Fixation: An Obsessive or Unhealthy Preoccupation or Attachment

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FIXATION: AN OBSESSIVE OR UNHEALTHY PREOCCUPATION OR ATTACHMENT.1

[THE M]IGRATION ISSUE NEEDS SENSE, NOT A BIG FENCE.2

BY KATHERINE L. VAUGHNS

Introduction

Congress, for the most part, has had an unnerving focus, arguably un-healthy—at least in terms of achieving fair, just, orderly, and humane immigration policies3—on sealing the border that the United States shares with its southern neighbor, Mexico, to ensure this nation’s security especially in the post-9/11 era. This fixation continues notwithstanding a potentially adverse impact on the economy4 and exorbitant appropriations5 that will be needed for yet another round of increased border enforcement expenditures.6 For the most part, efforts to control unauthorized migration at

1 MerrimWebster’s Collegiate Dictionary 474 (11th ed. 2007).
the border failed to stem the annual influx of hundreds of thousands of unauthorized migrants who, historically, came primarily because of the push of poverty in Mexico and the pull of job opportunities in the U.S.7 A failure to realize that two issues, border control and legalization of a large unauthorized immigrant population residing in this country, are not necessarily interconnected will doom any prospects for sensible and sane immigration policy choices, thereby undermining this nation’s overall security and economic stability.

For the federal government, maintaining the appearance of security and control at the border is a political imperative in the post-9/11 era.8 But its ability to ensure this nation’s security is far from the reality confronting border enforcement in today’s global climate of trade and migration trends.9 Past history and policies bear this out.10 If anything, an escalation of organized criminal enterprises associated with drug and human (including migrant) smuggling,11 accompanied by increased deaths in the desert and border violence have historically followed in the wake of enhanced border enforcement efforts.12 And building a nearly 700-mile physical

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In the wake of September 11, 2001, the border acquired new symbolic importance in the “war on terror.” Although Mexico has no significant Islamic population and houses no known terrorist cells, the border has once again been depicted in terms of “national security,” though now it is reinforced as a bulwark against terrorists rather than communists. Those who criticize the illogic of building a wall between Mexico and the United States while the coasts are wide open and the border with Canada is undefended miss the greater symbolic point.


Also, of notable concern is that the focus on the longest unguarded border in the world the U.S. shares with its northern neighbor has never been as intense. For example, there are seventeen thousand border patrol officers that patrol the Southwest border, whereas fewer than three thousand are dedicated to the northern border. See Chad C. Haddal, CONG. RESEARCH SERV., RL32562, BORDER SECURITY: THE ROLE OF THE U.S. BORDER PATROL (2010) (noting that 85% of approximately 20,000 Border Patrol agents are detailed to the Southwest).


11 Josiah McC. Heyman, Guns, Drugs, and Money: Tackling the Real Threats to Border Security, IMMIGRATION POLICY 4 (September 12, 2011) (opines that the focus should be on guns, money, and drugs which pose the immediate danger.).

fence proved not to be an impenetrable barrier to unauthorized migration. Among other factors, the economic downturn accomplished that halt. Regardless, Congress cannot credibly continue to ignore the need for comprehensive immigration reform. This is especially so, now that the Supreme Court has declared most of Arizona's infamous SB 1070 unconstitutional. Moreover, Congress will not be able to keep the public pacified much longer given the changing demographics of the U.S. population and electorate.

This article explores an interesting but politically confounding area of public policy. Policy choices in immigration tend to ebb and flow depending on several factors, but mostly those involving the economy and national security post-9/11. Immigration reform is the subject of intense debate among politicians, policy experts and analysts, and advocacy groups alike. However, since the policy debate over immigration reform is infected with shameless demagoguery, sound policy choices are virtually impossible to hear. For in this political cauldron, talk of border security and control substitute for the reality that is essential to inform policymakers about necessary choices to reform the immigration system comprehensively. A consensus exists that the system is broken (and in need of a “fix”); this consensus, however, breaks down when differing policy choices are advanced. An irony exists — as the debate over illegal immigration intensifies, the surge of unauthorized migration has ebbed considerably.

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18 Across a myriad of disciplines, at every level of theoretical abstractions, from every ideological direction, the presenters at the 2007 University of Chicago Law School symposium offered proof that current immigration policy is a factory for the production of paradoxes. See Symposium, Immigration Law & Policy, 2007 U. CHI. LEGAL F. IMMIGRATION LAW & POLICY. The fact that the nation’s politicians continue to seek panaceas for a problem where every panacea, like every fence, has failed might be the greatest immigration paradox of all.
20 See, e.g., Jorge G. Castaneda & Douglas S. Massey, Op-ed, Do-It-Yourself Immigration Reform,
Part I offers a brief historical perspective as background to the current debate; it also underscores the special relationship between the U.S. and Mexico concerning border and migration management. Part II confronts the ongoing, intensified debate, while describing the rise of stringent border policies and politics post 9/11. Part III then explains why it is rare for reality to play a role in immigration policymaking. Part III also warns that failure to consider the practical realities will continue to invite "abuse and chaos" if Congress fails to focus on effective policy choices for border and migration management. Part IV, however, explores an alternative to building fences. For example: one that capitalizes on shared responsibilities among regional neighbors. Part IV also underscores the need for a more flexible immigration system given the reality of global migration, to wit, establishing one that, as a bipartisan blue ribbon immigration task force once recommended, "... meets U.S. economic interests now and in the future;" and one that does not compromise national security.

I. Background: A Brief Historical Perspective

History and geography have given Mexico a unique status in the U.S. immigration system, and have made the Mexico-U.S. migration flow the largest in the world. Mexicans are the largest group of U.S. migrants across most types of immigration statuses—a fact that may have important implications for how Congress makes U.S. immigration policy. 


In the noisy American debate over immigration reform, something important seems to have escaped notice: time, and common-sense decisions by Mexican migrants, have brought us nearly everything immigration was supposed to achieve.... [And what remains to be accomplished is the regularization of the immigration status of the 11.5 million unauthorized immigrants who reside in the United States. As the co-authors observe, "a solution can be envisioned by recognizing that self-deportation is not going to happen."]

21 Editorial, An Invitation to Abuse and Chaos, N.Y. TIMES, Apr. 21, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/22/opinion/sunday/an-invitation-to-abuse-and-chaos.html (last visited July 20, 2012) (declaring that Arizona’s SB 1070 was enacted to bring about “attrition through enforcement” which according to the editorial “invites unfettered racial profiling and the abuse of police power.” The editorial further asserted that if the Supreme Court were to allow this “cold-blooded immigration statute” to stand, “it opens the door to states’ writing their own foreign policy, in defiance of the Constitution.”) Although the Court did strike down the three of the four challenged portions of the act, it did (cautiously) upheld the infamous “show me your papers” measure which issue will undoubtedly land in the Supreme Court in the near future. Arizona v. United States, No. slip op. at __. This is especially likely unless in the interim, Congress enacted a measure that regularizes the statuses of unauthorized immigrants residing in the U.S.


