

Population/Immigration: One Problem, Indivisible

by Lee G. Madland

Some months ago in Missoula, Montana, I had a conversation with a niece of mine who was visiting from California in connection with wedding festivities for her nephew. She recently had returned from a three-week trip to Southeast Asia in which she visited Burma, Thailand and Cambodia, and not long before had also visited Guatemala. These being her first exposures to Third-World countries, the experience clearly had made a major impression on her. During dinner one evening she mentioned to me that multitudes living in the Third World would do *anything* to come to the United States, and vividly described crowds outside U.S. embassies or consulates applying and imploring for visas. “They would cut their arm off” if that’s what it took, she later commented. I expressed understanding and agreement with her observation, but in the midst of a busy social situation there wasn’t much opportunity to discuss it further. What follows grew out of an e-mail I later sent to her.

Certainly what she observed is stark reality. Unfortunately, that reality is used by many people as an argument to admit more and more immigrants as the only compassionate thing for America to do. Those advocates show little awareness of limits or constraints that necessarily must be enforced – and effectively, which is emphatically *not* being done at present **n** for this country to avoid being swamped as a culture and destroyed as a nation, given the continuing clamor for such admission by huge numbers of diverse (*that word again*) peoples.

One can understand the immigrants’ desires, but as Garrett Hardin has noted in another but similar context, “maybe that touches your heart, but just don’t let it touch

your mind.”¹ Politically Correct souls, however, more than just suggest that even to oppose increasing, or **n horrors** – actually advocate decreasing the immigration flow to America **n** is off the table for decent people, and that pushing for restrictive measures not only threatens the sacred cow of diversity but also brands one as a racist, bigot, or, as Thomas Sowell recently remarked, whatever the epithet *du jour* may be. Without stopping to seriously consider likely consequences, they shy away from the problem like the legendary ostrich, and heatedly deny that the influx will bring any bad results at all. It will be interesting to see what they will think some years hence when they are unmistakably confronted with real consequences. (Some of these are already occurring on a still relatively small but increasing scale, as my niece living in San Francisco observed herself with no prompting from me.) The trend is ominous.

Guilt and Mass Immigration

Dreamy-eyed advocates of liberal or even totally uncontrolled open-border immigration are fond of citing historic wrongs, which are easy to find. But *this is the here and now*. To wrap oneself in guilt over past wrongs that some of our ancestors have perpetrated (and which others have not) can never accomplish anything constructive. (As Edmund Burke said two centuries ago, “I would not know how to draw an indictment against an entire people.”) We can operate only from where we are right now. And right now there is a huge and burgeoning problem of massive immigration to America – people crossing seas and rivers, deserts and fences to this land by whatever means possible, legal or illegal.

The immigrants, by and large, cannot be blamed individually for wanting to better themselves. There are exceptions, of course, which now include a bag of Islamic jihadists in this country, as well as Aztlan agitators and those influenced by them whose objective is to take over the American Southwest.

Numeracy

Lee G. Madland, Ph.D., is a freelance writer in Missoula, Montana. His doctorate in geography is from the University of California at Los Angeles and he has taught at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Overall, however, the problem is less with individuals than with the sheer *numbers* of immigrants and prospective immigrants. Hardin has often observed that journalists, influential opinion-makers who are by definition skilled with words and thus a highly literate lot, are seldom much accomplished in *numeracy*, the use and insightful interpretation of quantitative information. Oh, they can manipulate figures, but often are sorely lacking in the ability to see what is significant in them, and rarely do they let mere numbers get in the way of what they regard as their insights, which have been formed primarily by concepts based on words. They eagerly use numbers they believe will support their beliefs, but frequently are willfully blind to numbers that cast those beliefs in doubt; in such cases they find it easy to dismiss quantities as just "sterile numbers" that cannot inform their verbally based concepts. Journalists, of course, are hardly unique in this respect **n** most members of the teaching profession, at least outside the natural sciences, are more literate than numerate and so is most of the general public, so the power of merely literate journalists to influence public thinking is all the greater. What is needed is *both* literacy and numeracy, a combination hard to find in today's opinion leaders.

If the latter were not true, the old saw – "figures don't lie but liars figure" – wouldn't have the piquancy that it does.

The current problem of immigration is a particularly good example of the need to consider numbers as a key to the *quality* of decisions that must be made. Even if we should suppose that every single immigrant coming to America does so with the best of intentions, there is a limit to how many can be accommodated without disastrous consequences down the road. This land **n** any land **n** is finite. The contiguous United States comprises 5.3 percent of the world's land² and presently contains 4.5 percent of its population; thus it is reasonably close to the present world average in population density. Whether that density is now beyond the optimum is a matter that can be argued on both quantitative and qualitative grounds depending on how one defines the "good," though many believe we have already passed that point. The U.S. is without question materially better off than most of the rest of the world due to its technological culture and advanced economic system, but there is no doubt that there are practical limits which cannot be exceeded without penalties, some of which

can be draconian **n** and ultimately will be if checks are not put in place.

