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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 15, 2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

After hearing numerous reports in the last several days that you may direct our military to play a major role in controlling our southern border, and knowing that you are preparing to address the nation tonight on immigration, I am writing to express my grave concern about the potential ramifications of such a decision.

Since the late 1980's, law enforcement agencies along the border have received military-unique support from Joint Task Force Six (now Joint Task Force North) on a limited basis, and except for the incident that occurred in 1997, this support has been well received and successful. However, I have always opposed using our military for border enforcement itself, and now is certainly not the time for an expanded military role or presence on our nation's southern border.

I have been troubled by developments in Latin America over the last few years. We have seen an emerging resentment that can be described as either "anti-American" or "anti-American foreign policy." As you are aware, a number of Latin American countries have elected presidents who ran on anti-American platforms, and other candidates are currently running on similar platforms. The presidents of Venezuela and Cuba continue their attacks against you and the United States as well as their support of those candidates who endorse anti-American policies.

Mexico's presidential elections are six weeks away, and I am very concerned that decisions you make today and announce tonight could sway Mexicans toward electing an anti-American administration. Militarization of our southern border has always been a contentious political issue for Mexico and across Latin America. Mexican media may create a frenzy of anti-American feelings that could have very detrimental and long-term implications for our country if that sentiment translates into the election of a Mexican administration courted by Venezuela and Cuba. If that happens, illegal immigration will be the least of our problems. Mexico is not our enemy, and there is much at stake for both our countries with respect to security, commerce, and culture.

Mr. President, urge Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that includes three provisions: border security, a guest worker program, and earned legalization, but please do not militarize our southern border. I have worked on border issues for almost forty years, including serving for 26 ½ years in the U.S. Border Patrol as an agent and Sector Chief, and would be pleased to offer my assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Silvestre Reyes', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress