

Terrorists among the Ranks in the Invasion of Illegal Aliens

BY PETER B. GEMMA

Ernesto Castañeda, of the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility, asserts, “There is no real security threat, either from current Central American minors or from earlier waves of unauthorized immigrants now woven into the fabric of American life. Rather, in political circles especially, there is a shortfall of understanding and compassion ...”¹

He is so very wrong.

Last month, in a joint letter to President Obama regarding lax border controls, Senators Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Jeff Sessions (R-AL) wrote, “We have identified at least 72 individuals in the United States who, over the last year, have engaged in or attempted to engage in acts of terrorism; conspired or attempted to conspire to provide material support to a terrorist organization; engaged in criminal conduct inspired by terrorist ideology; or...been sentenced for any of the fore-going.”²

The FBI has more than 900 active investigations into ISIS sympathizers in all 50 states.

In a House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, National Security Subcommittee hearing on March 23, Congressman Ron DeSantis (R-FL) warned, “Recent reports state that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has apprehended several members of known Islamist terrorist organizations crossing the southern border in recent years.”³

According to Congressman DeSantis, Mr. Castañeda is dangerously wrong.

The U.S. brings in 85,000 foreign refugees per year, approximately half of them coming from countries with active jihadist movements. Another 10,000 foreign

nationals are granted asylum every year from Muslim-dominated countries. That’s about 95,000 potentially dangerous immigrants just between those two programs alone. And it does not include the roughly 170,000 who enter the U.S. from Muslim countries every year on green cards or the thousands more who come as college students and are only lightly screened. More than one million Muslim refugees have already arrived over the past 20 years from Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and other terror hotbeds.

Late last year, the U.S. Border Patrol nabbed two Pakistani men with ties to terrorism at the Mexican border—illegal aliens from so-called “special interest countries” using the Mexican border as a point of entry into the country.

Muhammad Azeem and Mukhtar Ahmad were caught just over the line from Tijuana. When agents checked their identities through databases, they got hits on both of them: Ahmad popped up as an associate of a known or suspected terrorist, while Azeem’s information had been shared by a foreign government for intelligence purposes. Both men had been processed two months earlier by immigration officials in Panama, suggesting they took advantage of smuggling networks used by Central American illegal aliens.

In a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA), a member of the House Armed Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Intelligence, Emerging Threats, and Capabilities, demanded to know how many people in the FBI’s terrorist screening database have been caught at the border: “The southern land border remains vulnerable to intrusion and exists as a point of extreme vulnerability.” Hunter continued, “Evidently there are criminal organizations and individuals with the networks and know-how to facilitate illegal entry into the United States without regard for one’s intentions or status on a terrorist watch list. The detention of the two Pakistani nationals underscores the fact that any serious effort to secure our homeland must include effective border security and immigration enforcement.”⁴

Peter Gemma has been published in a variety of venues including USA Today (where more than 100 of his commentaries have appeared), Military History, the DailyCaller.com, and the Washington Examiner. He writes regularly on defense and foreign policy issues for the Unz Review.com.

A year before the two Pakistanis were caught, the U.S. Border Patrol apprehended four Kurdish men who said they were part of the Revolutionary People’s Liberation Front. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said the four were members of the Kurdish Workers’ Party, which has been on the State Department’s list of foreign terrorist organizations since 1997.

The Texas State Department of Public Safety (DPS) reports that border security agencies have arrested several Somali immigrants crossing the southern border who are known members of al-Shabab, (the terrorist group that launched a deadly attack on a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya), as well as al-Itihaad al-Islamiya, a Somalia-based group that was funded by Osama bin Laden.

DIVERSITY AMONG ILLEGAL ALIENS

Media reports focus too much attention on Mexicans illegally crossing the border—they miss the mix of other illegals. The FBI reports it is monitoring “special interest aliens,” who come from countries with known ties to terrorists or where terrorist groups thrive. Those apprehended include Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis, Syrians, Libyans, and Pakistanis. In all, immigrants from 35 countries in Asia and the Middle East have been arrested over the past few years in the Rio Grande Valley. The Texas DPS found that between November 2013 and July 2014, there were, “143 land border crossing encounters with watch-listed individuals in southwest border states,” including 97 in Texas.

According to Breitbart News, “Eight Syrians were

apprehended on November 16, 2015. According to sources, the Syrians were in two separate ‘family units’ and were apprehended at the Juarez Lincoln Bridge in Laredo, Texas.” Border Patrol agent and NBPC Local 2455 President Hector Garza told Breitbart, “Border Patrol agents who we represent have been contacting our organization to voice concerns about reports from other agents that Syrians crossed the U.S. border from Mexico in the Laredo Sector. Our agents have heard about Syrians being apprehended in the area from other federal agents. At this time, I cannot confirm or deny that Syrians have crossed, for security reasons.”⁵

Brietbart News also confirms that, “a Syrian did attempt to enter the U.S. illegally through Texas in late September [2015]. The Syrian was caught using a passport that belonged to someone else and U.S. authorities decided against prosecuting anyone involved due to ‘circumstances.’”