In any case, warning flags are waving. One of them warns that for over 30 years America has been taking in a far, far outsized proportion **n** an actual *majority* of the entire world's immigration – with no end in sight.

Hardin uses the analogy of a lifeboat to illustrate the basic problem involved in terms of population increase and

"Hardin uses the analogy of a lifeboat to illustrate the basic problem involved in terms of population increase and limits to a land's carrying capacity."

limits to a land's carrying capacity (whether that increase is due to an excess of births over deaths or immigration, or both). Say we are fifty survivors of a sunken ship in a lifeboat with just that rated capacity, and we see a hundred others swimming toward us in a desperate bid to be taken aboard. No matter how much we sympathize with their plight we obviously cannot take them all in. If in our compassion we attempt to take all aboard, the lifeboat will swamp and *everyone* will be drowned. ("Complete justice, complete catastrophe," Hardin comments.³) If we repel those attempting to board, though as moral people we do it with a heavy heart, fifty people may at least survive. Such are the stark realities of the situation. We might decide to take a chance by inferring a small safety factor in the rating and let a few more aboard, but this clearly cannot do anything for the bulk of the swimmers. The most we could rationally offer might be to tow those who will cling to a rope behind the boat, but unless we are near a shore they will not last long, especially if the water is cold.

This analogy is an excellent, if wrenching, example of how what may seem at first glance purely moral decisions can all too easily run up against the numbers.

It also illustrates that numbers can – in many cases must – be a key factor in making moral decisions.

Key Questions

A prime, almost too close case, is that of immigration. How many can we take in? How many *should* we take in? At what point does taking in more bring more harm than good – for us, of course, but also in the long run for those admitted and their descendants. And, here we are not dealing with cases of certain death if we decide not to admit them as immigrants in the first place. To refuse to admit more than a few judiciously selected entrants (which means many fewer than are entering the U.S. today) is certainly more humane than our present allegedly compassionate, but in fact irresponsibly freewheeling policies toward admitting legal immigrants and refusing to deport illegals in more than token numbers.

There are always limits – to populations that can be reasonably accommodated as well as to any other physical factor, whether on earth or on other planets (once these are reached and rendered both habitable and self-sufficient). Settling other worlds could be stimulating and, significantly, would provide survival insurance for the human species against some total disaster on Earth. But it is grandiose delusion to think that space colonization can solve Earth's population problems: even if it should become logistically possible to send multitudes into extraterrestrial space, that would only make room, and an excuse, for more people to be produced on Earth. Earth's excess of population generation will have to be solved on Earth, and nowhere else. And for similar reasons, the acute overpopulation problems now facing many Third World countries must be solved in those countries, and nowhere else.

It's true that modern science and technological innovation, such as large irrigation projects and development of new higher-yielding crop strains, have extended the capacity of favorably situated land on Earth to support considerably more people than has been true in past centuries. But costs (financial and environmental) are likewise considerable and sometimes prohibitive, and by no means all lands can be so utilized – the vast and nearly empty Sahara, for example, is as barren as ever. Still, given the natural prerequisites such as suitable climate and terrain no doubt further progress in these respects can be made, but it is always worth asking the question: *If* we should make the earth's land (and seas) capable of supporting the maximum number of people possible, what kind of life would those people be living, crowded cheek by jowl as they would be in all but the

more sterile lands? Would their lives consist of more than a desperate treadmill of subsistence? Would more than a tiny elite have any time or resources to pursue anything but daily drudgery, merely to survive in grinding poverty? (And often, not survive at all.)

To these arguments, devotees of growth-oriented schools of thought have objected that some of the most crowded places on earth, namely cities like Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Singapore, not to mention other great cities especially in Europe and North America, are today highly prosperous and thriving. (Manhattan's population density in the 2000 Census was 67,000 residents per square mile). But such places have always been exceptional in the world, achieving such status today mainly through a high economic productivity which makes them able to afford to buy food and amenities from great hinterlands, and even overseas. The point here is that the land that supports them is actually many times greater in extent than the small areas occupied by those cities themselves. At the other end of the scale, many great cities in the Third World (Calcutta comes immediately to mind), also drawing their subsistence from far larger regions, are better described as concentrations of squalor.

Unending Growth?

Some well-known economists, famously the late Julian Simon, dismiss the idea of inherent limits to growth as "Malthusian," citing recent gains in mankind's capacity for producing food and other goods. However, few practicing economists are used to thinking in the long term; their projections and forecasts are typically limited to the next five years or perhaps a decade for the bolder among them (and even then are always subject to change due to unforeseen events). Beyond that they tend to assume that "things will work out." Not just economists but few people at all think in terms extending beyond a single human lifetime, or those of one's children or grandchildren at most.

A simple example will serve to show conclusively that present rates of growth in the human population of Earth cannot – absolutely *cannot* – be sustained long-term:

The world's net increase in population during the 1990-2000 decade averaged 1.5 percent per year according to United Nations statistics, with the globe's population having passed the six billion mark by the year

2000. As a thought experiment, I have calculated what the population would be after centuries of this kind of growth. A 1.5 percent annual increase does not sound like much; from one year to the next you might not notice any particular effects at all. But at this rate, population doubles every 46 years and 8 months.

