Increasing Border Security Using Mutual Cooperation with Mexico

BLUF

Applying technology, infrastructure, and mutual cooperation toward the border is imperative for a more comprehensive border security initiative. Technology and infrastructure can be implemented together and cost a lot of money whereas cooperation can be implemented and can enhance the US relationship with Mexico. Different online sources provided information that can help us conclude that cooperation is the most beneficial and cost-effective tactic that can be applied to enhance border security.

Background

As political and social constructs, borders have created and continue to create issues regarding territories and the illegal entry of those who do not belong to a certain territory. The US-Mexico border is an example of a border where there is a concentration of strict security measures to ensure illegal entry does not occur. The security at the border has a main goal to thwart illegal entry and potential security concerns for the United States that are associated with illegal entry. There are many different ideas about the most efficient and secure way to protect the border between the United States and Mexico including technologically advanced methods, infrastructure, and mutual cooperation with Mexico.

Obstructing the movement of weapons, drugs, and people, as well as protecting economic prosperity and national sovereignty are all reasons that make border security an essential part of the overall national security efforts. If not taken seriously, the fight against drug trafficking, human trafficking, and all other forms of illegal movements will be allowed to flourish and can successfully infiltrate the United States. While these issues still occur under a more stringent border, advancing border security using technology, infrastructure, and cooperation will mitigate and help maintain them. In a world where technology advancements are seen daily, implementing these advancements at the border can help achieve the overall efficiency of border movements, while maintaining the security goals.
Methods

The evidence provided will create a better understanding of how current technology can be advanced and implemented in a more expansive effort on the border. Physical barriers and tactical infrastructure already exist, but maintaining them and keeping them updated will prove to facilitate the goal of border security at a high cost. A push for increased cooperation with Mexico will provide support from both sides of the border and can facilitate the objectives of border security as well.

The United States Government Accountability Office states that implementing more surveillance technology can keep the security personnel on the ground from being spread too thin. To avoid spending funds on unimpactful technology equipment, GAO stressed the importance of acquiring performance metrics. The lack of performance metrics that are collected at the border may be leading to unneeded spending. If the metrics are collected, it can determine which surveillance technologies are most impactful and supportive of the border security initiative. Ways to determine effectiveness of technology systems can be determined by comparing apprehension statistics before and after implementation of the system.

The RAND Organization suggests a tactic called “profiling out.” This tactic would allow for a more efficient border experience by trading companies and other trustworthy people or entities. They would circumvent the routine inspections that each person entering the country must do, unless they are deemed trustworthy. This would facilitate trade and make a faster more efficient border crossing experience. Technology like Pulsed Fast-Neutron Analysis (PENA) is like MRI technology and can help border agents see what is present inside large cargo vehicles, and if present, can allow them to see individual contraband. The Universidad Nacional Autónoma De México suggests that adding a more inclusive cooperation tactic could lead to increased cooperation on the Mexico side in regard to stopping the criminal before they reach the border.

Implications

The most widely talked about implication from many sources is an increased cooperation with Mexico to help facilitate a safer more efficient border for each nation. Under the assumption that the
citizens of each nation want to feel safe and free, striving for more cooperation between Mexico and the United States could help economically with trade and could help thwart transnational crime. This could result in a better international relationship with Mexico and could lead to more cooperation in the future on different topics.

To counter this argument, cooperation takes full accountability from each side. It would be hard to ensure each side takes the full responsibility and follows through with their commitments. It is also difficult to cooperate with someone who may not have the same standards. Cooperation to stop crime before it gets to the border also requires a bigger commitment from Mexico due to the crime happening in their nation.

Another major implication that could reinforce the border security initiative is implementing more advanced technology and infrastructure along the border. These could facilitate a stronger more secure border that makes it harder for illegal crossings to occur. Adding advanced technology like Pulsed Fast-Neutron Analysis (PENA), radar, sensors, and other surveillance equipment could help surveille areas of the border that are unregulated. Adding technology could create a protective blanket over the area without putting any security personnel in danger due to the terrain and inaccessibility of the area.

A counter to this argument is that applying new technology and infrastructure is very costly. Without many performance metrics that provide information on the contributions of these tactics, money and time could be wasted in implementing these. There are also infrastructure and technology already applied to the border. Adding more may not be the most beneficial.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, enhancing mutual cooperation with Mexico would prove to be the most influential in gaining a fully comprehensive effort to increase border security. The cost and lack of performance metrics for technology and infrastructure would not be as beneficial as growing mutual cooperation with Mexico to combat transitional crime and illegal border crossings.

Riley, k. Jack. “Border Control.” *RAND*, www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reprints/2006/RAND_RP1216.pdf. This was interesting to read. It had a lot of important information on all the borders and how the border infrastructure is impactful. It gave an interesting insight from a company that serves solutions to policy.

Trinkunas, Harold. “Fear Itself: Why Closed Borders Are Bad for America and the World.” *Brookings.edu*, The Brookings Institution, 29 July 2016, www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2015/11/20/fear-itself-why-closed-borders-are-bad-for-america-and-the-world/. This article provided good information on ways borders are important. It helped to understand the different border techniques that can be applied to secure the border.