

'Cancel trip if you can't pay for wall': Donald Trump tells Mexican President on Twitter

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Washington: In a tough message to neighbour, US President Donald Trump today told his Mexican counterpart that he should cancel his visit to Washington to meet him if Mexico is unwilling to pay for the massive border wall that he wants to build to stop illegal migrants from entering America.

Trump said that Nieto should cancel his visit if Mexico can't pay for wall

"If Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting," Trump tweeted, hours after his Mexican counterpart Enrique Pena Nieto condemned the US decision to build a border wall and repeated that Mexico would not pay for the wall despite Trump's assertions that it would.

“The U.S. has a 60 billion dollar trade deficit with Mexico. It has been a one-sided deal from the beginning of NAFTA (The North American Free Trade Agreement) with massive numbers of jobs and companies lost,” he said in another tweet.

Pena Nieto was scheduled to be in Washington on January 31.

"Mexico does not believe in walls. I've said time again; Mexico will not pay for any wall," Pena Nieto had said in a video statement posted to Twitter.

"I regret and reject the decision of the US to build the wall," he had said.

Pena Nieto said he would wait for a final report from his top officials who arrived here yesterday to meet with the Trump administration, and previous meetings with Mexican legislators, before deciding which steps he would take next.

The Mexican government had no immediate reaction to the tweet by Trump, in addition to its earlier indication that Mexico was "considering" cancelling Nieto's trip.

Former foreign relations secretary Jorge Castaneda had told local media "Pena Nieto has no other choice but to say 'I'm not going.'"

In a late night interview to ABC News, Trump said the US will be reimbursed by Mexico for the wall his administration is building across the US-Mexico border to stop the flow of illegal immigrants and drug traffickers.

"Yeah, absolutely, 100 per cent, yes," Trump said when asked if Mexico will pay US back.

Earlier, Trump had signed two executive orders directing the construction of a wall on the US-Mexico border, boosting border patrol forces and increasing the number of immigration enforcement officers who carry out deportations.

In a speech on Monday, Pena Nieto had said his government is prepared to negotiate with the US if Mexico's national sovereignty is respected. He laid out economic integration and respect for the rights of migrants and the money they send home as his nation's key negotiating points.

Trump has suggested some of the USD 25 billion in annual remittances that migrants return home would be retained to pay for the border wall.

"Neither confrontation nor submission. Dialogue is the solution," Pena Nieto had said Monday.

Trump said that he wants to build an "impenetrable, physical, tall, powerful, beautiful, southern border wall" between the US and Mexico.

The US-Mexico border is about 3,100-km long and traverses all sorts of terrain from empty, dusty desert to the lush and rugged surroundings of the Rio Grande.

Some 1,046-km of the border is covered already by a confused and non-continuous series of fences, concrete slabs and other structures. Trump says his wall will cover 1,600 km and natural obstacles will take care of the rest.

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