The calculation is straightforward. Let's figure it for 800 years, during which time just over 17 doublings would take place. Seventeen doublings of our six billion base yields a population of 786 *trillion* people. But what does that enormous number mean? The bottom line is that the allotment of the Earth's total land area for each person would amount to a space almost exactly one foot long by two feet wide⁴ – in brutally literal terms, standing room only! And this result in just a little over eleven traditional human lifetimes.

Recently, certain well-known media pundits have ridiculed the notion that practical limits to population apply by pointing out triumphantly that, as an example, the earth's entire present population could fit into the state of Texas with room to spare. This, I find, works out to the equivalent of a square plot 35 feet on a side for each person, which on the surface might seem better than standing room only. What they do not address is how long these unfortunates would remain alive in such a situation. The answer is that nearly all would be dead within days if that amount of land had to provide water and food for each occupant. Those writers have taken up and used numbers, all right, but obviously with little idea of their implications.

It goes without saying that nothing remotely approaching either scenario can ever occur. The numbers show conclusively that to sustain indefinitely the present human population growth rate, or for that matter *any positive growth rate at all*, is utterly impossible. Moreover, at present population growth rates it would obviously take no more than a very small fraction of 800 years before any reasonable definition of the earth's

SELECTED EXAMPLES: FERTILITY & POPULATION GROWTH RATES

	Mid-2000 population (millions)	Fertility: Number of lifetime children per woman (1995 - 2000)	Annual percent pop. increase (1995 - 1999)
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa:</i>			
Nigeria	123	5.2	3.2 %
Ethiopia	64	6.3	3.0
Congo (fmr. Zaire)	52	6.4	2.6
Tanzania	35	5.5	3.7
Sudan	35	4.6	2.3*
Uganda	23	7.1	2.9
Ivory Coast	16	5.1	3.4*
Angola	10	6.8	3.2
Somalia	7.3	7.3	4.1
Rwanda	7.2	6.2	2.7*
<i>Arab Near East:</i>			
Egypt	68	3.7	2.0*
Iraq	23	5.3	2.8
Saudi Arabia	23	5.8	2.2
Yemen	17	7.6	4.0*
Syria	16	4.0	3.2
Jordan	5.0	4.9	3.1
West Bank	2.0	5.3*	3.5*
Gaza Strip	1.1	7.7*	4.6*
<i>Other areas:</i>			
<u>The World</u>	<u>6,080</u>	<u>3.1*</u>	<u>1.5*</u>
China	1,262	1.8	0.9
India	1,014	3.1	1.7
United States	282	2.1	0.9
Russia	145	1.3	-0.4
Mexico	100	2.8	1.8
Guatemala	13	4.8	2.5*
Haiti	6.9	4.4	2.1

Notes: Population estimates from *The World Almanac* 2001 (except U.S. 2000 Census result for April 1 being here projected to July). Population growth and fertility use 1995-99/2000 averages, or if not available for latest year shown during given period, from *Demographic Yearbook 1999* (United Nations, 2001). Asterisks denote data from *The World Factbook 1996-97* (Central Intelligence Agency) for 1995, the year generally most typical for the decade (used here chiefly in lieu of U.N. omissions, often due to gaps in its 1995-2000 data). Population growth rates for countries reflect not only net natural increase but any migration in either direction across their borders.

carrying capacity (for human beings and other creatures) would be exceeded. Therefore, at some point not very far off humanity will be compelled to stabilize its population at zero growth, or even negative growth for a time. (In modern First-World economies, a lifetime average of 2.1 children per woman will result in zero population growth.)

The world average fertility rate for the mid-1990s has been 3.1 children per woman, resulting in the 1.5 percent net population growth rate already noted. The world averages are affected greatly by high rates in Third World countries. Even a cursory perusal of fertility rates and population growth rates shows that the highest such rates are found in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab countries of the Near East. Most of these countries show lifetime *averages* of some five, six and in a few cases over seven children per woman, and net population growth rates of three or even four percent or more

annually. (A three percent net growth rate will double the population every 23 years, four percent in less than 18 years.) Some examples of the more prolifically reproducing countries are shown in the table, along with a few others for comparison.

While the table on the previous page focuses especially on countries and regions with high fertility and growth rates, those shown are by no means isolated examples. In Africa (ignoring a few tiny island states),

“The population of Mexico, the largest source of immigration to the United States, is growing at double the U.S. rate despite the drain of “exporting,” so to speak, many hundreds of thousands of its people each year to north of the border.”

no less than seventeen of 43 countries south of the Sahara show fertility rates greater than six children per woman in the UN data, and seventeen more show rates between five and six. Seven fall between four and five children, and only two countries show fewer than four children per woman **n** even the latter being quite high for an *average*, and capable of producing rapid population growth.

The two regions spotlighted in the table, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab Near East, show the highest fertility and/or growth rates in the world today **n** no other great regions come close in these respects. Some countries within several of those regions do, however, such as in parts of South and Southeast Asia, in the Melanesian region of the Southwest Pacific, and in certain areas of the New World, especially Central America, Haiti, and parts of South America such as the Andean plateaus.

