

John Zogby--Testimony for joint hearing of the House Foreign Relation Subcommittee on International Organizations and Oversight and the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. Thursday 3pm.

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Thank you Mr. Rohrabacher. Thank you members of the committee. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to appear before your committee today and discuss our recent work in Latin America. I believe today's hearing merits added significance as this hearing coincides with the start of President Bush's trip to Latin America.

Since 1997, Zogby International has conducted extensive polling in Latin America—focusing not only on national elections, but also on the opinions of elites and key decision makers. In reviewing our findings from the past several years, several trends emerge. First, there is a growing disaffection with the United States that threatens our long standing vital interests and working relationships.

When we examine our data further in an effort to identify the causes for this disaffection, we find over the past several years, U.S. policies have angered and alienated not only the general population, but also the Elite communities—who traditionally are more conservative and pro-American.

And while immigration policies and regional trade policies compose a large part of the picture, our unilateralist policies with the rest of the world have augmented this sense of alienation. As a consequence, Latin American nations increasingly are looking elsewhere, both internally and externally, to forge other close relationships in the region.

Elite Poll Findings

Let us first look at elite opinion regarding the U.S. government's handling of its relations toward Latin America. Here we find an overwhelmingly negative response. Eighty-six percent of those surveyed in our 2006 Elite poll rate the U.S. handling as 'fair' or 'poor.' Approximately one-in-ten (13%) give the U.S. a positive rating (See Appendix A, Table 1).

Looking across the seven countries surveyed we find that high negative ratings exist throughout Latin America, including 78 percent in Colombia, where we have committed significant amounts of foreign aid. Chile, arguably one of our best friends in the region, has the highest negative opinion of U.S. relations at ninety-five percent. While these overall negative ratings are high, the highest 'poor' rating emerges from our neighbor and top trade partner, Mexico, where two-in-three elites (65%) view U.S. relations in a poor light (See Appendix A, Table 1).

In our 2005 survey of elites, two-thirds (67%) told us that relations with the U.S. were very important and that the U.S. should pay more attention to Latin America (See Appendix A, Table 2.1 & 2.2). At many turns we need to remind people that these opinions are from an elite sample, where there is a strong representation of conservatives and moderates, as well as business owners and community leaders.

What is the origin of this negative attitude? One source is the overwhelming belief that the U.S. benefits more from free trade than does Latin America (See Appendix A, Table 3). This opinion has grown stronger over time, particularly among elites in Argentina, Colombia, Chile and Venezuela. Asked what changes the U.S. should make

in its trade policies, nearly half of these elites tell us that they would like to see a more balanced approach to trade relations (See Appendix A, Table 4).

A second source of negative opinion stems from U.S. immigration policies, which show a tremendous disconnect between U.S. policy and regional opinion (See Appendix A, Table 5). We find that respondents follow immigration issues very closely and indeed eighty-two percent believe that the future of Hispanic Americans is either very important or somewhat important (See Appendix A, Table 6).

At the same time, American media and political discourse is littered with leading figures and pundits railing against immigration. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that more than four out of every five elites (83%) surveyed hold a negative opinion of U.S. immigration policy. In the most extreme example, three-in-four Mexican elites (74%) rate the current U.S. policy as ‘poor’ (See Appendix A, Table 5).

When asked to rate President Bush’s overall job performance, we again find the same high negative ratings with four-in-five elites (81%) giving the President a rating of ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ (See Appendix A, Table 7). This includes a stunning ninety-six percent of Mexican elites. Half of all elites (50%) say that President Bush’s policies have been worse for the region than those of his predecessors, while only 6 percent say that his policies have been better (See Appendix A, Table 9).

These high negative marks can not only be attributed to our performance in the region and our immigration policy, but also our handling of world affairs—that is to say the war in Iraq and our ‘go it alone strategy.’ A case in point -- eighty-six percent of elites disagree with the U.S.’s management of world conflicts, including majorities in every nation who strongly disagree (See Appendix A, Table 10).

These negative feelings come at a time when significant change has been occurring throughout the region.

Nationwide Election Poll Findings

During the course of 2006, many Latin American countries held Presidential elections and to gauge the shifting opinions in the region we polled likely voters in five nations—Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Nicaragua and Venezuela. While the focus of these polls was largely on national political and economic issues, in each country we had respondents rate their opinion of the American people and the U.S. government.

As with the Arab world and as you are going to hear in the coming weeks from my brother Jim Zogby, poorly received policies have hurt the image of the American people among Latin Americans. Less than half (45%) hold a favorable view of the American people with the highest favorable ratings coming from Colombia (59%) and Nicaragua (50%). Almost one-third (31%) hold a negative, or unfavorable view (See Appendix A, Table 11).

