

IS AMERICA SAFER NOW THAN IT WAS BEFORE SEPTEMBER 11?

BY: ANTHONY J. SACCO, SR. © January 2009

Pine Bluffs – My answer to that question is a resounding “YES”. But perhaps a better question would be, “Why has the United States become safer since September 11?”

Prior to September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, or against U.S. citizens and military personnel in other parts of the world, had been carried out numerous times. (For a comprehensive list by year, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_incidents). Those receiving the most media attention were the first World Trade Center bombing on February 26, 1993, when a car bomb exploded below Tower One, intended to knock the North Tower into the South Tower and bring both down, killing thousands. Although the demonic plan failed, it did kill 6 people and injured 1,042; and the USS Cole attack on October 12, 2000, when a small craft loaded with C-4 explosives blew up alongside the Arleigh Burke class destroyer while it was making a routine re-fueling stop in the port of Aden, Yemen. The blast killed 17 sailors and injured 37.

There had been at least two other noteworthy terrorist incidents that did not garner much attention at the time: January 25, 1993, when Mir Aimal Kansi, a Pakistani, fired an AK-47 rifle into cars waiting at a stoplight in front of CIA headquarters in Virginia, killing 2 and injuring 3 others; and March 1, 1994, the Brooklyn Bridge shooting, when Rashid Baz killed a Hasidic Jewish seminary student and wounded 4 on the bridge in New York City.

But Democrat President, William Jefferson Clinton, in the White House from January 1993 to January 2001, failed to recognize what was happening; that radical Islam had declared war on the United States. Consequently, little if anything was done militarily to serve notice on the Arab World that the United States would act promptly and decisively to avenge these incidents, protect itself against Islamic extremists, and otherwise join the battle. Further, Clinton continued the outmoded policy of arresting and trying terrorists in our criminal courts, despite the fact that this resulted in long delays in apprehending the perpetrators, and huge expense to American taxpayers as the legal system ground its way through trials and numerous appeals. He and his minions completely ignored the fact that as enemy combatants, terrorists are subject to the terms of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the protections afforded to them therein, *not* the due process rights guaranteed to American citizens by our Constitution.

However, all that changed in 2001. George W. Bush moved into the White House in January that year, full of bipartisan zeal, and eager to attack the serious problems – foreign and domestic – that faced us. Little is known as to how his presidency might have impacted those problems, because just eight months later - in September - Mr. Bush was forced to radically alter whatever his plans had been, and devote almost his entire time and energy to a “war on terror” which was thrust upon us.

Because of the policies Mr. Bush has pursued since then, our country has been free of any further attacks like those described above. His actions involved revamping the intelligence community so that CIA and FBI now work together, monitoring terrorist communications that originate outside of America's borders, and taking the fight to the enemy abroad, by searching out and destroying its training camps and sanctuaries.

But by far his biggest and most important undertaking was the creation of a new Cabinet level organization: the Department of Homeland Security.

In the face of numerous threats to the security of the United States, an entity was needed to come to grips with and attempt to manage the risks. President Bush saw this and moved quickly to establish this agency, appointing Pennsylvania Governor, Tom Ridge as its first Secretary. Later, on February 15, 2005, Michael Chertoff, who previously served as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Philadelphia, as U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey, where he prosecuted several noteworthy cases, and as an Assistant U.S. Attorney General, where he headed up the Criminal Division and co-authored the Patriot Act, became the second Secretary of this new and important cabinet Department, overseeing a \$40 billion dollar budget (2008 figure) and coordinating 22 distinct agencies and programs, employing 218,501 employees, approximately 81% of them civilian, and 19% military personnel.

"On an average day," said Mr. Chertoff in an op-ed piece in *The Washington Times* (CHERTOFF: Keeping America Safe, 12/26/2008), "the men and women of my department will screen more than 2 million domestic air travelers, inspect more than 300,000 vehicles crossing our borders, check more than 70,000 shipping containers for dangerous materials, and secure thousands of pieces of critical infrastructure."

The Department's overriding mission is to lead a unified national effort to secure the country and preserve our freedoms. While it was created to secure the United States against those who seek to disrupt the American way of life, its charter also includes preparation for and response to all hazards and disasters, including events like Hurricane Katrina.

Recognizing that it is impossible to provide "perfect security" to a country as large as the United States, with borders joining Canada (5,525 miles), and Mexico (1,969 miles), and two seacoasts with numerous busy ports, Mr. Chertoff understands that it is probably impossible to eliminate all risks. "Our goal and [former] President Bush's vision has been to provide risk-based protection against the most significant threats, reduce our major vulnerabilities, and mitigate potential consequences, with minimal disruption and inconvenience," he said. "I believe we have achieved these aims. Across land, sea, and air, our nation is better equipped to deal with threats of the 21st century. In many cases, we have implemented programs and capabilities that did not exist prior to September 11."

