



Charting a New Course: Policy Options for the Next Stage in U.S.-Mexico Relations

Towards a North American Foreign Policy Footprint

By Earl Anthony Wayne & Arturo Sarukhan



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KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand North American cooperation on regional and foreign policy under a paradigm of common prosperity and common security.
- Deepen U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada efforts—as well as trilateral efforts where appropriate—to prevent terrorist attacks and more broadly, to prevent entry into North America of potential terrorists.
- Build on the recent North American Dialogue on Drug Policy to share best practices and to evaluate the regional implications of domestic drug policy changes.
- Significantly strengthen regional and bilateral efforts to fight international criminal networks and illicit trafficking of drugs, money, arms, and people.
- Develop a common North American approach to Central America, supporting the Northern Triangle countries' efforts to fight crime; manage migration; upgrade customs facilities and transportation corridors; and improve energy infrastructure.
- Develop a coordinated approach to managing migrant and refugee flows from Central America; engage in a global dialogue on refugees.
- Counter illicit activities at the border and increase the efficiency of legitimate cross-border commerce and travel as dual goals in the broader North American agenda for security and prosperity.
- Evaluate opportunities regarding upgrade and modernization of NAFTA with new disciplines, the future of transpacific and transatlantic trade and investment flows, and the implications of a potential border adjustment tax or any similar mechanism. Dialogue and cooperation on the trade and investment agenda is vital to the competitiveness of all three North American countries.
- Take steps to enhance the continent's energy security and cooperation on international energy issues.
- Implement commitments made in past administrations for biannual meetings to identify opportunities for policy coordination at the United Nations and other multilateral fora.
- Work together to create a plan and engage other partners in the hemisphere to revitalize the Organization of American States.
- Build on Mexico's recent commitment to peacekeeping by working toward the establishment of a common peacekeeping facility where trainers and troops from all three countries could work together; consider making a first joint regional deployment for disaster relief or peacekeeping. More broadly, continue to deepen defense cooperation bilaterally and trilaterally in North America.
- Develop shared protocols and standards regarding cyberattacks and cybersecurity, including identifying opportunities for shared rapid response to support neighbors when they suffer an attack.
- Maintain and deepen readiness to counter pandemics and respond to natural disasters.

TOWARDS A NORTH AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY FOOTPRINT

By E. Anthony Wayne and Arturo Sarukhan

Every electoral cycle in the United States or Mexico brings the opportunity to explore how both nations can deepen their coordination on a range of international issues. The particularities of this U.S. presidential electoral cycle -and the way Mexico and Mexico-related issues were cast during the past 18 months- make this a unique challenge. The resilience and strength of the relationship will be tested over the coming months, and possibly years. Crucial issues in the relationship may well be revisited in profound ways. Yet the benefits of an enhanced bilateral collaboration for the security and economic well-being of both countries and all of North America, continue to be immense, particularly now if differences can be overcome and a longer term strategic vision for bilateral ties and for our region is adopted.

We believe that the North American strategic framework and its potential international footprint continues to be of unique importance for the United States and Mexico, as well as Canada. We are also convinced that this is the moment for a review of existing cooperation and blue sky thinking about how both Mexico and the United States, and the three North American partners, can expand areas for common approaches to foreign policy, international economic policy, and aspects of public security policy in the region and globally. This will probably be a case-by-case and an a la carte approach, sometimes working bilaterally and sometimes trilaterally with Canada. There are, however, without doubt a range of advantages to a greater North American strategic footprint covering aspects of international policies in the region and beyond.

Given a U.S. administration that seems to be intent on reviewing paradigms and a new Canadian government that has recommitted to expanding Canada's global and regional engagement, the situation calls for forward-looking, strategic thinking amongst the three North American partners as well as between Mexico and the United States. Asymmetries of

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power exist—and will persist—between the three North American nations, however, and thus their respective appetites, capabilities, and interests will also be divergent, given the nature and scope of the many specific opportunities and challenges that exist around the world. The campaign rhetoric and the post-election comments have also left wounds—particularly amongst public opinion—that will take time to heal. But, there are certainly several areas where enhanced or new collaboration should be of mutual benefit and be a plus for international problem-solving, and therefore should be pursued. For the good of both countries, bilateral problem-solving should begin immediately.

