

From Lopez Portillo's Sept. 18 interview

The following is a translation of an interview with Mexican President Lopez Portillo on the Sept. 18 NBC-TV Today Show, as printed in the Mexican press:

Q: How would you want the U.S. to think of Mexico?

A: As a permanent neighbor whom they will have to deal with as long as this earth revolves around the sun and rotates on its own axis. We must look at things in long term perspective. As well as having deep historical roots, the relationship between us will have great importance in the future, very frequently the U.S. adopts purely conjunctural solutions, molded by the pressure of immediate circumstances, often circumstances of U.S. internal politics, which

necessarily deform and compartmentalize the (U.S.) vision. We would like the proposals and solutions to be more structural, on a more national scale, more closely tied to universal problems and not bound to sometimes very small, and very local, political factors, which impede the "grand design" ("el gran planteo"). That is what I would like, but perhaps it is asking a lot.

Q: Mr. President, many American officials believe that your government is not doing all that it can on the problem of illegal immigration of Mexicans of the U.S. because this in fact helps to solve some problems that you have. Does this opinion bother you: to alleviate your burden by creating one for your northern neighbor?

A: Of course. We have continuously said when this point is raised that we want to organize ourselves such that we export goods and not labor power. The fundamental problem is that we have not had the capacity to create sufficient employment opportunities in the interior of the Republic and to keep with us those who dare to leave, who incidentally are some of our best men. This is the fundamental problem. We are doing all we can in a country that has a system of guarantees and individual rights, among them, the right to travel freely and settle freely...And this we have made clear to the Carter Administration, expressing clearly and precisely that the problem is not one of simple migration, but is linked to economic, financial and commercial problems and that for this reason we can not solve it with mere measures on migration, but with financial and commercial measures. We have established systems of communication to guarantee that the problem is well-defined and is possible to solve.

Q: You say that Mexico's petroleum reserves may be as great as those of Saudi Arabia, or even greater. How should this money be used? To create jobs or for private enterprise, so that private enterprise can create more jobs?

A: In our recent second State of the Union address, we outlined a very detailed program of what we think should be done with our petroleum surplus, with our reserves, which seem to be sufficiently ample. Geological tests show that there are possibly around 200 billion barrels of oil in our subsoil. We have probable reserves of 37 billion and proven reserves of 20 billion barrels. This makes us certain that we will enter the 21st century with dependable reserves.... We must strengthen the State and its development financing capacity. We must use surplus oil revenues to generate employment and for this purpose we have a system of plans.

Ibarra on the IMF and development

This report on the Mexican Finance Minister's criticism of the World Bank and IMF was published in the Mexico City daily Novedades on Sept. 19.

Finance Minister David Ibarra Munoz was elected today as the president of the 15th meeting of IMF and World Bank governors from Latin America, the Philippines and Spain. Ibarra declared...in the name of the Spanish-speaking world: "We accept, he said, supervision as a logical condition of the new foreign exchange system, but we do not accept straight-jacket conditions which are applied exclusively or preferably to the developing countries." The chief of national finances refers here to the chapter of the monetary reform which facilitates IMF supervision of member's monetary policies.

The Mexican proposal is that it is urgent that Latin America takes a united position because "it is a part of the international decision-making system." The Mexican proposal calls for the World Bank to profoundly change its operative and financial policies in order to be changed into a real international development bank. Even the World Bank's name should be changed. Another proposal is that the International Monetary Fund be converted into an organism for long-term financing of developing countries. Another proposal is the one Mexico has insisted on since the Vancouver conference: the transferral of real resources from the industrial countries to the developing economies...