The lowest population growth rates are found in Europe (and Japan) and, generally, in overseas regions settled largely by people of European origins. The UN

listings show Europe (with Russia) as a whole with precisely 0.0 population growth for the 1995-2000 period, and most countries in Eastern Europe show absolute declines. Western Europe still shows tiny “holdover” increases, reinforced in many cases by immigration. But *every* country in Europe except Muslim Albania is now reproducing at below replacement levels, most well below **n** and the trend is still downward. Over half of 35 European countries (excluding microstates) now show less than 1.4 children per woman. If this means Europeans are being more “responsible,” it also means they are becoming a smaller proportion of the world’s population year by year, which if continued will have profound effects in world affairs.

Among countries of the industrialized Western world, the highest rates of population growth are found in the United States, Canada, and Australia. A perusal of currently available data shows that in all three countries, new immigrants are today entering in numbers either comparable to or exceeding the natural increase (births over deaths) **n** and an appreciable portion of that natural increase itself is being produced by Third World immigrants of the last three decades and their descendants.

The population of Mexico, the largest source of immigration to the United States, is growing at double the U.S. rate despite the drain of “exporting,” so to speak, many hundreds of thousands of its people each year to north of the border. As of the late 1990s Mexico’s rate of doubling its own population is 39 years, compared with 78 years for the U.S. And remember, a considerable part of the U.S. population growth itself is a direct result of immigration, legal and illegal, from Mexico and other countries. Thus the immigration-induced population increase in the United States, year after year, decade by decade, feeds on and compounds upon itself.

China has managed to cut its population growth rate to about the same as the present U.S. level at just under one percent annually, but its enormous total population of 1,300 million (1.3 billion) means China will continue to be a major contributor to the world population increase for some time to come **n** India even more so with its 1,000 million people and a 1.7 percent annual population growth rate, which seems low only in comparison with African and Arab rates of increase (immigration to both China and India is essentially zero). India alone now accounts for one-fifth of total world population growth. The

Subcontinent, which includes Pakistan and Bangladesh along with India, has pulled even with East Asia (China, Korea, Japan) and will soon surpass that region in absolute numbers of people. While no single countries today have populations in India's or China's league, as a continent Africa in 1997 overtook Europe, and now swelling from 800 million is positioned to close the gap with India and China — this in a part of the world that can ill afford further population pressure on the land.

If mankind cannot or will not check population growth on his own, nature will do it for him — and if the latter the results will not be pretty.

In the United States, the “mere” one-percent annual population growth for the 1990s, though well below the world average, is likewise unsustainable long-term. The average number of children for American women has fallen a bit below the 2.1 required to produce zero growth in population — so, why is there any population growth at all? First, part of the present U.S. population increase is accounted for by the numbers of post-World-War-II baby boomers' children who are still having their own offspring; but this temporary “holdover” gain has nearly run its course as that group moves beyond childbearing age.

The other part of America's population increase is the direct result of the surge in immigration legal and illegal, as already noted. This has become an apparently unstoppable trend which began to “take off” just a few years after passage of the 1965 immigration-reform law and which accelerated as immigrants attained citizenship and could bring in increasing numbers of relatives in a burgeoning chain migration under the “family reunification” provisions of that law. The trend was concurrently boosted even more by the rise of Politically Correct notions of multiculturalism and the glorification of diversity that have made it politically almost impossible to effectively oppose not only legal immigration but the very large illegal flow as well.

As a result of the 1965 law, the overwhelming bulk of immigrants coming to the United States, roughly 90 percent, now come from Third World countries — vastly different from immigration flows during the 19th century and first two-thirds of the 20th when about 90 percent came from Europe. The changes instituted by the 1965 immigration act have crowded out most Europeans seeking to immigrate legally, as the long waits — often in decades — are prohibitive for most.

In barely over three decades since 1970 all this has reduced the proportion of Americans of European origin from about 88 percent of the population to around 70 percent today. In terms of on-the-ground demographics, this is a lightning rate of change — and that trend is not only continuing but also increasing with every passing year. While long-term projections can be hazardous, it is clear that if present trends do not change dramatically, people of chiefly European origins in the U.S. will slip below 50 percent in a few more decades. Those who would deny this are invited to show evidence that changes great enough to dramatically slow or stop that trend will occur in the meantime.

Although no better than widely varying estimates of illegal immigrants are for obvious reasons unobtainable,⁵ the proportion of the current U.S. population *increase* attributable to post-1965 legal and illegal immigrants and their descendants now accounts for a considerable majority (a recent estimate puts it at 70 percent of the increase, *not* counting illegals), and in the absence of major changes in immigration law and enforcement, in another decade or two this looks to be all or nearly all of future increases.⁶

The present immigration flow to America is thus changing the basic cultural composition of its population as well as its overall numbers. This is a new phenomenon, attributable entirely to the present wave of immigration that got under way in earnest about 1970. The trend was helped along in many ways by changing cultural attitudes among native-born Americans, which became apparent in the 1960s. During the 1970s, as the U.S. immigration flow increased in both numbers and cultural diversity, “diversity” itself came to be seen by many intellectuals as an ideal to be encouraged — both by liberals on the left and many otherwise conservative economic growth advocates on the right (for different reasons). The net result was that both the numbers and the character of the immigration-induced population changes were applauded by media and politicians alike, and even the most thoughtful criticism of the burgeoning trend became Politically Incorrect in a society becoming more and more permissive in many diverse ways.

