

WEBVTT

00:00:02.600 --> 00:00:08.860

<v SPEAKER\_1>Hello again, and welcome to Global Exchange, part of The Canadian Global Affairs Institute's Podcast Network.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>I'm your host Colin Robertson.

00:00:10.900 --> 00:00:22.560

<v SPEAKER\_1>On this episode, recorded on September 22, we speak with Graeme Clark and Carlo Dade about Canada-Mexico relations following Prime Minister Carney's visit last week to Mexico.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>A career Foreign Service Officer, Graeme Clark served five years as Canadian Ambassador to Mexico, earlier assignments as Ambassador to Peru and Bolivia, and earlier, the Organization of American States, amongst his other postings.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>CGAI fellow Carlo Dade is Director of International Policy at the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>He is the lead on the new North American Initiative based at the School of Public Policy.

00:00:51.900 --> 00:01:04.560

<v SPEAKER\_1>Researchers will be tasked with developing a vision of what the continental relationships, that does include Mexico, could become at a time of increasing trade uncertainty and geopolitical turmoil.

00:01:04.560 --> 00:01:06.120

<v SPEAKER\_1>Four listeners.

00:01:06.120 --> 00:01:25.880

<v SPEAKER\_1>During his official visit to Mexico last week, the first such bilateral visit in many years, despite the fact that Mexico is our third largest bilateral trading partner after the United States and China, Prime Minister Carney in Mexico, Mexican President Claudia Scheinbaum, agreed to a new comprehensive strategic partnership.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>It will quote, drive progress in strategic areas, particularly in shared prosperity, security, inclusion and sustainability, advanced by frequent meetings at the leader and ministerial levels.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Priorities include the development of long-term infrastructure, including ports, rail and energy corridors, creating a new bilateral security dialogue to disrupt transcontinental organized crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime, building more opportunities for trade and investment, from energy and infrastructure to critical minerals and agriculture, reinforcing climate and conservation cooperation to protect wildlife and freshwater systems.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Prime Minister Carney also announced \$9.9 million in funding for the United Nations led projects to support migrant integration initiatives in Mexico and combat the illicit production and trafficking of fentanyl.

00:02:31.900 --> 00:02:41.920

<v SPEAKER\_1>Carney, who was accompanied by a senior business delegation, also announced that Minister Dominic LeBlanc will soon lead a major trade mission to Mexico.

00:02:42.780 --> 00:02:44.320

<v SPEAKER\_1>So, let's get started.

00:02:44.320 --> 00:02:49.580

<v SPEAKER\_1>And, Graeme, I'm going to let you lead on this because you spent recently five years in Mexico.

00:02:49.580 --> 00:02:51.760

<v SPEAKER\_1>What's your take on the visit?

00:02:51.760 --> 00:02:53.220

<v SPEAKER\_2>Well, I'm glad that it took place.

00:02:53.220 --> 00:02:58.360

<v SPEAKER\_2>I mean, that's the first very obvious insight, right?

00:02:58.360 --> 00:03:20.720

<v SPEAKER\_2>This is something that should have happened a while back, and so it's great to see a clear signal from the Canadian government, a clear expression of interest in a rapprochement with the Mexicans, which, of course, was preceded by a visit by Ministers Annan and Champagne about a month ago.

00:03:20.720 --> 00:03:33.180

<v SPEAKER\_2>So the fact that the visit took place, that it seemed to have gone well, that the exchanges were cordial, and that there is a forward looking agenda, that's all good.

00:03:33.180 --> 00:03:41.980

<v SPEAKER\_2>And it's particularly good given that last year was a rather difficult year in bilateral relations for any number of reasons.

00:03:41.980 --> 00:04:03.400

<v SPEAKER\_2>We reimposed a visa, we criticized their decision to go ahead with the election of judges, we failed to send somebody of sufficient political clout to Claudia Scheinbaum's inauguration, and of course at the end of the year we had Doug Ford's comments about Mexico, throwing Mexico under the bus and trying to cut a bilateral deal with the US.

00:04:03.400 --> 00:04:05.420

<v SPEAKER\_2>None of that went down very well.

00:04:05.940 --> 00:04:12.100

<v SPEAKER\_2>So we only have to go, the only way we have to go is up, I think in terms of the bilateral relationship.

00:04:12.100 --> 00:04:15.620

<v SPEAKER\_2>I will add that the word strategic always scares me.

00:04:15.620 --> 00:04:24.540

<v SPEAKER\_2>Anybody who's been a public servant or a diplomat, when we see that word strategic, we wonder what exactly that means.

00:04:24.540 --> 00:04:32.320

<v SPEAKER\_2>And if it means more frequent meetings at all levels from the leaders on down, I guess that's a good thing.

00:04:32.320 --> 00:04:33.860

<v SPEAKER\_2>But what does it mean beyond that?

00:04:35.060 --> 00:04:38.780

<v SPEAKER\_1>Oh, and although they did spell out certain areas, but we'll get into that.

00:04:38.780 --> 00:04:39.840

<v SPEAKER\_2>They did.

00:04:39.840 --> 00:04:40.120

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yeah.

00:04:40.120 --> 00:04:46.040

<v SPEAKER\_1>Carlo, your take, because you've been watching the Canada-Mexico relationship for many years as well.

00:04:46.040 --> 00:04:48.860

<v SPEAKER\_1>And as Graeme said, it's been rocky the last few years.

