



## Border security Bushwhacked again

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Finally there's a political figure on the national scene who's making sense on the key issues of illegal immigration and border security.

Unfortunately, it's Hillary Clinton.

At the recent opening of the Clinton Library in Arkansas, Hillary told a TV interviewer that the U.S. needs to toughen up its border security.

"There's technology now available," she said. "There are some advanced radar systems. There are biometrics and other kinds of identification systems that we've been very slow to deploy and unwilling to spend money on."

Last year, she told a radio interviewer that she is "adamantly against illegal immigration." Many observers took the most recent remarks as an indication that Hillary will be seeking the Democratic nomination for president in 2008. Bill Clinton had a knack for exploiting popular issues, such as welfare reform, that the Republicans were ignoring. Hillary's doing the same thing with illegal immigration.

Perhaps. But perhaps she's just representing the interests of her constituents. The people of New York want security from foreign attack. It's impossible to be secure when you have 10 million or so undocumented aliens running around the country. It is therefore logical for a senator from New York to support border security.

By that same logic, a politician from Texas would oppose border controls if he is thinking only in the narrow interests of his constituents. George W. Bush's constituents, or at least those he listens to, want cheap labor.

"This guy is supposed to be the top law enforcement official in the United States yet he wants to facilitate terrorists and ordinary criminals in getting driver's licenses," says Peter Gadiel, a Connecticut resident and advocate for border security. "Why is he so hot on having illegals get driver's licenses?"

If Gadiel sounds bitter, that's because he is. His 24-year-old son died in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, a victim of a gang of 19 terrorists who held 63 driver's licenses among them.

Gadiel's even angrier after the recent maneuvering in Congress. Last week, Republican congressional leaders pulled back a bill to implement the 9/11 Commission's proposed reforms after failing to gut it of all its border-security provisions. The GOP leadership in the Senate wanted

to retain only those parts of the bill that would restructure the nation's intelligence-gathering apparatus. The parts of the bill restricting illegal immigration and tightening border security were removed on the grounds they were "too controversial."

House leaders were going to go along with the deal until Gadiel and other members of his group, 9/11 Families for a Secure America, began lobbying key congressmen. U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo, a Colorado Republican who is an advocate of immigration-law enforcement, took advantage of a little-used rule to sink the compromise. He began gathering the signatures of his fellow representatives to force another vote on the bill before the full House.

That maneuver sunk the compromise bill -- for now. But a member of Tancredo's staff, Carlos Espinosa, told me last week that Bush will insist that the bill be revived without the border-security measures.

"His problem with us is we talk too much about border security," said Espinosa of the president. "Bush has said the border security part is something he isn't going to cave in on. They're not willing to negotiate on border security."

You would think that when a so-called "conservative" president said he wasn't going to negotiate on the question of border security, that means he's in favor of it. Bush is against it. Bush's entire plan for securing the Mexican border is to grant guest-worker status to those trying to cross it. People wishing to cross illegally could still do so.

Gadiel made a trip to Arizona just before the election. He found that the border patrol had effectively shut down illegal crossings for a few weeks -- just long enough to get past Election Day, when Arizona voters were considering a referendum to ban illegal aliens from getting public services. The referendum passed handily despite GOP opposition.

"We know the border can be closed down when the government wants to do it," he said. "The government has the technology, but these guys are trying to keep them from using it."

Why? Cheap labor, said Gadiel. Bob Baer agrees. Baer, a former CIA spook and author of books about the Mideast, says Bush cares more about the Texas economy than about domestic security.

"Ultimately all these big Texas fat cats and Bush supporters need Chinese-style labor," said Baer. "What difference does it make if 3,000 people are killed in the World Trade Center when you consider the fortunes of people who live off illegal immigrants?"

That may sound like a cynical view of our president. But, strictly on the evidence, an intelligent person must conclude that if our president isn't cynical, then he must be somewhat dimwitted. I have my own opinions on the matter. But I will keep them to myself and leave you to ponder that question between now and Jan. 20, when George W. Bush will once again take an oath to uphold laws that he has no intention of upholding.

*Paul Mulshine is a Star-Ledger columnist.*