

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE GLOBAL FORUM OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE BY THE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MEXICO, HER EXCELLENCY CLAUDIA RUIZ MASSIEU.**

**June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

*Opening remarks*

**Javerot ve javerim:** [amigas y amigos]

It is a true privilege to be here today and I want to thank the AJC for its hospitality and its kind invitation.

**Stanley, David and Dina:** Thank you for having me here tonight.

I would like to thank very specially the Mexican delegation that is present tonight. Thanks for your support, here and at home.

I am particularly honored to share this forum with **two distinguished, intelligent and tough women:** National Security Advisor Susan Rice, and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini.

**Susan, Federica:** **You are truly global leaders.** Your work is widely recognized [...] you are a living proof of how every country and every society grows stronger when women get empowered and have access to positions of influence and decision.

Dear friends from the AJC,

Just a few months ago, we met in Mexico City to celebrate the first decade of the *Belfer Institute*; and here we meet again, among good friends with whom we share values, and also interests.

You know [...] **friendship is a gift that you cannot promise with words, but that you demonstrate with actions.**

And I am proud to say that **the Mexican and the Jewish people have forged an enduring friendship based on mutual solidarity in prosperity, but particularly during times of need.**

Between 1939 and 1942, **Gilberto Bosques**, our Consul in Paris was one of the few diplomats who, facing tremendous personal risks, sheltered and issued humanitarian visas for **hundreds of Jews who were wanted by the Gestapo, but thanks to his efforts they found safe haven in Mexico and [...]** became part of our national family.

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But our common story begins much earlier, for the first Jews who arrived in Mexico came in 1519, with the Spaniards.

And ever since, particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, different waves of Jewish immigrants have enriched Mexico's multicultural landscape.

And let me tell you [...] **this has been no exception.** Hundreds of Chileans, Argentinians and other peoples from South America, found refuge in our country, when military *juntas* ruled in many capitals in the region. Mexico, also received thousands of Spaniards fleeing from Franco's fascist regime.

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**This open doors tradition,** is something we have in common with the United States.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thousands of people from different nationalities, Japanese, Armenian, Lebanese, Chinese and many others, arrived to the Mexican ports just like they arrived to Ellis Island in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century [...] **reaching a land of peace, where they could prosper with their families.**

**This tradition cemented solidarity,** as shown in 1985, when the most dreadful earthquake hit Mexico City.

In those days many lives were saved because friends and allies from all over the world –such as **Israel—, were steadfast in sending a humanitarian missions and aid.**

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These are examples that are not mere anecdotes [...] but serve as a **prologue to build a better future together.**

**Part of our shared future is being built right here in the United States, home to both, the largest Jewish and Mexican diasporas in the world.**

The United States is the land of the free and the home of the brave; but it is also **the land of the pioneers and the home of the immigrants.**

#### *Mexico – United States relationship*

Like any other neighbors, we have had **to learn to work together, understand each other better, and respect each other more.**

**It is a permanent journey** that often poses challenges, but also one in which our common values and shared interests, have given us the **strength to keep ahead and overcome fear and suspicion.**

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In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the relation with our Northern neighbor was so full of suspicion that someone coined the phrase [...] *«oh poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States»*. Incidentally, a Jewish friend once told me that he would phrase it rather differently: *«oh Israel, so close to God but so far from the United States»*.

Well, those days are so long gone that we can joke about it now. **Today our border with the United States is a source of prosperity and opportunities for both countries.**

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When you look at the data, you reach a conclusion that you will not hear these days.

So, I will say it here, **loud and clear**, because it is important [...]: **the United States benefits, greatly, from the economic relation with Mexico; and the American people benefit, immensely, from the presence of Mexicans in this country.** This is natural, because we are allies and we are friends.

We live in a world where no country can face alone the major economic challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. **Competition is fierce**, so the region that proves to be more competitive, will trade more goods and export more services. **It will attract more investment and create more jobs.**

This is why, we are convinced that one of the best ways for the United States to maintain and increase its global competitiveness is to consolidate and expand trade, investment, cooperation and integrated chains of value with Mexico.

**Mexico's network of 12 Free Trade Agreements with 46 countries** worldwide means that, U.S. companies manufacturing in Mexico have preferential access to 60% of the world market.

**Also, in recent years, due to an increase in productivity, manufacturing costs in Mexico have dropped below those of China.**

The naked truth is that today, **over 6 million U.S. jobs depend on the commercial relation with Mexico. That is more than the entire population of Norway.**

So, allow me to debunk one of the greatest myths: **we do not steal jobs from the U.S.** On the contrary, we are vital for millions of women and men providing for their families on this side of the border.

As production chains continue to integrate, **we are witnessing the emergence of a new paradigm: Mexico and the United States do not just trade among themselves, they build things together:** from automobiles, that cross eight times our border in the process of production, to smartphones and computers; from beer to state of the art *learjets*.

