

Joe Biden and Andrés Manuel López Obrador

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Imagine if someone called your people, “drug dealers, criminals and rapists.”

Imagine someone repeatedly claiming that you would pay for the wall between your two countries.

Imagine someone dumping thousands of migrants on your border and expecting you to care for them.

Imagine someone waiting until a prominent citizen of yours (Salvador Cienfuegos, ex-defense Minister) stepped off a plane in their country and then arresting that person without a word of warning to you?

Despite all these insults, Mexico’s President, Andrés Manuel López Obrador *(better known as AMLO) remained a Trump supporter. Although claiming to be fiercely independent, he seemed totally subservient to Trump. Even after the US elections results were repeatedly verified, he has struggled to reach out and congratulate the winner, Joe Biden.

What does this mean for our two countries, two countries with so much in common and so in need of a strong working relationship between its leaders?

Here is a list of some of the issues that need to be addressed.

1. On July 1, 2020 the United States Mexico Canada Agreement replaced NAFTA. As a result of NAFTA, Canada and Mexico became the US’s largest trade partners and helped create thousands of new jobs in all three countries. This new agreement can do even more but needs leadership from the top.

2. President Biden proposes to reinvigorate US manufacturing and bring jobs home. I believe that that will result in a shift away from China and more emphasis on US-Mexico manufacturing joint ventures, an economic plus for both countries.
3. How will the two presidents work on immigration issues? For example, will AMLO feel compelled to continue posting his soldiers at the border wall at great cost to his government?
4. Because of the Cienfuegos case where American officials arrested this former high ranking Mexican official in the US without warning their Mexican counterparts, our drug interdiction partnership is in shambles. This happened under Trump's watch. Can Biden repair the damage and, if so, how?
5. Migrants will continue to flee Central American countries like Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. What can the US and Mexico do together to help alleviate the violence in those countries so that the pressure to flee is lessened?
6. Through the efforts of Attorneys General in the western United States, Mexican judges and prosecutors are being trained in more effective prosecutorial and judicial processes, the hope being to improve the dismal rate of successful prosecutions in Mexico. Can this be expanded?
7. Trump's remain in Mexico program exposed the lack of health care and public services as well as the extreme violence on the Mexican border. Can a joint Mexico-US task force be formed to alleviate these issues?
8. AMLO has rejected the idea of foreign investment in oil exploration in Mexico, thus cutting off the opportunity to bring new investment and technology to his floundering oil ministry, PEMEX. Can that be reconsidered?
9. AMLO is now recovering from COVID and is perhaps recognizing how deadly it has been for his country. Could he and Biden team up on a preventative program at least for border areas like El Paso and Juárez?

The United States faces huge and very complicated foreign policy issues, China and Russia being the most difficult. In comparison, these US-Mexico issues are relatively simple with positive benefits on both sides. It's time, therefore, for AMLO to reach out to our new leader.

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