



The Not-So-Friendly Summit

As Obama Sits Down With His North American Counterparts, His Political And Policy Troubles At Home May Produce An Awkward "Amigos" Summit

Today, Obama Is Meeting With Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto And Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper At The North American "Three Amigos" Leadership Summit. "Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's frustration with U.S. President Barack Obama's failure to approve the Keystone XL pipeline may make this installment of the North America summit, known as the 'Three Amigos,' the frostiest since the annual meetings began almost a decade ago. At the one-day meeting tomorrow in Toluca, Mexico, with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and Harper, Obama is bringing an agenda focused on trade, education, border security and stopping drug trafficking." (Eric Martin And Angela Greiling Keane, "Obama Heads To Mexico Amigos Meeting Strained By Keystone," [Bloomberg](#), 2/18/14)

But Obama's Feet Dragging On Keystone And Ongoing Trade Disputes Have Contributed To Tensions Among The Leaders. "And Ottawa is displeased that Obama has taken five years to make up his mind on its proposed Keystone XL pipeline into the United States with still no decision in sight. Further setting the atmosphere for the one-day summit, Mexico is displeased with Canadian visa policy, and the two countries currently have what Duncan Wood, director of the Mexico Institute at the Wilson Center, calls 'rather frosty relations.' There are, said Wood, 'a number of tensions which have emerged among all the countries,' noting unhappiness by the other leaders at the NSA revelations as well as ongoing trade disputes." (George E. Condon Jr., "Why There Won't Be A 'Three Amigos' Summit This Time Around," [The National Journal](#), 2/18/14)

National Journal Headline: "Why There Won't Be A 'Three Amigos' Summit This Time Around"

(George E. Condon Jr., "Why There Won't Be A 'Three Amigos' Summit This Time Around," [The National Journal](#), 2/18/14)

- **Obama, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, And Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper "Are Not Really Acting Much Like Amigos These Days."** "But Obama is not really the hugging kind. And he, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper are not really acting much like amigos these days." (George E. Condon Jr., "Why There Won't Be A 'Three Amigos' Summit This Time Around," [The National Journal](#), 2/18/14)

AS OBAMA PLANS TO HIGHLIGHT TRADE AT THE SUMMIT, HE CAN'T EVEN GET MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY BEHIND HIS TRADE STRATEGY

"President Barack Obama Will Strive To Come To An Agreement With His Mexican And Canadian Counterparts On The Trans-Pacific Partnership." "President Barack Obama will strive to come to an agreement with his Mexican and Canadian counterparts on the Trans-Pacific Partnership as the three

leaders meet this week to discuss how the members of Nafta will fit into the new, far-reaching trade pact. Mr. Obama, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper will tackle a wide-ranging agenda including security, energy and immigration issues when they gather Wednesday in Toluca, Mexico, for the North American Leaders' Summit. Economic competitiveness and trade also loom large at the one-day meeting, and experts say this is a crucial opportunity for the three countries to resolve to speak with one voice as they continue to negotiate the TPP, a trade bloc that includes 12 countries around the Pacific Rim." (Colleen McCain Nelson, "Obama Seeks Agreement With Mexico, Canada On TPP," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 2/17/14)

However, "Top Democrats Have Rejected The White House's Call For 'Fast Track' Authority." "Still, Mr. Obama is facing opposition to his trade agenda at home, and he is likely to encounter tough questions at the summit about his ability to win Congress's approval for a new trade pact. Top Democrats have rejected the White House's call for "fast track" authority, legislation that would prevent trade agreements with foreign partners from being amended during the congressional approval process--and which would likely ease passage of the TPP." (Colleen McCain Nelson, "Obama Seeks Agreement With Mexico, Canada On TPP," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 2/17/14)

And "Mexican Officials Are Concerned That Mr. Obama Doesn't Seem To Have The Backing From His Own Party For The Trade Pact." "Mexican officials are concerned that Mr. Obama doesn't seem to have the backing from his own party for the trade pact. Many officials and economists in Mexico view the pact as an opportunity for North America as a region to become an export manufacturing powerhouse, using Mexico's low-cost labor and the region's low energy costs to better compete--and slim down the U.S. trade deficit with China." (Colleen McCain Nelson, "Obama Seeks Agreement With Mexico, Canada On TPP," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 2/17/14)

"So The Tougher Fight, For Now, Is Within The President's Own Party." (Paul Courson, "House Dems Disagree With Obama On Trade Issue," [CNN](#), 2/13/14)

Just Last Week, Joe Biden Admitted Congress Would Not Grant Obama Fast-Track Trade Authority

The Huffington Post Headline: "Joe Biden Admits Vast Obama Trade Deals Are On Hold" (Michael McAuliff, Sam Stein, And Sabrina Siddiqui, "Joe Biden Admits Vast Obama Trade Deals Are On Hold," [The Huffington Post](#), 2/14/14)

