MIRANDA INTELLIGENCE

Public Affairs Chatter

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Steady as She Goes: Sheinbaum Signals Strategic Continuity from the Zócalo

President Claudia Sheinbaum's October 5 address from the Zócalo, marking her first year in office, was both a domestic rally (with maybe hundreds of thousands of supporters bused in) and a foreign policy calibration (geared in part to her domestic audience). Delivered without new legislative proposals or major announcements, the speech reinforced continuity with a deliberate tilt: affirm ties with Washington, while signaling Mexico's intent to diversify strategic alignments beyond the North American perimeter.

The language was measured. "We have friends in every region of the world," Sheinbaum noted, casting Mexico's diplomatic posture as open and plural. The framing wasn't anti-U.S.—but it was notedly *not* U.S.-centric either. Officials later described the approach as "two-track": safeguard integration under the USMCA, while expanding commercial and technological corridors with Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

The aim might be considered three-fold. First to signal an attempt to reduce exposure to U.S. political and economic cycles without compromising economic access to the US. Second, to keep onside more nationalist elements of Morena who might be wary (and in some cases afraid) of constant concessions to Trump. And third, send a measured message to the Trump administration that Mexico also has complementary alternatives to the US-centric policies, and thus should not push too hard.

The message aligns with Mexico's external economic narrative (even if big tariff increases on China, Brazil and South Korea imports might not be fully consistent with this non-U.S. reach out). Sheinbaum positioned fiscal discipline and social investment as the dual foundations of international credibility, linking domestic macroeconomic stability with attractiveness to non-U.S. capital. Key sectors—semiconductors, electromobility, AI, and satellite technologies—were presented as instruments of "technological sovereignty," with targeted partnerships flagged across Japan, South Korea, Spain, and Brazil.

Analytically, the move shifts diversification from rhetoric to roadmap. While Sheinbaum reiterated support for U.S.-led supply chains, she underscored that energy transition and digital infrastructure would increasingly hinge on multipolar cooperation. A broader basket of trade and industrial alliances, she implied, could serve as insulation—not rejection—of U.S. dependence.

Fact-checking groups flagged overstatements on medicine coverage and energy self-sufficiency. But the tone was notably restrained. More institutional than populist, the address appeared calibrated for both foreign counterparts, and her domestic constituencies. But in the end it was just a speech, and Mexico's dependence on the U.S. cannot be wished away with words, however wisely chosen.

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Amparo 2.0: Streamlining Justice, Testing Limits

What began as a legal tweak to Mexico's amparo system turned into a live stress-test of internal politics. Adán Augusto López, the Senate embattled majority leader facing mounting corruption scandals, and the former interior minister under López Obrador, sought to push through Amparo reform without public hearings, citing efficiency—a decision that some viewed as emblematic of Morena's centralized approach.

Two days later, that message was quietly edited. Public hearings were announced. The reversal also acknowledged pressure—from within. Javier Corral, the Justice Commission chair and an unlikely Morena ally, had complained. Once a PAN senator, Corral framed the reform not as modernization, but as a potential breach of constitutional safeguards.

Then came the real turbulence. Senator Manuel Huerta introduced a transitory clause in the dead of night—retroactive application to pending cases. Constitutional lawyers barely had time to react before it passed in the Senate. Article 14 of the constitution prohibits retroactive laws that harm individuals. Huerta's amendment practically invited litigation.

Sheinbaum moved quickly. In her morning briefing, she distanced herself from the amendment, rejecting retroactivity and urging the Chamber of Deputies to restore constitutional compliance. Arturo Zaldívar followed, arguing the clause was procedural, not substantive—but conceded it would have to go. It was a technical defense wrapped in political alignment.

In a press conference at the Chamber of Deputies, Ricardo Monreal, leader of Morena's parliamentary group, affirmed that the Justice Commission would now review it in the lower house. He acknowledged a delay in sending the bill. Still, he denied any irregularities, stating that debates over possible corrections (such as an errata) were resolved appropriately by sending the original, unaltered version.

Monreal stressed that any significant change—like the controversial transitional clause affecting pending legal cases—cannot be corrected through a mere *fe de erratas*, which is typically reserved for technical adjustments and not substantive legal content. He affirmed that the reviewing commission has full authority to examine and, if necessary, modify the bill's contents in accordance with constitutional procedures. The legislator also underscored the need for transparency and constitutional alignment, echoing recent the president's remarks.

