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Canada's Spotlight on the Americas

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FOCUS ON CANADA-MEXICO

Canada and Mexico: Strategic partners

Francisco Barrio-Terrazas

There is still much room for the relationship to grow.

The relationship between Mexico and Canada has grown exponentially since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1944. Today, with increasing bilateral trade and tourism, Canada is not only our close neighbour, but has become a strategic partner.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed 16 years ago and there has already been a threefold increase in trade for Mexico. This has coincided with a significant decrease in poverty in the country.

Canada is now Mexico's second largest trading partner worldwide after the United States. In comparison, in 2009 Canada's trade with Mexico reached US\$21.7 billion; thereby, only three countries have larger trade relationships with Canada than Mexico.

Bilateral exchange in goods takes place daily and is worth over US\$52 million. Mexican exports to Canada, which annually amount to US\$14.6 billion, surpass all exports to Latin America combined (US\$11.4 billion).

In order to attract more Mexican business travellers to Canada after visas were implemented in July 2009, Minister of International Trade Peter Van Loan launched a special, invitation-only visa program on



North American leaders met August 10, 2009 in Guadalajara to promote global competitiveness of the region, foster the well-being of their citizens and ensure more security for the three countries.

April 10, 2010 to assure that participants have their visa requests processed within a day. This program for Mexican business travellers represents an important step forward. Hopefully, it is also the beginning of a simplified visa application process for more Mexicans travelling to Canada or coming to study.

Canadian and Mexican companies need to keep working together to fuel our economic recovery after the global recession. Over 2,000 Canadian companies have found Mexico to be a very suitable place for working and investing. In terms of foreign direct investment,

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FOCAL Views: Setting the bilateral table

Mexican President Felipe Calderón's Ottawa visit has the potential to reignite talks of a new joint plan of action.

Mexican President Felipe Calderón's official visit to Canada from May 26 to 28 is a unique and much needed opportunity to renew dialogue with Prime Minister Stephen Harper and put the spotlight on bilateral ties. It is high time for the two leaders to dispel public misperception that the relationship is depreciating by showcasing the depth of linkages.

Both countries see eye to eye on a host of North American priority areas. Energy and the environment are a case in point and should make it to the top of the visit's agenda. As the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico still makes the headlines, it is likely that its impacts for North American energy security will be discussed. The U.S. decision to pause the review and issuance of new licences for offshore drilling could boost ongoing discussions on the need to develop alternative and other more traditional sources of energy, including nuclear power. A more forward discussion could also explore co-operation on research in renewable energy and, given the inter-connection of the automobile industry in North America, tie it to the development of hybrid cars. All of these considerations could feed into the policy dialogue in preparation for the June G20 meeting hosted by Canada and the conference on climate change to take place in Mexico at the end of 2010.


The growth in bilateral economic linkages has reached a plateau despite some enormous potential

remaining; Calderón and Harper could revive this agenda. The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) led to impressive Canada-Mexico trade growth; yet the economic relationship could be enhanced further. Even in the absence of progress at the North American level, there are immediate possibilities to harmonize financial services, strengthen co-operation on research and development, promote investments, expand infrastructure, and develop regional value chains and economic clusters. Recent developments in aerospace —now the fastest growing industry in Mexico— is an object lesson on the bilateral benefits of gaining access to the right combination of factors such as availability of skilled labour, access to destination markets, science and technology, and incentives in order to create value chains and enhance competitiveness.

For some time, Canada and Mexico have been discussing co-operation in Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that ranks high in the foreign policy priorities of both countries. Successful bilateral experiences in trade and investment or in governance can serve as the basis for co-operation in the region. Calderón and Harper could explore co-ordinating their efforts to reverse the current trend of missed opportunities. For instance, in Haiti, Canada has co-operated successfully with Brazil but has largely disregarded Mexico's

contribution. In turn, Mexico has failed to advocate for Canadian participation in the newly-created regional economic forum of Latin American countries, the Arc of the Pacific.

The bilateral relationship is too important and well-equipped not to be able to transcend disagreements and show progress in the many areas that will be addressed by the two leaders: trade and investment, security, energy and environment and flows of people. Their meeting and the attention it will generate should also serve to energize other actors that play an equal if not more important role in the relationship such as the private sector or provincial and state governments.

More importantly, we hope that this visit will set the table for the design of a new joint action plan outlining a longer term vision of the Canada-Mexico relationship. 

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Canada and Mexico: Strategic partners

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they have placed over US\$9 billion in Mexico. Some of Canada's largest firms have stated that their Mexican operations are among the most profitable they have around the world.

As for tourism, despite the negative impact of the H1N1 crisis, over one million Canadians vacationed and spent more than US\$1 billion in Mexico last year. This represents a 7.6 per cent increase in the number of visitors compared to 2008, making Canada the second largest—and steadily growing—market for the Mexican tourism industry. Moreover, thousands of Canadian snowbirds have a second home in Mexico where they spend up to six months every year.

Bilateral exchanges in many other economic areas are likely to expand further, given the work both countries are doing to simplify the movement not only of goods and products, but of people between our countries.

