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# Mexico



## Jaime Castillo: What does a Colorado lawmaker know about guarding borders?

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### San Antonio Express-News

We don't call a plumber when our TV goes on the fritz.

And we don't call a mechanic when we need a doctor.

So it's beyond me why so many people look to a congressman from suburban Denver to get ideas about protecting our international borders.

But I'll give this much credit to Colorado Rep. Tom Tancredo: he doesn't discriminate when it comes to the U.S. border with either Mexico or Canada.

Three days after Canadian intelligence agents and police arrested 17 people suspected of plotting terror attacks on public targets, Tancredo was renewing his call for a wall between the United States and our northern neighbor.

"We are trying to forge a chain of security around America," Tancredo told a Canadian news service.

Clearly Tancredo, who supports a similar barrier on the U.S.-Mexico border, has a constituency that extends beyond his district. There are a good number of people in this country who share a genuine and deep concern over illegal immigration and what they consider to be porous American borders.

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But all of this politically opportunistic, red meat rhetoric is threatening to overshadow the real lesson to be learned from last week's events in Canada.

The discovery of the alleged terror plot had nothing to do with legal or illegal immigration. The suspects were Canadians who were allegedly planning to bomb sites in their own country.

Five years after the epic intelligence failure that culminated in the 9-11 attacks, we should be celebrating the fact that Canadian authorities made arrests before any buildings fell or blood was spilled. We've also found out through the FBI that two terror suspects arrested earlier this year in Georgia had clandestine contacts with the Canadian suspects.

This is good news that hopefully represents a turning point from the previously scattered situation where one hand of the federal intelligence community didn't know what the other hand was doing.

If they truly want to be productive about terrorism, Tancredo and the rest of Congress should be committed to finding out what went right in Toronto last week and ensuring that the intelligence community in this country is working as well as their Canadian counterparts.

Alas, even I'm not naïve enough to expect politicians to resist comparing apples (illegal immigration) to oranges (homegrown terror plots) when political points are there for the taking.

The facts are, however, that barriers on our southern and northern borders wouldn't have led authorities to the terror suspects in Georgia or Toronto any faster.

And illegal immigrant crackdowns would do nothing to augment our intelligence network.

But we still must address a broken immigration system that drives too many American employers to break the law by hiring undocumented immigrants, whose numbers are now estimated at 12 million. So we'd all be better served if we separated the two issues.

Let's give terrorism experts the resources they need to do their jobs.

And let's stop looking to Democrats from Massachusetts and Republicans from the Rocky Mountains for border solutions, and start listening to the ideas of lawmakers who live, eat and breathe there.

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*To contact Jaime Castillo, call (210) 250-3174 or e-mail [jscastillo@express-news.net](mailto:jscastillo@express-news.net). His column appears on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.*