

Ambassador Wayne's Remarks for 4th of July Reception

It is a great honor for my wife, Pamela, and me to welcome you to this July 4 celebration.

It has been a year of change and progress since our last 4th of July celebration. We saw President Obama get re-elected and President Peña Nieto take office.

The U.S.-Mexico relationship remains, however, broad and dynamic, with new opportunities to strengthen our shared economic potential, our collective security, and our people-to-people ties.

When President Obama met with President Peña Nieto in Mexico on May 2, the two Presidents agreed to continue a close and productive economic relationship to enhance our shared competitiveness and to create new opportunities. The Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to act as partners on a collaborative approach to citizen security. They committed to build on the existing deep connection between our peoples which enriches the culture of both societies. And they reviewed our cooperation to address global and regional issues.

President Obama and President Peña Nieto's discussion highlighted the extraordinary benefits we realize from our relationship which are deeply relevant to our daily lives and to our future.

One in ten Americans – more than 30 million people – is of Mexican heritage. Some twenty million Americans traveled to Mexico last year. And Mexico is home to one of the largest expatriate communities of American citizens in the world – totaling over one million people. These ties bring us together as families, neighbors, and friends.

Driven by the closeness of our two nations, new presidential initiatives are underway.

A Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation and Research will promote expanded opportunity, and the development of a 21st century workforce in both countries. The High-Level Economic Dialogue will advance competitiveness and connectivity, foster economic growth and [rapidly expanding] innovation.

When President Obama spoke to Mexican youth two months ago today, he recognized the emergence of a new Mexico. He talked about a Mexico that is strengthening its democracy through greater participation by civil society, creating new prosperity and lifting millions from poverty, and courageously confronting challenges to its security.

He also outlined the potential of greater engagement across the spectrum of our shared interests. President Obama challenged each of us to “do more to unlock the potential of our relationship.”

I believe we are on the path to do that – renewing our commitment, expanding initiatives that have served us well, and forging ahead where we see new opportunities.

President Obama also spoke of his support for comprehensive immigration reform. The President's vision for reform respects our tradition as a nation of immigrants, but also a nation of laws.

A great strength of the United States is its diversity – not just diversity of races and ethnicities and national backgrounds, but of thought, culture, religion, geography, philosophy, politics, economics, and everything in between. . .

As President Obama put it: "Our Nation derives strength from the diversity of its population and from its commitment to equal opportunity for all. We are at our best when we draw on the talents of all parts of our society, and our greatest accomplishments are achieved when diverse perspectives are brought to bear to overcome our greatest challenges."

Ultimately, it is this widely shared belief in the value of our democracy that has made the United States a country that accommodates immigrants and refugees. This process continues today, as President Obama and our legislators seek comprehensive immigration reform.

The 4th of July brings together Americans to celebrate with picnics, parades, music, and fireworks. In organizing tonight's celebration, we sought to capture and share with you some of that joyous spirit.

Again, thank you all so much for joining us tonight.

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