He is correct. The task has been daunting. In the transportation field, more than 20 layers of security have been added to airline travel. These include federal air marshals on many flights, 100 per cent screening of passengers and their bags, hardened cockpit doors, and heightened cargo security requirements. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA), comprised of 43,000 security officers, inspectors, directors, air

marshals, and managers who protect our nation's transportation systems so we can travel safely, look for bombs at border checkpoints and in airports, inspect rail cars, patrol subways with law enforcement partners, and work to make all modes of transportation safe.

During the week of January 20 –January 25, 2009, TSA reports that 9 passengers were arrested due to suspicious behavior or fraudulent travel documents, 16 firearms were found at checkpoints, 4 artfully concealed prohibited items were discovered, and 12 incidents that involved a checkpoint closing, terminal evacuation, or sterile area breach were processed.

In the area of Immigration, the Department's most significant accomplishment has been with the U.S. Border Patrol. It has met President Bush's goal of doubling the workforce during his presidency from around 8,000 agents to its present force of over 18,000. According to Border Patrol officials, the additional personnel have helped elevate drug seizures and apprehensions of illegals coming across the border.

Just in time, too. The country is reeling under the impact of illegal aliens streaming across what was once a porous southern border. Many communities, conscious of the slogan, "We are a nation of immigrants," have attempted to provide jobs and services to these people, even though that slogan is not altogether accurate; it is more correct to say, "We are a nation of *legal* immigrants." Perhaps these statistics, taken from an article appearing in the *Los Angeles Times*, a newspaper not known for supporting conservative causes, might bring some perspective to the problem:

1. 40% of all workers in LA County, California (LA County has 10.2 million people) are working for cash and not paying taxes. This is because they are predominantly illegal immigrants working without a green card.
2. 95% of warrants for murder in Los Angeles are for illegal aliens.
3. 75% of people on the most wanted list in Los Angeles are illegal aliens.
4. Over 2/3 of all births in Los Angeles County are to illegal alien Mexicans on Medi-Cal, whose births were paid for by taxpayers.
5. Nearly 35% of all inmates in California detention centers are Mexican nationals here illegally.
6. Over 300,000 illegal aliens in Los Angeles County are living in garages.
7. The FBI reports half of all gang members in Los Angeles are most likely illegal aliens from south of the border.
8. Nearly 60% of all occupants of HUD properties are illegal.
9. 21 radio stations in L. A. are Spanish speaking.
10. In L. A. County 5.1 million people speak English, 3.9 million speak Spanish. (There are 10.2 million people in LA County).

11. Less than 2% of illegal aliens are picking our crops, but 29% are on welfare.
12. Over 70% of the United States' annual population growth (and over 90% of California, Florida, and New York) results from immigration.
13. 29% of inmates in federal prisons are illegal aliens.

And that's not the half of it. Just look at these statistics regarding what is spent annually to support this invasion of illegals from our neighbor to the south. For ease of checking, the URLs have been included so you can confirm these facts yourself:

1. Nationally, \$11 Billion to \$22 billion is spent on welfare to illegal aliens each year by state governments. Verify at: <http://tinyurl.com/zob77><<http://tinyurl.com/zob77>>
2. \$2.2 Billion dollars a year is spent on food assistance programs such as food stamps, WIC, and free school lunches for illegal aliens. Verify at: <http://www.cis.org/articles/2004/fiscalexec.html>>
3. \$2.5 Billion dollars a year is spent on Medicaid for illegal aliens. Verify at: <http://www.cis.org/articles/2004/fiscalexec.html>>
4. \$12 Billion dollars a year is spent on primary and secondary school education for children here illegally and they cannot speak a word of English. Verify at: <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0604/01/ldt.0.html> <
5. \$17 Billion dollars a year is spent for education for the American-born children of illegal aliens, known as anchor babies. Verify at <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0604/01/ldt.01.html> <
6. \$3 Million Dollars a DAY is spent to incarcerate illegal aliens. Verify at: <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0604/01/ldt.01.html> <
7. 30% percent of all Federal Prison inmates are illegal aliens. Verify at: <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0604/01/ldt.01.html> <
8. \$90 Billion Dollars a year is spent on illegal aliens for Welfare & social services by the American taxpayers. Verify at: <http://premium.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0610/29/ldt.01.html> <
9. \$200 Billion Dollars a year in suppressed American wages are caused by illegal aliens. Verify at: < BR><http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0604/01/ldt.01.html> <
10. The illegal aliens in the United States have a crime rate that's two and a half times that of white non-illegal aliens. In particular, some experts believe that their children are going to create a huge additional crime problem in the US. Verify at: <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0606/12/ldt.01.html> <
11. During 2005, there were 4 to 10 MILLION illegal aliens that crossed our Southern