00:04:48.860 --> 00:04:53.980

<v SPEAKER\_1>I think the relationship between AML0 and Justin Trudeau, for whatever reason, was not particularly strong.

00:04:53.980 --> 00:04:58.740

<v SPEAKER\_1>And as Graeme pointed out, there were other challenges involved.

00:04:59.860 --> 00:05:04.220

<v SPEAKER\_1>We sided with the US in criticism of the Mexican judicial reforms.

00:05:04.220 --> 00:05:13.660

<v SPEAKER\_1>And as you point out, we didn't send somebody I thought appropriate, given that it is our other NAFTA partner, our COSMA partner.

00:05:13.660 --> 00:05:20.800

<v SPEAKER\_2>I mean, the government was otherwise engaged, Colin, but you know, government should be able to chew gum and walk at the same time.

00:05:20.800 --> 00:05:26.120

<v SPEAKER\_2>You know, you can deal with caucus revolt and also send somebody of importance to an inauguration.

00:05:26.220 --> 00:05:29.180

<v SPEAKER\_2>It's just a matter of political will.

00:05:29.180 --> 00:05:29.880

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yeah.

00:05:29.880 --> 00:05:30.660

<v SPEAKER\_1>I think that's right.

00:05:30.660 --> 00:05:32.020

<v SPEAKER\_1>Carlo?

00:05:32.020 --> 00:05:32.540

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yeah.

00:05:32.540 --> 00:05:38.000

<v SPEAKER\_3>So of course, follow most of what Graham has said.

00:05:38.000 --> 00:05:44.400

<v SPEAKER\_3>His litany of the irritants in the relationship, he had a couple of things that I missed in there.

00:05:44.400 --> 00:05:47.860

<v SPEAKER\_3>So thank you for the thoroughness.

00:05:47.860 --> 00:05:54.340

<v SPEAKER\_3>You know, there were three or four takes, but let me boil down to two big ones in this.

00:05:55.600 --> 00:06:04.240

<v SPEAKER\_3>But first of all, you know, Graham's comment about the visits that preceded, the Champagne visit before to set this up.

00:06:04.240 --> 00:06:12.260

<v SPEAKER\_3>There was another visit that came down before the Prime Minister's visit, and that was the Premier of Alberta.

00:06:12.260 --> 00:06:20.640

<v SPEAKER\_3>And I'm not saying that for your Western boosterism, but rather there were two premiers that threw Mexico under the bus.

00:06:21.380 --> 00:06:26.400

<v SPEAKER\_3>Doug Ford had Mexico by the collar, and Danielle Smith had Mexico by the feet.

00:06:26.400 --> 00:06:29.020

<v SPEAKER\_3>And it was the two of them that were doing it.

00:06:29.020 --> 00:07:00.460

<v SPEAKER\_3>So I think the reversal from Danielle Smith, or not the reversal, as much as the new appreciation of the relationship, she's not as versed in the relationship as obviously the feds, but for her evolution to realize itself in the trip to Mexico, her trip was just as good as the Prime Minister's, not as much in the limelight, but I think it sent a signal to Mexico that, hey, this isn't just an Ottawa thing.

00:07:00.460 --> 00:07:08.440

<v SPEAKER\_3>We no longer have a Canadian provincial problem, we now have a Canadian province problem.

00:07:08.440 --> 00:07:10.360

<v SPEAKER\_3>So I think that would help to shift.

00:07:10.360 --> 00:07:22.580

<v SPEAKER\_3>And talking to my colleagues in the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations, I did get a couple of notes that, yeah, it was good to see Danielle Smith come to tell us that it's not just the Ottawa bubble.

00:07:22.580 --> 00:07:26.160

<v SPEAKER\_3>Folks outside of the bubble also appreciate the relationship.

00:07:26.160 --> 00:07:34.700

<v SPEAKER\_3>But, you know, it's funny, the word strategic, this is what really got me about the announcement from the trip.

00:07:34.700 --> 00:07:42.460

<v SPEAKER\_3>There were only two comprehensive strategic partnerships, comprehensive strategic partnership.

00:07:42.460 --> 00:07:46.180

<v SPEAKER\_3>There are only two in the hemisphere that don't involve China.

00:07:46.200 --> 00:07:51.360

<v SPEAKER\_3>One is to Canada, Korea, and the other one is the New Canada, Mexico.

00:07:51.360 --> 00:07:54.020

<v SPEAKER\_3>So that language struck me.

00:07:54.020 --> 00:07:57.720

<v SPEAKER\_3>I don't think anyone in this government thought through that.

00:07:57.720 --> 00:08:07.040

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's sort of like the issue we had with the Royal Canadian Air Force's acronym in French, BARC, you know, Graham's laughing.

00:08:07.040 --> 00:08:20.880

<v SPEAKER\_3>But I don't think anyone thought about that, so someone tapped the government on the shoulder and said, by the way, with your rapprochement with the Americas, your America strategy, you may want to rethink the acronym for the Canadian Air Force.

00:08:20.880 --> 00:08:33.600

<v SPEAKER\_3>But I don't know if the CSP was an accident on purpose, but in the Asian hierarchy of relationships, a comprehensive strategic partnership is important.

00:08:34.080 --> 00:08:35.960

<v SPEAKER\_3>It signals a real shift.

00:08:35.960 --> 00:08:53.320

<v SPEAKER\_3>And to close, if you look at the difference between the Korea-Canada Comprehensive and Strategic Partnership, and the Canada-Mexico Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the Korean partnership has lagged since it was lost.

