

STATEMENT BY ENRIQUE PEÑA NIETO,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES,

POSITION ON
FOREIGN POLICY

Mexico City;
January 23th, 2017.

EDMUNDO JAVIER BOLAÑOS AGUILAR,
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF THE CHAMBER OF
DEPUTIES;

PABLO ESCUDERO MORALES,
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF THE SENATE;

GRACO RAMÍREZ GARRIDO ABREU,
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MORELOS AND
PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
GOVERNORS (CONAGO);

ERUVIEL ÁVILA VILLEGAS,
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MEXICO AND PRESIDENT
OF THE CONAGO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE;

JUAN PABLO CASTAÑÓN CASTAÑÓN,
PRESIDENT OF THE MEXICAN BUSINESS COORDINATING
COUNCIL;

CARLOS ACEVES DEL OLMO,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CONFEDERATION OF
MEXICAN WORKERS (CTM);

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
MEXICO;

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES;

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The last ten years have witnessed profound changes on the international stage.

Driven by unprecedented technological progress and framed by the 2008 financial crisis, we have seen accelerated social, economic, and political paradigm shifts.

As we have done throughout our nation's history, Mexico must not only face the emerging global challenges, but also leverage the new opportunities that these challenges bring along.

Without a doubt, one of the principal and most recent changes at the international level is the beginning of a new administration in the United States.

As a result, it is important to delineate the objectives of Mexico's foreign policy over the next two years to make it a responsible global actor.

Many of the objectives that we established at the beginning of my term in office are still valid.

Based on the fundamental principles of our Constitution, we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that our foreign policy boosts the Mexican development.

In terms of trade, we reaffirm our position as a nation open to the world, that competes in global markets with high-value products and services.

Nonetheless, it is true that we must redefine Mexico's relationship with the new government of the United States of America to provide greater certainty.

Therefore, the foreign policy for the remaining years of this administration will focus on two major priorities:

FIRSTLY: to strengthen Mexico's presence across the globe, in order to diversify our political relations and our ties of trade, investment, tourism, and cooperation.

SECONDLY: to build a new phase of dialogue and negotiation in the bilateral relationship with the United States.

In terms of the Diversification Strategy: while our largest trading partner is the United States, we must now seize the global opportunities that today, more than ever, are open to Mexico.

Thanks to our privileged position between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Mexico has increasingly become a logistics center for global trade flows, and a natural bridge between different regions of the world.

Therefore, Mexico can and must increase the diversification of its economic and political relationships.

With that on mind, the Mexican Government must pursue a balanced, pragmatic, and timely agenda to expand its export destinations and its sources of investment; deepen bilateral relations and political dialogue with key stakeholders; and engage with the most important causes promoted by the international community at multilateral mechanisms.

To this end, we will continue to strengthen our relationships with the different regions of the world.

By identity, will and conviction, we are a proudly Latin American country.

We will have a greater strategic sense in our relations with Latin American and the Caribbean countries, and we will work to transform them into more trade and investment; in better jobs and greater dialogue.

In line with this objective, this week I will attend the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in the Dominican Republic, a major forum that Mexico has been part of, year after year.

With the countries of Central America, and particularly those of the Northern Triangle — Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador — we will work together to address common challenges, such as development, prosperity, peace, and a safe and orderly migration with full respect for human rights.

Mexico ratifies its respect for the Human Rights of migrants, whom we recognize as agents of change, prosperity and development.

Meanwhile, in South America, we will continue to strengthen regional integration with our partners in the Pacific Alliance, an innovative mechanism that we share with Chile, Colombia, and Peru.

Simultaneously, Mexico will draw closer to Argentina and Brazil, with whom we are working to deepen and expand trade opportunities.

Across the Atlantic, our priority in Europe this year is to conclude the update of our Global Agreement — which includes upgrading our Free Trade Agreement with the European Union — and to conclude the modernization process of the Treaty we have with the European Free Trade Association.