23 MARC R. ROSENBLUM, CONG. RESEARCH SERV., R42560, MEXICAN MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES: POLICY AND TRENDS, Summary Page (2012).
A. U.S.-Mexico Border Relations

The U.S.-Mexico border is much more than a boundary between two nations. Over the years, it has become a symbolic stage upon which the nation's insecurities and fears, hopes and dreams, are projected for public consumption.24

Mexico, along with Canada, is one of the U.S.'s largest trading partners. Approximately 500 million crossings occur annually at the international borders the U.S. shares with Canada and Mexico, respectively.25 In the past, policy discussions about border management and migration have not been very high on the list of U.S. priorities or, for that matter, in the minds of the American people.26 This was so despite the fact that enforcement at the U.S.-Mexico border was rather chaotic at times.27 Then September 11 changed U.S. priorities dramatically, especially as it related to U.S.-Mexico border relations. Still, the borders these two countries share with the U.S. create a special relationship between and among them on a regional basis. As it relates to the U.S.-Mexico border, this relationship is one that is "a close and complex bilateral relationship,"28 one that has existed between the U.S. and Mexico for a very long time; and one that is "largely of the U.S.'s own making,"29 according to migration historian and scholar Aristide Zolberg.

The U.S.-Mexico border was formalized when the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War.30 Nearly sixty years later, immigration inspectors on horseback began enforcing immigration

27 Id.
28 Clare Ribando Seelke, CONG. RESEARCH SERV., RL32724, MEXICO: ISSUES FOR CONGRESS, Summary Page (2012) (noting also that the United States and Mexico have extensive economic linkages; but in recent years, security issues have dominated the bilateral relationship).
laws on the U.S.-Mexico border in 1904. Because the Southwest border was not specifically demarcated, people crossed back and forth freely. Beginning in the 1920s and throughout various periods that followed, Mexican nationals entered this country without authorization invariably in response to U.S. economic demands for cheap labor. Border enforcement efforts did not manage to stem the tide of migration; it took the Great Depression in the 1930s to accomplish that, as sociologist and co-director of the Mexican Migration Project Douglas S. Massey once observed.

The U.S.'s entry into World War II reignited the U.S.'s demand for cheap labor. But this time the U.S. and Mexico negotiated a formal temporary guest worker program, called the "Bracero Program," which brought millions of Mexican nationals to the United States to offset U.S. labor shortages in agriculture during the war. The program officially ended in 1964. But when the demand for workers exceeded the supply of temporary visas under the regular immigration system, the growers began to recruit Mexican workers outside the program, and thus illegal immigration in the U.S. steadily rose. During the program's formal period, the

33 Id.
34 See Massey, supra note 32; arguably, history repeated itself post-2007; see e.g., Marc R. Rosenblum Congressional Testimony, Measuring Border Security: U.S. Border Patrol's New Strategic Plan and the Path Forward before the Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, May 8, 2012 reporting that in evaluating the effectiveness of migration enforcement efforts to decrease illegal migration on the Southwest border: Assigning casualty is particularly difficult in the case of the post-2007 downturn because many of the most significant new enforcement efforts—including...most border fencing...have occurred in the context of the most severe recession since the 1930s. The economic downturn has been particularly intense in certain industries that have historically employed a large number of unauthorized migrants.
39 See id. at 5.
braceros, i.e., temporary guest workers, returned home seasonally. Meanwhile, patterns of cross-border (or circular migration) were established and persisted despite the official end of the Bracero program.

Unauthorized migration continued seemingly without notice until the late 1970s when border enforcement became an issue of national prominence in congressional policy debates. With each border initiative implemented, the goal was to seal the border. The circular migration patterns, however, continued unabated until the unprecedented escalation of border enforcement that began in the early 1990s. However, the ability of unauthorized migrants to return to Mexico became increasingly riskier and more dangerous. As a result, many viewed enhanced border enforcement efforts as contributing to the creation of the current composition of unauthorized migrants in the U.S.—those once here on a seasonal basis have now become the predominant part of unauthorized migrants permanently residing in the U.S. today.

During the late 1970s to early 1980s, the influx of unauthorized migrants continued unabated and the politically orchestrated cry went out that the U.S. was losing control of its borders. This became part of the political agenda by the early 1980s, until Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). President Ronald Reagan signed IRCA, also known as the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, into law on November 6,
1986. With IRCA’s enactment, Congress employed a tripartite (also known as “the three-legged stool”) approach in an attempt to solve the illegal immigration problem. President Reagan proclaimed IRCA to be a major step towards reform and touted it as the solution to the problem of illegal immigration. Unfortunately, this ambitious goal was unrealized. Unauthorized migration continued, essentially unabated, despite the escalation of border enforcement on the U.S.-Mexico border, except for the legalization (aka “amnesty”) of former unauthorized status for approximately 3 million unauthorized immigrants.

Although IRCA is considered to be the first serious attempt to curtail illegal immigration, many observers consider it to have been “spectacularly unsuccessful” in addressing the problem. Moreover, Congress did not pass the requisite funding for the unprecedented build-up of enforcement efforts at the U.S.-Mexico border until 1993; years after IRCA had authorized such funding. The political will for such enforcement efforts was lacking until emotional anti-immigrant fervor began in California with the passage of Proposition 187. Then it picked up speed in Congress. In the interim, Congress passed another immigration reform measure, to wit, the

Prime Minister, Foundation President and Young Diaspora Lead (Apr. 19, 2012). MPI intended for these awards to “serve as reminder of a time when Congress was able to set aside its divisions to accomplish big things in the immigration arena.” Id.


Immigration Act of 1990 ("IMMACT"),55 which was aimed at increasing legal immigration.

These two pieces of legislation, IRCA and IMMACT, are considered "the cornerstones of modern immigration reform."56 IMMACT, however, has attracted far less attention in the public arena.57 With its passage Congress authorized more spending at the border, expanded the number of employment-based visas intended for highly-skilled immigrants, and introduced a new category popularly called the visa diversity lottery.58 That Congress had increased the number of visas available, among other positive measures, was viewed as reflecting Congressional confidence in the U.S.'s "capacity for continuing to absorb new immigrants."59 Not surprisingly at the time of its passage, the economy was doing well.60 Finally, one of the measure's goals, arguably, was to place the U.S. in an economically competitive position with the European Economic Community.61

Then President Bill Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on December 8, 1993.62 Implementation of NAFTA began on January 1, 1994. Since its inception in 1994, NAFTA has not been without its critics. The concept behind NAFTA was to promote economic growth by easing the movement of goods and services between the U.S., Mexico and Canada.63 NAFTA-related talks in the 1990s presented the two neighboring countries an opportunity to address unauthorized migration.64 Nonetheless the talks did not include migration management. NAFTA did, however, provide for a number of immigration-related visas to ease the movement of highly skilled professionals.65 And the established

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56 Richard A. Boswell, Immigration Law and Reform: Crafting an Amnesty with Traditional Tools: Registration and Cancellation, 47 HARV. J. ON LEGIS. 175 (2010).
57 Id.
59 Id.
60 See, e.g., Bryn Siegel, The Political Discourse of Amnesty in Immigration Policy, 41 AKRON L. REV. 291, 305 n. 84 (2008) (citing JOHN ISBISTER, THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE 200 (Kumarian Press 1996), in which the author examines the different elements that factor in to immigration debates: "It is no coincidence that the expansive Immigration Act of 1990 was passed at the end of a decade of steady economic growth, increasing prosperity for many Americans (although not all) and falling employment.").
65 Susan Martin, Politics of U.S. Immigration Reform, in MEXICO-U.S. MIGRATION
cross-border patterns and networks of Mexican migration persisted. Meanwhile, IRCA had failed to curb illegal immigration; IMMACT focused on legal immigration and NAFTA arguably exacerbated the unauthorized migration problem.\textsuperscript{66} With the midterm elections in 1994, Republican restrictionists on immigration reform seized the opportunity to enact their vision. So in 1996 Congress passed immigration laws that many considered harsh, draconian, and violative of individual rights.\textsuperscript{67} These measures were enacted largely in response to the first World Trade Center bombing and that of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal building in downtown Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, the latter being the largest domestic terrorist attack in the history of the United States, until September 11, 2001.\textsuperscript{68} Although the Oklahoma City bombing was orchestrated by anti-government militia-men of the homegrown variety, the newly enacted immigration laws were principally directed at non-citizens.\textsuperscript{69}

Then early in 2001, newly elected U.S. president George W. Bush met with Mexico’s relatively-new president Vicente Fox to discuss migration issues between the two countries.\textsuperscript{70} The goal of their meeting was to achieve immigration reform.\textsuperscript{71} The historical relationship between the U.S. and Mexico was thus about to play a major role in unauthorized migration initiatives. Later talks were intended to focus on resolving the much larger illegal immigration problem in the U.S. Unfortunately, 9/11 occurred; the ability of politicians to capitalize on the public’s fear of future terrorist attacks rendered these two friendly countries – both with major interests in bilateral cooperation given their shared responsibility – unable to complete negotiations on a migration agreement that began in hopeful anticipation prior to 9/11. Clearly the attacks on 9/11 had their impact on border policies and unauthorized migration management.


\textsuperscript{71} Kristen McCabe and Doris Meissner, \textit{Immigration and the United States: Recession Affects Flows, Prospects for Reform}, \textit{MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE} 4 (January 2010), available at \url{http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/}
B. Border Policies Post-9/11

... some members of Congress want to rely on the old ways of doing things, such as fencing, which rhetorically and symbolically seem like the easy and simple answer for the war on terrorism. Unfortunately, these kinds of border control methods only serve to confuse or ignore the underlying political, social, and economic factors at play on the border and between the United States and Mexico.72

Prior to the terrorist attacks, many in immigrant communities had applauded the joint venture these two presidents had embarked upon. For pro-immigrant advocates, it represented a move that symbolized a change of direction in immigration policy and simultaneously signaled a return to "kinder, gentler" immigration reform policies; especially those affecting the millions of Mexican nationals residing in the United States.73 But that hopeful outlook was short-lived. In the wake of the terrorist attacks eight months after their meeting in Mexico, Congress and the Administration turned their attention decidedly away from promoting such initiatives and focused on sealing U.S. borders in an effort to prevent further attacks.

These attacks have had a lasting impact, both psychologically and politically. Focusing on border security and control initially was to be expected. In doing so, however, the government failed to fully appreciate that, as the 9/11 Commission put it, "the 9/11 attacks revealed four kinds of failures: in imagination, policy, capabilities, and management,"74 none of which related to a failure of land border enforcement efforts.75 In its final report, the

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72 Jason Ackleson, In Focus: Fencing in Failure: Effective Border Control is Not Achieved by Building More Fences 6 IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER (Apr. 2005).
73 See, generally, Barbara Hines, So Near Yet so Far Away: The Effect of September 11th on Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 8 TEX. HISP. J. L. & POL’Y 37, 40-45 (2002) (observing how the pendulum had swung toward harsher, more draconian immigration laws and was about to swing back when 9/11 occurred and halted all forward progress on ameliorating the 1996 laws); see also Kevin R. Johnson & Bernard Trujillo, Immigration Reform, National Security After September 11, and the Future of North American Integration, 91 MINN. L. REV. 1369, 1371 (2007) (noting that shortly before 9/11, Congress had been seriously considering possible legalization of undocumented workers and reconsideration of the restrictive nature of the 1996 immigrations laws).
75 See, e.g., Juan Carlos Linares, Hired Hands: The Impact of Globalization and Human Rights on Migrant Workers in the United States, 34 DENV. J. INT’L L & POL’Y 321, 350-51 (2006) It will be difficult to isolate the long-term effects of the September 11th terrorist attack on migrant workers rights. [fn. omitted] But what is known today is that law enforcement has focused on hunting down foreign would-be terrorists within U.S. borders, renewing interest in government control of immigration. [fn. omitted] In essence, immigration policy has been treated as a national security issue, rather than as a phenomenon of globalization. [fn. omitted] As a result, the United States currently spends one billion dollars on border enforcement annually. [fn. omitted] Yet, the only clear impact this increased border enforcement appears to have is increased deaths among immigrants [crossing the
9/11 Commission pointed to a failure of intelligence gathering, in concert with outdated visa issuance policies that focused on criteria not likely to detect those seeking to enter the U.S. to engage in terrorist activities. By consistently portraying the border as “security vulnerability,” the temptation to turn to law enforcement agencies and military measures has been “quite predictable.”

