

Both Parties Have Imported New Electorate

by Samuel Francis

While Republicans and Democrats bickered over which ballots to count in Florida, the election could have been decided long ago by the fast-track naturalization of non-Americans on behalf of the Democrats. If, as the ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu wrote, the acme of military skill is to win the battle before you fight it, the acme of political skill is to win the election before the ballots are even cast.

Just before the vote on November 7, the *Boston Globe* reported that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) helped push through the naturalization of some 1.7 million new immigrants in the last two years, “most of them with an incentive to vote and a lopsided preference for the Democratic Party.”

Vote Democratic they did, at least to judge from the exit polls, which reported a landslide 67 percent Hispanic vote for Al Gore

Samuel Francis, Ph.D. is a nationally-syndicated columnist. © 2000, Creators Syndicate, reprinted by permission.

(and a modest 85 percent for Hillary Clinton in the New York Senate race). In California, where George W. Bush won a pathetic 23 percent of the Hispanic vote, a consultant for the Democratic Party told the *Globe* reporter just before the election, “Both parties show up at swearing-in ceremonies to try to register voters. There is a Democratic table and a Republican table. Ours has a lot of business. Theirs is like the Maytag repairman.”

Nor is California the only state where Hispanic immigrants flock to Democratic standards. As the *Globe* article points out, the 5.6 million immigrants who became naturalized citizens between 1991 and 2000 live in “other battleground states, including Washington, Illinois, Michigan and Florida.”

The conventional wisdom of Beltway conservatives holds that immigrants support the Democrats because of Republican support for immigration control in the early part of the decade. But the same conventional wisdom (which is usually more conservative than wise) also held that George W. Bush, with his campaigning in Spanish, would be able to win far more Hispanic voters and perhaps a majority.

Indeed, for the last four years,

under the influence of the above-mentioned conventional wisdom, the Republicans have done everything they could to avoid alienating Hispanics. They abandoned immigration control entirely, and even reversed their own congressional votes for denying welfare benefits to legal immigrants. They pushed legislation that would have helped Puerto Rico become a state.

Bush even glowed over how immigrants were changing America into a reasonable facsimile of Latin America. “Just go to Miami, or San Antonio, Los Angeles, Chicago or west New York, New Jersey ... and close your eyes and listen. You could just as easily be in Santo Domingo or Santiago, or San Miguel de Allende,” he beamed. And he boasted of how his own nomination signaled a “choice to welcome the new America” that immigrants were importing.

Bush and his party may have welcomed the new America, but the new America didn't welcome them — as the Democrats knew. The *Globe* article also reports how “the White House, with Gore's office taking the lead, pressured the INS to naturalize 1 million new voters by Election Day, according White House documents assembled by congressional investigators.”

The result of the Clinton-Gore fast track for the new electorate was that the INS neglected to carry out fingerprint checks on some 180,000 immigrants naturalized before 1996, and that some 80,000 of them had criminal backgrounds, with more than 6,000 having committed serious crimes. But who cares about the standards of citizenship when political power is up for grabs? If the Clinton-Gore behavior cheapened citizenship and allowed criminals to become Americans, it was no less degrading than the political exploitation that Bush and his fellow Republicans practiced.

One moral of this ugly tale is that both political parties are so eager to gain votes from the electorate they're importing that the interests of the public and the nation become irrelevant. That's bad enough, but the second moral is that the Republicans totally missed the meaning of the electorate they allowed to come into existence. Because of this blunder, the Republican Party may have committed suicide.

Immigration control, for the brief time the Republicans supported it, proved to be a winner for them. California's Proposition 187 won 63 percent of the white vote in 1994 and pulled Republican Governor Pete Wilson from political extinction. By running with the immigration control ball, the Republicans could have raised their share of the white vote from 54 percent to a level beyond, which their rivals could never hope to reach.

It's not too late for the Republicans to take up the banners

of immigration control again. By doing so, they would not only stop the Democrats' new electorate from swallowing every election in the future, but also swell their own ranks with enough additional white voters to confront and defeat the racial politics the Democrats insist on playing. •

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