

IMPORTANT NOTE:

In the letter and column submitted by the National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers to the congressional delegations there was a reference to a copyrighted article, "Intelligence Chief Sees Southwest Border as a Terrorist Entryway", that appeared in the El Paso Times on August 22, 2007. The article was written following a visit by the Director of National Intelligence, Michael McConnell. Director McConnell was interviewed by the El Paso Times and the excerpts of that interview formed the basis of the article.

One of the key points of the interview that has impact on the ongoing Dona Ana County wilderness debate and how the wilderness creation potentially affects national security was when the Times narrowed the focus of the questions to the Southwestern border. The interview continued as follows:

Q: There are some cases (of terrorists coming across the border)?

A: There are some. And, would they use it as a path given it is available to them? In time, they will.

Q: If they're successful at it, then they'll probably repeat it.

A: Sure. There were a significant number of Iraqis who came across last year smuggled across illegally.

Q: Where was that?

A: Southwest Border.

Q: Can you give details?

A: I probably could if I had my notebook. **It's significant numbers. The point is it went from a number to (triple) in a single year, because they figured it out.** Now, some we caught, some didn't. The ones that get in, what are they going to do? They're going to write home. So, it's not rocket science, word will move around.

The interview continued with Director McConnell describing how the terrorist have entered South America and used that as a point of entry into Mexico and then bought assistance from there to enter the United States illegally across the Southwest Border expanse. To learn more about the article and the interview Google El Paso Times, Michael McConnell interview, August 22, 2007.