

## **Mexicans see insult, danger in border plan**

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### **Body**

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MEXICO CITY -- The **border**-security **plan** President Bush announced Monday as part of his immigration agenda has made him few friends here.

Alfredo Martinez, 56, a tomato seller at an open-air market, shook his head when asked about Bush's **plan** to send 6,000 National Guard troops to help police the 2,000-mile-long U.S.-Mexico **border**.

His 22-year-old son crossed the **border** illegally last year and now sends money home every month from his job in a New York City deli. "I don't think he'll be able to come back and visit for a while," Martinez said. "It's a shame. There should be a way to recognize the work we do up north, a way to see us as laborers and not delinquents."

His complaint was echoed by many Tuesday on the streets of Mexico's capital city.

"I don't understand why the United States must take such a repressive attitude toward us," said Agustin Melgar, 45, who works in the same open-air market as Martinez near Chapultepec Park in the city center. "It's **insulting**. We all know there's a mutual demand: The gringos need our cheap labor, and we want better pay."

Ruben Aguilar, a spokesman for Mexican President Vicente Fox, said Monday that a security-first policy at the **border** would not solve the problems created by illegal immigration. Fox has said he prefers a **plan** that would offer some form of legal status for all undocumented **Mexicans** now in the USA.

Rafael Fernandez de Castro, an international relations expert at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico, characterized the Mexican government's response as muted. "The government here does not want to portray this as a big setback for Mexico," he said. "But it clearly is. Mexico has been given the stick, while the U.S. Congress gets the carrot."

The government began to change its message on Tuesday. Foreign Secretary Luis Ernesto Derbez warned that the United States might face lawsuits if the increased troop presence on the **border** resulted in human rights abuses. "If we see the National Guard starting to directly participate in detaining people ... we would immediately start filing lawsuits through our consulates," he told Radio Red, a Mexico City radio station.

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a former Mexico City mayor who is running for president in July elections, said Tuesday that Fox's government is "mostly responsible. ... There are no jobs in Mexico, so people need to emigrate."

Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa, the presidential candidate of Fox's party, said Monday that he understands the U.S. government's desire to protect its **borders**, but adding troops there will only "increase the social and human costs for immigrants."

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He was referring to the possibility that hardening the **border** will force migrants to try to cross at more remote and dangerous points, especially the vast deserts of Arizona and New Mexico. In 2005, 463 migrants died crossing the U.S.-Mexico **border**, according to the Latin America Working Group, a human rights organization based in Washington.

"We realize that the discussion over how to manage the **border** has now turned into a win-lose game between the Republicans and Democrats," said Humberto Garza, an expert on Mexican foreign relations at the College of Mexico. "But it's an **insult** to **Mexicans**. This discussion clearly lacks foresight. It ignores the fact that no matter how tight you make the **border**, people will still find a way to cross."

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