

# **Tab 19**



BALTSUN - 11/14/97 BALTSUN 17A  
 11/14/97 Balt. Sun 17A  
 WL 5539638  
 T. Baltimore Sun  
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Friday, November 14, 1997

NEWS

Zedillo champions free trade; Mexican president notes worry about future deals  
 REUTERS

WASHINGTON -- Mexico's President Ernesto Zedillo expressed Latin America's disappointment yesterday over the Clinton administration's failure to get special negotiating authority to extend free trade in the hemisphere.

At the start of a 36-hour visit to Washington, Zedillo told businessmen that the North American Free Trade Agreement has been a great success in expanding commerce, employment and investment in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Mexican-U.S. trade has doubled since NAFTA was created in 1994 to \$165 billion this year, the Mexican leader said.

Zedillo said Latin America had had "tremendous expectations" over free trade. President Clinton failed to gain Congress's approval of the so-called fast-track authority needed to keep his promise to build a free-trade area by 2005.

Zedillo was to dine privately with Clinton at the White House yesterday and return today for a session with Cabinet officials on drug trafficking, law enforcement, migration, trade and environmental issues.

U.S. and Mexican officials signed agreements to expand the extradition treaty between the two countries and to demarcate their maritime borders to allow exploration of potentially vast oil reserves in the Gulf of Mexico.

But they only provided a progress report on talks to devise a joint strategy to combat the flow of narcotics into the United States from Mexico -- the most critical issue between the two countries.

Today, Zedillo and Clinton will attend the signing of an agreement to combat trafficking in illegal firearms, explosives and ammunition, an initiative proposed by Mexico.

Pub Date: 11/13/97

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STORY ORIGIN: WASHINGTON

EDITION: FINAL

Count: 248  
 11/14/97 BALTSUN 17A  
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