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Voices from the 2,000 mile border

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

The Star wanted to give a voice to the people who live along, work on and study the U.S.-Mexico border. Here is a collection of thoughts from the borderlands.

"I love the U.S. Border Patrol. They are great guys, really nice. They are doing a wonderful job and I feel safe now with them around." - **Carol Kimzey**, a ranch owner who lives across from the border fence in San Diego

"A fence is only dividing the Hispanic community. Our nation has been at its greatest when we have had a common vision and at its worst when we are divisive." - **Jesus Ruben Segura**, mayor of Sunland Park, N.M.

"However politically attractive it may be, it's not a feasible project. ... You would have to create a uniformly high probability of apprehension along the border. If you have anything less than that, then the traffic simply switches to the parts where the risk of apprehension is lower. ... In other words, you would need to create a real 'Fortress America.' " - **Wayne Cornelius**, head of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California at San Diego.

"The amount of money to build a fence in some remote areas, it would not be feasible to do it. There are places I wouldn't let my guys go. There are places where you drop 60 feet down and you probably wouldn't stop for 1,000 feet if you tumbled. To build even a primary fence in that kind of area you'd have to build a road, and you'd be creating the infrastructure you are trying to defeat." - **James Jacques**, U.S. Border Patrol spokesman, San Diego Sector

"We need to learn to live together and not be so competitive. That's what Jesus teaches - equality and economic justice. We need that for both countries. The wall is inhumane." - **Padre Cayatano Cabrera**, a Catholic priest who leads a migrant ministry in Agua Prieta, Son.

"They broke a window and they broke a fence and our dogs got out. Our dogs never came back." - **José Aristiga**, 9, a Douglas resident who lives one block from the border fence, talking about illegal entrants

This story is part of a series looking at border security, whether it can be done and what it will take. For more go to <http://www.azstarnet.com/secureborder>

There are nearly 12 million people who live along the U.S. - Mexico border, and that's just in the United States. This slide show depicts some of the borderland's residents.

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Tohono O'odham tribe member Ofelia Rivas talks about how the post-9/11 efforts to secure the border has cut members of the tribe off from their land through which the international border runs.

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"It doesn't make any sense to create one here. Mexico is not an enemy. Mexico is a friendly country for trade and commerce and visiting and everything else. So, why insult the neighbor by putting up a fence?" - **Juan Rivera**, spokesman for the Laredo (Texas) Police Department, talking about a border wall

"The border here, unlike some parts of the border, is almost more psychological than it is physical. We know it's there, but for generations there's been just kind of an ebb and flow across. When you have villages where they literally are a stone's throw from the border on both sides, it's a little more difficult to take the stance that you can't do what you've once done." - **Mark Spier**, chief ranger, Big Bend National Park in Texas

"You know, (Arizona) Governor (Janet) Napolitano said: 'Show me a 40-foot fence and I'll show you a 41-foot ladder.' My response: 'Let's make 'em get a ladder and slow them down a little bit.'" - **James Johnson**, whose farm, WH Johnson & Sons, is near Columbus, N.M.

"If we can send a man to the moon, I am sure we could technically seal the border. It would be very difficult in the rugged terrain of eastern San Diego County, but I have no doubt American ingenuity could find a way. I think the point is, do we need to?" - **Michael White**, of the non-profit Conservation Biology Institute, a conservation education group with offices in Oregon and California

"The Border Patrol strategy focuses on this line, going all the way east to the Gulf of Mexico. Doing that ignores the problem. People say the problem is illegal immigration. We say the problem is employers hiring illegal aliens." - **Christopher Bauder**, president of the San Diego chapter of the Border Patrol National Council, the agency's union.

"Weekends are so much better in Mexico. A lot of people are walking in the streets, talking, having fun. Here on the American side, it's really quiet." - **Eli Guerrero**, 15, of Naco, Son., who spends summers in Naco, Ariz.

"Voters feel satisfied when they see government putting up physical infrastructure. You get more bang for your buck as a politician when you are able to point to visible symbols at the border like a wall or a garrison of National Guardsmen." - **David Shirk**, director of the University of San Diego's Trans-Border Institute, which studies border issues.

"The border unites communities, it doesn't divide them. It's important to understand local perspectives." - **Nestor Rodriguez**, a sociologist and co-director of the Center for Immigration Research at the University of Houston.

"All these fences are just a Band-aid solution to what is going on. But we don't make the big solutions - that's up to Congress." - **Kathy Billings**, Superintendent, Organ Pipe National Monument

"If they show up at my door, I give them some water and call the green and white taxi - the U.S. Border Patrol." - **Larry Nolta**, 58, a resident of Ocotillo, Calif., talking about illegal entrants

"Mexico is a peaceful nation. Its military poses no threat to the U.S. It is our largest trading partner. It has no terror cells. Unilateral police actions have backfired. The symbolism of a fence is all wrong. We need to manage the border in ways that are beneficial to migrant workers." - **Douglas S. Massey**, a professor of sociology and public affairs at Princeton University

"When I work all day in the field, I make \$10 - it will be much more in the U.S. A fence or a wall is not going to stop us. We will go over it, under it ..." - **Antonio Ramirez Ayala**, 29, a fruit picker from Chihuahua who was planning to illegally cross into the United States in July

"Anybody who believes that you can do it doesn't understand the logistics of the border. We could secure most of the border. But if the reason is that we want to stop illegal immigration, never, because 40 percent that are in this country illegally didn't come across that border illegally." - **Neville Cramer**, a 26-year INS special agent who wrote "Fixing the INSanity: America's immigration crisis."

"People who live far from the border tend to not have much of an understanding of how the border works and they are easily led." - **David Spener**, sociologist at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, who studies U.S.-Mexican border relations.

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