

La Reconquista

Amnesty's elephant in the living room

by Carl F. Horowitz

Four decades ago Congress took a leap into the unknown and passed the immigration amendments of 1965. The law abolished what remained of the 1924 national-origin quotas and made family reunification the main basis for admission to this country. In so doing, it set in motion massive shifts in the size, composition and culture of the American people. It also changed radically how the American people view immigration law and its enforcement. Among the law's many baneful consequences has been a large increase in our population who are here illegally. The 2000 Census of Population estimated that the number of illegal (or "undocumented," as euphemism would have it) immigrants in America stood at 8.7 million.¹ As the illegal population now exhibits net annual increases of about 400,000 to 500,000,² the current total figure is likely well in excess of 10 million. *More than 3 percent of all persons residing in the U.S. thus have no business being here.*

The exploding illegal immigrant population is in large measure a consequence of the exploding legal immigrant population. Each year about one million people from abroad obtain legal resident status. But with each person who comes here, family and relatives in the country of origin have a greater motive to come here, too, and by any means necessary. In turn, once the illegal population balloons to a certain size, political pressure to legalize their status grows. The simultaneous rises in the legal and illegal immigrant populations, and the measures taken over the years to normalize the status of the latter, has

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led to a severe compromising of the integrity of both law and law enforcement.

Mexico is of particular concern here. For one thing, there is the size of that country's illegal population to consider, which the 2000 Census estimated to be 3.8 million, or 45 percent of the total. Second, Mexicans over time have accounted for a progressively larger share of the nation's foreign-born population. Whereas in 1970 only 7.9 percent of the existing immigrant population had come from Mexico, that figure had increased to 27.7 percent in 2000. Third, Mexicans, whether here legally or not, exhibit relatively high levels of poverty, welfare dependency, and crime, and low levels of education and English-language proficiency, compared to newcomers from other nations and to the native-born U.S. population. Finally, and what most concerns us here, Mexicans in this country increasingly have been attracted to an aggressive political separatism whose avowed aim is a *reconquista* ("reconquest") of the southwest portion of the United States, a goal promoted, and subsidized, by the Mexican government.

Surveys reveal that the majority of the American public has grown concerned, even alarmed, by this turn of events, and wants action to reduce illegal and legal immigration. That both kinds have been mutually reinforcing seems lost on most political leaders in this country. Though the Immigration and Naturalization Service (and its three successor agencies, all housed under the Department of Homeland Security)³ in recent years has taken stronger measures to enforce our Mexican border, including beefing up U.S. Border Patrol strength, the growth of the illegal population shows few signs of abatement. Frustrated, many public officials have come to believe that since our nation is unable to control the influx of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico, we should pursue a dual strategy of granting amnesty to those already here and discouraging future illegal immigration. In this way, we can normalize a potential volatile situation. It is a seductive but dangerous strategy.

Setting the Stage: A Brief History of Rolling Amnesty

From the very start, the Bush Administration, aggressively coaxed by Mexican President Vicente Fox, has advocated a Mexican amnesty program. Predictably, Democrats, always far more predisposed than Republicans to support mass immigration, upped the ante, calling for a program to legalize the status of all illegal immigrants, regardless of national origin. In January 2004, President Bush came around to that view, unveiling a far-reaching guest worker program that functioned as an amnesty (though he explicitly denied it was that). Under his plan, illegal immigrants would be eligible to receive a three-year guest worker visa. Though formally, they would have to return to their country of origin after the expiration date, an unspecified number could apply for permanent legal residence and (eventually) citizenship. The federal government would play matchmaker, lining up willing employers with willing employees. The 108th Congress, meanwhile, would be busy, too, introducing not less than nine separate amnesty proposals. Nothing came of them, and we can be further thankful, at least for the time being, that Social Security reform now has ascended to top billing among domestic policy issues. But there is no putting off the inevitable.

