

**Clear Accounting: Funds that the United States Owes  
Mexican Undocumented Workers  
Versus  
The Aid Funds to Mexico that the U.S. Government May Cancel  
(With Three Appendices)**

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The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued two memorandums (19 pages) stating how it will carry out the new administration's policies on immigration. It is important to emphasize that these memorandums do not change the U.S. immigration law, but they do portend a harsher application of the law in terms of deportation guidelines established by the executive power during the last two administrations.

We are especially troubled with the contents of the second memorandum that seeks to "identify and quantify sources of financial aid to Mexico." DHS Secretary **John Kelly** himself **has already ordered a detailed report in order to quantify "all funding sources" that have granted money to Mexico (directly or indirectly) in the last five years**, and these reports must be ready in 30 days. And we quote cnsnews.com for the full relevant paragraph:

"Identifying and quantifying sources of aid to Mexico: The President has directed the heads of all executive departments to identify and quantify all sources of direct and indirect federal aid or assistance to the Government of Mexico. Accordingly, the Under Secretary for Management shall identify all sources of direct or indirect aid and assistance, excluding intelligence activities, from every departmental component to the Government of Mexico on an annual basis, for the last five fiscal years, and quantify such aid or assistance."

As a preliminary report, **Donovan Slack** (in *USA TODAY*) estimates that the U. S. grants at least **US\$ 320 million yearly in financial aid to Mexico**, as can be seen **by category** in the **Appendix 1**, below.

When on May 23, 2017, Trump released his proposed U.S. grants for Mexican affairs in fiscal year **2017-2018**, he asked **Congress to allocate only \$88 million, 45% of the funds allocated for FY 2016 which may not include funds allocated as per Donavon Slack's more comprehensive January 2017 calculation of funds for Mexico from what we call "hidden pockets" of sources not readily apparent owing to the way many U.S. agencies send money to Mexico.**

According to Jorge Valencia of *Fronteras* (May 30, 2017), Trump's proposal would roll back assistance for Mexican police and military. Much of the reduced aid in

needed to help train police and judges in what is Mexico's work in the drug war, said University of San Diego Professor David Shirk.

"They're the ones who are seeing the high casualty rates when it comes to going after organized crime use and trying to interrupt the flow of drugs to the United States," Shirk said. Further, He noted that that the proposed cuts are in contradiction with U.S. officials' recent suggestion that there is a shared responsibility in fighting the war on drugs.

Yet Valencia offers an interesting view of Trump's plans for Mexico in the following statement by **Alejandro Hope, a security analyst in Mexico City, who is quoted as saying: "I'm actually surprised that there will be some appropriations for [Mexico], I would have guessed that that would have been one way of, quote-unquote, making Mexico pay for the wall."**

<https://news.azpm.org/p/news-articles/2017/5/29/111402-trump-wants-to-cut-us-aid-to-mexican-drug-cartel-fight/>

Although the U.S. Congress seemingly has the 'final' say on the amounts for Mexico, Trump could try to influence Congressional budget negotiations to follow his harsh lead.

**In the meantime, however we offer here our list of the amounts that the *United States owes Mexico*:**

1. First of all, it is necessary to take into account the reality that undocumented workers use mistaken, non-existent, or false identification (IDs) documents, and that these IDs have contributed and are now contributing billions of dollars a year to the U. S. Social Security pension fund. In our study, based at UCLA, we estimate that **up to the year 2012, the total amount of money owed by the U. S. to undocumented Mexican workers had reached US\$ 224 billion.**

Further investigation documents our projection that indicates that by the year **2015-2016, the total amount of money that the U.S. must pay Mexican undocumented workers has surpassed US\$ 300 billion.**

2. During many decades the Mexican Government has waged a bloody war against drug smuggling and organized crime. But setting aside the human toll, it is important to know what is the economic cost of this war for Mexico. In the end, it is obvious that stark expansion of drug trafficking stems from the long-growing demand created by drug use in the United States. It is illegal drug use in the USA that fuels the Drug Wars in Mexico among and between Drug Cartels and the Mexican Military, as well as Police.

