Homeland Security: Border Security and Terrorism

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With President Trump’s wall being at the forefront of every news story and finding its way in every political debate, it brings our border security into question. Is our border secure? Is the Department of Homeland Security effective in preventing illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and terrorists from entering the country? Lastly is the proposed $5 billion wall a necessary addition to protecting our homeland or is it the a prop that will only be used to cement a man’s legacy and ego. I hypothesize that the proposed border wall is not needed, will not be effective in stopping illegal immigration and will not stop a determined terrorist who is motivated at causing destruction and panic to American citizens. All throughout history there have been many border walls which were erected for numerous reasons but they all eventually failed and I fear that the same conclusion will come about with this wall. I am not only a pessimist or someone who thinks we should not actively protect our borders but I believe that there are many other solutions that could be researched as viable options instead of the wall. One viable alternative is using the $5.7 billion dollars to fix the currently broken immigration system. Currently there is a very large backlog of foreign asylum seekers who are entangled in a bureaucratic red tape along with many personnel who are “in line” for many years spending tens of thousands of dollars on immigration lawyers; many of these personnel potentially see paying a Coyote (a person who gets paid to illegally cross/escort personnel into the United States from Mexico) as an easier alternative than the legal way. Another alternative is making our ports of entry more secure; many illegal immigrants and illegal contraband are discovered at the ports of entry as opposed to crossing the border in the middle of the desert as many people would think. One last solution that we could use the border wall money and resources is to modernize the technology that is used on the border and to increase the funding of personnel who perform border security this would make our border immensely more secure than a wall would.

Reference

Alexander, Y. (2010). Terrorists in our Midst: Combating Foreign - Affinity Terrorism in America. Santa Barbara: Praeger.

Terrorists in our midst is about three topics primarily: “1. The organizational structure and interior workings of international networks in the United States; 2. The policies and legal framework of the United States that we rely on for protection of both security and democratic values; and 3. The lessons to be learned from past experiences, from which we might be able to discern best practices” (Alexander, 2010). This work concentrates not only on local terrorism from individuals such as the Unabomber Theodore J. Kaczynski and the Oklahoma City Bomber Timothy McVeigh in addition to terrorists from abroad. From his work, I also learned that Doctor Alexander explains that the United States did not devise a homeland security approach until the 1970s and to this day, countries from around the world have struggled in accepting a common definition for terrorism.

Andreas, P., & Biersteker, T. J. (2003). The Rebordering of North America: Integration and Exclusion in a New Security Context. New York: Routledge.

The Rebordering of North America, takes a look at the security of America’s borders post September 11, 2001. This book gives a very unique perspective when it comes to our borders along with the economic impacts. This book references many trade and economic experts who provide in detail regarding how open borders which allow for better trade between companies and countries are also a lot safer than closed borders which goes against conventional wisdom. This work argues that security can be met and improved through “using sophisticated technology, regional security cooperation, and the cooperation of industries that rely on open borders, techniques can be developed effectively to protect the United States from penetration by a terrorist threat while also allowing the free flow of goods and people” (Andreas & Biersteker, 2003).

Andrews, M. T. (2012). The Border Challenge: An Insiders View of Stopping Drugs at America's Borders. New York: University Press of America inc.

The Border Challenge is a book by a former prosecuter who fought cases against international drug traffickers along a border city in Arizona who later was offered a job in Washington DC for the Department of Homeland Security in the newly established Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement. This book describes how federal drug policy makers decide whether or not to take action on policies and procedures to prevent drugs from entering our border. In addition, it is a peek behind the curtain that explains “How priorities are determined; which agencies do what; and how the resources are allocated” (Andrews, 2012).

Anonymous. (2003, Nov). Homeland Security Getting Tough on Borders. Security, pp. 9-10

Homeland Security Getting Tough on Borders article speaks about the biggest concern for the Department of Homeland Security which is the protection of the United States through its borders. This article explains that through the use of technology in specific video surveillance is one of the most advantageous steps in protecting our borders from illegal immigration and contraband from entering the country (Anonymous, 2003).

