

Strength in Diversity? Not!

by Don Feder

OF THE MANY MYTHS of liberalism, perhaps the most improbable is the notion that diversity makes us stronger.

Last week, New York City's planning department released a report on patterns of immigration to the Big Apple. From 1990 to 1996, roughly 113,000 immigrants settled there each year, the overwhelming majority from the Third World.

The report positively glowed about the supposed benefits of this influx. Many city neighborhoods have become delightfully polyglot. Why, in a single block, the products of dozens of different countries are sold.

True, there has been somewhat of a strain on the city's schools, which have had to accommodate students from 196 different countries. Those in bilingual education cost twice the average to educate.

And, along with polyglot products, New Yorkers have imported crime and poverty. The city's foreign-born represent 28

percent of its population, but comprise half of those on welfare.

As immigrants arrived, the native-born fled. New York's non-Hispanic white population has plummeted from 63 percent in 1970 to 35 percent today. Due to immigration, nationally, whites will constitute a minority by 2050.

In the city, the fastest-growing immigrant groups are from Ghana, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Egypt. These countries are all impoverished (Bangladesh's per capita Gross Domestic Product is \$1260), backward (Egypt has a 49 percent illiteracy rate) and far removed from our culture.

While Mayor Rudy Giuliani's administration celebrates diversity, ordinary Americans aren't putting on party hats. The November 8 *Miami Herald* reports on a poll showing: "Floridians are not in a welcoming mood when it comes to new immigrants. They favor strongly reducing legal immigration to the United States."

Hispanics are the only group that doesn't, and then by only 51 percent (40 percent favor cutbacks). The *Herald* quotes a Cuban immigrant who warns that America is "like a ship that can take on only so many passengers before sinking."

Many of us understand what the elite does not: that due to unrestrained immigration and

multiculturalism, America is losing its identity.

Although New York's report alludes to Ellis Island, today's immigrants are another story. The Irish, Italian and Jewish immigrants of yesterday all came from countries connected to Western culture.

On arrival, they were told in no uncertain terms what was expected of them — to assimilate by adopting our language, learning our history and identifying with American values.

Today, an elite which is guilty about America's past and unsure of the value of our culture tells them: don't assimilate. Why learn English? Why should you want to identify with a nation founded by white males with guns? Don't even become a hyphenated American; remain a *whatever* who happens to reside here.

Dan Stein, executive director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, observes that as far as liberals are concerned there's "virtually nothing" for today's immigrants to attach themselves to "other than rampant consumerism" and a "vague concept of diversity."

Has a country ever grown stronger through disunity? Our differences may make us interesting; they do not unite us. What happens when a growing

Don Feder is a nationally-syndicated columnist. This item is © 1999 by Creators Syndicate and is reprinted by permission.

portion of the population feels no allegiance to our national ideals, disdains our heroes and clings to its separateness?

In the past, we could absorb and ultimately Americanize millions of immigrants because of our shared identity. Today, that common ground is fast eroding.

Last week, the Pope was in India pleading with its inhabitants not to murder Christians. In the past two years, there have been more

than 150 reported incidents of murder, rape, beatings and church desecration.

India is deliriously diverse. There are Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs and Christians, castes and sub-groups. For hundreds of years they've all been at each others' throats. For most of its existence, India was held together only by the bloody swords of the rajahs or British lances. Is this the America

under construction for our children and grandchildren?

You can bet the authors of the New York report don't live in diverse neighborhoods, send their children to diverse schools or experience the joys of immigrant culture by strolling the streets of Washington heights, with its Jamaican gangs, 'round midnight.

The elite celebrates diversity; others have to live with it. **TSC**