Mexican Government and Armed Forces have had to face (and continue to fight) the illegal importation of arms and ammunition into Mexico from the United States by the Cartels.

3. We ask: How much does the Mexican government invest in providing health services to the millions of undocumented Mexican Workers in the USA? Moreover, what is the cost to Mexico of its Workers who, after developing chronic illnesses, or simply not being able to continue to work in the United States, return to Mexico without a pension or benefits and have had to become wards of the Mexican Social Security System (IMSS)? These costs have risen (and continue to mount) because of the U.S. failure to protect the rights of Mexican workers.

Much more could be mentioned, but that is not the issue here. Friends should be able to help each other, but “therein lies the dilemma”—as Cantinflas would have said. The new administration is not a friend of Mexico or the United States. It is a regime with authoritarian overtones that came to power without the vote of the majority of the U.S. electorate.

Let us note a positive development: With his recent trip to Mexico, the new **Secretary of State of Texas, Rolando Pablos**, has offered real friendship to Mexico, and we hope that his open-arms visit is reciprocated. In the words of Rolando Pablos: “México and the United States are inextricably bound by trade, cultural ties and shared values” ... the moment has come to have a united front for clarification of economic matters in both countries.

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## **Appendix 1: On Amounts of U.S. Aid to Mexico**

## **Appendix 2. Estimates of Cost and Process of building the Wall Between the USA and Mexico**

## **Appendix 3. Where Trump’s Wall Would Start in the [in the 'crown jewel' of wildlife refuges']”**

In Appendices 1 and 2 we contrast the views by **Donovan Slack** and **Joseph Tanfani**.

**Donovan Slack** writes...

**“U. S. Provides Aid [Averaging] US\$ 320 Million a Year to Mexico; Experts Say Yanking It Could Hurt...”** *USA TODAY*, January 27, 2017:

“According to the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), roughly a dozen agencies directed roughly **US\$ 1.6 billion (mil millones de dólares) overall in aid to Mexico from 2011 to 2015**, the most recent year for which complete data is available.

“The State Department, Defense Department and USAID provided the largest amounts, accounting for 95% of the **US\$ 338 million in aid in 2015**. The remainder included much smaller slivers from the departments of Energy, Labor, Interior, and Health and Human Services, and the Peace Corps, among others.

“Law enforcement and counter-narcotics initiatives accounted for US\$ 260 million, while support for justice and legal reforms added up to roughly US\$ 10 million, and military aid accounting for another US\$ 10 million....”

[For minor U.S. aid initiatives totaling US\$ 18.1 million (including US\$ 4 million for crime and violence prevention)]

## **Appendix 2: Estimates of Cost and Process of building the Wall Between the USA and Mexico**

**Donavon Slack** writes in the article above: “The Bernstein Research group estimated the cost for building the southern border wall could range from **US\$ 15 billion to US\$ 25 billion**. **If the United States redirected all of its foreign aid, at the current annual average, it would take nearly 50 years to reach the low end of that range.**”

**A counter estimate** by **Joseph Tanfani** quotes the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as having estimated the cost to be **US\$ 21.6 billion**. [Tanfani, “Border Wall Progressing, Slowly,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 2017 <http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-border-wall-update-20170627-story.html> ]

“**[Ronald Vitiello, acting deputy commissioner at the agency, told reporters on June 27]: ‘At the pace of construction planned for next year, it would take more of it rugged and remote, that don’t have physical barriers now....’**”

“**‘Customs and Border Protection still has not signed any contracts to build prototypes of new barriers, a first step in plans to design and erect a wall along the 2,000-mile Mexico border.’**”

“**Vitiello** said construction of four to **eight prototypes** could begin by late summer. All will be built near the San Diego-area border fence.

