



Press Release

News from
Congressman Eliot Engel

Representing the Bronx, Rockland, and Westchester Counties

Offices in the Bronx, West Nyack and Mount Vernon

2161 Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC 20515

Contact: Joseph O'Brien 718 796-9700, 917 880-0392 (cell)

Jeremy Tomasulo 202 225-2464

For Release: Tuesday, May 18, 2010

**REP. ENGEL WELCOMES MEXICAN PRESIDENT FELIPE
CALDERÓN TO WASHINGTON**

***Chairman of Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Calls on Obama Administration to
Curb the Illegal Flow of Weapons to Mexico***

Congressman Eliot Engel, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, issued the following statement regarding Mexican President Felipe Calderón's two-day state visit this week:

"The United States has no more important friend in this hemisphere than Mexico. By welcoming President Calderón for a state visit, President Barack Obama has made it clear that U.S. – Mexico relations are a priority and will continue to remain at the top of his foreign policy agenda.

"Our joint efforts to confront drug-related violence in Mexico will undoubtedly be front and center in this week's meetings. Security assistance to Mexico through the Merida Initiative is essential, and I will continue to ensure that Congress provides the necessary funding to achieve our shared goals. While the current budget environment in Washington certainly is challenging, we must do everything we can to provide Mexico with the assistance it needs.

"Of course, security assistance alone is not enough. It is unacceptable that the United States not only consumes the majority of the drugs flowing from Mexico, but also arms the very cartels which contribute to the daily violence devastating Mexico.

“I am pleased that President Obama has developed a strategy to curb illegal firearms trafficking to Mexico. Still, much remains to be done. I urge the Obama Administration to enforce the existing ban on imported military-style weapons being trafficked at an alarming rate from the U.S. across the border into Mexico. The import ban – which was authorized by provisions in the 1968 Gun Control Act – was enforced during the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. President George W. Bush’s Administration quietly abandoned enforcement of the import ban. As a result, the U.S. civilian firearms market is flooded with imported, inexpensive military-style weapons. A return to enforcement of the existing import ban requires no legislative action and would be a win-win for the United States and Mexico. Starving Mexico’s brutal drug cartels of military-style weapons will make all of us in the United States and Mexico much safer.”

XXX