Six Decrees, One Direction: Sheinbaum's Energy Framework Comes into Focus

On the evening of October 3, the federal government quietly published six regulatory decrees that, taken together, establish the energy governance model for President Claudia Sheinbaum's administration. Covering hydrocarbons, electricity, geothermal energy, biofuels, and sector-wide planning—alongside fiscal changes to the Hydrocarbons Revenue Law—the package consolidates institutional authority around the Energy Ministry (SENER) and the Finance Ministry. It also formalizes a strategic shift: a state-led transition that reasserts Pemex and CFE as central to Mexico's energy future.

The decrees introduce the concept of "Energy Justice" as a cross-sectoral principle, reinforcing social equity as a guiding criterion for infrastructure investment, fuel supply, and tariff structures. Planning is now "binding" (*vinculante*) meaning that regulatory actions and private permits must align with state-defined priorities and timelines. While private investment remains part of the equation, the model limits discretionary space and codifies a more hierarchical coordination between public and private actors.

The Mexico office of the prestigious law firm Holland & Knight provided some excellent analysis of the various decrees which we summarize here, but recommend reading the full documents:

- The Hydrocarbons regulation replaces the 2014 framework and details how the state will run exploration, extraction, transport, storage, distribution, marketing and retail. SENER, SHCP, Economy, the new CNE and ASEA split duties. Pemex keeps exclusive "desarrollo propio" areas and can partner under "desarrollo mixto" with floor rules and content targets; contracts remain exceptional. It adds a five-year permit for fuel blending, tightens control and sanctions, preserves open access to infrastructure, and sets social impact and consultation requirements.

- The Electricity regulation implements the 2025 law, making planning binding and confirming CFE must generate at least 54% of power. SENER, CNE and CENACE lead planning, permits and system operation. It defines three generation modes, raises the exempt threshold to 0.7 MW, sets 60-day permit timelines, and allows priority projects. Developers need a social impact authorization and, when relevant, prior consultation. It enforces open access with cost contributions, grows national content, and calibrates sanctions by severity.

- The Planning and Energy Transition regulation creates a binding planning spine for the sector. SENER leads with instruments for short, medium and long term: a National Transition Strategy, backed by a Planning Council and technical committees. Authorities must use these plans when issuing contracts and permits. It sets quantitative clean-energy and efficiency goals, aligns with international pledges, builds a national energy data system, creates a high-use registry, and enables inspections and penalties.

- The new Bio combustibles regulation, published Oct. 3, 2025, sets rules for producing, storing, transporting, importing, exporting, selling and retailing biofuels. SENER, SEMARNAT and SADER oversee permits, traceability, mandatory logs, and compliance. It bars forest-to-farm land-use changes, requires environmental safeguards, and allows suspensions, closures and fines for breaches. It defines national-content metrics and creates voluntary sustainability recognition. It repeals the 2009 rulebook and gives existing permit holders 365 days to align.

Customs Overhaul: Agents Get the Audit, Institutions Get a Pass

The Sheinbaum administration's customs reform cleared another hurdle on October 6, as the Chamber of Deputies' Finance Commission approved a revised version of the draft. The original initiative, pitched

as a technical modernization to combat contraband, has quietly evolved into a broader realignment of power—with agents under scrutiny and institutions largely left untouched.

The reform alters 65 articles, adds 44, and repeals nine. Central to the overhaul is the creation of the National Customs Council, a new supervisory body chaired by the Finance Ministry, with representatives from tax collection agency SAT, the National Customs Agency (ANAM), and the Anti-Corruption Ministry. It's framed as a coordination effort, but critics see it as a consolidation play—shifting regulatory discretion into a tighter executive loop.

Lawmakers softened the original draft in key ways. Agent licenses, initially capped at 10 years, now extend to 20 and can be renewed for the same period. Certification requirements were eased from every two years to every three. The rationale from Morena is to "provide certainty to those who've invested in infrastructure and training." But the core premise remains: agents now share legal liability for import errors—while public officials continue operating without comparable scrutiny.

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