



Operation Gatekeeper was launched in late 1994. The California part of the U.S.-Mexico border was the testing ground for a strategy aimed at blocking traditional border crossing routes. Well over a billion dollars has been spent on Gatekeeper, but it has not prevented illegal entries -- simply shifted them to the mountains and deserts east of San Diego. Meanwhile, migrant deaths have soared, increasing by 500%. Nevertheless, the U.S. Border Patrol has extended Gatekeeper into Yuma, Arizona. In fact, the strategy of pushing the undocumented foot traffic out of the public eye and into ever more remote and dangerous places has gone border-wide.

Last year, there was at least one migrant death a day along the entire border. Mexican consulates in San Diego and Calexico, California reported 134 migrant deaths from January through December of 2001...

According to the Mexican Foreign Relations Office, a total of 384 Mexicans died while crossing the border illegally last year. And in the first half of this year, the body count has reached 175.

Up to now, Operations Gatekeeper, Safeguard and Rio Grande are estimated to have cost at least twelve billion dollars.

As stated above, Gatekeeper was a political strategy. Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, the Southwest border has been put in a national security context, although terrorists do not need to make awful treks across the mountains and deserts, or to swim irrigation canals and rivers, to enter the U.S. from Mexico. They get in the legal way.

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service touted the Gatekeeper idea -- dubbed "prevention through deterrence" -- by predicting a big fall in the apprehension figures along the entire Southwest border at the end of five years.

The General Accounting Office has concluded repeatedly -- most recently last August -- that there is no reliable data to indicate that Gatekeeper or its counterparts in Arizona and Texas have deterred illegal crossings.

In the face of all these figures, the San Diego Union-Tribune (until the last couple of years a staunch Gatekeeper defender) admitted in an editorial that the new approach to border enforcement has "merely shifted the problem elsewhere."

Amnesty International-U.S.A. overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning Gatekeeper for forcing migrants to attempt border crossings in areas which put them in mortal danger. The resolution says that Amnesty "does not take issue with the sovereign right of the U.S. to police its borders, but insists that it do so in a manner which complies with international human rights obligations."

The U.S. government is bound to protect life as a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, specifically Article 6.

GATEKEEPER KILLS: IT BRINGS SHAME TO OUR NATION, NOT SAFETY.

The information above is excerpted from:
<http://www.stopgatekeeper.org/>