

Press Releases: Joint Remarks With Mexican Foreign Secretary Luis Videgaray Caso

Remarks
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Mexico City, Mexico
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MODERATOR: (Via interpreter) Good afternoon, and welcome to the Foreign Affairs Office. We are going to give a message to the media with the Secretary of State Michael Pompeo from the United States and the Chancellor Luis Videgaray Caso, if you could please say a couple of words.

FOREIGN SECRETARY VIDEGARAY: *Buenas tardes.* Good afternoon, I'm going to be speaking in Spanish, but I just want to say in English again welcome, Mike. Welcome back.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Luis.

FOREIGN SECRETARY VIDEGARAY: (Via interpreter) Welcome. I would like to welcome the whole delegation from the State Department. Particularly we would like to welcome Mr. Jared Kushner, Senior Advisor to President Trump. It is a privilege for the Foreign Affairs Office and Mexico to receive you this afternoon and to have you with us today, as well as receiving the ambassador from Mexico in the United States, Geronimo Gutierrez.

Today, as everyone knows, Mr. Pompeo along with Mnuchin, Secretary Mnuchin, Secretary for Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen, and Jared Kushner, as well as the delegation from the United States, they gathered in the official presidential residency with the President of Mexico Enrique Pena Nieto. It was a meeting that happened with a lot of respect between both governments. It was a very warm meeting, a meeting between work teams. We know each other. We have spent a lot of time together working trying to strengthen the relationship, the friendship that exists between our countries.

During this meeting in Los Pinos, the president of Mexico reinforced and assured the American delegation as well as to Mr. Pompeo his commitment and the commitment of his government to continue to work until the final date of his government in November of this year to strengthen our relationship,

particularly regarding to the Free Trade Agreement of North America. The president of Mexico mentioned the willingness and the commitment by the Mexican people and by his government to continue to work and doing so with speed to have a successful renegotiation of that agreement as soon as possible.

The President of Mexico as well talked with Secretary Pompeo and the rest of the American delegation. They talked about the concern that exists in Mexico regarding the children that have been separated from their parents in the border and asked Mr. Pompeo and Secretary Nielsen as well as the rest of the delegation if they could do their best efforts to reunite the families as soon as possible.

The meeting in general terms was a fruitful meeting, was a successful meeting to further improve the bilateral relationship between our countries. I would like to mention that President Enrique Pena Nieto has agreed with the current president, with the incoming president of Mexico, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, to create a unified front, a front for Mexico. And this is how we are working regarding the relationship with the United States. Today we need to add efforts for Mexico. We will be working with the team from Mr. Lopez Obrador. We will be talking to him about the free trade agreement and the bilateral relationship. The President Enrique Pena Nieto is going to uphold his responsibility until November 30th, and he is going to do so with a very close communication with the team of Lopez Obrador as was agreed, and we are going to transmit this to Secretary Pompeo and to the American delegation that is with him.

This is a moment of definition between the relationship of the United States and Mexico, but it's also a moment for opportunity. President Enrique Pena Nieto and his work team will make our best efforts to capitalize on this opportunity in favor of Mexico and the United States and this great region that is North America.

Again, Mr. Secretary, it is a privilege to have you here today with your delegation, and you are in your home.

MODERATOR: (Via interpreter) We would like to thank [Secretary] Videgaray for his words. And now we have the Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, if he could mention a couple of words.

SECRETARY POMPEO: All right. Luis, thank you so much for the kind words. It's a true honor to be here in Mexico for my first trip as Secretary of State. I've been here many times before, but not since my new assignment. I want to thank President Pena Nieto for receiving us this morning and for our wide-ranging, candid discussion across a broad range of bilateral relationships – broad range of discussion of our bilateral relationship.

I want to congratulate the people of Mexico on their historic election once again. It has demonstrated Mexico's commitment to democracy. We look forward to working with President-elect Lopez Obrador after his inauguration on December 1st, and to that end it was a priority for me and our team to come to Mexico soon after the election to begin building our relationship with him

and his team. In that visit with the President-elect Lopez Obrador, we discussed how Mexico and the United States can advance common goals, including strong economic growth, good jobs, and expanded opportunities for citizens of each of our two countries.

The Trump administration will continue to work closely with Pena Nieto – with the Pena Nieto administration across our broad range of shared agendas. This includes our economic relationship, border and security issues, and the common regional and global priorities that each of our two countries hold dear.

First, as America's third-largest trading partner, it's important for the United States to have a strong, fair, and reciprocal trade relationship with Mexico. Modernizing NAFTA to support the American worker is a key goal for the Trump administration, and we're committed together to work forward on that. The United States will continue to work with Mexico and Canada on an updated agreement. We all agree that we want North America to remain the world's most competitive and economically potent region.

Second, we share nearly a 2,000-mile border. The United States is committed to making measurable progress that ensures the security on both sides of that border. Americans must be able to see improvements that better protect our national sovereignty and the safety of our local communities. I respectfully reinforced the importance of the border issue in each of our conversations today.

We'll also keep working to take on the threats of transnational criminal organizations that illegally traffic drugs, weapons, and human beings across our border in both directions. These brutal outlaws are responsible for spreading violence and undermining law in both – law and order in both of our countries. It must be stopped.

And we recognize the demand for drugs is principally on the United States side of the border and that this problem is destroying communities and tearing families apart. It's why President Trump has renewed efforts to prevent and treat addiction and to combat the flow of drugs coming into our country from abroad. With our shared resources and commitments, the United States and Mexico can make citizens on both sides of our border more secure.

And finally, Mexico is an important and vital partner for regional and global challenges. As just one example, we're working together to help our partners in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras reduce insecurity and violence, enhance their economic opportunity, and fight corruption in their countries. Progress in these areas will reduce the irregular migration that undermines the security of both the United States and Mexico.

Our meetings today reaffirmed that Mexico and the United States are neighbors, partners, and friends. I thank my Mexican hosts for their gracious welcome, and I look forward to visiting again soon. Thank you.

MODERATOR: (Via interpreter) Thank you, everyone, for your presence and good afternoon.

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