

US-Mexico Delegation: Jan 23 - Jan 24, 2023  
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**Ms. Kathi Lynn Austin**, Executive Director, Conflict Awareness Project; Principal Researcher, U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Project

Kathi Lynn Austin is an internationally recognized expert on arms trafficking, peace and security, and human rights. She is founder and Executive Director of the Conflict Awareness Project, a non profit dedicated to investigating, exposing, and bringing to justice major arms traffickers, war profiteering networks, and transnational criminal operations that fuel war, armed conflict and environmental devastation around the world. She is also a fellow at the Human Rights Center/ University of California Berkeley.

For over 30 years, Ms. Austin has carried out original, precedent-setting field investigations into the illegal weapons trade, trafficking operations, terrorism, the illegal wildlife trade, and natural resource exploitation, that has spanned Africa, Latin America, East and Central Europe, and South Asia. Her work has been featured and she has been a guest expert on major media worldwide, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, CNN, Al Jazeera, NPR, PRI and the BBC. She has produced award-winning documentaries, and in 2011, she was named "Arms Control Person of the Year"

Ms. Austin previously served as an arms expert for the United Nations Security Council and Chief of Joint Mission Analysis for UN Peacekeeping Missions as well as a consultant for a broad array of multilateral institutions and non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group, the Fund for Peace, and the Open Society Justice Initiative.



**Judge Robert C. Bonner**, Former United States District Judge, Former Administrator of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Former Commissioner of the United States Customs and Border Protection and Senior Principal of Bonner ADR & Consulting Group

Robert C. Bonner is the principal of Bonner ADR & Consulting Services where he serves as a neutral arbitrator and mediator of international disputes. He is a retired partner of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher and the former senior principal of the Sentinel HS Group, LLC, a Washington, D.C.-based homeland security consulting firm that provides strategic advice regarding homeland and border security issues.

Judge Bonner has extensive government service. In September 2001 Judge Bonner was appointed by President George W. Bush as the Commissioner of the U.S. Customs Service, and, after the homeland security reorganization of 2002, Bonner served as the first Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the agency of the Department of Homeland Security responsible for managing and securing U.S. borders while facilitating trade and travel. Prior to that, Mr. Bonner's government service included Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U. S. District Judge, and the United States Attorney for the Central District of California. He also served on active duty in the U.S. Navy JAGC.

Judge Bonner is the chair of the Civilian Oversight Commission for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and was the chair of the California Commission on Judicial Performance. He currently serves on the board of trustees of the California Institute of Technology and chairs its Audit and Compliance Committee. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Pacific Council on International Policy and was co-chair of the Pacific Council's Binational Task Force regarding management of the U.S.-Mexico Border. He is a former member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council.

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**Mr. Michael Casey**, Chairman of the Board, Whittier Trust Companies of California and Nevada

Mike is the Chairman of the Board of the Whittier Trust Companies of California and Nevada. For the past 25 years, he has guided the firm's transition from a family office to a multi-client family office and private trust company. This unique approach to wealth management combines the best aspects of a corporate fiduciary, world-class asset manager, and traditional family office.

Prior to joining Whittier in 1990, Mike spent more than 20 years with diverse financial services providers where he was responsible for delivering and managing private banking, trusts, investments, and legal services.

He received his Bachelor's degree from St. Mary's College and completed postgraduate work in the business schools of De Paul University and The University of Wisconsin. He earned his JD degree cum laude from Chicago Kent College of Law.

Mike is a member of the California Club, Annandale Golf Club, Twenty-One Fund, Checkered Flag 200 of the Petersen Auto Museum, a member of the Board of Governors for Providence Saint Joseph Foundation, Rolls Royce Collectors Club, LaSalle Driver's Club, The 100 Club of Los Angeles, a Regent at St. Mary's College, and a past Advisory Board member to the Family Office Exchange. Mike has recently been elected to the board of Musique, a local charity that utilizes music to help the disadvantaged.



**Dr. Richard D. Downie**, President, World Affairs Council of Orange County and Chair, Pacific Council Mexico Initiative

Dr. Richard Downie is President of the World Affairs Council of Orange County, California. He also Chairs the Advisory Board of the Pacific Council on International Policy's Mexico Initiative, and is a member of the Boards of the World Hwa Rang Do Association (a non-profit martial art, and Westport Construction Incorporated. Additionally, he is a member of the Faculties of the Thayer Leader Development Group at West Point, NY, and Missouri State University's Defense and Strategic Studies Program. Dr. Downie is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Following a distinguished career in the US Army, Dr. Downie was Director of the U.S. Department of Defense's Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies in Washington D.C. for nine years.