00:08:53.320 --> 00:09:01.000

<v SPEAKER\_3>I mean, we just had an event with the Koreans here in

Calgary, and no one from the government was talking about it on either side.

00:09:01.000 --> 00:09:02.540

<v SPEAKER\_3>There was no awareness of it.

00:09:03.020 --> 00:09:05.640

<v SPEAKER\_3>There was no constituency for it.

00:09:05.640 --> 00:09:08.020

<v SPEAKER\_3>There was no previous work for it.

00:09:08.020 --> 00:09:11.040

<v SPEAKER\_3>There was no base or movement behind it.

00:09:11.040 --> 00:09:19.820

<v SPEAKER\_3>But you look at the Canada-Mexico Strategic Partnership, and there's a friggin 21-year trajectory of work.

00:09:19.820 --> 00:09:26.020

<v SPEAKER\_3>The Canada-Mexico Partnership Group, the CMP Group.

00:09:26.020 --> 00:09:26.980

<v SPEAKER\_3>Graham's been there.

00:09:26.980 --> 00:09:28.120

<v SPEAKER\_3>Colin, you've been there.

00:09:28.120 --> 00:09:29.200

<v SPEAKER\_3>I've been there.

00:09:29.240 --> 00:09:30.580

<v SPEAKER\_3>Meet every year.

00:09:30.580 --> 00:09:32.380

<v SPEAKER\_3>Wide range of stakeholders.

00:09:32.380 --> 00:09:46.800

<v SPEAKER\_3>So what you saw with The Visit was a movement that finally had some ambition, as opposed to the Korea-Canada Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which is ambition without anything behind it.

00:09:46.800 --> 00:10:05.780

<v SPEAKER\_3>So I think the Mexico announcement is interesting, in that you may put a capstone, a top-of-government focus on a latent movement that's already existed, connections that are already there, and infrastructure of people, institutions, resources that are in place to realize it.

00:10:05.780 --> 00:10:14.620

<v SPEAKER\_3>So if the government plays this right, if they activate the Canada-Mexico relationship that's been dormant, they may actually have a win here.

00:10:14.620 --> 00:10:15.560

<v SPEAKER\_1>Graeme, what do you think?

00:10:15.560 --> 00:10:18.040

<v SPEAKER\_1>I mean, you were there for five years.

00:10:18.040 --> 00:10:23.380

<v SPEAKER\_1>It was not, my observation, a time of particular close cooperation.

00:10:23.380 --> 00:10:25.740

<v SPEAKER\_1>Part of it, I think, as I mentioned earlier, was personalities.

00:10:26.440 --> 00:10:27.940

<v SPEAKER\_2>Absolutely, you're absolutely right.

00:10:27.940 --> 00:10:29.520

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yeah.

00:10:29.520 --> 00:10:30.220

<v SPEAKER\_1>Do you think that...

00:10:30.220 --> 00:10:35.720

<v SPEAKER\_2>It was personalities and, you know, there's also, let's be very, you know, Carlo mentions the Ottawa Bubble.

00:10:35.720 --> 00:10:40.240

<v SPEAKER\_2>Within the Ottawa Bubble, you know, there's an animus against a Mexico.

00:10:40.240 --> 00:10:46.620

<v SPEAKER\_2>The Canadian Foreign Policy establishment doesn't take Mexico seriously as a file or as a partner.

00:10:46.620 --> 00:10:56.140

<v SPEAKER\_2>And I'd say that the relationship during my time as ambassador was characterized by sort of benign mutual indifference.

00:10:56.140 --> 00:11:05.380

<v SPEAKER\_2>There were certain areas in which there was a, you know, an understanding on certain foreign policy issues.

00:11:05.380 --> 00:11:12.840

<v SPEAKER\_2>But there was also much that left be desired in terms of,

you know, a warm, friendly dynamic.

00:11:12.840 --> 00:11:17.280

<v SPEAKER\_2>We used to talk about friends, allies and partners in North America.

00:11:17.280 --> 00:11:19.660

<v SPEAKER\_2>But I think that that was window dressing.

00:11:19.720 --> 00:11:35.960

<v SPEAKER\_2>And the reality or the relationship is that beyond the trade and investment issues, and we can talk about that, there wasn't a great deal of, you know, strategic momentum, if you want to call it that, in the relationship.

00:11:35.960 --> 00:11:38.700

<v SPEAKER\_2>Certainly when I was there, maybe that's my doing.

00:11:38.740 --> 00:11:41.920

<v SPEAKER\_1>All right, well, look, I just want to follow up on my own doing.

00:11:41.920 --> 00:11:55.760

<v SPEAKER\_1>No, no, I think it was, it struck me difficult for our ambassadors consecutively over time, that we seem to, that there's often a frenzy of sort of interest, and then all of a sudden it dies.

00:11:55.760 --> 00:12:19.060

<v SPEAKER\_1>I saw this in the North American Forum, which depended, basically we came to see what the Americans were coming to see, and then we would chat to each other and we'd sort of complain, but it's difficult, especially with the Americans not taking it very seriously, much preferring to, as we refer to it, dueling bilaterals, talk to one and the other and not necessarily bring the three of us together.

00:12:19.060 --> 00:12:22.820

<v SPEAKER\_1>But I guess the question I put to you then would, what do we have to do?

00:12:22.820 --> 00:12:30.160

<v SPEAKER\_1>And you mentioned trade and investment, and obviously that's got to be top priority for both the Scheinbaum and Carney governments.