Supporters of amnesty seem to have a blind spot for its negative consequences. The sad thing is they do not have to look too far to find them. In 1986 Congress passed and President Reagan signed a massive piece of amnesty legislation, the Immigration Reform and Control Act, or IRCA. The evidence has been overwhelming that far from stabilizing the growth in illegal immigration, as its backers had virtually guaranteed, it fueled it even more.

Briefly, IRCA offered legal residence, and potential U.S. citizenship, to two main categories of unauthorized immigrants: 1) those who had resided in the U.S. continuously prior to 1982; and 2) those who had worked in perishable agriculture here for at least 90 days prior to May 1986. About 3.1 million persons applied for amnesty, and about 2.7 million (plus eventually an additional 160,000 family members) received it. More than half of the grantees lived in California. While persons from around the world were eligible, the law's context and implementation made clear that Mexico was foremost in mind.⁴ To soothe fears that IRCA might be a soft touch, the law imposed, for the first time in U.S. history, sanctions against employers who knowingly hired illegal aliens. But the amnesty-for-sanctions tradeoff worked far better on paper than it did in practice. Immigration

authorities and the Labor Department have lacked the resources and political support to go after any more than a tiny portion of employers. Unscrupulous employers and employees alike learned to play a mutually beneficial con game, aided by a huge underground fake-ID industry.

The most enduring legacy of IRCA, however, is its acceleration of illegal immigration, which in turn has led to more amnesty. Politically, it has gotten easier, first, because of the psychology of "breaking the ice" in any endeavor, and second, because of the rise in the overall proportion of immigrant populations (legally here or not) in this country. IRCA set in motion a self-reinforcing cycle. Having legitimized the act of coming to or remaining in America illegally, we have raised expectations among future illegal immigrants and their political advocates for further amnesties. And indeed, we created six separate small-to-medium scale amnesties since IRCA, one of which granted "late amnesty" to the 400,000 or so illegal immigrants who applied but didn't qualify the first time around.⁵

The experiences of nearly two decades of amnesty validate Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington's thesis that immigration is *self-perpetuating*. That is to say, in absence of a deliberate policy of restriction, more begets more. Huntington elaborates:

*(S)ustained high levels of immigration build on themselves. Immigration reinforces immigration. Once one group has come, it's easier for the next group, and then for subsequent groups. Immigration is not a self-limiting process, it's a self-enhancing process. Also, particularly in this country, the longer immigration continues the more difficult politically it is to stop it. Immigrants themselves...are not necessarily overwhelmingly in favor of more immigrants coming in...but by and large, they tend to favor it. Certainly the leaders of immigrant organizations and interest groups do. They have a vested interest in expanding their own constituency. And hence, as immigration continues to enjoy political support, organizational support for it also mounts and it becomes more and more difficult to limit or to reshape it.*⁶

In other words, mass immigration, once set in motion,

triggers even more rounds of mass immigration in lieu of overt efforts to counteract it. And opposing such efforts is politically risky, for it means going up against powerful political forces favoring unlimited immigration. *The Bush plan is less significant for the legislation it may yield than for the ongoing surrender it symbolizes.*

That raises the question: Surrender to what? Or more accurately: Surrender to whom? Given that each round of amnesty makes more possible a future amnesty, who benefits from all this? It is more than a little naive to believe that an ethnic interest group and its allies will promote amnesty for its own sake, as though it were some sort of massive rhetorical exercise. There is something deeper, a long-range plan as it were, whose intent is to remake our nation in that ethnic group's image. That "something" is visibly in front of us – that is, if we choose to look.

Crossing Swords with Mexico

RUNNING FROM THE EXITS?

Of all ethnic groups benefiting from our nearly two-decade-long experiment in rolling amnesty, none has done so to the extent of the Mexicans. Mexico was the sending nation for about three-fourth of the recipients of IRCA amnesty during 1989-93.⁷ And the pressure for further amnesty, emanating both from Mexico and Mexican ethnic advocates in the U.S., is rooted in an unapologetic power grab in the service of expanding their nation's political borders. Whew! That sounds excessively dramatic and more than a tad paranoid, right? Well, as this article shall explain, such an assertion is rooted in both experience and common sense. It is no overstatement. Advocates of rolling amnesty, most of all for Mexico, armed with speeches, demonstrations, lawsuits, and *cojones*, have people at the pinnacle of American life running scared, looking for graceful exits from direct conflict. Perhaps if the bulk of our political, business, educational and philanthropic leaders understood the nature of Mexican militancy, they would understand the nature of their own timidity as well. Let us consider each separately.

