

As Mexico's foreign minister in the reformist government of Vicente Fox, Jorge Castaneda championed human rights and democracy as core values in Mexico's foreign policy and sought agreements with the U.S. to grant legal status and documentation to millions of Mexicans living north of the border. He resigned in 2003, frustrated by the lack of progress in Mexico-U.S. relations following the September 11, 2001, attacks.

In this interview, Castaneda discusses the progress made toward human rights and democracy and his views of the NAFTA agreement and Mexico's role in the global economy.

The Political Left

INTERVIEWER: You wrote a book some years ago called *Utopia Unarmed*. Where does the left intellectually fit into the era of globalism?

JORGE CASTANEDA: Many of the issues that traditionally parties or movements or coalitions of the left had raised during the 20th century not only are still present and are still valid, but many of them have become exacerbated by some of the trends that globalization is characterized by—for example, inequality. At the end of the day, the left's main issue since the middle of the 19th century has been inequality that accompanies capitalism, whether one provokes the other, or whether one is inevitable without the other or not. We can also accept that in some countries or many countries of Western Europe, the North Atlantic, the United States, initial inequality was enormously reduced. But that was the origin of what the left thought was unquestionable. There is probably more inequality pressing against society today than before, within rich countries, within poor countries, and between rich countries and poor countries, so on this score the left has more of a cause, more of a *raison d'être* than perhaps in any time recently. Certainly [in] any time since the Depression and the postwar Keynesian golden age.

The second is an issue of identity, the issue of minority rights in an era of homogenization or uniformization of the world. They're two slightly different things, identity and minorities. If everything is the same in a globalized world, then every small bit of difference becomes more important. All over the world we are seeing movements, coalitions, explosions, trends of affirming identities, and this tends to be—it's not always, [but] it tends to be—on the left. It's not always the case. The most obvious example is Islam—where do you put it in the political

spectrum? It's a different issue, but in many other areas of the world this affirmation of identity is giving the left a second wind. The same is true of minority rights. In societies where majority rule is very democratic but also very homogenous, as you have broad majorities of the electorate in the center, 70, 80 percent if you add up Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, Tories and Labour. If you add up the two sides you have huge electoral majorities, but there are people left out, and those people left out for whatever reason have to affirm their rights, their identity, their cause. There you have an area where the left is increasingly present and increasingly representative.

The Impact of Globalism on Different Countries' Economies

INTERVIEWER: You hear a lot of opinions from the left about globalism. Have you really heard an argument?

JORGE CASTANEDA: I don't think there is an argument. It's very difficult to have an argument about a fact. It's easy to have opinions, but an argument in the sense of "I wish this didn't take place"? I suppose that's an argument; I suppose there are people who believe that. But setting those aside, most of the movements of the left that in one way or the other address the issue of globalization do so in a way of trying to affirm their existence, their presence, their cause, within that framework.

INTERVIEWER: So as foreign minister of Mexico, how do you fit into that?

JORGE CASTANEDA: In the case of a government, in the case of a country, you first have to manage or do with what you have, with the deck of cards you were dealt. Mexico was dealt a certain deck of cards, geographically, historically, culturally, ethnically, and, more recently, economically and politically. So opinions are important, but they are perhaps not as decisive as the deck of cards you were dealt. In the case of Mexico, certainly one of the central issues in this insertion into globalization is addressing and managing an almost unique situation which we have, which is that we are really one of the very few countries that does not form part of the rich industrialized North Atlantic world or the other industrialized countries. In Western Europe, you have the Mediterranean and you have a continuum of gradual change between the most Eastern part of Western Europe or the most Western part of Eastern Europe. The shift is not as dramatic as it is between Mexico and the United States. Obviously

there are differences between Poland and Germany, but those differences are between Poland and Eastern Germany and then between Eastern Germany and what used to be West Germany and then between Russia and Poland. In the case of Mexico you have this very dramatic geographic, historical, economic, political situation, where there's no Mediterranean in between. We have to manage that, and we mainly have to manage it regarding the question of the flow of people, which is the big pending issue on our relationship and in the world today.

United States-Mexico Relations and NAFTA

INTERVIEWER: Talk about how important the relationship with the U.S. is to Mexico and vice versa.

