10-2-1989

On U.S.-mexican Relations & President Salinas' Visit

John Neagle

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur

Recommended Citation


This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiSur by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.
On U.S.-Mexican Relations & President Salinas' Visit

by John Neagle

Published: Monday, October 2, 1989

Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari arrived in Washington Oct. 1 for his first official visit to the US since taking office in December last year. In addition to meetings with President George Bush and members of the cabinet, Salinas will meet privately with members of Congress and is scheduled to deliver an address to a joint meeting of Congress Oct. 3, followed by a speech at the National Press Club. Salinas' Washington schedule also includes meetings with scholars who specialize in Mexican affairs at so-called think tanks, leaders of the Mexican-American community, and news media executives and columnists. Salinas is scheduled to travel to New York City for meetings Wednesday night and Thursday morning with the US-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, the board of the Metropolitan Museum of Art which will mount an exhibit of Mexican art next year, business leaders who play influential roles in US decisions on foreign debt relief and increased trade, news media executives and United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar. Salinas will also receive an honorary doctorate degree from Brown University in Providence, R.I. before returning to Mexico City on Oct. 5. On the eve of the Mexican president's visit, several media agencies published items proclaiming that bilateral relations have never been better. A summary of selected highlights about the state of US-Mexican relations and the Mexican president's visit follow: Speaking at the annual meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund last week, President George Bush praised Salinas as a "courageous leader" who is "turning away from state control" of the economy and "opening the door to private initiative." In a Sept. 28 interview with several US reporters in Mexico City, Salinas argued that his economic program has not yet been answered by a corresponding opening of the US market to Mexican products. He said, "I think that reciprocity in commercial relations is fundamental. Isn't that what the United States is asking of Japan?" Salinas said priority topics in talks with US officials will be trade, investment and debt and other economic issues, as well as "greater cooperation among governments" in fighting drug trafficking, including increased information exchange on traffickers' movements. The president indicated he has no interest in the type of joint anti-narcotics field operations that the US has initiated with law enforcement agencies in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru. "The responsibility for combating drug trafficking in Mexico belongs exclusively to Mexicans," he said. Previous Mexican administrations have rejected Washington's requests that US troops be allowed to engage in "hot pursuit" of traffickers' planes and land vehicles as they cross the US border into Mexico. Salinas reiterated this position: "Along the border, Mexico will act on the Mexican side. On the American side, those whom the Americans want to act will do so." Salinas linked reduction of migration to the US to economic recovery. "I would prefer that Mexican workers stay and work here in Mexico. That is why the recovery of our economic growth and the generation of greater job opportunities here in our nation so interests me. Without a doubt, that can attenuate the migration of Mexicans to the United States." With the objective of stimulating the Mexican economy, Salinas said he would call for preferential treatment for Mexican exports, such as textiles, steel and agricultural products. On Sept. 28 in New York, Mexican Foreign Minister Fernando Solana told Notimex that relations between the countries are "particularly positive" at present. In an interview aired on Univision on Oct. 1, Salinas pointed to his government's "very energetic efforts" to combat drugs. He said Mexican narcotics agents had broken up over 150 drug gangs, arresting 8,000 persons and seizing
more than 22 tons of cocaine, equivalent to one-third of US consumption. Salinas emphasized that a successful campaign against drug trafficking requires international cooperation. He added, "One nation alone cannot cope with this problem." According to Copley News Service (10/01/89) and Notimex (09/28/89), the two presidents are expected to sign agreements affecting Mexico's trade deficit and foreign debt, border environmental problems, tourism, foreign investment in Mexico, and bilateral cooperation in efforts to stem drug trafficking. Most of the agreements were formulated during an August binational meeting at the ministerial level in Mexico City. In addition, the visit is designed to highlight the recent improvement in bilateral relations and the reported growing friendship between Bush and Salinas. Salinas and Bush are expected to announce an unprecedented agreement to establish presidential coordinating committees to oversee the growing number of bilateral working groups focused on specific issues. It would mark the first time the US has adopted such an approach to managing a bilateral relationship. One environmental project expected to be ratified by presidential agreement would see implementation of a joint sewage treatment facility serving Tijuana and San Diego. The US Environmental Protection Agency recently released $20 million for the first phase of its part of the project. Copley cited a statement by an unidentified Mexican government official made last week: "This is the highest point in US-Mexican relations in 14 years. President Salinas, who has no bias against the United States, wants to keep the momentum of constructive dialogue and action moving forward." An unidentified US official cited by Copley and Notimex, said: "We have gone from defining the relationship as one of many irritants to one of creating common opportunities." According to an Oct. 2 report by Notimex, Salinas and Bush will sign an agreement to continue negotiations on trade in goods and services that would expand on a 1987 accord. The new round of talks is to begin in November under the guidelines of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In 1988, US-Mexican trade totaled $44 billion. (Basic data from Notimex, 09/28/89, 10/02/89; DPA, Univision, Copley News Service, 10/01/89; New York Times, 10/02/89)

-- End --