Border, and also as many as 19,500 illegal aliens from Terrorist Countries. Millions of pounds of drugs, cocaine, meth, heroin and marijuana, crossed into the U. S from the Southern border. Verify at: Homeland Security Report: <http://tinyurl.com/t9sht> <
<http://tinyurl.com/t9sht>>

12. The National Policy Institute "estimated that the total cost of mass deportation would be between \$206 and \$230 billion or an average cost of between \$41 and \$46 billion annually over a five year period." Verify at:
<http://www.nationalpolicyinstitute.org/pdf/deportation.pdf>.

13. In 2006 illegal aliens sent home \$45 BILLION in remittances back to their countries of origin. This means that the United States is supporting the economies of Mexico and a few other nations. Verify at: <http://www.rense.com/general75/niht.htm>.

14. "The Dark Side of Illegal Immigration: Nearly One Million Sex Crimes Committed by Illegal Immigrants In The United States." Verify at:
<http://www.drdsk.com/articleshtml> <<http://www.drdsk.com/articleshtml>>

The total cost of all this is a whopping \$ 338.3 billion dollars each year.

Surely these are sobering statistics. Those who champion open borders and work to protect illegals once they arrive "seeking only a better life for themselves and their families," must understand that these illegal aliens are violating U.S. sovereignty and breaking the laws of their new country - as their *very first act* in setting foot in America. That is *NOT* the way my grandparents, and probably yours, came to America. It cannot be tolerated any longer. We are a nation of compassionate people. In times of emergency, no country on Earth gives more aid and assistance to others. But when that compassion – and our generosity - are abused and taken advantage of (ever hear of the Reconquista Movement in southwestern United States?) we can and must take action to protect ourselves.

Some progress is being made. In the interior, according to Mr. Chertoff, ". . . we have arrested record numbers of illegal aliens, including more than 11,000 gang members, 34,000 fugitives. We also have cracked down on employers who violate immigration laws, while giving businesses better tools, such as E-Verify, to maintain a legal work force. The result has been a historical reversal of illegal immigration, with no net increase in the illegal immigrant population in our country for the first time in decades."

What's E-Verify? A voluntary program that allows private employers to ensure electronically that their new hires are eligible to work in the United States. In just one year it has processed more than 4 million eligible checks, and 82,000 employers have taken advantage of the free service.

The system has proven to be quite effective," explains James Carafano of *The Heritage Foundation*, "and SSA and DHS continue to work to improve service, reliability, and privacy protections."

Knowing that business is (or at least, was) driving the illegal immigration problem, recent raids on large corporations that hire numerous illegals have been conducted recently. And an end to "Catch and Release" policies followed by two Democrat Administrations in the '90s, whereby illegals were arrested, processed, assigned a trial date and released on their own recognizance never to be seen again, has been mandated. Also resources have been assigned to end gang violence, which is among the most difficult of criminal activity to quell. All this is good news indeed.

Other accomplishments of the Department of Homeland Security include the building of hundreds of miles of pedestrian and vehicle fencing, including an attempt at a "virtual fence" of about 128 miles, and adding new technology to prevent entry of terrorists, criminals, illegal aliens, and dangerous drugs and weapons.

With so much of its resources devoted to the southern border, what about our seaports? Radiation scanning equipment has been deployed to check almost 100% of incoming cargo for weapons of mass destruction. Before September 11, no cargo was scanned for such threats. And in an interesting innovation, U.S. inspectors have been stationed overseas to screen cargo as it leaves foreign ports.

Driving across America, one can't help but notice large numbers of oil, gas, and chemical plants, which appear unprotected and vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Is anything being done there? Mr. Chertoff again. "We now require high risk facilities to develop security plans and harden their assets. We have implemented new regulations for chemicals traveling by rail. To guard against biological threats, we have developed early warning systems for 30 major metropolitan areas under the Bio Watch program. We have built new national facilities to characterize and respond to biological attacks. And to counter emergency threats in cyberspace, we have launched a major, multi-agency initiative to protect cyber systems and infrastructure."

Since 2001, excluding Iraq and Afghanistan, terrorists have killed more than 20,000 innocent people and wounded more than 43,000 around the world. But not one of these has happened in the United States. According to Mr. Chertoff, "That is a testament to the president's [Bush's] leadership and to the deliberate efforts of the 218,000 men and women of the Department of Homeland Security who serve our nation today."

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