JORGE CASTANEDA: They're linked asymmetrically—that is, the United States is enormously important for Mexico in economic terms; 80 percent of our trade, 70 percent of foreign investment, [up] to 80 percent of tourism comes from the United States. The opposite is not really that true. The aggregate figures are very impressive. This business of Mexico being the second or third largest U.S. trading partner, if you take away the in-and-out movements in ... gross exports, and you go down to net exports, Mexico has a much more reduced role given the size of the U.S. economy. Mexico's importance to the U.S. economy has perhaps been a bit exaggerated. Mexico's very important to the U.S. for other reasons: immigration, the border, even the drug question, which is important—not as important as Americans think it is, but important nonetheless. But the purely economic aspects have been, perhaps, overrated.

INTERVIEWER: Does that lessen your control over the Mexican economy against America since there's such an imbalance in the relationship?

JORGE CASTANEDA: Economic policy today isn't what it used to be. You do not get the results, you do not have the control [and] the impact as a government that you used to have 30 or 40 years ago, or 100 years ago. Not that at the time the control was what it was meant to be, either ... but certainly there is less control. Every country faces this reality. Mexico probably faces it more so because it is very much associated with a country in which there's an enormous degree of asymmetry in terms of the sizes of the two economies and the levels of

development in the two economies. Clearly for Mexico it's difficult to carry out economic policy without taking very much into account what the United States does.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk about NAFTA. When it was being negotiated, what was your vision for what the treaty could be, and when it was actually finalized?

JORGE CASTANEDA: I was opposed to NAFTA the way it was negotiated. First of all, it was negotiated for strictly Mexican domestic reasons and Col. Salinas trying to get himself reelected. That's what I thought was behind all of this, and I thought it was being done too quickly, rushed essentially for Salinas's personal political domestic reasons. Most people today in Mexico would tend to agree with me—they didn't then, [but] they would agree with me now. Not that it matters very much at this stage.

Secondly, I thought that the type of NAFTA that Mexico should have negotiated was a different one. It should have been a much more European-style arrangement with some form of initial mobility of labor. It doesn't mean opening borders overnight, but it means at least getting a foot in the door and setting a precedent. Also, compensatory financing schemes that would have allowed resources to flow to more underdeveloped regions of Mexico for infrastructure, for social cohesion, [and] for regional development. That would have begun, in a more proactive way, to try and reduce the gaps between Mexico and the United States and Canada.

Finally, it should have had initial steps towards creating types of super-national institutions along "Brussels" lines, or dispute solving mechanisms for labor and environmental concerns for the border, to find ways to go beyond just the trade aspects which were the ones that were originally included. That would have been the proper NAFTA for Mexico; obviously that's not the way things turned out. That said, today there are far more people in this country who tend to think that those ideas were not as far-fetched or as off-the-wall as they were said to be then, and in a very different way and with a series of nuances, President Fox reached many of these same conclusions.

INTERVIEWER: Can we talk about the NAFTA debate in the U.S.? You had Clinton, a Democratic president, going against many people in his own party. What was the intellectual debate like here in Mexico? What did the treaty represent to this country?

JORGE CASTANEDA: You have to remember that this was still carried out under the former authoritarian regime. To a large extent there was no debate; there was certainly no debate in the House, where it wasn't even voted upon. There was an overwhelming majority in the Senate in 1993 when this was debated and approved, so there was no legislative debate. That means that nothing was at stake in the intellectual debate, as you could talk till you were blue in the face, but everybody knew that from the Mexican perspective this was going to be approved, period, because the president wanted it, and that's the way Mexico worked at that time. So the debate was much more marginal and much less intense and much less relevant; it was largely an irrelevant academic debate to the extent that it existed.

Inequality and Globalization in Mexico

INTERVIEWER: You talked before about inequality. Were you worried that increased trade would only benefit the elite?

