

Fox Says U.S. Shares Blame For Problems Along Border

The New York Times

September 5, 2005 Monday, Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2005 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 760 words

Byline: By GINGER THOMPSON

Dateline: MEXICO CITY, Sept. 4

Body

President Vicente **Fox** responded over the weekend to criticism from American authorities about a recent surge in violence and illegal immigration **along** the **border**, **saying** that the **United States shares** responsibility for the **problems** and should work harder with Mexico to fix them.

Mr. **Fox said** he rejected "forcefully" the statements by the Bush administration and governors of **border** states, contending that they had unfairly depicted Mexico as a safe haven for organized crime, though his government has arrested more leading drug traffickers and dismantled more cartels than any of its predecessors. He also **said** Mexican immigrants had been portrayed unfairly as potential terrorists when they had in fact become a pillar of the American economy.

In an interview aboard the presidential airplane on Saturday, Mr. **Fox** acknowledged that his government had a long way to go to make the **border** secure. But he **said** the **United States** should stop casting **blame** for **problems** created by both countries.

He also **said** the **United States** should not allow concerns about **border** security to derail efforts to adopt new measures to allow millions of additional Mexicans to become guest workers in the **United States**.

"Security is a **shared** responsibility," President **Fox said**. Then, referring to the **United States**, he **said**, "I don't understand that now they only cast **blame** and accusations, and they do not collaborate or cooperate so that together we can resolve this **problem**."

On the changes in immigration policy, he **said**: "There is will on the part of President Bush, according to what he has expressed publicly, and what he has expressed in conversations with us. So, I trust that in the coming weeks and months, we will succeed finally in arriving at a positive resolution for the benefit of both countries."

More pressing realities, however, may once again stand in the way. Work on immigration policy was first postponed four years ago, after the Sept. 11 attacks. Then it was put off for Mr. Bush's re-election campaign. Now, it may be set aside again as the **United States** struggles to recover from Hurricane Katrina.

But Mr. **Fox** has little time left; he is entering his last year in office.

His comments were aimed at what many here perceive as a troubling shift in **United States** attitudes and diplomatic policy toward Mexico.

In recent weeks, the **United States** has openly berated Mexico for failing to stop a wave of drug-related violence that has taken close to 1,000 lives **along** the 2,000-mile **border**. The Bush administration has issued numerous

Fox Says U.S. Shares Blame For Problems Along Border

travel advisories and temporarily closed its consulate in the city of Nuevo Laredo, which has turned into a murder capital as drug traffickers fight for control of lucrative routes into Texas.

Last month, the governors of New Mexico and Arizona declared states of emergency, saying they needed federal help to fend off a flood of undocumented migrants.

Neither Mr. Fox nor his aides denied the problems. But the authorities here said that the responses from the United States did not reflect the complexities of the problems, nor did they acknowledge that Mexico had undertaken significant efforts to address them.

"This self-sustained blaming someone else, is it going to help anything?" said a high-level intelligence official who asked not to be named because of the diplomatic sensitivities involved. "If everyone in the United States keeps profiting politically from this very difficult situation, then we are not going to be able to make things better." He added, "We are trying to do our job, even with our limited resources."

Mr. Fox said trade and other day-to-day interactions between the countries had not been affected by the political tensions, and he said he trusted that President Bush would not allow concerns over security to stall efforts to pass changes in immigration requirements.

"Let there be no doubt, that we are going to win this battle," he said, referring to his government's efforts in Nuevo Laredo. "So it cannot be used as a pretext to provoke a distancing in relations between the United States and Mexico."

He said his country shared the pain of the hurricane. An estimated 140,000 Mexicans were affected, he said, and 70,000 are unaccounted for. But now, he said, the contributions of Mexican workers could be more important than ever.

"The reconstruction of that city and of that region is going to require a lot of labor," Mr. Fox said of New Orleans, Mississippi and Alabama. "And if there is anything Mexicans are good at, it is construction."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: TERRITORIAL & NATIONAL BORDERS (91%); IMMIGRATION (90%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (90%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (89%); IMMIGRATION REGULATION & POLICY (89%); PUBLIC POLICY (89%); US PRESIDENTS (89%); CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES CRIME (89%); ELECTIONS (78%); NATIONAL SECURITY (78%); ORGANIZED CRIME (78%); HISPANIC AMERICANS (78%); BORDER CONTROL (78%); ARRESTS (78%); TERRORISM (78%); FOREIGN LABOR (78%); DRUG TRAFFICKING (75%); SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACK (74%); INTERVIEWS (73%); INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (73%); HURRICANES (73%); EMBASSIES & CONSULATES (72%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (70%); STATES OF EMERGENCY (69%); BUSINESS INTERRUPTIONS (65%); HURRICANE KATRINA (50%)

Person: VICENTE FOX QUESADA (90%); GEORGE W BUSH (58%); Vicente (Pres) Fox Quesada; Ginger Thompson

Fox Says U.S. Shares Blame For Problems Along Border

Geographic: ARIZONA, USA (79%); NEW MEXICO, USA (79%); TEXAS, USA (79%); **UNITED STATES** (96%); MEXICO (94%); Mexico

Load-Date: September 5, 2005

End of Document