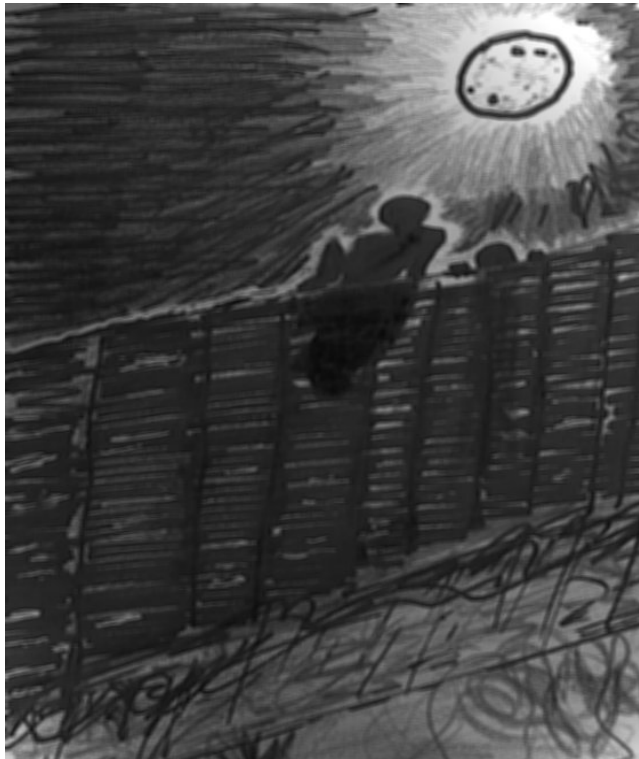


# INTRODUCTION

An image may be the best way to represent what a future border would look like. There is no assurance of this outcome but what is assured is that this possibility exists because of the existence of the border wall.

The image below depicts what may one day be one outcome of having a border fence between the US and Mexico. At first, there was much interest in putting up a border fence but as a few years have demonstrated, it is already a forgotten structure along the US and Mexico border with much controversy over its effectiveness and cost. Yet there are others that want to see the border fence completed as proposed and believe in its creation.

To some degree if not entirely true, organize crime are the only people attracted to this border fence since it takes more desperate measures to overcome the border fence and also drives away any possible suitor who may be interested in any nearby land by the border fence. Thus, now and in the future, this land will become a zone of terror and a zone that only organize crime is attracted to. There may be some justification for a border fence in open areas along the US and Mexico border and those areas may remain dangerous for many years.



Criminals use the night to jump the international fence.

And now that the border fence is standing along rural and urban areas, the fate of a border fence in an urban area does not have to be a permanent fixture in the near or long term future. This “fence” might be effective with other measure but not alone. Within the US cities along the border, it is the wrong use of “securing the border.”

The actors behind using the border fence as a deterrent appear to have made one important assumption that the border fence was appropriate along any location of the border. Whether it was in a rural location or urban location, or just simply put, in a city.

This assumption appears to be incorrect. The assumption is demonstrated by the fact that there was only one solution that was funded at the borderline; a border fence. Essentially, for a major city like El Paso, there is a border fence just like there is a border fence two hundred miles away towards California. So essentially, it is the same approach to two different geographic, economic, and social areas.

More specifically, the incorrect assumption that the border fence was appropriate along the border specifically in urban areas is spelled out at the DHS site<sup>1</sup> regarding the border fence. A portion is posted here:

**Gaining effective control of our nation's borders is a critical element of national security. Among other benefits, this will help make our nation's borders more secure by:**

- **Establishing a substantial probability of apprehending terrorists seeking entry into the United States**
- **Disrupting and restricting the smuggling of narcotics and humans**
- **Preventing violence against border residents and illegal immigrants**
- **Promoting better environmental health along the Southwest Border**
- **Restricting potentially harmful diseases (both human and agricultural) from crossing the border.**

Probably everyone that lives along the border supports what is stated above. What may be disputable and even poorly defined is how to “Gaining effective control” and provide “national security.” Many times using simple neighborhoods can demonstrate how these borders are like.