Despite a post-9/11 boom in immigration legislation intended to provide more border control, such policy initiatives have yet to stem the flow of unauthorized migrants across the Southwest border. Other factors, however, play a role. Presently, it appears that the economic downturn beginning in 2007 and the later improvement in Mexico’s economy are contributing factors to the sharp decline in migrant border-crossings. Still, when talking about immigration reform, most politicians will say that the border must first be secured. It’s like a political mantra.

Congressional frustration may result from being able to do so little, if resolution of the problem is not within its power. If indeed the failure to prevent the attacks was one of a lack of imagination, this may help to explain, in part, the continuing “border fixation” of the policy makers. Another contributing factor, however, is undoubtedly a lack of political will. After all, once better intelligence and sharing of information is recognized as the goal, what really remains for Congress to do in demonstrating its role in preventing the next attack? When the public demanded that something be done, Congress rose to the occasion and passed arguably questionable laws within six weeks of the attacks to show its power. Another more
likely reason may be politics pure and simple.\textsuperscript{82} Unfortunately, the kind of politics associated with the current immigration debate is not the kind that is likely to generate sound and wise immigration policies and enacted reforms.

From a humanitarian perspective, what has been most disturbing about U.S. border policies is the sharp increase of border-crossing-related deaths that have occurred since the escalation of border enforcement efforts. As comparative migration scholar, Wayne A. Cornelius once observed and reported in 2004, the death toll then was “10 times more lives than the Berlin Wall claimed during its 28-year existence.”\textsuperscript{83} Anticipated opportunities for better management of the current migration situation, especially as it related to Mexican migration, had all but vanished.\textsuperscript{84} But then on January 7, 2004, President Bush outlined a set of principles for dealing with illegal immigration to the U.S.,\textsuperscript{85} ostensibly marking the beginning of the current debate now ending its second decade that took hold in earnest during the 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress. Unfortunately, border security concerns came to dominate the political agenda of the 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress.\textsuperscript{86}

\section{II. The Current Debate: Border Policies and Immigration Politics}

Efforts to police the flow of illegal immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico border have undergone a metamorphosis since the early 1990s: immigration control along the border has been elevated from one of the most neglected areas of federal law enforcement to one of the most politically popular. The unprecedented expansion of border policing... has been strikingly successful in projecting the appearance of a more secure and orderly border.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{82} See infra Part II.


\textsuperscript{84} See, e.g., Barbara Hines, So Near Yet so Far Away: The Effect of September 11\textsuperscript{th} on Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 8 TEX. HISP. J. L. & POL’y 37, 39 (2002) (observing that “[t]he tragedy of September 11th and its aftermath further reinforce the political nature of this area of law.”).


\textsuperscript{86} Andorra Bruno, et. al, CONG. RESEARCH SERV., RL 33125, IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION AND ISSUES IN THE 109\textsuperscript{th} CONGRESS (2005); see Immigration Reform Beyond the Border, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS (Sep. 18, 2006), http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2006/09/beyond_the_border.html (noting that the House of Representatives announced its pursuit of a “Secure Border Now Agenda,” formally abandoning CIR.).

\textsuperscript{87} PETER ANDREAS, BORDER GAMES: POLICING THE U.S.-MEXICO DIVIDE 85 (Cornell University Press, 2d Ed., 2009).
A. 109th & 110th Congresses: Border Policies

... Enforcement of laws against unauthorized immigration is, in the vast majority of cases, a resource-and attention-wasting distraction from sensible national security measures. That does not mean the U.S.-Mexico border is free from risk of harm, such as increasingly violent drug trafficking organizations operating nearby in Mexico. But that issue needs to be addressed in different ways than current enforcement policy does.88

Everyone with a stake in this policy debate agrees that the current system of immigration is in need of a major overhaul.89 But which approach would best accomplish the much needed "fix" remained the critical bone of contention throughout the 109th and 110th Congresses. For the better part of those congressional terms, the competing approaches can be summed up into two phrases: "enforcement only" or "enforcement plus."90 The former approach focused on tougher border control methods, ostensibly intended to prevent future terrorist attacks, but to the exclusion of all other components of a comprehensive immigration reform package. This approach represented a continuation of the harsh and punitive reform measures which Congress repeatedly passed beginning in the mid-1990s.91 The latter approach also contemplated (in addition to border control) addressing the millions of unauthorized immigrants residing here together with President Bush's previously proposed guest worker program.92

At the core of what became a hotly contested debate over these two approaches during the 109th Congress was a determination on the part of the Republican restrictionists not to see any compromise undermine their hard-line strategy dealing with the unauthorized migrant population that is contrary to their anti-immigrant goals. The House adamantly embraced the


91 See supra note 42.

former approach and passed an enforcement only measure in December 2005, a “take no prisoners” initiative, the highly controversial Sensenbrenner bill.93 Also a Senate bill of the “enforcement plus” variety had been pending; it combined the components of a number of bills previously introduced.94

For a period of time, however, the pending Senate bill seemed to be at a stalemate. On May 25, 2006, the Senate eventually passed what some hailed as a historic immigration bill;95 it turned out to be the high-water mark of the 109th Congress.96 Yet the House never budged on its “enforcement only” approach to immigrant reform. The Senate Majority Leader altered the phrase “enforcement plus” to embrace a more politically salvageable approach to comprehensive immigration reform, labeling it as an “enforcement first” strategy.97 The House split the Sensenbrenner bill into several separate enforcement only bills, one of them being a measure to build a fence on the Southwest border.

On October 26, after strong bipartisan votes in both houses of Congress, the Secure Fence Act of 200698 became law. It passed both houses with a sizable number of Democrats voting in its favor.99 The bill was then trotted out for presidential signing just in time for the mid-term elections.100

95 Julia Gelatt, Senate Approves Scaled-Back Immigration Bill, President Calls for National Guard, MIGRATION POLICY INST. (June 1, 2006), available at http://www.migrationinformation.org/about.cfm http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=405. Not everyone was celebrating but see, e.g., Facts on Immigration—Fence Offensive: A Nineteenth Century ‘Solution’ to a Twenty-First Century Problem (Oct. 19, 2006) (“no secret that the bill was placed on the Senate calendar for political reasons . . . proving once again that the bill is a political stunt and not a serious legislative proposal.”).

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ulation ensued about further legislation;\textsuperscript{101} but the 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress ultimately ended without having passed any legislation intended to overhaul the immigration system comprehensively.

