” is subtitled: “ten basic and fundamental steps suggested by the Mexican Consulate.” It advises illegal aliens to contact the nearest Mexican consulate and “listen to Spanish-language radio” for information. It also includes tips on how to stay out of trouble and not attract attention, including “Do not hit or abuse your

spouse.” The article informs illegal aliens that legal residency can be obtained by marrying a citizen or legal resident, but adds “Do not attempt simultaneous marriages.” Keeping illegal aliens abreast of recent state developments, the article informed them that “California undocumented youth ... can be admitted to state universities and colleges paying resident tuition.”

Consular activism has a growing potential to influence legislation on the state level — in fact it is already happening in California. On June 3 (*La Opinion — California*, June 4, 2002) five Latino state legislators met in the state capitol in Sacramento with five Mexican consuls general of five California cities (LA, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose). Topics included the *matricular consular* and drivers’ licences for illegals. The stated goal of the meeting was to improve relations between California and Mexico and “to identify the themes of greatest impact in the most numerous Mexican community of the nation, so that ... legislative proposals that reflect this necessity will be born.” One of the legislators stated: “We want to discuss all the themes that affect the Mexicans living here and at the same time recognize the point of view that Mexico has.”

According to the article in the Spanish language press, “The consuls proposed that the legislators use their positions so that the state authorities accept the Mexican *Matricula Consular* as a valid, generalized identification.” The California legislative measure AB60, which would grant drivers’ licenses to illegal aliens was also discussed. Gustavo Mohr, a representative of the SRE — Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations — addressed the meeting on the importance of a bilateral migratory accord, and criticized the proposal that local police enforce immigration law — a proposal which Mohr termed “worrying.” Mohr told the group that (Mexican) consuls and the (American) legislators were “all in the same boat, and if we do not row together we are going to drown” and that the consuls and legislators “must share the same co-operation and the same commitment.”

A growing number of Mexican consuls-general have already gained a reputation for overt meddling in U.S. politics. One example is Teodoro Maus, consul-general in Atlanta from 1989 to 2001 (with a brief hiatus). Maus was consul-general of Atlanta, responsible for Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and South Carolina, but functioned

more as a colonial governor than a diplomatic representative.

Maus publicly opposed the declaration of English as Georgia’s official language, demanded and received an apology from a local radio talk show host who had suggested machine guns and guard towers be placed at the border. Maus joined with local Hispanic activists in attacking Norman Bingham, Cobb County Board of Education Chairman, who had stated that Latino construction workers were “uneducated” and “probably illegal aliens.” In the end Bingham did not leave his position but was forced to apologize and issue a two-page apology. Maus attacked a Smyrna, Georgia, law requiring all commercial signs be in English, agitated for the issuance of drivers’ licenses to illegal aliens, and told local Hispanics to punish Georgia companies which, in Maus’ view, “mistreat or ignore Hispanic customers.” Whatever one might think of the details of such incidents, the fact remains that Maus overstepped the proper function of a foreign diplomat and was clearly intervening in American internal politics.

To date, though, none of these incidents or similar ones have been reprimanded by the U.S. government.

### Consular Cards

Currently, one of the major emphases of Mexican consulates in the U.S. is the issuance of, promotion of, and defense of, the *matricula consular* or “consular card.” Thousands of Mexican residents in the U.S. are lining up daily to receive a consular card from a Mexican consulate as proof of their identity. As of October 3, 2002, according to Mexican journalist Bernardo Mendez, the cards “are recognized as identification by almost one thousand police departments, and hundreds of counties and cities. (*The Siglo*, October 3, 2002).

What exactly is a *matricula consular*?



Although the Mexican consul at Santa Ana, California, defended the *matricular consular* by asserting that “it has nothing to do with immigration and the INS,” the facts speak otherwise.

To begin with, the *matricula consular* is not a Mexican passport. A Mexican passport is issued in Mexico to Mexicans planning to travel outside of Mexico. Mexicans who travel legally to the United States are granted passports before they apply for their U.S. visa. Legal Mexican immigrants or visitors thus have no need of a consular card, which is applied for when the applicant is already in the United States.

The fact that Vicente Fox has made the issuance of consular cards a high priority indicates the real reason they are issued — to avoid the deportation of illegal aliens.

That, in fact, is what has been reported in the Mexican media:

*The frequent deportation of Mexicans for lack of an ID card can become a thing of the past, with the approval of an initiative that proposes the acceptance of the matricula consular (issued by the Mexican government through its consulates in the entire country), as an official identification document for police authorities when they detain or intercept Mexicans.*  
(Monica Solis, *The Siglo*, November 5, 2001).

*La Reforma* calls the *matricula consular* a “benefit for illegal aliens.”

## Conclusion

The Mexican government is currently engaged in an organized, coordinated, and well-planned effort to subvert U.S. immigration laws, impede the assimilation of immigrants, and cultivate the existence of a vast pro-Mexican lobby in the United States. Although this effort has scarcely begun, it is already bearing fruit. If allowed to continue, the inevitable outcome will be effective control of U.S. immigration policy by a foreign power.

Therefore, it behooves American policy-makers, and ultimately the American people, to be aware of such efforts of the Mexican government, and the enormous impact they are having and will continue to have on U.S. immigration and assimilation policy. What is at stake here is nothing less than American sovereignty. Rather than

avoid such a difficult and sensitive issue, the very real ramifications of the Mexican government’s influence on U.S. immigration policy must be squarely faced and acted upon. The American people, in fact, should demand it. •

### Consulate Employee Lobbies in Colorado

Gov. Bill Owens has asked the Mexican consulate in Denver to clarify the status of its spokesman after lawmakers said he is lobbying them without proper credentials.

Gubernatorial spokesman Dan Hopkins said Owens sent a December 27 letter to the Consulate General of Mexico asking for an explanation of Mario Hernandez’s official status.

In the letter, addressed to Consul General Leticia Calzada, the governor writes:

“Recently, questions have been raised as to whether Mr. Hernandez should be registered as a foreign agent due to certain activities, such as lobbying state legislators and representing the consulate in matters involving press relations. The questions have been raised because it is not clear that his activities are within the scope of his consulate position as determined by the Department of State.”

Hopkins said the governor believed that Hernandez, who identifies himself as a consular spokesman, had been active in a number of areas, including driver’s license and in-state tuition legislation involving immigrants in Colorado.

— *Rocky Mountain News*, January 16, 2003