Joe Biden Acknowledged Congress Would Not Grant Obama Fast-Track Trade Authority. "The White House's trade plans are on hold, at least for now, Vice President Joe Biden said Friday, in welcome news to many Democrats who oppose the sweeping deals. ...After speaking to lawmakers at a Democratic policy retreat in Cambridge, Md., Biden acknowledged that Obama would not get his trade authority any time soon, in spite of having pushed for it in his recent State of the Union address. 'Nancy, I know it's not coming up now,' Biden said to Pelosi, according to a Democratic aide in the room." (Michael McAuliff, Sam Stein, And Sabrina Siddiqui, "Joe Biden Admits Vast Obama Trade Deals Are On Hold," [The Huffington Post](#), 2/14/14)

The Democratic Leadership In The Senate And House Have Voiced Opposition To The Fast-Track Authority Bill

The Top Democrats In The Senate And House Have Expressed Opposition To A Bill Granting Obama Fast-Track Trade Authority. "The top Democrats in the U.S. Senate and the House have expressed opposition to a bill that would give the Obama administration room to clinch overseas trade agreements such as the TPP, subject to expedited approval in Congress." (William Maudlin, "As Obama Meets Neighbors, Nafta Critics Warn Over New Trade Deal," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 2/13/14)

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) Said Granting Obama Fast-Track Authority Was "Out Of The Question." "Last month, the Senate majority leader, Harry Reid of Nevada, said he had no

plans to schedule a vote on trade promotion authority. On Wednesday, Ms. Pelosi told reporters that giving Mr. Obama that authority was ‘out of the question.’” (Mark Lander And Jonathan Weisman, “Trade Pact With Asia Faces Imposing Hurdle: Midterm Politics,” [The New York Times](#), 2/14/14)

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) Refuses To Commit To Bring The President’s Bill To The Floor. “On the Senate side, Majority Leader Harry Reid refused on Tuesday to commit to bringing the bill to the floor even if the Finance Committee reports it out. “There’s a lot of controversy on that, and I’m going to see how that plays out with my caucus and with the Senate,” the Nevada Democrat said at a news conference after his party’s weekly caucus lunch.” (Eric Bradner, “Hill Democrats MIA On Obama Trade Agenda,” [Politico](#), 1/15/14)

IT’S NO WONDER EVERYONE IS NERVOUS: ON TRADE, OBAMA GOES WHERE THE WIND TAKES HIM

The Washington Post: “Obama Has A Mixed History On Trade.” “Obama has a mixed history on trade. As a candidate in 2008, he questioned whether free-trade pacts give an edge to countries with low labor and environmental standards and criticized the North American Free Trade Agreement. Later in the campaign, however, he strongly endorsed trade agreements that addressed labor and environmental concerns.” (Zachary Goldfarb and Lori Montgomery, “Obama Gets Win As Congress Passes Free-Trade Agreement,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/12/11)

- **Obama “Was Seen As Indifferent To Trade Agreements When First Elected.”** “Obama, who was seen as indifferent to trade agreements when first elected in 2008, tied both negotiations to his flagging five-year goal of doubling exports to more than \$3 trillion in 2014.” (Doug Palmer, “President Obama Speaks Out On Trade Promotion Authority,” [Politico](#), 9/19/13)

Obama Opposed NAFTA While Running For President, But Quickly Changed His Tone Once Elected

While Running For President Obama Said That He Didn’t Think NAFTA Had Been Beneficial For America. OBAMA: “In her campaign for Senate, she said that NAFTA, on balance, had been good for New York and good for America. I disagree with that. I think that it did not have the labor standards and environmental standards that were required in order to not just be good for Wall Street but also be good for Main Street.” (Senator Barack Obama, [2008 Democrat Primary Debate](#), Cleveland, OH, 2/26/08)

- **Obama Said That He Would Threaten To Leave NAFTA In Order To Force Renegotiations Of The Trade Agreement.** OBAMA: “I will make sure that we renegotiate, in the same way that Senator Clinton talked about. And I think actually Senator Clinton’s answer on this one is right. I think we should use the hammer of a potential opt-out as leverage to ensure that we actually get labor and environmental standards that are enforced.” (Senator Barack Obama, [2008 Democrat Primary Debate](#), Cleveland, OH, 2/26/08)

Less Than Two Months Into His Presidency, Obama Dropped Plans To Reopen NAFTA Negotiations To Add The Labor And Environmental Protections That Had He Promised During His Campaign. “The administration has no present plans to reopen negotiations on the North American Free Trade Agreement to add labor and environmental protections, as President Obama vowed to do during his campaign, the top trade official said on Monday.” (Brian Knowlton, “Obama Doesn’t Plan To Reopen NAFTA Talks,” [The New York Times](#), 4/20/09)

AND OBAMA’S DELAYS ON KEYSTONE HAVE FURTHER “STRAINED” RELATIONS

Bloomberg Headline: “Obama Heads To Mexico Amigos Meeting Strained By Keystone” (Eric Martin And Angela Greiling Keane, “Obama Heads To Mexico Amigos Meeting Strained By Keystone,” [Bloomberg](#), 2/18/14)

