

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021*

**Remarks Prior to a Virtual Meeting With President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters**

*March 1, 2021*

*President Biden.* It's great to be with you, Mr. President. You know, this is—my second call to a foreign leader in my third day as President was you. And now you're my second virtual meeting with a foreign leader, and that's not by accident. The importance of our relations—the importance of our relationship with Mexico is vital to the North American partnership we have and paramount to all the elements of my administration's priorities. So I'm delighted to be with you.

Of the 16 visits I made to Latin America and the Caribbean as Vice President, four of them were to Mexico, and I was honored to meet you on one of those visits, Mr. President.

During my visits, I got to know Mexico a little bit and its people and paid my respects to the Virgin of Guadalupe. As a matter of fact, I still have my rosary beads that my son was wearing when he passed. And I walked the beautiful and historic cobblestones of Mexico City and spoke with Mexicans of all walks of life. And I treasure those memories, and I hope to be able to build on them in the next 4 years.

Mr. President, this is what I know: The United States and Mexico are stronger when we stand together. There's a long and complicated history between our nations, and haven't always been perfect neighbors with one another, but we have seen over and over again the power and the purpose when we cooperate. And we're safer when we work together, whether it's addressing the challenges of our shared border or getting this pandemic under control.

In the Obama-Biden administration, we made a commitment that we look at Mexico as an equal, not as somebody who is south of our border. You are equal. And what you do in Mexico and how you succeed impacts dramatically on what the rest of the hemisphere will look like.

And as you know, the fastest growing population in the United States is Hispanic. And 60 percent of the Hispanic population is Mexican American. They're an integral part of our history, and I keep a bust of a civil rights leader, Chávez—César Chávez—in my Oval Office as a reminder.

And, Mr. President, I'm looking forward to our discussion today and to the many ways we'll have to work together as neighbors and partners in meeting our shared challenges. And thank you for doing this.

*[At this point, President López Obrador spoke via videoconference from Mexico City, Mexico.]*

*President López Obrador.* President Biden, I would like to start by thanking you for your confession regarding your devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe. We, as Mexicans, respect and admire two symbols. They might be different; however, they call to the plurality of our country. One is the Virgin of Guadalupe, as you said, and the other one is Benito Juárez, a liberal President, the best one we have ever had, a Zapotec indigenous that we are very proud of.

I would like to thank you also for starting the conversation this way: Mexico—for stating that Mexico is as important to you. It is a pleasure to greet you. It is important that we base our good relationships on constant dialogue, periodic dialogue.

I know our relations in the future will be even better. We are united by 3,180 kilometers of border. But we are not only united by geography; we are also united by our economies, our trade, our culture, our history, and our friendship.

We had a Mexican President who dominated the country for 34 years—very little time. His name was Porfirio Díaz. And he would say, "Poor Mexico, so far from God and yet so close to the United States." [Laughter] I can now say that it's wonderful for Mexico to be close to God and not so far from the United States. [Laughter]

I believe our countries will allow us to develop jointly in these dire times. Integration will strengthen both our countries as we are faced with this inevitable expansion of other regions. Our relations are strategic.

I would like to also thank you after the call that we have had for wanting to base our relations on respect and equality. It is important for Mexico, and we must keep on cooperating for further development based on independence and autonomy, potentializing what our peoples mean to us.

We are very thankful that you are willing to maintain good relations for the good of our peoples in North America: the Canadian, the United States, and the Mexican peoples.

*President Biden.* Well, thank you, Mr. President. I'm going to ask the press whether they'd be kind enough to exit shortly here. [Laughter] I'd appreciate it. Thank you very, very much. Thank you.

#### *Mexico-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Mr. President, are you sending vaccines to Mexico? Sending vaccines to Mexico? Are you sending? Are you considering?

*President Biden.* We're going to talk about that.

*Q.* How about a program for immigration—[inaudible]?

*President Biden.* Thank you.

*Q.* Mr. President, a number of Republicans—[inaudible]?

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:57 p.m. from the Roosevelt Room at the White House. President López Obrador spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Mexico, President López Obrador.

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