

Department of Defense (DOD)

SHADOW SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EDWIN S. RUBENSTEIN

The Department of Defense provides the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of the United States. Although projecting U.S. power abroad is its major mission, DOD is also responsible for homeland defense. Homeland defense includes the protection of U.S. sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical defense infrastructure against external threats and aggression, or other threats as directed by the President.

The nation relies on DOD to be vigilant regarding potential threats, prospective capabilities, and perceived intentions of potential enemies.

Illegal Immigrants and National Security

Defense is rarely included among the governmental activities impacted by immigration. In the jargon of economists, defense is a “public good.” Consumption of a public good by one person does not reduce the amount available for others to consume. Thus, all people in a nation must “consume” the same amount of national defense—the defense policy established by the government.

This implies that if U.S. population were to double while defense spending remained the same, the level of defense protection provided to each resident would not change. Under these assumptions, higher rates of immigration would not require additional national defense spending.

But what if the new immigrants are themselves a threat to national security? The “public good” concept is oblivious to this possibility—and is

therefore a dangerous abstraction that has no real world relevance.

Case in point:

Immigrants other than Mexicans

The number of illegal aliens flooding into the United States this year will total about 3 million — enough to fill 22,000 Boeing 737-700 airliners, or 60 flights every day for a year. It will be triple the number of immigrants who enter the United States

legally. (No one knows how many illegals are living

in the United States, but estimates (<http://www.bearstearns.com/bscportal/pdfs/underground.pdf>) run as high as 20 million.)

While the vast majority are Mexicans, a small but sharply growing number come from other countries, including those with large populations hostile to the United States.

In 2005 Border Patrol Chief David Aguilar reported his agency was on course to apprehend 150,000 people who fall into the category described officially as other than Mexicans (OTMs). That would almost triple the previous year’s 65,000. In fiscal 2003, the numbers were around 40,000, and in 2002 and 2001, around 30,000 each. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/07/26/national/printable711912.shtml>

But that’s just the OTMs who are caught. Based on long-time government formulas for calculating how many elude capture, as many as 450,000 illegals from countries other than Mexico may have entered the United States undetected in 2005, including intruders from Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Russia, and China, as well as Egypt, Iran, and Iraq. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,995145-2,00.html>

Immigration Fiscal Impact Statement

Until recently, most apprehended OTMs were released due to lack of detention space. (See my Immigration Fiscal Impact Statement for the Department of Homeland Security.) Today OTMs are detained and transported to their home country. Yet according to the Border Patrol, some 465,000 OTMs apprehended under the old “catch and release” policy are living in the United States.

No one knows how many OTMs still cross the border undetected.

It is clear, however, that they represent a threat to national defense and should be dealt with by DOD as well as the Border Patrol. We highlight expenditures DOD may incur when dealing with OTMs.

Border surveillance

H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, was aimed at strengthening U.S. borders and eliminating Homeland Security’s “catch and release” practice. Among its provisions was a requirement that DHS and DOD develop a joint strategic plan that will provide the Border Patrol with military support and increased DOD surveillance. The law authorized physical barriers and widespread, state-of-the-art surveillance technology, including cameras, sensors, radar, satellite, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

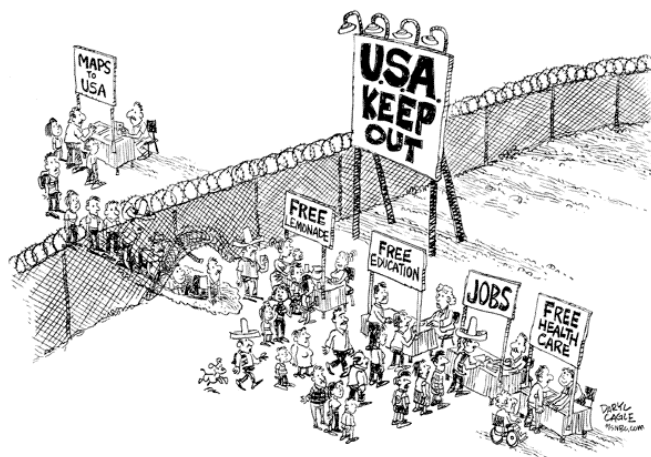
In May 2006, the President committed 6,000 National Guard troops to border security. The National Guard’s border missions were to include surveillance and reconnaissance, engineering support, transportation support, logistics support, vehicle dismantling, medical support, barrier and infrastructure construction, road building, and linguistics support. (Guard forces play no role in the direct apprehension or incarceration of illegal immigrants detained by Homeland Security or other civilian authorities.) <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=15749>

The average military “salary” for enlisted personnel, defined as basic pay plus housing and subsistence allowance plus associated tax savings, is \$45,000. Multiplying this figure by the 6,000 additional National Guard personnel yields an estimated cost of \$270 million.

