

A Caravan from Hell —With Outside Help

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The “caravan” of Central Americans seeking automatic entry into our country in late 2018, under the guise of humanitarian purpose, is challenging U.S. sovereignty like no event in recent memory has. [Another caravan is now taking shape.] Originating in Honduras in mid-October and arriving weeks later in Tijuana, Mexico, just south of the California border, this aggregation, lately estimated at 6,000 persons, has the potential to inflict lethal violence down the road. A portion of the crowd already has provided a taste of possible things to come.

It was Sunday, November 25, 2018, around 11:30 a.m., when hundreds of migrants, having broken away from the larger crowd housed in Tijuana shelters for over a week, stormed our San Ysidro Port of Entry, south of San Diego, and continued to do so for several hours. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents, many of them pelted by debris or physically assaulted, used pepper spray, tear gas, and rubber bullets to repel the rioters. The riot continued well into the afternoon. Agents temporarily shut down vehicular and pedestrian traffic in both directions at the San Ysidro station to prevent the mayhem from spreading. Nearly 70 rioters were arrested by the time Border Patrol agents restored order in the late afternoon.

Supporters of the caravan insist that the Trump administration’s insensitivity to the special needs of the migrants made the riot inevitable.¹ This is pure nonsense. The clash easily would have been avoided if the United States had a sensible immigration policy and the will to enforce it. The fact that we still don’t have these things, despite the best efforts of the Trump administration, suggests that enormous obstacles lie ahead in preserving U.S. sovereignty.

It’s about a 1,000-mile walk from Honduras to the nearest U.S. city, McAllen, Texas. The trek to the San Diego area is at least twice that. The Bataan Death March of April 1942, a wartime atrocity conducted at Japanese gunpoint, was by contrast only 65 miles. It is intuitive, given the physical risks involved, that the Honduras-to-San Diego march was enabled from the outside. It is also a matter of record. Leave aside those esoteric conspiratorial theories about remote control by George Soros. This march was planned by a tight network of U.S. activists, mainly in Chicago, who for years have been operating in plain sight.

Thanks to some intrepid investigative reporting, especially by Hayden Ludwig, a research associate with the Washington, D.C.-based Capital Research Center,² we know a great deal about the motives and behavior of the prime movers of this caravan. At the center of things is a Chicago-based organization, Pueblo Sin Fronteras, which, translated from Spanish, means “People Without Borders.” That pretty much sums up the group’s philosophy. Two prominent Pueblo Sin Fronteras activists, Denis Omar Contreras and Rodrigo Abeja, embedded themselves in the caravan, getting vocal when necessity arose. Shortly after the phalanx, by then numbering in the many thousands,³ entered Mexico from Guatemala, Contreras announced, “Welcome to Tapachula!” Another one of its leaders is versed in Old School persuasion. On October 18, Irineo Mujica, director of Pueblo Sin Fronteras’ Mexican operations and a U.S. citizen, physically assaulted a Mexican official at a rally near the Guatemala-Mexico border, an act for which he was arrested.

Pueblo Sin Fronteras is a project of another Chicago entity, an IRS Section 501(c)(4) nonprofit group known as La Familia Latina Unida. Each exists to facilitate mass illegal entry from our southern border and eventual citizenship. These seemingly benign social service organizations have been sponsoring such invasions for several years, including one in the early spring of 2018 from Tapachula to San Diego. The caravan did not end as its backers had hoped.⁴ But the latest campaign by Pueblo Sin Fronteras, though also (so far) formally

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unsuccessful — dozens of marchers by the end of November headed back home on their own and dozens more were deported by Mexico — has been a public relations triumph. Aside from its sheer size, the montage of accompanying published photos and footage of Central American migrant marchers, especially those featuring mothers with children, has been a heart-tugging tonic to radical American activists who seek to transform our country from a nation-state into an identity-free global sanctuary. Had the campaign resulted in a grant of mass asylum here — marchers already had rejected an offer of asylum from Mexico — it almost certainly would have inspired many more caravans headed our way. As it was, by early December, about 90,000 illegal aliens had entered this country since the formation of the caravan less than two months earlier.⁵ It was the Trump administration’s proactive response, and not any benevolence on the part of the marchers, that headed off a worst-case scenario.