JORGE CASTANEDA: Without compensatory mechanisms, yes, and to a large extent this has occurred. The Northern part of the country, where very few people live by Mexican standards, has eight to 10 million people, perhaps 12 with the very broad definition of border. If you reach down maybe 100 kilometers or so, this is a country over 100 million people. The North has benefited undoubtedly, not only from NAFTA, but from the entire trade liberalization reforms that took place from 1985 onward. It has become more industrialized, with more jobs, higher wages, and better social indicators. There is no question that those 10 to 12 million people who live in the North and the border area are not doing badly by Mexican standards. The people in the South are doing very badly by any standards, so that gap has certainly been accentuated. I'm not sure it's by NAFTA; I think it's by all of the economic trends of the last 15 years in Mexico and abroad. It's logical that this occurred here and that it would occur elsewhere, but the fact is that that has happened. The numbers we have seen [seem] to indicate that inequality, social inequality in Mexico has also deepened over the last 15 years. There are some ways of making the comparison which would lead some people to conclude that Mexico is perhaps a little bit less unequal, but it was so unequal before that a little bit less or a little bit more doesn't make that much of a difference. [What] is clear is that whatever economic development has occurred, it has not in any way made this society less unequal.

INTERVIEWER: Inequality poses an enormous challenge for your administration. How are you going to attack inequality?

JORGE CASTANEDA: It is the foremost challenge that this administration has, and it is also the single issue that Fox is the most committed too. What to do? The first thing is to acknowledge that this is an ancestral problem in Mexico. This is not a problem that emerged with Salinas or with NAFTA or with PRI. It's been around for centuries. This was a tremendously unequal society since the conquest, at least, which is one of the most unequal events that can occur to a society. To be conquered by conquerors and the conquered—that's inequality in spades. What does the administration intend to do about it? The first thing is to try and to empower the most unequal. That's the whole logic of the Chiapas initiative, putting an end to the conflict that the constitutional reform is in favor of—indigenous rights and culture. It's not just to put an end to the conflict but to hope that through a series of symbolic, political, and legal measures, the most left-behind sectors of Mexican society, which are the indigenous communities, be able themselves to fight for more rights. Similar reforms will take place in the labor movement over the next seven or eight months, and the idea there is to allow the workers to fight for higher wages.

[Secondly], through a much more proactive social policy, President Fox's tax reform is quintessentially redistributive. There are people who don't agree with it, and I'm sure we can do much more, but as a first step four months into government, raising the tax stakes significantly, taxing the middle class and redistributing most of the revenues. Redistributing the revenues from the middle class to the poorest sectors of Mexican society is a step in reducing inequality. That's all it is, a step, but at least it's a step. More proactive economic policies—in terms of jobs, infrastructure, attracting foreign investment in order to generate growth and jobs—will also be a significant element of reduction of inequality. How much we will be able to achieve in six years on this front, [we hope to] at least to arrest the trend, and perhaps get some movement at the margins so that over the next 20 years we can really go forward.

INTERVIEWER: We've got a crew today with some protestors in Tijuana. Has NAFTA worked for those people?

JORGE CASTANEDA: Again, it's the same issue. Obviously what President Fox says is right on the money. He says unemployment has been dramatically reduced in half the country, and that's true. [But] not only hasn't it been reduced, it's grown in the other half. Real wages have finally begun to rise the last year and a half to two years, particularly since he took office... but real wages in the informal sector and the marginal sector have continued to be terribly depressed. So I think both things are true. NAFTA has benefited some groups in Mexico, some regions of Mexico, some sectors of society in Mexico, and has not benefited other regions and other sectors.

Trends in Privatization

INTERVIEWER: Your book tells the story of the effect of privatization across the world. Do you feel like you are part of a global trend toward a reduced role of government in the economy?

JORGE CASTANEDA: The situation in Latin America is perhaps a little bit different today than it was 10 years ago and that it [is] maybe elsewhere in the world. Latin America, for a series of reasons that are of a historical nature, they are not "mistakes" made by policymakers, there was too much of a state in Latin America, certainly during most of the 20th century. There was a logical backlash which began in Chile in the late 1970s and then moved on through other countries, which was this broad trend of privatization. Today the trend is moving slightly back in the opposite direction. Not in terms of expropriating private companies, but certainly in terms of understanding that in these societies, the state probably has to do more than was thought, let's say, five years ago, whether it's in terms of education, health, housing, combating poverty, or in terms of infrastructure, roads, refineries, electric power. Putting all of this in the hands of the private sector, given the private sector you have, not the private sector you'd like, things went too far. Probably things were not as effective as they should have been. So I think there is a reaction, an opposite reaction in many countries, not just in Mexico, though clearly the situation in Mexico is very clear. The identification of privatization with the Salinas corruption is so overwhelming in Mexico that you couldn't get much done any more, if you wanted to.