There are neighborhoods where yards are expansive and have no fence between them; at least in the front yard. Then there are those smaller lots where people have a fence all around their property lot. Which neighborhood is safer? It always depends on the characteristic of the neighborhood and its surrounding areas which determines how safe these neighborhoods are.

Then there is the required security that is required on New Years Eve in New York City Times Square. How can you have that much security in such a public event in which all would agree that such events should still take place even in an environment of terrorism?

In the case of the neighborhoods above, no neighborhood is safe unless those individuals who live in them protect their “neighborhood” and have good support from the police department. Add to that a general safe environment and non-declining economy.

In the case of the New Years Eve celebration, the amount of security needed has been escalated as compared to one or two decades ago so as to assure security. Who would think of canceling the event simply because of the amount of security required?

Even as we use the words “safe environment” and “security,” are they rarely really defined.

A “safe environment” is abstract. No one can really measure it but everyone can feel it.

When you go to the grocery store, the mall, gas station, and other public areas that you may live around, you do not get information about the rating of the safe environment that you're in, you just observe it and feel it. Why should that be any different for people living along the US-Mexico border in any of the cities that have the border as part of their city limits?

When you expect "security," you may expect a security guard during the night time hours where there are few people, or bright parking lot lights. We rate security based on the type of security measure in place and that others feel safe also by observing them. So as an individual, you also participate as well because if you thought security measures were weak, you simply would not patronize the location.

These two abstract ideas of safe environment and security are the core ideas of what the border fence should address or should they? A person in Ohio may not really feel that a safe environment has been created by the border fence simply because it is there but may feel more secure that its there. While a person who lives on the border may both feel safe and secure because of the border fence. This may be what that individual believes but when test to roam around at night by the border fence, does this individual really feel safe and secure?

Any observer would be able to look to see if people feel safe and know that this is probably not the case along the border.

As it pertains to the fence in the desert and in an urban city, the border fence probably did advance "gaining effective control" for the time. That was also believed when Operation<sup>2</sup> "Hold the Line" and "Gatekeeper" were implemented. No doubt that a border fence is a real "physical" deterrent that has no comparable "physical" parallel in the past. The chain link fence along the El Paso border is no comparison.

In the interest of "national security," yes something had to be done. And the border fence does suggest that this policy for national security is being implemented but it should not suggest that it was the only good or very best alternative.

It may have been the quickest. There is something to say about why the speed of the fence was so important back in 2006 and why not the best solution was sought instead which would probably not been the quickest solution. But in looking for a quick fix, it only gives it supporters something to boast about while cities along the border suffer the consequences. That is the real deterioration of safety along the border and an economic vacuum that has continued for more than one generation.

As such, national security may have been achieved but it may not be permanent. That is because in urban areas, "more security" was probably achieved on the cheap but may not be lasting since the kind of border security being sought has parallels in Iraq and Afghanistan. To state simply, no war will be won simply by an overwhelming military presence. It may be "part" of the solution but it is "not" the solution. Why would anyone believe that the border is any different?

Individuals who support the border fence who do not live along the border or even along the Border States may not want to concede that it was the quickest solution which probably was not the best solution. The best solution along urban cities is what is most in question here.

What may happen at some remote border location between the Pacific coast and the Gulf coast may not be very important to most Americans although in the urban cities along the border, this is much more a significant issue. People can read about what problems such rural areas have and

how disturbing it may be while in an urban area, the population just lives with this reality. That is significantly different to read about it versus living in that environment. As such, most political leaders may not grasp the impact of the border fence. Already too many years have gone by and people have forgotten that there should have been something else than to two decades of escalation of border patrol presence and a meaningless body of land. A waste land; an economic desert.

El Paso and Cd Juarez have to make the incredible transition to believe that there is something more that can be done with 20 mile of borderland than just simply putting ports of entry bridges over them. There is few unique assets this area that can truly define these cities and the borderlands between them is their largest.

Given 100 years or less, it could rival any international city in the world for beauty and uniqueness. That will never happen with a border wall between both cities.

Of the bulleted points made, yes people along the border want to prevent terrorist from passing through, and the disruption of smuggling of narcotics and humans. Preventing violence against border residence and illegal immigrants can be done in other ways. Promoting better environmental health and restricting potentially harmful diseases may need further clarification or acknowledgment that this is in conjunction with other environmental and disease control policies within the state and federal government.