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THE MEXICAN MIND

Mexican ethnic separatism has been a fact of American life for decades. It's only been in the last few years that people outside Southern California have taken notice in large numbers. Hunter S. Thompson – yes, the original (and late) "gonzo journalist" – had taken notice way back in 1971. "Between 1968 and 1970," he wrote, "the

'Mexican-American Movement' went through the same drastic changes and heavy trauma that had earlier afflicted the 'Negro Civil Rights Movement' in the early Sixties. The split was mainly along generational lines, and the first 'young radicals' were overwhelmingly the sons and daughters of middle-class Mexican Americans who had learned to live with 'their problem.'⁸ Fringe organizations such as the Brown Berets and the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance for Land Grants) appeared on the scene, demanding separate territory for Mexicans within the U.S.

But as was the case with black radicalism, Mexican identity politics has moved to the mainstream. The political style may be less confrontational, but the animus toward white/gringo America is still there, manifest, among other ways, in the proliferation of Chicano Studies academic programs at major colleges and universities and the gradual transformation of Cinco de Mayo Day into a quasi-official U.S. holiday.⁹ Many Mexican ethnics have come to believe that their people received a raw deal more than a century and a half ago. By migrating and staying here, legally or not, they are righting a historical wrong. In their minds, moving to America is neither an act of settlement nor invasion, but of *reclamation*. The chunk of territory that Mexico ceded to the U.S. – our Southwest – following the Mexican-American War is something they call "Aztlán." And Aztlán is theirs and theirs alone. Mexicans here and back home who support amnesty tend to view the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848 (officially ending the war) as a crime, and regard the gringo's maps with the same contempt that they regard his laws. The amnesty-demanding Mexican views Arizona, California and Nevada as belonging every bit to his country as Chihuahua, Durango and Oaxaca.

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President Vicente Fox has virtually advertised his desire for reconquest. Yet like that proverbial elephant in the living room, few Americans see the warning signs. In 2001, when talks with the U.S. over guest worker alternatives had begun, Fox said, "When we think of 2025, there is not going to be a border. There will be a free movement of people just like the free movement of goods."¹⁰ Indeed, Fox doesn't think the U.S.-Mexico border is such a good idea right now. His director of the Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad, Juan Hernandez, stated in an April 2002 speech in Tucson, "Vicente Fox sees the nation of Mexico as being one of 123 million people – 100 million people within the borders, and 23 million living outside Mexico."¹¹ Fox's predecessor, Ernest Zedillo, was just as blunt during his time in office: "I have proudly proclaimed that the Mexican nation extends beyond the territory enclosed by its borders," he said, "and that Mexican migrants are an important – a very important – part of this."¹² Since our borders carry no force of law, it follows that any attempt to distinguish between legal and illegal immigration only serves to thwart a legitimate quest for reconquest. *Amnesty is an installment plan for Aztlan's restoration!*

It is not simply Mexican heads of state who speak these days of taking over U.S. territory. Mario Obledo, president of LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), laid down the law in 1999: "California is going to be a Mexican State. We are going to control all the institutions. If people don't like it, they should leave." Ricky Sierra of the Chicano National Guard is equally blunt. "We're recolonizing America, so they're afraid of us," he said. "It's time to take back what is ours."¹³ The radical Chicano student organization, MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan), makes no secret of its desire to take back America from the hated gringo – or of its National Socialist-style blood-and-soil *volk* ideology. The group's motto is, "Por La Raza todo. Fuera de La Raza nada." ("For our race, everything. For those outside our race, nothing.") Its manifesto reads in part, "With our heart in our hands and our hands in the soil, we declare the independence of our mestizo nation."¹⁴ Then there is the unofficial *reconquista* national anthem, "Somos Mas Americano" ("We Are More American"), by the folk-pop group Los Tigres Del Norte, winner of at least one Grammy award and seven gold albums. Having lived in California for three and a

half decades, its members have yet to become U.S. citizens. It's not difficult to see why, with lyrics such as "We are more American/Than any son of the Anglo-Saxon."¹⁵

