

Pro-immigrationists Prefer United *Market* of America to United *States* of America

by Dan Stein

For some time there has been a growing feeling in America that government has ceased serving the interests of the people and become a wholly owned enterprise of bankers, lawyers and multinational corporate CEOs. The almost daily revelations of the shameless fund-raising practices at the White House have more than confirmed these suspicions.

The President and the Democrats are in the hot seat at the moment, but the American people have little confidence that the Republicans are any less in the pockets of the donors who helped them take and keep control of Congress. The choice of the Republican leadership to chair the Senate Immigration Subcommittee is a clear indication of where the party's loyalties lie.

According to recent polls, more than 80 percent of Americans believe that immigration to the United States is excessive and needs to be trimmed back. Among the small minority that favors high levels of immigration are those with a direct financial interest in the availability of cheap immigrant labor. When the Senate leadership appointed Senator Spencer Abraham of Michigan to chair the Immigration Subcommittee last January, they opted to side with the cheap labor interests.

Abraham has made it clear, in deed and

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statement, that he believes that American businesses should be able to recruit labor wherever it chooses. In his first official act as chairman, Abraham made a pilgrimage to California's Silicon Valley to assure corporate executives that the door to foreign labor will be kept wide open.

But it is not just skilled labor that Abraham has vowed to protect. The United States admits large numbers of poorly educated, unskilled immigrants through policies that guarantee admission to extended family members of other immigrants. After helping to defeat changes in the

family-based immigration policies last year, Abraham has made it clear that any further attempts to reform these policies will never see the light of day as long as he wields the gavel.

Abraham is emblematic of an emerging culture in Washington that is further alienating the political leadership from the citizens. In a city where the people's representatives have developed an incestuous relationship with lobbyists, PACs and soft money-givers, the idea of the nation has become somewhat of an anachronism. Washington thinks in terms of economies, markets and consumers. While Americans think of themselves as citizens with a stake in their nation, the prevailing culture in Washington views them as consumers and interchangeable workers who constitute a market. The concerns of a nation and the concerns of a market are very different.

The current immigration policy that Abraham has promised to preserve, protect and defend, is consistent with the philosophy of the United Market of

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America. The United States of America is a nation with a culture, a language and a national identity. The United Market of America has little use for such antiquated concepts. In the Market what is paramount is economic activity and corporate bottom lines. Non-economic considerations such as a sense of community, the commonweal and shared ideals are subjugated to short-term economic expedience.

What Abraham and other proponents of unfettered (legal and illegal) immigration forget is that the economy they worship depends on a stable, cohesive society. The reason the United States has a successful economy is because we have created a society in which people are not merely economic cogs in a machine, but rather citizens with a proprietary stake in the nation.

Current immigration policies are changing that. Americans increasingly see themselves as hired hands who can be replaced at any time by workers from anywhere. The sense that the people who built the nation and the economy have an unquestionable right to determine its cultural, demographic and linguistic future is rapidly evaporating as cities, and even regions, are transformed by massive settlement of immigrants.

The concept of the nation must evolve to conform with the realities of the modern global economy. But as we embrace the challenges and opportunities of the global market we cannot forget that a nation is greater than its GNP. The market-driven immigration philosophy espoused by Spencer Abraham and endorsed by the congressional leadership and the Clinton Administration is dangerous and shortsighted. Along the banks of the Potomac the blizzard of money has obscured the reality that the economy cannot exist independent of the nation. **TSC**

