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Arizona can show rest of the country how important Mexico is | Opinion

Border security, manufacturing supply chains and trade tie Arizona to Mexico. It shows how much America depends on the strong bond between countries.

Steven E. Hendrix, For The Republic

Arizona understands better than most of America that the United States' future is tied directly to Mexico.

From border security and migration to supply chains, manufacturing, and trade, few states live the U.S.-Mexico relationship more directly than Arizona. Arizona's economy, communities and security are shaped daily by what happens across the border. That reality offers a lesson for the nation: America's future depends more on Mexico than Washington often admits.

The most important country for the United States isn't China or Russia. It's Mexico.

Start with economics.

Mexico is now America's largest trading partner, with nearly \$1 trillion in annual trade. But the United States and Mexico do not simply buy and sell goods. They build things together through deeply integrated supply chains that support jobs, production, and competitiveness on both sides of the border.

How do Arizona and Mexico work together?

Arizona sees this firsthand. Cross-border commerce through Arizona helps drive logistics, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and small business growth. What happens in Nogales, Sonora or along regional supply routes does not stay at the border. It directly affects Arizona jobs, prices, and opportunity.

As the United States seeks to reduce dependence on China and strengthen resilient supply chains, Mexico is not just a neighbor. It is America's most viable strategic economic partner.

Now consider security.

Arizona also knows that border security cannot be reduced to slogans alone. Drug trafficking, fentanyl, organized crime and human smuggling are real threats. But Arizona's lived experience also demonstrates that security and economic cooperation are inseparable.

A weaker Mexico does not make Arizona safer. It creates more instability, more criminal opportunity, and more pressure on border communities.

Arizona and Mexico must align on security, immigration

That is why durable security requires more than enforcement. It requires sustained cooperation with Mexico on intelligence, law enforcement, economic opportunity and institutional strength.

The same logic applies to migration.

Arizona has long stood at the center of America's immigration debate. But migration is not simply a border event. It is driven by economic conditions, security and opportunity long before migrants reach Arizona's desert.

When Mexico is stronger, more stable, and more prosperous, migration pressures can ease. When instability grows, Arizona often feels the consequences first.

For Arizona, this is not theory. It is daily reality.

But Mexico's importance also goes beyond economics and security.

Arizona, Mexico ties go back generations

Arizona's cultural, family and business ties to Mexico are deep and enduring. Communities, industries and families span the border. Arizona's connection to Mexico is not peripheral—it is foundational.

Yet too often, Washington treats Mexico primarily as a problem to contain rather than a strategic partner essential to American success.

That is a mistake.

A strong Mexico strengthens Arizona and the United States alike. It supports supply chains, stabilizes migration, enhances regional security and reinforces North American competitiveness.

A weaker Mexico would do the opposite.

Strong Mexico means strong Arizona, U.S. too

The United States cannot secure its border, strengthen its economy or compete globally without a functional and respectful partnership with Mexico.

Arizona already understands this.

Because America's future will be shaped not only in Beijing or Moscow—but also in Mexico City, Monterrey, and in border states like Arizona that already live this reality every day.

Washington should too.

If America wants to be strong, it needs a strong Mexico.

And if Washington wants to understand America's future, it could start by listening more closely to Arizona.

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