

# Comment

We go to press with this Review in the aftermath of two devastating earthquakes. The quake in Haiti was a natural disaster that became a social catastrophe, leaving hundreds of thousands dead and displaced and crippling the economy. The unusually strong *terremoto* in Chile — 8.8 on the moment magnitude scale — resulted in hundreds of dead and severe economic disruption. The disasters saw an outpouring of aid from throughout the Americas, but the grueling challenge of rebuilding lies ahead for both countries. We plan to look at the context of the disasters and the options for the future in upcoming Reviews.

We begin with a political upheaval: the end of two decades of center-left governance in Chile and the election of Sebastián Piñera, a candidate of the right. While the Piñera victory was hardly a surprise, the new president faces the tasks of reconstruction on top of the challenge of constituting a new government. Kirsten Sehnbruch lays out the possibilities in “Chile Heads Right.” Sehnbruch, a senior fellow at CLAS and now a professor of Public Policy at the Universidad de Chile, also examines the historic legacy of the Bachelet presidency in this edition.

This Review also reflects on the many challenges facing Mexico and the United States. Four articles examine

the bilateral relationship from different angles, including: the economic collapse and its impact on both countries; the growing importance of issues of transparency and accountability; energy and the environment; and the horrific escalation of violence associated with the drug wars. All of these issues were part of the discussion at the U.S.–Mexico Futures Forum, organized by CLAS and ITAM and held at Berkeley in the fall of 2009.

Rosemary Joyce, a UC Berkeley Anthropology professor, writes about “Culture and Politics in the Honduran Coup.” Joyce has done path-breaking anthropological research in Honduras for three decades and brings unusual depth and cultural understanding to this look at a contemporary political disaster.

Finally, we present a conversation between Fernando Botero and Lawrence Rinder, director of the Berkeley Art Museum, about the world-renowned artist’s life and work. Botero was in Berkeley to open an exhibit showing 60 of his extraordinary Abu Ghraib paintings and drawings that he has donated to UC Berkeley. Chancellor Robert J. Birgeneau presented him with the Chancellor’s Citation, one of the university’s highest awards.

— Harley Shaiken

Harley Shaiken with members of the U.S.-Mexico Futures Forum walking across the Berkeley campus, fall 2009.



Photo by Matty Nematollahi.