As the immigrant flow became a flood in the 1980s and 1990s, those who raised warnings were dismissed and vilified as ethnocentric bigots and, increasingly, racist-fascist⁷ or some other scurrilous epithet. Even though problems with immigration were becoming ever more

apparent, much of the intelligentsia and those in the media became even more assertive in favor of immigration. There has been notably less enthusiasm for immigration among the general public, who are much less insulated from problems involving jobs, crime, welfare, ethnic exclusivity, and the like. But even many citizens genuinely concerned about this have tended to mute their feelings and hold back from expressing their doubts on these matters in public **n** no one likes to be called a bigot **n** and, as always, a large number were and are apathetic and disinclined to challenge what is presented as the dominant trend.

This situation still holds, although many eyes have been opened since the event of September 11, 2001, with a sizeable cultural quarter of the world nurturing a now-obvious animus against Western civilization in general and America in particular. But in the aftermath of that horrific event and America's shocked response to it there is also danger that in the meantime a less spectacular but continuing trend, which is an even greater threat to the security and the very future existence of the United States, will get less attention: the out-of-control immigration into the U.S., whose effects if not stopped in time could be terminal for the American nation and culture. If present levels of immigration to America continue for two or three more decades, the time frame for a likely dissolution of the United States would in all probability be not in the next century but in this one. Will a tricentennial in 2076 be celebrated at all, except perhaps in a rump U.S. centered somewhere in the heartland of the Midwest or South?

'Diversity' Ideal?

It is strange how those pushing diversity as a desired ideal in U.S. domestic population matters have been successful enough to make the word fashionable and chic. All over the world diverse, multicultural, multilingual countries are having enormous trouble achieving any real unity. Many have broken up in internecine conflict, with bloodshed and not infrequently huge loss of life, and others have been held together only through fear and oppression.⁸ Where are the reassuring examples of authentic multiculturalism within nations today? There are none.

Even in basic meaning, the terms unity and diversity are diametrically opposite. Cultural diversity in measured small amounts can add a certain tang to the mix without threatening a nation's unity, but unlimited diversity can

easily lead to unlimited chaos. Once again we see the powerful effect of numbers in human affairs, whether looking at the aggregate or at specific segments of the population.

In the natural world, scientists and nonscientists alike know that small doses and large doses of almost anything are *qualitatively* different. Medicines must be carefully monitored as to dosage. Needed vitamins all have toxic dose levels. Gorge yourself on any kind of food or drink and you will soon regret it. There is a toxic dose even of the substances most basic for life. Although one cannot live for more than a matter of days without water, there have been cases of people dying from compulsive drinking of even that substance. One cannot survive for more than

"If present levels of immigration to America continue for two or three more decades, the time frame for a likely dissolution of the United States would in all probability be not in the next century but in this one."

some minutes without oxygen replenishment, but if you breathe pure oxygen for too long you will not survive either.⁹

The human body properly grows greatly in size from infancy to adulthood, but at some point it must stop growing or early death will be the certain result **n** and within quite narrow limits. A few persons with gland disorders have grown to over eight or nine feet in height, but these unfortunates do not have long life spans. Gigantism is not a desirable state of affairs in the human species or in any species. And uncontrolled growth in particular parts of the human body **n** known as cancer **n** is universally feared.

There is no reason to think such limits do not apply to human population growth in general or to immigration in particular, and every reason to think they do. Yet many today follow intellectual leaders who tell them that no

such limits apply to either.

The school of opinion which assures us that economic expansion has no limits in the foreseeable future suggests to the naively trusting that such expansion can sustain many times the populations of today. Even if this might still be true in a few selected regions, apparently forgotten are the billions who already live hard-pressed against what the land can provide in Africa, many parts of Asia, and not excluding considerable regions in the Western Hemisphere. It must also be asked at what *level* can people be provided for, from finite resources. In the industrialized West we may not yet have reached the potential limits of our present high level of living, although even here the costs of such expansion are becoming increasingly apparent in less open space available, the greater efforts needed in extracting resources from the earth with attendant increasing costs, and greater tensions between people in competing for rights to use them in more and more crowded surroundings.

Going hand in hand with the “no-limits” philosophy is the school, particularly ascendant in the United States, that continued or even increased immigration is an unmitigated good, its problems transitory; that cultural problems will dissolve if we only practice mutual goodwill; and that our culture will be immeasurably enriched by a multiplicity of very different cultures speaking many different languages (which must be preserved) and with very different traditional values, which not only must be nurtured but to which our own traditional values must be subordinated. The result, this school implies, will be one big diverse national family. Note the mutual incompatibility of the last two adjectives. And note the horribly catastrophic breakup of the diverse “national family” of former Yugoslavia, not to mention equally bitter ethnic-cultural tensions that have periodically erupted into open conflict in a hundred other multicultural countries around the globe.

