

Samuel Francis is a nationally syndicated columnist. This column is reprinted by permission of Tribune Media Services.

In the Wake of the 'Golden Venture'

By Samuel Francis

With the crackup of the grotesquely named "Golden Venture" off the coast of New York this week, the full horror of the reality of illegal immigration may at last be breaking through the fog of propaganda about it.

Packed into the stinking holds of the vessel, fed two bowls of rotten rice a day for five months, extorted for some \$20,000 a head by the gangsters who run the traffic, 296 Chinese nationals finally jumped and swam for their lives when the ship limped into sight of land.

Eight of them drowned or died of hypothermia. Five remain hospitalized. Six have disappeared into the bottomless jungle of the Big Apple. The captain and crew of this slave ship are in custody for smuggling. And 276 of their slaves now sit in American jails awaiting the tender ministrations of the immigration bureaucracy. If you liked the African slave trade, you ought to love illegal immigration.

But the "Golden Venture" is not unique. Last week, two fishing boats with another 300 illegals from China were nabbed in San Francisco. Last month, the Coast Guard seized a ship in San Diego harbor with 193 illegals. And these are merely the ones mentioned in recent news reports. "This is a modern-day slave trade," says Joann Lum of the Chinese Staff and Workers Association in New York, and for those who imagine we don't have slavery in this country, the voyage of the "Golden Venture" adds new meaning to the phrase "global economy."

Interviewed by *The New York Times*, one miserable Chinese illegal who made it through the hellish voyage a few months ago talked about life in America. "I regret coming," says Hua Zhen. "I feel like I was tricked. Everybody said life in America is wonderful, that everyone has a big car and a big house." Mr. Hua had to cough up no less than \$27,000 to endure his 52-day voyage from China to Mexico and then walked on foot across the border. Now in New Jersey, he still hasn't found work and still lives with relatives. For a man from communist China to say he's sorry he left ought to tell us something.

Mr. Hua is not yet a burden to American citizens, but thousands like him are, and the 276 survivors of the "Golden Venture" have joined them. William Slattery of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in New York says, "I have 62,000 people under deportation proceedings in this district. I deport 750 a year. At this rate it would take me 80 years to clear the system out." For every one of those 62,000 illegal

immigrants, American citizens have to pick up the tab.

Well, how much does it cost? Last week, at a news conference sponsored by the Carrying Capacity Network, economist Donald Huddle of Rice University unveiled a new study that totaled it all up. For the 4.8 million illegal aliens already settled in the United States, Professor Huddle calculates a cost in 1992 of \$12.5 billion in "major outlays." That figure includes \$4 billion for primary and secondary education, \$820 million for teaching illegals English at public expense, and a final \$7 billion in unemployment assistance for illegal alien workers.

That, however, is merely the price tag for illegal aliens. He also concludes that the "11.8 million legal immigrants covered by this study, including refugees, asylees and amnestied illegal aliens, present in the United States in 1992 cost all levels of government that year more than \$45 billion above and beyond the taxes they paid." This tidy sum is further enhanced by considering that since American workers are often displaced by their immigrant competitors, the taxpayer has to pay for them too. The cost of public assistance to Americans pushed out of their jobs by legal immigrants who arrived between 1970 and 1992 he estimates at \$6.5 billion.

These are merely the highlights of Professor Huddle's study, and if Hua Zhen reads this, he may begin to understand why everyone in this country does not have a big car and a big house. We have to carry the load for millions of immigrants like him, so he can discover the truth behind the rumors and lies he was fed by the global gangsters who conned him into coming here.

Exactly why it will take the INS 80 years to clear its system of the illegal aliens who are public charges is not clear, nor is it clear why the 276 victims of the "Golden Venture" need to be dispatched to overcrowded detention centers rather than simply placed on the next boat to China.

But then it's also not clear why Congress has so dismally failed to deal with the immigration crisis that has been a public issue for some 15 years, or why the American people, who have to pay the costs of that failure, don't demand action. If they don't, then what we can expect is for the United States itself to turn into one big "Golden Venture," until Americans themselves have to jump ship from their own country. ■