

Open Borders in Dangerous Times



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With all our attention focused on the millions of illegal, undocumented Mexican immigrants pouring over our southern border each year, we have paid scant attention to those who have chosen to hide in their midst - those who seek entry into the U.S. not to pursue the American dream, but to destroy it. As noted in an October 6, 2006 article in the *UK Times On-Line*, "Seizures of radioactive materials fuel 'dirty bomb' fears": "Smugglers have been caught trying to traffic dangerous radioactive material more than 300 times since 2002, statistics from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) show. Most of the incidents are understood to have occurred in Europe. The disclosures come as Al-Qaeda is known to be intensifying its efforts to obtain a radioactive device. Last year, Western security services, including MI5 and MI6, thwarted 16 attempts to smuggle plutonium or uranium. On two occasions small quantities of highly enriched uranium were reported missing. All were feared to have been destined for terror groups."

FBI Director Robert Mueller told Congress in March 2005 that "there are individuals from countries with known al-Qaeda connections who are changing their Islamic surnames to Hispanic-sounding names and obtaining false Hispanic identities, learning to speak Spanish, and pretending to be Hispanic immigrants. The matter concerned former Homeland Security Deputy Secretary James Loy enough that at one point, he wrote: "Recent information from ongoing investigations, detentions and emerging threat streams strongly suggest that al Qaeda has considered using the Southwest border to infiltrate the United States. Several al Qaeda leaders believe operatives can pay their way into the country through Mexico, and also believe illegal entry is more advantageous than legal entry for operational security reasons." In other words, the less we know about them and their entry into this country, the more dangerous they become.

So, when the 9/11 Commission Report notes that Lebanese nationals sympathetic to Hamas and Hezbollah have been smuggled into the United States with the assistance of "corrupt Mexican officials in Beirut, Mexico City and Tijuana to facilitate their travel"; when, in November 2005, Rep. Sue Myrick (R-N.C.) tells the *Charlotte Observer* that three al Qaeda terrorists had been captured at the U.S.-Mexico border; when evidence surfaces that former al Qaeda operations chief Khalid Sheikh Mohammed encouraged aspiring "dirty bomber" Jose Padilla to enter the United States by way of Mexico in order to carry out attacks on U.S. targets; when the *Washington Times* reports that al Qaeda has allied itself with organized Mexican crime groups (such as the notorious Mara Salvatrucha gang, also commonly known as MS-13) to facilitate the entry of al Qaeda operatives into the United States via Mexico; when the sheriff of Hudspeth County near El Paso and other Texas border sheriffs complain that Mexican military personnel were

assisting cartels in smuggling illegals across the Rio Grande and into the U.S.; when American intelligence confirms a growing al Qaeda-Hezbollah interest in the Arab communities of the tri-border area of central South America (a lawless, crime-ridden area where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay intersect) as a staging ground for future attacks on American soil; when the *Brownsville Herald* reports that persons with possible terrorist ties have been captured just after entering the U.S. from Mexico, but are being released into the American interior due to lack of detention space at the border; when a Los Angeles radio station reports that Middle Eastern men with al Qaeda links are adopting Hispanic names, acquiring fake Mexican ID cards and are mixing with the stream of illegals coming across our southern border;¹ when KGBT-TV in Harlingen, TX catches Border Patrol agents dropping off a van load of illegal immigrants at a local bus station; when an El Paso, Texas law enforcement report tells of "approximately 20 Arab persons a week utilizing the Travis County Court in Austin to change their names and driver's licenses from Arabic to Hispanic surnames"; when the *Tombstone Tumbleweed* (June 13, 2004) reports that American border patrol agents arrested one hundred and fifty-eight illegal aliens in Cochise County, Arizona, fifty-three of whom were overheard speaking Farsi (Iranian) and Arabic in the back of the detention vehicle;² when Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo releases a report revealing that some illegals from terrorist nations are paying as much as \$50,000 to be smuggled into the U.S. and notes sarcastically that "they're not paying that kind of money simply to work at a 7/11"; and when bin Laden's biographer Hamid Mir writes that several tactical nuclear weapons and enough uranium to build others have already been smuggled over the U.S.-Mexican border for the purpose of launching catastrophic radiological attacks in our major cities.....there are significant danger signals emanating from our southern border that America has more to be concerned about than the economic ramifications of Mexican illegals seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

Based upon al Qaeda documents seized by British MI-6 intelligence during recent raids in Pakistan, it is now known that al Qaeda has established strong South American links with the Colombian terror group FARC, the Shining Path in Peru, thousands of Muslim students in the Dominican Republic, the Hugo Chavez government in Venezuela and with Mexico's Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR). The documents reveal that al Qaeda sees these groups as facilitating the entry of al Qaeda operatives into the United States through the porous Mexican border.

