

# A dangerous sanction spectacle

Trump's threat of tariffs against Mexico could generate even more migrants to U.S.

BY GLADYS MCCORMICK

The question we should all ask is whether President Donald Trump's threat of imposing scaled tariffs on Mexico will go the way he plans — including shutting down the border.

The fallout of such tariffs would be catastrophic to Mexico's economy, thereby worsening the migration north. It also would jeopardize the passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement and have untold effects on the American consumer and the U.S. economy, which is heavily integrated with Mexico, particularly the auto industry. U.S. taxpayers already foot the bill for aid to farmers — Trump signed a \$16 billion bailout last month — to ameliorate the prolonged effects of sanctions against China. Does this mean we have to prepare ourselves for more?

The administration's threat does not recognize the Mexican government's efforts on its southern border. The preceding government of Enrique Peña

Nieto and the current government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador have spent considerable resources at the behest of the U.S. government — including agreeing to allow some Central Americans seeking U.S. asylum to await the resolution of their cases in Mexico. We can only imagine the frustration of Mexican officials at the lack of recognition of their efforts. Likewise, Trump's threats against the asylum process have created a boom business for human traffickers in the northern triangle of Central America; they are capitalizing to get more migrants to pay them for the harrowing journey north. If anything, the Trump administration has contributed to the recent increase in the number of people traveling north.

It is virtually impossible for the Mexican government to implement new initiatives within the time frame Trump demands — initial tariffs of 5 percent on Mexican goods on June 10 that can increase to 25 percent in the coming months. June 10 is less than a week



Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador says he's open to talking with President Donald Trump after his tariff threat.

away. The fact that Trump's demand is not accompanied by assistance from the U.S. government suggests this is a foolhardy mission from the outset.

López Obrador's response so far, reminding Trump of the rules of diplomacy and urging him to look at history, shows that the Mexicans are coming to terms with how to prepare a response to such a surreal threat.

Perhaps López Obrador

hopes the sectors with the most to lose — automotive, construction, agriculture and mining — will call on the Trump administration to cease and desist from yet another foolhardy plan. Mexico is the United States' No. 1 trading partner. Not to mention the fact that our neighbor to the north, Canada, also has invested much in the passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

The issues of the economy and trade have nothing to do with migrants heading north. Trump's initiative underscores the xenophobic fearmongering that has become de facto policy in his administration. It also should raise eyebrows that this decision came right on the heels of special counsel Robert Mueller's statement about Russia's interference in the 2016 elections and intensifying calls for a Trump impeachment. Trump is rallying his base of support with this call for sanctions because it reminds his supporters that he's going to make Mexico pay — if not for the actual wall — by punishing the country.

Sanctions as political spectacle are the height of irresponsibility. They set aside the needs of Americans, not to mention our neighbors to the north and south, who will suffer the effects of such shortsighted policies.



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American, Caribbean and modern Mexican history.



Adrienne Esposito of the Citizens Campaign for the Environment explains in March that the advocacy group found the toxic chemical 1,4-dioxane in 65 of 80 household products it tested.

shampoo, dish soap and body wash.

In addition, this chemical is leaching into Long Island's groundwater, contaminating our coastal environments and our only drinking water source, which makes this situation all the more concerning, since this can cause long-term sickness in

my community.

We need our state representatives to ban 1,4-dioxane from household products. My community of Bethpage already has to deal with the harmful effects of a giant toxic plume in our groundwater. State legislation under consideration to ban 1,4-dioxane is a positive step to

make sure the situation doesn't get worse.

Ashley Flores, Bethpage

Long Island's groundwater has been under attack for a century or more. This is not only the fault of ineffective politicians and greedy industrialists. They are merely a manifestation of our society. We are them.

Many of us know people who spill used motor oil down storm drains, throw noxious chemicals into the kitchen sink and let their cars leak fluids all over the place. The cost of the cleanup is many times the cost of the prevention.

I believe it is actually too late. The aquifers can never be returned to their pristine condition. Chemical plumes can only be contained, maybe. Another reason to move off the Island.

Richard Mordecai, Bay Shore

## Socialism, spending and ageism, too

Writer Elizabeth Bruenig missed the mark in her op-ed, "Young voters love old socialists," by a country mile [Opinion, May 24].

Old socialists, with their "authentic commitment," promise young people the world — free health care, free college tuition, etc. Oh, and let's eliminate student debt.

But who do they think will pay for those freebies? You and me, Joe and Jane Taxpayer.

Young voters, millennials, etc., will be in for a rude awakening someday. If they think the federal deficit is bad now, just wait until "free" reigns! They'll wind up paying for those freebies, too!

John Cilento, Plainview

Rather than using her platform to bring reason and fairness to one of society's most

pervasive issues — ageism — Washington Post columnist Elizabeth Bruenig seemed to resort to stereotypical characterizations as the foundation of her piece.

What might have been a thoughtful column on how blocs of younger voters are attracted to the messages of an experienced and popular politician, her characterization of Bernie Sanders as "old" regrettably served up another example of thoughtless ageism. Why does a group of voters' resonance with the messages of a successful politician have to be reduced to an age thing?

So Ms. Bruenig, since you didn't offer a definition, what does "old" mean to you anyway?

John Imhof, Amityville

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