

# **A New Hope for Mexico**

# **A New Hope for Mexico**

Saying No to Corruption,  
Violence, and Trump's Wall

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# ¡Oye, Trump! Speech 1

## The Night of the Election

*A message to the people of Mexico on the US election results.*

I believe it's important to address the Mexican people, foremost migrant workers and their families, but also all of the people of Mexico, including businessmen and investors:

There is no cause for concern at the US election results. Don't forget that Mexico, through the hard work and sacrifice of our forefathers, is a free, independent and sovereign nation, not a colony or protectorate; we are beholden to no foreign government. Be at peace. I believe that it was wrong of Mexico's political elites to take sides in the election; they have forgotten the principles of nonintervention and the right of the people to self-determination. In any case, we will find strength through our unity in the face of any eventuality.

I call on the Mexican people to be at peace. We will forge ahead; there are no problems we can't address because we will assert our right to sovereignty, whoever may occupy the White House.

I repeat: Mexico is a free, independent, and sovereign nation.

Without sabre rattling, we will assert our independence and our right to sovereignty.

We have nothing to fear. We shall forge ahead.

## CHAPTER 1

### A GANG OF THUGS

I open with a categorical assertion: Mexico's crisis cannot be confronted without first addressing corruption and the failure to prosecute people benefiting from it, which requires regime change and the establishment of a new political order, one that is democratic, that promotes the rule of law, that is humanist and distinctively honest. The Republic that exists today is a republic in name only, not a government by the *pueblo* and for the *pueblo*. The State has come to serve a rapacious minority and, as Tolstoy once wrote, a state that does not procure justice is no more than a pack of miscreants. This definition, that of a writer, not a pundit or theorist, has clarity and simplicity and comes closest to our present political reality. In Mexico the governing class constitutes a gang of plunderers that operate throughout the country. This may seem like an exaggeration, and one might argue that it's always been this way, but the astounding dishonesty of the neoliberal period (from 1983 to present) is wholly unprecedented. It constitutes a qualitative shift in the disintegration of the country.

The system has been utterly corrupted. The political and economic powers feed off each other, and the theft of public goods has become their *modus operandi*. Corruption is no longer a matter of a few isolated instances, but a systematic practice. In the so-called stabilizing development period (1930s–80s), the government dared not privatize communal lands, forests, beaches, railroads, mines,

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electricity, and petroleum above all; in this bitter period of neoliberalism, they have dedicated themselves, as in the *Porfiriato*<sup>4</sup> period, to handing over our firms and territory and public goods, and even functions of the State, to domestic and foreign entities. It's no longer about individual acts of dereliction, nor a web of complicity at the expense of the public; now, feeding corruption has become the principal function of the State.

The politics of pillage—more specifically, the neoliberal model—is a set of dogmas and mantras asserting that privatization is the cure-all, the sole and perfect fix to the country's economic and social issues. Though it may seem redundant, the *Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy* states that privatization means to make what is public private. Quite literally, “Transferring a business or public good to the private sector.” The heralds of neoliberalism call upon all sorts of falsehoods to justify this sacking. They exalt the myth of market supremacy; they assert that sovereignty is irrelevant in the face of globalization, that the State need not promote development or redistribute wealth, because wealth spreads when the elites prosper. But this is sophistry, because wealth isn't water and doesn't trickle down. Neoliberal propagandists have gone so far as to resurrect the old *Porfirista* wisdom that there will always be a wealthy elite, living in stark contrast to the vast majority, and even with every absurd justification at their disposal they still shirk responsibility for the State's failure to provide for the people. Denying any right to justice, they condemn those born into poverty to die in poverty.

As neoliberalism spreads across the globe, this supposed “new paradigm” has been used as armor behind which to plunder the country on a scale never before seen. The Washington Consensus took shape under Miguel de la Madrid's administration (1982–88), but its grasp was strengthened under his successor, Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988–94). During this period we saw the beginnings of a new legal framework, one that legalized pillage behind a rhetoric of selling off

4 A reference to Porfirio Díaz, dictator who served seven terms as president of Mexico (1877–1880 and 1884–1911).

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inefficiently run government entities. Though formally privatization bids were supposed to take place under the guise of fairness and transparency, it was clear from the start who the winners would be. One need only recall that Salinas, his brother Raúl, and the secretary of finance, Pedro Aspe, benefitted from this distribution of banks and other assets that had previously belonged to Mexico.

Thus, in thirteen months—from June 1991 to July 1992—and with an average of twenty business days per bank, 18 lending institutions were shuttered. In a mere five years—December 1988 to December of 1993—251 businesses were privatized, including Telmex, Mexicana de Aviación, Televisión Azteca, Siderúrgica Lázaro Cárdenas, Altos Hornos de México, Astilleros Unidos de Veracruz, Fertilizantes Mexicanos, as well as insurance providers, sugar mills, mines, and factories. The transfer of public goods to a select few wasn't limited to banks and state-owned entities. Communal lands were also privatized, as were highways, ports, and airports. And with that, domestic and foreign business opportunities increased significantly for Pemex<sup>5</sup> and the Federal Electricity Commission.