In modern history, the psychology of conquest has consisted of two elements: desirability and inevitability. All collective entities – e.g., religions, nations, ethnic groups and political parties – desire to conquer, for the instinct for territorial conquest is innate to human experience. But what makes that desire unrelenting, even in the face of apparent defeat, is the sense of God- or History-ordained inevitability. To create this aura and attract followers, warriors trumpet every small victory as a great one, while downplaying every defeat as minor or nonexistent. When it comes to weakening the will of the opposition, *momentum is everything*. It is not just collectivist movements such as Communism, Fascism and Islamic theocracy that frame their appeal this way. In a more subdued, rule-bound way, political parties and office seekers do the same thing (as did national party nominating conventions until the 1980s, when they became scripted affairs). The more people leap onto a bandwagon, the more other people want to leap onto that bandwagon. And the people who create an aura of inevitability are what most people would term demagogues. "A crowd," wrote Gustave Le Bon more than a century ago, "is a servile flock that is incapable of ever doing without a master."¹⁶ It would seem this is true of television audiences and stadium crowds.

La Reconquista is the Mexican nationalists' version of this. These are people who want their country back. They've got more than just rapid population growth on their side, though this in itself is a prerequisite for triumph. More crucially, they have a sense of the imminent, of historic destiny about to be realized. And they've got connections to the highest levels of power. With each extraction of concessions from America's timorous political, business and other leaders, they envision more and greater victories ahead.

Those who deny the power of *reconquista* may counter that Mexico is nowhere nearly as mendacious or as powerful as its critics make it out to be. Surely, other ethnic groups lobby for and get amnesty. Why single out Mexico? This point is not outright wrong, yet it is an evasion. To be sure, the Chinese, Cubans, Filipinos, Indians, Central Americans and Jamaicans all have their own ethnic advocates who practice hardball politics to

bring as many of their countrymen into the U.S. as possible. But after all is said and done, Mexico is the unofficial leader of the amnesty lobby in this country in much the same sense as Saudi Arabia is the unofficial leader of the OPEC oil cartel. And Mexico's interests are not ours.

Mass immigration supporters also may point out that support for *reconquista* among Mexicans here is hardly universal. Again, that's true. But the significant fact is their primary loyalties now tilt more toward Mexico than America. A Pew Hispanic Center survey published in December 2002 found that among American citizens of Mexican descent, 55 percent considered themselves Mexicans first. Another 25 percent of the respondents viewed themselves primarily as Latinos or Hispanics, while a mere 18 percent saw themselves mainly as Americans.¹⁷ *And these are citizens!* Moreover, in 2004, a Zogby Poll revealed that 82 percent of Hispanics in this country say illegal aliens should be allowed to become citizens.¹⁸ Yet in the face of this, defenders of mass immigration may not only downplay the importance of Mexican ethnic chauvinism, but may even deny it exists. Brandeis political scientist Lawrence Fuchs, in his review of Samuel Huntington's *Who Are We?*, made this statement: "(T)here is no evidence to believe that Mexican and Central American immigrants and their descendants will maintain their political attachments to their ancestral homelands."¹⁹

One cannot buy off a conqueror. And just as denying or downplaying the existence of Mexican nationalism is a case of putting on blinders, so is offering amnesty. For one thing, it won't reduce large-scale illegal migration, which feeds the *reconquista* psychology as nothing else. As amnesty necessarily conflates distinctions between legal and illegal immigration, Mexicans see untold opportunities to expand their numbers and influence here with each new round. Giving in to their demands would amount to creating a rolling amnesty without end.