The United States and Canada have been cooperating on international security issues since the inception of NATO, building from the common effort during World War II, and

they took first steps to forge a bilateral free trade agreement before the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was crafted. U.S.-Mexican foreign and international policy cooperation was much more limited in the post-WWII years. The 1993 NAFTA accord marked the breakthrough for economic cooperation, which has continued to deepen over the past twenty-three years. Today, Mexico is the second largest customer of the United States in the world, and Canada is the largest, and the United States is the largest export and foreign investment market for its two neighbors. The United States' two neighbors are integrated into a continental production chain that makes the United States' North American partners essential for its economic well-being. After 9/11, the United States and Mexico started to build a wider range of cooperation on security issues as well, mostly focused on bilateral threats and the Western Hemisphere. This security collaboration has widened and deepened over the past fifteen years.

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Today, under a paradigm of common prosperity and common security, the United States and Mexico, along with Canada, could deepen their partnership in Central America, for example, in addition to enhancing efficient commerce and security on shared borders. The Northern Triangle countries would benefit from additional assistance from their northern neighbors in fighting crime and poverty, in tackling the challenges of migration and refugee flows, in upgrading customs facilities and transportation corridors, and in strengthening access to energy resources.

Along with Canada, Mexico and the United States have set shared objectives and an action agenda in climate, environmental, and energy cooperation. This set of commitments and pledges to cooperate is one of the most ambitious regional agendas in the world for implementation of the commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement, which took effect in 2016. Given the positions enunciated during the U.S. presidential campaign and during the transition, the new U.S. administration may want to rethink aspects of this cooperation, though some aspects make great sense for maintaining the quality of the continental environment independently of the climate change issues. The ability to take a longer strategic view of energy security across the continent could also help the economic well-being of all three countries and their geo-strategic clout in the world in important ways. If handled well, North America could become a serious energy power in the world for decades to come, helping to reduce significantly dependence on energy resources from other areas of the globe.

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Also, at the 2016 Summit meeting of the North American Leaders (NALs), the three countries agreed to deepen synchronization on international issues in the UN and other fora and to meet at least twice yearly to identify how and on what issues to better

coordinate. That agenda has yet to be defined and the mechanism needs to be implemented, but it provides a range of opportunities for the new U.S. administration to forge new multilateral, regional and global cooperation with its two large neighbors.

Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto has publically called for his country to play a bigger role in the world, like Mexico's groundbreaking commitment to participate, for the first time, in peacekeeping operations. That objective has not yet seen much concrete manifestation for a variety of reasons, including limited capacity and available funds. Canada and the United States have expressed their willingness to provide support to help build Mexico's peacekeeping capacities during the 2016 NALS.

How formerly distant neighbors built a common agenda

Even if the current agenda for Mexico-U.S. and Mexico-U.S.-Canada cooperation should expand, the progress in collaboration is impressive. In the 1980s, the most well-known English language book about Mexico and the United States described them as "distant neighbors."¹ That characterized their coordination on foreign policy issues as well as bilateral affairs. Central America was a case in point with sharp public disagreement over the U.S. policies of intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador as bright examples of the clash between Mexican and U.S. international approaches and, what were at the time, primary objectives of the respective foreign policies of both nations.

In the 1990s, Mexico and the United States began a major shift in how they dealt with each other through the negotiation of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which brought senior level officials with trade-related topics into regular contact and established unprecedented ties between the private sectors of the United States, Mexico and Canada. The important role the United States played in helping to stabilize the peso in the mid-1990s solidified and expanded that economic and financial cooperation and built trust between the two financial teams. Thus, the United States was an enthusiastic supporter of Mexico joining the G20 when it was established in 1999, as it was when Mexico joined the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1994, as the first "developing" or "emerging" economy to join that exclusive club.

Still, through 2000, while U.S. cooperation with Mexican officials was very close on the range of economic and financial issues, there was much less trust and cooperation between the two foreign ministries, let alone among law enforcement and justice agencies. The list of areas of foreign policy cooperation was quite short. The U.S. Ambassador at the time characterized the prickly relationship as "The Bear and the Porcupine."²

¹ A. Riding, *Distant neighbors: A portrait of the Mexicans* (New York: Knopf 1985).

² J. Davidow, *The U.S. and Mexico: The bear and the porcupine* (Princeton: Markus Wiener 2004).