Support and understanding between Mexico and Canada is not circumscribed to times of crises. An illustration of this is the longstanding Mexico-Canada collaboration in the area of labour mobility. Indeed, the two countries have worked together for 36 years in this field. They boosted and enhanced productivity of Canadian farms and greenhouses through the participation of Mexican temporary workers under the auspices of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). This program has been operating since 1974 on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding that ensures the protection of workers' rights

and facilitates an orderly flow of seasonal agricultural workers based on demand. During eight months each year roughly 16,000 Mexican workers are employed on farms and greenhouses in nine provinces of Canada. In 2009, 15,351 workers participated in spite of the international economic slowdown, bad weather conditions in Canada and the H1N1 outbreak in Mexico. Thus, it could be viewed as a model to follow in many parts of the world.

**Canadian firms say
Mexican operations are
among most profitable.**

Yet, there are still many other areas where co-operation could be enhanced, such as energy and the environment, infrastructure development, science and technology, health, public security and law enforcement.

There has been some fruitful legal co-operation between the two countries who both share democratic values and strongly defend rule of law and human rights.


Early in 2010, a group of Mexican judges from the states of Chihuahua, Morelos and Zacatecas conducted a working visit to Canada to expand their knowledge of procedures for oral and adversarial trials. The judges exchanged useful experiences on how to best implement the Mexican constitutional reforms that entered into force in October 2008. These

reforms aim to establish more efficient and transparent criminal proceedings that respect human rights of both victims and defendants.

Regarding law enforcement, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) recently provided a new training course in executive leadership to a group of 42 commanders of the Federal Police from Mexico's Ministry of Public Security, an important contribution to organizational capacity-building in the Americas. To bolster Mexican policing capacity, the group of federal police officers was trained in November 2009 by Canadian specialists in managerial and leadership skills.

In August and October 2009, during previous phases of this initiative, Spanish-speaking RCMP instructors had travelled to Mexico to provide basic training and mid-level management education to a group of Mexican police officers.

All these efforts could be strengthened through Canada's Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program that has earmarked an investment of up to C\$15 million per year to support various programs established with several countries in the Americas, including Mexico.

More than ever, Mexico and Canada have to be bound by a shared commitment to further support and build understanding as partners. We can still achieve a more extensive, productive and promising partnership. 

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Taking the Initiative: Canada and Mexico at a crossroads

Agustín Barrios Gómez

It's in the two countries' interest to band together.

In 1991 a forward-looking Mexican president, Carlos Salinas, decided to stake his country's geographical right to belong to North America by asking for a bespoke free trade agreement. The Americans were pleasantly surprised; the Canadians were bewildered at first, but under the leadership of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, quickly got on board. Three decades later the Canada-Mexico relationship has taken shape but its potential remains largely untapped.

Americans are very much aware that Mexico is a part of their continent: nearly 30 million Mexicans and Mexican-Americans live in the U.S. (80 per cent either as U.S. citizens or legal residents) and there are nearly 300 million land border crossings through 47 points of entry every year. But are Canadians aware? Mexican immigration to Canada, although relatively small, is growing and overwhelmingly consists of middle class professionals —the asylum debate notwithstanding— while the population of Canadian retirees and snowbirds in Mexico is larger, but footloose. On an economic level, Canada-Mexico trade stood roughly at US\$26 billion according to Mexican government 2008 statistics. They have mutually become top trading partners.

Is Mexico in North America then a U.S. eccentricity to be tol-

erated, or can Mexico —home of over 2,000 Canadian companies and a like-minded country committed to multilateralism and democracy— be considered a strategic partner? It is up to us to decide.

Worryingly, there is no solid ground for this debate to take place since generally speaking, Mexicans know little about Canada and Canadians are just as uninformed about Mexico. This creates the very real danger that policy decisions could be made in a vacuum and create situations that could undermine a promising relationship.

Can Mexico be considered a strategic partner?

This lack of knowledge has damaging consequences. Mexicans are upset because of the (surprisingly onerous) visa requirements that were imposed on them last year by the Canadian government, which was also detrimental to the Canadian tourism industry. It is perceived in Mexico that some Canadians are trying to distance themselves from the trilateral negotiating table, disregarding the benefits of co-operating with the 13th-largest economy

in the world and the third-largest U.S. trading partner when dealing with the superpower.

The Canada-Mexico Initiative was created to raise awareness of the extent of the bilateral relationship and to offer pragmatic solutions to make the most of its potential. Its co-chairs, the Hon. William Graham and Sen. Rosario Green, are both former cabinet ministers and are pushing for the relationship to be seen as important as it is for both countries. The two renowned institutions that house the Initiative, the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) and the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations (COMEXI), are working hard to make sure that their vision is made a reality.

A complementary relationship

In the 2010 edition of *Competitive Alternatives: Guide to International Business Location*, KPMG ranked Mexico and Canada first and second, respectively, among a group of 10 leading economies, after assessing factors including, among others, taxes, labour costs, price of real estate and education. This is not lost on cutting-edge companies such as Bombardier and Goldcorp, and the Mexican auto parts manufacturing companies that are investing in Canada. It is not lost either on the tens of thousands of Canadians with second homes in Mexico and neither

is it by the thousands of Mexican professionals who have decided to pursue their career further North by taking advantage of Canada's points system immigration laws designed to attract human capital.


