

Emparejando a Bush y Fox

Matching Up Bush and Fox

Por José Carreño

By José Carreño

Sombrero tejano y botas vaqueras; una cuidadosamente cultivada imagen de rancho que lo ayudó a llegar de gobernador a presidente luego de una relativamente corta carrera política al menos en público... ¿George W. Bush o Vicente Fox?

Si alguna vez México y los Estados Unidos parecen tener coincidencias mayores que el interés en el otro es ahora, con el inicio de un nuevo milenio que además ve a los dos países más entrelazados e interrelacionados que nunca.

Aunque Bush y Fox se conocieron varias veces cuando eran gobernadores de Texas y Guanajuato, Bush viajará el 16 de febrero, apropiadamente, a San Cristóbal, el rancho de Fox, para sus primeras sesiones diplomáticas como presidentes de los países vecinos.

"Los dos usamos botas vaqueras, los dos amamos nuestros países, los dos queremos un mejor futuro para nuestros pueblos y los dos queremos resolver los grandes problemas en la relación entre Estados Unidos y México, como inmigración, como narcotráfico," declaró Fox a una cadena de televisión estadounidense.

Las coincidencias parecen acrecentadas por las también aparentes similitudes entre sus nuevos mandatarios, que de hecho comienzan sus gobiernos de manera simultánea.

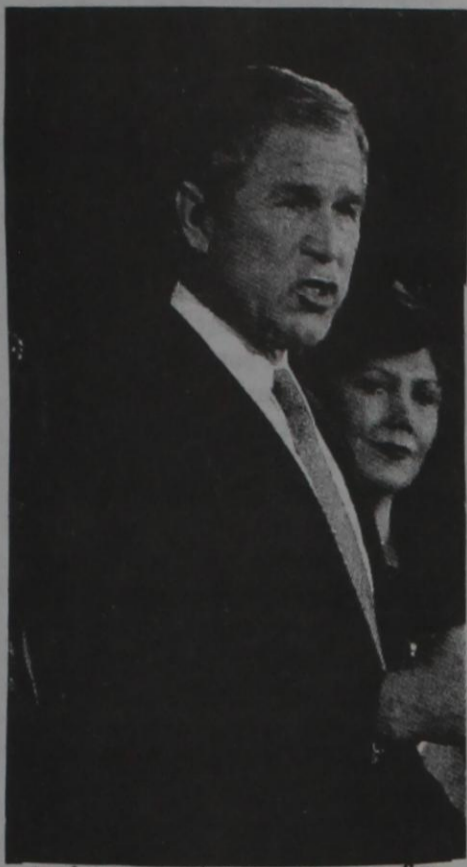
Más allá, sin embargo, uno y otro resultaron vencedores mediante campañas que no sólo iniciaron en aparente desventaja sino en las que buscaron establecer una imagen campesina, campirana y aún de rudeza que pareció hacer olvidar a sus adversarios que lidiaban con auténticos "vaqueros" urbanos: un "cowboy" de Yale (una prestigiosa y tradicional universidad estadounidense), un vaquero de la ibero (por la prestigiosa Universidad Iberoamericana en México).

De hecho, a los dos les gusta pasar tiempo en sus respectivos ranchos. Y tanto en México como en Estados Unidos la idea del rancho, de la vida campirana, evoca no sólo imágenes de la mitología nacional sino también ideales que con harta frecuencia son confundidos con simplicidad respecto a la "sofisticación" urbana. Y eso ha ayudado a que algunos de sus rivales los subestimen.

Los dos se distinguen en todo caso como comunicadores personales, por un uso incesante del teléfono como instrumento de comunicación directa y personal con otros, al grado que Fox ha sido presentado como un "presidente con celular" y que Tomás Yarrington, gobernador del estado mexicano de Tamaulipas en la frontera con Texas, señale que Bush también le gusta usar ese instrumento.

Para nadie ha sido una sorpresa que Fox haga un esfuerzo por comunicarse con posibles aliados en Estados Unidos y de hecho que tenga una considerable popularidad entre los grupos hispánicos, especialmente mexicanos, dentro de las fronteras de este país.

Al mismo tiempo, Bush ha cortejado y corteja al voto hispánico, con lo cual no es extraño que los caminos -- y los intereses -- de los dos manda-



tarios se entrecruzan con frecuencia.