00:12:30.160 --> 00:12:34.660

<v SPEAKER\_1>What do we have to do to make this more than, to use Mr.

00:12:34.660 --> 00:12:45.220

<v SPEAKER\_1>Trump's term, just simply transactions on certain areas like energy, mining, banking, tourism?

00:12:45.460 --> 00:12:54.820

<v SPEAKER\_1>Can we actually, you know, Carlo says this comprehensive partnership, these words maybe mean something.

00:12:54.820 --> 00:13:02.660

<v SPEAKER\_1>And I looked at it and like I think you observed, I always get a bit frightened when I see strategic because what does that really mean?

00:13:03.520 --> 00:13:04.620

<v SPEAKER\_2>What does it really mean?

00:13:04.620 --> 00:13:14.600

<v SPEAKER\_2>You know, I think the fundamental question is what can we do at that we can't do at what are the things that we can do, Canada and Mexico, that we can't do the three of us, you know?

00:13:14.600 --> 00:13:18.160

<v SPEAKER\_2>And I don't think that's necessarily an easy question to answer.

00:13:18.160 --> 00:13:21.840

<v SPEAKER\_2>Let's look at some of the items that you put on the table, for instance, security, right?

00:13:21.840 --> 00:13:25.360

<v SPEAKER\_2>Yes, we can have a bilateral security dialogue with Mexico.

00:13:25.360 --> 00:13:40.500

<v SPEAKER\_2>And one of the strange results of a sort of more Canadian tourism to Mexico is that there are more Canadian bad guys landing in Cancun and getting in trouble with their Mexican partners.

00:13:40.500 --> 00:13:42.340

<v SPEAKER\_2>But that's anecdotal.

00:13:42.340 --> 00:13:45.580

<v SPEAKER\_2>But there may certainly be things that we can do bilaterally.

00:13:45.580 --> 00:13:58.440

<v SPEAKER\_2>But, you know, in my time in Mexico, the real discussions, for instance, on fentanyl or on cyber took place between the three countries in a trilateral venue, not on a bilateral venue.

00:13:58.560 --> 00:14:02.460

<v SPEAKER\_2>So we'll have to see what is feasible on that front.

00:14:02.460 --> 00:14:07.160

<v SPEAKER\_2>On the infrastructure, I mean, I find the language and infrastructure interesting.

00:14:07.160 --> 00:14:14.240

<v SPEAKER\_2>We already have a trilateral rail link run by Canadian Pacific, Kansas City Southern, right?

00:14:14.240 --> 00:14:15.480

<v SPEAKER\_2>The CP bought...

00:14:15.480 --> 00:14:20.100

<v SPEAKER\_1>Sure, and the Prime Minister actually made a point of going to visit the terminal in Mexico.

00:14:20.100 --> 00:14:26.180

<v SPEAKER\_2>That's of course a model and an inspiration for others to follow suit.

00:14:27.260 --> 00:14:44.120

<v SPEAKER\_2>The language on mining and in the extractives, obviously I see that as a signal that Mexicans put a little water in your wine and allow us to mine with gay abandon in Mexico, which is something we haven't been able to do over the past 20 or 30 years.

00:14:44.120 --> 00:14:47.320

<v SPEAKER\_2>And of course, that goes for the rest of the Americas as well.

00:14:47.320 --> 00:14:53.500

<v SPEAKER\_2>So, yeah, there are certain files on which I think we'll be able to do things bilaterally.

00:14:54.660 --> 00:14:58.620

<v SPEAKER\_2>But I'm not convinced that that adds up to a strategic partnership.

00:15:03.220 --> 00:15:06.580

<v SPEAKER\_4>Hi, I'm Dave Perry, the President and CEO of The Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

00:15:06.580 --> 00:15:11.200

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00:15:28.640 --> 00:15:30.640

<v SPEAKER\_1>You mentioned Premier Smith down there.

00:15:30.640 --> 00:15:32.000

<v SPEAKER\_1>Obviously, energy is really big.

00:15:32.000 --> 00:15:36.640

<v SPEAKER\_1>TransCanada, TransAlta have been involved down there.

00:15:38.020 --> 00:15:42.180

<v SPEAKER\_1>How do you see the energy file being advanced?

00:15:42.180 --> 00:15:48.760

<v SPEAKER\_1>Because there is and has been shared interest over some time in that particular file.

00:15:49.480 --> 00:15:51.500

<v SPEAKER\_3>The energy file has been difficult.

00:15:51.500 --> 00:16:00.400

<v SPEAKER\_3>I remember the boom 10 years ago when I first came to Calgary, or 13 years ago when I first came to Calgary.

00:16:00.400 --> 00:16:07.280

<v SPEAKER\_3>The University of Calgary had a huge multimillion dollar agreement with the Mexican government to work on training.

00:16:07.280 --> 00:16:13.300

<v SPEAKER\_3>I think the opportunities rise and fall with Mexican politics to some degree.

00:16:13.300 --> 00:16:18.220

<v SPEAKER\_3>The ease of our access, the current reforms are troubling to people out here.

00:16:18.720 --> 00:16:28.440

<v SPEAKER\_3>But the energy file, electricity, natural gas, Mexico building terminals, it's complicated.

00:16:28.440 --> 00:16:34.220

<v SPEAKER\_3>But I'd like to get back to the point about the comprehensive strategic partnership again.