In another manifestation of the multicultural school of thought, open-borders advocates want to abolish illegal immigration *by letting any and all come in as they will*. This, of course, would instantly increase both the numbers of immigrants as well as making this country even more a diversity dumping ground (which now, as we have seen unmistakably, includes terrorists who wish nothing but ill for the United States).

Even now it is becoming clear that America’s

indulgence in cultural diversity is dividing the population against itself. The natives are bewildered and become defensive as a result of invited and uninvited cultural clashes. The new immigrant groups draw together in clumps (which in cities are called ghettos, and which on a regional scale can become incipient nations). And, observing the present drive for diversity and lack of pressures on immigrants to become American, many immigrant groups respond (surprise!) by staying foreign in a situation very different from previous immigration waves in this country, when the dominant drive was to become American as quickly as possible. Today, the larger and more concentrated the group the more likely are its members to remain foreigners, drawing in effect their own “national” boundaries.

Ethnic Strife

Not only that, some of the various immigrant groups are squaring off against other groups of immigrants. A few years ago when I was living in Bishop, California, I had occasion to talk with a house painter from the Lake Tahoe area who was passing through on his way home from Los Angeles. He had gone there seeking work in his trade since business had been slow at home. Spending the better part of a year on various jobs in Los Angeles as a low-level supervisor wielding a brush himself, he found himself dealing chiefly with Mexican and Guatemalan immigrant workers, mostly illegals. During our conversation he pointed out that the two kept as separate as possible, and when they were thrown together on the same job the simmering tension was obvious. As an Anglo, he was able to observe both “Hispanic” groups as a third party. (Guatemalans have been in the U.S. for less time than Mexicans, are generally poorer and will work for lesser wages than Mexicans and thus undercutting their wage level, just as Mexicans have undercut wages of Anglos in their trade and caused many to move out of it. And it is no coincidence that Guatemalans in Mexico are reviled there.)

"The Mexicans hate the Guatemalans and the Guatemalans hate the Mexicans," he told me in frustration, with the clear implication that the mutual feeling between the two is visceral and goes far beyond just wage problems. There it is in a nutshell. The accumulated stress he felt after working for many

"Immigration of the kind and on the scale America has had for the last three decades is in effect a recipe for cultural suicide and the squandering of a rich national heritage..."

months in this environment led him to give up on Los Angeles, where there was plenty of work albeit at lower wages, and pick up and go back to Lake Tahoe where work was still scarce but without such tensions on the job when he did find one.

This is but one small sample of the sort of cultural tension that immigration enthusiasts are inviting while they roll open the welcome mat to any and all who want to move into the country. Immigration is naively looked upon by those promoting it, some favoring wholly uncontrolled entry, as a desirable tool to foster ever more diversity.

Immigration of the kind and on the scale America has had for the last three decades is in effect a recipe for cultural suicide and the squandering of a rich national heritage, in a nation that just one generation ago was essentially unified as a culture. What can we anticipate in one more generation?

Much has been made of strains between blacks and whites in the United States. Although these undeniably have had large and serious effects, in reality American whites and blacks have more in common culturally with each other than they do with most of the recent immigrant groups (or for that matter, more than the latter have with one another). One basic point of convergence is that blacks and whites both speak the same tongue **n** *language* being the most conspicuous single mark of cultural identity **n** while immigrant groups speaking a hundred different languages are now being encouraged

to retain those in the name of diversity, which promotes their continued separation both from one another and from the American mainstream. By contrast, American blacks are more like American whites than probably either group realizes at present. Having lived on this continent nearly as long as whites, even allowing for their historically different circumstances blacks over the centuries have become in key respects as American as anyone in attitudes and values. As time goes on this may well become increasingly apparent to both groups as they find themselves among rising numbers of immigrants, most of whose home cultures are very different indeed and whom are being encouraged officially and unofficially to resist assimilation.

A Strange Silence

Moreover, immigration is obviously an increasingly large part of both existing and future dangers of overpopulation in the United States. Yet some of those who should be the most concerned about this have been strangely silent on immigration, even to the point of ignoring the fact that this influx is now the largest contributor to the country's ongoing population increase.

The Sierra Club, for example. That organization long has had a reputation of championing environmental preservation, including population stabilization as a means of making this preservation possible. But in 1996 its Board of Directors decided that the Club would "take no position on immigration levels, or on policies governing immigration into the United States." Its president, Carl Pope, stated that since the excess of population is worldwide, "restricting immigration into the United States will not solve the environmental problems caused by global overpopulation." Thus the Club neatly washed its hands of any moral imperative to further its basic aims, by opposing change in what has become the driving force in the expansion of the U.S. population.