The economic system imposed under Salinas was perpetuated under Ernesto Zedillo, Vicente Fox, and Felipe Calderón, and the beneficiaries of Salinas's spoils continued to accumulate not only wealth but political influence. Before long they became a political power in and of themselves, a power that operated beyond the reach of constitutionally bound institutions. It is these figures who determine the fate of our most pressing political questions of the day—the questions fiercely debated in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate; in the Supreme Court; the National Electoral Institute and Electoral Tribune; by the Attorney General; the Secretary of Finance; and the PRI and PAN<sup>6</sup>. What's more, they enjoy unfettered control of the media.

5 Short for Petroleos Mexicanos (Mexican Petroleum), central to the Mexican economy (and Latin America's second largest enterprise).

6 Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and National Action Party (PAN), Mexico's center-right parties.



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These tycoons, quite understandably, are betting on the continuation of this state of affairs and have forestalled regime change through favours and manipulation. A fruit of these efforts was the installation of Enrique Peña Nieto as president of Mexico. He's one more puppet for the elite, a frivolous and irrelevant character. And yet this spineless, immoral, unpredictable sycophant has led the deterioration of the country in every facet of public life. Not only are we plagued by impoverishment and unemployment, but instability and insecurity are rampant. Decadence prospered because a new collective politics was not pursued; the regime instead doubled down on its grasp of neo-liberal politics. In a mere two years Peña Nieto managed to impose a foreign agenda on a compliant populace. As Mexico's elites conspired, so-called "reforms" were enacted in the spheres of labor, education, economic policy, and energy. The country's sovereignty and the *pueblo's* integrity were violated, leaving frustration, chaos, and violence in their wake.

## ¡Oye, Trump! Speech 2

### The First Day of Trump's Presidency

*Acuña City, Coahuila, January 20, 2017*

Today, Donald Trump took office as president of the United States and launched yet another attack against those he considers foreigners, both at home and abroad.

I regret this uncomfortable new reality, but I don't rule out the possibility of things improving for the sake of both our nations.

Our task is to try and persuade Trump, but at the same time, we must create the conditions to make him listen to reason.

Before the US elections, we were prudent and did not publicly favor any candidate or party; we held firmly to the principles of nonintervention and self-determination, but now we cannot stand idly by as US foreign policy seeks to encroach on the dignity and legitimate interests of the Mexican people.

What Trump expressed in his message a few hours ago represents a significant setback in US foreign policy and a vulgar threat to human rights.

Who could forget that, a century ago, President Woodrow Wilson was the main arbiter of peace negotiations following the First World War? He created the League of Nations, the precursor to the United Nations, to foster brotherhood among people and to resolve problems through agreement, not force.

Who could set aside, as was proposed in Washington today, the four fundamental human rights declared by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt:

1. Freedom of expression
2. Freedom of worship
3. Freedom from want
4. Freedom from fear

Who could transform, overnight, a country that so sympathized with the migrants of the world into a spiritual wasteland, a state of abuse, oppression, and expulsion, a state that denies justice to

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those who seek to escape poverty through hard work? What happens then to the idea of fellowship for all?

This is why we shall act to defend the human rights of our countrymen—and of migrants around the world. This entails fighting against the creation of a wall, against deportations, and against unilateral and tyrannical decisions in the realm of trade.

This is our Action Plan to address the menace unleashed today:

1. Request that Mexican president Peña Nieto arrange an emergency meeting with the US president today, to take a personal stand for human rights and our national interest.
2. Convert Mexican consulates in the US into migrant defense offices.
3. Take prompt and effective action to confront this menace. We have the right to put forward our agenda. We don't seek to meet arrogance with bravado, nor retell a David and Goliath story; we seek merely to assert our sovereignty, acting always with courage and conviction.
4. Roll out a national emergency plan to confront the protectionist policies announced by Donald Trump.
5. This plan must consider, among other approaches, bolstering our national production and strengthening our internal markets to create jobs in Mexico; investing in the construction industry; using our energy sector as a lever for national development; and constructing refineries to avoid having to purchase gas and other energy sources from abroad. We must also provide support to our rural areas and protect our producers by setting guaranteed prices for crops and basic foods (corn, beans, rice, wheat, milk, chicken, eggs, and beef, among others). We aim to achieve food self-sufficiency, producing what we consume.
6. Promote a bilateral agreement with Canada to increase the employment of Mexican workers there and to secure a greater investment in Canadian mining companies in Mexico, paying workers a living wage and respecting the laws that protect our environment.

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7. Support the needs (investment, commerce, job creation) of our border towns along the 1,800 mile shared border with the US. This must include lowering taxes, reducing the cost of gasoline, diesel, gas and electricity, and moving our customs office twelve miles inland from the border. Regarding the possible modification of tariffs and tax increases on exporters to the US, we must consider a duty-free zone that will benefit Mexican border towns.
8. Diversify economic and commercial relationships. We must accept that we can't put all of our eggs in one basket. We must promote investment, financing, and commerce with countries across the globe.
9. Mount appeals to international authorities, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), in the event of arbitrary tax and customs modifications that would disadvantage companies based in Mexico.
10. Establish a responsible budget to finance our national emergency plan. We project savings of 360 billion pesos (US\$19 billion) through the eradication of corruption and the elimination of the inflated privileges of high ranking officials.

One cannot fix an injustice from the outside. We must reach out to the hard-working American people and confront this anti-immigrant propaganda. It must not take root, neither in small towns nor in large cities.

We shall strive tirelessly to convince the US government that fellowship, without walls or borders, is the best approach.

Without impinging on the rights of others, we will firmly defend our freedom and sovereignty.