A graduate of the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, he holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Southern California. Dr. Downie has appeared on CNN/E, Univision, Telemundo, Bloomberg, NPR, France24 and other media outlets as a commentator on international security issues.

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**Ms. Nastasha Everheart**, Vice President of Engagement, Pacific Council on International Policy

As Managing Director of Strategy and Operations, Nastasha Everheart creates, implements, and measures institution-wide strategic and operational plans, helps develop and execute the Council's impact agenda, and oversees the Council's initiative to improve the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship. Prior to assuming her role in strategy, she served as Interim Director of Programs, where she incubated programs related to city diplomacy and the Sustainable Development Goals. She also led the Council's membership department for nearly a decade. As a member of the executive management team, she retains her role as a key advocate and community organizer for the Council.

Prior to joining the Pacific Council, Nastasha worked as a human rights advocate focusing on impunity and gender-based violence in Guatemala. Nastasha has Bachelor's degrees in International Studies and Spanish from the University of Idaho and a Master's degree in Public Diplomacy from the Annenberg School at USC. She is a Spanish speaker and a Latin America expert specializing in U.S. relations with Mexico, Central America's Northern Triangle, and the Andean region. She hails from Northern Idaho, where she (a) was the first person in her family to graduate from college; and (b) developed a (now hidden) talent for the lumberjack sport of log rolling.



**Mr. Richard B. Goetz**, Co-Chair of the Pacific Council on International Policy; Partner at O'Melveny & Meyers LLP\*

Richard B. Goetz is Co-Chair of the Pacific Council on International Policy's Board of Directors. He also Co-Chairs the Council's Guantanamo Task Force, and was the Council's first official observer of the US military proceedings against those charged with planning the 9/11 attacks. He presided over the creation of the Guantanamo Task Force's two unanimous reports, which led to congressional adoption of recommendations aimed at enhancing transparency and participation. He has also joined several of the Council's trip delegations, and co-authored the report for the delegation to North Korea.

Rich is a partner at O'Melveny & Myers LLP, where he is the Global Co-Chair of the Litigation Department and a member of the Executive Committee. He writes frequently on legal issues, and has lectured at Harvard Law School and the UCLA School of Engineering and Applied Science. He is Chair of the Board of Directors of Volunteers of America of Los Angeles, and serves on the Board of Advisors of the Saks Institute for Mental Health Law, Policy, and Ethics at USC Gould School of Law. In 2015 he was elected to the American Law Institute. Rich received an A.B. in 1981 *summa cum laude* from Dartmouth College and a J.D. in 1984 from the University of Chicago Law School, where he served as an editor of its Law Review.

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**Dr. Jerrold D. Green, President & CEO, Pacific Council on International Policy**

Dr. Jerrold D. Green is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Council on International Policy in Los Angeles. He is concurrently a Research Professor at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Green was previously a Partner at Best Associates in Dallas, Texas, a privately held merchant banking firm with global operations. He also occupied a number of senior management positions at the RAND Corporation where he served as the Director of International Programs and Development and was awarded the RAND Medal for Excellence. Dr. Green has a B.A. (summa cum laude) from the University of Massachusetts/Boston, as well as an M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago.

His academic career began at the University of Michigan where he was a professor in the Department of Political Science and the Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies. He subsequently joined the University of Arizona where he became a Professor of Political Science and Sociology as well as Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

Green has lived and worked in Egypt, where he was a Fulbright Fellow, Iran, and Israel. He has lectured on six continents and been a visiting fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Science's West Asian Studies Center in Beijing; a visiting lecturer at the Havana based Center for African and Middle East Studies (CEAMO), a fellow at the Australian Defense College, and delivered papers at conferences sponsored by the Iranian Institute of International Affairs in Tehran. Dr. Green led three U.S. Department of Defense sponsored Pacific Council delegations to Afghanistan and another to Iraq as well as Pacific Council delegations to China, Cuba, Israel, Japan, North Korea, Turkey, South Sudan, Myanmar, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, and numerous other countries. He has represented the Pacific Council as an observer at the legal proceedings being conducted at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Green is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the London based International Institute for Strategic Studies, The California Club, the Lincoln Club, the Advisory Board of the Center for Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California, and the Bill Richardson Center for Diplomacy/FBI Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell Influencers Group. He has served on the Selection Committee for the U.S. Department of State Herbert Salzman Award for Excellence in International Economic Performance by a Foreign Service Officer. Green serves as a member of the Agenda Committee for the annual Halifax International Security Forum where he is an HFX Fellow. Dr. Green has been a Reserve Deputy Sheriff with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department for over a decade and was accorded the department's Meritorious Service Award. He previously served as a Specialist Reserve Officer with the Los Angeles Police Department where he advised on terrorism and intelligence issues.