In a piece entitled the "Dismal Legacy of 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress,"\textsuperscript{102} the Center for American Progress, the progressive Washington think tank, observed that comprehensive immigration reform was "[n]otably absent from the [the 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress'] list of last-minute 'accomplishments'. . . ."\textsuperscript{103} That Congress failed to deliver on resolving the growing unauthorized immigrant population should not be too surprising.\textsuperscript{104} Immigration "enforcement plus" measures were political victims of hardliners in the 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress, who adamantly sought security-related measures. They also sought, albeit unsuccessfully, to gain a political advantage during the 2006 midterm elections.

The 110\textsuperscript{th} Congress was poised to take up these measures in its first session. The Democrats had taken control of Congress and considered prospects for reform promising.\textsuperscript{105} During the first week in January 2007, congressional leaders spoke optimistically with President Bush about immigration reform.\textsuperscript{106} However, the 110\textsuperscript{th} Congress ended without passing a comprehensive immigration reform bill.\textsuperscript{107} Seemingly, events in 2006, including the role of the media,\textsuperscript{108} arguably changed the political climate in which immigration would be debated in the future.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{101} See, e.g., Lee, supra note 92, at 268 (promoting the adoption of the two measures she introduced in the 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress).
\textsuperscript{103} Id.
\textsuperscript{106} Id.
\textsuperscript{107} Jonathan Weisman, Immigration Bill Dies in Senate, WASH. POST, June 29, 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/28/AR2007062800963.html; see also, Ruth Ellen Wasem, CRS REPORT TO CONGRESS, IMMIGRATION REFORM ISSUES IN THE 111\textsuperscript{th} CONGRESS (July 13, 2009), available at http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/130263.pdf; (reporting that "Senate action on comprehensive immigration reform legislation stalled at the end of June 2007 after several weeks of intense floor debate").
B. 111th & 112th Congresses: Immigration Politics

Comprehensive immigration reform is the exception, not the rule, in American politics.\textsuperscript{110}

Back in 2006, the American Bar Association (ABA) urged Congress to enact realistic immigration reform measures, calling for a more modern, fair, and transparent immigration system.\textsuperscript{111} Specifically, the ABA called for "a regulated, orderly and safe immigration system that addresses the unauthorized population, the need for immigrant labor, the value of family reunification and the need for an effective enforcement strategy,"\textsuperscript{112} among other things. Congress, in effect, has not only rejected updating the system to provide sufficient opportunities for people to come and join their close family members, as the ABA had urged,\textsuperscript{113} but also to take into account the reality that the current immigration system is not suitable for the new century.

It is well known that both former president George W. Bush and President Barrack Obama favored comprehensive immigration reform.\textsuperscript{114} Nonetheless, both presidents have deported record numbers of unauthorized immigrants,\textsuperscript{115} ostensibly making comprehensive immigration reform more politically palatable.\textsuperscript{116} But such an internal enforcement action is unlikely
to achieve the removal of millions of unauthorized immigrants residing in the United States. Nonetheless, both presidents, at one time or another, promised to make passage of comprehensive immigration reform a top priority in his second term after efforts had failed in their respective first terms. Of course another factor dominated all political agendas at the beginning of the 111th Congress and continued into the 112th Congress, to wit, the downturn in the U.S. economy and its slow recovery.

As reported to the 111th Congress, key elements of the immigration debate included, among other issues, border security, internal enforcement and also legal immigration and legalization. Similarly reported to the 112th Congress, key elements of the immigration debate included: border security, internal enforcement along with legal immigration and legalization. The latter report noted that the debate over the legalization of status of unauthorized immigrants residing in this country is complicated by opposing positions. On the one hand, those in favor of “earned legalization” and on the other, those who use the term “amnesty” for so-called lawbreakers, who are opposed to any form of regularization of unauthorized immigrants to lawful immigration status.

Not surprisingly, neither the 111th nor the 112th Congresses managed to pass any comprehensive immigration reform package. Although incremental change in the form of the perennial DREAM Act dominated legislative action in the 111th, comprehensive immigration reform took “back-

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118 See Ruth Ellen Wasem, IMMIGRATION REFORM: BRIEF SYNTHESIS OF ISSUE (2007); Obama says he will tackle immigration reform in his second term. REUTERS (Feb. 23, 2012), http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2012/02/23/obama-says-he-will-tackle-immigration-reform-in-his-second-term; cf. Cristina M. Rodriguez, The Early Obama Administration: Immigration and the Civil Rights Agenda, 6 STAN. J.C.R. & C.L. 125, 145 (2010) (noting that “[d]espite promising to tackle immigration reform during his campaign, President Obama has not yet made the issue a serious priority, nor has it risen to the top of the legislative agenda.”); see also Frank Sharry, Memo to President Obama Regarding Immigration Policy, MIGRATION POL’Y INST. May 2009 (urging the then newly inaugurated president to deliver on his campaign promise to prioritize comprehensive immigration reform in late 2009 adding: “provided conditions make a reform push viable”).
120 Id.
121 CRS REPORT TO CONGRESS, Ruth Ellen Wasem, Overview of Immigration Issues in the 112th Congress at p. 4 dated March 21, 2011; see also, John Cornyn, Immigration Reform: Back to the Future, 115 Yale L. J. Pocket Part 112 (2006), http://www.thepocketpart.org/2006/05/cornyn.html (stating as a congressman: “While I favor a second chance for hard-working illegal aliens currently within the United States, I cannot in good faith support any proposal that will repeat the failures of the 1986 amnesty.”).
"burner" status in the 112th Congress. Notwithstanding the broad-based consensus, some observers have opined that failure to pass an overhaul of U.S. immigration laws—despite substantial efforts in the recent past—is because such a measure is a "zero-sum game" or a "third rail." The "thorniest of these immigration issues centers on policies directed toward unauthorized [immigrants] in the United States."

Politics aside, immigration policy initiatives will always be viewed through a national security lens. "The post-9/11 era has witnessed the emergence of an immigration system in the United States dominated by national security and enforcement considerations." That is 9/11's unfortunate legacy for an area of law already bedeviled with politics and perennially poor policy choices. Neither the 111th nor 112th Congresses were able to accomplish what is now seemingly the impossible, to wit, comprehensive immigration reform. Perhaps it's time to pause for a reality check; as many have observed, reality and reason tend to be rare when it comes to immigration reform.

III. Overcoming the Stalemate on Comprehensive Immigration Reform

The asymmetries of immigration enforcement versus legalization and visa reform on the one hand, and the short-and long-term political barriers to passing CIR legislation on the other explain the history of U.S. immigration policy in the post-9/11 period. Robust immigration enforcement efforts along the U.S.-Mexico border and within the United States since the 1990s have intensified, but no significant steps have been taken to liberalize immigrant admissions or to legalize unauthorized immigrants already within the United States.