00:16:34.220 --> 00:16:37.980

<v SPEAKER\_3>Sorry, dog with a bone, not going to let this one go.

00:16:37.980 --> 00:16:40.480

<v SPEAKER\_2>You're the real diplomat, Carlo.

00:16:40.520 --> 00:16:44.640

<v SPEAKER\_2>Yeah, but please, Carlo, do because it's about strategic partnership.

00:16:46.720 --> 00:16:54.880

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's easy for the outsider to butt his nose and come up with some brilliant forms of wisdom for eye rolls around the table.

00:16:54.880 --> 00:17:03.480

<v SPEAKER\_3>But in all seriousness, the Asian concept, I really wonder if we didn't pick up some of the thinking from our Indo-Pacific strategy with this.

00:17:03.520 --> 00:17:09.940

<v SPEAKER\_3>The comprehensive and strategic partnership is not just driven by government.

00:17:09.940 --> 00:17:16.640

<v SPEAKER\_3>And I think this is a potential major overlook in the relationship.

00:17:16.640 --> 00:17:29.160

<v SPEAKER\_3>My point earlier about the ties that we have with Mexican civil society, with academia, with think tanks, with groups like COMEXI are there and they're strong.

00:17:29.620 --> 00:17:35.620

<v SPEAKER\_3>Graeme's point about benign neglect is also true at the same time.

00:17:35.620 --> 00:17:44.700

<v SPEAKER\_3>You can have strong relations and not really emphasize them or intensively work with them.

00:17:44.700 --> 00:17:55.740

<v SPEAKER\_3>But I think there is a comprehensive agenda in culture, in education, in the full range of things we can potentially share with Mexico, that's there.

00:17:55.740 --> 00:17:56.860

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's not with government.

00:17:57.360 --> 00:18:01.060

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's with, again, the work of the CMP on agriculture.

00:18:01.060 --> 00:18:11.120

<v SPEAKER\_3>We're meeting every year and we're working together on issues that the agricultural sector, not government necessarily defines.

00:18:11.120 --> 00:18:14.180

<v SPEAKER\_3>I think that this is fairly unique for Canada.

00:18:14.180 --> 00:18:41.800

<v SPEAKER\_3>Again, looking at the Korea example, we're attempting to adopt this comprehensive strategic partnership model with an Asian partner and we're having difficulty because we just don't have the architecture, the infrastructure, the resources, or people to really build something that goes beyond government bureaucrats, not bureaucrats, but folks at the top level meeting and trying to pick interest and then sell it to the rest of the country to get people to buy on board.

00:18:41.800 --> 00:18:50.180

<v SPEAKER\_3>Mexico, it's not perfect, it's not complete, but I would argue it's a lot more than we have with most other countries other than the Americans.

00:18:50.180 --> 00:18:55.260

<v SPEAKER\_3>We certainly do need to find spaces where we can have a table for two with Mexico.

00:18:55.260 --> 00:19:02.580

<v SPEAKER\_3>I would say China is the most important issue and potentially engagement in the CPTPP.

00:19:03.760 --> 00:19:08.280

<v SPEAKER\_3>That's a natural table for two because the Americans aren't part of the agreement.

00:19:08.280 --> 00:19:09.540

<v SPEAKER\_3>We in Mexico are.

00:19:09.540 --> 00:19:12.820

<v SPEAKER\_3>There's a hell of a lot we could leverage, potentially.

00:19:12.820 --> 00:19:20.440

<v SPEAKER\_3>We could potentially leverage, but we haven't because we even haven't sat down to talk about what's practical, what's viable.

00:19:22.260 --> 00:19:23.160

<v SPEAKER\_1>Let's get into China.

00:19:23.160 --> 00:19:24.800

<v SPEAKER\_1>Please go ahead, Graeme, but I'm interested in-

00:19:24.800 --> 00:19:32.560

<v SPEAKER\_2>I just wanted to say, what do the Mexicans want out of this strategic partnership?

00:19:32.560 --> 00:19:40.320

<v SPEAKER\_2>Because the list is, it's got a pretty strong Canadian flavor, right?

00:19:40.320 --> 00:19:48.960

<v SPEAKER\_2>I would say, and I think what is missing in the list, in which I'm sure the Mexicans wanted to put on this list, is the whole people-to-people agenda.

00:19:50.120 --> 00:19:57.920

<v SPEAKER\_2>The visa issue, the Season of Agricultural Workers program, enhancing tourism, enhancing student exchanges.

00:19:57.920 --> 00:20:04.100

<v SPEAKER\_2>I mean, that's actually a very important part of the relationship as it is now.

00:20:04.100 --> 00:20:27.120

<v SPEAKER\_2>And I know from frequent dialogue with my former Mexican counterparts, that the visa issue, for instance, finding a way around that with an enhanced ETA or, you know, some model that is not quite at the level of a visa, but isn't quite at the level of an ETA, that would be something that I'm sure they want to explore.

00:20:27.120 --> 00:20:35.240

<v SPEAKER\_2>But it's not on the list, I guess, for reasons of, you know, of our side not being quite so keen on that idea.

00:20:37.080 --> 00:20:59.960

<v SPEAKER\_1>Arguably the, I'll come back to the China relationship, Graeme, because that's the piece in the puzzle that we both hear about from the Americans who look at us sometimes as the loose back door, broken back door for people, fentanyl products and things.

00:20:59.960 --> 00:21:07.140

<v SPEAKER\_1>And I didn't see mention of China in the prime ministers, but it struck me that that's got to be something.

