

Why the Axis of Amnesty Was Defeated

A Post-Mortem

BY STEVE SAILER

Back in late May, the Axis of Amnesty seemed like an unstoppable coalition of the Great and the Good. It linked the Republican White House and the Democratic leaders of Congress, business, media, religion, and the ethnic lobbies.

And yet, put to the test in the Senate, the Bush-Kennedy Amnesty/Immigration Surge bill collapsed ignominiously—twice.

Why did the Axis of Amnesty turn out to be a paper tiger?

Sure, we immigration reform patriots had a large majority of American voters on our side. But only the naïve assume that the majority rules in modern America. While we entered the battle with both numbers and morale, the Axis of Amnesty held the commanding heights of the institutions and had almost all the hired guns.

So what happened?

Well, as Napoleon said: “In war, moral factors account for three quarters of the whole; relative material strength accounts for only one quarter.”

What the Axis didn’t have was any Americans below the elites who actually cared enough about the amnesty bill to write their Senators.

Let’s review each component of this mile-wide-but-inch deep coalition of special interests to see why its overall strength was so vastly overrated.

◀ Mainstream Media

The good news for the Axis of Amnesty was that the Mainstream Media consistently demonize patriotic immigration reformers. But that was about

all the good news they enjoyed. Just about the only steadfast partisans were obviously self-interested or delusional fringe interests like the immigration lawyers, La Raza, and economists.

◀ Illegal Immigrants

The huge illegal alien demonstrations in the spring of 2006, with their vast sea of Mexican flags, just made actual voters more adamant in saying “*No mas*” to illegal immigration. But they intimidated and motivated the Establishment.

But where were the marchers this year?

The dismal failure of illegal immigrants to turn out in the streets was the most striking change from 2006 to 2007. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the May Day march of the illegals dropped from 650,000 in 2006 to 35,000 in 2007. Similar declines were seen nationally.

Then, after the collapse of the Bush-Kennedy bill in mid-May...practically *nada*.

The single most important reason for this unexpected collapse: probably the fact that the old House bill threatening to make being an illegal immigrant a felony was not on the table this year. Only “a path to citizenship” was being debated. Illegal aliens don’t want to be deported, but, in contrast to the sentimental propaganda about them, they don’t care much about citizenship (or America either, for that matter). They are, in the most part, patriotic Mexican nationals here merely for the money.

Illegal aliens also, evidently, don’t long to be “brought out of the shadows.” They don’t see all that much in it for them. That’s because they have a better understanding of economics than do many of their elite supporters. They realize that their wages are determined not by their “legal status,” but by supply and demand.

◀ Legal Immigrants

The majority of legal immigrants who have become citizens and can now vote are not Mexican or Central American. So why did anyone expect

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them to care about Latin American illegal immigrants who jumped ahead of their loved ones in line?

◀ American-born Hispanics

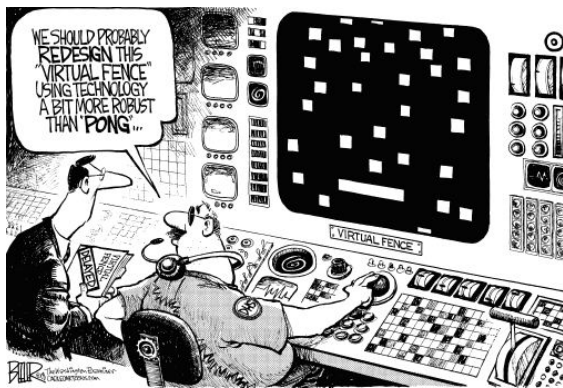
While the small number of Hispanics who make a living out of their ethnicity were fired up over this chance to import more co-ethnics for them to claim to represent, the typical Latino-American was ambivalent—alternating between feelings of ethnocentrism and the hard-headed realization that importing even more people from Mexico sure wasn't going to make his life any better.

◀ African-Americans

...were unenthused. Utterly.

◀ White liberals/"progressives"

As Randall Burns has documented on VDARE.COM, white liberals who are ordinary citizens showed negligible zeal for amnesty. The "progressive netroots" who hang out on Daily Kos and the like have turned themselves into a formidable political force, but they were yet another dog that didn't bark for amnesty. On the rare occasions when the Senate legislation came up on liberal blogs, the comments sections tended toward hostility.



Just about the only pro-amnesty talking point that white liberals could rally around was that passing the bill would make white conservatives—who are, by definition, evil racists, morally far inferior to white liberals—mad.

That kind of status-striving certainly motivated a lot of the biased pro-amnesty press coverage in the Mainstream Media. But it didn't seem to drive much positive political activism among the netroots.

The truth is that white liberals are *bored* by Mexican illegal immigrants, who lack the glamour of the 1960s black civil rights protestors. At the 2006 march for illegal aliens that I witnessed, I didn't see a single white American. Everyone marching down Van Nuys Boulevard appeared to be *mestizo* or full-blooded Indian. (Indeed, judging from how short the marchers were on average, there weren't many American-born Latinos in attendance either.)

◀ Catholics

The Roman Catholic hierarchy's most prominent pro-amnesty spokesman was Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahoney. But he was simultaneously negotiating a legal settlement of the child molestation charges against the LA Archdiocese that would keep him from having to testify in court about why he had kept shuffling the criminal priests from one parish to another—at a cost of \$660 million out of the contributions of the faithful (including me).

Not surprisingly, Mahoney's calls for amnesty were widely ignored.

◀ Labor

The AFL-CIO had been a strong voice for immigration restriction going back to Samuel Gompers in the early 20th Century. But in 2000, the union's bosses switched sides and backed amnesty. In 2007, however, the rank-and-file was so opposed that the big shots apparently felt they had to go along and condemn the bill.

◀ Business

The CEO's finally realized that their current employees hated amnesty, so they toned down their support.

In summary, the Axis of Amnesty coalition turned out to be a lot of chiefs and very few Indians.

This doesn't mean the Axis won't try again. They will, probably by trying to smuggle through mini-amnesties.

But they have sustained an epochal defeat. And it has exposed their weaknesses as never before. ■

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http://www.vdare.com/Sailer/070729_amnesty.htm