Likewise, Mexico is ready to start negotiations on a trade agreement with the United Kingdom, once it formally leaves the European Union.

In the Asia-Pacific region — which is home to five of our ten largest trading partners — our priority is to consolidate our position as a major player, to intensify trade, investment, and tourism flows.

Specifically, in light of the clear obstacles to conclude the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), Mexico will immediately start talks to generate new bilateral trade agreements with the participating countries.

The Middle East is an important region because of its concentration of energy resources and its impact on international peace and security.

In this region, our priority will be to consolidate strategic alliances with key countries and stakeholders, based on closer ties between the business and financial sectors, in order to attract new investment.

In Africa, our goal will be to increase and consolidate Mexico's political presence, our trade, and joint cooperation projects in the continent's sub-regions.

In the multilateral arena, México will continue to support humanity's best causes.

They benefit the international community as a whole, but also because some of them are also part of our most basic interests.

In this sense, in the United Nations we will continue negotiating to reach the highest standards in the Global

Agreement regarding safe, orderly and regular migration; to address the world drug problem; and to ensure we fully implement the arms trade treaty.

With regard to the second priority — dialogue and negotiations with the United States — our diagnosis is objective.

It is obvious that the United States of America have a new perspective on foreign policy.

Given this reality, Mexico is bound to take action to defend its national interest. It is clear that we must embark on negotiation.

There are those who suggest, based on the tone of the presidential campaign in the U.S., that Mexico must now adopt an aggressive and confrontational stance.

Others anticipate submission, when they consider the asymmetries between the two nations.

However, neither of these positions offers a true solution. We will be neither confrontational nor submissive. The real solution lies in dialogue and negotiation.

Yes, we will negotiate, and in order to succeed, we must have well-defined guiding principles to pursue our goals effectively.

The five principles that will guide the Mexican government's negotiations with the government of the United States are as follows:

One. National sovereignty. We are a sovereign nation and we will act as such.

The exercise of sovereignty means that our sole interest in the negotiation process is that of Mexico and the Mexican people.

Mexico and the United States will dialogue as sovereign nations. We will do so with certainty, with dignity, with firmness, and with confidence in our strengths.

Let us always remember that while the relationship with the United States is fundamental for Mexico, the United States' relationship with Mexico is likewise of the utmost importance.

Two. Respect for the rule of law, namely respect for the laws of Mexico and the United States.

Mutual respect for the rule of law in our countries is and must continue to be the basis of our interaction.

Today, the maxim made famous by President Benito Juárez remains more relevant than ever: “Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace.”

Three. Constructive and purposeful vision. We believe that this should be a win-win negotiation.

Therefore, our position will be open to creative, innovative, and pragmatic solutions, keenly aware of the new situation in the United States and of the international context.

Four. North American Integration. Our region comprises three countries, and its dynamism and competitiveness depend on what Canada, United States and Mexico do together.

Five. Comprehensive negotiations. Mexico will discuss each and every aspect of our relationship in an open and comprehensive manner.

We will bring all the issues to the table: trade, yes, but also migration and security issues, including border security, terrorist threats, and illegal trafficking in drugs, weapons, and cash.

These are the five principles that will guide the negotiation. However, we must also be clear in our objectives in order to be successful.

In this regard, the ten objectives that the government of Mexico will pursue in its negotiations with the United States are as follows:

First. The U.S. government must make a clear commitment that guarantees fair treatment and respect for the rights of Mexican migrants.

Second. Any process of repatriation involving undocumented migrants undertaken by the U.S. government must be carried out in a coordinated and orderly manner. All existing protocols and agreements must be maintained and improved, grounded on the principle of treating people with dignity and respect.

We must remember that nearly three million people were deported over the last eight years, and that these processes have been conducted in an orderly manner, precisely because of these jointly agreed protocols.

Third. Development of the nations in our hemisphere must be a shared responsibility. The governments of Mexico and the United States must take on a commitment to work together to promote the development of Central America.