THE AMERICAN (AND POST-AMERICAN) MIND

That large numbers of Mexicans now promote and believe in amnesty is logical; it is part of their growing collective will to power. The other, more mysterious part of the equation is why so many Americans are so acquiescent in all this. Actually, our supporters come in two varieties. The first type consists of activists within the secular and religious Left, aggressively preening with

ostentatious displays of "idealism." They are the nation's immigration lawyers, the clergymen who prattle on about "dignity," and mainstream civil-rights organizations such as LULAC and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). All are examples of what Peter Brimelow calls "alienists" (the antipode of nativists), people skilled in the art of morally hectoring opponents of mass immigration. The second type is the Establishment figure in a position of authority and influence. Whether in or out of government, they adhere to the old political principle that to get along, you go along. Fearing a loss of face (and perhaps their jobs) if they side with "backward" people favoring restriction, they succumb with remarkable speed to the demands of alienists.

A federal court ruling in Virginia in July 2004 illustrates how even in formal defeat, enthusiasts of illegal immigration from Mexico manage to win the larger battle.²⁰ U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III that month dismissed a lawsuit filed by a group of illegal aliens who had claimed that seven state-run colleges and universities had violated the Constitution by refusing to enroll them. On the surface the decision was a convincing victory for sensible immigration policy. But the real story lay just below. The judge said that while a college or university was within its authority to deny admission to illegal aliens, it did not *have to* maintain such a policy. In any event, the issue of deportation didn't even come up. Tisha Tallman, an attorney for MALDEF's Atlanta office who represented the plaintiffs, called the ruling "great victories for our plaintiffs, for Virginia students and for the Commonwealth as a whole." At least as to the first, she was not far off the mark. Two of the seven institutions under suit, George Mason University and Virginia Tech, even before the ruling came down, switched gears, saying they would not deny students admission based on immigration status. After the ruling, Bob Templin, president of another defendant, Northern Virginia Community College, went out of his way to praise illegal immigrants who had graduated from his school, pointing out that many went on to graduate from four-year colleges and are now business owners. "They are welcome to be admitted," he said.

How do you say "capitulation" in Spanish?

A benevolent idealism about human nature long has been ingrained in our national character. We as Americans want to believe that our nation is a shining city on a hill, a beacon of light in an otherwise dark world. This sort of metaphor serves as a powerful inducement to give refuge to those denied the blessings of liberty. The Pledge of Allegiance, the Statue of Liberty and large crowds taking the Oath of Citizenship all signal to people around the world, "Our way of life is accessible to one and all." It is a view that resonates in Fourth of July speeches, school textbooks, and televised political

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debates. So long as our newcomers become patriotic Americans, the argument goes, the size, national origins and motives of arriving populations dissolve into secondary importance. As the truths of a free society are self-evident, all have the capacity to shed their previous national identity and join in shaping our ongoing national destiny. We are a nation of immigrants, and as such, fulfill our historic role welcoming and assimilating each fresh wave of immigrants. And there's plenty of room to accommodate them anyway. It is unfair, indeed downright un-American, to deny immigrants, regardless of how they got here, the bounty of liberty and prosperity that we take for granted. We were the first, and remain the foremost, universal nation.

This optimistic, Reagan-like sensibility is the basis for what Huntington terms the "American Creed." It is a creed possessed of an undeniable decency and nobility, and has permitted this country to live in relative internal peace (save for the Civil War) for over 200 years. But unadorned by moral realism, the creed has a naivete

whose dangers have become painfully apparent. Those who adhere to it simply cannot fathom that certain people, by virtue of their native language, race and customs, are less willing and/or able than others to be assimilated.