Más allá, Bush ha subrayado la importancia que para él tiene México y la resolución de problemas comunes como migración o narcotráfico, y posibles áreas de cooperación, como energía. En la poco conocida lista de sus invitados a la inauguración del 20 de enero estaban Yarrington y el gobernador de Veracruz, Miguel Alemán, así como Juan Hernández, comisionado mexicano para temas de migración, y Juan Felipe Bravo, presidente del Partido de Acción Nacional, que llevó a Fox al poder.

Igualmente, uno y otro son "delegadores." Fox creó de entrada una estructura de gobierno con "coordinadores" en algo que al menos en México parece un audaz experimento, pero en la que el es quién toma la decisión final. Bush afirma que será una especie de Presidente y Director General (CEO) en una estructura en la que al menos en el papel, la mayoría de sus Secretarios tiene más experiencia que él.

Los dos, curiosamente, entregaron la dirección de su política exterior a personas a su izquierda, como concesión a grupos aliados útiles y más que eso en sus respectivas campañas. Fox tiene un Jorge Castañeda, un prestigioso académico conocido por posiciones liberales; Bush tiene a Colin Powell, un prestigioso militar de tendencias moderadas.

Y ambos entregaron puestos clave de su gobierno a personas identificadas con "el sistema" y en algunos casos a su propia derecha: Fox a Carlos Abascal, Secretario del Trabajo, Bush a John Ashcroft, Procurador General de Justicia.

Políticamente, ambos se encuentran en una situación similar: ambos enfrentan Congresos con grandes complicaciones: el Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) que respaldó a Fox no tiene la mayoría en el Congreso; el Partido Republicano que eligió a Bush tiene una mayoría tan raquítica que a veces puede ser más una desventaja que una ventaja. Pero los dos actúan como si hubieran conquistado mandatos claros e indiscutidos.

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Texan hat and cowboy boots -- a curiously cultivated rancher image that helped him rise from governor to president after a relatively short political career, at least in public.

Is this George W. Bush or Vicente Fox?

If there was ever a time that the United States and Mexico appeared to share coincidences other than a common interest in the other, it is now, at the beginning of a new millennium that finds the two countries more enlaced and interrelated than ever before.

Although Bush and Fox have met while serving as governors of Texas and Guanajuato, Bush will travel, appropriately, to Fox's San Cristobal ranch Feb. 16 for their first diplomatic sessions as presidents of the neighbor nations.

"We both wear cowboy boots, we both love our countries, we both aspire to a better future for our people, and we both want to resolve the big problems concerning U.S.-Mexico relations, such as immigration, drug trafficking," Fox explained recently to a U.S. television interviewer.

The coincidences appear more and more because of the apparent similarities between the two new leaders, who will begin their administrations in a similar manner.

Beyond that, they both were victorious because of campaigns that not only began at an apparent disadvantage, but also in which they looked to establish an easygoing, rancher image. And although this may sound harsh, the two seemed to make their oppo-

Red Wine May Not Help Hearts

Although drinking red wine may be an appealing ritual for heart health, medical authorities caution that it's not the most proven.

To ward off heart attacks, doctors with the American Heart Association say nothing beats the time-honored practices -- eating healthfully, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight.

"We want to make clear that there are other risk-reduction options that are well-documented and free of the potential hazards associated with alcohol consumption," Dr. Ira J. Goldberg, a member of the AHA's Nutrition Committee, said in a statement.

"There is no scientific proof that drinking wine or any other alcoholic beverage can replace these effective conven-



ents forget that they were up against real urban cowboys: one from Yale, the other a graduate of Mexico's prestigious Universidad Iberoamericana.

They both enjoy spending time on their ranches. And equally in Mexico as in the United States, the idea of the rancho, of country life, evokes images not only of the national mythology of that lifestyle, but also ideals that are frequently confused with simplicity in terms of urban sophistication. This has often led their rivals to underestimate them.

Both Fox and Bush distinguish themselves in every instance as communicators because of their incessant use of the telephone as an instrument of direct and personal communication with others, to the point that Fox has been described as "the president

tional measures."

Goldberg said studies suggest that drinking a moderate amount of red wine can increase blood levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, often called good cholesterol.

However, a similar increase is seen with exercise programs and medication, Goldberg said.

Much of the hypothesis that red wine counteracts the effects of dietary cholesterol and saturated fat came from population surveys. They showed lower rates of heart disease, despite high-fat diets, in parts of Europe where people drink wine regularly.

