

Remarks on Arrival in La Paz, Mexico, for Meetings With President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado

August 14, 1983

President de la Madrid. Your Excellency, Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my great pleasure to welcome you and the distinguished members of your party to Mexican territory. I am sure that our meeting, although brief, will contribute to the further strengthening of the loyal, dignified, and fruitful friendship of our peoples.

This part of Mexico has been the scene of many facets of our history. It was here on the shores of Cortez' Vermillion Sea that dreams of discovering new worlds began to come true, and here today we find the scene of a new search and affirmation, a search for economic and social progress and the assertion of a convinced and unwavering determination to strengthen our territorial integrity, our will to sovereignty, our national identity, and our commitment to the ideals of freedom, development, and justice that define the historical force of the Mexican people.

Mr. President, you have arrived in a Mexico that trusts in the firmness of its destiny, a Mexico shaped by its own effort, a Mexico that has shown its ability to cast seed on fertile soil and to convert adversity into challenge and trust. Our people are proud of their heritage and of what is theirs today. We are committed to their values and to the development of our nation. However, we are not a self-absorbed people, nor are we engrossed in our immediate circumstances.

History and perception open Mexico to the world and thus the solidarity and constructive contact with other peoples and nations. We know that peace and progress are now, more than ever, shared ideals as well as interlinked realities and that their attainment by all can only come from shared and equal effort based on dignified and respectful relations.

The momentum of history cannot in itself remove the obstacles that states encounter in their course. It is men and peoples who through their will and their action determine the outlines of history, hence the unquestionable value of solidarity, sustained international cooperation, of negotiation and understanding as premises for a concord in these times of redefinition and crisis that are threatening plural and peaceful coexistence and the harmonious development of nations.

Today, as never before, whatever happens in any part of the planet affects the peoples of all countries. In the case of Mexico and the United States, our proximity gives rise to many and complex relations. Despite our different viewpoints and interests, the inescapable consequence of our diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, the border itself creates ample opportunities for cooperation and exchange that can benefit our two peoples.

The maturity of a political relationship which bears witness to our intention of achieving coexistence based on respect, dignity, and mutual benefit rises to oppose the many barriers and new problems brought about by the unique development of the two nations and those created by a frankly deteriorating world. The maturity is the reflection of long and consistent efforts and has not been attained without difficulty. At the same time it is the sound foundation of our desire to comprehend, to understand, and to cooperate. We trust that it will continue to permeate the actions of our governments and our societies for the good of equitable, respectful, and productive bilateral relations.

President Reagan, today as you enter Mexico you cross the threshold of Latin America. The border between the United States and Mexico is also the boundary between two different components of our continent and two different expressions of development and culture -- both a national and a regional boundary, its two faces simultaneously express uniqueness and reciprocal influence.

The worlds of North and South America, the industrialized and the developing worlds, are linked today by their complementary potential and their manifold contradictions. In Latin America, the need for social changes is confronted today with the dramatic impacts of a troubled world that limit its long, unsatisfied urge for development, freedom, democracy, and justice.

In the face of social underdevelopment now aggravated by a profound economic crisis and by shows of force which threaten to touch off a conflagration, we must urgently respond with a firm vocation for peace and solidarity by showing respect for the law and for the institutions of the parties involved and by furthering the development and full predominance of a balanced, realistic, and constructive political dialog.

Mr. President, allow me to express my most fervent hope that at the conclusion of our meeting we may look forward for the good of our two great peoples and of the region to an effective contribution toward the achievement of that peace and solidarity so deeply desired in our times.

May your stay in Mexico be a pleasant one, Mr. President.

President Reagan. Good morning. It's a pleasure to return to your proud and beautiful country.

This will be my first visit with President de la Madrid as President. At our initial meeting last October in San Diego and Tijuana, President de la Madrid observed that personal and friendly contact encourages a free and open exchange of ideas. That meeting was very constructive, and I look forward to today's discussion.

We are neighbors, and as such, we are concerned for one another. Our sessions today should open new avenues to put that concern to

good use. It's my hope that President de la Madrid and I will continue to meet periodically. Our countries share a host of common objectives and hopes. Open and friendly communication between us will benefit us both.

Last October President de la Madrid and I had the opportunity to get to know each other better and to strengthen the cooperation between our two countries. Today we will be able to build on our relationship and openly discuss our differences as well as our many areas of agreement. I'm sure that our meeting will further strengthen the mutual respect and understanding which is the cornerstone of relations between the United States and Mexico.

Note: The exchange of remarks began at 9:50 a.m. at the Palace of Government, where President Reagan was accorded a formal welcome. Following the ceremony, President Reagan participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Benito Juarez Monument.

President de la Madrid spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.