This commitment is increasingly important. While the number of Mexicans migrating to the United States has been falling every year, over the last three years the flow of undocumented foreign nationals traveling through Mexico to the United States grew by more than 100%.

Fourth. We must guarantee the free flow of remittances from our compatriots living in the United States, and prevent any obstacles being raised, or increases to costs.

At November, last year, remittances from our compatriots add up to more than 24 billion dollars. This represents an invaluable contribution to the development of our nation and one that is essential to the livelihood of millions of Mexican families, especially low-income families.

Fifth. The U.S. government must commit to working together with Mexico to stop the illegal entry of firearms and of money from illicit sources.

The current situation leads to thousands of deaths in our country every year.

Sixth. We must preserve free trade access between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Our exchanges should be exempt from any fee or tariff.

We want to strengthen the competitiveness of North America and its regional supply chains, increasing Mexican exports to the United States and Canada on the basis of healthy competition and the development of high value-added industries.

Seventh. In updating the North American trade framework, all three governments must include new sectors such as telecommunications, energy, and e-commerce.

Eighth. Any new trade agreement with the United States must result in improved wages for workers in Mexico.

Mexico do not compete on the global stage on the basis of low-quality jobs, or cheap labor.

On the contrary, we must take part in international trade on the basis of increased productivity and complementarity, making trade a powerful tool to protect existing jobs, create new ones, and improve wages in Mexico.

Ninth. We will protect the flow of investment into Mexico. We will ensure that our country maintains its status as a reliable and attractive destination for investment.

We will seek agreements that provide certainty for investment and trade between Mexico, Canada, and the United States. We will defend domestic and foreign investment, that have trusted Mexico.

And our tenth objective. We will work for a border that unites us, NOT a border that divides us.

Even though Mexico recognizes the rights of every sovereign nation to guarantee its security, Mexico does NOT believe in walls.

Our country believes in bridges, in road and rail crossings, and in the use of technology as the best allies to promote good neighborly relations.

Our border should be the place of our greatest coexistence; it should be a space of security, prosperity, and shared development.

We must invest more in border infrastructure to facilitate bilateral trade and reduce waiting times at border crossings.

(...)

I have said it before and I firmly believe it: the U.S. benefits when Mexico is doing well; just as Mexico benefits when the U.S. is doing well.

We Mexicans value the relationship we have built over many years and know that if we work together, we can keep moving forward in the right direction.

North America has the potential to be the most competitive region in the world, for the benefit of all its citizens.

That is why we will continue working with Canada and the United States to achieve this goal.

Forging the new relationship with the United States with its respective negotiations should be everyone's job, and not only the responsibility of the Mexican government.

The negotiations must be accompanied and supported by state institutions, by business and civic organizations, and by society as a whole.

Particularly, the support of the Mexican Senate will be key in the months to come, given that it is the Chamber of Congress that has the exclusive power to assess the foreign policy

developed by the Executive and to approve international treaties.

Consequently, I have instructed the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of Economy to maintain ongoing communications with the Senate.

As such, I recognize the plural initiative implemented by a group of senators, known as Operation Monarch. I have instructed the offices of the Mexican government to support this effort to protect our citizens.

I also recognize the efforts made by the different state governments through the National Conference of Governors (CONAGO).

I ask the Governor of Morelos, the current president of CONAGO, to convey to all State Governors the Federal Government's willingness to work together.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

In the coming weeks and months, we will have to define the new rules of our relationship with the rest of North America.

Throughout this process, protecting Mexicans both within and outside of Mexico will be our highest priority.

Today, I have ordered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly our Embassy and our consular network in the United States, to redouble their efforts to protect and assist Mexicans by defending and supporting them in asserting their rights under the law.

This is a moment that calls on us to unite. It is a moment that calls on us to work together, always bearing in mind the best interests of the nation.

Let us use the principles and objectives I have set out today to work together for the good of Mexico.

Today, more than ever, let us make National Unity the solid foundation on which to build a future of development and prosperity for Mexico.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH