

The Foreign Ministry's Position on the U.S. Senate Hearings on Mexico Internal Affairs

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Shortly after Jesse Helms, ultra-right Senator from North Carolina, began his hearings on Mexico's internal affairs, this country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented a strongly-worded protest to Washington. Because of its importance, VOICES OF MEXICO reproduces the full text:

The Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate, under the auspices of Senator Jesse Helms, held two hearings on the 12th and 13th of this month, in which a minority of the members of the sub-committee and a number of Executive branch officials made denigrating statements regarding Mexico and its government. But it is not only that; rather, in spite of the fact that at least the first of the hearings was supposed to be secret, some of the opinions therein expressed were reported in the media. This must be considered as a deliberate measure on the part of said legislators and officials to strengthen the process of disinformation regarding Mexican reality.

In this regard, I have received instructions from my government to present your Excellency with a formal and energetic protest for those events which represent an unfriendly attitude toward my country and which contrast with the spirit of cooperation demonstrated by the Mexican government in the effort to resolve the problems that mark our bilateral relations.

To cite only one example, recently the Attorney Generals of Mexico and the United States met in Cancún, Quintana Roo. They were able to reach important agreements in regards to illegal narcotics traffic, as well as crime prevention, in general. The opinions expressed by that minority group of Senators and government officials from the Executive branch of the United States, to which I make reference, are diametrically opposed to the concepts expressed by Attorney General Meese in said meeting in Cancún. Those declarations are clearly in conflict with the Mexican government's intention of creating a more conducive atmosphere for the implementation of the coordinated actions agreed upon by our two governments.

For the Mexican government, the struggle against the production of and traffic in drugs, and against the delinquents who promote those activities, is a permanent one. This struggle has been intensified significantly in recent years in the hopes of preventing and eliminating actions which harm people's health, even though drug consumption in Mexico is not a society-wide problem, of major proportion, as it is in other countries. Nonetheless, it is quite clear to Mexico that so long as measures are not implemented to prevent and combat the consumption of drugs in those centers that constitute the principal market, the problem will not be resolved in third countries, such as Mexico. The United States must resolve with determination the rapidly growing problem of drug production within its own territory, and it must attack the distribution and consumption of drugs, which is constantly on the rise.

United States authorities have widely recognized the effective results of the Mexican government's efforts in the fight against narcotics trafficking. President Ronald Reagan, in his speech in Mexicali on January 3, 1986, spared no opportunity to acknowledge and express appreciation for Mexico's campaign against drugs.

In addition, the interventionist-style comments made in the hearings to which I refer, aside from falsifying the facts and distorting the reality of my country, constitute a clear and inadmissible violation of Mexican sovereignty.

The Mexican government cannot accept the fact that U.S. officials make declarations regarding internal political matters which pertain only to Mexicans and about which no other government may grant itself the right to express value judgements.

The Mexican government rejects the slanderous statements and accusations leveled against Mexico during the above mentioned hearings. The level of defamation and the political irresponsibility implied by some of the opinions therein expressed are surprising.

Throughout its independent history, Mexico

has maintained its firm and invariable commitment to the principles and norms of international relations. Its respect for the right of other peoples to freely determine their destinies has been unbending. For this reason, Mexico, justly and with moral authority, demands respect from others for its sovereignty.

The Mexican government has actively encouraged frank, respectful and constructive communication with the North American government, as a means for resolving the problems that affect both countries in their relations as neighbors and friends. In order for efforts at bilateral cooperation in a variety of areas to be effective, they must be carried out in a climate of trust and mutual respect.

Hearings like the ones held by the U.S. Senate Sub-Committee on Western Hemisphere Affairs tend to damage that climate of harmony and understanding which we seek. Such events encourage tendencies to implement unilateral measures in response

to problems and promote suspicion, distrust and enmity in sectors of our population. Likewise, my government expresses its displeasure over the lack of correspondence between statements by President Ronald Reagan and his principal advisors acknowledging Mexico's efforts to advance in our bilateral relations, and the unfortunate statements denigrating Mexico made by a minority group of Senators and low-level officials in those hearings.

The Mexican government reiterates its firm willingness to continue forward with efforts that might facilitate constructive political communication between both governments and equitable cooperation, within a framework of genuine respect, in order to resolve problems of mutual interest and to broaden the interchanges between the two peoples.★

Tlatelolco, D.F.
May 14, 1986

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