

Mr. López Obrador goes to Washington

Mexican president kowtows to his “friend” Donald Trump

By Eric London
9 July 2020

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s appearance with Donald Trump yesterday will rank in history as among the most demeaning and sycophantic visits to Washington by any Latin American head of state.

López Obrador, known in Mexico as AMLO, won a landslide election in 2018 by pledging that he could unite Mexican workers, peasants and the “progressive” sections of the capitalist class to end austerity and stand up to decades of exploitation by American corporations. AMLO’s visit to Washington confirms that all such promises are fraudulent, as the interests of all sections of Mexico’s ruling class are entirely antagonistic to those of the country’s working masses.

During his visit, AMLO allowed his government to be used as a prop in Trump’s efforts to distract the American population from his administration’s disastrous handling of the coronavirus pandemic. The goal of the Mexican ruling class and its American handlers is to protect the profits of American and Mexican corporations, secure a swift and deadly return to work, and stymie the growing influence of China across Latin America.

Speaking at a joint press conference in the White House Rose Garden, AMLO said he wanted “to thank Trump personally for being more respectful to the Mexican people.” Looking appreciatively at his American counterpart, AMLO said, “You have never attempted to impose anything on us that would violate our sovereignty, you have not treated us like a colony, but on the contrary, you have honored us as an independent country.”

AMLO finished his paean to Trump by shouting “Viva Mexico! Viva Mexico! Viva Mexico!” at which point Trump added, “Great job, thank you.”

This exchange shows why the Mexican president’s visit is so unpopular in Mexico. AMLO’s poll numbers are sinking as Mexico climbs in the global rankings of

coronavirus deaths.

“You have treated us as we are, a country and a people that are dignified, free, democratic and sovereign,” AMLO said to the man who referred to Mexicans as “rapists” and “criminals,” deployed thousands of soldiers to the US-Mexico border and threatened to impose massive tariffs on imports from Mexico to extract concessions in trade negotiations. This is the man, moreover, whose immigration agencies are terrorizing immigrants—including millions from Mexico—on a daily basis throughout the US.

During his remarks in the Rose Garden, AMLO justified his relationship with his “friend” Trump by referencing Benito Juárez, Mexico’s president from 1858 to 1872, who led Mexico’s war against the Franco-Habsburg occupation of Mexico and who collaborated with US President Abraham Lincoln in opposing French involvement on the continent.

AMLO’s analogy is an insult to the legacy of both Juárez and Lincoln. While Juárez took up arms against the French, AMLO took a delegation of Mexican billionaires and millionaires by the arm to dine with the fascistic Trump. At a corporate dinner last night, Carlos Slim and various bankers represented Mexico. CNBC reported that the American attendees included “FedEx Chairman and CEO Fred Smith, UPS Executive Chairman David Abney, Intel CEO Bob Swan and Lockheed Martin CEO James Taiclet, according to a partial list obtained by CNBC.” The business cable channel added that executives from Sempra, Shell, Ford, Nucor and other corporations were also slated to attend.

The meeting between Trump and AMLO was of a purely ceremonial character, as the agreement they celebrated—the USMCA trade agreement between Canada, the US and Mexico—formally took effect on July

1. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau refused to attend the gathering on the grounds that Trump was seeking to use it for political gain. Congressional Democrats urged AMLO not to attend, citing similar reasons.

During the two leaders' meeting, Trump declared that the US and Mexico were "working closely together in the fight against the coronavirus, saving millions of lives."

Neither Trump nor AMLO wore protective masks at the Rose Garden ceremony and both governments have played a criminal role in downplaying the virus, with Trump calling it a "hoax" invented by Democrats and AMLO saying the virus could be prevented by holding the Bible. The US has suffered the most deaths—over 130,000—while Mexico's official tally of 30,000, likely a vast underestimation, is the fifth highest globally.

AMLO was called to Washington by corporate America to pledge that Mexican workers will be forced to keep supply chains running, no matter the death toll, making possible the full "reopening" of the United States. Doctors and health officials in northern Mexican cities, home to many *maquiladora* sweatshops that produce parts for export to the US, have warned that morgues are filling with the dead bodies of workers killed after contracting the virus on the job.

Beyond the pandemic, the USMCA's overall purpose is to integrate supply chains across North America at the expense of China. In a *Wall Street Journal* article published July 6, former Trump National Security Adviser H. R. McMaster praised AMLO and Trump, noting that "the reduction of trade barriers among the USMCA's parties will strengthen US, Mexican and Canadian supply chains, returning manufacturing jobs to North America from China."

McMaster added, "When President Trump hosts Mr. López Obrador at the White House this week, the two leaders should discuss implementing the USMCA in a way that will accelerate the economic recovery and alter critical supply chains, protecting trade from the whims of an increasingly aggressive Chinese Communist Party."

AMLO referenced these geostrategic interests when he stated that the purpose of the USMCA was to seek "a better integration of our economies and a better functioning of the productive channels, to recuperate the economic presence that North America has lost in the last five decades."

Aside from the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and *World Socialist Web Site*, every nominally left political tendency on earth encouraged

illusions in AMLO, presenting his government as one that would cede to pressure from the left. This includes the Morenito publications *Left Voice* and *Izquierda Diario*.

More than any other tendency, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) prostrates itself before AMLO as AMLO prostrates himself before Trump.

Just four days ago, the DSA-linked publication *Jacobin* published an article titled "Time for Mexico to Tax the Rich." The commentary, by Kurt Hackbarth, proclaimed that AMLO had set an example of "enlightened governors who live within their means and lead by example." It continued, "In a country oppressed for centuries by top-heavy, centralized administrations, from the viceroys of New Spain to the 'Pharaonic' presidencies of recent times, [AMLO's] message is a potent one."

AMLO's presidency, *Jacobin* claims, is based on a "liberation-theology-inspired concept of the preferential option for the poor." AMLO "speaks with a simple and clear moral urgency, one that goes over the head of the fickle middle class to speak directly to the half of the nation living in poverty. Where the Left in other countries has ceded the concept of morality to the hypocrisy and fundamentalist pandering of the Right, AMLO has made it his own." *Jacobin* is an organ of the Democratic Party. It praises AMLO not despite his kowtowing to US imperialism, but because of it.

The task of workers in the US and Mexico is to forge an alliance with one another and with their class allies across North, Central and South America in a common fight against US imperialism and its allies in all the capitalist governments, and for the establishment of the United Socialist States of the Americas.

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