Anti-Globalization Protests, Democracy, and Free Speech

INTERVIEWER: You're going to Quebec, and there will be a lot of protestors there. What are your expectations from that? Do you think globalism is reversible?

JORGE CASTANEDA: No, I don't think globalism is reversible, but I certainly think it allows great leeway in terms of what happens in the broad parameters of globalization, that not everything is predetermined. You can have China as part of globalization and New Zealand as part of globalization. The two nations are equally inserted into the global economy and, by the way, equally successful. They are as different as you can imagine in terms of the way their economies are organized, their societies are organized, their size and everything else; [yet] they're both part of globalization. The specific policies that are followed by the WTO or the World Bank or the IMF can be of one type or of another type. The World Bank comes and goes constantly, not only between its different policies but different interpretations by different groups within the Bank. So there is much greater leeway within globalization than is generally thought to be the case.

The protestors—I think it's fine that there [are] protestors. There should be. They're saying things that are important, things that now are being acknowledged and taken seriously only because of the protestors. It's not true that these things would have been acknowledged without the protestors. Obviously they are sometimes a pain. They're on television; the police beat them up because the police are not very nice in countries like Mexico, so you have kids complaining—it's part of the territory. But I think the protestors, from Seattle to Prague to Nice to Davos to Quebec, are saying important things. Even if they're not saying them reasonably, they're not saying them peacefully, they're not saying them necessarily in a very eloquent or articulate way, they are saying important things that others were not saying, so I welcome them.

INTERVIEWER: Should you shut down trade?

JORGE CASTANEDA: No, I don't think you shut down trade. You do try and deal with the issues of global trade in a different way. What's important is that they are forcing others to have what I consider to be more reasonable and moderate policy towards trade. Perhaps that's not what they want, but that's too bad. You don't always get what you want, and you don't always know who you're working for. But I do think that the protestors are natural allies of people who believe that there are things that should be done to manage world trade a certain way, and I think these are points of view that are very much reflected in the United

States, Canada, and Western Europe and in many sectors of Mexico, Brazilian, Indian society who do not necessarily believe that radical free-trade, laissez-faire policies are the best ones. The protestors, by staking out an extremist position, make a more regulatory position more centrist, and that's fine.

INTERVIEWER: President Fox is quoted as saying it's easy for people to protest when they've got comfortable lives and full stomachs. What's your sense of what's going on?

JORGE CASTANEDA: It's logical, understandable, [and] perfectly normal for these types of meetings to generate more and more protest. Because of the media that's here, it's a great opportunity to get your point of view across. [And] because there are real issues behind what some of the protestors are saying—not all of them and not all of their issues, but there are some real issues behind some of the protestors—whether it's the environmental issues, whether it's the labor issues, whether it's the indigenous peoples issues, whether it's the transparency, sunshine, civil society-type of issue, all these are real issues. They're valid issues. They have an agenda, they have a cause, and it has to be addressed.

The governments of these countries have not yet found a way to really address these concerns. Everyone is looking for a way to do it. Obviously it's complicated when on the one hand you have the people outside saying, "We're society" and on the other hand you have leaders democratically elected by those societies and insisting on a democratic cause. It's complicated because you know what the protestors theoretically should do—if they don't like these presidents, [they should] elect other ones. If they don't like the congressmen who choose these regime leaders, they should elect different congressmen. If you believe in representative democracy, you have to accept for now that the leaders are much more representative than the protestors because you do have, in this case, very democratic systems. It's very, very difficult to question the legitimacy of any of these people.

On the other hand, it is true that many of the issues that they raise are not put forth by the trade ministries, by the technocrats, by the economic policy-types in the governments. Those are the least accountable, least transparent, least responsive, least sensitive sectors of all of these governments. There is a certain tendency for a bureaucracy or technocracy to emerge and to work without any form of accountability. People come and go and they're elected and

then reelected and dis-elected and removed and brought back, and you have a permanent course of action by the finance ministries, trade ministries, central banks. So are they representative? Who elected Alan Greenspan? It's a [valid] question. He was appointed by a president who was elected. But then he goes around and does what he wants. Maybe that's the way it should be, but then these [protestors] say, "What makes him more representative than we are?" These are real issues that are out there.