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124 CRS REPORT TO CONGRESS, Ruth Ellen Wasem, Overview of Immigration Issues in the 112th Congress at p. 1 dated March 21, 2011.
125 Id.
126 Michelle Mittelstadt, et. al., Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11, MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE (August 2011).
A. \textit{The Rarity of Reality in Border Policymaking}\footnote{Reality Is Still a Rarity in Immigration Debate, Editorial, \textsc{Arizona Daily Star}, Nov. 17, 2006, at A10.}

...American border policy has less to do with the underlying realities of Mexican immigration than with America's view of itself and its place in the world.\footnote{Douglas S. Massey, \textit{Borderline Madness}, \textsc{The Chronicle Review} I (June 30, 2006), available at http://chronicle.com/article/Borderline-Madness/29421 (last visited July 16, 2012).}

As U.S.-Mexico border scholar Douglas S. Massey has noted, our need for symbolic assurances come at a high price.\footnote{Id. at 3.} And as distinguished law professor Michael A. Olivas has observed: “[A]ll that enhanced security and border crossing militarization has achieved has been to drive the border-crossers further into the desert, where more of them die.”\footnote{Michael A. Olivas, \textit{Fences and Mushrooms Along the Border}, \textsc{Immigration Monthly}, 2 (Nov. 2006).} For Olivas, “we are all made less-secure by resorting to the easy solutions, which have such clearly counterproductive results.”\footnote{See http://immigrationpolicy.org/ for more information about the Center.} At the Security Initiative of the Mexico Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., event held in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of 9/11, two noted scholars in residence at the Immigration Policy Center\footnote{See generally, Josiah McC. Heyman, \textit{Guns, Drugs, and Money: Tackling the Real Threats to Border Security}, \textsc{Immigration Policy Center} (Sept. 12, 2011), http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/perspectives/guns-drugs-and-money-tackling-real-threats-border-security; Terry Goddard, \textit{How to Fix a Broken Border: A Three Part Series}, \textsc{Immigration Policy Center of the American Immigration Council}, (Sept. 12, 2012), http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/perspectives/how-fix-broken-border-three-part-series.} would likely agree with Olivas’ sentiments.\footnote{Is the Border Broken? Rethinking the Conventional Wisdom, \textsc{Mexico Institute of the Wilson Center} (Sept. 12, 2011), available at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/the-border-broken-rethinking-the-conventional-wisdom, video available at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/the-border-broken-rethinking-the-conventional-wisdom.} According to Eric Olson, a Senior Associate at the Institute, “[t]he question [the conferees] want to wrestle with ... is whether security at the physical border is truly the best way to enhance national security.”\footnote{Eric Olson & David Shirk, \textit{Is More Getting Us Less? Real Solutions for Securing our Border}, \textsc{Immigration Policy Center of the American Immigration Council} 2 (Feb. 15, 2011).} Although ongoing reports about Mexico’s bloody conflict with organized crime have raised concerns about the violence “spilling over” into the U.S., concerns about illegal migration still drive the policy debate that is centered on “securing the border.”

After concluding his opening remarks, Olson shared an anecdote about a
U.S. Border Patrol officer who was asked about his primary responsibility. The officer responded that since 9/11, his primary responsibility is "fighting terrorism and capturing terrorists." The obvious follow-up question: "How many terrorists have you actually captured? The response: "None." Olson then asked the two speakers: "Are the priorities at the border the right ones and how do we define security along the Southwest border?"

For Professor Josiah Heyman, a border security, it is time to rethink the equation between borders and security. It is "misleading to use public safety...to justify immigration-oriented, boundary-enforcement operations, when immigrants—including the unauthorized—have significant lower violent crime rates than native-born populations." Heyman opines that our fundamental border-security criterion should be "[a] clear and disinterested definition of security [that] is careful and focused." In the end, Heyman offers practical policy steps to address the broad framework of security outlined in his paper, acknowledging that in the current political climate implementation may be challenging; and none more so than comprehensive immigration reform which he considers "essential."

Terry Goddard, Arizona's former (two-term) Attorney General, puts it simply: "If the United States wants effective border security, then more effective law-enforcement measures must be taken." The first step is to identify the right target, and it's not illegal migration. For Goddard, symbolism seemingly trumps common sense when it comes to effective border security. Policymakers whose real intent is not to fix the border, but to stop all illegal immigration into the U.S. will never be satisfied. In his paper he describes how Arizona dealt with the drug cartels successfully.

139 Id. at 2-3.
141 Id. at 8.
142 Id. at 9.
143 Id. at 8.
145 Id. at 9.
146 See id. at 10.
147 See id. at 5-6 (explaining that as Arizona's Attorney General, Goodard focused on cartel mon-
For those seriously interested in real border security in the 21st century, for effective results in terms of a secure and commercially viable border between the United States and Mexico, policymakers should consider Arizona’s story in targeting the cartels and following the money.147 Yet, the reality is that the inability to account for the unauthorized migrants now residing here in the shadows, arguably represents a threat to this nation’s overall economic, social, and security interests.148 Without the ability to monitor their presence through the new technological advancements in computer retention capabilities, the government has no way of ascertaining information essential for security purposes. Any approach to enhancing the national interests in these areas would necessarily involve the regularization, in other words, the legalization of immigrant status of this unknown population.

Presently, the immigration system is not only outdated but also in need of a twenty-first century solution.149 For the hardliners in Congress,150 any bill introduced that offers opportunities to regularize unauthorized status and be more realistic in meeting future worker demands, remains a sticking point in the current debate. Once the data is considered, it is hard to logically justify why politicians would appropriate so many billions of dollars to get so little in national interest returns, but still leave the country so potentially vulnerable.151 So linking one to the other in an effort to preserve appearances may be, hopefully, surfacing as a false reality.