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Frustration With Obama Over Keystone May Make This Summit "The Frostiest Since The Annual Meetings Began Almost A Decade Ago." "Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's frustration with U.S. President Barack Obama's failure to approve the Keystone XL pipeline may make this installment of the North America summit, known as the 'Three Amigos,' the frostiest since the annual meetings began almost a decade ago." (Eric Martin And Angela Greiling Keane, "Obama Heads To Mexico Amigos Meeting Strained By Keystone," [Bloomberg](#), 2/18/14)

- **Twenty Years After NAFTA Took Effect, The U.S. And Canada "Are At Loggerheads" Over Keystone.** "Yet 20 years after the North American Free Trade Agreement took effect, the U.S. and Canada are at loggerheads over a \$5.4 billion collaboration that would carry oil south from the thick sands of Alberta to American refineries along the Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana." (Eric Martin And Angela Greiling Keane, "Obama Heads To Mexico Amigos Meeting Strained By Keystone," [Bloomberg](#), 2/18/14)

Harper: Obama Has "Punted" On Keystone. "'He's punted,' Harper said of Obama in an interview at an event today hosted by the Vancouver Board of Trade. 'He said, 'Maybe.'" (Andrew Mayeda And Christopher Donville, "Harper Says Obama Punting Won't Stop Keystone XL," [Bloomberg](#), 1/6/14)

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After Years Of Dodging, Obama Has Run Out Of Reasons To Continue Delaying A Keystone Decision

For Years, Obama Has Been Able To "Dodge Rendering A Verdict" On Keystone. "The new State Department report that discounted most of the environmental community's warnings about the Keystone XL oil pipeline puts the final decision on the project closer to Obama's desk, after years in which he's been able to dodge rendering a verdict." (Darren Goode And Darren Samuelsohn, "Keystone Foes Pinning Final Hopes On Obama," [Politico](#), 2/1/14)

- **Keystone Remains In Limbo, "Stuck In A Complex Regulatory Process That Has Enabled Obama To Put Off What Will Inevitably Be A Politically Explosive Decision."** "Five years after the pipeline's backers first asked the Obama administration for approval, the project remains in limbo, stuck in a complex regulatory process that has enabled Obama to put off what will inevitably be a politically explosive decision." (Nedra Pickler And Josh Lederman, "Obama Running Out Of Reasons To Reject Keystone XL," [The Associated Press](#), 2/1/14)

But The Release Of The State Department's Environmental Impact Report "Removes A Major Excuse For Delay." "But the release Friday of a long-awaited government report removes a major excuse for delay, ramping up pressure on the president to make a call." (Nedra Pickler And Josh Lederman, "Obama Running Out Of Reasons To Reject Keystone XL," [The Associated Press](#), 2/1/14)

- **The Associated Press Headline: "Obama Running Out Of Reasons To Reject Keystone XL"** (Nedra Pickler And Josh Lederman, "Obama Running Out Of Reasons To Reject Keystone XL," [The Associated Press](#), 2/1/14)

The State Department Report "Discounted Most Of The Environmental Community's Warnings" About Keystone. "The new State Department report that discounted most of the environmental community's warnings about the Keystone XL oil pipeline puts the final decision on the project closer to Obama's desk, after years in which he's been able to dodge rendering a verdict." (Darren Goode And Darren Samuelsohn, "Keystone Foes Pinning Final Hopes On Obama," [Politico](#), 2/1/14)

Perhaps Obama Should Listen To His Former Advisers And Approve The Keystone Pipeline

"Former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar Says He Believes The Keystone XL Oil Pipeline From Canada Should Be Built." (Matthew Daly, "Salazar: Build Keystone XL Pipeline," [The Associated Press](#), 2/5/14)

Salazar Said The Keystone Pipeline Could Be Built Safely. “Salazar said at an energy conference in Houston Wednesday that the pipeline could be built safely, as long as conditions are imposed. Those conditions would require the pipeline operator to meet tough environmental standards and even pay for conservation programs along the pipeline route.” (Matthew Daly, “Salazar: Build Keystone XL Pipeline,” [The Associated Press](#), 2/5/14)

- **Salazar: Keystone Could Be A “Win-Win” That Benefits U.S. Energy Security While Boosting Conservation Efforts.** “Salazar told The Associated Press that the pipeline could be a ‘win-win’ project that benefits U.S. energy security while boosting conservation efforts in Montana, South Dakota and other affected states.” (Matthew Daly, “Salazar: Build Keystone XL Pipeline,” [The Associated Press](#), 2/5/14)

Former Obama National Security Advisor Tom Donilon: I Would Recommend That Obama Approve Keystone Pipeline. WALTER ISAACSON: “I know you’re not in the administration anymore, so maybe you could answer. Would you recommend for the Keystone pipeline if you were there?” DONILON: “You know, I would.” (Tom Donilon, [Remarks At Aspen Institute Forum](#), Washington, D.C., 1/7/14)