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Briefing, analysis, opinion and insight of legal affairs in Mexico. Digital publication by Abogados Sierra

July 15, 2019 year 08 | No. 08

The new Wall in the Mexican border.

by José Manuel Muñoz

JUNE NEWS on Mexican Aviation

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"DILIGITE JUSTITIAM QUI JUDICATIS TERRAM." "Ye who judge the earth, give diligent love to justice"

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In order to set up the context for the following piece, the US presidential election, in which the current president of the United States Donald J. Trump is looking to get re-elected, will be taking place next year, yet, the president's campaign has kicked off, and the U.S. administration has no problem using international trade as a political weapon in order to fulfill their political agenda.

"During the month of May alone, 146,000 people had reached the United States by crossing through Mexico's border. This was the deal breaker between the governments of both countries, and President Donald Trump announced a clear and overwhelming threat to the Mexican state."

As this happens in the US, in Mexico, we cut back to a president who outspokenly and firmly criticized the actions of the previous administration during his campaign, for trying to approach, at the time a republican candidate, and now president of the United States, even going as far as declaring that if he won the Mexican presidential election he would "respectfully put President Donald Trump in his place", and that he would "personally respond to every one of his tweets related to Mexico"¹.

Further, the president of Mexico, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, has promoted a migration policy based on immigrant protection² since his presidential campaign, and even proposed to create a program in order for members of migrant caravans that appeared during the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019 that would allow them to be able to work in Mexico³.

During the month of May alone, 146,000 people had reached the United States by crossing through Mexico's border. This was the deal breaker between the governments of both countries, and President Donald Trump announced a clear and overwhelming threat to the Mexican state.

If the United States and Mexico did not reach an agreement in which Mexico could guarantee more safety in the southern and northern borders, the United States government would add a 5% tariff to all Mexican products crossing the border into the US. The tariffs would then increase 5% each month if the Mexican government did not conduct the proper action that the United States government consider necessary to solve the illegal immigration problem until reaching a total rate of 25% to all Mexican products crossing the border.

According to Mexican chancellor Marcelo Ebrad Causaubón, this would represent the loss of 1.2 million Mexican jobs and one entire point of the Gross Domestic Product.

The possibility to fight this decision with new economic allies seems nearly impossible since the current president of Mexico, refused to go to the G20 meeting, making the country even more dependent on its relationship with the United States.

1- <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/politica/Le-voy-a-contestar-cada-tweet-a-Trump-AMLO-20180118-0106.html>

2- <https://www.milenio.com/opinion/enrique-acevedo/en-voz-alta/cual-es-la-politica-migratoria-de-amlo>

3- <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-45898633>

Nevertheless, last June 07, 2019, Mexico and United States finally reached an agreement in which Mexico temporarily avoided the imposition of the tariffs to Mexican products. In this agreement, it is stated the main objectives that Mexico must fulfill in 45 days are the following:

- Increasing migration law enforcement in the southern border.
- Six thousand members of the new “Guardia Nacional” will be deployed to the southern border in order to help apply law enforcement in the southern border.
- People requesting asylum in the United States should remain in Mexico’s side of the border until their asylum trial is conducted in the United States courts.
- New ground control will be established in Chihuahua state.

This means that the Mexican government must drastically change its migration policies in order to avoid any highly important economic consequence that could be generated from the tariffs that the United States president is threatening to impose. As mentioned before, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took the presidency and imposed a migration policy of free transit and no persecution of immigrants, but now that the United States president is threatening Mexico’s economy, it seems that the Mexican president’s fear of Donald Trump affecting the Mexican economy is greater than the idealistic ideas that it had during campaign.

It is important to highlight that if Mexico does not fulfill the conditions of the agreement in the next 45 days, the United States will look to establish Mexico as a “Third Secure Country, which would have several economic, political and legal consequences for Mexico.

According to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, the figure of a “Third Secure Country” is an exception to the 1951 convention regarding the Statues for the Refugees, in which, the person requesting asylum could be sent back to a third country in which he or she could wait for asylum⁴.

This “Third Secure Country” should fulfill all the obligations that the first country has with the refugees requesting asylum. This means that the “Third Secure Country” must provide the immigrants access to healthcare, education, housing, work, and must respect the no return principle.