When asked about the American government there is increased evidence of a deterioration of America's image. The U.S. government is viewed in a favorable light by only one-third (33%) of Latin Americans, while forty-five percent view it unfavorably. One-quarter say their opinion is very unfavorable (See Appendix A, Table 12).

Perhaps the most revealing and potentially significant evidence of Latin American disaffection with the United States emerges from our 2006 Elite poll when we asked respondents to name the country they feel is most important to Latin America (See

Appendix A, Table 13). Less than one-in-three (31%) think the U.S. is the most important nation—with particularly low marks in Argentina (14%) and Chile (22%). China was named by an almost equal number of respondents (27%), evidence of its increased standing in the region.

To conclude, I would just like to highlight the causal pattern that places these findings into context. Our work throughout Latin America has revealed several trends. First, the opinion of the U.S. handling of relations, immigration and world conflicts has fallen over the last few years, as has the rating of President Bush. This decline has led to a lower opinion of the American people, the American government and the overall importance of the U.S. as a regional player.

Appendix A: Supplemental Tables

1. How would you grade the US government's handling of its relations toward Latin America?

Table 1: Opinion of U.S. Handling of Relations with Latin America

2006 Elite	Overall	Argentina	Brazil	Colombia	Chile	Mexico	Peru	Venezuela
Excellent	1	--	3	--	--	--	3	4
Good	12	5	14	23	5	14	18	9
Positive*	13	5	17	23	5	14	20	13
Fair	45	62	46	46	57	21	64	45
Poor	38	33	37	31	38	65	15	43
Negative	86	95	83	78	95	86	79	88

*Positive responses are the aggregate of Excellent and Good. Negative Responses are the aggregate of Fair and Poor.

Source: 2006 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 603, Margin of Error 4.5%.

2. Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all important and 5 being extremely important, please rate each of the following as to its overall importance to the economy of Latin America.

Table 2.1: Importance of Trade Agreements to Latin American Economy

2006/2005 Elite	2006		2005		Highest Rating*		Lowest Rating	
	Higher Importance**	Lower Importance	Higher Importance	Lower Importance	Nation	(%)	Nation	(%)
Latin America	81	6	81	5	Venezuela	93	Brazil	12
U.S.	59	14	50	17	Peru	79	Argentina	20
E.U.	80	5	74	5	Venezuela	88	Arg/Brazil	13
China***	70	9	58	16	Chile	57	Mexico	14
Arab Nations	81	6	32	33	Chile	57	Mexico	43

*Highest Rating reflects the nation with the greatest "Higher Importance" rating. Lowest Rating reflects the nation with the greatest "Lower Importance" rating.

**Higher Importance is the combination of 4&5, while Lower Importance is the combination of 1&2.

***In 2005, respondents were asked about agreements with Asian Nations. In 2006 they were asked about China, specifically.

Source: 2006 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 603, Margin of Error 4.5%.

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

Table 2.2: Importance of Trade Agreements to Latin American Economy

2006/2005 Elite		Argentina		Brazil		Colombia		Chile		Mexico		Peru		Venezuela	
		'06	'05	'06	'05	'06	'05	'06	'05	'06	'05	'06	'05	'06	'05
Latin America	High	78	78	76	82	82	83	72	76	81	82	88	N/A	93	85
	Low	9	5	12	6	1	4	7	9	4	3	3	N/A	--	4
U.S.	High	36	41	57	55	55	40	70	61	55	44	79	N/A	61	60
	Low	20	18	18	19	9	21	13	7	16	26	3	N/A	14	6
E.U.	High	73	64	73	80	83	69	84	78	77	71	87	N/A	88	83
	Low	6	8	13	4	3	5	6	--	5	13	3	N/A	--	1
China*	High	72	61	62	69	71	51	85	81	64	37	79	N/A	69	54
	Low	5	11	8	11	11	15	5	--	14	37	6	N/A	9	15
Arab Nations	High	34	21	53	5	36	25	57	46	25	14	40	N/A	48	26
	Low	22	34	16	17	34	30	15	15	43	62	18	N/A	18	14

**In 2005, respondents were asked about agreements with Asian Nations. In 2006 they were asked about China, specifically.*

Source: 2006 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 603, Margin of Error 4.5%.