But for our promise to be fully realized, our policy community has to put the proverbial elephant to bed. Mexicans need to understand that the world does not end at the 49th parallel and understand the fact that Canada-Mexico trade has grown faster (in percentage terms) than either U.S.-Canada trade or U.S.-Mexico trade since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Mexicans would benefit from seeking out their Canadian counterparts at the G20 and the NAFTA negotiating table with mutually beneficial proposals. Canadians and Mexicans need to find an appropriate mechanism to allow people not representing a security threat to travel hassle-free.

We need to put the proverbial elephant to bed.

Canadians would benefit from putting to rest the old argument about "going it alone" with the U.S., realizing that Americans will always negotiate according to what they perceive to be in their national interest. Sometimes they will talk to Canada alone; sometimes they will only consult Mex-

ico. Often they will sit with both countries to see how they can better deal with shared issues. As the larger partner on friendly terms with both, it is the Americans who will decide whether the table has two or three chairs. Whether we take advantage of the opportunities presented to us to negotiate together with the U.S. is up to us.

Further, the world is getting more competitive and we need the full, co-ordinated strength of 440 million North Americans pushing their comparative advantages to keep improving our standard of living. Best of all, unlike our competitors in other parts of the world, the three countries are liberal democracies with shared values.

Ask any Canadian snowbird in Puerto Vallarta or Mexican skier in Whistler: we like each other. Now let's make the effort to find out how well we can get along for the benefit of both countries. 

Agustín Barrios Gómez is a Mexican journalist with degrees in public policy from Georgetown University and the Madrid Law School. He is Co-director of the Canada-Mexico Initiative and a member of the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations (COMEXI). The views expressed in this article are his alone and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Initiative or of COMEXI.

The Canada-Mexico relationship: A view from inside the Beltway

Armand Peschard-Sverdrup

A stronger rapport between the two countries could leverage dealings with the U.S.

It is puzzling for American commentators to see that despite promising trade, health and security ties, the Canada-Mexico relationship does not carry more weight in North America. Official visits planned over the next months will provide both Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Mexican President Felipe Calderón an opportunity to thaw the relationship after the Canadian decision to impose visa requirements on Mexicans and to re-position the bilateral relationship on a more strategic track.

Trade and investment

The robust trading relationship between Canada and Mexico that emerged with the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is on the rebound following the global economic recession that hit North America's manufacturing sector hard, particularly the auto industry. According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, in January 2010 surface transportation trade among the U.S., Canada and Mexico reached US\$56.7 billion —an increase of 19.5 per cent compared to last year.

Canada and Mexico have repeatedly voiced their interest in enhancing North America's economic competitiveness, but their call has too often fallen on deaf ears in Washington. The economic recession may have created the conditions that make it now advantageous to explore competitiveness more concretely — be it for the relationship between Canada and Mexico or among all three North American countries.

From a geo-strategic perspective, Washington prefers seeing Canadian investment in Mexico's mining sector (representing roughly 70 per cent of all foreign investment in the sector) rather than live with sizable investments from China, which already has significant leverage over the U.S. economy.

Health

Canada's experience with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002–2003 and the government's successful level of co-operation with Mexico and the United States in dealing with the H1N1 pandemic exhibited Canada's leadership in the field of epidemiology, something Washington and Mexico welcomed at a time of crisis and uncertainty. After all, more Americans travel to Mexico and Canada than to any other foreign destination. Similarly, the United States and Mexico are, respectively, the number one and two destinations for Canadians travelling abroad — 18 million visits to the United States and 1.1 million visits to Mexico in 2008.



Photo: Office of the Prime Minister

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper participates in the August 2009 North American Leaders' Summit in Guadalajara, Mexico with Felipe Calderón and Barack Obama.

Security

Canada and Mexico have been co-operating on national and domestic security. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), along with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and Colombia's National Police, is providing training to Mexico's federal police investigators to support the fight against crime. The Canadian Armed Forces have also been relatively successful in engaging both the Mexican army and navy through the ongoing political-military dialogue that was established in 2006. Washington fully understands that the Mexican military feels more at ease with its Canadian counterpart for historical reasons dating back to the Mexican-American war of 1846.

The U.S. government recognizes that Canada can strengthen

its bilateral security relationship with Mexico and provide greater technical assistance geared toward the institutional strengthening of Mexico's judiciary and armed forces. Even though Ottawa and Washington have expressed interest in co-ordinating their work with Mexico on security issues, it has not yet materialized. Such co-ordination could optimize the technical assistance that both governments provide to Mexico and also avoid redundant or disjointed efforts.

Trilateralism as an opportunity

It appears that the current Canadian government views North American trilateralism as weakening its relationship with the U.S., as opposed to being complementary to solid bilateral ties with

Washington and Mexico City. From a U.S. standpoint, trilateralism does not exclude strong bilateral dynamics and some issues can be pursued bilaterally, trilaterally and multilaterally.


The Canadian government has decided to disengage from the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America launched in 2005. In some Washington policy circles, this was seen as the result of mounting domestic political pressure against free trade and further integration. However, Canada did agree to meet annually under the framework of the North American Leaders' Summit.

Canadian concern over trilateralism has also been reinforced by the fact that the Bush and Obama administrations have implemented harmonized security measures at its two borders—a policy that contrasts with the Harper government view that the northern border warrants a different approach. Harper's push for a differentiated U.S. approach to border security was, irrespective of its merit, never an appealing option for Washington and in fact, it turned into somewhat of an irritant.

