

Trump poses new mission for Mexico's diplomats

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After months of near silence regarding Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's "increasingly hostile" comments about Mexico, the country, through its foreign ministry, is now trying to protect its image and respond more vigorously to anti-Mexican rhetoric, according to a new issue brief from Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.

["Mexico's Diplomatic Strategy and Anti-Mexican Climate in the United States"](#) describes how Mexican diplomats' new mission is to soften the Republican Party's stance toward migrants, especially Mexican migrants, and to exploit current divisions among Republicans. The brief was authored by Isidro Morales, nonresident scholar in the Baker Institute's Mexico Center, a senior professor and researcher at the School of Government and Public Transformation at the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education, Santa Fe campus, and editor-in-chief of the journal *Latin American Policy*.

Morales said this is not the first time the Mexican government has dealt with anti-Mexican sentiment

in the U.S. For example, in 1986, former Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., denounced the Mexican government and disparaged the Mexican people during a congressional hearing on drug trafficking and other problems related to Mexico.

"What is new in the latest wave of anti-Mexican rhetoric is that Mexican migrants have been criminalized and called drug traffickers and rapists, and Mexico's positive economic performance has been attributed to the 'theft' of U.S. jobs," Morales wrote. "Given this attitude toward Mexican migrants, the Mexican government for the first time has openly recognized a 'hostile climate' in the U.S. and directed its diplomats to deal with the situation before it gets worse."

On April 5, when Trump unveiled his plan to bill Mexico for the construction of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, Mexico's government announced it had reshuffled its U.S. diplomatic staff. Gone was Mexico's ambassador to the U.S., Miguel Basáñez, a respected academic specializing in Hispanic public opinion who had been appointed to the position only seven months earlier. His replacement is Carlos Sada, a career diplomat who previously served as Mexico's consul general in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and San Antonio. Sada officially became Mexico's ambassador to the U.S. May 12. In addition, the Mexican government named its foreign press secretary and "country brand" coordinator, Paulo Carreño, to the high-profile position of deputy secretary of foreign relations in charge of North American affairs.

Morales said Mexico's diplomatic turnover is a response to what the country's secretary of foreign affairs, Claudia Ruiz Massieu, told the *El Universal* newspaper is an "exacerbated mood" against Mexicans in the U.S. and the fear that "this spirit can grow and overflow and may generate hostilities."

"Mexico's newly appointed diplomats must prove

their skills by separating rhetoric and opportunistic attacks from very real flaws in their own government," Morales concluded. "Opportunistic attacks are usually cyclical; they come and go. Well-informed criticism, supported by facts and credible sources, becomes more poisonous if [government](#) authorities do not directly respond to the issues raised."

Provided by Rice University

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