This separation of global and American population problems is a curious dichotomy. What can the Sierra Club do to limit world population growth? Virtually nothing. But its influence on such issues in the United States is considerable. And even if it could somehow exert a restraining effect on world population, this position would leave the United States as the main dumping ground for the world's present excess of population, with no end in sight. Most people had thought the Sierra Club staunchly opposed dumping of any kind. The copout **n** no other word better describes it **n** was quite obviously a

capitulation to pressure from Politically Correct ideologues who have been labeling any effort to limit immigration as bigotry toward “people of color” who now constitute the bulk of immigrants to the United States.

The Sierra Club is hardly the only environmental organization complicit in the copout. Others that one would expect to oppose large-scale immigration as a necessary part of any population control efforts **n** but do not **n** include Zero Population Growth (belying its very name), the Audubon Society, the League of Conservation Voters, and the Green Party of California, all of which have likewise caved in to race-baiting of the Politically Correct variety.¹⁰

On the right, there is the editorial board of *The Wall Street Journal*, which pushes for open borders and diversity while at the same time being pro-assimilation and opposing multiculturalism **n** as if admitting massive numbers of immigrants with profoundly different cultural backgrounds and values does not undermine assimilation and promote the very multiculturalism it so properly opposes.

What should be obvious by now is that immigration of the kind produced by the 1965 law is precisely what fuels multiculturalism. When ethnic diversity dominates in a population within the same borders, multicultural dissonance **n** with groups working at cross-purposes that can easily degenerate into open conflict **n** becomes rife. That same newspaper has reported many times on such frictions and conflict elsewhere in the world, but turns a blind eye to the sources of similar danger in the United States.

In its pro-immigration stand *The Wall Street Journal* is scarcely a lone voice on the right, either. This view is shared by libertarians, by a number of influential conservative economists who liberally advocate raw growth, and by employers who want cheap and subservient labor. All these additionally wish to share in the praise for their tolerance and magnanimity along with political liberals, for whom that yearning is a chief motive. Thus we have an impromptu alliance on these matters between the left and many weighty voices on the right, a coalition that has so far proven unshakable.

Then there are members of both houses of Congress belonging to both major parties, forming a majority for now at least, who either believe in the Politically Correct dogma, or wish to curry favor with its

advocates, or have been cowed by their shrill voices. And sadly, President Bush himself seems to share that dogma, as shown by his advocacy of more open borders and a second amnesty for illegal immigrants. One hopes the attacks of September 11th may have produced second thoughts on this, but there is little hard evidence of it as yet.

People don't like to have to face unpleasant topics, such as the likely and even certain consequences of continued massive immigration and unchecked population growth, and therein lies the danger: that in not squarely facing them now, little will be done about these intertwined problems before it's too late to avoid those consequences.

Native-born Americans have in recent decades reduced their birth rate to slightly below replacement levels, which if continued will, not long hence, result in zero population growth for the group. This trend, applying to the aggregate of whites and blacks, could be an encouraging fact if viewed in isolation. But in truth it cannot realistically be so viewed. For the side of the equation that simply can't be ignored is the great and still growing immigration flow, which for three decades running has overwhelmingly consisted of both visibly and linguistically different Third-World peoples coming from cultures vastly unlike that of the present American majority. Many of the current groups of immigrants and their descendants show considerably higher fertility rates than the present American white-black majority. The influx has already reduced black Americans from their historic status of largest American minority to second largest, the largest official minority now comprising those with Hispanic surnames. In a few more decades Americans of European origin will likely become a minority, and in not much more time no longer even the largest group, Hispanics becoming first a plurality and then a majority, with blacks reduced to third place. (Again, those who doubt this are invited to show evidence that without major immigration reform this is unlikely to happen). Whatever the resulting societal changes, these would clearly be enormous, and more likely disastrously chaotic than evolutionary.

If no effective brakes are applied to immigration, legal and illegal, **n** and soon **n** present demographic trends will continue for the foreseeable future, with results that will be by their very nature irreversible. Any beneficial effects of lower birth rates and population

growth among whites and blacks in terms of reducing population pressures will go for naught, as the numbers of post-1970 immigrants and their descendants continue to balloon the overall population to the point that the United States will become as crowded as China and India are now or more so. U.S. Census projections

“Promiscuous compassion, so much advocated in influential circles today, will ultimately destroy both the giver and the receiver.”

indicate this might happen by century's end.

Demographic Suicide?

This brings up the question: Is a nation, or a people morally obligated to commit demographic suicide by being responsible in limiting its reproduction, all the while applying the *coup de grace* by allowing immigrants to enter the country in numbers that overwhelm this restraint?

What is the solution? Simply to get serious on real immigration reform, along with regaining control of U.S. borders. The illegal flow could be stopped or at least reduced to a trickle in short order if the political will to get tough on it were mustered and as soon or later it must be including the finding and deporting of illegals already here. (All this was done in the mid-1950s when a major illegal influx from Mexico that had become chronic was stopped cold during the Eisenhower administration). The likewise out-of-control flow of legal immigrants could be checked with an oft-suggested but as yet not seriously considered moratorium on immigration for several years, which would give the country a breathing space during which new priorities can be sorted out as to how many and whom can be prudently admitted to the national family.

