

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

Remarks on Signing a Joint Declaration With President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico

July 8, 2020

President Trump. Well, thank you very much, everyone. It's a nice hot day, to put it mildly—*[laughter]*—so we'll make this quick. But it's all very positive, that I can say.

And it's my tremendous pleasure to welcome everyone to the White House with my good friend, President López Obrador of Mexico. We've had a very outstanding relationship.

Mr. President, we're truly moved that you chose to make your first foreign visit since taking office—very successfully taking office, I might add—to be with us at the White House.

The relationship between the United States and Mexico has never been closer than it is right now. And as the President said a little while ago, people were betting against that. They were actually betting against that. But it's never been stronger, never been closer. We're doing a tremendous job together.

We're cherished friends, partners, and neighbors. Our cooperation is founded on mutual trust and mutual respect between the two of us and between our two countries. And we honor the great dignity of both nations.

With this visit, President López Obrador and I have the opportunity to strengthen the bond we have forged since his impressive election victory more than 2 years ago, a victory the Vice President and Ivanka joined in celebrating at the swearing-in. That was a very exciting day for them. Each of us was elected on the pledge to fight corruption, return power to the people, and put the interests of our countries first. And I do that, and you do that, Mr. President.

The tradition of great respect between Mexican and American Presidents goes back to the early days of both of our nations. And, in particular, it includes President Abraham Lincoln and President Benito Juárez, who each held one another in very, very high esteem. They were great friends, and they did great things together. And we are grateful that this morning President López Obrador laid a wreath at the memorials that stand to each of these leaders, right here in our Nation's Capital. That was a very beautiful, beautiful ceremony.

Our countries are linked by trade and travel, by history and culture, by faith and family. The United States is home to 36 million incredible Mexican American citizens. Mexican Americans uplift our communities, and they strengthen our churches and enrich every feature of national life. They are hard-working, incredible people. They are also great business men and women and make up a big percentage of our small-business owners and very successful. They're very, very successful. They're like you: They're tough negotiators and great businesspeople, Mr. President.

Working alongside President López Obrador, we're taking this relationship to new heights and building a powerful economic and security partnership. Together, we have addressed many of the most complex issues facing our two countries that really went unresolved for many years and, frankly, far too long. It should have been resolved long before I got here. But we're achieving great strides and remarkable breakthroughs in strengthening our relationship for decades to come.

With everything that we have accomplished, the potential for the future of the United States and Mexico is unlimited. Far, far greater situation, really, for both countries than anyone thought possible.

Today we celebrate the historic victory we achieved together just days ago when NAFTA was officially terminated—one of the worst trade deals in history—and replaced with a brandnew, beautiful USMCA. We want to thank Canada, also. I spoke with and will be speaking to the Prime Minister in a little while.

While NAFTA slashed wages and eliminated jobs, the USMCA includes groundbreaking labor protections for workers in both nations. This landmark agreement will bring countless jobs from overseas, back to North America, and our countries will be very big beneficiaries. We are already seeing the fruits because it started. It's the largest, fairest, and most advanced trade deal ever reached by any country, and it will bring enormous prosperity to both American and Mexican workers and Canada. We want to thank everybody. We'll have a separate day with Canada. They're coming down at the appropriate time. But we want to congratulate Canada and the people of Canada, the Prime Minister.

But this has been a tremendous achievement. It's actually the largest trade deal ever made. And we made a big one with China too, but this is the largest trade deal ever made.

Our two Governments are also in close cooperation to stop the illicit cross-border flow of drugs and guns, cash, and contraband, and very importantly, stopping human trafficking. We're forging critical partnerships across the Western Hemisphere to combat the cartels and the smugglers and to ensure safe, humane, and lawful migration. And we've been helped greatly by Mexico on creating record numbers, in a positive sense, on our southern border. It's been really, very, very tight and done a great job.

And I want to thank the Secretary, who's here. We have a—Chad, you're here someplace. Where is Chad? What a good job you're doing, Chad. It's a great job. We're proud of you. And you've worked very closely with Mexico. I know you were just telling me what a great help they've been, right? Thank you very much, Chad.

