

Mexico and Israel: Lessons on our Respective Relationship with the U.S.

Introduction

Israel and Mexico have much to learn from each other as some of the major U.S. international partners. On September 21, 2022, the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at UC San Diego's School of Global Policy and Strategy and Reichman University coordinated the conference "Mexico and Israel: Lessons on Our Respective Relationship with the U.S." to bring together some of these countries' academic and public leaders to discuss consular diplomacy, diaspora lobbying, public opinion, and the economy.

During the event's welcoming remarks, Pradeep K. Khosla, Chancellor at UC San Diego, highlighted the great significance of discussing Israel-Mexico-U.S. relations among such renowned stakeholders. He also acknowledged the multiple connections UC San Diego has with both Israel and Mexico through the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, the CaliBaja Center for Resilient Materials and Systems, the U.S.-Israel Center on Innovation and Economic Sustainability, multiple universities in Israel including Reichman University, and beyond.

Rafi Melnick, President at Reichman University, welcomed this new opportunity hoping "this in only the beginning of an activity that will continue in the future." He mentioned that Reichman University is the first and only entrepreneurship school in Israel with a great international presence of over 2000 students from 90 different countries and successful exchange programs with more than 100 universities worldwide. Thanks to the fruitful collaboration among faculty and researchers, Reichman University provides interdisciplinary teaching on national infrastructure management and policy for issues such as water, energy, food security, and more.

Caroline Freund, Dean at UC San Diego's School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), also underscored interdisciplinarity as central to GPS' curriculum to understand both the science and the politics embedded in policy. She noted the similarities between both countries and both schools and urged assistants to use this opportunity to discuss the challenges of current global divides.

This report presents the conference's main takeaways. It was developed through a collaborative process and does not necessarily reflect the views of any individual participant or the institutions where they work.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Consular Diplomacy in the U.S.: Los Angeles 3

How Mexican and Jewish Diasporas Lobby in the U.S. 4

How Americans See Israel and Mexico and How Mexicans and Israelis See the U.S. 5

The Israeli Economy: Startup Nation and Inflation Challenge..... 6

Final Remarks 7

Consular Diplomacy in the U.S.: Los Angeles

Los Angeles has the largest Mexican population and the second largest Israeli population in the U.S. This raises challenges for consular diplomacy, as well as opportunities of collaboration since nearly 100 consulates have jurisdiction in Los Angeles.

Although each consulate faces different contexts, some general challenges were identified:

1. Providing citizen services. Consulates need more resources and people to help citizens navigate the system.
2. Community empowerment to increase education opportunities, mental health sites, vaccine providers, and humanitarian assistance.
3. Building bridges between diasporas and their countries of origin.
4. Reaching out to diverse, spread individuals, communities, and politicians.
5. Cross-border diplomacy in border communities, which involves serving and understanding the people on both sides of the border.

Opportunities of collaboration in consular diplomacy include:

1. Taking advantage of multiculturalism and diverse consular presence in Los Angeles to do more from the West in trying to understand and help each other and overcome global divides.
2. Build networks across cultures and sectors to respond to shared human rights challenges as minorities and victims of hate crimes.
3. Using media, the film industry, and cultural events to help spread cultural influence jointly and creatively and improve public opinion.

It is central to consular diplomacy that political will helps solve migration issues. Governments need to overcome their differences, increase their compassion and acknowledgment of the people coming to the U.S., and solve this problem without further victimizing migrants. People must be open and embrace new societies, families, and cultures while arriving migrants must embrace their new realities.

The aim of consular diplomacy is to touch every single person in a positive way. To this end, consulates need enough budget to reach out to communities through expanding social media and organizing more events. Consulates can find allies among people with shared values in the U.S., elected officials, religious communities, and other immigrant communities.

Panelists

Hillel Newman, Consul General of Israel in Los Angeles

Marcela Celorio, Consul General of Mexico in Los Angeles

Moderator: José Galicot, Tijuana Innovadora

How Mexican and Jewish Diasporas Lobby in the U.S.

The U.S. is considered the only world superpower where average citizens have been able to impact policy. This provides unique motivation and opportunities for Jewish Americans and Mexican Americans to lobby.

Israel has great lobbying success and a great relationship with its diaspora. Since the Clinton administration, every U.S. president has sought Israeli/Jewish communities. There is a history of successful lobbying for nonprofit grants. Still, the need for security among Jewish communities and the history of shootings at synagogues show that there is still a need for promoting stronger policies and a stronger relationship.