Green was honored in 2019 by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce with its World Trade Week Stanley T. Olafson Bronze Plaque Award that honors "a member of the international trade community whose outstanding dedication, efforts and achievements have advanced trade in the Southern California region."

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Dr. Green is currently an International Medical Corps Ambassador, serves on the Los Angeles Steering Committee of the USA Eisenhower Fellowships, and for over a decade was a member of the selection committee for the Charlotte W. Newcombe Fellowships conferred by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. He served for 8 years as a member of the United States Secretary of the Navy Advisory Panel where he was awarded the Department of the Navy, Distinguished Civilian Service Award for his service.

Green also served multiple terms on the U.S. Department of State Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy (ACIEP), the Board of Directors of the California Club, the Advisory Committee of The Asia Society of Southern California, the Advisory Board of Whitney International University, the Board of Falcon Waterfree Technologies, and the Board of Columbia University's Middle East Institute. Dr. Green is a technical advisor to Activision Publishing in Santa Monica, California, where he has consulted on the highly successful Call of Duty series.



**Mr. Jessie Hernandez**, Artificial Intelligence Lead at Capgemini Government Solutions  
Washington, D.C

Jessie Hernandez is a recognized leader in national security and emerging technology. He was integral to creating the U.S Government's data framework for identifying, tracking, and reunifying over 3,000 migrant families at the overturn of the zero-tolerance policy. His policy experience includes service at the Department of Homeland Security and as a member of White House taskforces during the Obama Administration. During his time in government, Jessie led large and complex initiatives to improve intelligence sharing in remote areas of the U.S. to strengthen America's security posture. Now at Capgemini, Jessie is committed to bridging the public sector to data, technology, Machine Learning, and Artificial Intelligence to achieve the same. In his current role, he leads an energetic and ambitious team of analytics professionals and data scientists responsible for helping and partnering with public sector organizations to unlock and realize the value of their investments in data. Among Jessie's accomplishments are becoming a Pacific Council on International Policy member and being recognized as a national security and foreign policy next-generation leader by New America. He has also been listed in the Huffington Post's: 40 under 40 Latinos in Foreign Policy.

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**Ms. Margarita Paláu-Hernández, Esq.**, Founder and CEO of Hernández Ventures,

Ms. Paláu-Hernández is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Hernández Ventures, a privately held enterprise involved in Spanish media, business and real estate ventures. Ms. Paláu-Hernández serves on the boards of directors of Xerox Holdings Corporation, Conduent Incorporated and Apartment Income REIT Corp., also known as AIR Communities. She previously served on the boards of Occidental Petroleum, Herbalife Nutrition, Ltd. and ALJ Regional Holdings, Inc. In September of 2018, Ms. Paláu-Hernández was nominated to serve as a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventy-third Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations with the personal rank of Ambassador. Prior to founding Hernandez Ventures, Ms. Paláu-Hernández was an attorney with the law firm of McCutcheon, Black, Verleger & Shea.

In addition to her professional responsibilities, Ms. Paláu-Hernández serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum of the American Latino at the Smithsonian, Chair of the Yale School of Management Council of Global Advisors, ex-officio Board Member of the Yale School of Management Board of Advisors. She also serves on the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center Board of Advisors and is a founding Board Member of UCLA Law Women L.E.A.D. She previously served as a Board Member and currently a Trustee Emeritus of UCLA School of Law Board of Advisors and the University of San Diego Board of Trustees.

Ms. Paláu-Hernández was born in Mexico where she received her primary and secondary education. She completed her education in the United States, earning a bachelor's degree, magna cum laude, from the University of San Diego and a Juris Doctor degree from UCLA School of Law.



