

Presentation

Two Hundred Years of History with the United States

Mexico and the United States are celebrating 200 years of diplomatic relations. At the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs we have prepared a program of celebrations that is, above all, a space for plural reflection. The bicentennial is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ask ourselves what lessons we should learn from the past, what is the current state of the relationship, and which path going forward will strengthen our binational ties, consolidate North America as a region globally, and advance the interests of Mexico abroad.

This commemorative issue of the *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* is a clear example of this exercise in critical discussion throughout our shared history. The issue opens with a text by Paolo Riguzzi and Marcela Terrazas y Basante, in which the 19th century is divided into two: dispute and territorial appropriation, followed by an opportunity for cooperation as a result of the civil wars we waged against ourselves in the 1860s.

The number continues with a reflection in three moments: the beginning, the middle, and the end of the 20th century. Ambassador Roberta Lajous explores the meetings between Porfirio Díaz and William Taft, prior to the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution; between Miguel Alemán and Harry Truman in the postwar period, and between Carlos Salinas and George Bush, along with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada, after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

The historical reflection continues with a review of the origins of the Mexican consular network in the United States. Laura Beatriz Moreno Rodríguez

and Gregorio Joaquín Lozano Trejo describe the genesis of this network in the neighboring country. Since the establishment of the first Consulate of Mexico in New Orleans, during the first republican government of Guadalupe Victoria in 1824, the authors retrace the long and necessary history of one of our most powerful instruments of foreign policy.

Sergio Silva Castañeda and Ethan D. Ayala, meanwhile, delve into the economic history of Mexico and the United States. They take into account not only the change in trading dynamics over time, but also observe how political and ideological factors permeate the complex process of economic integration of our countries and our region. Silva and Ayala provide detailed historical context to the abstract economic theories that led us to the current situation under the renewed USMCA.

Bringing us up to the present day, the issue includes contributions from three central actors in the development of the bilateral relationship. This section begins with Mexican ambassador in Washington, Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, who uses concrete examples to develop the thesis of a North America that can achieve the right balance between respect for sovereignty and fruitful integration based on the bilateral relationship between Mexico and the United States.

Moctezuma's text is followed by an interesting reflection by the U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Ken Salazar. Ambassador Salazar writes about the central and evolving role played by Mexican-Americans in the bilateral relationship. Next, the head of Mexico's Unit for North America, Roberto Velasco Álvarez, details the main areas of progress made in building the institutional architecture between Mexico and the United States.

Following this, Ambassador Ana Luisa Fajer and Stephanie Syptak-Ramath, Deputy Chiefs of Mission at our embassies in Washington and Mexico City, respectively, present a joint outlook on the bilateral relationship. The text by the two career diplomats emphasizes the role of innovation and education, as well as the fight against climate change, as two key avenues towards the future that will be led by the following generations—and that already play a part in the diplomacy of our two countries.

The issue closes with an analysis of two recently published books, whose central lessons we must not forget. In the Interviews section, Arturo Rocha talks with Soledad Loaeza about *A la sombra de la superpotencia. Tres presidentes mexicanos en la Guerra Fría, 1945-1958* (In the Shadow of the

Superpower: Three Mexican Presidents in the Cold War, 1945-1958). This is a dialogue about the years after the Second World War and the present day, and it concludes with a critical analysis of the role of the United States in the institutional and democratic development of Mexico.

Finally, in the Book Reviews section, Leonardo Curzio explores the book edited by Roberta Lajous, Erika Pani, Paolo Riguzzi and María Celia Toro, *Embajadores de Estados Unidos en México. Diplomacia de crisis y oportunidades* (U.S. Ambassadors to Mexico: Crisis Diplomacy and Opportunities). From Poinsett to Carlos Pascual, Curzio presents the personal styles of diplomatic representation, the different ways of being an ambassador in Mexico, and how these styles carry truly historical consequences.

The episodes in our history, marked by convergences and divergences in the 19th and early 20th centuries, remind us that Mexico had to take a defensive position to assert its independence and sovereignty against Washington. Without leaving aside the past, Mexico and the United States currently maintain a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation, not only bilaterally, but also as part of the global projection of North America.

Under the leadership of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Mexico has constructed an effective foreign policy together with the United States. We can observe a mature and robust relationship that admits the difference of legitimate opinions. Only a deep bond, between equals, allows divergences to be expressed such as the one that arose at the most recent Summit of the Americas, held in Los Angeles, where Mexico advocated a broad and inclusive dialogue in the face of a different U.S. position.

We live in times of geopolitical stress that remind us of the tensions of the Cold War and the war in Europe. Aware of the historical lessons, both countries are able to overcome their differences and cooperate for mutual benefit. In the present and going forwards, Mexico and its foreign policy must navigate the sometimes stormy waters of the United States. We know how to establish an architecture of peaceful coexistence, and channel the avenues of cooperation in formal spaces for dialogue and joint action.

Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon

Minister of Foreign Affairs