The Venezuela terrorist connection is especially disturbing. The *Washington Times* recently quoted Thomas A. Shannon, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere affairs that "Cuban intelligence has effectively cloned itself inside Venezuelan intelligence" and that the Chavez government is providing shelter for organizations with ties to unspecified "terrorist organizations in the Middle East" notably Hezbollah.³ Venezuelan identity cards are also being distributed to foreigners from Middle Eastern nations, specifically Syria, Pakistan, Egypt, and Lebanon - cards that are then used to obtain legal travel documents and passports to the U.S.

In the post 9/11 world, these events represent significant warning signals. According to former FBI consultant Paul L. Williams, thousands of al Qaeda agents have already infiltrated the U.S. over the Mexican border with the mission of carrying out what he

terms the "American Hiroshima" plan.⁴ These "sleepers" were provided with phony identifications (mostly bogus *matricula consular* ID cards that are indistinguishable from Mexico's official ID cards and are accepted in the U.S. to open bank accounts and obtain driver's licenses). Bin Laden's goal, according to Williams, is to kill at least four million Americans, two million of whom must be children. Only then, (bin Laden says) would the crimes committed by America on the Arab and Muslim world be avenged. Of special concern is a December 2006 article in the *Canada Free Press*, "Spy Death by Nuclear Poisoning Tied to American Hiroshima", where it was reported: "The death of Alexander Litvinenko by radiological poisoning points to the possibility that the former Soviet spy may have been involved with Islamic terrorists in the preparation of tactical nuclear weapons for use in the *jihad* against the United States and its NATO allies." The article continues: "In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to suitcase nukes that were developed by U.S. and Soviet forces during the Cold War. Reliable sources, including Hans Blix of the United Nations, have confirmed that bin Laden purchased several of these devices from the Chechen rebels in 1996. According to Sharif al-Masri and other al Qaeda operatives who have been taken into custody, several of these weapons have been forward deployed to the United States in preparation for al Qaeda's next attack on American soil." Thus, the issue of illegal immigration across the U.S.-Mexican border is as much more of a national security threat than an economic one.

For years, a dangerous loophole has existed in our border security system - one that separates "illegals" into two groups - those who are automatically turned back at the border, and those from countries other than Mexico who are allowed into the U.S. pending deportation hearings. These "other than Mexicans" (OTMs) come primarily from other Latin American countries, although an undetermined number come from countries designated by our government as countries of "Special Interest (SI)" because of their known al Qaeda presence - countries that include Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Pakistan, Yemen, Qatar, Algeria, Somalia and Malaysia.⁵

According to reports issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and a September 2005 Congressional Report, the numbers of OTMs released on their own recognizance in this country for fiscal years 2002 (5,775) and 2003 (9,139) was far surpassed in 2004 when 32,782 were released pending their hearings. In 2005, another 63,494 were released and in 2006, 98,153 OTMs were caught sneaking across our still-porous southern border, including some from terror-friendly states. What's worse is that all these figures are considered low.⁶ Although the number of known Special Interest (SI) OTMs entering the U.S. through undocumented channels are very small (1,615 apprehensions between 1999 and 2004), the security threat arises from the fact that of the 70% of OTMs known to have been released on their own recognizance once they have entered the U.S., less than 30% actually show up for their deportation hearings. They simply disappear into the American interior.....and it is the fear of what these SI-OTMs may be planning that keeps DHS and FBI agents up at night.

The so-called "catch and release" policy exercised at our southern and northern borders is due to the lack of federal detention facilities. Rather than detaining OTMs until a deportation court hearing or deporting them outright, they are released on their own

recognizance. On June 8, 2004 border agents at the Las Cruces, N.M. border station apprehended three illegal Pakistanis.....and promptly released them. The same day, guards at Texas's Uvalde station released a Bosnian wanted on an Interpol warrant. As noted in the June 2006 article, "Broken", by Kenneth R. Timmerman that dealt with a Homeland Security publication on the issue: "The report reveals that 45,008 aliens from countries on the U.S. list of state-sponsors of terror or from countries that protected terrorist organizations and their members, were released into the general public between 2001 and 2005, even though immigration officers couldn't confirm their identity." Law-enforcement authorities told the *Washington Times* that al Qaeda is well aware of these loopholes.*