Total Army National Guard spending is estimated at \$6 billion in the fiscal year (FY) 2008 budget. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2008/pdf/appendix/mil.pdf>

Border fence

Most fences built along the southern border were constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Homeland Security’s border protection unit. The Corps obtains the land, drafts the environmental protection plan, designs the project, and oversees construction. Labor is usually provided by National Guard and military units on loan from the Department of Defense.



The cost of building and maintaining a double set of steel fences along 700 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border could be 5 to 25 times greater than congressional leaders forecast last year, or as much as \$49 billion over the expected 25-year life span of the fence, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service (CRS). <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/01/08/BAG6RNEJG1.DTL>

A CRS study released in December 2006 notes that even the \$49 billion does not include the expense of acquiring private land along hundreds of miles of border or the cost of labor if the job is done by private contractors—both of which could drive the price billions of dollars higher.

A state-of-the-art fence constructed on almost 10 miles of border in western San Diego County has reduced the number of Border Patrol arrests of illegal entrants there, CRS says. Secure fencing of

some kind already exists along 106 miles of border, mostly in short stretches around cities.

Boeing Co., under a September 2006 contract with Homeland Security, is already constructing a “virtual fence” along all 6,000 miles of the U.S. border, north and south, that is expected to run to \$2.5 billion.

Congress provided \$1.5 billion for upgrading infrastructure and technology at the border in FY2007, which ended September 30th. No money has been allocated specifically for the 700 miles of fence.

Total Army Corps of Engineers outlays in 2007 are estimated at \$4.3 billion. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2008/pdf/appendix/mil.pdf>

Illegal Alien Soldiers?

Tucked away in the current immigration bill is a provision to help boost military recruiting. It’s known as the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors, or DREAM Act of 2007. The provision would allow illegal aliens to enlist in the military as a way to obtain citizenship.

Defense Department figures show that the Army fell short of its May recruitment goal by 399 recruits. The Army National Guard fell 12 percent short of their goal, while the Air National Guard was well below their target by 23 percent. http://www.infowars.com/articles/military/recruitment_numbers_fall_us_army_looks_toward_illegals.htm

Illegals who cross the border as minor children and have been in a U.S. school system for “a number of years” would be eligible to enlist under DREAM. The newly enlisted recruits would be given a Z visa, granting them probationary status as a legal resident and making them eligible for student loans, job training, and other benefits as a first step toward citizenship. <http://www.jbs.org/node/4479>

At the end of their enlistment they would be eligible for full citizenship.

Currently, only immigrants legally residing in the United States are eligible to enlist. There are

about 30,000 such noncitizens in the U.S. armed forces, making up about 2 percent of the active duty military, according to press reports. About 8,000 permanent resident aliens enlist every year. http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2006/12/26/military_considers_recruiting_foreigners/.

Drawing from the pool of illegal immigrants would add significantly to recruitment. With an estimated 750,000 of youths eligible for DREAM, even 10 percent of them would equal a year’s worth of recruits.

Some top military brass believe the United States should go as far as targeting foreigners in their native countries—that is, recruit foreign mercenaries for the U.S. armed forces. The alternative would be a sharp increase in military pay or less stringent qualifications for enlistees.

Fighting an unpopular war may be one job that Americans truly “don’t want to do.” Displacing native-born American soldiers with illegal immigrants would surely reduce the cost of manning the volunteer army. But sometimes you get what you pay for: is it really wise to recruit illegal immigrants who haven’t assimilated well or learned the language of our nation, and whose loyalties may lie elsewhere?

Even the National Council of La Raza—a Hispanic immigration rights advocacy group—says the plan sends the wrong message, making it appear that Americans are not willing to sacrifice to defend their country. Officials have also raised concerns that immigrants would be disproportionately sent to the front lines as “cannon fodder” in any conflict. http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2006/12/26/military_considers_recruiting_foreigners/

We believe the military can meet recruiting goals without having to rely on foreigners. It may require significantly higher pay and benefits but, unlike the illegal alien alternative, would not compromise national security. ■