Under the Presidency of Vicente Fox, however, the Mexican government began to separate its foreign policy from the so-called Estrada Doctrine³ and other constitutionally mandated foreign policy tenets,⁴ which included a maximalist view of sovereignty whereby foreign governments should not judge, for good or bad, changes or events in governments in other nations, because it could be seen to impinge on their sovereignty. This doctrine had limited the ability of Mexico and the United States to collaborate on a range of foreign policy issues, most notably the human rights performance of another country. However, Mexico started speaking out more frankly than ever before about democracy and human rights in Cuba, as well as Venezuela, during these years.

Mexico also made a series of forays to demonstrate international leadership, winning a rotating seat on the UN Security Council, running unsuccessfully for the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), and winning the position of Secretary General of the OECD in 2006. In response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Mexico also dispatched military personnel, a navy ship and civilian experts to help in disaster recovery—the first uniformed deployment of Mexican military personnel to the United States since WWII.

These endeavors generated more U.S.-Mexico dialogue and coordination on a host of international issues, and witnessed the launch of biannual policy planning talks between State's Policy Planning Office and SRE's Coordinación General de Asesores to discuss all relevant global and regional issues (and in fact purposefully setting aside all issues of the bilateral relationship itself). This model was also replicated by Mexico with Canada and other nations, and included consultations between the three North American Missions to the UN. The United States also actively campaigned for Jose Angel Gurría to head the OECD, based in part on his strong role in deepening U.S.-Mexico cooperation in the 1990s.

From 2006 to 2012, President Calderon inspired efforts to expand Mexico's dialogues and outreach in Latin America, with Europe and with Asia. He increased funding for the Foreign Ministry, established a small foreign assistance agency, balanced comments on human rights with dialogues with Cuba, Venezuela and others, and agreed to a strategic dialogue with the European Union. His government also successfully launched a series of Free Trade Agreements, including along with Canada, the incorporation of Mexico to the TPP negotiations, which has made Mexico the country with the greatest number of free trade partners in the world. During this period, Mexico also launched the Pacific Alliance with free trade partners Colombia, Chile, and Peru (of which two, Peru and Chile, are also TPP partners). Mexico participated in relief efforts in Haiti in 2010, an example of a willingness to help regional neighbors in need and collaborate in international humanitarian efforts at least in the western hemisphere.

Calderon also greatly expanded practical U.S.-Mexico security and intelligence cooperation with the creation of the Merida Initiative in 2008, aimed at deepening U.S.

³ Oxford Reference, "Estrada Doctrine," last modified 2017, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095758788>.

⁴ Constitution of Mexico, https://www.oas.org/juridico/mla/en/mex/en_mex-int-text-const.pdf.

support for Mexico in its struggle against organized crime.^{5,6,7} This expanded cooperation on security matters included the two governments working together to foil an Iranian plot to attack a target in Washington, DC via Mexican crime figures⁸ and to deter a plot by one of Muammar Gaddafi's sons from illicitly finding refuge in Mexico.⁹ In the also vital area of health security, Mexico and its North American partners collaborated successfully in responding to the outbreak of the H1N1 pandemic in 2009. They have continued to maintain and exercise this ability to collaborate and respond to health threats since. Similarly, under President Calderon, the two countries began cooperating much more closely on bilateral and international environmental issues.

During the Calderon years, the U.S.-Mexico foreign policy dialogue expanded, but in general Mexico's willingness to get involved in international issues, especially outside of international economic and financial themes and the Western Hemisphere, remained limited. The three North American nations decided to channel efforts and resources to pre-position resources and capabilities for disaster relief and emergency response in Central America and the Caribbean, an area where synergies and complementarities could help shape a truly North American rapid response capability. Unfortunately, this initiative has not yet materialized.

Under President Peña Nieto, the U.S.-Mexico agenda continued to expand, as Peña Nieto made clear his priority on strengthening North American collaboration and building Mexico's international role. An unprecedented number of bilateral U.S.-Mexico

An unprecedented number of bilateral U.S.-Mexico mechanisms now exist, including several important innovations, to manage and guide cooperation across economic, commercial, financial, public security, immigration, defense, environmental, educational, scientific, and business collaboration, among others.

mechanisms now exist to manage and guide policy cooperation across a range of areas: the economy, commerce, finance, public security, immigration, defense, the environment, education, science, and business collaboration, among others.

