

# Dream Worlds Are Killing the American Dream

By JOHN VINSON

In my view, immigrants today aren't any different from immigrants who have come to America throughout our nation's history. They bring new ideas.... And they are eager to achieve the American Dream.... It's to our benefit to keep our doors open, and to keep enriching our economy and culture. I'd like to see America continue to do so.

—Former Rep. Dick Arme (From letter to a constituent, September 22, 1995)

Mass immigration promoters constantly identify their scheme with the “American Dream.” That dream generally refers to the hope of the dreamer to exercise freedom to achieve a decent standard of living. But if it is a dream that limitless numbers of foreigners have the right to attain, then in what sense is it an American Dream?

Some of the zanier immigration enthusiasts probably would reply that the American nation is just a proposition of ideas or dreams, so that anyone anywhere who embraces them is already an American—even before he may choose to come here. But given that nearly all human beings want freedom of action and a comfortable lifestyle, in just what sense are they American? Or, to put the question another way, if everyone is basically an American already, then what distinctive meaning does “American” really have?

Obviously it has no meaning at all, which points to the absurdity of the “proposition nation” claim. A nation by its essential meaning, derived from its Latin root *natio* (to be born), is not a dreamy abstraction floating in the clouds. It is a flesh and blood reality derived from ethnicity, a common history, and a shared culture. Immigration enthusiasts have an excessive fondness for dreams because they live in dream worlds. While pursuing dreams can be a noble endeavor, it is only so when

the dreams are connected to the world of reality. When dreams leave reality and create dream worlds, grave danger lies ahead.

Some of the saner less zany immigrationists will concede that America does have a real and distinctive character. They maintain that immigrants, by assimilating to America, can become members of the nation, and thereby partake of the American Dream. That view is reasonable enough, but then they commonly soar off to dream world by claiming that assimilation can take place no matter how great the numbers or the diversity.

Dick Arme suggests that immigration today is not any different from immigration in the past, but that isn't true for a number of reasons. One is the numbers of immigrants. Today we have the highest sustained rate of immigration in our history. Another is unprecedented diversity.

America, by any honest reckoning, is an extension of Western Civilization. In the past most immigrants came from western countries. Many were different in many ways from the native-born, yet the heritage they still had in common did much to promote assimilation. Today we lack that commonality, with most immigrants in recent decades having come from Latin America, followed by Asia.

With Mexico being the country sending the most immigrants, legal and illegal, in recent years, we have the unique and unsettling situation, a country on our border populating adjacent states with people bearing historic grudges against the United States. A Zogby poll in 2002, for example, found that 58 percent of Mexicans believed that our southwestern states properly belong to Mexico. Such sentiments don't bode well for assimilation.

In contrast, in years past, immigrants generally had no particular animus toward our country, and certainly no territorial ambitions. No Italian immigrant, for example, ever imagined that New Jersey was land belonging to Italy. Further assisting assimilation was the vast Atlantic Ocean between the home countries of immigrants and their new home. Alas, the Rio Grande offers no such isolation.

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Just as significant as the greater difficulty of assimilation, is the decline in our national will to assimilate. In the past, immigrants faced great pressure, formal and informal, to change their ways to our ways. But today, thanks to the cults of multiculturalism and diversity, our elites in politics, media, and education often are inclined to discourage assimilation. The immigrants will have their dreams to be sure, but those won't necessarily become American Dreams.

Purely in economic terms, the mass immigration-ists are living in a dream world. Yes, as Armey said, they are bringing new ideas, but those ideas aren't conducive to prosperity. Americans tend to agree that the fundamentals of our capitalist free-enterprise system have been the key to our national prosperity and the pathway for individuals to achieve the American Dream. People of Latin American background, 56 percent of them immigrants or children of immigrants, are highly suspicious of capitalism.

According to the Pew Research Center, only 32 percent of them have a favorable view of capitalism, with 55 percent having a negative view. For the general population, the percentages are 50 percent favorable and 40 percent negative. Pew also found that people of Latin American/Hispanic background are much more likely to favor government to solve problems, rather than the private sector.

Yes again, immigrants are bringing new ideas — the very ideas that caused stagnation in the homelands that the immigrants left. And as they participate in American politics, the consequences of those ideas will negatively impact the American Dream for themselves and native-born Americans as well.

Another economic detriment to the American Dream is the impact of so many legal and illegal immigrants now entering our workforce each year. By the economic law of supply and demand, increasing the number of workers proportionately decreases their wage levels. And not by coincidence, it seems, wage levels in the U.S. in constant dollars have stagnated since the current wave of mass immigration took off in the early 1970s.

Wage suppression by immigration is nothing new. Today we tend to look at the era of Ellis Island immigration through rose-colored lenses, and envision the immigrants of that day as beneficiaries of the American Dream. But quite often during that era the American reality was what Upton Sinclair depicted in his novel *The Jungle*, economic misery as wave after wave of immigrants lowered wages and working conditions for all workers, foreign-born and native alike.

This American nightmare only began to change when Congress wisely reduced immigration in the

1920s and America's rising industrial economy created an abundance of decently paying jobs — jobs sufficient to sustain the American Dream.

Today, sadly, we are moving in the opposite direction. As our corporations lobby to admit endless millions of foreigners to take American jobs, they export our industries and the jobs they provide to China and other countries. This form of capitalism truly deserves scorn. It is anti-American because it has no loyalty to America at all, but rather to the global ambitions of stateless profiteers who apparently want a Third World world where they can lord over the impoverished masses of the planet.

An electorate of Americans who understand American values could restrain these elites, and demand an ethical capitalism that restrains profiteering with loyalty to nation and community — the only type of capitalism that can sustain the American Dream.

Will the newcomers understand this distinction and other key facets of our values? Probably not. Certainly their children won't learn much about them in our multicultural schools. Most likely, they will reject ethical free enterprise at the polls in favor of big government, which is exactly what the elites want as their vehicle to rule and safeguard their economic piracy.

Meanwhile, to hide the impending harsh realities, the elites and their agents are inducing as many Americans as possible to keep dwelling in dream worlds about immigration. People like Dick Armey tell us, all evidence to the contrary, that mass immigration is “enriching” our economy. And battalions of bought-off scholars churn out study after study “proving” that immigration is the path to unending prosperity.

A clear wake-up call from these dream worlds comes from California. Only a few decades ago the Golden State was the showcase of the American Dream, where good jobs and opportunities were plentiful beyond imagination. California now is the state most heavily impacted by immigration, both in terms of percentage of the population and numbers.

Surely California today is a perfect empirical opportunity to test the truth of the enrichment by immigration theory. And by that standard the state proves that theory false. California hovers near bankruptcy as the American Dream there recedes into memory. More and more, the state resembles the homelands of its immigrants, a few wealthy at the top and lots of poor and near-poor at the bottom.

Many say that California leads the way in national trends. And truly that is a point to ponder. If more Americans don't awaken from their maudlin dreams about tired huddled masses, the American Dream will die. ■