**Ms. Kristen Hodess**, Managing Director, Pacific Council on International Policy

As Managing Director, Kristen oversees administrative strategy for the Pacific Council, leading all operational functions for the organization including finance, accounting, real estate, tech, legal, and other B2B relationships. Her responsibilities include investigating and implementing strategies that optimize operational efficiency, developing annual operating plans that support the Council's strategic plan, monitoring work trends and advising executive management team on future staffing and operational models. She supports CEO with annual budget development and management and serves as HR liaison between the Pacific Council and USC.

Kristen comes to the Pacific Council with over ten years of corporate management experience from Disney and KPMG, as well as over fifteen years of non-profit management experience at Barnsdall Arts. She holds an MBA from The Anderson School at UCLA, Master of Architecture from Yale University, and Bachelor of Arts from Wellesley College. She is a longtime volunteer at Hollywood Food Coalition, as well as an amateur flutist and a devoted yoga student.

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**Consul General Youngwan Kim**, Consul General, Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Los Angeles\*

Youngwan Kim is a career diplomat who joined the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Korea in 1993. He worked at various Ministries of the Korean Government, including Foreign Ministry, Unification Ministry, and Office for Government Policy Coordination, Prime Minister's Office. Prior to his current post as Consul General in LA, he served as Director-General for National Security and Foreign Policy at the Prime Minister's office. He also worked as Director-General for Planning and Management of the Foreign Ministry. His most recent foreign post was a Member of the Panel of Experts, UN Security Council Sanctions Committee at the United Nations headquarters. His foreign posts also include Washington D.D. New York, Beijing and Baghdad.

Mr. Kim graduated from Yonsei University in 1992 and received a masters degree from the University of Virginia in 2001. He is married with one daughter and one son.



**Sheriff Jim McDonnell**, Sheriff (ret.), Los Angeles County, CA, Sheriff's Department

Jim McDonnell has served for almost forty years in the public safety profession. He is the first person to serve in senior executive leadership positions in the three largest policing agencies in Los Angeles County: the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), and the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD). During his tenure, all three agencies saw a reduction in crime and improved police-community relations.

McDonnell began his career with the LAPD, serving twenty-nine years holding every rank up to First Assistant Chief of Police. Early in his tenure, McDonnell played an integral role in developing a framework that transformed the LAPD into a thought leader in community policing strategies. In 2010, he retired from the LAPD and became Chief of the LBPD. In 2014, McDonnell was elected as the thirty-second Sheriff of Los Angeles County, leading the largest sheriff's department in the U.S. with over 18,000 employees and managed an annual budget of over \$3.3 billion dollars. This was an agency shaken by scandal and, in his four-year term, McDonnell was able to restore public trust, institutionalize systems of accountability, and work collaboratively and effectively with federal, state and, local agencies to combat human trafficking and terrorism among other regional challenges.

McDonnell inherited the nation's largest jail system, which had come under a federal consent decree due to a pattern or practice of inadequate mental health care and excessive force in violation of inmates' civil rights. McDonnell's administration restored a culture of professionalism and respect, thereby substantially changing it to become a model for large jail systems.

McDonnell is a respected voice on local, state, and national criminal justice issues. He has served as Vice President of the Major County Sheriffs of America; President of the California Peace Officers' Association; President of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association; a board member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police; a board member of the Peace Officers' Association of Los Angeles County; a member of the Major Cities Chiefs Association; and as a member of the California Commission on Peace Officers' Standards & Training (POST).

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After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice from St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, McDonnell obtained a master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California. He is also a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Executive Institute and has completed executive education programs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

In 2019, McDonnell Strategies Group was formed to advise public and private sector clients across the nation on a diverse range of issues involving public safety and leadership development.



**Bishop Juan Carlos Mendez, Founder, Churches in Action**

Bishop Juan Carlos Mendez, was born in Guatemala and migrated to the United States of America in 1976 to Los Angeles, California, where he resides and has been locally engaged as an advocate for social justice for over 30 years. As founder and president of Churches for Action, he oversees a coalition of 2300 churches, who mobilize on behalf of the needy and destitute. He has founded 40 churches, including the "Dream Center", formerly Bethel Temple Los Angeles, heads the Annual Mayor's Inter-Faith Prayer Breakfast in Los Angeles, has worked on the U.S. Congressional Forum on Immigration and has organized hundreds of Prayer Breakfasts for elected officials at the municipal, state and national levels. In Washington D.C., he has hosted Congressional summits. He serves on the board of numerous boards both nationally and internationally.