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

3. Who do you think would benefit most from free trade between Latin America and the U.S.?

Table 3: Beneficiaries of U.S.–Latin American Trade: U.S. or Latin America

2005/2003 Elite	Overall		Argentina		Brazil		Colombia		Chile		Mexico		Venezuela	
	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03
U.S.	54	51	65	43	53	73	57	44	45	39	66	76	35	18
L.A.	9	8	10	6	7	6	9	10	9	15	5	3	16	8
Both	36	39	24	48	38	18	31	46	45	45	29	18	49	71
Neither	1	2	--	1	1	2	1	--	1	1	--	3	--	1
Not Sure	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	--	--	--	--	1	--	3

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

Table 4. Desired Changes in U.S. Latin America Policy

2005 Elite	Overall	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Venezuela
More balanced trade relations	47	44	30	38	53	58	63
A more European-like hemispheric union	22	20	25	31	24	16	19
More free-trade agreements	16	18	30	11	6	22	6
More foreign aid conditional on fiscally responsible economic policy	12	14	14	20	14	4	11
Not sure	2	5	1	1	4	--	1

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

5. Generally speaking, how would you evaluate United States immigration policies toward Latin America?

Table 5. Views on U.S. Immigration Policies

2005 Elite	Overall	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Venezuela
Excellent	1	3	--	--	--	--	1
Good	14	18	18	13	15	6	14
Positive	15	21	18	13	15	6	15
Fair	36	31	30	43	44	20	51
Poor	47	40	48	42	38	74	31
Negative	83	71	78	85	82	94	82
Not sure	3	9	4	2	3	--	3

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

6. In your view, how important are Hispanic Americans to your country's future?

Table 6. Importance of Hispanic Americans

2005 Elite	Overall	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Venezuela
Very important	50	11	64	52	54	78	31
Somewhat important	32	41	25	33	32	20	45
Not at all important	16	44	7	13	14	1	24
Not sure	2	4	4	1	--	1	--

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

7. How would you rate United States President George W. Bush's overall job performance?

Table 7. Rating President Bush

2005/2003 Elite	Overall		Argentina		Brazil		Chile		Colombia		Mexico		Venezuela	
	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03	'05	'03
Excellent	2	2	4	--	2	--	1	1	1	4	1	3	1	1
Good	15	10	13	4	10	2	23	15	22	19	3	2	21	21
Positive	17	12	17	4	12	2	24	16	23	23	4	5	22	23
Fair	36	37	40	44	29	28	40	48	46	43	19	14	48	54
Poor	45	50	38	49	58	70	35	35	26	35	77	78	25	23
Negative	81	87	78	93	87	98	75	83	72	78	96	92	73	77
Not sure	3	2	6	4	1	--	--	1	5	--	--	4	5	2

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

8. How would you rate United States President George W. Bush's overall job performance?

Table 8: Opinion of the President Bush—VENEZUELA OVERALL--ELECTION

Venezuela 2006	Overall	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Very Favorable	6	5	7	7	7
Somewhat Favorable	14	21	19	15	11
Favorable	20	26	26	22	18
Somewhat Unfavorable	12	16	18	17	4
Very Unfavorable	45	34	31	37	42
Unfavorable	57	50	49	54	46
Not Familiar	17	18	17	20	33
Not Sure	6	6	8	5	2

Source: 2006 Venezuela Nationwide Election Survey, Sample Size 800, Margin of Error 3.5%

9. In comparison with other recent U.S. presidents, would you say that President Bush's policies toward Latin America have been better, worse, or the same for the region?

Table 9. Bush and Latin America

2005 Elite	Overall	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Venezuela
Better	6	5	1	11	20	1	3
Worse	50	53	59	40	25	66	50
The same	42	38	39	48	51	33	48
Not sure	2	5	1	1	5	--	--

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

10. Do you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with how the government of the United States is managing world conflict?

Table 10. Views on U.S. World-Conflict Management

2005 Elite	Overall	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Venezuela
Agree	3	6	2	4	3	--	1
Somewhat agree	11	6	15	9	12	2	23
Agree	14	12	17	13	15	2	24
Somewhat disagree	25	31	19	29	31	18	26
Strongly disagree	61	55	63	59	54	80	50
Disagree	86	86	82	88	85	98	76
Not sure	0	1	1	--	--	--	--

Source: 2005 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 523, Margin of Error 4.4%

Table 11: Opinion of the American People

2006 Election	Mexico	Colombia	Brazil	Nicaragua	Venezuela
Very Favorable	11	16	7	24	14
Somewhat Favorable	30	43	30	26	29
Favorable	41	59	37	50	43
Somewhat Unfavorable	20	12	25	11	12
Very Unfavorable	23	10	12	9	16
Unfavorable	43	22	37	20	28
Not Familiar	9	15	20	13	22
Not Sure	7	4	6	17	7