This organized campaign, quite palpably, is motivated by a deep animosity toward America’s historic identity and laws. Less evident, but no less crucially, it

also is motivated by a deep resentment toward governments south of our border that cooperate with us in any way. In an October 21 press release, Pueblo Sin Fronteras accused Mexican and Central American authorities of adopting “a policy of fear and racism imposed by the United States doing its dirty work and shouldering the cost of repressive tactics that do not take into account the root causes of this exodus.” The statement also demanded that Mexico become a “sanctuary country.” A San Francisco-based organizer for the group, Alex Mensing, a human cliché machine, declared, “It’s time the Guatemalan government stood up for its Honduran brothers and sisters.”⁶ Here’s a thought: Maybe it’s time the *Honduran* government stood up for its Honduran brothers and sisters.

Pueblo Sin Fronteras and La Familia Latina Unida openly have declared their intent to block all deportations of illegal immigrants. The two groups are, for all intents and purposes, interchangeable. They have overlapping staff and share a common address, 2176 West Division Street, Chicago. The founder of La Familia Latina Unida, Elvira Arellano, is a special piece of work. A Mexican



Open-borders activists Walter “Slim” Coleman (left) and Emma Lozano (right) run Centro Sin Fronteras Community Services Network and serve as pastors of the Lincoln United Methodist Church in Chicago.

national, Ms. Arellano first entered the U.S. in 1997 but was sent home for document fraud. She illegally reentered our country later that year, settling in Yakima, Washington. In 1999, she gave birth to a son on U.S. soil, making him an automatic U.S. citizen. Not long after that, she resettled in Chicago. In 2002, she was arrested for Social Security fraud while working at her cleaning job at O’Hare International Airport. She eventually was convicted. Facing deportation, she won three stays of removal. By August 2006, however, she was out of legal options. Rather than go home, Ms. Arellano very publicly, and to morally charged applause, sought and received sanctuary inside Adalberto United Methodist Church in Chicago. The church’s street address is 2176 West Division Street — small world. The following August, Arellano, announcing that she would continue to defy U.S. immigration authorities, arrived at Los Angeles International Airport, where she was promptly arrested and then deported days later. After several years of nursing her grievances in Mexico, she returned to America in March 2014 under a grant of asylum.⁷

La Familia Latina Unida, inconveniently, had its 501(c)(4) nonprofit tax status revoked in May 2017 after failing to file the required IRS Form 990 for three consecutive years. Yet it continues to operate in conjunction with Pueblo Sin Fronteras and another Chicago outfit, Centro Sin Fronteras Community Services Network, a Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit group headquartered at Lincoln United Methodist Church, 2009 W. 22nd Place. Form 990 tax returns for the period 2013-17

indicate that Centro Sin Fronteras received a combined \$576,610 from outside sources to provide a wide range of Hispanic immigrant-related social services, including health care screening, legal referrals and financial counseling. The center received two small grants in 2017, one for \$4,000 from the American Heart Association to conduct outreach to the Latino community on the effects of consuming soda and other high-sugar foods, and the other for \$7,646 from the Chicago-based Resurrection Project to conduct workshops on how to navigate the immigration and citizenship process. Predating the most recent five-year period,⁸ the center received far larger grants from Left-leaning philanthropies such as the National Immigration Forum and the Public Welfare Foundation.

The married couple who runs the center, Emma Lozano (president) and Walter “Slim” Coleman (treasurer, program chairman), serve as pastors of the aforementioned Lincoln United Methodist Church. They are also avowed supporters of open borders and a moratorium on deportations. Ms. Lozano for years has been active in coaching Chicago-area Hispanic “undocumented” immigrants on how to obtain U.S. citizenship and voting rights. Back in June 2007, at a breakout session of the annual convention of Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow/PUSH Coalition at the Hyatt Regency O’Hare in Rosemont, Ill., this writer got a first-hand taste of her obsessiveness. After giving a pro forma talk about the heroic Elvira Arellano, with the requisite sentimentality, she concluded with the battle cry, “Don’t mess with



The largely male caravan of Central Americans heading to the U.S. in 2018 was well organized and financially supported.

Tejas!” Lozano’s Spanish pronunciation of the Lone Star State was no accident.⁹ She, like other *Reconquista* advocates, long has claimed that the United States “stole” Mexican territory following our victory in the Mexican-American War of 1846–48.¹⁰

These organizers may paint a face of desperation on the Central Americans demanding entry into the U.S., but the reality is that a great many marchers, far from fleeing persecution and civil strife, had been waiting for months, if not years, to make the journey.



