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Former Mexican president Vicente Fox says racism holding up immigration accord in U.S

NEW YORK (AP) — Former Mexican President Vicente Fox said Monday that the United States is letting racism dictate its policies, especially when it comes to immigration.

"The xenophobics, the racists, those who feel they are a superior race ... they are deciding the future of this nation," he said, without naming names, in an interview with The Associated Press.

In his first interview to promote his new book, "Revolution of Hope," Fox applauded President Bush's desire to pass an immigration accord that would allow more Mexicans to work legally in the U.S.

But he criticized Bush for failing to pass the promised reform.

"There was always a reason for why it couldn't be done. 'It is not possible because of the elections.' He couldn't touch the topic because this election is very important, or because security was more important," Fox said.

"So, when are they going to finally address it? It needs to be resolved."

Fox said he hopes his new book, written in English, helps Americans understand the Mexican point of view on immigration.

"To be so repressive isn't democratic or free ... to be putting up fences, chasing Mexicans, that isn't right," Fox said. "The U.S. needs better answers than repression, weapons and violence."

Fox also talked about his sometimes rocky relationship with Bush, a man he calls a "windshield cowboy" in his book.

Both men had worked together as governors of influential agricultural states in Mexico and the U.S. They began their presidential terms in office nearly eight years ago with close relations, and Bush even made a visit to Fox's central Mexican ranch his first foreign trip as president in early 2001.

But they split ways on Iraq, after Fox refused to back the impending war.

"There are important differences between myself and President Bush, including the case of Iraq and other topics where we think and act differently," Fox said.

Fox also denied media and opposition allegations of illicit wealth that have arisen in Mexico, after a celebrity magazine published photos of his newly renovated ranch. He said the accusations were made "without any evidence."

"It's just yellow journalism," he said.

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