

Mexico's 'AMLO' to rely on 'professionals' for security

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MEXICO CITY –



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President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Thursday he will rely on a group of 10 women and 10 men for his personal security, sticking with a promise to fold into the Defense Department the service that has long guarded Mexico's leaders.

Lopez Obrador said they will include "professionals" such as lawyers, doctors and engineers, all with a university degree or higher. They will receive some training, he said, "but not for the use of weapons."

He described it as more of an "assistantship" than a bodyguard corps, and added he will also be protected by Mexicans of all stripes — police, soldiers, ordinary citizens.

Lopez Obrador's refusal to rely on the kind of security traditionally afforded to presidents has raised concerns for his safety in a country where cartels hold sway over many parts. Famous for his austerity, he has traveled around in a plain white sedan with no bodyguards since his landslide election July 1.

At a news conference, Lopez Obrador reiterated that he will not use the country's presidential plane and in fact intends to have it sold off.

He spoke after meeting at Mexico City's colonial National Palace with current President Enrique Pena Nieto about the transition.

The president-elect said the two had agreed to work toward the creation of a new Department of Public Security and a General Prosecutor's Office, both of which would be federal entities. He hopes to have both in place before he takes office Dec. 1.