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Mexican & U.S. Presidents Sign Trade & Investment, Environmental Clean-up Agreements

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On Oct. 3, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and President George Bush signed agreements on trade and the environment at the White House. The first was designed to expand bilateral trade and investments and defined a procedure for resolving disputes in those areas. Salinas said greater access to the US market for Mexican exports was necessary to help stimulate domestic economic growth and to create new jobs. Salinas said, "We can open a new stage in trade between our two countries. We can find a more dignified treatment for the emigration of Mexicans to the United States...We can strike mortal blows against drug trafficking to free the world from this international evil. We can respond to the urgent demand for a healthier environment. These are themes that will receive our sharpest attention." Salinas called for greater cooperation among governments to defeat the world's drug mafia. He added, "Mexico intends to eradicate drug trafficking at its very roots in the sphere that falls under its responsibility." Salinas asserted that his government's major interest in the accords on investment and trade is to see that "our compatriots have better incomes, above all, in Mexico." According to the New York Times, the trade and investment agreement was the broadest ever reached by the two countries. Under the agreement, Mexico and the US are to decide by November on specific industrial sectors that could benefit from lower tariffs. By July 1990, negotiators are to complete a first round of talks on related provisions. The agreement is an extension of a 1987 accord. The two governments also reached agreements on steel and textiles and made progress on talks concerning the protection of intellectual property rights in Mexico. No specifics of the pact were available, but it was expected that Mexico will be permitted to export more steel to the US than under past quotas. According to a joint communique, the textile pact provides for "continued expansion of trade in textiles, and apparel in an orderly and non-disruptive manner." The second agreement consists of bilateral cooperation in pollution problems in urban areas along the border, and in Mexico City, described by Salinas as both the world's most populous city, and experiencing the worst air pollution problems. Unidentified diplomatic sources told Notimex that Salinas requested a demonstration of greater respect by Washington for undocumented Mexican workers' human rights and rights to work by reducing protectionist barriers against Mexican imports. He emphasized that he wanted jobs for Mexican workers in Mexico, not in the US. On Oct. 4 during an address before a special joint session of the US Congress, President Salinas said that drug traffickers appeared to be winning the international war on the traffic. "When we see the magnitude of the fight against drugs, we must honestly ask ourselves: Are we winning or losing the war? I think that, at the world level, we are losing and that is unacceptable," he said. (Basic data from Notimex, AFP, 10/03/89, 10/04/89; New York Times, 10/04/89)

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