

## **BUSH, FOX VOW TO WORK TO OPEN BORDERS**

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### **Body**

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MONTERREY, Mexico -- Mexican President Vicente **Fox** on Monday embraced President **Bush**'s plan to ease U.S. immigration laws, saying that the changes would improve life for millions of Mexican workers in the United States.

Meeting at the start of a two-day Summit of the Americas, the two leaders agreed to put aside past differences and **work** together on more **open borders** and expanded trade. But other tensions remained as 34 leaders from throughout the Western Hemisphere gathered in northern Mexico to look for ways to promote democracy and economic development in the region.

Leaders from Brazil and Venezuela said they would try to slow **Bush**'s push for a free-trade agreement linking the entire hemisphere. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, under pressure from the White House to cut his ties to Cuba's Fidel Castro, arrived in a defiant mood.

Before leaving Caracas, Chavez said he would use the summit to "tell the world" that Venezuelans would not tolerate what he called U.S. interference in his country's affairs. Canada and the United States have joined forces to try to block Chavez's push for a new humanitarian aid fund for Latin America.

**Fox**, whose opposition to the invasion strained relations with **Bush**, offered his congratulations for the capture of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. The Mexican president also gave his strongest endorsement yet for **Bush**'s immigration proposal.

The plan, which falls far short of **Fox**'s goal of an **open border**, would let as many as 8 million illegal workers become legal by joining a new temporary worker program. Although the plan is not limited to Mexico, the vast majority of illegal workers in the United States came from Mexico.

"What we want is the plan presented by President **Bush**," **Fox** said, calling it "a very important step forward" that would let illegal workers come into the **open** with full legal rights.

**Bush** said the plan, which faces an uphill fight in Congress, "recognizes the reality" of illegal immigration without rewarding illegal behavior by putting foreign workers on a track to citizenship. Guest workers could apply for citizenship, but they would have no advantage over any other foreigner.

"These are hardworking, decent, honorable people that are in our country to fill jobs that others won't take," **Bush** said. "It seems to me like it make sense to have laws that treat people with respect."

In another sign that the two are set to improve relations, **Bush** invited **Fox** and his wife to meet at the U.S. president's ranch in March. **Fox** canceled a planned 2002 visit to protest the execution of a Mexican citizen.

## Graphic

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Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS

President **Bush** chats with Mexican President Vicente **Fox** on Monday at the Summit of the Americas in Mexico.

## Classification

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**Company:** LET AS (66%)

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**Person:** GEORGE W **BUSH** (89%); VICENTE **FOX** QUESADA (79%); HUGO CHAVEZ (78%); SADDAM HUSSEIN (58%); FIDEL CASTRO (53%)

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