



Friends Of The Border Patrol

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Governor needs real knowledge of border

by Andy Ramirez, FBP Chairman

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It has been reported that Gov. Schwarzenegger is going to deploy 1,000 National Guard troopers to the California border with Mexico.

While this is a step in the right direction, it is a small step. The governor has stated that the Guard will be deployed via rotations under order until Dec. 31, 2008.

This shows that Gov. Schwarzenegger has not met with people who understand the border and continues to rely on his staff, which knows about as much about the border as a pig knows about Sundays.

Has the governor of California personally met with the chief patrol agents of San Diego and El Centro Border Patrol sectors, or merely relied on his staff members to do this for him? Has the governor personally met with the Southwest Border Sheriffs Coalition?

I have met with the border sheriffs and chiefs/deputy chiefs of law enforcement agencies, including the Border Patrol, along the Southwestern border and conducted my own personal investigations that have since been reported to congressional leaders in Washington.

Gov. Schwarzenegger is uninformed and does not know what's going on, as his timetable demonstrates. That's due to the insulation by his own staff and the complete lack of truth from the Department of Homeland Security in Washington through David Aguilar, chief of the Border Patrol. Anyone who believes that we will have several thousand new Border Patrol agents on the border by 2009 is clueless about the facts.

You don't hire personnel and put boots on the border in mere days. First, you need to recruit. The ratio of recruits to "cadets" is 30:1 (source USBP). Then you have the security clearances and interviews, which is a lengthy process. The time at the Border Patrol Academy in New Mexico is 19 weeks, with major exams in Spanish language that are simply put, pass or fail. This doesn't even include the post-academy exam at 10 months. Failure of those exams means you are out. Lest I forget that the academy is not built to handle several thousand Border Patrol trainees, not including the other agencies whose trainees attend the various "academy" training.

Guard deployment to the border is not a novel or new concept since guard units have been on the border as part of the state's counter-drug program and assisting with infrastructure in smaller numbers for a couple of decades now. Again, border deployment for the guard is not a new concept.

Consider the near-stupidity that was initially discussed of guardsmen not being armed. Whoever thought of that nonsense hasn't been to the border, and certainly hasn't spoken with Sheriffs West and Flores of Texas, Border Patrol line agents or local guardsmen, or spoken with me. We'd all have reported to the governor that the border is a dangerous place. In fact, it's a war zone.

The only reason I ever suggested that civilian observers be unarmed was to protect us from liabilities. I knew it was too dangerous to be unarmed without constant coordination with law enforcement (which we did).

Think about it. The only armed individuals besides local citizens residing along the border would be narcotic and human traffickers, the Mexican military during incursions, and other dangerous criminals including violent gangs. Yet, we were not going to arm the Guard troopers out on the border? That concept is beyond ridiculous, it's stupid.

The national media have not reported stories on the increasing number of assaults or shooting incidents against law enforcement from across the Mexican border. I've been there and seen it myself. This number has increased over the past two to three years. Outside of Lou Dobbs and Fox News Channel, the media focus on "rallies" against laws, bills, and efforts to see immigration law enforced.

Let me explain the infamous "X's." We place Border Patrol agents on a spot, or "X," and there they sit; illegal aliens will not cross (unless in a Banzai-type charge) at that point by the mere presence of the Border Patrol agent. (That's the BP's theory).

Since we can now put the Guard on "X" or deterrence fence duty, we could pull Border Patrol agents from those same "X's." This action makes it simple to move the chess pieces and resume interior enforcement operations or sweeps. Since ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency) is a pointless waste of congressional funding and should be disbanded, we let the Border Patrol resume sweeps and clean up those job magnets and our cities. In a matter of time, we clean up our illegal immigration problem.

I'd be remiss if I did not mention those who claim that the Border Patrol would engage in racial profiling. However, the fact is if you have a jail that has 70% of a certain population for inmates, and you look at the nearby community and see a nearly identical populace, isn't it more than a mere coincidence here? Let's face it. If our only border was shared with Canada, then it's not likely we'd have 20 million illegal aliens from Mexico here if you go by Mexico's own numbers. So that's just more phony smoke and mirrors to keep the public distracted, or "like a cat, chasing its own tail."

Anyone who thinks this is simply a training mission does not understand the role of the Guard. They are not just for disaster aid and assisting with relief but in time of war are additional manpower from what is considered a "volunteer army" that ensures our states are protected in the way the old militias protected our nation back when it was being formed. The Guard is well led, organized, trained and armed.

As many reserves, and guardsmen have reported to me over the past 13 months, they see their duty as the same regardless if they are deployed overseas to Iraq, or within the Continental U.S. (CONUS) due to a simple fact: according to the Commander in-Chief George W. Bush, 43rd President of the United States, we are engaged in a war on terror. This is no training exercise, but a deployment as part of the "War on Terror."

Gov. Schwarzenegger needs to meet with the border sheriffs and the Border Patrol's sector chiefs. He also needs to sit down with real people like me, who have presented reliable information to Congress about the War on the Border, and then he'll be able to make the best decision, which will benefit the people of California.

I have repeatedly attempted to contact the governor and never been granted even five minutes, though many GOP state legislators have accepted meetings and briefings and all have said they learned more on the issue in that 30 minutes than they did in all the news reports they read prior.

Arnold needs to go see this for himself, and not depend on his incompetent staff whom are incapable of gaining such info having not been in the trenches and are geared towards continuing the culture of insulating politicians based on manipulated polls and skewed data collected by people who have long maintained the preservation of the status quo.

Let's face it. If I compare Arnold's silver-screen characters to his real-life role as governor, it's obvious that his screen persona has more guts than the insulated one that is responsible for more than 35 million Californians.

Give me the choice, and I'll take that firefighter from "Collateral Damage" because that character didn't accept scripted stories from bureaucrats but instead went into the trenches and got down and dirty and took care of it personally.

Don't know that movie? Well, I'll simplify it. Just give me Conan the Barbarian. That's the Arnold Schwarzenegger we have waited to see since he was elected governor of California, instead of the person whose handlers have only succeeded in making him look like a completely insulated, uninformed, red-carpet on-tour schmuck since his election in 2003.

Note: If you don't believe one person can make a difference, Arnold visited San Diego Border Patrol Sector 10 days after this was published and it was due to this column.