REALLY?

The American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF) claims, “Illegal immigrants are not terrorists. They want to come legally to do the jobs Americans don’t want...the government is wasting money and manpower trying to keep out the immigrant workers the U.S. economy needs. That makes the job of finding a terrorist like finding a needle in a haystack.”⁶ The Zolberg Institute’s Ernesto Castañeda’s naiveté (at best) and the ALIF’s misinformation (or worse) have muddied the public’s focus on the crises at hand.



COMING IN “LEGALLY”

Going on their belly under the “fence” on the Mexican border is one way for terrorists to infiltrate the U.S., but they gain entry using passports as well. “The terrorists are smart about which passports they use,” says David Simcox, director of migration demographics for the Center for Immigration Studies. “At least two of the September 11 attackers used stolen Saudi Arabian passports. Saudi Arabia is a friend of the United States and so using their passport makes it easier to get in at the border.” The terrorist can make a counterfeit passport, hoping that the border agent wouldn’t be able to identify the forgery. “The INS has a forensic document laboratory to train agents to detect these false passports,” Simcox says. “But there are so many countries, that it is difficult to track. And some will get through because the quality is getting so good. The technology of counterfeiting is constantly improving.” And, according to Simcox, Internet sales of fraudulent documents has blossomed in recent years, despite efforts by law enforcement to stop the practice.⁷

Many terrorists simply enter the U.S. using their own passports and a student or business visa. INS officials say there are so many visas given out around the world that it is impossible to check the backgrounds of every person. Two of the September 11 suicide hijackers who had been put on an FBI “watch list” while they were in the U.S. entered the country by applying to take classes at a university or technical school, acquiring a student visa, and then never showing up for class. Three of the terrorists entered on business or tourism visas and simply overstayed their visa. (The INS says the number of foreigners in the U.S. who have overstayed their visas currently stands at more than 2 million.)

ADDING SYRIANS TO THE MIX

President Obama wants the U.S. to absorb 10,000 Syrian refugees in the next year. The findings of an NBC poll revealed that 56 percent of U.S. voters are opposed to that initiative.⁸ The Rasmussen Report tags that number at 59 percent, and to its survey question, “No country has ever prospered that failed to put its own interests first. Both our friends and enemies put their countries above ours and we, while being fair to them, must do the same,” 60 percent of Americans agree.⁹ This is not the first issue where the administration says the public be damned.

Mexican drug traffickers help Islamic terrorists stationed in Mexico cross into the United States to explore targets for future attacks, according to information forwarded to Judicial Watch by a high-ranking Homeland Security official. Among the jihadists that travel back and forth through the porous southern border is a Kuwaiti named Shaykh Mahmood Omar Khabir,

an ISIS operative who lives in the Mexican state of Chihuahua not far from El Paso, Texas. Khabir trained hundreds of Al Qaeda fighters in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen and has lived in Mexico for more than a year, according to information provided by Judicial Watch’s government source. Judicial Watch disclosed:

Now Khabir trains thousands of men—mostly Syrians and Yemenis—to fight in an ISIS base situated in the Mexico-U.S. border region near Ciudad Juárez, the intelligence gathered by JW’s source reveals. Staking out U.S. targets is not difficult and Khabir actually brags in an Italian newspaper article that the border region is so open that he “could get in with a handful of men, and kill thousands of people in Texas or in Arizona in the space of a few hours.” Mexican Foreign Affairs Secretary Claudia Ruiz says in the article that she doesn’t understand why the Obama administration and the U.S. media are “culpably neglecting this phenomenon,” adding that “this new wave of fundamentalism could have nasty surprises in store for the United States.”¹⁰

Khabir was ordered to leave Kuwait about a decade ago over his extremist positions, and is currently on the ISIS payroll operating a cell in an area of Mexico known as Anapra. This information is found in the Open Source Enterprise, a government database that collects and analyzes valuable material from worldwide print, broadcast, and online media sources for the U.S. intelligence community. Only registered government employees are cleared to view the information and analysis in the vast database—unauthorized access can lead to criminal charges. Judicial Watch was able to get into the system, raising the question who else can review that site.

