

Felipe Calderon's Foreign Policy

- **Democracy in Latin America**
- **National security debate in the U.S.**
- **Realignment of the world order toward Asia**

“Instead of being mere observers, we must seek to participate actively in the construction of rules that will affect our country. The active participation of Mexico must allow us to punch above our weight and acquire a stronger influence in the geopolitical and geoeconomic arena.”

“Mexico accepts its responsibility to secure its borders and promote its own growth and development. But as long as profound asymmetries exist in wages and economic opportunities, people from Mexico will continue to migrate to the United States.”

“One mile of new highways in the state of Zacatecas will do significantly more to address the effects of undocumented migration flows than ten miles of new fences along our common border.”

On March 28, Felipe Calderón outlined his views on foreign policy at the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations.

Mr. Calderon began his remarks by saying that if elected President, Mexican foreign policy will not start from zero, since the country has a long tradition of successful diplomacy. “Mexico has made important contributions to international issues such as disarmament, refugees and asylum, international peace and security and the codification of international law.”

Although, Mr. Calderón stressed that mistakes in policy implementation and strategy have occurred both in the past and during the current Administration, and that Mexico must play a greater role in defining the new rules of the international system.

Felipe Calderón stated that Mexico's interests in the international arena should be grounded in Mexico's transition to democracy and pluralism. Protecting human rights and promoting democracy across the globe will be a natural extension of Mexico's new political and social reality.

Mr. Calderon highlighted three global trends that will have a particularly important impact on Mexico's future foreign policy:

- ❖ Polarizing debate in Latin America regarding globalization, economic modernization and development, and democracy:
 - Without a determined defense of democracy and human rights, it will be impossible to lessen poverty and inequality in the region.
 - Mexico needs to regain its ability to engage constructively and actively with the rest of Latin America.
- ❖ National security debate in the U.S.:
 - The resolution of the political and ideological post 9–11 debate taking place in the United States regarding security and the role that the nation plays in the international system, will have a profound impact on Mexico and it's future well-being.
 - A threat to the security of our neighbors affects the interests, the security and the prosperity of Mexico, and this was clearly demonstrated by the impact the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil had on the bilateral discussions regarding immigration reform.
 - The most important bilateral issue for Mexico in the coming years will be the consolidation of a North American integration and the urgent need to address labor mobility in the region.
 - The next government of Mexico must develop a holistic vision of shared responsibilities with Washington to attack the causes and effects of the undocumented migratory flows to the United States.
 - In regard to the current immigration debate in the U.S.: The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee has taken important steps in the right direction towards an improved and holistic immigration reform. The Senate seems willing to take into consideration the realities of migrant flows and the push and pull factors between the two countries, and reject the criminalization of undocumented

workers who are already in the United States and of those who aid them.

“I believe we have several important points of coincidence that will allow us to build political alliances with nations like China and India.”

- ❖ Realignment of the world order toward Asia:
 - China and India, along with the rest of Asia, are playing a growing and more active commercial and economic role.
 - Mexico can strengthen its relationship with these countries by exchanging experiences in areas such as industrial policy, technological development, services, and food sustainability.
 - Aside from initiating greater commercial opportunities in Asia, it is in Mexico's interest—as a member of APEC—to promote a positive dialogue with Asia that aims to build consensus and actions in regard to global issues.

“Active and strategic participation in the international arena can help us strengthen our internal democratic and social changes in fundamental areas such as the respect for human rights, the fight against discrimination, the need for transparency and the campaign against private and public sector corruption. We need to build on the positive changes that have already occurred in Mexico. But we can certainly do better.”

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Calderón said, “the fundamental issue that needs to be addressed when debating the future of Mexico's foreign policy is whether we want to continue to be subjected to a vision of Mexico, of its international relations, and of the world that no longer corresponds to reality. It is true that we can keep playing a passive role and maintain a low profile, as López Obrador suggests. Or, that as Madrazo proposes, we can continue to implement a foreign policy based on premises that responded to national and international circumstances that no longer exist in our own society or in the international context.” He argued that either recipe would lead Mexico to self-imposed irrelevance. Instead, Mr. Calderon said that Mexico must look for more, not less, involvement with the outside world.