After his graduation from Vanguard University in 1990 with a degree in theology and Liberal Arts, Bishop Mendez completed two master degrees: Multicultural Education, Public Administration, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Bishop Mendez was ordained in the Assembly of God denomination, and has served in numerous capacities during his ministry. Mendez' passion leads him to train pastors both nationally and internationally, where he is frequently called upon to speak at leadership conferences. Bishop Mendez is also a prominent media figure, from 1996 to 1999 was the host of the Spanish language radio show "Guerreros del Tercer Milenio" which aired twice daily reaching millions throughout the U.S, has founded different TV stations and is frequently featured on national TV.

In his early career years, Bishop Mendez served in the Los Angeles Unified School District as a k-12 teacher and administrator at different high schools and downtown Los Angeles Schools as schools administrator. Bishop Mendez is also known as an entrepreneur, at the age of 17 he started a number of successful small businesses.



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**Ms. Alicia Miñana, CEO, Law Offices of Alicia Miñana\***

Alicia Miñana was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She attended and graduated from Princeton University with an A.B. in Biology and a Certificate of Proficiency in Latin American Studies. She obtained her Juris Doctor from the UCLA School of Law.

Alicia is a member of the UCLA Foundation Board, the Advisory Board of the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, and the Advisory Board of UCLA Law School. Alicia is the founding Chair of the Board of Directors for the Learning Rights Law Center. Recently, Alicia was appointed to co-chair the Capital Leadership Committee for Princeton University. Alicia is also a member of Pacific Council on International Policy, and is a trustee of The Nature Conservancy's Caribbean program. She is a founding family Trustee member of Vistamar School, an independent school in the South Bay of Los Angeles. Alicia is the former chair of the Diversity and Access Committee for the school and currently continues as a member of the Committee.

Alicia Miñana has spent 25 years as a practicing attorney. She has worked with the National Labor Relations Board and with national law firms, as well as in firms located in Singapore and Puerto Rico. She also worked with the legal team of Human Rights Watch while she resided in London during 2012. When not practicing law or serving on boards, her favorite pastime is racing on her sailboat Dark&Stormy with her competitive crew. She also is an avid zumba fan and loves watching all sports including golf.



**Ms. Alejandra Palacios, Former Chair, Mexican Antitrust Agency**

Ms. Alejandra Palacios is a Senior Fellow of the University of Southern California (USC) Price School of Public Policy and an affiliate expert on competition and antitrust for The Brattle Group. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Grupo Aeroportuario del Pacífico (NYSE: PAC; BMV: GAP) and Seguros Monterrey New York Life. From September 2013 until September 2021, Alejandra was Chair of the Mexican antitrust agency (COFECE). At a Ministry-level government position, she was the first woman to preside over the agency, directing a team of 450 professionals.

Ms. Palacios served as the Vice President of the International Competition Network, the premier global organization on antitrust made up of 140 competition authorities. She was also a member of the Board of the Competition Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). At present, she is a member of the Trilateral Commission, the Pacific Council on International Policy and the Mexican chapter of the International Women's Forum (IWF).

She was born in Mexico in December 1975 and lives in Los Angeles, California.

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**Dr. Jack Riley**, Vice President and Director, RAND Homeland Security Research Division; Director, Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center  
Pittsburgh Office

Ph.D. in public policy analysis, Pardee RAND Graduate School; M.S. in foreign service, Georgetown University; B.A. in economics and Russian, University of Michigan.

Jack Riley is vice president and director of RAND's Homeland Security Research Division. He directs the RAND Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC), which provides independent and objective analyses to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Until January 2022, Riley directed the National Security Research Division (NSRD), home to another Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) operated at RAND under a contract with the U.S. government. From 2008 to 2010, Riley was associate director of NSRD. Before that, he served as associate director of RAND Infrastructure, Safety, and Environment (ISE). Prior to joining RAND, Riley worked as a senior civil servant at the U.S. Department of Justice where he focused on crime, immigration reform, drug epidemiology, and domestic terrorism.

Riley has testified before Congress on multiple occasions and has served as a trial observer in Guantanamo. He is a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, and a board member at the National Defense University Foundation. A supporter of educating the next generation of national security professionals, Riley has guest lectured at the University of Michigan's Ford School on the role of policy analysis in national security, and given a commencement address at the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Criminology. He is also on the board of the Fern Hollow Nature Center.