As part of a deeper dialogue between assistance agencies, for example, the United States and Mexico launched their first joint development project in El Salvador. The United States and Mexico are collaborating on trying to manage surging migrant flows

⁵ U.S. Department of State, "The Merida Initiative Fact Sheet," U.S. State Department, June 23, 2009, <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/fs/122397.htm>.

⁶ U.S. Department of State, "United States-Mexico Security Partnership: Progress and Impact Fact Sheet," U.S. State Department, March 23, 2010, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/03/138929.htm>.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, "United States-Mexico Partnership: Anti-Arms Trafficking and Anti-Money Laundering," U.S. State Department, March 23, 2010, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/03/138924.htm>.

⁸ "Iranian plot to kill Saudi ambassador thwarted, U.S. officials say," *CNN*, October 12, 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/11/justice/iran-saudi-plot/>.

⁹ "Sun, sand, celebrities and Saadi: How Gaddafi's son planned escape to lost Mexican refuge," *National Post*, December 6, 2011, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/saadi-gaddafi-planned-escape-to-luxurious-home-in-trendy-punta-mita>.

from the Northern Triangle countries of Central America through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Mexico's SEGOB. Mexico has participated in key meetings with the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador on how to better support those three countries in facing their public security and economic problems. Mexican and U.S. officials have also coordinated and worked closely to help address energy needs in those three counties by exploring natural gas pipelines and expanded electricity flows from Mexico southward in a series of meetings with Central American leaders and officials.

The United States and Mexico are collaborating on trying to manage surging migrant flows from the Northern Triangle countries of Central America through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Mexico's SEGOB.

From a U.S. perspective, there has been a desire for Mexico to stop punching below its weight and to more actively participate in the multilateral handling of international issues in other regions of the world. U.S. diplomats believe Mexico's reasoned approach and resources could be beneficial to international coalitions, such as in dealing with refugee challenges or in helping to fulfill international peacekeeping needs. From a Mexican perspective, and particularly in the aftermath of the rhetoric of the presidential campaign, there is a hope that the United States will stop taking Mexico for granted on all fronts and acknowledge that Mexico is the key strategic partner of the United States in the Americas.

As most things in life, you need two to tango. However, there is a positive change that has occurred in the past two decades. Octavio Paz, a Mexican Nobel Literature winner, once wrote that Mexicans and Americans had a hard time getting along because Americans did not know how to listen and Mexicans did not know how to speak up. In recent

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The Road Ahead

Of course, major questions remain unanswered about what approach will emerge regarding NAFTA and eventually rethinking and reengaging in trade negotiations with the Pacific nations. These issues deserve their own articles, but it is clear that the paths taken on these issues will have a major impact in a number of domains including the prospects for international collaboration between the two countries. Recall, for example, that the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was a vessel for upgrading and modernizing

NAFTA, in addition to its objectives of expanding trade and strategically linking big chunks of the Americas with Asian and Pacific nations. Given the current US Administration's disinclination to pursue the TPP, the North American partners will need to sort through the issues related to modernizing NAFTA, and they will need to decide if they will pursue, either together or individually, alternative efforts to construct a hemispheric and transpacific coalition of those open to free trade. They also need to consider how they respond, if others take the initiative to fill the space left by TPP with other visions. Similarly, the two nations need to sort through the potentially very tough issues related to the proposed border wall, a potential Border Adjustment Tax (BAT) in the US and US criticism of new investment in Mexico aimed at producing for the US market.

While considering the provisions of NAFTA, Mexico and the US will need to intensify efforts to pursue the dual goals of ensuring that their common border is more efficient in promoting commerce and legitimate travel and making it more secure against terrorists and the illicit trafficking in drugs, arms, money and people that brings harm. Improving the efficient movement of people and goods across the US-Mexico, and the US-Canada, border will save many billions of dollars for North American producers and consumers.

All of this work on commerce and investment is vital for North America's global competitiveness.

Related is how the countries build new trade and investment bridges with other regions such as Europe. Canada, for example, already has a new arrangement with the European Union (EU), and Mexico is scheduled to renegotiate its agreement with the EU. The United States has been negotiating with the EU too, but it is not clear where that project will go under the new U.S. administration.

