

Absolut vodka pulls ad showing California in Mexico



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The distillers of Sweden's Absolut vodka have withdrawn an advertisement run in Mexico that angered many U.S. citizens by idealizing an early 19th century map showing chunks of the United States as Mexican.

The billboard ad has the slogan "In an Absolut World" slapped over a pre-1848 map showing California, Arizona and other U.S. states as Mexican territory. Those states were carved out of what had been Mexican lands until that year.

Although it was not shown in the United States, U.S. media outlets picked up on the ad, and after a barrage of complaints, Absolut's maker said on Sunday the ad campaign would cease.

Defending the campaign last week, Absolut maker Vin & Spirit said the ad was created "with a Mexican sensibility" and was not meant for the U.S. market.

"In no way was this meant to offend or disparage, nor does it advocate an altering of borders, nor does it lend support to any anti-American sentiment, nor does it reflect immigration issues," a spokeswoman wrote on Absolut's Web site.

"Instead, it hearkens to a time which the population of Mexico may feel was more ideal," she wrote.

Absolut's blog site has received more than a thousand comments since the ad campaign was launched a few weeks ago, with many calling for boycotts of the Swedish company.

"I have poured the remainder of my Absolut bottles down the sink," one blogger wrote.

A war between Mexico and the United States from 1846 to 1848 started with Mexico's refusal to recognize the U.S. annexation of Texas and ended with the occupation of Mexico City by U.S. troops.

At the end, Mexico ceded nearly half of its territory to the United States, forming the states of California, Nevada, Utah and parts of Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and Wyoming.

Mexicans remain sensitive about the loss and the location of the border. At the same time, the United States is fortifying barriers to keep out undocumented Mexican migrants.

Some Mexicans use the term "Reconquista" (reconquest) to refer to the growing presence in California of Mexican migrants and their descendants.

France's Pernod Ricard is taking over Absolut vodka, one of the world's top-selling spirit brands, after buying Vin & Spirit from the Swedish government at the end of March.

+ 1.5%--What is your reaction to the article? Write ½ to 1 page detailing your feelings. Can you identify with the Mexican people? If you were in "their shoes" how would you feel if the majority of your land was taken away? Would you feel conflicted about where your "true homeland" is located if you were Mexican—especially if you are living in the part of the US that originally belonged to Mexico? What "current" US states originally belonged to Mexico?