Recall Pat Buchanan's infamous remark during his 1992 presidential campaign that a million Englishmen would better assimilate into Virginia than a million Zulus. He was roundly denounced for his putative racism. Buchanan indeed did err, but not where most people had thought. His mistake was his use of the word "million"; a million people of *any* nationality pouring into one state on short notice is likely to create major problems. Had he said "thousand," he could have made a more effective case for selectivity (of the English over the Zulus, for example) in immigration admissions. For our nation's politics, economy and culture have been shaped, more than anyone else, by the English, with the lowland Scots running a close second.²¹ These people, who came here during the 17th and 18th centuries, were not immigrants as much as settlers, Huntington notes. Our "universal" creed originated in a particular place and time. It came into acceptance over the course of the late 19th and early 20th centuries because it already had found fertile soil in a transplanted Anglo-Protestant culture, with able assists from the French, the Germans and other European groups.

But aren't Mexicans as a whole willing to integrate themselves into this larger, established culture? Is this not the bargain that all newcomers accept, even if at first reluctantly? Our political leadership maintains we have no need to fear a Mexican population, however large and locked into their own folkways, who only want to better themselves, enriching our national heritage in the process. At the very least, they are not radical Muslims.

This is a naïve understanding of reality. Our nation, in fact, has been undergoing an effort, launched in earnest during the 60s, to deconstruct our nation into separate black, Hispanic, Asian and Islamic, not to mention feminist, gay and disabled, populations. Each faction has nursed its own collective sense of grievance against the American experience. And each faction has succeeded in codifying its grievances into such contrivances as affirmative action laws, government-funded bilingual education programs, race-themed college dormitories, corporate "diversity" training programs, and selective law enforcement.

To oppose this trend, but to maintain faith in mass immigration as good Americanism, would put us roughly in the same territory as, say, Norman Podhoretz, Linda Chavez and Michael Barone. Such people are quite right about the Left's political balkanization project, but they overlook the other key part – the part about the process of becoming American being more complicated than simply *wanting* to live here and one day taking an oath of allegiance. They cannot conceive of the reality that certain cultures, and nations, are more resistant to integration into the predominant American way of life than other cultures. Nor can they grasp that when certain national groups obtain a numerical critical mass, they can become especially resistant and even downright revolutionary.

Never mind Zulus or any other African ethnic group, insignificant as they are in numbers and political influence. Consider first and foremost Mexicans. Without question, there are many highly patriotic persons of Mexican descent living in the United States. Their ranks include natural-born citizens, naturalized citizens, legal immigrants, and yes, once in a while even illegal immigrants. But the fact is that Mexicans here are far more likely to hear the siren of Mexican separatism than English immigrants are to retain loyalty to the British crown. Indeed, our home-grown Mexican separatism is a good deal more virulent than Quebecois separatism in Canada, the latter at least having the virtue of not seeking territorial expansion.

It says something about our national character that few prominent figures in American public life are willing to openly debate advocates of Mexican separatism or even show a willingness to deny public benefits to those who live here illegally. They sense that publicly objecting to illegal immigration – never mind the legal kind – is now a one-way ticket to the margins of American public life. But what does that say about American public life, or at least what it has become? Tocqueville's main observation 170 years ago in *Democracy in America* was that America is a nation where destination counts more than origin. That has had the great virtue of enabling us to choose our own fates, and without holding our heads in shame before family, community or nation. But it also has a great defect, too. For in our haste to arrive somewhere, we often forget (or care) about where we came from. By believing Mexicans, so long as they have tightly-knit families and traditional religious beliefs, really are, or

could be, "just as American" as the native-born, we are ignoring irrevocable differences in how our countries came to be.²²

We Americans haven't really forgotten our philosophical roots. But a large portion of us has come to render these roots of passing importance. The old verities are good for Fourth of July oratory and a few other special occasions, but not good for legislation, law enforcement and court decisions. This is hardly an old WASP's lament. Regardless of one's ethno-religious origins, we are poorer for ignoring the process by which the American nation came to be. Public policy debate in this country is heavily circumscribed by an unwritten rule that sovereignty – patriotism – is for squares, if not necessarily bigots. And who wants to be a square? The Center for Immigration Studies' Mark Krikorian identifies this sensibility as "post-American":

