



Key Players Comment on Immigration Crisis

As the crisis stemming from the uncontrolled wave of illegal immigrants flowing across our southern border continues, several key players in the scenario — the secretary of Homeland Security, the governor of Texas, and the commander of the U.S. Southern Command — have expressed their views on what needs to be done in response to the illegal immigrant invasion.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson (shown, left), speaking on NBC's *Meet the Press* on July 5, said somewhat ambiguously that everyone who crosses the border illegally faces a "pending" deportation proceeding, but added that the Obama administration is looking at ways to "create additional options."

He added, "There's deportation proceeding pending against everybody coming illegally across the border. We have to do right by the children, but at the end of the day, our border is not open to illegal migration and we will stem the tide."

Speaking the same day on ABC's *This Week*, Texas Governor Rick Perry (shown, right) observed that he doesn't think President Obama "particularly cares whether or not the border of the United States is secure."

And Marine Corps Gen. John Kelly (shown, center), commander of U.S. Southern Command (which is responsible for providing contingency planning and operations in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean) said in an interview with *Defense One* posted on July 5: "Many argue [that the near collapse of Western Hemisphere societies and the associated drug and illegal immigrant flow] ... do not challenge our national security. I disagree."

The Obama administration has estimated that 60,000 children unaccompanied by parents or relatives will pour into the United States this year, up from about 6,000 in 2011. Since most come from Central America and can be sent home only by chartered flights, they are transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement to be housed in shelters, including some on military bases.

Johnson echoed the language President Obama used last week in a statement saying he would bypass Congress and take executive action to revamp the U.S. immigration system: "There are a number of things the president and I, within the confines of existing law, can do to fix the broken immigration system. If Congress doesn't act, we will."

By Congress not acting, Johnson was referring to the failure of the House to pass the "Gang of Eight" immigration bill passed by the Senate that many conservatives oppose because it offers amnesty to illegal immigrants.





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Reuters reported that Johnson would not answer a question asking whether the U.S. government would deport the current wave of Central American children who have come here illegally, and said only that authorities would stem the tide, and that deportation proceedings against illegal immigrants have been initiated.

Reuters also quoted a statement made on CNN's *State of the Union* program by Representative Henry Cuellar (D-Texas), whose congressional district includes a stretch of the Texas-Mexico border where 48,000 people, including 9,700 unaccompanied children, were detained in May. "We should have been ready for this surge," said Cuellar. "The administration should have been ready.... They should have seen this coming a long time ago."

On *This Week*, Gov. Perry was asked by the show's host, Martha Raddatz, "Do you really believe there's some sort of conspiracy to get people into the United States by the federal government, by the Obama administration?"

Perry's reply was straightforward: "I have to believe that when you don't respond in any way that you are either inept or you have some ulterior motive ... which you are functioning from."

Perry made similar comments during a June 17 interview on *Fox & Friends*: "This president, I will suggest, is either totally and absolutely inept, or making some decisions that are not in the best interests of American citizens."

During Sunday's interview, Perry also pointed out another threat stemming from our unprotected borders: "We also have a record high of other than Mexicans being apprehended at the border. These are people that are coming from states like Syria that have substantial connections back to terrorist regimes."

Perry's assertions reflect concerns that others have voiced for some time. In October 2011, the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research released a report concluding that Hezbollah (the Lebanese-based terrorist organization) "is using the Western Hemisphere as a staging ground, fundraising center, and operation base to wage asymmetric warfare against the United States." Entitled "The Mounting Hezbollah Threat in Latin America," the report also pointed out that "evidence indicates Hezbollah is sharing its terrorist experiences and techniques with Mexican drug cartels along the US border."

Gen. John Kelly said that because of budget cuts, the military's ability to defend the southern approaches to the U.S. border has been severely degraded to the point that last year his task force was unable to act on nearly 75 percent of illicit drug trafficking events.

Like Governor Perry, Kelly pointed to the partnership between the Latin American drug cartels and Middle Eastern-based terrorists. The general warned that the neglect of our southern border approaches has created weaknesses that can be exploited by terrorist groups, creating a "crime-terror convergence" exemplified by Hezbollah's involvement in the region.

"All this corruption and violence is directly or indirectly due to the insatiable U.S. demand for drugs, particularly cocaine, heroin and now methamphetamines, all of which are produced in Latin America and smuggled into the U.S. along an incredibly efficient network along which anything — hundreds of tons of drugs, people, terrorists, potentially weapons of mass destruction or children — can travel, so long as they can pay the fare," Kelly told *Defense One*.

The overwhelming tide of illegal immigrants from Latin America, including many unaccompanied



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children, has several causes and requires several solutions. Paramount among these, almost all will agree, is securing our borders. But former U.S. Representative and presidential candidate Ron Paul included several other common-sense steps in his proposed plan to stop illegal immigration:

1. Abolish the welfare state. The incentive to take a job at whatever wage available must prevail.
2. Establish a generous visitor work program. Once we solve the economic crisis by introducing sound money, demand for domestic and immigrant labor will rise.
3. Enforce the laws on the books with more border guards. Allow states and landowners to enforce the law and provide security assistance.
4. Abolish birthright citizenship for children of illegal immigrants. [Current U.S. citizens will not be affected. Instead, babies born to illegals after a future cutoff date will no longer gain automatic U.S. citizenship. They will still have citizenship in their parents' home countries.]
5. End all federal mandates on the states to provide free education and medical care for illegal immigrants.

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