Brownell, P., Morral, A. R., & Willis, H. H. (2011). Measuring Illegal Border Crossing Between Ports of Entry: An Assessment of Four Promising Methods. Santa Monica: RAND Homeland Security and Defense Center.

Measuring Illegal Border Crossing Between Ports of Entry is an extremely interesting research paper completed by the RAND Organization which explains in detail the complications with quantifying the rate of illegal immigration. Previous to this article and still somewhat in use, many scholars and articles would cite that United States Border Patrol were arresting more illegal immigrants which was a positive indicator that border security was working; on the other hand, other years, scholars and articles would cite that US Border Patrol arrests were down which was also a positive indicator due to less illegal immigrants attempting to cross the border which would seem to be a complete contradiction to the previous statement. This research paper also draws the possibility for inconsistencies to be reported by the equations being used that guess at best as to how many illegal immigrants reattempt to enter the United States illegally after being caught and arrested one, two and three times previously.

Caldwell, A. A., & Youssef, N. A. (2018). U.S. Weighs Extending Troop Deployment at Southern Border - - Update. Dow Jones Industrial News.

U.S. Weighs Extending Troop Deployment at Southern Border is an article regarding the deployment of US troops at the US – Mexican border due to the travelling caravan of immigrants from Central and South America who were traveling to the US in order to ask for asylum. This article representing the deployment of personnel along with military assets proves the point that a wall alone would not have stopped this traveling caravan. There are already walls in place and without the troop deployment, this caravan would have made its way into the United States.

Clancy, V. M. (2010). United States Border Issues: Defense, Security and Strategies. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

United States Border Issues is a book that goes into depth on a wide variety of issues concerning US border security. This book describes commerce between US and Mexico and the NAFTA, border violence issues and ramifications, gun trafficking across the border, border searches and the fourth amendment, and the barriers along the border.

Donnan, H., & Wilson, T. M. (2012). A Companion to Border Studies. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

A Companion to Border Studies is an interesting book for the fact that it not only addresses issues, complications and strategies along the US – Mexico border but it also discusses issues respective to the borders between African countries and Europe as well.

Frois, C., Maguire, M., & Zurawski, N. (2014). The Anthropology of Security: Perspectives from the Frontline of Policing, Counter-Terrorism and Border Control. Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.

The Anthropology of Security: Perspectives from the Frontline of Policing, Counter Terrorism and Border Control is an all encomposing book that describes how policing, counter terrorism and border protection all intertwine for the security of the United Kingdom. I believe that we should be open to reviewing the lessons learned from other countries and tailor their tactics to view what can have a successful impact on the security of the United States.

Fullerton Jr., T., & Walke, A. (2014). Freight Transportation Costs and the Thickening of the US - Mexico Border . Applied Economics , 1248-1258.

Freight Transportation Costs and the Thickening of the US – Mexico Border is an economic article that compares and contrasts the border commerce pre and post September 11, 2001. The attack on September 11, 2001 significantly impacted both of our economies and how we do business across our borders.

Jailly, E. B. (2007). Borderlands Comparing Border Security in North America and Europe. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

Borderlands Comparing Border Security in North America and Europe is a very self explanatory book from its title that compares the security along the US – Mexico border in comparison to how Europe conducts border security.

Salter, M. B., & Piche, G. (2012). The Securitization of the US-Canada Border in American Political Discourse. Canadian Journal of Political Science , 929-951.

The Securitization of the US – Canada Border in American Political Discourse is an interesting read since rarely is any attention paid to the security of America’s northern border in relation to the southern border. The security of America’s northern border has changed immensely from the 1990’s to where it is at today and it warrants attention.

Warner, J. A. (2010). U.S. Border Security: A Reference Handbook. Santa Barbara: ABC\_CLIO, LLC.

U.S Border Security: A Reference Handbook is a great resource that encompasses the complete security site picture of our borders. This book describes in detail the issues faced along both of America’s borders, the history, today and future issues that we may be facing in terms of border security, customs, immigration, counter terrorism and a wide array of solutions to these problems.