Some U.S. observers argue that the Harper administration is now even less interested in trilateralism than it was before Obama took office. This change in outlook may be attributed to Canada's interest in protecting the Canada-U.S. relationship, particularly with a Democrat in the White House. The statements Obama made during the electoral campaign about renegotiating NAFTA and the introduction of the "Buy American" provision in

the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 both seemed to contribute to this vision.

Canada has not recognized Mexico's strategic importance. Yet, not only do bilateral ties have great potential, but were they strong enough, they could also be used to leverage the relationship with the U.S. This approach could prove to be more effective than ever now that Washington grapples with the gradual shift in the world's economic balance of power, which ultimately reduces the United States' ability to project its influence in the hemisphere. This creates an opportunity for Canada—and even Mexico—to exhibit greater influence over the North American agenda. They could also assume a broader leadership role in the hemisphere acting as counterweights to countries such as China and Iran that are actively seeking to enhance their influence in the region.

Finally, viewed from the American perspective, the bilateral relationship between Canada and Mexico has ample opportunity to deepen and become much more strategic. Canada and Mexico could now turn their attention to two critically important issues on which they could co-operate to become bold leaders in North America: energy and the environment. This can be done irrespective of whether the White House and Democrats can overcome their ideological differences with Republicans on Capitol Hill to come to terms with initiatives that are substantial enough to actually make a difference. 

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Official visits

Calderón to conduct visit to Canada

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently announced that Mexican President Felipe Calderón is scheduled to visit Canada from May 26 to 28.

Harper said that the state visit underscores the strong and enduring friendship between Canada and Mexico.

"Mexico is a partner with Canada in North America, a key ally for Canada's engagement in the Americas and an important interlocutor multilaterally," highlighted Harper.

The two leaders will meet in Ottawa and will discuss trade, investment and competitiveness as well as flows of people, hemispheric affairs, security, environment and new sources of energy, according to a Mexican news release.

Calderón is also set to address Parliament during his visit, participate in a working meeting with the Governor General Michaëlle Jean and meet with Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff.

Canada and Mexico strengthen sub-national diplomacy

David Parks

Dealings among sub-national actors may be essential to developing a lasting bilateral relationship.

Due largely to the economic association enjoyed through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), over time the Canadian and Mexican national governments have deepened co-operation to address issues of education exchange, environmental protection, governance and public security. This bilateral engagement is enhanced, and in some cases driven, by an emerging set of relationships between the federal countries' provincial and state governments. Largely unmanaged and often unmentioned, these dealings among sub-national actors could be the key to developing a more profound and lasting bilateral relationship.

While Canada does not maintain a registry of international commitments between Canadian provinces and their Mexican counterparts, the Mexican Foreign Ministry has documented 23 mutual co-operation declarations signed between 1998 and 2009. This is a conservative figure as Mexican states have been providing this information on a voluntary basis. Areas of co-operation are related primarily to trade, followed by agriculture, forestry and environmental management. Mexico's registry reveals that there has been a significant increase in state-provincial engagement since 2006, led by a small number of constituent units: the provinces of Alberta, Quebec, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, and the

states of Campeche, the Federal District, Jalisco, Nuevo León and Veracruz. Moreover, there are more than 200 agreements registered between Canadian and Mexican universities, facilitating the movement of faculty and students between the two countries. As education falls under the jurisdiction of Canada's provinces, it provides an important area of sub-national exchange.

In addition to bilateral ties, Canadian provinces and Mexican states collaborate through continental associations, particularly in the priority policy areas of climate change and public security. Mexico's six northern border states as well as Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan are observers on the U.S. state-led Western Climate Initiative (WCI), while the provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec are full partners. As Canada and the U.S. have yet to fully articulate their national climate change strategies—let alone a continental vision that reconciles Mexico's preference for a Green Fund with the Canada-U.S. apparent commitment to cap and trade—the WCI has already provided an unparalleled opportunity for states and provinces to lead the way in designing a *de facto* regional greenhouse gas reduction strategy focused on cap and trade, green technology development and broader environmental governance.

Addressing the threats to public safety in Mexico is one of the most

important governance challenges faced by Mexico at all levels of government. The U.S., through the Mérida Initiative, has been Mexico's primary partner in combating organized crime networks, but Canada has also provided assistance through training of mid-level and senior federal police executives from Mexico at a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) college. More direct provincial-state engagement on public security is illustrated by the 2009 letter of intent between British Columbia and Baja California that pledges co-operation in preventing cross-border criminal activities such as weapons trafficking, money laundering and child pornography. A network of trilateral experts and practitioners at the sub-national level that focuses on decentralization and co-ordination of public security policy is emerging. Managed largely by a small number of think-tanks and research institutes, this network includes representatives of state and provincial governments, and provides a space for sub-national actors to exchange practices of inter-governmental co-ordination and information sharing.

Challenges to deeper sub-national co-operation

Linguistic and cultural differences are clear obstacles to enhanced engagement between Canadian provinces and Mexican states. Canadian provinces, by design, often



Photo credit and copyright: Government of Alberta

Governor of the State of Veracruz, Mexico, Fidel Herrera and Alberta's Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations Iris Evans at the signing of the Declaration on Economic Co-operation between Veracruz and Alberta, on Friday, March 26, 2010 in Boca del Río, Veracruz, Mexico.

lack the capacity to manage complex inter-governmental foreign relations and in most cases rely on the federal government to perform this task. There is a trend within provincial governments to centralize the management of international commitments within their inter-governmental affairs department, but poor communication among provincial departments can sometimes result in a lack of follow-up to meet agreed-upon timelines. In Mexico, the high turnover among state-level civil servants presents continuous challenges, and it is not unusual for international commitments to be abandoned or de-prioritized by new administrations.

