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## Gonzales First Hispanic Attorney General

### Torture memos fail to derail senate decision

(AP)—The Senate voted Thursday to confirm White House counsel Alberto Gonzales as attorney general, setting aside complaints he helped craft questionable U.S. policies on the treatment of foreign prisoners.

Gonzales, 49, a longtime friend who was President Bush's legal counsel when he was governor of Texas, becomes the first Hispanic to be the nation's top law officer. His 60-32 vote confirmation came after opponents said they would not tie up the nomination with a filibuster.

"This is a breakthrough of incredible magnitude for Hispanic-



Alberto Gonzales

Americans," said Sen. Mel Martinez, R-Fla., calling Gonzales "a role model for the next generation" of Hispanics in this country.

Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., said he expected Gonzales, a former Texas judge, "to help lead the way for the creation of an America that

despises hate and bigotry and recognizes that every human being deserves a government that will fight for the dignity and equality of all."

During his confirmation hearing, other Democrats charged that Gonzales' January 2002 memo as White House counsel led to the abuse of suspected terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The memo argued that the fight against terrorism "renders obsolete [the Geneva Conventions'] strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions."

"I simply cannot support the nomination of someone who, de-

spite his assertions to the contrary, obviously contributed in large measure to the atrocious policy failures and the contrived and abominable legal decisions that have flowed from this White House over the past four years," said Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., the senior senator.

Gonzales defended the memo and said the treaty's protections did not extend to al-Qaida and other suspected terrorists, but he declared, "Torture and abuse will not be tolerated by this administration."

He told senators that as attorney general he would "ensure the Department of Justice aggressively pursues those responsible for such abhorrent actions."

Salazar said Gonzales made his position on torture clear.

"Torture is illegal and wrong, and that will be the position of Judge Gonzales as attorney general," Salazar said.

## Race 'Goes Beyond' Skin Color for Many

### Study shows how Latinos view themselves

(AP)—Hispanics who identify themselves as "white" tend to be better educated and less likely to be in poverty than those who consider themselves "some other race," according to a report by a private research group.

The Pew Hispanic Center analyzed data from the 2000 census and its own survey in 2002 and found foreign-born Latinos who became citizens were slightly more likely to consider themselves white than noncitizens.

"White" also was more popular among the U.S.-born grandchildren of immigrants than among the U.S.-born children of foreign-born Hispanics.

Sonya Tafoya, the Pew research associate who wrote the report, said, for Latinos, "race goes beyond physical characteristics and skin color."

The census results showed that race among Hispanics appeared "to be a measure of belonging or of political enfranchisement.... Those feeling more belonging to the American mainstream are more likely to feel white," she said.

The government considers "Hispanic" an ethnicity instead of a race; people of Hispanic ethnicity

*The 2000 census counted 35 million Hispanics. Since then, Hispanics have passed blacks as the nation's largest minority group.*

can belong to any race.

The 2000 census counted 35 million Hispanics. Since then, Hispanics have passed blacks as the nation's largest minority group.

The last census found the two most popular responses to the race question among Hispanics were white (48 percent, or 17 million people) and "some other race" (42 percent, or nearly 14.9 million).

Among Hispanic subgroups,

Cubans were most likely to identify themselves as white (85 percent), while Dominicans most often selected "some other race" (58 percent).

In most groups, naturalized citizens were slightly more likely to choose white than noncitizens. 47 percent of naturalized Mexican-Americans said they were white, compared with 44 percent of Mexicans who were not U.S. citizens.

## Doll's Storyline Upsets Neighborhood

### Character leaves 'dangerous' city for a better life

(AP)—Some residents of Chicago's largely Hispanic Pilsen section are upset over a new doll in the popular American Girl series because her storyline says the Mexican-American youngster and her family left the "dangerous" neighborhood for a better life in the suburbs.

Many in the neighborhood say the characterization is insulting and inaccurate.

"It's very offensive and it's really a slap in the face to the hardworking people of the Pilsen community," said Alvaro R. Obregon, who lives near where the doll, Marisol, supposedly lived before setting out for the suburbs.

According to the biography that accompanies the doll, which was



Marisol Luna, the newest character in the American Girl doll maker's line.

introduced just after Christmas, she is the daughter of a transit worker and an accountant. One day her mother tells Marisol the family is leaving their apartment for a house in the suburbs.

The old neighborhood "was no place for me to grow up," the doll's story says. "It was dangerous, and there was no place for me to play."

American Girl officials said that they never intended to insult the community.

Although crime was down 6 percent last year in Pilsen, the neighborhood still grapples with gang violence and high dropout rates.

"It's a community that doesn't give up and doesn't run from its problems," said Obregon, who works with the community group The Resurrection Project. "It's a community of faith, of hardworking people, and that's why when this comes out I'm sort of taken aback."

American Girl dolls were introduced in 1986. The dolls, which have become a must-have for many girls, also feature other ethnic characters, including a Hispanic girl living in colonial New Mexico, a black girl during the Civil War and an American Indian girl.

## Chevez Pledges Support to Poor

(AP)—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez pledged to deepen his "revolution" for the poor as he marked his government's sixth anniversary, saying he intends to win another six-year stint next year.

Chavez was inaugurated on Feb. 2, 1999. He swiftly oversaw the drafting of a new constitution that called for elections in 2000, and won a six-year term. Ahead of next year's

elections, Chavez has pledged a new push to fight poverty and expand social programs.

"One day we will no longer speak of class here," Chavez said, blaming accumulated poverty on "a century of exploitation, of hegemony, imperialism."

In his six years, Chavez has survived a short-lived coup in 2002, a two-month strike in 2003 and recall

referendum last August.

Critics argue his policies have done little to improve the lives of the 25 million Venezuelans, most of whom live in poverty despite the country's oil wealth.

"Venezuelan society has become poorer and, in addition, divided," said Anibal Romero, a political science professor at Simon Bolivar University.

## Money Goes Home to Mexico

(AP)—Mexicans living and working in the United States sent \$16.6 billion to their homeland during 2004, an increase of 24 percent over 2003, the Bank of Mexico said Monday.

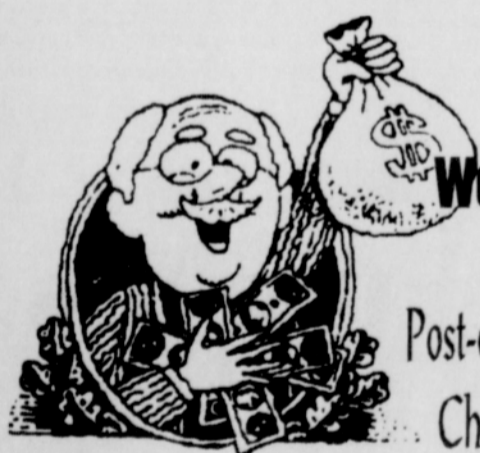
It was the second year in a row that remittances were greater than direct foreign investment. In 2003

remittances became the country's second-most-important source of revenue after oil.

Such increases in remittance figures may be a result of better record keeping by authorities and not necessarily a large increase in money shipments, Bank of Mexico Guillermo Ortiz warned in early January.

"Now nearly all of the remittances are passing through the financial system and we are recording them," Ortiz said. "These spectacular increases of 20 percent and 30 percent in many ways reflect simply a better collection of the information and not necessarily an increase in the shipments."

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