

**Eldredge, D. C. (2002, March 11). Q: Should Washington stem the tide of both legal and illegal immigration? Yes: Immigration will double the population of the United States within the next sixty years. *Insight on the News*, vol. 18, pp. 40 – 43.**

The United States will double its population in the next 60 years unless we take prompt, aggressive action. The doubling will be caused almost entirely by immigration; more than 90 percent of our population growth since 1970 has come from recent immigrants and their children born here. Only Congress and the president can prevent this calamity, but so far neither has taken preventive action. Like Nero, they are fiddling while Rome burns.

To exacerbate matters, Congress legalized nearly 3 million illegal immigrants with amnesties in 1962, 1986 and 1997. Another is being considered for the 8 million to 11 million illegals we now host. This *must* be stopped.

### **Dramatic Population Growth**

In 1981, the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, then-president of Notre Dame University, chaired a congressional commission to study immigration policy. The commission told President Ronald Reagan that our population was 200 million, which it labeled "already ecologically unsustainable," and recommended an immediate freeze on immigration. The commission found the root cause of our dramatic population growth to be chain immigration, a concept created by the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Naturalization Act. The Hesburgh Commission studied chain immigration in detail, concluding that it allowed such aberrations as a family of five immigrants, if all became naturalized citizens, to grow in a relatively short period to 84 immigrants. Other studies found the multiplier to be somewhat less, but all agreed it was substantial. The study was reported more than 20 years ago, yet nothing has been done to halt population growth or reduce the dramatic effects of chain immigration. From the "ecologically unsustainable" 200 million in 1981, our population now is 281 million—and growing.

This growth has not occurred in a vacuum, but rather in the midst of the world's population exploding around us. It took from Adam and Eve to 1800 for the world to accumulate its first billion inhabitants. The pace of growth then accelerated and the world added 2 billion people in the next 160 years. Then the really frightening growth began: It took only 40 years for Earth to double its population from 3 billion in 1960 to 6 billion by the year 2000!

This accelerating rate of growth created tremendous external pressure on the United States from people in the Third World, where most of this growth occurred. They are desperate to better their lot by moving to more advanced countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia and those in Western Europe.

### **A Tremendous Price**

Excessive immigration, both legal and illegal, resulting from the amendments of 1965, has exacted a tremendous price from the American people, paid in the coin of overcrowded schools, congested highways, deteriorating ecology and lagging infrastructure. California, for instance, would require the completion of one new school each day to keep pace with the growth of the student populations. Of course, no state is able to finance and build schools that rapidly. This shortfall causes increasingly crowded classrooms and a deteriorating quality of education. Nor is the problem limited to California. Other high-immigration states such as New York, Florida and Texas face similar demands.

Inadequate highways are another manifestation of excessive immigration. Licensed drivers in the

United States have increased by 64 percent since 1970, and vehicle miles by 131 percent. Yet during that period the nation's road mileage has grown a scant 6 percent. Remember that deficit next time you are stuck in traffic.

Recently we have experienced power shortages resulting in brownouts and rolling blackouts caused by too many people using a sometimes inadequate power supply. Because in today's politically correct climate it would be considered career suicide, no political leader has admitted that excessive immigration is a major contributor to these problems.

On the ecological front, in spite of impressive progress in some areas, 40 percent of Americans live in cities where the Environmental Protection Agency deems air quality substandard. Thirty-five of our states are withdrawing ground-water faster than it's being replenished. Forty percent of our lakes and streams are unfit for fishing or swimming. Our shortage of convenient open space is a national tragedy.

Americans need tranquility more than ever, as overcrowding in our nation's population centers makes the mere absence of cell-phone babble a luxury.

### **Failure of Assimilation**

The numbers tell why the United States suffers from immigration indigestion. During the 1960s we were absorbing 300,000 immigrants annually. Resulting from the aforementioned amendments to our immigration laws, the inflow of immigrants by the 1990s had ballooned to an average of more than 1 million per year. The dramatic change in the rate and ethnic composition of immigration brought fundamental changes to our nation, with failure of assimilation being the most profound.