Enhanced co-operation is also limited by differences in institutional design and jurisdiction. For example, public security in Canada is a shared federal-provincial jurisdiction whereby law enforcement is a provincial responsibility, and urban areas can be authorized to

maintain their own police force. In practice, law enforcement is managed through contracts between the provinces and the RCMP, so only Newfoundland, Ontario and Quebec maintain their own provincial police forces. In contrast, Mexico's state and municipal police forces are numerous and have considerable jurisdictional authority. Given the differences between these realities, potential sub-national co-operation is limited. Yet, provinces could support some policing reform in Mexico as exemplified by the recent proposals to incorporate municipal police forces into state law enforcement bodies in Mexico, a reform that can certainly be informed by the experiences of Ontario and Quebec in creating amalgamated regional police forces.

Strengthening sub-national ties

There are several measures that state and provincial governments can adopt to help develop exchanges

between their public officials. Firstly, provinces should commit to providing Spanish language programs in their public schools; in the long term, language capacity will be essential to bridging the geographical and cultural distance between the two countries. As well, heads of government, legislators and senior officials could meet regularly, either on the margins of regional meetings or in bilateral visits. Both Mexico and Canada have national associations of sub-national leaders (National Council of Governors and Council of the Federation, respectively) and these associations could be better utilized to facilitate contact between states and provinces. Strategic departmental secondments between governments would not only yield benefits in specific areas of technical co-operation (e.g. forestry management, pest control in agriculture, police training, etc.) but would foster greater understanding of culture and ways of conducting business in general.

There is no question that contact between Canadian provinces and Mexican states will continue to increase, either through North American trilateral dealings or bilateral engagement. While national governments work to iron out diplomatic wrinkles and develop non-trade areas of bilateral co-operation, sub-national governments are forming equally important relationships that will underpin the larger North American partnership. 🌐

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México-Canadá: Construyendo la arquitectura de seguridad de América del Norte

Raúl Benítez Manaut

(English translation follows)

Una relación bilateral fuerte es clave para la seguridad de la región.

Las relaciones de seguridad entre México y Canadá en la actualidad son débiles aún y se encuentran limitadas a aspectos particulares como son la cooperación en inteligencia, defensa, la ayuda de la Real Policía Montada de Canadá (RCMP) en programas con distintos cuerpos policíacos mexicanos y en desarrollar temas comunes de la diplomacia multilateral. Sin embargo, si ambos países logran enfrentar efectivamente los retos que existen para el fortalecimiento de la relación bilateral en materia de seguridad, serán una pieza importante en la conformación de la arquitectura de seguridad norteamericana.

Cuando se firmó el Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte (TLCAN) había optimismo en Estados Unidos y Canadá y se hablaba de reactivar programas de cooperación que se podrían ampliar a México, como el Comando de Defensa Aeroespacial de Norteamérica (NORAD, por sus siglas en inglés), ya que se pensaba que el nacionalismo mexicano estaba vencido, y que México superaría el aislamiento que siempre había tenido en política exterior, principalmente en temas de seguridad y defensa. Sin embargo, de 1994 al 2000, simultáneamente al TLCAN, se dio en México el alzamiento zapatista, y las políticas de seguridad de México se cerraron. Gran cantidad de organizaciones no gubernamentales de Canadá otorgaron su respaldo al Ejército Zapatista

de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) y a la causa indígena, y el gobierno de Canadá mencionó reiteradamente al gobierno de México la necesidad de respetar los derechos humanos. Esto no gustó a los mexicanos.

Con la democratización de México en 2000, se pensaba que México iba a cambiar su política exterior autárquica y nacionalista. Ello no fue así. Canadá podía ofrecer asistencia en el tema de las operaciones de paz, y puso a disposición de estudiantes militares mexicanos el Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. Algunos militares mexicanos han tomado cursos allí, pero el gobierno mexicano decidió no enviar militares mexicanos a la Misión de Estabilización de las Naciones Unidas en Haití (MINUSTAH) en 2004, cuando se podía hacer, a pedido de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas.

En materia de seguridad, el factor Estados Unidos ha determinado la relación México-Canadá y ello ha impulsado acercamientos desde el 2001. Un tema que comparten Canadá y México es el de la seguridad fronteriza con Estados Unidos. Después de los atentados terroristas en Estados Unidos, Canadá firmó en diciembre de 2001 un acuerdo de fronteras inteligentes, seguido por México en marzo de 2002. Estos acuerdos son muy similares, y construyen los primeros elementos de lo que se puede denominar una arquitectura de seguridad de América del Norte.

A nivel interno, Estados Unidos, como parte de las políticas antiterroristas, redefine la estructura de sus comandos y crea el Comando Norte, que incluye en el área de cobertura a Canadá, Cuba, México y parte del Caribe. El Comando Norte tiene su base en Colorado Springs, al igual que el NORAD, y confluyen militares de Canadá y México, por lo que se está desarrollando una cooperación inter-agencial en materia de defensa.


