

Mexican leader seeks tempered attitudes

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MEXICO CITY --

President Felipe Calderon on Friday told Mexican consuls to the U.S. and Canada that they must work to "neutralize" anti-immigrant attitudes north of the border.

Calderon's instructions came two days after he accused U.S. presidential candidates of "swaggering, macho and anti-Mexican" posturing. He also warned the U.S. Congress not to impose conditions on a \$1.4 billion anti-drug aid package.

On Friday, the Mexican leader asked his diplomatic representatives in the U.S. to participate in the public debate on immigration by appearing at public events, talking more to the media and working with nonprofit groups to promote Mexican immigrants' role in supporting the U.S. economy.

"The key is to neutralize this strategy of confrontation and discrimination that forms part of U.S. society's mistaken perception, and be able to newly focus arguments on the complimentary aspects of our economies," he said.

Calderon complained about "the seeds of animosity, or in some cases even hate and discrimination, that are being planted are not only against immigrants, but sometimes against Mexicans in general."

He said the increasingly hostile attitude toward Mexicans was "affecting our bilateral relationship" with the U.S.

"The worst mistake that we can make, both in the U.S. and in Mexico, is make our respective people feel that the other nation is the enemy," he said.

Mexico has pushed for an immigration accord and better treatment of its estimated 11 million citizens who live in the U.S. Some 6 million are believed to be there illegally.