We've also worked closely in the battle against the coronavirus, together saving countless thousands of lives. It's been my honor to help Mexico procure 600 ventilators, and it's going to be a higher number than that. They needed them very badly, and we were able to make them. We're making thousands a week, and we're helping a lot of countries. But one of the first, and maybe the first that I spoke to, was Mexico. We have a lot of them in Mexico saving a lot of lives. And, Mr. President, we're in this fight together, and we're doing very well.

Just a couple of things on that: I'm proud to further announce that the U.S. is, by far, number one in testing—number one in the world in testing—and that the mortality rate is the lowest or just about the lowest of any nation anywhere in the world.

And we're safely reopening our country, and very importantly, we're safely reopening our schools. We want the schools to be open and going in the fall. And most of them, I think, are looking at it that way. It's very important. We're finding out that learning by computer is not as good as learning in the classroom or learning on the campus. And I think you're finding that too. We want to learn in the classroom. So our schools, we want them open in the fall.

Following President López Obrador's remarks, we'll sign a joint declaration committing ourselves to a shared future of prosperity, security, and harmony. This is truly a proud moment in history for both of our nations, Mexico and the United States.

With this signing, we pledge the close and continued friendship between the United States and Mexico, and we accelerate our progress toward an even greater tomorrow—and that's what's happening: a greater, maybe even a far greater tomorrow—with a prospering region, a flourishing hemisphere, and two sovereign nations thriving, growing, and excelling side by side, working together—and that's what we've been doing.

Mr. President, we look forward to hosting you for a beautiful dinner later on this evening with some of your friends from Mexico and some of our great friends from the U.S. And it's an honor to have you with us.

And, please, we'd love to have you say a few words. Thank you. Thank you very much.

President López Obrador. Friends, ladies and gentlemen, I truly celebrate this meeting with you, President Trump.

My visit, to a great extent, has to do with the importance right now, in these times of world economic crisis, the importance of the entry into effect of the Mexico-U.S.-Canada Agreement, to make by its Spanish acronym, "USMCA." Having been able to close this deal constitutes a great accomplishment benefiting all three nations and our peoples.

As it is well known, North America is one of the most important economic regions of the planet. However, our region is inexplicably a region of trade deficits. We export to the rest of the world about \$3.6 trillion, but we import about \$4.2 trillion. That is, we have a deficit of \$611 billion, which is translated into capital flight, less opportunities for companies and businesses, and job source losses.

This new agreement seeks to reverse this imbalance through greater integration of our economies and improvements in the functioning of productive chains to recover the economic presence that North America has lost in the last five decades. Suffice it to say that, in 1970, the region constituted 40.4 percent of the world GDP. And now this share in the global economy has gone down to 27.8 percent.

That's why this agreement is a great option to produce, create jobs, and foster trade without having to go so far away from our homes, cities, States, and nations. In other words, import volumes of our countries' imports to the rest of the world may be produced in North America at a lower transportation cost with reliable suppliers—reliable vis-à-vis the companies, of course—and the utilization of regional labor force.

Of course, it's not a matter of closing our countries to the world. It's a matter of taking advantage of all the advantages that we have because we're neighbors, as well as the enforcement of a good policy of cooperation for development.

This agreement allows us to attract investments from other places of the hemisphere, bringing those investments to our countries, provided, we comply, we honor the principles of reducing merchandises with high regional content and also trying to have salary and labor conditions that are fair conditions for our workers of the exporting or importing countries of consumption goods.

It's also important to point out that this agreement signifies the integration of all three countries, because we're all contributing with productive capacity, markets, technology, experience, expertise, highly skilled labor force, and we end up complementing each other. For instance, Mexico has something which is extremely valuable to make this economic integration effective and to boost this integration—economic and commercial integration—in the region. I'm talking about this very young, creative, and responsible labor force.

Let us not forget that the participation of workers in productive processes is just as important as the role of businesses and companies. It really would be not good for us to have capital and technology if we don't have good workers that are outstanding workers because of their imagination, their talent, and their mystique when they do their work.

On the other hand, with this type of agreement—and respecting our sovereign states—instead of distancing ourselves, we are deciding, we're opting to walk together towards the future.

We want to privilege understanding. That's why we're united. And we're setting aside differences, or we are solving those differences through a dialogue and mutual respect.