En 2005, México, Estados Unidos y Canadá, firmaron la Alianza para la Seguridad y Prosperidad de América del Norte (ASPAN), que incluye cooperación en seguridad en muchos temas, incluyendo seguridad energética y cuestiones de seguridad humana. Un ejemplo de cooperación fue cuando apareció la epidemia de influenza H1N1 en México en abril de 2009. La cooperación de los ministerios de salud fue estratégica, y la relación entre los científicos de Canadá y México fue decisiva.

Un reto importante actualmente es el hecho de que México está siendo impregnado por la acción criminal de los cárteles del narcotráfico. El gobierno de Felipe Calderón reconoció en 2006 que con los recursos nacionales no era posible combatir este problema de seguridad nacional. Por ello, se negoció con el gobierno de Estados Unidos el arranque de la Iniciativa Mérida, con un presupuesto de US\$1,400 millones de dólares para tres años. México

también está recibiendo cooperación de un número importante de países de Europa. Dada esta realidad nueva para México, el gobierno de Canadá podría incrementar sus programas de cooperación en inteligencia, asistencia a las reformas del sector de justicia y de entrenamiento que la RCMP está facilitando a distintos cuerpos policíacos de México.

Con México, Canadá puede también poner de ejemplo su experiencia de cooperación en seguridad con otros países del hemisferio. Canadá tiene mucha experiencia en la organización de cumbres militares y de defensa. Fue país sede de la reunión de jefes de ejércitos de las Américas en 2003, y se reunieron en Banff los ministros de defensa en 2008. Canadá está asistiendo al gobierno de Bolivia en la realización de la IX Cumbre de Defensa para el 2010, y parece que México será anfitrión de la X Cumbre de Defensa.

A fin de capitalizar estas oportunidades, México necesita des-bilateralizar sus relaciones externas de seguridad, las cuales se dan casi exclusivamente con Estados Unidos, y con Canadá hay muchas oportunidades.

Debido a que el narcotráfico es un fenómeno global y que los países norteamericanos son interdependientes en materia de seguridad, el marco de la cooperación existente en América del Norte ofrece los espacios para que crezcan los programas bilaterales México-Canadá. 

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www.seguridadcondemocracia.org. Sus últimos libros son Atlas de la seguridad y la defensa de México 2009 y Crimen organizado e Iniciativa Mérida en las relaciones México-Estados Unidos. El autor puede ser contactado en manaut@servidor.unam.mx.

Official visits

Calderón to visit Washington

Mexican President Felipe Calderón is slated to visit Washington from May 19 to 20. This marks his first state visit to the United States since U.S. President Barack Obama took office.

Calderón is scheduled to engage in talks with Obama and other U.S. lawmakers and officials, said the Mexican Presidency. The U.S. president will also host a state dinner in light of the visit; this is the second state dinner for a foreign leader since the start of his presidency. Robert Gibbs, a spokesperson, said the dinner was in recognition of the deep ties and strong relationship between the two leaders.

The two presidents will be discussing border infrastructure, co-operation against cross-border organized crime, immigration and trade, among other issues.

The visit comes at a time of tension over drug trafficking. Mexico has said that there is a shared responsibility with the United States in the battle to combat drug gangs as, for instance, the U.S. supplies 90 per cent of the weapons used by drug traffickers.

Mexico-Canada: Building North America's security framework

Raúl Benítez Manaut

A strong bilateral relationship is key for the security of the region.

Security relations between Mexico and Canada remain weak, and are limited to specific areas such as co-operation on intelligence, defence, assistance programs involving the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and different Mexican police forces, and developing common issues in multilateral diplomacy. However, if both countries could effectively face challenges in strengthening their bilateral security relations, they would play an important role in the creation of a North American security framework.

When the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed, Canada and the United States were optimistic; there was talk of reactivating co-operation programs that could be expanded to include Mexico, such as the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD). Indeed, there was a general perception that the era of Mexican nationalism was over and that the country would overcome the isolation it had long been prone to in matters of foreign policy, especially on security and defence.

However, as NAFTA was being implemented between 1994 and 2000, Mexico underwent the Zapatista uprising, and the country's security policies turned inward again. Many Canadian non-governmental organizations supported the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN in its Spanish acronym) and the indigenous cause, and the Canadian government repeatedly mentioned that human rights needed to be respected. This did not please the Mexicans.

With Mexico's 2000 wave of democratization, it was assumed that the country would change its autarchic and nationalistic foreign policy. This did not happen. Canada offered assistance in the area of peacekeeping operations, making the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre available to Mexican military students. Members of the Mexican military took courses there, but the Mexican government declined to send its soldiers to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in 2004 when it could have been done at the request of the United Nations.

The U.S. factor has led to a rapprochement since 2001.

On the matter of security, the U.S. factor has determined the relationship between Mexico and Canada and has led to a rap-

prochement since 2001. Canada and Mexico share a common issue: border security with the United States. After the terrorist attacks in the U.S., Canada signed the Smart Border Agreement in December 2001; Mexico followed suit in March 2002. These very similar agreements are the first elements of what could be called a security framework for North America.

