

Opinion | The U.S. doesn't have standing to criticize Mexico's judicial reforms

The Mexican government responds to the Editorial Board.

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By Letters to the Editor

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Regarding The Post's Aug. 26 editorial, "[AMLO's judicial 'reform' has got to go](#)":

Mexico is undergoing an internal process to address much-needed reform of its justice system, with the purpose of strengthening and reinforcing its transparency and efficiency. These are values both the United States and Mexico share. However, both U.S. Ambassador Ken Salazar and The Post have criticized this national exercise by arguing that direct election of magistrates and judges — a significant feature of the proposal but not the only change under consideration — somehow threatens Mexican democracy. This is both worrisome and puzzling.

Contrary to The Post's argument that Mexico's domestic affairs are a matter of hemispheric concern, such interference is contrary to the U.N.-recognized principle that nations have a duty not to intervene in matters within the internal jurisdiction of any state. And the specific nature of the argument made by The Post and Mr. Salazar suggests a double standard: What is virtue in the United States is vice in Mexico.

Certainly, a comprehensive judicial reform deserves a broad domestic debate, such as the one that took place in Mexico during the recent electoral process. But just as Mexico respects America's right to self-determination through its political processes, even when the results might not favor Mexican interests, the United States must show the same respect for Mexico's sovereign quest for a more transparent, accountable and independent judiciary, conducted through our internal constitutional legal procedures. The Mexican people are capable of judging what is in their own best interest. The United States should not disenfranchise them by suggesting otherwise.

It is also worth noting that with the majority obtained in the June elections in Mexico, the president-elect could simply fill the Mexican Supreme Court with loyalists, as leaders do in many other countries. Her support for direct elections of the judiciary is an expression of support for Mexican democracy and for judicial independence from any one administration or leader.

Mexico will remain open to any constructive engagement and exchange of ideas in line with our democratic values as long as those conversations are rooted in the deep respect Mexico and the United States have for each other and their sovereignty. We are neighbors, we are friends and we are partners in growth, building prosperity for our common future.

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The writers have been nominated to serve as secretary of foreign affairs and secretary of economy, respectively, by Claudia Sheinbaum, the president-elect of Mexico.