Certainly, in the history of our relations, we've had, perhaps, moments in which our minds have not been together. And there are—there have been problems that are not yet forgotten. However, we've been able to establish explicit agreements of cooperation and coexistence. For instance, in the forties of last century, during the Second World War, Mexico helped meet the needs of the United States in terms of the raw materials needed by the United States, and it gave its support with the labor of migrant workers that were known as the *braceros*.

Since then, and until now, we've been consolidating our economic-commercial trade relationship, as well as our very peculiar coexistence, cohabitation, sometimes as distant neighbors and other times as very affectionate and close friends.

And as it is also well known, history of geopolitics, this neighborhood we have, and economic circumstances of both of our Nations have promoted, in a very natural manner, a process of migration of Mexican men and women coming here to the United States. And here we've been able to create a community of about 38 million people, including the children of Mexican parents. It is a community of good, working people—good people, working people—who have come here to make a living in a very honest fashion. And they have so much contributed to the development of this great nation.

Furthermore, in Mexico, more than in any other country of the world, we have in our society a million and a half of U.S. citizens. They live there, and they're part of our society. So we're not just united by geographic proximity; we have economic commercial, social, cultural, and ties of friendship.

President Trump, as in the best times of our political relationship, during my mandate as President of Mexico, instead of remembering this insults and things like that from—against me, we have received from you, President Trump, understanding and respect. People—some people thought that our ideological differences would inevitably lead to confrontations. Fortunately, this has not been the case. And I believe that, towards the future, there will be no motive or need to break our very good political relationship or the friendship between our two administrations.

The best President Mexico has ever had, Benito Juárez García, as you have mentioned, had a good understanding with the great Republican President, Abraham Lincoln. Let us remember that this great, historic leader of the United States, who was the promoter of the abolition of slavery, never recognized Emperor Maximilian imposed in Mexico through the intervention of the powerful French army.

It is no coincidence that Juárez lamented Lincoln's murder in the United States, saying—I quote—"I have deeply felt this disgrace because Lincoln, who was constantly working in such a determined manner for the complete freedom of its fellow men, was worthy of a better fortune or luck." End of quote.

The same thing happened with the splendid relationship that Democrat President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had with our patriot President, General Lázaro Cárdenas. The same situation took place. And after the oil expropriation, in a letter, General Cárdenas recognized the good understanding—the good bilateral understanding—as follows: He said, "My administration believes that the attitude of the United States of America, in the case of the oil company expropriation, reasserts once more the sovereignty of the peoples of this continent that with so much efforts have been maintaining—and the situation and the position of his Excellency, Mr. President Roosevelt." End of quote.

So with all proportions and all the circumstances, with different circumstances, history tells us that it is possible to understand each other without arrogance or extremisms.

Now that I have decided to come to this meeting with you, President Trump, we had a good debate in my country on the convenience of this trip. I decided to come because, as I have already expressed, it is very important for us to be launching this new agreement.

But I also wanted to be here to thank people of the United States, its Government, and thank you, President Trump for being increasingly respectful with our Mexican fellow men.

And to you, President Trump, I want to thank you for your understanding and the help you've given us in issues related to trade, commerce, oil, as well as your personal support for the acquisition of medical equipment that we needed urgently to treat our patients of COVID-19.

But what I mainly appreciate is that you have never sought to impose anything on us violating our sovereignty. Instead of the Monroe Doctrine, you have followed, in our case, the wise advice of the lustrous and prudent President George Washington who said, quote, "Nations should not take advantage of the unfortunate condition of other peoples." End of quote.

You have not tried to treat us as a colony; on the contrary, you have honored our condition as an independent Nation. That's why I'm here to express to the people of the United States that their President has behaved with us with kindness and respect. You have treated us just as what we are: a country and a dignified people: a free, democratic, and sovereign people.

Long live the friendship of our two Nations. Long live the United States of America. Long live Canada. Long live our America. Long live Mexico. Long live Mexico. *Viva México.*

President Trump. We'll now sign a very important document. Thank you.

[At this point, President Trump and President López Obrador signed two copies of the joint declaration in each language.]

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:45 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump; Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada; and Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad F. Wolf. President López Obrador spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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