

Welcome Remarks Ambassador Tony Wayne (as prepared)  
Mexico Institute Board Dinner  
December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018  
Four Seasons Hotel, CDMX

Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome fellow board members and friends of the Mexico Institute.

A special welcome to:

- Mexico's new Under Secretary for North America, Jesus Seade
- Mexico's Ambassador-designate to the United States Martha Barcena
- Chief of Advisors to President Lopez Obrador, Lazaro Cardenas who joined us for our reception, and
- United States Charge D' affairs John Creamer

Welcome to members of the press with a reminder that tonight's event is off the record

On Saturday, I was honored to be present at the inauguration of Mexico's new President, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.

- We are beginning a new era for Mexico with shifts in policy, priorities, style and language.
- This also means it is a new era for bilateral relations and new opportunities for the Mexico Institute.
- This is the moment for both governments to invest intensely in establishing a firm foundation for long-term cooperation. Specifically, short-term challenges need to be managed in ways that strengthen collaboration for the years ahead.
- The three big areas to manage constructively are: commerce and investment; migration; and cross-border crime and public security.
- The U.S. is Mexico's largest market, buying some 80 percent of its exports. Some 5 million U.S. jobs are supported by trade with Mexico, as the U.S.' second-largest export market in the world.
- Though USMCA is signed, it still needs to be ratified and outstanding steel and aluminum tariffs and retaliatory tariffs removed.
- This will require hard work, including with other stakeholders in the case of getting a good outcome from the U.S. Congress.

- Migration is the most urgent issue to tackle, as well as representing a complex set of problems. Because of the large number of Central American migrants near Tijuana, the danger of an incident with bad consequences remains real.
- The incoming Mexican government has made clear its hope to work with the U.S. on long-term solutions to the flow of migrants from Central America. AMLO offered cooperation to spur economic development and security as part of the solution in his early communications with President Trump. He seeks massive U.S. investment as part of this development effort.
- It is very much in the U.S. interest that Mexico's longer-term efforts to better manage migration succeed, but the U.S. is now looking for near-term Mexican steps to help reduce the flows of migrants reaching the US border.
- Of course, both countries should also continue to improve cooperation against cross-border crime. The massive illegal trade in drugs, people, money and guns seriously harms both countries.
- U.S officials say they hope the new Mexican team will be open to picking up the dialogue and acting on ideas already on the table, as well as building on successful programs underway. The U.S. and Mexico have been exploring new proposals on migration and anti- crime work over the last year or so, including informal discussions on migration-related issues in recent weeks with the AMLO team.
- These U.S. officials know how important a good long-term collaboration on migration and homeland security is given the push and pull factors sending hundreds of thousands of Central Americans northward each year in search of security and jobs as well as other travelers who may seek to use the paths to get into the U.S.
- But, it is not yet clear what the new Mexican administration might be willing to undertake to address near term problems.
- The U.S. and Mexico should also get off to rapid start in reviewing U.S.-Mexico cooperation against crime. That cooperation has deepened and matured since 2007 under the umbrella of the Merida Initiative.
- Given the massive flows of illegal drugs northward and of illegal funds and guns southward across the border, it is in the national interest of both countries to improve that collaboration.

- Bilateral cooperation will need to reflect AMLO's new multi-pronged approach to solving Mexico's soaring violence and we must learn the lessons of what worked and what did not work in a decade of U.S.-Mexico collaboration.
- Both countries would suffer from a suspension of anti-crime cooperation, however, as happened following Mexico's presidential transition six years ago.
- Considering the prospects for making trade and daily commerce more efficient and competitive under the new trade agreement, this moment is ripe with prospects for big benefits for both Mexico and the United States. We need a wise approach now from both sides to turn these opportunities into realities.
- The Mexico Institute can contribute usefully over the year ahead to the policy options in all three of these big areas: trade, migration and security policy. I hope we can explore ideas tomorrow.

Two examples of the importance of the work we do at the Mexico Institute:

- This year we worked extraordinarily hard on the Nafta re-negotiation:
  - Highlights: 196 media mentions, 41 op eds and articles, 8 events, 65 TV and radio interviews, 1 congressional testimony
- On the Mexican election even more remarkable:
  - Highlights: 226 media mentions, 65 op eds and articles, 10 events, 59 TV and radio interviews, 1 major publication and 1 ground truth briefing

This highlights the multidimensional roles for Mexico Institute

- Mexico 101 for Americans
- Policy advice for Congress
- Working with the executive branch in both countries
- Generating Policy ideas – in nonpartisan environment.

The Mexico Institute remains the most important non-governmental organization to discuss, analyze, work on bilateral issues. As our friend and fellow board member Carlos Heredia said many years ago, it's like having a second embassy: one that works for both countries!

Thank you for being here, and please enjoy your dinner. I will be back during dessert to introduce our speaker. Buen provecho!

