

On the Border of an Illegal Immigration Solution  
by Frederick William Springer III

Sometimes you have to think outside of the box. A solution to our southern-border, national security issue, the millions of illegal aliens gaining entry to our country and the potential terrorists that could be mixed among them, is rather simple. So simple that it can be summed up in one word--Commonwealth.

Commonwealth, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is "a nation, state, or other political unit as one founded on law and united by compact or tacit agreement of the people for the common good." Or, simply put for our purposes, "a political unit having local autonomy but voluntarily united with the U.S."

Such an arrangement between the United States and Mexico would be beneficial to both parties. The most important, at this time, would be the solution to the illegal immigration problem and the headaches it causes on both sides of the border when it comes to political communications and safety of those involved. As a commonwealth of the United States, Mexicans would be granted statutory citizenship. With citizenship, Mexicans could legally seek job opportunities here in the United States with no problem. Those already here would no longer need to live on edge worrying about deportation if their badly kept secret was exposed.

The hotly debated wall construction on our border would be a thing of the past (not that it could have been erected in good conscious without also constructing one along our northern border, to be fair, where terrorists can just as easily gain entry). However, a wall could now be constructed along Mexico's southern border. This is a much more reasonable prospect since the area needing coverage would now be effectively cut down to almost a third, from 1,952 miles (3,141 km) to 753 miles (1,212 km), requiring less resources and manpower to be effective.

And, believe it or not, Mexico contends with illegal immigration from their southern neighbors too. Jointly manning a fortified wall there would be advantageous for them and us as well, since

Mexico serves as the primary transshipment country for South American cocaine bound to the U.S.

Also, as part of a commonwealth arrangement, the United States would be able to establish military bases in the region. This could also help the Mexican government, in addition to the obvious, with drug problems in their country. It would be good for the U.S. because we could deploy troops near our border, inside or out, when we feel our security has become compromised without worrying about stepping on anyone's political toes due to the teamwork nature of our new arrangement.

Another mutually beneficial result would be Mexicans entering into the Social Security pool. According to the CIA World Factbook, the Mexican labor force is over 43 million strong. This (in addition to the 10+ million already here) would be a nice supplement to our own workers paying into the system, providing a temporary boost to help prolong the way things are currently run just a little longer as we figure out how to update our program, smoothing out the flaws. By the time Mexicans are ready to collect, the system should have been adjusted appropriately and, in any case, they will gain more than they had in the past.

In addition to Social Security, Mexico would be eligible for other federal programs, subsidies, development assistance and public works. Mexico considers its lack of clean drinking water a national security issue. In the new found spirit of collaboration, this would be a problem America assigns a priority to and immediately begins to help alleviate, rather than allowing politics to get in the way as they have in the past. In this way, important national security issues in both countries will have been addressed and acted on.

Another fringe benefit would be the implementation of U.S. minimum wage laws. As things stand now, half the Mexican population is poor, living on a mere \$2 a day or less. Not only

would a minimum wage help their dire situation, it would also diminish the drive for so many to seek employment in the U.S.

Annually, our mutual border is the most frequently crossed international border on the planet, both legally (350 million) and illegally (1 million). And whereas many Mexicans seek to live in America, Mexico likewise has the greatest population of U.S. citizens living outside their home country. (Mexico is quickly becoming the new Florida--Americans going there to party when they're young and to retire when they grow old). It seems like common sense that we should be working together rather than counter-productively.

So, the solution to illegal immigration and protecting our southern border seems rather simple to this non-politician--push pride aside and do what's right. Entering into a commonwealth, each country will maintain its own identity. Essentially, Mexico can continue running its government as is, president and all. In essence, we'll be pooling our resources for the betterment of both nations and declaring to the rest of the world that neighbors should work along side one another and look after each other. And, I ask, what's wrong with that? Just some food for thought...

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