Diplomatic gathering

Jim Martinez, left, of the Presidio Soldiers re-enactment group reads a proclamation for Prince Felipe of Asturias, third from right.

Spain's royal heir among dignitaries in SB for U.S.-Spain Council forum

Jim Martinez, left, of the Presidio Soldiers re-enactment group reads a proclamation for Prince Felipe of Asturias, third from right.

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Calm temperatures and a relaxed atmosphere welcomed delegations and prominent business leaders and royalty from Spain and the United States as they convened in Santa Barbara on Friday for the U.S.-Spain Council's 18th annual forum.

The world leaders and policy makers will focus today's discussions on Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations, as well as private sector innovations in energy efficiency and technology.

A tour Friday afternoon highlighted Santa Barbara's Spanish heritage for the delegations, with stops at the Santa Barbara Mission, the Presidio and Casa de la Guerra.

"From renewable energy and trade and investment, to education and cultural bonds, and a close partnership in combating global terrorism, the historic ties that bind the United States and Spain are deep and centuries long," said Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and honorary co-chair of the U.S.-Spain Council.

"Santa Barbara serves as a perfect and historic venue to expand that relationship and chart a course forward highlighted by continued cooperation between our two nations," Menendez said.

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Spain's royal heir among dignitaries in SB for U.S.-Spain Council forum

Above and at right, Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., and other delegates of the U.S.-Spain Council visit the Santa Barbara Mission.

By REBECCA BORLAUG
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

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Prince Felipe of Asturias, heir to the throne of Spain, meets with members of the Presidio Soldiers re-enactment group during a reception Friday at the Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore.

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nations.”

U.S. officials joining Mr. Menendez in the forum include Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va.; Rep. Ed Royce, R-Fullerton, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman; Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman; and U.S. Ambassador to Spain James Costos.

The Spanish delegation is headed by Prince Felipe of Asturias, heir to the Spanish throne, and Princess Letizia; Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo, minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Ana Pastor, minister of Public Works; and Jose Manuel Soria, minister of Industry, Energy and Tourism.

Engaging more than 100 guests in a historic narrative of Santa Barbara on the bus ride from the Bacara Resort to the Santa Barbara Mission, David Bolton, executive director of California Missions Foundation, set the tone for the evening’s events.

Javier Colas, vice president of Medtronic in Spain and Portugal, listened carefully and acknowledged the significance of Spain and United States collaboration.

“It’s very important to understand how America and Spain can work together, specifically on health care issues,” said Mr. Colas, who is president of the technology and health foundation for the council.

“Spanish and American companies can align together with objectives in developing goals in health care,” he said, “especially in this time of economic recovery.”

Recognizing the profound importance of the two countries coming together once a year, Anton Smith, counselor for Economic Affairs for the U.S. Embassy, took in the sites with his colleagues.

“This is a crucial opportunity for the Spanish to reacquaint themselves with California,” said Mr. Smith. “To come, not just as tourists, but to build bridges — economic and commercial bridges.”

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