The entire preceding DHS site discussed above was just a warm up to the real problem. The same site goes on further to state:

## **Tactical Infrastructure Program**

**As part of the Department's Southwest Border security strategy and under the execution of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Tactical Infrastructure (TI) Program develops, installs, and maintains physical components—consisting mainly of roads, fencing (both pedestrian and vehicle fence), lights, electrical components, and drainage structures—designed to provide persistent impedance of illicit cross-border activity. Its most visible programs are the border fence projects. More on [border fence](#).**

**The success of the TI Program directly impacts the Department's mission to achieve effective control of the border. When finished, the Department will have constructed a total of approximately 670 miles of pedestrian and vehicle fence along the Southwest Border. View current [fencing construction status](#) (PDF, 1 page - 3.76 MB)**

The problem is: What is the best solution for “persistent impedance” along an urban city? A border fence does exist where there is an urban city and it may be believed by most Americans that this is the best solution for persistent impedance. It was the quickest but not the best solution. One definition for best solution may include the following:

The borderline between both countries in an urban area becomes a very high risk illegal crossing point while at the same time becoming a very low annual cost of maintenance or manpower to the federal government per each linear mile in question.

In a city, there should be a need that federal resources in maintenance and manpower be on a declining curve over time while achieving higher levels of security which can be measure by the number of illegal crossings thwarted or number of days between breach attempts.

In addition to federal manpower enforcement,

City police

Heavy electronic surveillance

City partnership physical impedance

would all be part of a comprehensive initiative in securing the border. If people feel secure, they will come!

Economic trade should be protected by convincing the Government of Mexico that it is also in their interest to have a parallel program on their side of the border.

When left to a law enforcement agency to come up with a best solution, they may not be the best party to come up with the best physical impedances because they think too much in terms of a policing or military type of solution. This is especially true in their building of a border fence in an urban city. The question is not whether it will work but many question come up that relate to social justice, social dynamics, security, ugliness, justifiable, not working with state or city as partners to solve the problem and many other questions. As dynamic and layered a city can be in its politics is as varying in the amount of questions that can come up about a border fence in these urban environments.

It is preferable to have the DHS as a nagging hard to please partner instead of them actually be in control of what physical impedances are designed in an urban environment. Other entities should design and propose while DHS gives a thumb up or down or offers additional points that helps them in their efforts.

City stakeholders will rely on architects and civil engineers who will develop very specific structures that create effective physical impedances while at the same time consider modern applications in lighting, surveillance, and human comfort. All this while at the same time, will give a city a beautiful landmark which they will support and help maintain.

As compared to the rest of the nation which believes that threats come across the border but most have never lived there or travel to any border city, it may be hard to understand the impact a border fence has on a community. Maybe they believed there was no other option but they will later find out that there is. Then it should just simply become an issue of social justice. What people along the border want is just what the rest of American want also.

That they understand that people along the border do not want a border fence as a solution is not enough. They have to help give those cities their best solution to physical impedance other than a border fence.

The nation that has the largest GDP in the world and has put men on the moon should understand that other Americans have a solution that is both effective and one that the rest of the nation can applaud them for. Just like every other city in the nation that has worked out solutions of their own, the border cities can do the same while “helping” in its effort to obtain national security.

Whether it is disputed if the border fence should have been built and by what method that fact remains that it has been done; even if it is disputable whether the fence is complete. The SECURE FENCE ACT OF 2006 (The PUBLIC LAW 109–367—OCT. 26, 2006) required it and for all practical purposes along urban areas designated to get a border fence, it has been mostly accomplished if not eventually accomplished. The Act required within 18 months “to achieve and maintain operational control over the entire international land and maritime borders of the United States” which appears to be substantially completed.

So what is next? Nothing remains static and now is the time to go back and re-do portions of the border fence within urban areas and implement the next best solution for the long term.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc\\_1207842692831.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1207842692831.shtm)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border\\_security/border\\_patrol/border\\_patrol\\_ohs/history.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/border_patrol/border_patrol_ohs/history.xml)