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Actually, **by buying Mexican you are helping the U.S. economy [...]** on average 40% of the content in Mexican exports is made in the United States. That is right: **40 cents of every dollar you spend in Mexican products support U.S. jobs.**

And, just as our stores are filled with American products, you will only see more Mexican products in your local stores: by 2018, the United States will import more from Mexico than from any other country, so that **«Hecho en México» will oust «Made in China».**

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This is remarkable but not surprising, if you consider **that every minute of every hour, of every day, Mexico and the United States trade over one million dollars.** To give you an idea of the importance of our commercial relation, in 2014 we reached a historic record of 534 billion dollars, that is, **Mexico exports 3.1 times more to the United States than Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa combined. American consumers value and rely on the quality and taste of our products.**

**The U.S. economy also benefits from our already vast and growing Mexican internal market [...]** Today [...] 39% of the Mexican population is middle class; this represents about 44 million people, more than the total population of Canada.

And believe me, **this is good for the United States:** exports from the U.S. to Mexico are larger than those to China and Japan together.

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**Mexico, also brings prosperity to this great nation as we invest.** Today, Mexican investment in the United States totals 17.6 billion dollars, and has grown over 35% in the past five years. **So, people, we are most definitely not the problem, we are part of the solution.**

The presence of Mexican investments, products and services is larger than most people imagine, spanning all states and multiple sectors [...]. For example, I know everyone would expect Mexico's *Mission Foods*, to be the world's largest tortilla maker. **But [...] the hamburger you regularly eat, may be more Mexican that you would imagine.**

The United States is the main destination of Mexican agro-food, an annual market of six billion dollars. **From phase one when cattle is raised until beef arrives to your table, it crosses our border between 4 and 5 times.**

So probably you have been eating products from *SuKarne*, a Mexican global company and one of the leading suppliers in the United States.

**Now [...] grab the buns**, which very well might be made by *Bimbo*, the largest bread-maker in the entire continent [...] **add the tomato**, most probably Mexican since we are the second global exporter of this product. And [...] **do not forget the avocado!** And guess what? **Yes [...] that is right, we are the first international exporter.**

**For the record:** In the run up to, and on this year's Super Bowl Sunday, 139 million pounds of avocados, —that is about 278 million individual avocados—, were consumed in the U.S.

Now relax and read the *New York Times*, or go shopping to *Saks Fifth Avenue*, both iconic U.S. firms, heavily supported by Mexican investments.

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And do not be surprised if your office or house is built with Mexican materials, because **CEMEX is North America's first maker of cement and concrete.**

In fact, **our cement is building two of the most innovative skyscrapers in the United States:** the **Salesforce Tower**, which will become the tallest building in San Francisco, and the **Panorama Tower of Miami**, which will be the tallest residential structure in the East Coast outside of New York City.

**Mexico ranks within the top 10 worldwide industries in sectors such as** automotive, electronics, precision manufacturing, telecom, aerospace, food, chemicals, renewable energy, medical devices, metal components, pharmaceuticals, and plastics. Mexico contributes to strengthen these sectors for the benefit of **our closest and most important ally: the United States.**

At this point [...] please give me a few seconds to catch my breath  
[...]

Because as you can see, **the contributions of Mexico** to the world and the United States in particular **are not only huge [...]** **they are Talmudic!**

But most importantly, and to the dismay of those **who prey on disinformation and fear for political gain**, **the Mexican people are and have always been a positive presence and force for good in the United States. This is not an opinion: It is a fact.**

**The population of Mexican origin in the United States, which is about 35.5 million, generates 8% of the U.S.'s GDP**, and immigrants of Mexican background own 570,000 companies: one out of every 25 in the whole country.

**The Mexico – United States relation is strong, because it is the reflection of its people [...]**. Our 2,000-mile border area is home to a binational community of over 14 million people in 10 states.

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Contrary to what has been, irresponsibly repeated lately, **immigrants contribute with their honest and hard work to this country [...]**: They earn about 240 billion dollars per year; pay 90 billion in taxes; and use only about 5 billion in public services and benefits.

The data shows that **there are less, no more Mexicans migrating to the United States every year**, and just in 2012 the migration rate between our two countries reached net zero, and it is becoming negative.

Those Mexican immigrants who are still arriving to the United States are increasingly more educated, more skilled and more qualified.

So [...] the future and viability of the United States as an economic dominant power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is therefore linked to the success of its immigrant population.

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Due to all these reasons and more, **the Mexican-U.S. alliance is unwavering [...]**: It has deep, strong roots; it is mature enough to endure any political juncture, and **it goes way beyond this unprecedented electoral process.**

However, we cannot dismiss this challenge to our shared future and common values lightly. Because **our problem is not one of closed borders, but one of narrow minds.**

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And so [...] we will keep working together, making facts, truth, and **objective information the founding blocks of a lasting, mutually beneficial relation, cemented on mutual trust and respect.**

*Working together to empower our communities*

***Ladies and gentlemen:***

In his magnificent autobiography, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, Amos Oz tells us how when his father was a little boy in Poland, the streets of Europe were covered with graffiti: **«Jews, go home».**

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**Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, here in the United States, a climate of intolerance is sending a similar message: «Mexicans, go home».**

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**And in many other parts of the world, conspicuously the Western world, we are witnessing the same trend: «Immigrants, go home».**

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The context is certainly different, but **at its core sits the same disturbing rationale [...] the same lies [...] the same poignant stench of bigotry [...] Disparage those who are different! Blame the minorities! Demonize the stranger! Well, let me tell you who those [...] «strangers» are.**

No different than American Jews from all walks of life, Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants are those who plow the land and make sure there is food on our tables.