PBS reported on one terrorist who came across the border, Ahmed Ressam, who they say “was somewhat of an expert in fake passports. He used a counterfeit French passport to enter Canada and apply for political asylum. While living there, he supplied fake Canadian passports to other Algerians. And he used a fake Canadian passport under the alias of Benni Noris in a failed attempt to enter the United States and bomb Los Angeles International Airport.”¹¹

Ressam confessed that he was trained in these and other “security” techniques at one of Osama Bin Laden’s training camps in Afghanistan. He also said that an Al Qaeda representative had recruited him to supply the group with false Canadian passports.

QUICK—LOOK UP!

Immigration reformers should qualify calls for protecting the border to mean both borders—Ressam came in from Canada. Ressam associate and fellow

Algerian Mokhtar Haouari was skilled in passport and credit card fraud and was convicted in 2001 for his role as Al Qaeda's dispatcher in the plot. He had credit card imprinting gear and the means to counterfeit checks. He issued stolen identities by the dozens to terrorist operatives in Canada and Europe.

Howard Campbell, a border researcher at the University of Texas at El Paso, believes the U.S. border patrol authorities, "overemphasize security on the southern border and we don't emphasize enough on the northern border." Campbell is emphatic: "If Homeland Security is really concerned with security, and the biggest security threat is terrorism, we should be more worried about the Canadian border than the Mexican border."¹²

In testimony to the U.S. Senate, Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Alan Bersin said he is concerned that potential terrorists are exploiting Canadian loopholes to gain entry to the United States. "We have had more cases where people who are suspected of alliances with terrorist organizations, or have had a terrorist suspicion in their background—we see more people crossing over from Canada than we have from Mexico."¹³

According to a report to Congress by the majority staff of the House Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Investigations, members of Hezbollah have already entered the United States across the Southwest border. The report states, "Former Mexican National security adviser and ambassador to the United Nations, Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, reported, that 'Spanish and Islamic terrorist groups are using Mexico as a refuge.'"¹⁴

One more wrinkle. Congressman Louie Gohmert (R-TX) has warned that, "There were people from terrorist countries who are assuming Hispanic names, and learning a few words of Spanish, and coming in. 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."¹⁵

MEMO TO CASTAÑEDA AND THE AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAW FOUNDATION

Illegal immigration compromises national sovereignty by showing an inability to defend our borders and enforce immigration laws. This inability can be attributed to either lack of resolve, incompetence, or both. Exacerbating the situation, policies and statutes exist at the federal and state levels that seem to make citizenship meaningless, legal immigrant status pointless, and illegal immigrant status penalty-less.

Illegal immigration is a national crisis even if it is only confined to our nation's culture. However, investigative reporting by the news media, findings from Congress, and reports of law enforcement agencies make

evident that the effects of illegal immigration reach beyond just social areas. The invasion of illegal aliens presents a threat to national security by creating and harboring population concentrations with questionable loyalty to the United States.

Illegal immigration is so voluminous and unregulated that U.S. Border and Immigration personnel have no idea who is living or operating within the country: a fact exploited by al Qaeda and terribly displayed on September 11, 2001—and ever since.

That there is an invasion is a fact. That there are terrorists who have used the well-worn border crossings as a means of entry is true. There is a war going on, if anyone cares to look carefully. ■

Endnotes

1. www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/there-no-immigration-security-threat-reform-earned-path-citizenship-cannot-address
2. www.nationalreview.com/article/422436/ted-cruz-jeff-sessions-homegrown-terrorism-illegal-immigration
3. www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_cOvjYLB0w
4. <http://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/dec/30/pakistanis-terrorist-connections-nabbed-us-border/?page=all>
5. www.breitbart.com/texas/2015/02/26/dps-report-illegal-aliens-with-terror-ties-entering-through-texas/
6. <http://immigration.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000786>
7. www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/trail/etc/fake.html
8. www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/poll-majority-americans-oppose-accepting-syrian-refugees-n465816
9. www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/questions/pt_survey_questions/may_2016/questions_foreign_policy_may_1_2_2016
10. www.judicialwatch.org/blog/2016/04/cartels-help-terrorists-in-mexico-get-to-u-s-to-explore-targets-isis-militant-shaykh-mahmood-omar-khabir-among-them/
11. www.judicialwatch.org/blog/2016/04/cartels-help-terrorists-in-mexico-get-to-u-s-to-explore-targets-isis-militant-shaykh-mahmood-omar-khabir-among-them/
12. www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2015/09/30/123671/greater-us-security-threat-mexico-border-or-canada-border/
13. www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/us-border-chief-says-terror-threat-greater-from-canada-than-mexico/article580347/
14. http://media.cygnus.com/files/base/OFCR/document/2012/01/borderthreat_10619200.pdf
15. <http://www.westernjournalism.com/congressman-warns-terrorists-crossing-texas-border/>