Nor is the southern border the only porous border. Despite the projected increase in expenditures for additional border guards provided for in the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004*, the Canadian border continues to operate like a sieve. Most of Canada's one hundred and sixty land and maritime border crossings are guarded by a lone staffer.⁷ Heather MacDonald, a contributing editor at the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal* produced a scathing report in mid-December 2004 on U.S.-Canadian border security. She noted that the alien-smuggling trade was the "sea in which terrorists swim" and indications are that the trade is thriving primarily due to fears of offending the race and civil rights lobbies. She noted that, each week agents at the U.S. border patrol's Swanton sector catch Middle Easterners and North Africans sneaking into Vermont and every week, they immediately release (them) with a polite request to return for a deportation hearing because the Department of Homeland Security has failed to budget enough funding for sufficient detention space.

In May 2004, Swanton agents released illegal aliens from Malaysia, Pakistan, Morocco, Uganda and India without bond. Since these aliens chose to evade the standard visa process, none has had a background check by a U.S. consular official that might have uncovered terrorist connections." All are now at large in the U.S."⁸

The 9/11 Commission Report cataloged the "failures of imagination, policy, capabilities and management" that enabled Islamic terrorists to kill over 3,000 Americans. We have clearly not learned the lessons of 9/11. Unfortunately, what happens at our borders never stays at our borders. By not securing our northern and southern flanks, we continue to expose our country to catastrophe. As Richard Shultz, an international security expert at Tufts University's Fletcher School in Medford, Mass. has acknowledged: "We believe there is an international Salafist jihadi movement with a goal to attack..... the U.S. These terrorists are smart. They study these issues and learn from one other. And one way (into America) is right through the southern security perimeter."

*The *Real ID Act of 2005*, which established standards for state-issued driver's licenses and non-driver's identification cards, has now been put off until at least 2009. And many states are in open revolt against its tough requirements for issuing driver's licenses. The result is that potential terrorists here illegally can easily use phony licenses or, in many

states, get real ones issued to them, along with credit cards and all of the other papers needed to blend into our society.

ENDNOTES

1. "Osama's biographer says nukes in U.S. - Border used to smuggle WMDs inside America, says source," WorldNet Daily, May 24, 2006; see also: Michelle Malkin.com; Joseph Farah, "Al-Qaeda nukes already in U.S. - Terrorists, bombs smuggled across Mexico border by MS-13 gangsters," WorldNet Daily, July 11, 2005; Joseph Farah, "INVASION USA: Osama's exploits south of border - Al-Qaeda in league with Mexican radicals in plot to penetrate U.S., says MI6 report," WorldNet Daily, May 10, 2006; Joseph Farah, "Al-Qaeda south of the border - Rumsfeld: Human smuggling rings tied to bin Laden's terrorist network," WorldNet Daily, February 16, 2004; Jerry Seper, "Al Qaeda seeks ties to local gangs," Washington Times, September 28, 2004.
2. World Tribune, August 2, 2004
3. "Venezuela and terrorists," The Washington Times, May 21, 2006
4. Paul L. Williams, *The Al Qaeda Connection: International Terrorism, Organized Crime and the Coming Apocalypse* (Prometheus Books, 2005)
5. Leo W. Banks, "Other Than Mexicans - Are terrorists entering the United States through Arizona's border with Mexico?" Tucson Weekly, September 2, 2004
6. Faye Bowers, "US-Mexican Border as a Terror Risk," Christian Science Monitor, March 22, 2005; Douglas Jehl, "U.S. Aides Cite Worry on Qaeda Infiltration From Mexico", New York Times, February 17, 2005; Chris Kelly, "The Immigration Blog," May 23, 2005; "Border Security: Apprehensions of "other than Mexicans," Congressional Research Report, September 22, 2005; Walter Ewing, "U.S. Border Insecurity: U.S. Border - Enforcement Policies and National Security," American Immigration Law Foundation, Spring 2006 ; Mimi Hall, "Despite new technology, Border Patrol overwhelmed", USA Today, February 2005.
7. Beth Duff-Brown, "," The Plain Dealer (Cleveland), December 16, 2004; see also: "Intelligence Law Contains Enhanced Border Security Provisions," USINFO.state.gov, December 20, 2004. President Bush's proposed 2006 budget for the Department of Homeland Security called for 210 additional Border Patrol agents instead of the 2,000 mandated in legislation signed in December 2004.
8. It should be noted that Ahmed Ressam ("The Millennium Bomber") an Algerian, was caught in December 1999 almost by accident at the Canadian border with a hundred pounds of explosives destined for the Los Angeles International Airport. He ran an al Qaeda cell in Montreal.

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