That’s how the caravan grew so quickly from hundreds to thousands. Aspiring marchers, having seen extensive coverage of the march via television, Facebook, WhatsApp and other media, joined up. “Right away, I knew I would go,” remarked one El Salvadoran marcher, Irma Rosales, who after viewing televised images, bought a bus ticket to become part of the caravan in Guatemala.¹¹ Ediberto Fuentes, who earlier had left his native Honduras for Mexico, explained, “I had been waiting for a way to get north, and then I heard about the caravan.” Mr. Fuentes had been stranded in Mexico for months, unable to pay a smuggler to transport him to America.¹² A Honduran teen, Jose Mejias, put it this way after a friend knocked on his door during the wee hours of the morning and told him that it was time to join the caravan: “I packed my bag in 30 minutes.”¹³ These are not the voices of people fleeing political persecution. Even MSNBC, hardly a news outlet friendly to American immigration patriotism, has reported that most of the marchers are not seeking political asylum here.¹⁴

In addition to assaulting our borders, these marchers also may be importing a public health crisis.¹⁵ Of the estimated 6,000 caravan migrants temporarily residing in Tijuana in late-November, over a third were being treated for illnesses such as respiratory infections, skin infections, tuberculosis, and hepatitis. Many of these ailments were acquired from the unsanitary conditions of the march route and from local public shelters. The

City of Tijuana is spending about \$30,000 a day on the problem, but officials there emphasize that the money is running low. The U.S. government has every obligation to our people to keep this looming health care crisis as far away as possible.

The commanding officers and foot soldiers who made the caravans possible are demanding as a matter of right that we suspend enforcement of our immigration laws. These people are determined to promote Hispanic mass immigration without any consideration given to American law, security, public health, or identity. Our political leadership’s generally reflexive unwillingness to challenge such activists led directly to this situation. By promoting amnesty and a path to citizenship as morally imperative, they virtually announced to Central America, “Come one, come all.” People in these dysfunctional nations — and Honduras is especially dysfunctional¹⁶ — understandably assumed that admittance to the U.S., and acquisition of public benefits once here, would be a cakewalk. They assumed wrong, but not for want of trying. And many will try again.

The radical street politicians stage-managing these “caravans” are anti-American to the core, but they are not stupid. They have sensed, time and again, our fecklessness. They are not to be underestimated, given their connections to Hispanic political leaders, especially Chicago Democratic Congressman Luis Gutierrez, an open borders fanatic who walked out of President Donald Trump’s 2018 State of the Union address as a protest against Trump’s “racism.”¹⁷ Pueblo Sin Fronteras and the rest of its legally challenged allies have thrown down the gauntlet. They know that when thousands of people illegally cross our southern border in unison rather than in small groups, they become far less susceptible to Border Patrol apprehension. Even the best-trained and equipped CBP officers cannot repel a bum’s rush across our border with standard law enforcement tools and procedures. This caravan, in effect, was intended as a dare for us to use force.

President Trump, for one, is willing to go that route. While the march was making its way through Mexico, he ordered more than 5,000 active-duty troops to our southern border on top of the roughly 2,000 National Guardsmen already there. A showdown was almost inevitable when the marchers, having reached Tijuana, failed to secure either a warm welcome from local residents or a green light from Mexican authorities to enter the U.S. As the delay grew by the day, so did the marchers’ frustration. On November 25, 2018, an eruption happened. Roughly 500 to 1,000 of the aliens broke through a barricade set up by Mexican officials not far from the San Ysidro Point of Entry, the busiest land-based border crossing in the world.¹⁸ Once having arrived on foot at the border, many invaders threw rocks

and other projectiles at CBP personnel stationed there. To the outraged horror of America's social justice warriors, Border Patrol agents responded with pepper spray, tear gas, and rubber bullets, though without incurring any serious injuries. Pueblo Sin Fronteras' own Irineo Mujica was on top of things. In an interview with the Associated Press, he rationalized the run for the border as an attempt to dramatize the migrants' plight to U.S. and Mexican authorities.¹⁹

The president was right in calling this march an invasion and in invoking his authority to order Border Patrol agents to use whatever measures necessary to disperse it. Legions of Trump haters responded with the usual epithets — “xenophobic,” “heartless,” and “Nazi.” But would any president have responded differently? Five years earlier, in fact, in November 2013, President Obama, faced with a virtually identical situation, authorized Border Patrol agents near San Ysidro to employ aggressive tactics to repel a rock- and bottle-throwing illegal immigrant mob.²⁰ Self-styled anti-racist activists back then seemed not to notice.