The United States has a proud tradition of assimilating immigrants into the mainstream of our variegated population. Today, however, balkanization has replaced assimilation. Increasingly in America we see ethnic enclaves of recent immigrants making no effort to assimilate. Mexicans are the slowest to assimilate, perhaps because of their homeland's proximity. Alejandro Carrillo Castro, a former Mexican consul general in Chicago, says Mexicans in the United States are especially slow to naturalize, the ultimate act of assimilation. On average they take 22 years; others take seven.

Disturbing examples of balkanization are found in California and Florida, to name just two trouble spots. The Hispanic former mayor of Miami, Florida, Maurice Ferre, once declared Spanish the official language of his city and predicted that soon people either would speak Spanish or leave. Fortunately, his abrasive 1981 forecast has yet to materialize. Many Miamians would say the issue still is in doubt. Southern California's Huntington Park and Garden Grove are cities staunchly balkanized by Hispanics and Asians, respectively. Some former Garden Grove residents expressed their frustration through a bumper sticker, widely displayed in the 1990s, that read: "Will the last American out of Garden Grove please bring the flag?"

The *Houston Chronicle* reported a jarring example of nonassimilation: "At a soccer game against Mexico in February [1988], the American national team listened in frustration as a chorus of boos erupted during 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' Thousands of fans threw cups and bottles at the U.S. players, often striking them. They also attacked someone in the stands who tried to unfurl an American flag. The match didn't take place in Mexico City but in Los Angeles." Failure of assimilation weakens America's social fabric and makes it difficult for immigrants to succeed here by participating fully in our economy. When immigration takes place at a reasonable rate, assimilation is more likely to occur. Adding to the problem of nonassimilation are more affordable airfares between the United States and immigrants' homelands, and such conveniences as reasonable long distance telephone rates. In 1965 it cost \$10.59 to call the Dominican Republic for three minutes and \$15 to call India: now those rates are \$1.71 and \$3.66 respectively.

### **Stemming the Tide**

Through concerned, engaged leadership, the United States can stem the tide of immigration

and prevent the statistically inevitable doubling of our already-too-large population in the next 60 years. First, a 10-year moratorium for all immigration would provide time for us to assimilate and acculturate the torrent of immigrants of the last three decades. Second, it would give our underclass a chance to improve their incomes and working conditions absent the flood of cheap, immigrant labor with which they now compete for entry-level jobs. And finally, it would give us time thoughtfully to plan future immigration policies. What characteristics will we seek in future immigrants? What level of education, what skills, what ages and how many will we admit? The moratorium would provide time to develop a consensus on future immigration, supplanting today's "policy-by-pressure-group" approach.

For national-security and other reasons, our borders must be bolstered against today's silent invasion by illegal immigrants, 40 percent of whom enter with temporary visas and simply stay, melding into our society as did 13 of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists. Other illegals sneak across our porous borders and shorelines. There currently is no downside to breaking U.S. immigration laws. If illegal aliens are apprehended they often are simply taken back across the border and released. Hispanics at the border say: "*Es un juego.*" Translation: It's a game.

We should put teeth into our laws by incarcerating apprehended illegals in military facilities made available in recent rounds of base closures: 90 days for the first offense, six months for the second and a year for the third.

It's also time to demagnetize the magnet drawing them here: jobs. By replacing the easily counterfeited Social Security card every working American now must have with one containing a biometric representation of the carrier's fingerprints, we could make it simple to determine who is legally in our country and who is eligible for welfare and unemployment. Sanctions on employers who hire illegals should be part of the new paradigm.

A free, quality education is another element of the magnet. The simultaneous states of illegal immigrant and legal student are an affront to common sense and the rule of law and should be discontinued.

"There is nothing so permanent as a temporary farm worker" is more than a clever turn of phrase; it is a truism. This should be recognized and such programs discontinued. They simply perpetuate economically unsound arrangements where U.S. farmers produce labor-intensive crops that cannot be grown and harvested profitably without cheap immigrant labor, the availability of which discourages development of automated methods. If we cannot grow such crops profitably, their production should be left to countries that can. That's how a free market, unfettered by a flow of unrealistically cheap labor, efficiently allocates its resources.