*Let me be clear what I mean by a post-American. He's not an enemy of America – not Alger Hiss or Jane Fonda or Louis Farrakhan. He's not necessarily even a Michael Moore or Ted Kennedy. A post-American may actually still like America, but the emotion resembles the attachment one might feel to, say, suburban New Jersey – it can be a pleasant place to live, but you're always open to a better offer. The post-American has a casual relationship with his native country, unlike a patriot... Put differently, the patriot is married to America; the post-American is just shacking up.*²³

This puts America in a dilemma. As the ticket of entry into the top echelons of American life – in politics, business, education and philanthropy – more now than ever requires assuming a post-American identity, standing up to forces whose aim is to erode our sovereignty becomes risky to one's professional and personal advancement. Unfortunately, other than certain self-defined hard-core patriots like Tom Tancredo, Tom Clancy and Ted Nugent, most people in positions of power and influence instinctively follow the line of least resistance, and endorse whatever proposals that advocates of zero border-control put forth. A career, and the income and prestige that go with it, matter more than acts of standing up for one's country. Advocates of *reconquista* in the U.S. instinctively sense this, which is why they push the envelope ever further after each

political and legal victory. They, after all, are *not* afraid of standing up for their country. It's too bad that country is called Mexico.

Conclusion

America remains a welcoming society for immigrants. Indeed, the best way to keep us that way is to keep immigration levels low – or at any rate, substantially lower than what they are now. The proper rate should resemble an even flow rather than a flood. More to the point, the decision as to what constitutes an even flow must come from us, not Mexico, not any other foreign power, and not any of their adjuncts living here. Borders are to a sovereign people what a fence is to an individual property owner. When borders become meaningless, the interior – *that is to say the nation itself* – becomes meaningless as well! As a nation, we must maintain a sharp distinction between legality and illegality of residence by keeping legal immigration limited and opposing amnesty in all forms.

Most ranking members of both major political parties, to say nothing of business and other elites, are committed to securing passage of one or more amnesty bills. Even if they are not overt supporters, they cannot be counted on to become opponents. This has given mass-immigration advocates enormous leverage. They already believe there can never be “too much” amnesty, save for pulling back periodically for strategic purposes. And since “some” amnesty is necessary to promote our nation's welfare, more amnesty must even be better.

If the end result of rolling amnesty is a numerical majority of Mexicans and other ethnic groups innately opposed to what this country is about, then yes, it could be the end of America. Perhaps not in our lifetime, but it well could happen. Slowly, however, the American people are getting a glimpse of this future – and they are getting scared enough to make their opposition known. •

NOTES

1. The 2000 Census represented the first time that the Census Bureau had attempted to arrive at an estimate for the illegal population. One emphasizes the word “estimate” here, since people here illegally by nature tend to become scarce when they sense any presence of law enforcement authorities.

2. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) believes, with good reason, that the true figure for net annual average immigration is now around 475,000. FAIR argues that the Census Bureau's 2000 estimate of 8.7 million indicates that the increase in the illegal alien population

since IRCA went into effect had been about 6.6 million. Dividing 6.6 million by 14 years yields roughly 475,000. See “The Flood of Illegal Aliens Has Been Underestimated by INS,” Washington, D.C.: Federation for American Immigration Reform, March 2002.

3. INS formally ceased to exist when the Department of Homeland Security went into effect in March 2003. Its successor agencies are the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection. While the division of one agency into three may make for good symbolic action, it has not necessarily made for more secure borders. See Juan Mann, “A Handy Guide to the DHS's Three-Headed Immigration Lucifer,” *vdare.com*, July 19, 2004.

4. The amnesty application process, not insignificantly, was launched on May 5, 1987, Mexico's Cinco de Mayo Day.

5. In other words, the beneficiaries of late amnesty were those among the original 400,000 unsuccessful applicants under IRCA who were still alive and living in the U.S.

6. Samuel P. Huntington, “Reconsidering Immigration: Is Mexico a Special Case?” Washington, D.C.: Center for Immigration Studies, *Background*, November 2000, pp. 4-5. Huntington is the author of a recent book more fully exploring this idea, *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.