But Goldberg said this observation could be attributed to other differences in diet between Americans and Europeans.

with a cell phone." Tomás Yarrington, governor of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas on the Texas border, is another Mexican leader who can confirm that Bush also enjoys using a cell phone.

It comes as a surprise to no one that Fox has made an effort to communicate with potential U.S. allies, and that he is quite popular among Hispanic groups, especially Mexicans, inside that county's borders.

At the same time, Bush has courted and continues to court the Hispanic vote, and with this, it will not be uncommon for the paths -- and interests -- of these two leaders to cross frequently.

Beyond that, Bush has underlined how important Mexico and resolving common problems such as migration and drug trafficking, and possible areas of cooperation, such as energy, are to him. Among those on the little-known list of those invited to the Jan. 20 Bush inauguration were Yarrington and Veracruz Gov. Miguel Alemán, along with Juan

Hernández, Mexican commissioner for migration issues, and Juan Felipe Bravo, president of the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN), which led Fox to power.

They are delegators. Fox created a governmental structure made up of "coordinators" in something that at least in Mexico appears to be a daring experiment, but in which he makes the final decision. Bush confesses that he will be the kind of president and CEO in a structure that at least on paper the majority of his Cabinet Secretaries have more experience than he does.

The two, curiously enough, entrusted the leadership of their external politics to people on the left, a seeming concession to useful ally groups and more than that in their respective campaigns. Fox has Jorge Castañeda, a prestigious academician known for his liberal positions; Bush has Colin Powell, a prestigious military man with moderate tendencies.

And both gave key posts in their administrations to people who are considered part of the "system" and in some cases on the right: Fox to Carlos Abascal, Secretary of Labor, while Bush nominated John Ashcroft to be his Attorney General.

Politically, they find themselves in similar situations: Both are faced with largely complicated Congresses. The Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) that backed Fox is not the majority in the Congress. The Republican Party that chose Bush has a majority that is so weak that at times it appears to be more of a disadvantage than an advantage.

Both won election with less than 50 percent of the vote. But each acts as if he had been elected with a clear and indisputable mandate.

(Jose, Carreño is the Washington, D.C., correspondent for the Mexico City daily El Universal.) (c) 2001, Hispanic Link News Service. Distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate

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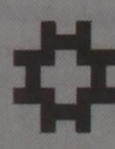
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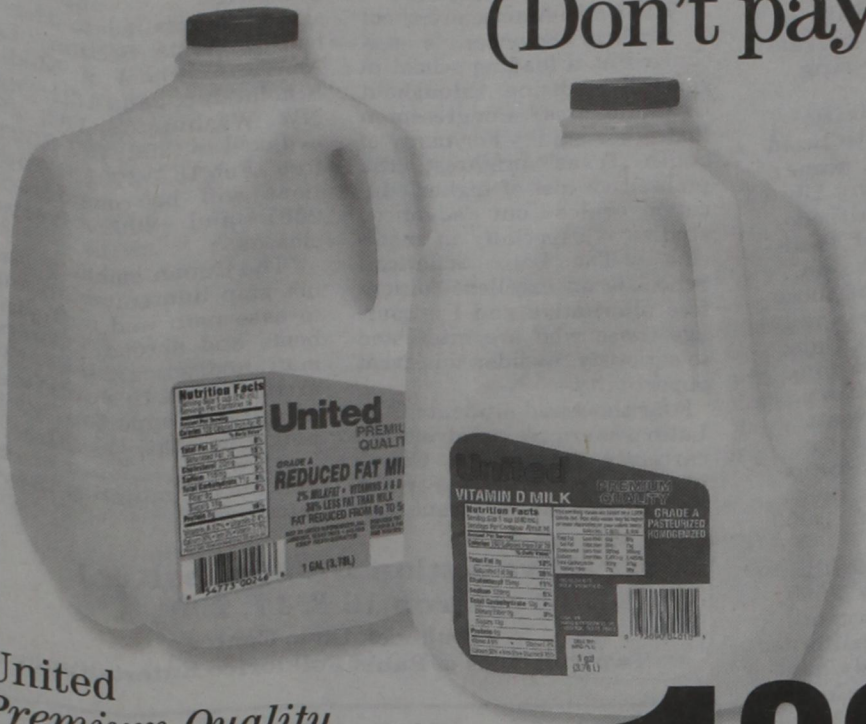
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