In other words, Mexico must have agreement with the United States 45 days after the agreement, to decrease the illegal immigration flow that goes into the United States, to strengthen the containment of immigration at its southern and northern border, in order to not be forced into becoming a “Third Secure Country” to all the immigrants that the United States are no able to receive, or get the tariffs on the Mexican products that cross the border.

Were Mexico to adapt this figure of a “Third Secure Country” as a result of the pressure of the United States government, it would be necessary to apply multiple reforms to the current legislation in order to adapt the Mexican legal framework in matters like healthcare, labor and education.

It seems as if president Donald Trump has already built his wall, and Mexico is indeed paying for it, and he should be grateful to the Mexican government and the President of México, who chose to stick to the same populist speech that they had during the campaign instead of establishing efficient and concrete public policies and now seems to have lost control of the situation.

4.- <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/scip/3ae68ccec/background-note-safe-country-concept-refugee-status.html>

The risks of the “military wall” with which Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador’s government undertook to control migration and avoid US customs duties.

The Agreement in which Mexico compromises to control irregular migration flows, as a form to restrain the imposition of customs duties by the US, has unleashed controversy. Civil organizations warn that the deployment of 6,000 members of the National Guard to the Northern and Southern border of Mexico is not the finest solution, since for instance, they don't have capacity to contain that number of human flows and also, it is well known that the implication of the Military in the country's borders, has caused several violations to human rights. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-48570886> 09/06/2019.

The Role of Monetary Policy in the Current Economic Situation.

The priority objective of the Bank of Mexico is to ensure the stability of purchase power of currency by keeping inflation low and stable. The Monetary Policy, based on the autonomy of the Central Bank, impacts in inflation but cannot determine the evolution of real variables such as growth and employment. It implies a scheme that is characterized by the announcement of a goal for inflation, supported by an emphasis on transparency and adequate mechanisms of communication and accountability. In this context, a 3% target for general annual inflation rate has been set, with a variability interval of plus/minus 1 %. Monetary policy is carried throughout the establishment of a target for the overnight interbank interest rate, which in turn influences aggregate supply and demand and, consequently, on inflation. <http://www.banxico.org.mx/publicaciones-y-prensa/presentaciones/%7BD5CEF4F5-C308-D7A4-DDCB-FFBEA2C3F37C%7D.pdf> 11/06/2019.

T-MEC Report, Num. 1: US-MEXICO Trade Relationship.

The economies of Mexico and the United States are deeply intertwined. Not only do we trade between us, but more important we produce together for the world market. In 2018, Mexico was the US third largest trading partner, ranking second both import and export markets. During the first quarter of 2019, for the first time in history, Mexico became the 1st US trading partner with a total bilateral trade of US\$151 billion; Mexico share of US total trade is 15%. We are a strategic partner for the US and rank in the first position as an export destination for 31 states of the US. https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/469030/Reporte-TMEC_n01-eng_20190612_b.pdf 12/06/2019.

Mexico sends nearly 15,000 troops to the US border.

Mexico has deployed almost 15,000 troops to the US-Mexico border, according to the country's Secretary of Defense Luis Sandoval. "In the northern part of the country, we have deployed a total of almost 15,000 troops composed of National Guard elements and military units,". <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/24/americas/mexico-sends-15000-troops-to-us-mexico-border-intl/index.html> 24/06/2019.

National Human Rights Commission: The defense of Legality and Human Rights, the backbone of the Democratic System.

The national Ombudsman, Luis Raúl González Pérez, affirmed today before the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation that the existence or inexistence of violations to human rights cannot be negotiated or interpreted in the light of political or ideological interests, as well as the high responsibility and dignity inherent to the exercise of the jurisdictional function do not admit any conditioning or bias. He stressed that, in the face of current challenges, the straightness of the conducts and the proper performance of the public function are the best testimony of the way in which Mexico and its society are respond in a time of great legal insecurity. http://www.cndh.org.mx/sites/all/doc/Comunicados/2019/Com_2019_238.pdf 24/06/2019.

“Dos Bocas” refinery puts 119 species at risk.

More of 4 thousand animals of 119 species of mammals, reptiles and birds will be threatened with the construction of the Dos Bocas refinery in the State of Tabasco, according to the Environmental Impact Statement presented by Petróleos Mexicanos, the document details that with the preparation of the site for the construction of the refinery is expected the possible decrease of animal species and the alteration of the mobility patterns of the terrestrial fauna. <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/dos-bocas-pone-en-riesgo-119-especies> 27/06/2019.

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