After such a pause immigration need not, and probably should not, be cut off entirely. Garrett Hardin's suggestion that the proper goal should be *zero net* immigration makes much sense, with new immigrants being limited to the same numbers as emigrants who leave.¹¹ The latter, though smaller than the number of

migrants coming into the country, has always been appreciable. In recent years, estimates of those leaving have typically been running around 200,000 per year, somewhere around a quarter the numbers of immigrants admitted legally. Such measured levels of immigration could be large enough to add a stimulating bit of spice without becoming divisive. And replacement-level immigration combined with the current replacement-level fertility would bring to an end the ballooning of the U.S. population, provided the illegal flow is stopped.

The national family ... In its original and true sense, a *nation* is a large, cohesive group of people with a sense of shared identity and the largest group that shares it. Without exception it speaks a single language, a strong “glue,” an indispensable key to holding it together. A nation is indeed similar to a family in many ways, having a common understanding and loyalty on the most vital and basic matters although not every member need see eye to eye on everything. A family has a home with walls, as a nation-state has a territory with borders, inhabited by people who see themselves as part of it.

This is precisely what is threatened by the present huge flow of immigrants to America from many diverse and often mutually antagonistic cultures. Present levels of immigration cannot and cannot be maintained indefinitely, nor for that matter much longer, without disastrous, even terminal consequences for this nation. No responsible family would invite just anyone from the street into its home as a guest, let alone as a permanent family member, no matter how much compassion its members might feel for such a person (or many of them!). Promiscuous compassion, so much advocated in influential circles today, will ultimately destroy both the giver and the receiver.

Families instinctively realize this. But the American nation which still *is* one nation with basically one language, though this too is now being undermined does not yet seem to realize it, at least not its present intellectual and political elites nor even its economic elite. A clear majority of Americans is ahead of the elites on this matter. That realization will inevitably come, even to the anointed. But will it come in time or too late to prevent national disintegration along ethnic-cultural lines?

We have seen internal cultural strife erupt again and again throughout history in multicultural countries in all parts of the world. What will it take to bring this reality home short of a nationwide unraveling and falling apart

at seams incapable of being stitched back together? There may yet be time to avert this. But not a lot of it. •

NOTES

1. See Craig Straub, "Living in a World of Limits: An interview with noted biologist Garrett Hardin," *The Social Contract*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, Fall 1997, p. 27.
2. The U.S. share of the earth's land is a full point higher at 6.3 percent with Alaska included, but that large and fascinating region can never support population densities comparable to those of the rest of the country. And, speaking as one who has lived there, Alaskans like it that way.
3. Garrett Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat," originally in *BioScience*, vol. 24 (Oct. 1974), p. 561-68. This famous essay has been reprinted in numerous sources, including recently in *The Social Contract*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Fall 2001, pp.36-47, along with five other Hardin selections.
4. Taking 2^{17} x 6 billion, then dividing by earth's land area in square miles (57.9 million), and reducing the resulting density to square feet.
5. The most recent estimate of which I am aware, reported by *The Washington Post* in 2001, put the number of illegals in the U.S. at 9 to 11 million "or higher." Other estimates have ranged as high as 13 million. None of these count the 2.7 million former illegals rendered legal by the "amnesty" whose peak years were 1989-93. A second amnesty now under consideration would almost certainly dwarf the first one.
6. Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation* (Random House, 1995). See particularly Chart 8 ("The Wedge": U.S. Population with and without Immigration, 1970-2050"), p. 47.
7. Careless usage aside, *racism* and *fascism* are not equivalent terms. Germany's Nazi government was racist. Italy's Fascist government was not.
8. These kinds of problems have been discussed by the present writer with numerous examples in a world survey, "Immigration, Ethnic Strife, Nations and America." *The Social Contract*, Vol. X, No. 3, Spring 2000, pp. 161-77. Switzerland, often thoughtlessly cited as a multicultural model, is in fact a loose confederation comprising in effect four nations, which has deliberately and successfully avoided multiculturalism.
9. All this has been realized for a long time. Paracelsus, a 16th-century German-Swiss pharmacologist, wrote, "All things are poison and nothing is without poison. It is the dose that makes a thing poison." (Quoted by Will Hively in *Discover*, Dec. 2002, p. 74).
10. For more on this, see Diana Hull, "Cry, the Overcrowded Country," *The Social Contract*, Vol. IX, No. 4, Summer 1999,

pp. 219-223; and Stuart Hurlbert, "The Globalist Copout," *Ibid*, Spring 2000, pp. 191-192.

11. Hardin, "Zero Net Immigration as the Goal." *Population and Environment*, vol. 14 (1992), pp. 197-200 (Human Sciences Press, Inc.). Reprinted with minor additions under the title "Free Immigration, the Enemy of Free Enterprise," in *The Immigration Dilemma: Avoiding the Tragedy of the Commons* (Federation for American Immigration Reform, 1995), pp. 121-124. The latter also contains seminal Hardin pieces such as "The Tragedy of the Commons," "Living on a Lifeboat," "Carrying Capacity as an Ethical Concept," etc.