At the domestic level, the United States redefined its command structure and, as part of its new antiterrorist policy, it created the Northern Command, which covers Canada, Cuba, Mexico and part of the Caribbean. The Northern Command is based in Colorado Springs, as is NORAD, and the confluence of Canadian and Mexican military officers is leading to the development of inter-agency defence co-operation.

In 2005, Mexico, Canada and the United States signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), which included security co-operation in many areas, including energy security and human security. An example of such co-operation took place during the H1N1 epidemic in Mexico in April 2009 when collaboration between health ministries proved strategic and the relationship between Canadian and Mexican scientists was decisive.

A current and important challenge concerns the criminal actions of drug cartels in Mexico. Felipe Calderón's government admitted in 2006 that the country's resources were not sufficient to fight this national security prob-

lem. Consequently, Mexico negotiated with the U.S. government the launch of the Mérida Initiative, with a budget of \$1.4 billion over three years. Mexico is also receiving help from a significant number of European countries.

Elections

Mexico to support electoral assistance missions

In 2010, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) joins forces with Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute and Electoral Tribunal to support technical assistance missions for electoral officers in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala and Haiti.

Since 2009, Mexico has been chosen to be a regional excellence centre for electoral assistance in the hemisphere within the UNDP Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support. The objectives of the program are to enhance credibility, transparency, effectiveness and sustainability of electoral institutions and processes, with emphasis on capacity development, South-South co-operation and empowerment of women.

With a budget of nearly US\$50 million, this three-year initiative (2009-2012) sets to improve countries' electoral laws, processes and institutions and enhance participation of women in the process. The program is financed by the Government of Spain with support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and will operate globally.

Given this new Mexican reality, the Government of Canada could expand its co-operation programs in the areas of intelligence, assistance for justice sector reform and training provided by the RCMP to a number of Mexican police forces.

With Mexico, Canada can also draw on its experience of security co-operation with other countries in the hemisphere. Canada has a wealth of experience in organizing military and defence summits. It hosted the Conference of American Armies in 2003, and defence ministers met in Banff in 2008. Canada is helping the Government of Bolivia organize the ninth Defence Summit in 2010, and it appears that Mexico will organize the 10th Defence Summit.

In order to build on these openings, Mexico needs to “de-bilateralize” its foreign security relations; right now, these relations are taking place almost exclusively with the United States, but Canada presents a wealth of opportunity.

Canada presents a wealth of opportunity.

Since drug trafficking is a global phenomenon and North American countries are interdependent in matters of security, the existing North American co-operation framework offers room for the

growth of bilateral Mexico-Canada programs. 

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Business

EDC boosts business loans

Export Development Canada (EDC) business loans between Canadian and Mexican companies are set up to jump 20 per cent this year, said Business Development Group Senior Vice President Benoit Daignault. Last year, despite the global economic recession, EDC granted loans totalling C\$1.1 billion to Canadian firms and Mexican importers. In 2008 it granted C\$1.7 billion in loans dedicated to projects between the two countries.

EDC’s mandate is to support firms to export their products to other markets. To do that, through its offices abroad it develops ties with local and Canadian firms engaging in international trade. As such, EDC has played an important role linking Canadian small and medium enterprises with the main state-run companies, including Mexican Petroleum (PEMEX) and the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE).

EDC also offers services to Mexican firms interested in investing in an exporting Canadian company. Examples of that are Mexican manufacturing firms Mabe and Nemak that are present in Canada. To have access to EDC resources, Mexican firms have to have a business relationship with a Canadian firm. EDC can also help identify potential opportunities for two companies to increase their market.

Knowledge transfer to tackle childhood obesity in Mexico

Ian Janssen and Juan López Taylor

Canadian researchers are collaborating with Mexican counterparts through the CAMBIO program.

The nutrition and physical activity transitions linked to the economic rise of Mexico in the past decades have led to a rapid increase in the prevalence of obesity and related diseases. In fact, in a similar manner to what happened in Canada many decades ago, non-infectious diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases have replaced infectious diseases as the leading causes of illness and death in Mexico.

Mexico has undergone rapid economic development in the past half-century. The adoption of new technologies has increased exposure to cultures and lifestyles that are more akin to those seen in Canada. Traditional Mexican diets based on whole grains, local products and limited intake of meat have been replaced by nutrient-poor, highly-processed, calorie-dense foods. New employment opportunities within Mexico have led to changes from rural to urban lifestyles and from physically-demanding to sedentary jobs. Transportation accommodates more automobiles and less walking and cycling.

Mexico is only midway through its nutritional and physical activity transitions. Nonetheless, the prevalence of obesity in both children and adults in Mexico has already approached if not exceeded that seen in Canada.

While considerable research support and expertise on obesity has been developed in Canada within the past two decades, this has not been the case in Mexico. Research knowledge has led to the implementation of several programs and policy changes in Canada to help remedy this situation; this has only occurred to a limited extent in Mexico.

CAMBIO is set to enhance research for childhood obesity.

Therefore, Canada and Mexico Battling Infant and Childhood Obesity (CAMBIO) was created three years ago as a multidisciplinary, international network of investigators participating in a program to enhance research capacity in childhood obesity in Mexico. CAMBIO, which also means “change” in Spanish, is a Canada-Mexico project that involves knowledge transfer among researchers, educational institutions, government ministries, non-governmental organizations and community-based groups. CAMBIO started as a collaboration between researchers from Queen's University in Canada and the University of Guadalajara


in Mexico and has since grown considerably to include partners such as the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, the Mexican Ministry of Health, the Mexican National Institute of Public Health, the Mexican National Commission for Physical Culture and Sports, the Ministries of Health and Public Education in the state of Jalisco and the Mexican National Institute of Anthropology and History. It is funded through the Global Health Research Initiative implemented by five Canadian government agencies.