As a researcher, Riley has led and co-led numerous projects on national and homeland security topics, including an evaluation the DOD program providing excess equipment to law enforcement agencies; assessments of passenger rail and airport security; police and security sector reforms in Israel, Mexico, and Afghanistan; and gun violence reduction and police/community relations in Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Dallas, and elsewhere. In addition to scholarly reports and journal articles, Riley has written commentaries that have been published in such outlets as *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and the *New York Daily News*. He's also given interviews with NPR, CBS, the *New York Times*, and Bloomberg Radio.

Riley holds a Ph.D. in public policy analysis from Pardee RAND Graduate School, an M.S. in foreign service from Georgetown University, and a B.A. in economics and Russian from the University of Michigan.

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**Hon. Seth Stodder**, Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council of the United States, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security

Seth Stodder teaches national security and counterterrorism law at the University of Southern California Law School, and serves as a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, focused on foreign policy, national security, technology, immigration, and international trade issues. He also is a lawyer and consultant in private practice, advising clients on a variety of issues, including national security, international trade and customs law, immigration, cybersecurity, cross-border travel, human rights, and matters before the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS).

Mr. Stodder served in the Obama Administration as Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Borders, Immigration & Trade, and as Assistant Secretary for Threat Prevention and Security – leading the teams developing policy and advising leadership on border security, immigration, trade enforcement, and counterterrorism, among other issues. In addition, he represented the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on CFIUS and oversaw all DHS foreign investment national security reviews. Earlier in his career, and in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, he also served in the Bush Administration as Director of Policy for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) – the agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in charge of the nation's borders – and Counselor/Senior Policy Advisor to CBP Commissioner Robert Bonner.

Mr. Stodder is a frequent writer, speaker, and media commentator on various issues. He lives in Los Angeles and, in addition to his membership in the Pacific Council, Mr. Stodder also is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and serves on the Alumni Leadership Council of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (he was a 2008 Marshall Memorial Fellow). He received his B.A. from Haverford College, and his J.D. from the University of Southern California Law School.



**Ms. Aída Velasco Perez**, Consul for Political Affairs and Education, Consulate General of Mexico in Los Angeles

Aída Velasco Perez holds a Master's degree in Risk Analysis from King's College London and another in International relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She graduated with merit from Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City in international relations. She joined the Mexican Foreign Service in 1999. At the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she worked in the North American and Special Affairs departments. She was posted abroad to the Embassy of Mexico to the United Kingdom (2001-2009) and afterward to the Embassy of Mexico to Japan (2009-2012). From August 2015- August 2022, she was Head of the Consular section of the Embassy of Mexico to the UK. She was transferred to Los Angeles, CA, in September 2022 and is currently Consul for political affairs and education. Before joining the Foreign Service, she worked for UNDP in Mexico and the OAS as an electoral observer in Nicaragua, Haiti, and Peru. She also worked for the UN Mission ONUSAL in El Salvador. She is married with two children.

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**Mr. Nick Wolf**, Mexico Initiative Fellow, Pacific Council on International Policy

Nick Wolf is a social entrepreneur, regenerative farmer and community development practitioner, based on the southern Pacific coast of Mexico. At the Pacific Council, Nick works as the Mexico Initiative Fellow, where he supports efforts to promote stronger ties between Mexico and the U.S., build awareness, and share a more nuanced understanding of Mexico. Nick's responsibilities include the U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Project, which seeks to use the relationship between migration, armed violence, and cross-border arms trafficking to advance security cooperation.

Nick has lived and worked in Mexico for more than a decade, starting, growing, and managing businesses and organizations in organic and regenerative agriculture and the local food movement. In 2021, he started an agroecological farm in Zihuatanejo, Guerrero. He also serves as a board member for three community-based nonprofit organizations, working in the local economy, regenerative food, ocean conservation and citizen science sectors. Previously, Nick spent 10 years as a freelance researcher and contributor at the Economist Intelligence Unit.

He holds bachelor's degrees in Broadcast Journalism and Spanish from the University of Missouri as well as MBA and Master of Science in Foreign Service degrees from Georgetown University. Nick served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Honduras from 2006 to 2008 and has also worked and studied in Peru and Spain. Originally from Oklahoma, Nick connected deeply with Mexico after a weeks-long motorcycle trip across the country, returning to work in the country after finishing graduate school.