Even if embarking on areas of closer work with the United States and Canada, as expressed in the 2016 meeting of North America's leaders,^{10,11} the government of Mexico will no doubt want to retain its independent profile on a number of issues. For example, on nuclear disarmament issues, Mexico and the United States have long taken and still maintain divergent approaches. Canada will likely also have areas where it will prefer to take positions or offer initiatives independently of its North American neighbors. Yet, there is good reason to hope that the United States and Mexico, and Canada, can expand the scope and substance of foreign policy cooperation.

¹⁰ The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: United States Key Deliverables for the 2016 North American Leaders' Summit," The White House, June 29, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/29/fact-sheet-united-states-key-deliverables-2016-north-american-leaders>.

¹¹ The white House Office of the Press Secretary, "Leaders' Statement on a North American Climate, Clean Energy, and Environment Partnership," The White House, June 29, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/29/leaders-statement-north-american-climate-clean-energy-and-environment>.

Central America: Coordination in North America and the Western Hemisphere will likely remain a key area for joint foreign policy work given Mexico's focus and limited strategic projection resources. Helping Central America's "Northern Triangle" countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras is a natural area for closer and practical "on-the-ground" cooperation, which can give a big boost to those governments.

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Those governments have been struggling to fight criminal gang violence, improve governance, and grow their economies. They are also facing substantial flows of migrants, including families and unaccompanied children heading north through Mexico toward the United States. The United States has already committed hundreds of millions of dollars of assistance to help the three countries. Mexico and the United States are collaborating to help strengthen Mexico's national immigration service (IMS). And, as noted, Mexico and the United States are coordinating efforts to build energy connectivity to the three Central American countries. Mexico must decide if it is willing and able to expand its on-the-ground presence in these countries to coordinate more closely with the United States on specific capacity building efforts. Canada could be a welcome addition to these efforts. A big step forward would be either bilateral or trilateral coordination in practical on-the-ground capacity building assistance.

The rest of the Americas: There is a potentially rich agenda of cooperation in support of the democracy and trade agenda in the Americas, where the three could collaborate as part of larger coalitions. The Organization of American States needs to be revitalized and particularly its institutions and practices supporting democracy and human rights reinforced and protected. Supporting Secretary General Almagro in his efforts could be vital.

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In this connection, Venezuela is likely to present a major problem set for the region from a humanitarian as well as a democracy perspective—a coalition for action is needed which includes but expands far beyond the three North American partners. Similarly, the peace process in Colombia will no doubt need international partners, particularly Mexico, the United States, and Canada, to provide support and engagement in fields as diverse as social resilience, and economic sustainability and opportunity programs. U.S. success and experience with place-based strategies and Mexico's with conditional cash transfer programs could be relevant in supporting the Colombian government's efforts to bring

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opportunity and growth to former conflict areas in the country. And the challenges and opportunities in Cuba can use positive inputs from a range of countries, including the North American partners and the European Union to move toward more respect for human rights and democratic practices.

On the trade and economic agenda, the three North American partners will no doubt want to collaborate on next steps with the other negotiating partners from the Americas (Chile and Peru) once the United States sorts out its internal debate on the TTP trade pact. And the Pacific Alliance, to which Mexico belongs, might serve as a conveyor belt between like-minded countries in the hemisphere trying to build a 21st Century rules-based trading system working with the United States and Canada. Argentina has signaled its strong interest in helping to build new trade bridges in the hemisphere, for example.

International and Multilateral Coordination: As noted above, Mexico and the United States have in this century greatly expanded their coordination on these issues, and along with Canada, in June 2016 committed to an effort to improve that cooperation through twice-a-year cooperation among senior foreign policy officials. Also, as noted, the United States and Canada have also expressed a willingness to support Mexico as it further develops its nascent peacekeeping capacities. Perhaps the three countries could eventually support a common peacekeeping facility where trainers and troops from all three countries could work together. A common deployment for **disaster relief or peacekeeping** should also be considered on the future agenda. These areas for augmented cooperation deserve concerted efforts bilaterally and trilaterally.

The United States and Canada have also expressed a willingness to support Mexico as it further develops its nascent peacekeeping capacities.

There is also good potential for cooperative efforts on a range of international governance issues such as **refugees and migration**. All three countries have long histories of accepting refugees, and Mexico now shares with the United States the challenge of managing increased migration of families and unaccompanied children from Central America. Mexico and Canada joined the United States in co-hosting a leaders' summit on refugees on September 20, 2016, on the margins of the 2016 UN General Assembly.

