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Treaty of Cooperation between the United States of America and the United Mexican States Providing for the Recovery and Return of Stolen Archaeological, Historical and Cultural Properties

The United States of America and the United Mexican States in a spirit of close cooperation and with the mutual desire to encourage the protection, study and appreciation of properties of archaeological, historical or cultural importance, and to provide for the recovery and return of such properties when stolen, have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

1. For the purposes of this Treaty, archaeological, historical and cultural properties are defined as

(a) art objects and artifacts of the pre-Columbian cultures of the United States of America and the United Mexican States of outstanding importance to the national patrimony, including stealae and architectural features such as relief and wall art;

(b) art objects and religious artifacts of the colonial periods of the United States of America and the United Mexican States of outstanding importance to the national patrimony;

(c) documents from official archives for the period up to 1920 that are of outstanding historical importance:

that are the property of federal, state, or municipal governments or their instrumentalities, including portions or fragments of such objects, artifacts, and archives.

2. The application of the foregoing definitions to a particular item shall be determined by agreement of the two governments, or failing agreement, by a panel of qualified experts whose appointment and procedures shall be prescribed by the two governments. The determinations of the two governments, or of the panel, shall be final.

ARTICLE II

1. The Parties undertake individually and, as appropriate, jointly

(a) to encourage the discovery, excavation, preservation, and study of archaeological sites and materials by qualified scientists and scholars of both countries:

(b) to deter illicit excavations of archaeological sites and the theft of archaeological, historical, or cultural properties;

(c) to facilitate the circulation and exhibit in both countries of archaeological, historical and cultural properties in order to enhance the mutual understanding and appreciation of the artistic and cultural heritage of the two countries; and

(d) consistent with the laws and regulations assuring the conservation of national archaeological, historical and cultural properties to permit legitimate international commerce in art objects.

2. Representatives of the two countries, including qualified scientists and scholars, shall meet from time to time to consider matters relating to the implementation of these undertakings.

ARTICLE III

1. Each Party agrees, at the request of the other Party, to employ the legal means at its disposal to recover and return from its territory stolen archaeological, historical and cultural properties that are removed after the date of entry into force of the Treaty from the territory of the requesting Party.

2. Requests for the recovery and return of designated archaeological, historical and cultural properties shall be made through diplomatic offices. The requesting Party shall furnish, at its expense, documentation and other evidence necessary to establish its claim to the archaeological, historical or cultural property.

3. If the requested Party cannot otherwise effect the recovery and return of a stolen archaeological, historical or cultural property located in its territory, the appropriate authority of the requested Party shall institute judicial proceedings to this end. For this purpose, the Attorney General of the United States of America is authorized to institute a civil action in the appropriate district court of the United States of America, and the Attorney General of the United Mexican States is authorized to institute proceedings in the appropriate district court of the United Mexican States. Nothing in this Treaty shall be deemed to alter the domestic law of the Parties otherwise applicable to such proceedings.

ARTICLE IV

As soon as the requested Party obtains the necessary legal authorization to do so, it shall return the requested archaeological, historical, or cultural property to the persons designed by the requesting Party. All expenses incident to the return and delivery of an archaeological, historical or cultural property shall be borne by the requesting Party. No person or Party shall have any right to claim compensation from the returning Party for damage or loss to the archaeological, historical or cultural property in connection with the performance by the returning Party of its obligations under this Treaty.

ARTICLE V

Notwithstanding any statutory requirements inconsistent with this Treaty for the disposition of merchandise seized for violation of laws of the requested Party relating to the importation of merchandise, stolen archaeological, historical or cultural property which is the subject matter of this Treaty and has been seized, or seized and forfeited to the requested Party, shall be returned to the requesting Party in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty. The Parties shall not impose upon archaeological, historical or cultural property returned pursuant to

this Treaty any charges or penalties arising from the application of their laws relating to the importation of merchandise.

ARTICLE VI

1. The Parties shall ratify this Treaty in accordance with the provisions of their respective constitutions, and instruments of ratification shall be exchanged at Washington as soon as possible.

2. This Treaty shall enter into force on the day of exchange of the instruments of ratification and shall remain in force for two years from that date and thereafter until thirty days after either Party gives written notice to the other Party of its intention to terminate it.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned Plenipotentiaries, Ambassador Robert Henry McBride for the United States of America and Antonio Carrillo Flores, Secretary of Foreign Relations, for the United Mexican States, duly authorized, have signed this Treaty.

DONE in duplicate, in English and Spanish, in the City of Mexico this seventeenth day of the month of July, nineteen hundred seventy.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
/s/ ROBERT McBRIDE
Robert Henry McBride
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
UNITED MEXICAN STATES,
/s/ ANTONIO CARRILLO F
Antonio Carrillo Flores
Secretary of Foreign
Relations.

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Revised: August 31, 1998

On October 1, 1999, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs will become part of the U.S. Department of State. Bureau webpages are being updated accordingly. Thank you for your patience.