



U.S.-MEXICO FORUM 2025

Strategic Diplomacy for a New Bilateral and Regional Horizon under Biden

When Joe Biden took office on January 20, 2021, a new window of opportunity opened for the U.S.-Mexico relationship. The Biden Administration can redefine the diplomatic cooperation ensuring that the relationship between the two countries becomes a source of prosperity and security for citizens of both nations. To do this, we must together imagine new paths and improve those that already exist. This is essential to secure the safety and prosperity of North America. Solving regional political and security challenges will require multilateral strategies and new narratives about each other.

Under Trump, the bilateral agenda focused almost entirely on two dimensions — commerce and migration — and Biden's presidency means a return to a relationship that is multifaceted and multi-actor. This renewed relationship will rely on existing structures: a strong Mexican and U.S. consular network in each other's countries, robust economic connections, and a history of high-level dialogue between the two countries. Simultaneously, however, the relationship will face numerous challenges including the prevalence of an anti-immigrant discourse in U.S. politics, and Mexico's prioritization of domestic issues.

There is a huge disconnect between U.S. perceptions of Mexico and the reality on the ground in Mexico and vice versa. While a majority of U.S. citizens hold a favorable view of Mexico, they tend to see Mexico as a vacation spot beset by a series of problems, from drugs, crime, and violence to immigration, poverty and corruption. It is important to change the cultural narrative to make sure both Mexicans and Americans understand our shared history and the importance of the U.S.-Mexico relationship in their everyday lives.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Mexico should take the initiative in establishing a diplomatic and personal relationship with the incoming administration at multiple levels in each government.
- Mexico should deepen its existing public diplomacy programs to build a better narrative of Mexico in the United States. Changing popular discourse about Mexico will make it more difficult for anti-immigrant and anti-Mexico political forces to gain traction in U.S. politics.
- The Biden administration should identify areas of common interest with López Obrador's government while avoiding sensitive political issues in Mexican domestic politics. Both sides must work to address persistent irritants in the binational relationship.
- Mexico and the United States should work together to build an integrated regional program for Central America, rather than the fragmented strategies that have resulted from Central American countries preferring direct relationships with Washington.
- Mexico should identify a strategy for navigating the growing rivalry between the United States and China and see these tensions as an opportunity to become more of a partner with the U.S.