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In the area of **law enforcement, justice and drug policy**, where Mexico, Canada, and the United States are working to fight transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and trafficking of persons, there is much potential for further collaboration. At the North American Leaders' Summit in June of 2016, the Presidents of Mexico and the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada agreed to

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convene the North American Dialogue on Drug Policy on an annual basis to exchange information on drug trends, increase trilateral coordination on drug policy, and develop actions that our governments can take to protect our citizens from harmful drugs and drug trafficking.

On October 27, 2016, officials of the governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States held the first North American Dialogue on Drug Policy. The meeting focused on the shared illicit drug problem, from production and trade to consumption and misuse. Specifically, participants discussed the various domestic challenges, including the opioid crisis, and how each country is responding to them. This discussion

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resulted in the identification of best practices, methods to gather data from multi-sectoral perspectives, and helped identify possible trilateral lines of cooperation to address North American drug challenges.¹² As both the United States and Mexico re-think the effectiveness of their policies and as U.S. states change their treatment of marijuana, there will be additional need and room for new thinking and cooperative approaches bilaterally and in international forums on how to treat illicit drugs. Given this new legal and regulatory landscape regarding cannabis in the U.S., business as usual or old paradigms in how we collaborate will not suffice.

Reinforced bilateral, trilateral, and broader cooperation on efforts to fight international criminal networks must be a priority at the borders, on the smuggling routes that cross the continent, and via the trafficking into North America from elsewhere. This effort goes beyond just drugs to embrace trafficking of arms, people and illicit money.

Meanwhile, Mexico, the United States, and Canada can look to support policy initiatives in such institutions as the G20 (where the three sit) on a range of **finance and development** issues, including tax havens. Regarding international **environment and energy** arenas, they can reinforce or reshape cooperative initiatives on the ground in North America and mobilize the private sector, while sharing best practices with other regions of the globe. The three energy ministers have already established a common work agenda, which should produce work areas and initiatives for the North Americans to take to wider energy forums (see chapter by Duncan Wood in this publication). This should be an area of continued intense cooperation bilaterally and trilaterally to establish as much synergy as possible between approaches to development of all energy sources and the energy industries across the continent.

¹² U.S. Department of State, “North American Dialogue on Drug Policy Media Note,” U.S. State Department, October 28, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/10/263847.htm>.

New threats to security: North American common domain awareness and defense cooperation are critical components of our respective bilateral relationships and of our regional interests. Given the investment in shared production and trading networks across North America and the increased threats of the weaponization of social media and digital platforms, and international cyberattacks on public and private infrastructure, the three North American countries need to develop shared protocols and standards as well as a rapid response capacity to support neighbors and sectors which suffer an attack. The three have been having conversations on these topics, but there is much to do to build reinforcing capacity and cooperation across North America, and the protocols that exist still do not interface adequately. On knowing who is coming and going into North American space, the three countries have agreed to put into practice a shared trusted traveler program by the end of 2016. They should not delay further in implementing this simple but important piece of the puzzle.

Given the investment in shared production and trading networks across North America and the increased threats of international cyberattacks on public and private infrastructure, the three North American countries need to develop shared protocols and standards as well as a rapid response capacity to support neighbors and sectors which suffer an attack.

The three are also working bilaterally to enhance information sharing so that all three governments can be alerted if a person of interest for possible terror or extremist ties tries to enter North America.^{13,14} This cooperation against **terrorists and violent extremists** should become an even more important extra layer of defense for the three nations.

U.S.-Canadian **military-to-military cooperation** has been very tight since WWII and the two have been integrated in the NORAD defense network since 1958. The U.S.-Mexico military to military relationships were more distant but have steadily improved over the last decade. Mexico has sent liaisons (Navy/SEMAR and Army/SEDENA) to U.S. Northern Command in Colorado Springs. U.S.-Mexico defense consultations, exercises, and joint training have increased over the last decade, and Mexico is now buying more defense supplies than ever before through Foreign Military Sales. Mexico should, however, be more intent on ensuring inter-operational capabilities with its North American partners as it acquires new material and equipment, whether via FMS, direct purchases or indigenous development. The Defense Ministers of Canada, Mexico, and the United States have also been meeting every two years, which should provide a common basis for interacting with others in the hemisphere on such things as disaster response and relief, a natural and logical area of convergence for the armed forces of the three nations.

