

U.S. aid urged in Mexican drug war

by UPI

MEXICO CITY -- Mexico's top lawman wants the United States to deliver on a promise of hundreds of millions of dollars in training and equipment to fight drug lords.

"I think it could be much faster, surely," Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said in an interview with USA Today, referring to an aid package bogged down in the U.S. Congress.

The aid package is known as the Merida Initiative after the city where Mexican President Felipe Calderon and former U.S. President George W. Bush first discussed it in March 2007. Bush originally requested \$1.4 billion.

Much of the aid is in the form of equipment, such as helicopters, X-ray machines and computers for prosecutors, and police training. The Democrat-controlled Congress cut the first chunk of aid from \$450 million to \$300 million, USA Today said. Little of that money has been spent as violence intensified.

Medina said that his country urgently needs the assistance but that Congress seems reluctant. In that respect, he told USA Today, "I don't think this issue is being given adequate priority."

U.S. President Barack Obama visits Mexico next week.

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