CAMBIO's long-term goals are to increase research capacity and knowledge transfer, and to promote partnerships. To achieve its goals, CAMBIO conducts four primary activities. First, it trains groups of emerging researchers on obesity through intensive, hands-on courses. Second, CAMBIO provides individual training opportunities through scholarships, post-doctoral fellowships and faculty exchanges for Mexicans coming to Canada. Third, it has developed a collaborative research program that focuses on “learning by doing” through funded research projects. Lastly, CAMBIO builds partnerships and has developed a Mexican network of obesity researchers.

Building research capacity and

invoking policy change in a country takes time. As the CAMBIO program is only three years old, it is only starting to scratch the surface in Mexico. Nonetheless, over 200 researchers within Mexico have already been impacted through CAMBIO's training initiatives. Awareness of obesity and its associated health risks in Mexico has undoubtedly increased. Public health initiatives, clinical programs and policy changes are being implemented more and more swiftly.

Awareness of obesity and its health risks has increased.

It has been estimated that middle income countries such as Mexico bear 90 per cent of the global disease burden but receive only 10 per cent of all health research funding. It is therefore important to strengthen the research capacity in these countries through international collaborations, such as the CAMBIO program. In addition to generating new knowledge, global health research programs should also lead to action. In other words, research outcomes should guide program and policy development. Addressing the global health problems in middle and low income countries will yield benefits for all, and it is important for Canada to make a contribution to solving these problems. 

Ian Janssen and Juan López Taylor are co-leaders of the CAMBIO Program. Dr. Janssen is a professor at the School of Kinesiology and Health Studies and Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. Dr. López Taylor is a professor at the Instituto de Ciencias Aplicadas a la Actividad Física y el Deporte, Universidad de Guadalajara, México. For more information on CAMBIO, please visit www.cambio-red.net or contact ibarguchi@cambio-red.net. For information on the Mexican network of researchers, see www.obisired.org.mx.

Trade

Alberta signs declaration with Veracruz

The Canadian province of Alberta signed a declaration at the end of March with the Mexican state of Veracruz in order to strengthen and advance trade and investment. Alberta's International and Intergovernmental Relations Minister Iris Evans visited Mexico on March 19 to 28 to sign the Declaration on Economic Co-operation, which inked the deal with the Government of Veracruz to promote commerce, encourage linkages between educational institutions and share best practices in terms of energy development.

Evans said that working together with Mexico will enhance global competitiveness in their respective energy sectors, train a new generation of students and grow the trading and investment relationship.

Alberta has previously helped secure two major contracts with Mexico: one with TransCanada to build a pipeline and another with Hyduke.

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FOCAL's Third Seminar Series on Migration and Development

May 27, 2010 - Ottawa, Canada

FOCAL will host a seminar with Jenna Henneby, the Associate Director for the International Migration Research Centre (IMRC). She will share expertise and good practice on migration and development management. The event will take place in the FOCAL Board Room at 1 Nicholas St., Suite 720 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. To RSVP or for more information, please send an e-mail to Fatima Gardaad at fgardaad@focal.ca before May 25.

Haiti's Future: How Can We Help?

May 12, 2010 - Ottawa, Canada

The Society for International Development will hold a roundtable on Haiti's future featuring the following panelists: David Edwards, Special Policy Advisor, Haiti Task Force, DFAIT; Carlo Dade, Executive Director, FOCAL; David Smith, Businessman and Philanthropist, Ottawa; and Stephen Baranyi, Professor, University of Ottawa. It will take place at Saint Brigid's Centre for the Arts and Humanities, 310 St. Patrick St., Ottawa 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Entrance fee is \$20 non-members, \$10 for SID-OG members and students, and \$5 for SID-OG student members. Please go to <http://www.eventsbot.com/events/eb051884563> for registration and tickets. Tickets will also be available at the door.

CMI identifies initiatives to energize Canada-Mexico relationship

April 20-21, 2010 - Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada

Under the leadership of the Hon. Bill Graham and Sen. Rosario Green, the Working Group of the Canada-Mexico Initiative (CMI) and experts gathered to develop practical initiatives to scale-up Canada-Mexico ties. These initiatives included options to enhance the movement of people, provincial-state relations, energy and economic ties. The CMI was also invited to present the work it has undertaken in the plenary of the Canada-Mexico Partnership on April 21.

The Canadian Foundation for the Americas is an independent, non-partisan think tank dedicated to strengthening Canadian relations with Latin America and the Caribbean through policy dialogue and analysis. FOCALPoint helps us accomplish our mission as a monthly publication combining news and analysis that reaches decision-makers, civil society, private sector, academics and students with an interest in the region. Our goal is to bring together diverse perspectives to make FOCALPoint a dynamic analytical forum.

With the exception of FOCAL Views, which is the official institutional stance of FOCAL, the opinions and analysis in FOCALPoint are those of the author and do not reflect the institutional position of FOCAL, its staff or its board.

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