00:21:07.140 --> 00:21:09.840

<v SPEAKER\_1>And again, you were there, and Carlo, you've spoken about this.

00:21:10.660 --> 00:21:24.200

<v SPEAKER\_1>This is one that we should take on because it's in our joint interest to probably have a, if not an alignment, at least we approach the Americans with a similar way.

00:21:24.200 --> 00:21:28.060

<v SPEAKER\_1>Although I do think that our situation is different from that of Mexico.

00:21:28.060 --> 00:21:35.200

<v SPEAKER\_3>Yeah, we need to deal with this, but we can't deal with it publicly, and it shouldn't be government taking the lead.

00:21:35.400 --> 00:21:37.900

<v SPEAKER\_3>That shouldn't be government trouble.

00:21:37.900 --> 00:21:52.540

<v SPEAKER\_3>No, it's got to be tracked to civil society, and we have the connections, we know the researchers in Mexico, we know the groups who are working on China, we just don't talk to them without the Americans being at the table.

00:21:52.640 --> 00:21:56.000

<v SPEAKER\_3>That doesn't make for a very productive conversation.

00:21:56.000 --> 00:22:00.400

<v SPEAKER\_3>But you don't want to do this publicly, you don't want to make a big deal of this.

00:22:00.400 --> 00:22:09.380

<v SPEAKER\_3>In my thinking about engaging China, it's always been engaging Mexico in these issues, it's always done quietly.

00:22:09.380 --> 00:22:11.520

<v SPEAKER\_3>You're not trying to draw attention to it.

00:22:11.520 --> 00:22:21.180

<v SPEAKER\_3>But in the dealings when I've had the Americans at the table, and looking at my Mexican counterparts, we're always thinking we need to go out for a beer afterwards and talk.

00:22:21.180 --> 00:22:24.700

<v SPEAKER\_3>Yeah, we just don't have the forum set up to do that.

00:22:24.700 --> 00:22:26.580

<v SPEAKER\_1>Graeme, let me just follow up on that.

00:22:26.580 --> 00:22:27.580

<v SPEAKER\_1>Do you think that makes sense?

00:22:27.580 --> 00:22:41.220

<v SPEAKER\_1>Because I do think the track two, I participated in stuff with China, and I've always thought these have been very useful, even if just getting together and frank discussions, we probably could do

something like that with Mexico.

00:22:41.220 --> 00:22:43.960

<v SPEAKER\_1>Because you pointed out the people-to-people ties.

00:22:43.960 --> 00:22:44.700

<v SPEAKER\_2>Yeah, no, I agree.

00:22:44.700 --> 00:22:46.600

<v SPEAKER\_2>I absolutely agree with Carlo.

00:22:46.600 --> 00:22:56.400

<v SPEAKER\_2>And I think that the business community, for instance, is further ahead in terms of seeking, I don't know, a dialogue at the senior level between Canadian and Mexican business people.

00:22:56.400 --> 00:23:17.600

<v SPEAKER\_2>I think that there is great appetite for that on both sides, it's greater perhaps than on the sort of official diplomatic political track where we have these declarations of love that are followed by, well, we can't find the time for a meeting or we can't find a venue for this summit.

00:23:17.600 --> 00:23:19.580

<v SPEAKER\_2>So I agree with Carlo.

00:23:19.580 --> 00:23:32.360

<v SPEAKER\_2>I think that the private sector should be encouraged to continue to lead on this file, or civil society, or NGOs, or academics, or because they're further ahead.

00:23:33.420 --> 00:23:34.600

<v SPEAKER\_1>What about state province?

00:23:34.660 --> 00:23:35.900

<v SPEAKER\_1>We have Premier Smith down there.

00:23:35.900 --> 00:23:42.120

<v SPEAKER\_1>I remember years ago going to Gimli with then Premier Gary Durr who had up several Mexican governors.

00:23:42.120 --> 00:23:49.360

<v SPEAKER\_1>We've got a Mexican governor who, former governor who is the ambassador right now set up to promote tourism.

00:23:49.360 --> 00:23:50.860

<v SPEAKER\_1>Is this an opportunity that we're missing?

00:23:50.940 --> 00:23:52.920

<v SPEAKER\_1>I'm interested in both your views.

00:23:52.920 --> 00:23:54.380  
<v SPEAKER\_1>Graeme, you lead.

00:23:54.380 --> 00:23:56.160  
<v SPEAKER\_2>Yes, no, I think absolutely.

00:23:58.220 --> 00:24:11.160  
<v SPEAKER\_2>With the caveat that Mexican governors don't have the same powers and influence and political clout that Doug Ford or Daniel Smith have in our political context.

00:24:11.160 --> 00:24:20.880  
<v SPEAKER\_2>But absolutely, let a thousand flowers bloom to keep with the Chinese theme in this conversation and let there be contacts between mayors of the big city.

00:24:20.880 --> 00:24:29.880  
<v SPEAKER\_2>I mean, the mayor of Mexico City, for instance, he or she at the moment governs a city of close to 40 million people, right?

00:24:29.880 --> 00:24:37.180  
<v SPEAKER\_2>So absolutely, that's a venue that needs to be explored.

00:24:37.180 --> 00:24:39.420  
<v SPEAKER\_1>And wasn't Claudia Scheinbaum mayor of Mexico?

00:24:39.420 --> 00:24:40.260  
<v SPEAKER\_2>She was indeed.