While there are many differences of opinions within the Jewish community, central goals in their lobbying agenda include ensuring safety and security, alerting Israel and the U.S. about their many shared enemies, and promoting diplomacy. Lobbying is bipartisan to avoid becoming dependent on one party to advance policy. The approach of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is not to dictate Israeli policy, but to rally American policy that will benefit all.

The Latino community's lobbying is different from the Jewish communities' lobbying. Latino organizations are mostly led by Mexican Americans, creating problems with other Latino communities. Latino lobbying is a project of inclusion, representation, and empowerment. It focuses on getting more appointments for Latinos by building an electorate, getting representation and appointments in the executive branch, and gaining representation in the legislative branch. Anti-immigration sentiments have led Latino organizations to unite for immigrant rights.

The Latino community has a crowded agenda. Mexican policy needs to be compatible with Latino empowerment and should not undermine the Latino community in the U.S. It is also needed that Latino leadership takes shared responsibility to advance foreign policy issues. For instance, Latino leaders should have joined in with Mexican leaders to support Mexico's lawsuit against U.S. gun manufacturers in 2021. Leadership development for the Latino community is needed.

Panelists

David Ayón, UC Berkeley, Co-author of *Power Shift: How Latinos in California Transformed Politics in America*

David Bramzon, AIPAC National Council, Former Board Chair of the Jewish Federation of San Diego

Moderator: Carlos González Gutiérrez, Consul General of Mexico in San Diego

How Americans See Israel and Mexico and How Mexicans and Israelis See the U.S.

Mexico and the U.S. are neighbors. Like all neighbors, they need each other but there are things each like and dislike about the relationship. Mexico needs the U.S. and remittances. Trump successfully sold the narrative that all Mexicans are criminals. But, in the last 20 years, the Trump administration has been the only “bad” relationship between both countries as the trade agreement narrative usually perseveres. There has been a change in public opinion on both sides.

Americans usually think about Mexico through the migration and security lens. The main narrative in the U.S. focuses on drugs and poverty. Trump grew this narrative and the interest in building the wall.

However, Mexican migration to the U.S. has declined in recent years, most Mexican immigrants have lived in the U.S. for over 10 years, and there are more second and third generation Mexican-Americans. The previous points will be important in changing the narrative about Mexico in the U.S. Mexico is a good neighbor to the U.S., not a problem. Presidential agendas usually differ from public opinion. Since the U.S. sets the agenda, talking to U.S. constituents through different channels could help change the narrative.

American public opinion towards Israel has remained positive over time. There has been exceptional support overall, but Americans do not want to set boots on the ground. Israel sees the U.S. as a world order keeper.

There is an increased partisan divide towards Israel in the U.S. Israel views the Republican party as more supportive than Democrats.

Panelists

Amnon Cavari, Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy

Azucena Cháidez, Sistemas de Inteligencia en Mercados y Opinión S.C.

Moderator: Eli Berman, UC San Diego

The Israeli Economy: Startup Nation and Inflation Challenge

The Israeli economy is characterized by being small and open, and comparatively advantaged in high-tech. There is a lack of raw materials, but a relatively high level of human capital. Waves of immigration are leading to large demographic changes. There is a large government involvement with a high security burden, as well as high inequality and poverty.

In the last 15 years (2007-2022), Israeli yearly GDP growth rates have often been greater than that of the world, Mexico or the U.S. Inflation rates (4.6%) are also lower than in Mexico (8.1%) and the U.S. (8.5%). The Israeli government debt in 2021 (87.7% of GDP) was greater than Mexico's (58.9%) but lower than the OECD average (130.3%) and the U.S.' (161.7%).

The economy is amid "the perfect storm" to fall into a world recession. Global food prices have increased due to supply chain shortages from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Dynamics of inflation are a huge problem because inflation rates have been very high in the last few years, which will likely lead to a recession. Interest rate adjustments could also lead to a housing crisis. The stock market is declining, and national debts are increasing.

This is a big challenge for the U.S. and the world. Countries will have to recycle their national debt.

Panelist

Rafi Melnick, Reichman University

Final Remarks

Future panels to discuss Israel-Mexico-U.S. relations are needed to continue building relationships among the countries' governments, diasporas, and businesses. All three countries still have much to learn from each other and break down stereotypes about one another. There is also an interest in further promoting entrepreneurship and finding solutions to the struggles of migrants.

A future panel could be held in Israel with conferences that are remotely accessible for students from various Israeli universities and UC San Diego. This could be a prime opportunity for international networking.

Panelists

Jonathan Davis, Reichman University

Rafael Fernández de Castro, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies