



From the desk of the CEO
Mario J. Paredes

September 19, 2019

FOR A PURPOSEFUL AND WELL-LED HISPANIC PRESENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Like a waterwheel, year after year, September arrives, the month decreed by the US government for the celebration of Hispanic Heritage. And, also like a waterwheel, year after year, we rejoice in this celebration as we acknowledge the presence of Hispanics and our Hispanic heritage in this Nation.

We deserve to have our presence recognized in this society as well as the contributions that, through our daily lives and work and over the decades, we have made to the construction of this great Nation. And it is very good that we celebrate, that we rejoice, that we have parades and processions, that we display our traditional clothing and our joy, that we show our customs and traditions and our jubilation. But, this important annual occasion cannot exist in just external gatherings. ... There are many problems that humanity faces, many very serious problems that our nations of origin are discussing, and many, also very serious problems that Hispanics face at this historical and political juncture in this Nation, like wasting the opportunity presented by this official and national recognition of our heritage in this Nation by lending ourselves to the vain game of simplistic formalities. ...

As Hispanics in this Nation, we must be more serious and more profound, less superficial, more thoughtful and committed to our present and to our near future in the United States.

I put forth, here, in these lines, some of the problems that we should approach seriously, that we should face together and decisively, issues for which we should pause, reflectively and purposefully, so that we achieve, here and now, in this Nation, a presence that is not only physical and symbolic, but also strong and decisive. So that our presence and heritage in the United States is not remembered just one month a year, but rather, is a presence and heritage that is respectable and respected, a presence that is strong, united, solidary, and



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powerful for the harvesting of our best aspirations for today's Hispanic community, for the Hispanics yet to come and for the future generations of Hispanics in the United States.

The ancestral account of our Hispanic origins tells us that we come from the "cosmic race" of Vasconcelos. That Hispanics carry in our blood the alchemy of all races of humanity. That we are, all at the same time: blacks and whites, aborigines and Indo-Europeans, Asians and Moors. ... We are ecumenical and Catholic in the most literal sense of these words: we are universal. In our hearts and in our minds, all colors, shapes, expressions, and cultures fit. ... Because we are a cosmic race, social and ideological positions as well as racist and discriminatory politics do not fit in our hearts and minds. There is no place in our existence and our lives for a world of walls and divisions; there is no place for separation or segregation. ... We do not discriminate against anyone, but we cannot allow discrimination, division, separation, labeling. ...

Therefore, I appeal to the conscience of the Hispanic community so that, I repeat, in addition to our annual Shrovetide gatherings, we focus on fighting, with our deeds and our words, with our votes and our laws, the anti-immigrant positions and prejudices that we suffer today and that results in millions of our Hispanic brothers and families finding themselves in endless situations of enormous suffering. ...

Communism, guerrillas, internal revolutions are not, here and now, our threat. Our real problems, our real threats come—among other extensive issues and problems that fall outside the scope of this discussion—from the enormous and unmeasurable administrative and political corruption that, along with drug trafficking, corrodes the foundations of our nations of origin and that, as a ruthless and immediate consequence, causes a thousand forms of violence and death, impoverishes millions of Latin Americans and forces them to emigrate to this Nation, among others, in search of better living conditions.

The solution to all of this and the successes that we urgently need for our Hispanic heritage and presence in this Nation, therefore, require a Hispanic leadership here and in our homelands, that is intelligent and honest, serious and combative, generous and altruistic, and that is trained in and



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committed to the best hopes of Latin Americans and Hispanics residing in this Nation.

We urgently need leaders who are in tune with Hispanics and with all things Hispanic, trained, intelligent, and knowledgeable about the functioning of this American society and our socio-historical roots. We need a leadership that is capable of tuning into all things American and into the needs and common good to which Hispanic residents in this nation aspire. We urgently need leaders who are capable of knowing and tuning in to our frustrations and desires, our anger and our values, and the best of our heritage as well as the best of this American society. Leaders capable of defending our integration into this society above and against any form of submission, surrender or assimilation. Leaders, in short, who will fight to achieve more just, equitable, and respectful political and diplomatic relations between this Nation and our nations of origin and with our Hispanic presence and heritage in the United States of America.

We have a lot to think about and to reconsider during this month when we celebrate our Hispanic heritage! There is much we have done, built and achieved, but we have much left to do!