00:24:40.260 --> 00:24:42.080  
<v SPEAKER\_1>As was Zamelow?

00:24:42.080 --> 00:24:43.960  
<v SPEAKER\_2>Right.

00:24:44.000 --> 00:24:52.400  
<v SPEAKER\_1>Carlo, the state province might presume you would favour that kind of thing that Premier Smith did?

00:24:52.400 --> 00:25:03.420  
<v SPEAKER\_3>With a larger note of caution than Graeme's put forward, I can see the look of shock on both your faces, that emerging caution with subnational engagement.

00:25:03.420 --> 00:25:06.300  
<v SPEAKER\_3>But there are a couple of issues here with Mexico.

00:25:06.340 --> 00:25:09.340  
<v SPEAKER\_3>One, it's not US governors.

00:25:09.340 --> 00:25:11.220

<v SPEAKER\_3>I mean, there are just, let's be blunt.

00:25:11.260 --> 00:25:16.760

<v SPEAKER\_3>There's some Mexican governors you don't want to be seen in a photograph with.

00:25:18.960 --> 00:25:20.680

<v SPEAKER\_3>There's some characters there.

00:25:20.680 --> 00:25:26.920

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's, you know, you have issues with US governors, but not to the same intensity.

00:25:26.920 --> 00:25:33.980

<v SPEAKER\_3>So you have to be very careful with the Mexican governors and with mayors.

00:25:35.420 --> 00:25:55.420

<v SPEAKER\_3>The other issue is you just don't have the capacity at the provincial level with one or one, maybe two potential exceptions, Quebec, Alberta to some degree, to really have the intelligence, the resources, the understanding to inform a sophisticated engagement.

00:25:55.420 --> 00:26:16.880

<v SPEAKER\_3>And you can have things like premieres throwing the, the premieres throwing the Mexican government under the bus because there simply isn't the institutional capacity in the province, not just the government, but also in civil society and academia to really inform a more sophisticated strategy.

00:26:16.880 --> 00:26:26.840

<v SPEAKER\_3>So yes, on the trade and transactional stuff, potentially on the educational stuff, and then rarely what the government of Alberta has done.

00:26:26.840 --> 00:26:37.860

<v SPEAKER\_3>I mean, they funded the only initiative in Canada, the only serious money in Canada, the only serious commitment in Canada to re-examine the North American relationship.

00:26:38.340 --> 00:26:41.800

<v SPEAKER\_3>And that does include Mexico.

00:26:42.580 --> 00:26:46.460

<v SPEAKER\_3>Our focus isn't on Mexico as much as the US for obvious reasons.

00:26:46.460 --> 00:26:52.960

<v SPEAKER\_3>But it's rare that a province puts that sort of money into understanding the relationship and supporting it.

00:26:52.960 --> 00:26:55.460

<v SPEAKER\_3>So we got to be careful here.

00:26:55.460 --> 00:26:58.920

<v SPEAKER\_3>We got to be careful putting too much pressure on people that don't have the resources.

00:26:58.920 --> 00:27:04.640

<v SPEAKER\_2>I don't disagree with you, Carlo, but there are, if you do a little bit of picking and choosing, I'll give you an example.

00:27:04.780 --> 00:27:11.280

<v SPEAKER\_2>Querétaro, where Bombardier and Bombardier Recreational Products is headquartered in Mexico.

00:27:11.280 --> 00:27:29.040

<v SPEAKER\_2>The Quebec government has forged a very useful dialogue and relationship with the governor of Querétaro, who for my money, and here I am saying this publicly, is probably among the strongest, if not the strongest governor that I dealt with while I was in Mexico.

00:27:29.400 --> 00:27:36.320

<v SPEAKER\_2>But he is not of the partisan coloration of Claudius Scheinbaum.

00:27:36.320 --> 00:27:41.580

<v SPEAKER\_2>He's pan, he's of the right, but a highly effective and sophisticated player.

00:27:41.580 --> 00:27:46.680

<v SPEAKER\_3>And Quebec has put the resources into understanding Mexico, Laval, etc.

00:27:46.920 --> 00:27:47.940

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yeah.

00:27:47.940 --> 00:27:49.020

<v SPEAKER\_2>Very true.

00:27:49.020 --> 00:27:57.240

<v SPEAKER\_1>All right, my final question before I ask both what you're reading or streaming, your sort of assessment of the Canada-Mexico relationship, where we're at today.

00:27:57.240 --> 00:27:58.200

<v SPEAKER\_1>Why don't you lead, Carlo?

00:27:59.620 --> 00:28:10.960

<v SPEAKER\_3>I think it's the traditional period of the ups and downs of benign neglect, the hills and valleys of the country of benign neglect.

00:28:10.960 --> 00:28:12.620

<v SPEAKER\_3>I think we're at a hill now.

00:28:12.620 --> 00:28:18.480

<v SPEAKER\_3>The engagement with the US has sharpened attention on Mexico first negatively.

00:28:18.480 --> 00:28:30.200

<v SPEAKER\_3>Then folks have been reminded of how much Mexico did for us during the last negotiation, keeping us informed, and the resolution to steel and aluminum tariffs.

00:28:30.200 --> 00:28:35.880

<v SPEAKER\_3>So I think we're at another hill, not necessarily a peak.

00:28:35.880 --> 00:28:38.920

<v SPEAKER\_3>Whether it will last, I don't know.