INTERVIEWER: Do the protestors, the tear gas and all that, have an impact? What's going on?

JORGE CASTANEDA: They should find a way to have an impact, but quite honestly I think they don't. They have much more of an impact in the media than inside, and they should find a way to perhaps have less impact in the media and more impact inside. But that changes the outlook. What is it they really want? Do they all want the same things? Maybe some of them want to include tougher environmental standards in trade agreements, and perhaps others want to have no trade agreements. It's not necessarily the same agenda, and it's not necessarily the same tactics to achieve one or the other.

INTERVIEWER: If you were 25 today, where would you be?

JORGE CASTANEDA: In the streets.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

JORGE CASTANEDA: I wouldn't think that the electoral system is responsive. I wouldn't think that political parties in the Western countries are sensitive or open to the types of demands or dreams or aspirations I have. I would think that [it's] certainly a hell of a lot more fun to be out there than watching ballot boxes on election day and organizing people. I think that makes a lot of sense, it's always been that way. The difference is that in the past in Western Europe, in Canada, certainly, parts of the United States, you had kids in the streets, but you also had labor leaders organizing in the factories and contributing to political parties and intellectuals defending other courses. So you had both things. You had a hard left in the streets, and you had a soft left or a reformist left that did represent an alternative. More in Western Europe and Canada than in the United States, but even in the United States. You can

go back to the Depression and the New Deal and Roosevelt, and the founding of the CIO and whatever. That is perhaps not quite the case anymore today, and that's a big difference.

President Vicente Fox

INTERVIEWER: How significant was Vicente Fox's presidential victory? Historically, how will that be viewed for Mexico? Why did he ask you to work for him, and why did you decide to say yes?

JORGE CASTANEDA: His victory was immensely important for two reasons: it brought an end to PRI rule, which I think was long due, and it really was the first time in Mexican history that power passed from one group to another group through the ballot box. It's not just a question of the PRI. Before the PRI it didn't happen, either. People in Mexico either didn't leave power until they died or they were thrown out by coups, insurrections, revolutions, assassinations. This really was the first time that you had a true transfer of power through the ballot box, which is one of the explanations for the complex nature of what's occurring. It's not just that you're having a rotation in power between two different parties or groups, it's that for the first time it's taking place this way.

Why did he ask me? I don't know; you'd have to ask him. But what I do know is that we began working together politically almost 10 years ago. It's not a short-term sort of arrangement. We met and did a lot of things together over the entire decade of the 1990s. I certainly always thought that he had a great degree of commitment to social issues and to a certain democratization of Mexico that, for me, was essential. I think that he found useful the discussions that he and I had with others during these years, in terms of trying to perhaps shape many of his instincts and his intuitions and his inclinations in a more structured, abstract way. I also think he wanted to have a certain balance in his Cabinet and that he preferred to have that balance with people he knew like myself, rather than people that he had to bring in from other sectors but that he didn't necessarily know.

Why did I join the Cabinet? First of all, because I was invited, which is always a good reason. Secondly, because I thought I could put in practice many of the ideas I'd had and [had] been trying to put down on paper for years, in the realm of foreign policy. Thirdly, because I'm convinced it's a great opportunity for Mexico. I think that Fox is a remarkable politician, a

remarkable leader, who is very all-encompassing. He allows people like myself to do things and people who are very conservative in his Cabinet to do things, and he manages to have many of these things coexist, so it's a great opportunity.

INTERVIEWER: What's the most striking thing about his personality?

JORGE CASTANEDA: His immense self-assuredness, which is not arrogance, which is not something that comes through as "I know everything," but once he's convinced of something, he really thinks that that's the way to go and he just sticks to it. He is not in any way high and mighty with the amount of insults and blows he took not only during the campaign, but these last [insults] this last month or two from Zapatistas, and he just stuck with it because he thought that was the way to go. Of course, he was right. This is a non-arrogant, modest, very self-confident man.

INTERVIEWER: [How has Mexico changed since Fox took office?]