7. During fiscal years 1989-93, 74.3 percent of all aliens legalized by IRCA came from Mexico. By contrast, Mexicans accounted for a mere 10.3 percent of all non-IRCA immigrants during this period, a figure still higher than that for any other sending nation (the Philippines ranked second at 7.7 percent). See Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster*, New York: Random House, 1995, Appendix 2, p. 285.

8. Hunter S. Thompson, “Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan,” *Rolling Stone*, April 29, 1971, reprinted in Thompson, *The Great Shark Hunt: Strange Tales from a Strange Time*, New York: Summit Books, 1979, p. 128.

9. Actually, California under Gov. Gray Davis for a while explored the possibility of designating Cinco de Mayo Day an official state holiday. “In the near future people will look at California and Mexico as one magnificent region,” said Davis. Such a statement ought to give most Californians – and Americans – yet another reason to sigh with relief over his removal from office and replacement with Arnold Schwarzenegger. Quoted in Pat Buchanan, *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization*, New York: St. Martin's, 2002, pp. 140-41.

10. Quoted in Philip Bennett, "Fox's Cutting Edge," *Washington Post*, January 14, 2001.
11. Cited in Allan Wall, "Hernandez Out – But His Soul Goes Marching On," *vdare.com*, August 20, 2002. The office that Hernandez headed was abolished. But as Wall explains, this was a case of bait and switch. The Fox government created a new agency in its place, the National Council for Mexican Communities Abroad. Hernandez was forced from his position in a battle over turf, not ideology. As for Fox, he made his desire for "regularization" (i.e., legalization) of Mexicans living illegally in the U.S. highly explicit in a May 16, 2002 speech in Madrid. See Wall, "Does Dubya Know About Fox's Madrid Speech?" *vdare.com*, May 30, 2002.
12. Quoted in Buchanan, *The Death of the West*, p. 140.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
14. MEChA was very much in the news in 2001 in the Los Angeles mayoral race. Antonio Villaraigosa, who came within 40,000 votes of being elected, had headed MEChA's UCLA chapter years earlier. Take heed: Villaraigosa again is running for mayor in 2005.
15. Allan Wall, "'Somos Mas Americanos' -- We Are More American!," *vdare.com*, October 17, 2002.
16. Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (originally published in 1895), New York: Penguin Books, 1977, p. 118.
17. Results cited in John Fonte, review of Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We?*, in *National Review*, May 31, 2004, p. 41. This particular survey was not cited in the Huntington book.
18. Cited in "For the Record," *National Review*, July 26, 2004, p. 4.
19. Lawrence H. Fuchs, review of Huntington, *Who Are We?*, in *The American Prospect*, August 2004, pp. 70-71. Fuchs is a significant figure in immigration debate. He served as a member of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy, chaired by Notre Dame University President Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, whose 1981 final report provided key elements for what became IRCA five years later. He also was a member of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, chaired by the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, D-Tex. Its 1997 final report was highly critical of certain aspects of our nation's immigration policy, particularly guest worker programs.
20. See discussion in Christina Bellantoni, "Suit Against Colleges in Virginia Dismissed," *Washington Times*, July 15, 2004.
21. The many contributions by the Lowlanders (as a distinct group apart from Highlanders and Ulster Scots) to culture, economy and politics, in America and overseas, tend to be underappreciated. For a lengthy discussion of Scottish achievement, see Thomas Sowell, *Conquests and Cultures: An International History*, (paperback) 1998, pp. 72-75. For a full-length book treatment, see Duncan Bruce, *The Mark of the Scots: Their Astonishing Contributions to History, Science, Democracy, Literature and the Arts*, Secaucus, N.J.: Birch Lane Press, 1997.
22. For a rebuttal of the view that mass immigration can serve as a moral/cultural improvement program for America, see Carl F. Horowitz, "Immigration and the 'Culture War': The Conservative View," *The Social Contract*, Vol. XII, No. 2, Winter 2002, pp. 141-46.
23. Mark Krikorian, "Post-Americans: They've Just 'Grown' Beyond Their Country," *National Review Online*, June 22, 2004.