The reason for this discrepancy in response by political activists should not be hard to figure out. The activists' hatred of Donald Trump is far more driven by his beliefs than by his actions. And what he believes is that America, like any nation, has a right to defend its own interests. Former President Barack Obama only fitfully defended our borders because he never was all that enthusiastic about putting America's interests before those of other nations. He's no different as an ex-president. Late in the 2018 election season, in a speech in Indiana on behalf of Democratic incumbent U.S. Senate candidate Joe Donnelly, Obama asserted that the caravan did not represent any threat to our country, the implication being that we ought to let all marchers in. “Two weeks before this election, they're telling us the single most grave threat to America is a bunch of, like, poor, impoverished, broke, hungry refugees a thousand miles away,” he said derisively. “That's like, the thing that's really going to threaten Gary, Indiana.”²¹ Donald Trump is different. He believes that our nation has a legal and moral right to say “no” to migrants who seek entry without authorization. That these “refugees” didn't look hungry or broke further justified his authorization of force.

While not a military attack, the latest America-bound human “caravan,” like its less-hyped predecessors, is an aggressive incursion into our sovereign territory. And if this one succeeds, more will follow. Anyone possessed of a grain of political wisdom knows this. Events are continuing to unfold at this writing. The flow of marchers to Tijuana has slowed, but busloads of other migrants have arrived in the border city of Mexicali, Mexico, about 90 miles to the east.²² U.S. Border Patrol agents would be overpowered and possibly killed if they

did not use the tools of crowd control at their disposal. On November 26, the day after the riot, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, struck this realistic note: “It is shocking that I have to explain this, but officers can be seriously or fatally injured in such attacks. Self-defense isn't debatable for most law-abiding Americans.”²³

The caravan campaign must *not* succeed. Organizers such as Irineo Mujica and Emma Lozano explicitly celebrate it as a prelude to a full-scale demographic transformation of the United States. No self-respecting nation anywhere, regardless of prevailing party or ideology, can be expected to sit passively in the face of such provocations. To accommodate these caravans would be to advertise our helplessness to the entire world. Our country is under no moral or legal obligation to be servants of “respectable” outside opinion. This latest human caravan, basking in media-manipulated public sympathy, underscores more than ever the necessity of protecting our borders. ■

Endnotes

1. Typical of this view is a blog post by Jack Holmes and Kelly Sherin, “Riot Police, Migrants, and American Tear Gas: 30 Scenes from the United States Southern Border,” *esquire.com*, November 26, 2018. The article obnoxiously begins, “The United States is a country that tear gasses children.”
2. Hayden Ludwig, “The Open Borders Activists Behind the Illegal Immigrant Caravans,” Washington, D.C.: Capital Research Center, October 24, 2018.
3. Indeed, the Mexican newspaper *El Universal* estimated that the caravan had grown to 14,000 people by the time its participants began crossing into Mexico from Guatemala. See James Kirkpatrick, “America Held Hostage by Caravan; Why Won't POTUS Propose Remittance Tax?” *Vdare.com*, October 22, 2018.
4. Elliot Spagat, “Central American Asylum-Seeking Caravan Reaches U.S. Border,” Associated Press, April 26, 2018; Carl Prine, “Caravan Supporters Rally on Both Sides of the International Border,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, April 29, 2018.
5. Katie Pavlich, “90,000 Aliens Have Come to America Since the Caravan Formed in October,” *townhall.com*, December 4, 2018. Pavlich quotes U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan: “Since the caravan was formed in mid-October, we've seen 90,000 people come to our border. Eighty-five percent of those crossing illegally between ports of entry and all lured by the fact that our legal framework has huge gaps that create the opportunity to stay in the U.S. while awaiting a court hearing even if they don't have a lawful permission or protection claim.”
6. Quoted in “Hondurans Rally Outside Guatemalan

Consulate in San Francisco to Decry Detainment of Migrants,” www.nbcbayarea.com, October 19, 2018.

7. Ms. Arellano’s moral theatrics during her church standoff won her plaudits from *Time* magazine as one of the “People Who Mattered” in 2006. See Wendy Cole, “Elvira Arellano,” content.time.com, December 25, 2006.

