

HEY, MINUTEMEN, WAIT A SECOND!

Don't sacrifice liberty to xenophobia

These are the days of neverending self-righteous political hand-wringing and pandering about "illegal immigrants." Today in the paper a poll says that most Americans want to throw out these hordes of alien invaders—especially those south-of-the-border minions that "take our jobs and draw down the welfare reservoir."

What's going on here? Why did non-citizen Hispanic visitors, e.g. migrant workers, or even de facto residents all of a sudden become a problem? Is the government trying to distract us from something?

Hmmm.

Mexico has the long land border with the United States, a border by the way that was established following the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). The entire American Southwest was ceded by Mexico and Texas reconfirmed as American territory under the terms set by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: 525,000 square miles.

However, the non-Indian population of this largely inhospitable area at the time was only 1% of the entire population of all of Mexico. And most of that 1% was due to (European) American settlement and property development. Thus the Chicano movement that argues Mexico's "manifest destiny" is to take back territory "stolen" from it during the Mexican War rests on questionable historical perspective.[1]

It is important to note, however, that the terms of the treaty did not compel Spanish-speaking residents of the Mexican Cession to renounce their Mexican citizenship as a condition of staying on their (now US) lands.

The exploration of history is especially relevant to the immigration issue when a large percentage of the immigrating population believes, rightly or wrongly, they are returning home. Which does tend to modulate any naivete I many have regarding open border arguments.

Here's a thought experiment:

Let's just say for purposes of argument I am officially a citizen of New Hampshire—I maintain a residence there, I vote there, I intend my future to be there—yet for long periods of time I visit Michigan. Who needs to know that? What state official anywhere needs to stamp his/her approval on my physical presence on any freely inhabited spot of the globe? How is anyone served by keeping tabs on me so long as I behave myself and commit zero aggression?

A person with citizenship south of the Rio Grande River feels he can better himself by working for an employer north of the Rio Grande River and staying here while he or she does so. And he doesn't care to get buried in red tape to make that happen. It's a voluntary relationship, no aggression occurs.

The overwhelming majority of these persons—please note the emphasis: I have it on good authority many, if not all, unpapered inhabitants are actual living, breathing human beings—wouldn't know how to spell Guadalupe Hidalgo, much less care about its legal implications. And if it weren't for expensive, boneheaded, bonecrushing laws 80% of them would migrate back south to their homes when their jobs ended. This has always been the trend.

This Cato Institute study dispels many of the myths. On balance Mexicans and other Hispanics who come here undocumented are doing so because the legal means are onerous (typical government processes) or unavailable. If I should be allowed to visit one state for extended periods as a citizen of another, then why shouldn't they?

Granted, we're talking about countries and national security, not US states: So spend a few bucks to set up readily accessible visas in sufficient number to hand them basically to anyone who wants one—excluding genuine criminals (note drug use or production/trade is not a genuine crime).

Then the other issues, government benefits and language, become nobrainers.

Personally, I feel you need to become a full citizen to qualify for any government HEW benefits. (By the way, I don't see government benefits as an incentive for citizenship or for anything much else of value.) The

language issue is largely resolved by the marketplace; you can make any concessions to Spanish you want to in your private life but we conduct all public life in the 50 states in English.

Someone needs to kneecap those ATMs that initially prompt you to choose English or Spanish before you can go further. I just know that not treating English as the default language is a corporate capitulation to PC multiculturalist nonsense. The irony is when you connect the free flow of people with the marketplace, PC and coercive multiculturalism go out the window.

So what do we have to fear? Plenty.

The new bill the Senate is talking about expands government power at every level: More border patrol agents, more intractable government bureaucracies and monitors, more labor-enforcement goons, more police snooping on individuals and companies nationwide to assure compliance, more incentives for Real ID, random searches and seizures pursuant to requiring "your papers," more routine violations of civil liberties... and many more corpses from failed smuggling attempts.

It even would start to build a mammoth Mexican Border Wall at an ultimate cost of tens of billions of dollars. Which brings up another major problem: geez, we really can't afford this.

Every time lately that we hold a Free State Project Porcupine Festival or other libertarian event, it seems I encounter these guys in the Minuteman booth. Many of them seem to seriously feel the US government needs to mount a quasimilitary campaign to roust every suspicious-looking Hispanic visitor and march them off to Ciudad Juarez or, perhaps, Havana.

I guess my basic question to them is this:

If nongovernment-approved Hispanics drawing sustenance north of the Rio Grande constitute a threat to your liberty, how does a police state on steroids preserve that liberty?

I'd really like to have your feedback on this issue . Thanks.

[1] Please read this article from Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) which speaks to the militant Mexican militancy movement. According to its author, in Mexico, 58% of the population feel the orange area of the map above (and Texas) rightfully belongs to Mexico.