

United States – Mexico Meeting: New security strategy

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Institutional context

Multiple meetings have been held between Mexico and the United States regarding security, however, there is no bilateral communication mechanism in specific. In 2007, both countries partnered under the Merida Initiative for the purpose of combating criminal organizations. In 2016, both nations shared security results and agreed on new border strategies. In 2017, Luis Videgaray, Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, met with the Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, and they agreed on having frequent meetings throughout the year. In 2018, the meeting of the 21st Century Border Technical Working Group was held between officials from both countries, where security issues were discussed. In 2019, a bilateral meeting on security was held. At the beginning of 2020, Presidents López Obrador and Trump met to discuss health and safety issues.

New Security Strategy Meeting, May 2021

The bilateral meeting held in May 2021 was the first dialogue on security issues since President Biden took office. The meeting was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico.

Participants

On behalf of Mexico, the following participated: Marcelo Ebrard, Secretary of Foreign Relations; Rosa Icela Rodríguez, Secretary of Security and Citizen Protection; Admiral Luis Javier Robinson Portillo Villanueva, Chief of the Navy General Staff; General Luis Rodríguez Bucio, Commander of the National Guard; Roberto Velasco Álvarez, General Director for North America of the SRE; Iván Escalante, Head of the Office of the Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection; Brigadier General Guillermo Briseño Lobera, Operational Deputy Chief of the National Defense General Staff; Rear Admiral José Barradas Cobos, Director of Academic and Logistics Support of the Educational Center; Navalcardo Mejía Berdeja, Undersecretary of Public Security; and Gral. Bgda. DEM Ricardo Trevilla Trejo, Chief of the National Defense Staff.

On behalf of the United States, the following participated: Juan González, Special Assistant to the President and Principal Director of the National Security Council for the Western Hemisphere; John Creamer, Charge d'Affaires of the United States Embassy; Bruce Swartz, Deputy Attorney General of the Department of Justice; Hugo Rodríguez, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere of the State Department; Heide Fulton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Programs for the Department of

State's Office of International Counternarcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; Heide Fulton, Chief of Staff of the Drug Enforcement Agency; and Captain Robert Passerello, Deputy General Counsel of the National Security Council.

Main agreements

It was agreed to continue the work to reformulate binational cooperation at different levels. The main topics of the meeting were strategies to decrease trafficked arms and narcotics, to reduce violence caused by organized crime, to deal with addictions as a public health problem and to attack the criminal organizations' finances that operate in both countries.

Next steps

During the meeting, it was not specified whether the Merida Initiative would be reformed or under what scheme the binational security efforts will be addressed.