

## Voice of America (VOA)

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### Latin American Reaction On President Bush's Second Term is Mixed

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Buenos Aires

As the final result of the U.S. presidential election was determined, people throughout Latin America reacted to the news of President George W. Bush's victory.

The news of another Republican victory in the White House brought mixed emotions in Latin America. Leaders throughout the region sent their congratulations to President Bush, many expressing hopes of increased relations during the next four years.

Mexico's president Vicente Fox called to congratulate Mr. Bush, repeating his desire to advance bilateral relations with the U.S. and to work together on issues such as immigration, security and terrorism.

Guatemala's President Oscar Berger assured his citizens that Guatemala was in the heart and mind of President Bush. Mr. Berger said the country wants to improve working conditions for immigrants and will look to the U.S. for help in modernizing its military.

However some citizens and analysts were disappointed with the result. The majority of Latin Americans were against the U.S.-led war in Iraq, and consequently supported Democrat John Kerry in his bid for the presidency.

Although geographically close, many critics have charged that relations between the U.S. and its southern neighbors have deteriorated in recent years, as the Bush administration has been occupied with the war on terror in the Middle East and beyond.

In Argentina, citizens expressed an array of feelings on the streets. 64-year-old real estate agent Bruno Teyka was indifferent.

He said if one wins or the other, it doesn't make any difference to Argentina because they don't even take us into account. From what I've read, the political analysts said that they didn't even mention Latin America, and even less Argentina, Mr. Teyka said.

Raul Fernández, a 40-year-old Argentine businessman supports President Bush.

Mr. Fernandez said the United States is playing a very important role right now on the world stage, and that is security. "We all have the possibility to grow, to progress but if we don't have security around the world, anything could happen to us," he said. "It could happen to us here in Argentina or in any part of the world. I've always seen Mr. Bush as a winner, and if it's like that, then everything is good."

In Brazil, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva sent words of support to President Bush. However, Marcilio Moreira, Brazil's former ambassador to the U.S. under President Ronald Reagan and Bush said most Brazilians are not happy with the result. They are reacting with dismay, he said, the people on the streets, the people in the universities, the press, the people in Congress they are really disappointed that the president (Bush) has chosen war instead of peace, have chosen aggressiveness instead of negotiations.

In 2000, President George W. Bush campaigned on the hope of increasing relations between the U.S. and Latin America, a desire that was somewhat derailed by the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.

Many in Latin America are now hoping to build upon that promise now that the Bush administration will govern the United States for the next four years.