8. In 2013 and 2014, Centro Sin Fronteras Community Services Network received, respectively, \$292,947 and \$145,800, or nearly 80 percent of its income during the 2013-17 period. Thus, the group could afford to forgo large grants and donations in the subsequent three years.

9. Significantly, three Democratic presidential candidates — Barack Obama, Dennis Kucinich, and Bill Richardson — spoke at a breakfast forum at that convention. Reprehensible as Obama was, he may have been the least radical of the trio. During his speech, former Congressman and Clinton administration official Bill Richardson, who at the time was governor of New Mexico, declared that his first order of business as president would be to tear down the U.S.-Mexican wall.

10. Ms. Lozano spelled out her motives back in September 2003 on the eve of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Rides, a multi-city bus ride project converging on Queens, N.Y. She put it this way during an interview: “Legalization is not enough — we want to make a new America, one that accepts and treats all of the inhabitants of our continent as equal citizens. We ride for freedom from our oppressors and we don’t say please, ‘Accept us, we are good workers,’ and make contributions, and wave the U.S. flag. We know our history — one-half of the entire United States was originally Mexico. We have every right to be here.” This view, almost breathtaking in its arrogance and factual inaccuracy, happens to be commonly held by Hispanics illegally in this country. See Teo Reyes, “Chicago Immigrant Workers ‘Get on the Bus’ for Freedom Rides,” *Labor Notes*, September 30, 2003.

11. Kevin Sieff and Joshua Partlow, “How the Migrant Caravan Became So Big and Why It’s Continuing to Grow,” *Washington Post*, October 23, 2018.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. Guy Benson, “MSNBC Reporter: Most People in the Caravan are Non-Asylum-Seeking Single Men, and Some Are Already Heading Home,” townhall.com, November 29, 2018. For evidence that the safeguards against abuse of our asylum laws already had been undermined by Congress, the courts, and federal agencies, see Dan Cadman, “Asylum in the

United States: How a Finely Tuned System of Checks and Balances Has Been Effectively Dismantled,” Background, Washington, D.C.: Center for Immigration Studies, March 26, 2014.

15. Lukas Mikelionis and Griff Jenkins, “One-Third of Migrants in Caravan Are Being Treated for Health Issues, Tijuana Health Official Says,” foxnews.com, November 29, 2018.

16. Rod Dreher, “Hopeless Honduras,” www.theamericanconservative.com, October 26, 2018. This blog post is a letter from an American citizen who has served as a missionary in Honduras for the past decade. The author presents a depressing portrait of a corrupt, crime-prone, and poverty-stricken society.

17. James Fulford, “Kristol and the Democrats Both Speak Treason — Fluently. Why Shouldn’t Trump Say So?” Vdare.com, February 5, 2018.

18. Timothy Meads, “Hundreds of Illegal Aliens Attempt to Rush into United States as Migrant Caravan Attacks Border,” townhall.com, November 25, 2018.

19. Christopher Sherman, “US Agents Fire Tear Gas as Some Migrants Try to Breach Fence,” www.nbcsandiego.com, November 25, 2018.

20. Susan Shroder and Elizabeth Aguilera, “Border Patrol: Crowd Confronts Agents,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, November 25, 2013.

21. Quoted in Katie Pavlich, “FLASHBACK: When Democrats Said the Caravan Wasn’t Dangerous,” townhall.com, November 27, 2018. As an aside, Jim Acosta, the CNN correspondent whom President Trump publicly rebuked during a post-election press conference, claimed during that conference that the caravan wasn’t really an invasion and that the migrants wouldn’t try to jump the border fence. His powers of prediction turned out to be less than accurate. Obama’s pitch on behalf of Donnelly, fittingly, failed to yield the desired result. Senator Donnelly lost his bid for re-election against his main challenger, Mike Braun, a Republican. Donnelly received 44 percent of the vote in contrast to Braun’s 52 percent; Lucy Brenton, who ran as a Libertarian, got the other four percent.

22. There are two points of entry in the area: Calexico East and Calexico West.

23. Nick Miroff and Tracy Jan, “More Clashes and Shutdowns Expected at Border: U.S. Defends Use of Tear Gas as Tension Rises; Resolution Still Distant,” *Washington Post*, November 27, 2018. Secretary Nielsen also noted that the predominantly male caravan marchers frequently pushed women and children to the forefront for maximum media coverage. “This is putting vulnerable people in harm’s way,” she said.