JORGE CASTANEDA: ... [I]f you're looking at the domestic situation in Mexico, the changes are very considerable in four months. If you're looking at the changes in Mexico's international positions on issues such as democracy, such as human rights, the changes are also very considerable. Now if you're looking at how much impact Mexico is having on the Summit of the Americas' agenda on these issues, by definition it is not the impact that we would like because we've only been involved in this for a few months. It takes a long time. But if you look at his speech today you will see that a number of issues that have not been placed on the agenda before are now on the agenda, and the others are responding to them. Some say they agree, some say they don't agree, but now they have to talk about those issues. Who has put forth the idea of a social cohesion fund to address imbalances in society in the world? Nobody, until Fox did it today. And it's in the text. It had never been put forth. Now it's on the table.

A "Post-Washington Consensus" and Global Economic Policy

INTERVIEWER: Do you see some new consensus emerging in the next round of trade talks?

JORGE CASTANEDA: There is some agreement; there is some beginning of a consensus, sort of a post-Washington consensus. It's still at a very incipient level. It's somewhat abstract. For

example, you feel you have to do something about asymmetries. This is an issue that's been coming up constantly in the speeches. The small countries, the poorer countries, the poorer regions of all countries, the poorer sector of each society need a special deal. They cannot just be left out because if they are, they'll never be brought in. There is a growing consensus on that, but there isn't necessarily a consensus on what to do. The notion of social cohesion funds, which is something that Fox has been pushing and pushing and pushing, it's making headway. He's only been pushing now for a few months, so he's making a lot of headway very quickly.

INTERVIEWER: Last week I interviewed Robert Rubin and talked about the Washington consensus. [How do you feel about the USA] promoting trade organizations...?

JORGE CASTANEDA: They may have been right in terms of pushing it as an expression of U.S. interests. I'm sure that there was logic to the former President Clinton and former Secretary of Treasury Rubin pushing the Washington consensus as an expression of U.S. interests. Now, whether all of this was as such in the direct interest of everyone in Latin America remains open to question. Some of the policies, some of the ideas of the so-called Washington consensus clearly were necessary regardless of in whose interests they were. Others were pushed too far, too hard, and [in] a direction that became too extreme. That is why you have a little bit of a correction now, or [what] they call [a] post-Washington consensus.

INTERVIEWER: What ideas were pushed too far?

JORGE CASTANEDA: Some of the trade-legalization ideas were probably pushed too far, particularly the cold-turkey type of ideas without any compensation, without any cohesion funds, infrastructure funds. The speed of privatization in some countries clearly was exaggerated. Mexico was perhaps the best case, but I'm not sure it was the only case. Certainly governments were embraced by all simply because they seemed to be carrying out the proper economic policies without looking too much into what else they were doing.... The case of Salinas in Mexico was perhaps not a very wise course.... So you had several aspects of things that perhaps went too far.

The Mexico "Bailout" in 1995

INTERVIEWER: What is your view of the so-called Mexico bailout that ended the Mexican debt crisis in 1995?

JORGE CASTANEDA: It was a great success given the enormous crisis that affected Mexico. The best way to address that crisis was external through the so-called bailout, which in fact was simply a guarantee of Mexican solvency. The guarantee would make it unnecessary to use it. In that sense it was a big success. Also, you can say that it was success from a domestic economic policy point of view. Although the economy collapsed in 1995 and millions and millions of Mexicans were thrown out of work, and billions of dollars of assets were destroyed, the economy recovered relatively soon. Now the cost, we're still paying the cost of all of that. This year we will pay several points—one, maybe two points of GDP in interest on the debt incurred by the Mexican government for the bailout of the Mexican banks that collapsed in 1995. So it's not that it's over; we're still paying now. President Fox can't spend the money he'd like to on education, on health, on housing, on combating poverty, on infrastructure because he's having to fork up a couple of points of GDP. That is around \$10 to \$12 billion a year in interest payments on the debt incurred because of the bank bailout. I'm not so sure that was such a great success.

It will be less and less likely for Mexico to have the type of crisis it has had in the past because I generally have believed that those crises were the product of the political system and of the specific type of transfer of power mechanisms that Mexico had. It wasn't a coincidence that they happened at the end of a term or at the beginning of a term. They happened at those times for a reason. To the extent that we have gone beyond that system now, that power is now being transferred to Mexico through truly democratic procedures, through elections, through campaigns.