147 See id. at 6.
150 See Timothy Egan, Editorial, Republicans Losing the West, N.Y. TIMES, June 21, 2007, at A23 (noting that in 2010, the House became even more restrictionist-oriented about immigration reform; in other words, if it was not about the border, no chance of passage, including measures which once had bipartisan support like the DREAM Act.).
B. The Political Feasibility of Continuing Failed Policy Choices

Making the process of reform even more difficult is a basic ambivalence within the American public regarding immigration. The result of this ambivalence is the absence of any strong consensus among the public about changes in immigration policy. But pressure for positive changes is too often lacking. The safe decision for politicians is no decision—at least until there is no choice but to act.\textsuperscript{152}

At the root of this hard-line restrictionist campaign, the American public remains ambivalent about immigration, especially those who fear the other: the foreigner.\textsuperscript{153} But nativism is not new to immigration rhetoric. In other words, prejudice and fear, not only of the other, but of the next terrorist attack, tend to energize, in part, this approach. This is not to say that enhanced border enforcement is not an appropriate part of a comprehensive approach to a complete overhaul of our national immigration policies. All speaking on the subject have acknowledged this fact.\textsuperscript{154} But it is only one part of a far more complex problem of security-related controls.\textsuperscript{155} In fact, as one commentator once opined, “fixing the border first,’ then reforming our immigration laws, after the border is ‘under control’”\textsuperscript{156} is a backwards approach to the problem. Complicating matters is the fact that in the post-9/11 era, immigration is viewed almost exclusively as a security issue.\textsuperscript{157}

Not surprisingly, immigration has always been a contentious issue in America despite its description as a “nation of immigrants.”\textsuperscript{158} Thus, the

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\textsuperscript{153} See generally BRIAN N. FRY, NATIVISM AND IMMIGRATION: REGULATING THE AMERICAN DREAM (Steven J. Gold & Ruben G. Rumbaut eds., 2007).


\textsuperscript{155} See supra Part III. A. at 17-20.

\textsuperscript{156} See Daniel M. Kowalski, Why “Fixing the Border First” is Backwards, BENDER’S IMMIGRATION BULLETIN (June 2, 2006), available at www.bibdaily.com.

\textsuperscript{157} See generally Doris Meissner & Donald Kerwin, DHS and Immigration: Taking Stock and Correcting Course, 2009 MIGRATION POL’Y INST. 86-87; see also id. at 1 (hoping that with the new leadership in the White House and throughout the executive branch that a “singular opportunity to examine the policies and performance of an immigration system that is, by turns, the most generous in the world but also widely viewed as dysfunctional and unresponsive to the interests of society, the economy, and immigrants themselves.”).

\textsuperscript{158} See Aaron Terrazas, Migration and Development: Policy Perspectives from the United States, 2011 MIGRATION POL’Y INST. 10 (“Few issues are as central to the American identity as immigration, and fewer still are as contentious.”).
congressional stalemate that exists over reforming the immigration system comes as no surprise. In short, there is virtual gridlock over immigration reform on Capitol Hill. The distinguished professor in journalism, Roberto Suro, has a partial explanation. Based on a 2009 commissioned paper, Professor Suro concluded that the “U.S. media coverage of immigration has hindered effective policy reform for years.” He adds that this is a trend exacerbated by the recent transformation in the multiple means Americans get their news. For him, “one need not favor any particular outcome to conclude that stalemate is a mark of failure in the policy process.”

Marc R. Rosenblum, noted MPI senior policy analyst, has written extensively on the subject and notes that “immigration policymaking is strongly biased in favor of enforcement rather than legalization or visa reform,” the combination of which is logical, comprehensive immigration reform. This observation has attracted scholarly attention about the dynamics of statutory entrenchment and comprehensive immigration reform. The goal with this approach in the immigration context is to explain why it is so difficult to enact comprehensive immigration reform legislation. According to the theory, America is a “republic of statutes;” as such certain statutes are considered super statutes that are entrenched in American lawmaking. It appears that the most entrenched lawmaking policy relates to enforcement of restrictions on unauthorized border crossing and visa overstays, whereas legalization is not entrenched at all.

Marshall Fitz, director of immigration policy at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C., recently wrote about the “dramatic shift in tone and strategy” in the hardliners reaction to two recent immigration developments. First, is the Obama Administration’s decision, in effect, to implement the DREAM Act principles and not deport...


160 Id. at 1.


163 See id. at 329-41 (discussing the entrenchment of immigration and the resulting difficulty in enacting comprehensive reform).

164 Id. at 325-36.

165 Id. at 333-45.


167 See, e.g., Gaby Pacheco, In 2012, The DREAM Act Will be a Major Electoral Issue in the Latino Community, (March 1, 2011), available at
young unauthorized immigrants of a certain age and criteria; and second, the Supreme Court's decision in Arizona v. United States. What is most informative about Fitz's observations relate to "the seismic demographic shifts in the electorate and their concentration in battleground states." For him, "the road to the White House leads through the Latino electorate." Perhaps, the time will soon come when politicians have no choice but to enact comprehensive immigration reform.

Although Rosenblum notes, "the American political system is strongly biased against comprehensive legislation of any kind," he also observed that "[t]he prospects for comprehensive immigration reform increase with the political influence of Latino voters." Finally, however, he opines that "[t]he resumption of a meaningful bilateral or regional dialogue about common US and Mexican interests in an orderly migration system could make a helpful contribution to the national migration debate."

I. Redefining Policies on the U.S.-Mexico Border

The need to understand Mexico-U.S. migration is greater today than at any time in its century-long history. Its volume and complexity are greater than most observers might have imagined even a decade ago; and it operates in a context charged with serious new human, political, and security challenges.

A. Shared Responsibility: An Alternative Approach to Unilateral Border & Migration Management

http://americasvoiceonline.org/blog/in_2012_the_dream_act_is_a_major_electoral_issue_in_the_latino_community/.


Supra, note 167.


Id. (noting that whether these demographics translate into policy outcomes depends on several unanswered questions) MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE (August 2011).

Id.

The most surprising aspect of international migration... has been the continuing absence of coordination between departments of state in host countries on the various aspects of migration policy.\textsuperscript{175}

Instead of building another physical barrier, the resumption of regional partners in border and migration management seems like a logical, realistic alternative choice.\textsuperscript{176} According to Demetrios G. Papademetriou, President of the Migration Policy Institute, "[a]s the discussion over immigration reform moves forward in the U.S., Mexico will continue to hold a prominent place both in the debates and the solutions."\textsuperscript{177} The history of the U.S.-Mexico relationship demonstrates that cooperation on migration issues—although difficult—would not be impossible.\textsuperscript{178} Now would be a good time to capitalize on a relationship that has existed for over a hundred years in tackling the illegal migration problem, especially so because the trend of Mexican migration to the United States has ebbed considerably.\textsuperscript{179} In the area of border management Mexico already cooperates with the U.S. relating to trade and security concerns.\textsuperscript{180} Not including a neighbor that shares a common border in migration issues seems counterproductive.\textsuperscript{181} Moreover, to date no credible evidence exists to support any claim

\textsuperscript{175} Peter D. Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on International Migration and Development as reported in MPI: Migration Experts Size up 2006, Migration Info. Source (Dec. 1, 2006), http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/print.cfm?ID=546.

