

The End of Assimilation

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“America is an empire, not a nation,” enthusiastically declared Matthew Walther in *The Week* on May 29. He argues “we have no language of our own” and no “national literature,” but a “succession of regional literatures that have all been displaced first by Hollywood, then by the Internet.... Practically, the only worthwhile things that were and have remained more or less uniquely and indubitably American are jazz and college football,” he writes.

What defines empire? Above all, the refusal to acknowledge limits to growth. People have different definitions of “a nation,” but members of a nation must at least share some sense of belonging.

You are part of a nation. You just live in an empire. An empire doesn’t need a shared culture or sense of identity. A nation requires assimilation. Even if one isn’t biologically descended from the founding group, a member of a nation should identify with its history, culture, and language. In an empire, there’s nothing to assimilate to.

Unfortunately, Walther may be right. Recent figures show the basic elements of American nationhood are collapsing. Above all is the English language.

In 2016, the Pew Research Center declared that almost nine in ten Americans believe “to be truly American it is very or somewhat important that a person speak English.” Language was identified as the “most critical” attribute associated with national identity.

The Pew Research Center also recently announced “unauthorized immigrants are more proficient in English” than those of a decade ago. Yet the full figures are hardly something to celebrate. In 2016, just a third of “unauthorized immigrant adults” were proficient in English, defined as speaking only English at home or claiming to speak English very well. Among “lawful”

immigrants, more than 40 percent are not proficient in English.

The *Washington Examiner* reported in July 2018 that 44 million people in the U.S. are foreign-born, the highest level in history. That’s about 13.5 percent of the population. However, what’s worse is that 22 percent of the U.S. population aged five and over speaks a language other than English at home, according to a July 2018 analysis from the Migration Policy Institute. In Florida, almost a third of the population does not speak English at home, with Spanish and Haitian Creole taking the number one and two spots for languages other than English.

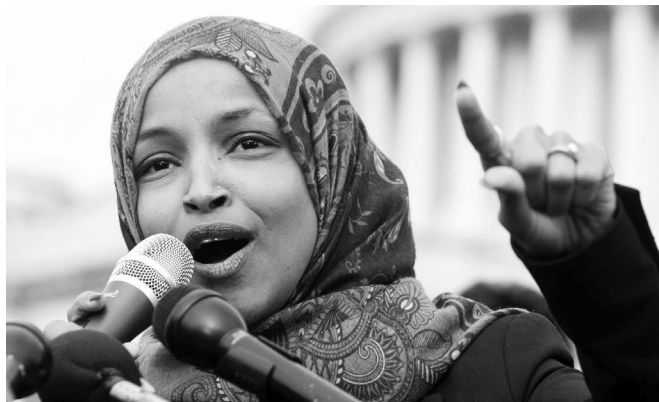
Historically, it’s not unknown for America to host large groups of people that do not speak the English language. However, these groups usually linguistically assimilated after an immigration pause. A “constant, unrelenting, stream” of immigrants, to use Joe Biden’s phrase from 2014, prevents such assimilation from taking place. It promotes the growth of entire communities that not only don’t speak English, but have no reason to identify with America. Unrelenting immigration facilitates the creation of foreign colonies within our country.

One of the most famous is the Somali diaspora within Minnesota, where about 200,000 Muslims live, according to *Voice of America* (VOA). “When you walk into the businesses and the neighborhoods where Somalis reside,” wrote VOA’s Mohmud Masadde in 2016, “you would assume you are in a Muslim country.” The local government in Minneapolis is already changing in accordance to the newcomers’ religion—Somali businesses are permitted to stay open after regular closing hours during Ramadan.

Some might find such cultural change enriching. Yet it also has darker implications. “According to data compiled last year by the *Washington Post*, more than half of all homicides statewide in Minnesota go unsolved,” reported Fox News in February 2019. “And that’s in part because Somali-Americans in Minneapolis aren’t talking enough to police, according to officers.” Fox News reports several street gangs also take up Somali names like the “Somali Mafia” and the “Somali Outlaws.” One outfit even reportedly calls itself the “Taliban.”

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In such an environment, policing is more akin to counter-insurgency in a foreign land—and America's recent overseas experiences show how difficult that can be. Within the Minneapolis police department, there are now designated “outreach officers” who speak Somali and can “reach out to immigrant communities.” Of course, sometimes the effort to recruit officers of Somali descent can backfire. In the 5th precinct, the first Somali-American officer hired was Mohamed Noor. He was recently sentenced to 12.5 years in prison for fatally shooting an unarmed white woman, Justine Diamond. A group of black men and women in Islamic garb protested in support of Noor at his sentencing, calling him a victim of identity politics.



U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN)

It's unclear whether such “outreach” even works. Forty-five people from the Somali-American community in Minneapolis have either attempted to join ISIS or the Somali Islamic insurgency al-Shabab, leading Fox News to call it the “terrorist recruitment capital of the U.S.” In the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, one U.S. official claimed “it's possible to go about day-to-day business without ever interacting with a non-Somali.” Besides international terrorism, the neighborhood is also troubled by ordinary crime. The *Star-Tribune* reports violent crimes rose from 54 in 2010 to 84 in 2017, driven by “a simmering rivalry between St. Paul and Minneapolis East African gangs.”

The most famous Somali-American today is U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN), one of the most prominent of the 2018 House freshman Democrats. Congresswoman Omar has already been fined by the Minnesota Campaign Finance Board for violating state campaign finance rules. She's also been accused of marrying her own brother while already being married to another person, in order to perpetuate immigration fraud. This charge remains unproven, but also largely uninvestigated. Syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin, in a

column chronicling widespread immigration fraud nationwide, says Congresswoman Omar must have her “immunity card” revoked.

Yet even if Congresswoman Omar obeyed all the immigration laws, she does not consider herself an American. Don't believe me—in a recent interview, she said she sees herself “as someone who has seen the United States from the perspective of a foreigner.” This could explain her seeming indifference to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

In a recent speech, she described the attacks as “some people did something.” These acts were seemingly incidental to her real grievances as a Muslim.

Her full quote, in context, was:

Far too long, we have lived with the discomfort of being a second-class citizen, and frankly, I'm tired of it, and every single Muslim in this country should be tired of it. CAIR [Council on American-Islamic Relations] was founded after 9/11 because they recognized that some people did something and that all of us were starting to lose access to our civil liberties.

Yet Ilhan Omar is not a “second-class citizen.” Though she is not a descendent of African-American slaves, she can identify as an African-American, and so is eligible for preferential treatment in government jobs and education. She doesn't seem grateful for this treatment, but resentful.

She seemingly refused to acknowledge Donald Trump as president in a recent speech in California, alleging that “the occupant in the White House, his goons in the Republican Party, [and] many of our colleagues in the Democratic Party...can't stand...that a refugee, a black woman, an immigrant, a Muslim shows up in Congress thinking she's equal to them.” Yet she's not “equal”—she's a preferred class. It's likely she knows this, which is why she feels so emboldened to taunt her fellow Americans on racial grounds. “This is not going to be the country of the xenophobes,” she declared. “This is not going to be the country of white people.”

Yet the real question is whether America is going to be a country at all. If America is to be a country, there need to be incentives in place for people to identify *as* Americans. These include making English the official language, establishing equal treatment under the law, and imposing an immigration moratorium to facilitate assimilation.

Absent these measures, we won't be a country, but an incoherent empire, with squabbling tribes feuding over strained resources and a declining standard of living. Minnesota is a view of the post-American future, unless Americans of good will act today. ■