“**‘We’re evaluating proposals now,’ he said. ‘We think it’s summer. It’s kind of hard to nail down....’**”

“**Vitiello** said it’s impossible to know whether that pace will pick up, saying ‘it depends on how much and how quickly the agency gets money for **surveys, engineering, designs, procurement and construction.**’”

“President Trump’s budget request to Congress next year includes US \$2.6 billion for border security. Part of that will help build **74 miles of new wall, much of it in**

**the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, and buy ground sensors, cameras and other technology to stop illegal crossings.**

“Scaling up to hundreds of miles will present **huge engineering, logistical and legal challenges.**

“Much of the border barrier would cross private property, snaking through floodplains and over mountains. **The Department of Justice has proposed hiring a dozen new lawyers just to work on eminent domain cases,**” [many still pending from the era of President George W. Bush, when in 2006 he started to build questionably effective Fencing of 700 miles, but by 2015 work was deemed to be completed after 654 miles had been built with delay after delay at a cost of US\$ 2.3 billion, with an estimated US\$ 1 billion more if it were to be maintained for 20 years:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secure\\_Fence\\_Act\\_of\\_2006](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secure_Fence_Act_of_2006)]

“Many critics have questioned whether the hugely expensive construction project is a cost-effective way to secure the Southwest border.

“The number of people caught illegally crossing the border has dropped dramatically since Trump took office, from 31,581 in January to 11,126 in April, before rising to 14,535 in May.

“Vitiello said the San Diego border was a good example of how barriers could make a difference: ‘In 1992, there were 560,000 arrests of undocumented migrants there, about half the total for the entire border. Last year it was 68,000,’ he said.

“Vitiello also said the agency has concluded that it’s **not practical or necessary to build barriers along at least 130 miles of border, including the steep canyons of the Big Bend Valley and the lake region near Del Rio, both in Texas.**

“‘It’s not necessary; the natural barrier already slows people down,’ **Vitiello** said.

“In documents requesting bids from private companies, the Department of Homeland Security asked for proposals to build **30-foot-high concrete walls with features intended to discourage climbing and tunneling, as well as tampering or damage.**

“**Trump, however, has added confusion to the design process, potentially slowing any construction.**

“**[Last week in Iowa, Trump] declared that he may want to build the wall with solar panels so it ‘creates energy and pays for itself.’**

“**Vitiello** said no one at the White House consulted with Customs and Border Patrol before that announcement. But he said some companies previously had pitched solar panels.

“We’re leaning on industry to innovate, to show us what they think is possible and doable and innovative,’ he said.

“Construction of the wall remains a divisive political issue, with fierce resistance in some communities.

“In California, Democratic state legislators have moved to blackball companies that participate in the wall construction. **One proposal, Senate Bill 30, would ban those firms from receiving any new or extended contracts with the state.**”

### **Appendix 3. “Where Trumps Wall Would Start [in the 'crown jewel' of wildlife refuges]”**

By Jennie Jarvie and Brian Bennett,  
*Los Angeles Times*, July 17, 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-texas-border-wall-20170717-story.html>

Environmentalists along the U.S.-Mexico border are gearing up for a fight as federal officials zero in on the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas to build the first stretch of the border wall promised by President Trump.

Last week, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers used a drilling rig to extract soil samples at the Rio Grande Valley refuge to prepare for the possibility of constructing three miles of concrete levee wall and fence, according to a federal Homeland Security official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal planning for the wall.



A crew uses a drilling rig to extract soil samples in the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. (Jim Chapman / For The Times)

There is no money in the current federal budget for wall construction on the site.

But federal engineers are preparing on the basis that Congress could approve funding for the 2018 budget year, the official said.