They are doctors, scholars, farmers, businesspeople, policemen, Oscar winners, athletes, and they are also soldiers who go fight overseas so **that freedom is safe and sound at home.**

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**Those who want to make a political profit stigmatizing these people, be them Mexican, Jews, Muslims, people of color or Asians are wrong [...] for this country was founded on the very principle, the self-evident truth, that all men and women are endowed with the same unalienable rights [...]: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.**

And you know [...], **this notion that we are all equal in dignity is one of the most prominent Jewish concepts.**

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That idea, which today sounds common sense, was revolutionary 3,000 years ago, when it became pivotal to the Jewish *ethos*. First, in a religious and then in a secular form, it spread throughout the world, and today it is the cornerstone of what we collectively understand by «civilization».

And yet, **in many parts of the world there seems to be too many people too willing to forget the lessons of history.**

**Aggressions against minorities happen all around the world on a regular basis, and stereotypes are widespread even in the most advanced societies [...]**

**We live in a time that demands us to remain vigilant and to close ranks. «Global solidarity» [...] is [...] the buzzword.**

And this is precisely one of the main pillars of **President Enrique Peña Nieto's State vision**. Mexico is a responsible global actor that will continue contributing to the most noble causes of humanity.

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If history has taught us something, it is that **when discrimination is allowed against one group, it is just a matter of time before it starts targeting others [...]. Passivity emboldens the bigots and intolerance flourishes amid silence.**

And so [...] we have to be strong and courageous, and not afraid. **We have to stand up, to set the record straight.**

History also teaches us that **every time we have been capable of uniting our will, our voices and our actions, the few who promote ignorance, prejudice and fear have been no match against the many who defend [...] justice [...] liberty and [...] hope.**

**The Mexican and the Jewish people partake in this common heritage [...]. It is our shared values that bind us together: respect for plurality, [...] diversity [...], freedom [...] and [...] tolerance.**

**We also share many traits [...]:** We both cherish the importance of family, and the role of mothers and women in our society [...] We are multicultural, multiethnic countries, liberal economies and vibrant democracies.

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It should then come as no surprise that **the Mexican Jewish community [...]** the third largest in Latin America, not only feels at home in Mexico, but [...] **has made Mexico its home.**

Mexican Jews have successfully flourished and they contribute to our national development: in science, business, philanthropy, the arts, public service, the academia, and almost every field, **Mexico benefits and is stronger thanks to its Jewish community.**

And let me say it loud and clear: **Fighting anti-Semitism, like standing up to anti-Mexican sentiments, is not a Jewish issue, nor a Mexican issue [...]**

**It is a common battle for human rights and [...] a matter of universal dignity that goes beyond race [...], religion [...], ideology [...] or politics.**

**And [...] this stance [...] is simply [...] ... non-negotiable!**

*Working together to empower our communities*

This is why I want to recognize the ***American Jewish Committee***, because, uncompromisingly, you have raised your voice in favor of human rights and human decency.

You have translated words into action, and your vision and work have transcended racial, national and religious boundaries.

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Especially, I want to commend your courageous defense of immigrants in the United States. As you stand up, you also inspire others to abandon apathy [...], lose the fear and follow your example.

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This has also been at the core of Jewish ethics and tradition, since it was written: ***“you are to love those who are strangers, for you were once strangers in a foreign land.”***

For years now, the *AJC's Belfer Institute* has cooperated with Mexico exchanging experiences in leadership and social engagement between Mexican, Jewish and Mexican-American activists, authorities and community organizers [...] **We are learning from you on how to better empower ourselves.**

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We are grateful for your support, and I want to tell you that we are ready to take our partnership to the next level [...]. That is why today, **the entire network of Mexican Consulates in the United States — the largest any country has in another— gathered here, along with dozens of Mexican-American community leaders from all the states of this great Union.**

Only an organization of the caliber of AJC could have achieved such a turnout.

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*Closing remarks*

***Javerot ve javerim:***

The British historian Paul Johnson once wrote: «***no people have insisted more firmly than the Jews that history has a purpose and humanity a destiny***» [...].

Today **we have the opportunity to become the designers of that purpose and [...] the architects of that destiny.**

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As I said at the beginning, this is a land of pioneers, **and by definition pioneers do not conceive borders [...] they push them outward.**

It is the **very essence [...], the DNA of this nation, to defy frontiers and borders, be them physical [...] intellectual [...] of race [...], or creed.**

We share common aspirations and we uphold common values [...].

I have no doubt that [...], working together, the future we will inherit to our children will be one **where [...]**:

**Hope will prevail over fear [...],**

**reason [...] over ignorance[...],**

**freedom and dignity [...] over discrimination and bigotry.**

***Todá rabá.***