\textsuperscript{176} Supra footnote 5; see Jason Ackleson, Fencing in Failure: Effective Border Control is Not Achieved by Building More Fences, Immigration Policy in Focus, Immigration Policy Center (Apr. 2005), available at http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Fencing%20in%20Failure.pdf (discussing how border security has become a growth industry since 9/11 and examining the failed policy choices implemented on the Southwest border).


of terrorist infiltration along the Southwest border.\textsuperscript{182} As for legitimate national security concerns, the United States will undoubtedly continue to work with Mexico as it has in the past. As observers have suggested, “[v]iewing border security as a solely national security matter tends to neglect the larger economic and social forces that underpin the flow of Mexicans and others into the United States to fill gaps in the U.S. labor force.”\textsuperscript{183} As it has done before—now is the time for a coordinated approach that involves border and \textit{migration} management.

In short, the time has come for policymakers to go beyond physical border policies. Admittedly, this will be a hard sell because nation-states are concerned about their territorial sovereignty, that is, the ability to dictate, via restrictive policy choices, who gets to come in and who will be expelled.\textsuperscript{184} Admittedly, overhauling the system may be rough sledding, but the apparent good will and bipartisanship once permeating inside the Beltway, may be reinvigorating once politicians appreciate that the demographics of future voters arguably will favor immigration reform.

\textbf{B. Global Migration: Beyond Physical Borders}

\textit{A proper understanding of the causes of international migration suggests that punitive immigration and border policies tend to backfire, and this is precisely what has happened in the case of the United States and Mexico.}\textsuperscript{185}

Recognizing the reality of migration as a global phenomenon is a necessary first step in overhauling the current system. “International migration is a defining feature of the contemporary era of globalization.”\textsuperscript{186} And the United States is not alone when it comes to managing illegal migration; it is a universal problem.\textsuperscript{187} Commentators now speak of approaches to illegal

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{182} Id. at 3.
\item \textsuperscript{187} See generally Demetrios G. Papademetriou & Elizabeth Collett, A New Architecture for Border Management, \textit{Migration Policy Inst.} (Mar. 2011),
\end{itemize}
migration in bi-national terms. U.S. policymakers, perhaps, should consider how European countries are dealing with their illegal migration problems as well. Importing a multinational concept into the policy equation for resolving illegal immigration is a second step. A look across the pond at the European Union relating to the movement of people across European continent might be a third step.

As long as there are wealthier countries and individuals in other countries seeking to better their lives, such migration, now a global phenomenon in this advanced technological age of communication and transportation options, will persist indeterminately, or at least until developing countries can provide acceptable levels of economic opportunities, social norms, and domestic security. Thus, countries worldwide seeking strategies to promote more security in border management must also incorporate strategies designed to address their respective illegal immigration problems. This leads us back to the comprehensive immigration debate that is assuredly going to take place in the 113th Congress.

Continually promoting restrictionist policies ignores the reality that globalization has rendered heretofore “closed borders” open, if not de jure then de facto. As one foreign migration expert observed, “[e]very nation-state has the right to base its immigration policy on truly selfish national interests.” In the case of comprehensive immigration reform, this same expert offers that any “reform must deal with border control, enforcement of the legality of the workforce, and the national economy’s need for hu-
man resources within the context of an aging population.” 193 Such a comprehensive approach is also consistent with the well-received report by the independent bipartisan task force on immigration that outlined “suggestions to simplify and strengthen U.S. immigration policy.” 194 The key here is flexibility. Congress would do well to heed the task force’s recommendations and enact comprehensive immigration reform to relieve an overburdened and outdated immigration system.

Finally, from a global perspective, adopting an approach of shared responsibility, whether bilateral or trilateral, is arguably this nation’s best hope for sound policy choices in the area of border security and the management of unauthorized migration. Despite the threat of global terrorism, which is something all nations potentially share, the U.S. needs to reform its immigration laws. This begins with the regularization of millions of unauthorized immigrants residing in this country, and the enactment of flexible measures that will accommodate the demand for foreign workers in the future, thereby allocating limited resources to areas of concern more efficiently and effectively in a genuine effort to protect the nation’s security and the growth of the U.S. economy. In other words, fix the domestic immigration system first so that the U.S. can participate as envisioned in a new global border and risks management architecture that goes beyond the physical borders.

Conclusion

Immigration is “America’s never-ending debate.” 195 Illegal immigration will continue unless and until Congress enacts a flexible immigration system that responds to economic and social realities of the new century. As for border enforcement efforts, the time has come to put aside the symbols and political rhetoric that allow appearances of security and control to substitute for wise and sound policy proposals. Maintaining this nation’s security is best done the old fashioned-way, via intelligence gathering and sharing with pertinent agencies; aided by regional or global initiatives in place and enhanced to track and prevent terrorist infiltration.

Congressional hardliners believe that legalizing the immigration status of

193 Id. at 3.
unauthorized migrants would reward them for entering the country illegally and thus undermine the rule of law. Maintaining the present status quo, in effect, denying them an opportunity to regularize their unauthorized status is a much greater threat to the rule of law, particularly given the government's complicity in establishing the illegal regime. Similarly, building fences along the Southwest border will not effectively stop the influx of unauthorized migrants when push-pull factors dominate the practical realities of their choices to migrate to the U.S.; border violence, and other criminal enterprises, such as drug and human smuggling, likely will continue largely unabated and the stakes and associated risks will be exponentially greater.

Finally, Congress can no longer indulge its unhealthy fixation on first sealing the border. All border enforcement efforts, among other factors, have not succeeded in stemming unauthorized migration effectively. The majority of those still residing in the U.S. without lawful status are likely to remain here; and the government is unlikely to deport those millions who remain. Failure to consider the beneficial aspects of according fair and humane treatment to those living and working in this country without authorization would be, arguably, inconsistent with this country's democratic values, freedoms, and notions of fairness. The Supreme Court in Arizona v. United States recently cautioned the federal government as follows:

The National Government has significant power to regulate immigration. With power comes responsibility, and the sound exercise of national power over immigration depends on the Nation’s meeting its responsibility to base its laws on a political will informed by searching, thoughtful, rational civic discourse. Arizona may have understandable frustrations with the problems caused by illegal immigration while that process continues, but the State may not pursue policies that undermine federal law.

In other words, the time has long since passed for Congress to step aside from its fixation on sealing the border first and take responsibility for reforming this nation’s immigration laws comprehensively.

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196 ROSENBLUM, supra note 187, at 9.
197 See ARISTIDE ZOLBERG, A NATION BY DESIGN: IMMIGRATION POLICY IN THE FASHIONING OF AMERICA "...the resurgence of nativist responses constitutes a more immediate threat to liberal democracy than immigration itself."
199 Id. at 17.