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Don't Fence Me In

by

Tom Holbrook

Edmund Burke, an 18th Century Political Philosopher once said, *“Better be despised for too anxious apprehensions, than ruined by too confident security.”* Tom, you ask, what does that have to do with anything? Well, to begin with, security is one of the hottest topics on the political table right now and I thought I would add my opinion to the others as to what we should do to secure our borders, especially the Mexican border.

To bring everyone up to snuff on this issue let's look at the facts pertaining to the illegal immigration challenge we face and just what's being done to plug the holes of our porous Southern border. In truth, it's not a porous border at all, it's a wide open border based upon the numbers of illegals that cross each and every day from Mexico. According to more sources than I care to credit over 872,000 illegal immigrants were apprehended while trying to sneak into the United States in 2004, while over 1,000,000 made it successfully. It is projected there are currently close to 20 million illegals living in the United States. Unfortunately, the border states are just the doorway to the rest of the country and those who come across in Arizona might eventually end up in Virginia or Washington state. It is estimated there are over 500,000 illegal immigrants in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC, ... up from 300,000 4 years ago. Those coming in are not just Mexicans either, but illegals from other Central and South American countries... **PLUS** over 450 were apprehended from Middle Eastern countries.

It seems everyone knows how to secure the border but no one wants to do it. Both Republican and Democrat lawmakers say it needs to be done but continue to balk on taking the necessary steps to make it happen. The cost to the Border States to host these uninvited guests is no small thing and their governors are pleading that something be done to curb the flow. California reports that they pay \$7.7 Billion annually just to educate illegal immigrants' children in its public schools; \$1.4 Billion to subsidize the Health Care for illegals; and another \$1.4 Billion to incarcerate those convicted of crimes. **That's \$10.5 Billion paid out every year by California alone.**

Many have submitted ideas on how to deal with the problem... **1)** Create more local Minutemen organizations like those in Arizona standing watch to report any illegal activity; **2)** Hiring an additional 10,000 agents to guard the border; and, **3)** Building a fence across the 2,000 mile long border.

Some say building a fence will create a sense of a **“Berlin Wall mentality”** throughout America and would be admitting the illegals and terrorists have won by taking away the freedom we've enjoyed for so long. **“That would make us no better than the Soviets during the Cold War,”** others have said. Let me remind you folks, the **“Iron Curtain”** was built to keep citizens of the Communist countries captive

and prevent them from enjoying freedom. Our fence would keep out those who are trying to take advantage of our freedom. Having a fence around your yard doesn't make you less free, but it does make you more secure. The world, however, has changed for the worse and we must take steps in our own backyard to counter those negative changes... like it or not. Back to Mr. Burke's quote at the top... we should care less of what people will say about a protective fence and be content with the additional security a border fence would provide. Farmers, homes, industry, airports, military installations... everyone... has a fence of some sort around their property. Why not our country?

Well, Tom, there is the huge cost to build such a fence. Yes, it wouldn't be cheap, but for what it would cost to build four B-2 Bombers we could build a 2,000 mile fence to cover the entire Southern border. Approximately \$8 Billion is the high end estimate. Considering how much it could save in their illegal immigrant maintenance costs, California and other border states would probably be willing to pay a big part of that. **Well, you know Tom we couldn't keep everyone out.** No, we couldn't. But terrorist attacks on Israel **dropped by 95%** after they built their security wall between them and the Palestinians. The number coming into our country illegally would be dramatically reduced. It would also relieve a great burden from each border guard's shoulders and maximize their effectiveness.

What kind of fence would be built? Who knows, but one suggested model would consist of two parallel fences made of high tensile steel, approximately 10-12 feet high, topped with razor wire. There would be a road between them to accommodate patrol vehicles the entire length of the border. On the outside of each fence there would be a large ditch and bales of razor wire 8-10 feet tall to prevent vehicles and individuals from approaching the fence. There would also be security cameras strategically placed on top of the fence and motion sensors underground to detect unwanted traffic.

What about all those illegal immigrants who currently work in the United States? I'm in favor of President Bush's Work Permits or Visas to be issued to those who wish to work in the United States and several hundred entry portals would be built at appropriate sites to allow organized ingress and egress. Not only would this control the entry into our country it would give us a great way to track and tax those who will be working for American businesses. I believe we need those who come to our country to work legally and peacefully. They fulfill a need and help strengthen our economy. I find it difficult to believe that those currently here illegally would rather be legal and above board not having to constantly look over their shoulder wondering if and when they will be deported. Some arrangement could be made to place them under the new plan, but it could not be implemented until a secure method of organized entry was in place.

I see a security fence as a win-win situation for all parties concerned... except those who intend harm to our country.

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