The 2,088-acre refuge about 10 miles southeast of McAllen in the southern tip of Texas was created by the federal government in 1943 for the protection of migratory birds and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Straddling a bend in the Rio Grande, it is home to the endangered ocelot, as well as jaguarundi, coyote, bobcats, armadillos and 400 bird species, making it one of the top birding destinations in the world.

The proposed barrier there, first reported by the *Texas Observer*, would cut off the refuge from its visitor's center and the rest of the country. Environmental advocates say that could have a devastating effect on the animals who live in or roam the refuge and to the residents of one of Texas' poorest regions who depend on the tourism it draws.

"This is insane," said Scott Nicol, co-chairman of the Borderlands Team for the Sierra Club. "This is the crown jewel of the Rio Grande Valley wildlife refuge system, with one of the highest rates of biodiversity in the U.S. If it's walled off, with no public access, it will be left to rot. Ocelots could be pushed over the cliff and into extinction in the United States."

But federal officials say that building a wall would allow them to ramp up immigration and drug-smuggling enforcement in the Rio Grande Valley, one of the most heavily trafficked portions of the border — with many places lacking any barrier.

"The Rio Grande Valley area has been an area of exploitation by smugglers, and an area lacking in border infrastructure," Carlos Diaz, a Customs and Border Protection spokesman, wrote in an email. "These miles will help connect existing segments of wall throughout the area and fill critical gaps."

Under the requested 2018 budget, Customs and Border Protection has prioritized 28 miles of new levee wall system in the Rio Grande Valley, Diaz said. The agency has already held preliminary meetings for projects under the enacted 2017 budget as well as those it hopes to fund in the next budget.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is under contract with Michael Baker International, a global engineering firm, to gather geotechnical data at sites in the Rio Grande Valley and other locations along the Southwest border, according to Jenny Burke, a spokeswoman for the Homeland Security Department.

On [January 24], U.S. Rep. Filemon Vela, a Democrat from Brownsville who represents the area of the border including Santa Ana, said he requested a briefing about the wall from Customs and Border Protection officials.

"Clearly, it's all being done in secret and it's not transparent at all," he said. "I can tell you we're going to fight like hell to stop it."

“These refuges are national treasures and sacred places, and we have to do everything we can to stop the Trump administration from putting this wall into place,” said Vela, who opposes all border walls in his district, famously telling Trump in an open letter last year: “Mr. Trump, you’re a racist and you can take your border wall and shove it up your ass.”

Estimates for a continuous wall along the southern border have ranged from \$12 billion to \$20 billion. Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One last week that his wall would not have to cover the entire 2,000-mile border because parts were blocked by mountains and rivers. About 600 miles already have walls, fences or other barriers.

Over the last decade, the government has erected about 56 miles of fencing in the Rio Grande Valley, mostly atop levees on land the government seized through eminent domain.

Unlike much of the land the government wants to build on in south Texas, **the wildlife reserve is already federally owned and will not involve the costly process of trying to seize property.**

Environmentalists are especially worried that a barrier along the levees would put animals in danger by trapping them during floods.

“Essentially, you’re creating an impassable barrier, so wildlife cannot get to the river or away from the river,” said Jim Chapman, vice president of the Friends of the Wildlife Corridor, a nonprofit group that advocates for the valley’s native habitat.

In 2010, the Santa Ana refuge was flooded by high waters that resulted from Hurricane Alex.

Many plants and animals did not survive, and environmental advocates say the impact would only be more devastating if a border wall was in place.

“Santa Ana was underwater for four months,” Nicol said. “A terrestrial animal can’t tread water for four months.” But building along the Rio Grande presents a range of engineering and other challenges, including a 1970 treaty with Mexico that could restrict construction in the floodplain.

A wall would also have a negative economic effect across the region, opponents say. **The Santa Ana refuge is home to 165,000 visitors a year, many birders from across the world.**

**A 2011 study by Texas A&M University found that nature tourism in the Rio Grande Valley brought in \$463 million a year. The biggest portion of that is from birding.**