There is a freer press. There is a Congress that makes the executive accountable. It will be far less likely for that type of crisis to occur. Consequently, I think it's a moot [point] as to whether the United States will have to "bail out" Mexico again. Does that mean that there won't be financial crisis in other countries across the world because of the types of policies or the types of situations or globalizations that are occurring? There will be in as many countries as many times, and the United States, because it is the only superpower, because in a sense it

is a payer of last resort, probably will have to intervene again as it did up to a point with Argentina earlier this year. On a smaller scale and with certainly nothing like the risk or the magnitude of danger involved in the case of Mexico.

The Meeting with Presidents Bush and Fox

INTERVIEWER: How did the meeting with Presidents Bush and Fox go?

JORGE CASTANEDA: It went very well. It was really very cordial [and] very friendly. It was longer than expected because as we were ending, the Secret Service fellow comes in and says, "We're told 10 more minutes because of the tear gas on the demonstrators, so you have to sit and wait." So we all said, "Wonderful, let's keep talking," so it worked out very well. It was a substantive meeting. [We] talked about immigration, talked about Colombia, talked about sugar, avocados—all sorts of things.

INTERVIEWER: You get a lot of people in that room. Who does the talking?

JORGE CASTANEDA: They [Bush and Fox] talk almost alone. They have been doing that since the first meeting that I attended that they had together, which was back in Dallas in August. Every now and then Secretary Powell makes a few comments, and if I think it's appropriate I will make some. But I would say 80 to 90 percent of the conversation is between the two principals.

INTERVIEWER: How are the discussions here followed up by your department, by other democracies?

JORGE CASTANEDA: [Let's] take an example. President Fox talked about the issue of avocados. We need to have an increase in the number of states and the number of months [during] which we can export avocados from Mexico, given that they are not declared unhealthy and that there are no NAFTA or WTO regulations that impede the exports. He brings it up with President Bush, gives him a piece of paper. President Bush passes the piece of paper over to Dr. [Condoleezza] Rice. Dr. Rice looks at it and then will pass it on to whoever she has to pass it on. At some point somebody will come back, probably to me or to ... our trade fellow to say, "Look, we looked at the avocado question and this is the deal."

Aspirations for Change in Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Is this something you've always wanted to do? Get into government and try to change things from within?

JORGE CASTANEDA: No, I don't harbor too many illusions about how much you can change. I think there are three or four things I'd like to be able to do. We've begun to work very well on one of them, which I think we're almost there on, which is the Chiapas conflict. Strictly speaking, it's not my beat, but I think the president for a series of reasons allowed me to be involved in the discussion and the design of the strategy. We've really made progress there. For the first four months, that's not too bad. We have started negotiations with the Americans on migration issues, which is something I've felt very strongly about for many years, and I think we'll be able to reach a good agreement with them within a year or so. Not all of what we want, but a lot. President Bush was much more forthcoming on that today than two months ago, and than [he was] eight months ago. You can sense his movement, you can see it. I think we'll maybe be able to get some more environment, labor, compensatory financing, civil society, transparency, sunshine into Mexico's trade position, and because it's Mexico and because it's Fox, that will have some real impact. If we can get that done in the next year or so, we're not doing too badly.

INTERVIEWER: Is this your first big summit with the president?

JORGE CASTANEDA: I attended the Cancun summit in 1981. President Reagan was there, Margaret Thatcher was there, Helmut Schmidt was there, important figures of the time. Pierre Trudeau co-chaired [the summit]. I've actually been to many of these over the years. This is my first big summit as foreign minister, and it's fun. Sometimes you have to pinch yourself to keep listening to the speeches, but it's fun.

INTERVIEWER: One more question about Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Some people say that they completely redefined politics, global economics, and [that] what we're seeing today, globalism, is actually a product of what they began.

COMMANDING HEIGHTS

Jorge Castaneda

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JORGE CASTANEDA: I would put it the other way around. I think Reagan and Thatcher were the product of globalization. They were effects much more than causes. There's always interaction, but I think in the bigger scheme of things they were much more an effect than a cause. They were able to transform their synchrony with what was going on into policy, and the left found itself out of sync. But I don't think they brought about all of this. I think they're a result of all of this.