Source: 2006 Latin American Election Series, Sample Size 4,371, Margin of Error 1.5%

Table 12: Opinion of the American Government

2006 Election	Mexico	Colombia	Brazil	Nicaragua	Venezuela
Very Favorable	6	13	5	15	6
Somewhat Favorable	21	39	22	22	19
Favorable	27	52	27	37	25
Somewhat Unfavorable	22	15	29	11	17
Very Unfavorable	39	16	21	21	34
Unfavorable	61	31	50	32	51
Not Familiar	7	13	18	14	19
Not Sure	6	4	5	17	6

Source: 2006 Latin American Election Series, Sample Size 4,371, Margin of Error 1.5%

13. What country do you think is most important to Latin America?

Table 13.1: Most Important Country to Latin America

2006 Elite	Overall		Argentina		Brazil		Colombia		Chile		Mexico		Peru		Venezuela	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
U.S.	1	31	3	14	1	28	1	40	2	22	1	32	1(t)	35	1	44
China	2	27	1	26	2	15	2	28	1	43	2	20	1(t)	35	2	25
Brazil	3	11	2	20	--	--	--	--	4	9	--	--	3	13	--	--
Japan	4	8	--	--	3	9	3	6	3	15	3	9	--	--	3	11
Spain	5	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	7	--	--	4	10

Source: 2006 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 603, Margin of Error 4.5%.

Table 13.2: Most Important Country to Latin America

2006 Elite	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Left (1)	(2)	Neutral (3)	(4)	Right (5)
U.S.	31	33	27	24	14	22	31	45	43
China	19	28	27	32	37	35	21	22	37
Brazil	6	11	14	12	13	16	13	5	8
Japan	6	7	10	4	10	3	10	4	8
Spain	6	3	4	8	5	7	3	7	4

Source: 2006 Latin American Elite Survey, Sample Size 603, Margin of Error 4.5%.

Appendix B: Polling Methodology

2006 Latin American Elite Poll Methodology

<i>Countries</i>	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela
<i>Sample Design</i>	Elite Sample
<i>Mode</i>	Face-to-face and phone interviews
<i>Language</i>	Spanish, Portuguese (in Brazil only)
<i>Fieldwork Dates</i>	November 10 - December 11, 2006
<i>Sample Size</i>	603 (100 in Brazil and Mexico, 80 in all other nations)
<i>Margin of Error</i>	+/- 4.1%, higher in subgroups
<i>Representative of</i>	Latin American elites

*Results are also included from previous Latin American Elite polls conducted by Zogby International in both 2002 and 2005.

- In 2002, Zogby International surveyed 420 elites in six Latin American countries. The overall margin of error was +/- 5.0%. Field work was conducted between 9/02/02 and 10/02/02.
- In 2005, Zogby International surveyed 523 elites in six Latin American countries. The overall margin of error was +/- 4.4%. Field work was conducted between 8/17/05 and 9/15/05.
- Both the 2002 and 2005 survey included Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela. **Peru was only surveyed in 2006.**

2006 Latin America Election Series Methodology

Methodology

Country	Overall
<i>Sample Design</i>	Probability sampling
<i>Mode</i>	Face-to-face, adults 18+
<i>Language</i>	Spanish (except in Brazil—Portuguese)
<i>Representative of</i>	Urban Adult Population

Methodology (Cont.)

	Mexico		Colombia	Brazil		Nicaragua		Venezuela	
	1st	2nd	1st	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
<i>Start Date</i>	5/6	6/10	5/10	7/29	9/2	9/1	10/20	10/1	11/12
<i>End Date</i>	5/9	6/15	5/14	8/12	9/13	9/5	--	10/16	11/18
<i>Sample Size</i>	1,000	1,000	830	941	923	800	800	800	800
<i>Margin of Error (+/-)</i>	3.2%	3.2%	3.5%	3.3%	3.3%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%

2006 U.S./Mexico Mirror Poll

Countries	U.S. and Mexico
<i>Sample Design</i>	Random Probability Sample
<i>Mode</i>	U.S.--Phone Interviews Mexico--Face-to-face
<i>Language</i>	U.S.--English Mexico--Spanish
<i>Fieldwork Dates</i>	U.S.--2/3/06-2/7/06 Mexico--2/10/06-2/16/06
<i>Sample Size</i>	U.S.—1,010 Mexico—1,000
<i>Margin of Error</i>	U.S.—3.2% Mexico--%3.2%
<i>Representative of</i>	Adult Nationwide Populations