¹³ U.S. President, Action Plan, "United States-Canada Beyond the Border: A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness" (December 2011): p. iv, p. 23-25, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/us-canada_btb_action_plan3.pdf.

¹⁴ "Smart Border Action Plan: Status Report," University of California Davis Migration Dialogue, December 17, 2004, <https://migration.ucdavis.edu/rs/more.php?id=170>.

The potential for common purpose

Given current budgetary constraints, Mexico is unlikely to have many new resources to make available for such cooperation, but its willingness to participate even in a limited range of topics can be useful in many international fora, including in building coalitions with other more moderate, mid-sized countries that are venturing toward collaboration with developed countries on issues where North-South or Developed-Developing divides used to define issues.

For its part, Mexico, and Canada too, will not want to be seen as mere “me too” partners of the United States but will want to retain an independent profile on a number of issues. Both neighbors will also look to the United States to show flexibility when developing common policy approaches. There will be international issues where the United States and Canada are more natural partners as they are in NATO, and issues where the United States will seek to move ahead with or without its North American neighbors. Yet, these cases still leave a large and potentially fruitful field for expanding a valuable North American foreign policy footprint.

There is great potential for enhanced cooperation on international issues between Mexico and the United States as well as across all North American countries. The relationship between both neighbors is not optional; we are uniquely, even singularly, relevant to each other’s security, wellbeing and prosperity. From a strategic perspective, each of the three can enhance the security of their neighbors if they build, solidify, and improve cooperation and collaboration against threats like terrorism and crime. Similarly, if they can work through current differences, there is great potential for an enhanced economic and energy platform across North America that makes all three countries more prosperous and more competitive in the world. It will not be easy to realize this potential. It will take hard and determined efforts to work through a range of issues, but the long-term benefit for the three nations could be enormous.

From a strategic perspective, each of the three can enhance the security of their neighbors if they build, solidify, and improve cooperation and collaboration against threats like terrorism and crime.

About the Authors

Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan is an international consultant and former Mexican Ambassador to the United States, and served as a career diplomat in the Mexican Foreign Service for 20 years and received the rank of career ambassador in 2006. He was posted to the Mexican Embassy in the United States as a junior diplomat during the NAFTA negotiations, served as Chief of Staff to the Ambassador, and was the head of the counternarcotics office at the Embassy. In 2000 he became Chief of Policy Planning at the Foreign Ministry and was appointed by the President as Mexican Consul General to New York City in 2003. He resigned from this post and took a leave of absence from the Foreign Service in 2006 to join Felipe Calderón's presidential campaign as a foreign policy advisor and international spokesperson and became the Coordinator for Foreign Affairs in the Transition Team. In January of 2007 he was appointed Mexican Ambassador to the United States until January of 2013. Ambassador Sarukhan is a Member of the Woodrow Wilson Center's Mexico Institute Advisory Board and is a board member of the National Immigration Forum, the Inter-American Dialogue and the Americas Society, among others. A digital diplomacy pioneer, he is a distinguished visiting professor at the USC Center for Public Diplomacy. He holds a BA in International Relations from El Colegio de México and an MA in US Foreign Policy from the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins, where he was a Fulbright Scholar and Ford Foundation Fellow.

Earl Anthony Wayne served as a U.S. diplomat from 1975 to 2015. The U.S. Senate confirmed him as a Career Ambassador, the highest rank in the US Foreign Service, in 2010. He is currently a Public Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a Senior Non-Resident Advisor at the Atlantic Council and at the Center for Security and International Studies. Wayne is an advisor for HSBC Bank in Mexico and Latin America on countering illicit finance and chairs the PAC of the American Foreign Service Association. He served as the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico (2011-15), Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs and Deputy U.S. Ambassador in Kabul, Afghanistan (2009-2011), and U.S. Ambassador to Argentina (2006-2009). Wayne has also worked for three Secretaries of State as Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs (EB) (2000-2006). Prior to his service with EB, Wayne worked as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe and Canada, Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Mission to the European Union in Brussels, and Director for Western Europe at the National Security Council. Wayne has an MPA from the JFK School of Government, Harvard University, an MA from Princeton University, an MA from Stanford University, and a BA is from the University of California, Berkeley.