00:28:38.920 --> 00:28:49.880

<v SPEAKER\_3>But I'm hopeful because of the ties that we have outside of government, the ties that we have with former government officials, Graham's colleagues on the Mexican side.

00:28:49.880 --> 00:28:52.460

<v SPEAKER\_3>But you know, Mexico has changed too.

00:28:52.500 --> 00:28:56.800

<v SPEAKER\_3>The Marrano movement has changed the country we once knew.

00:28:56.800 --> 00:29:00.680

<v SPEAKER\_3>Sort of like, not as bad as MAG has changed the US.

00:29:00.680 --> 00:29:01.980

<v SPEAKER\_3>But I don't know.

00:29:02.560 --> 00:29:06.300

<v SPEAKER\_3>We're dealing with a new world in the US and in Mexico to some degree.

00:29:06.300 --> 00:29:10.680

<v SPEAKER\_3>So I hate to pull out a crystal ball on something that's changed so much.

00:29:10.680 --> 00:29:11.500

<v SPEAKER\_1>All right.

00:29:11.500 --> 00:29:15.200

<v SPEAKER\_1>Graham, you get the last word on your assessment of the relationship.

00:29:15.200 --> 00:29:16.720

<v SPEAKER\_2>I'm going to be completely outrageous.

00:29:16.720 --> 00:29:32.800

<v SPEAKER\_2>I'm going to quote Sir Francis Drake when he goes into Cadiz Harbor, and there's a famous prayer that goes, When thou givest to thy servants to endeavor any great matter, grant them to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same throughout which yieldeth the true glory.

00:29:32.800 --> 00:29:36.540

<v SPEAKER\_2>So a nice start, but let's see what the next steps are.

00:29:36.540 --> 00:29:36.920

<v SPEAKER\_1>Right.

00:29:36.920 --> 00:29:37.500

<v SPEAKER\_1>That's the key.

00:29:37.500 --> 00:29:39.360

<v SPEAKER\_1>It's the follow-up.

00:29:39.360 --> 00:29:40.300

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yeah.

00:29:40.300 --> 00:29:47.720

<v SPEAKER\_1>That has to be led by both governments, but as you point out, business is going to be involved, civil society, and there's a role for the provinces.

00:29:48.660 --> 00:29:49.760

<v SPEAKER\_3>Right.

00:29:49.760 --> 00:29:51.340

<v SPEAKER\_1>Absolutely.

00:29:51.340 --> 00:29:51.660

<v SPEAKER\_1>All right.

00:29:51.660 --> 00:29:55.340

<v SPEAKER\_1>My final question, and then on this one, you can lead, Graeme.

00:29:55.340 --> 00:29:58.900

<v SPEAKER\_1>What are you reading or streaming these days while you're in Iceland?

00:29:58.900 --> 00:30:06.780

<v SPEAKER\_2>I have just finished reading Maher's, I don't know how you pronounce his name, the book on Trudeau, The Prince, right?

00:30:06.820 --> 00:30:09.000

<v SPEAKER\_1>Right, Stephen Maher, right.

00:30:09.000 --> 00:30:09.900

<v SPEAKER\_2>Just finished that.

00:30:09.900 --> 00:30:14.100

<v SPEAKER\_2>Very interesting, obviously, for somebody who's lived abroad for the past 10 years.

00:30:16.280 --> 00:30:21.860

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yes, no, and I'm sure there'll be a book out on Carney before we know it.

00:30:21.860 --> 00:30:23.660

<v SPEAKER\_2>Carlo, what are you reading or streaming?

00:30:23.660 --> 00:30:25.900

<v SPEAKER\_2>But I'll listen to what Carlo's doing.

00:30:25.900 --> 00:30:27.360

<v SPEAKER\_1>Carlo.

00:30:27.360 --> 00:30:33.640

<v SPEAKER\_3>Geez, I'm still trying to get through Abundance by Ezra Klein.

00:30:33.640 --> 00:30:45.900

<v SPEAKER\_3>So the whole take on the New North America Initiative is to understand what's coming in the US, and so we're looking for signallers of the future change in the US.

00:30:45.900 --> 00:30:49.220

<v SPEAKER\_3>So yeah, I'm still trying to get through Abundance, God help me.

00:30:49.220 --> 00:30:50.080

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's a great book.

00:30:50.080 --> 00:30:56.540

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's a good read, but I need to get something on the fun side, fiction.

00:30:56.540 --> 00:30:58.720

<v SPEAKER\_3>I need to find a fiction book.

00:30:58.720 --> 00:30:58.960

<v SPEAKER\_1>Good.

00:30:58.960 --> 00:31:00.480

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, we'll recommend that.

00:31:00.480 --> 00:31:01.120

<v SPEAKER\_1>All right.

00:31:01.120 --> 00:31:06.180

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, look, Carlo and Graeme, thank you so much and thank you for listening to this episode of The Global Exchange.

00:31:06.180 --> 00:31:08.640

<v SPEAKER\_1>We were joined today by Carlo Dade and Graeme Clark.

00:31:09.160 --> 00:31:12.940

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00:31:12.940 --> 00:31:16.920

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00:31:16.920 --> 00:31:21.520

<v SPEAKER\_1>Thanks go out to our producer, Jordyn Carroll and to Drew Phillips for providing our music.

00:31:21.520 --> 00:31:22.920

<v SPEAKER\_1>I'm Colin Robertson.

00:31:22.920 --> 00:31:24.840

<v SPEAKER\_1>Thanks for joining us today on The Global Exchange.