

from our viewpoint...

How do we fix our immigration?

Is illegal immigration really a problem? What do we do to fix the situation? The 12 million illegal immigrants estimated to be in the country should be evidence enough that the system is broke. How to fix it is a little harder to figure out.

Illegals come here for a lot of reasons, but mostly it's jobs. Reports show a little more than half are Mexican nationals and a quarter come from other Latin American nations. Almost a million came from Asian countries.

Some entered the country illegally, though the majority sneaked across the border somehow, infiltrating through the desert, hiding in trucks and railroad cars, even coming ashore from boats.

Many want to work, send money home to their families and eventually return. Today, with border crossing becoming more difficult — and dangerous — many choose just to stay once they're here.

The government has no way to track or catch them, let alone the means to deport 12 million people. The U.S. economy would be in a bind without their work.

Politicians like to scare people with talk of terrorist and criminals sneaking over the mountains, but there's little or no evidence that happens. Most terrorists, in fact, come into the country legally as tourists or students.

The real issues are jobs, race and the way immigrants are changing the country. As Americans always have, people tend to see newcomers as different. Even those whose parents came through Ellis Island less than a century ago can be found protesting the new immigrants.

People didn't treat the Italian, Irish or Croatian immigrants of a century ago very well, either. But they stayed, prospered and became Americans. There's every indication that most modern immigrants will do the same.

What can we do?

First things first. Being here illegally is wrong. Having 12 million illegal immigrants — maybe more, no one counts them — shows our system is horribly flawed.

We need to crack down on illegal immigration, but to do that, we have to make legal immigration possible, civilized and humane. Today, a Mexican citizen who wants to come here to work might have to wait years for a permit. People won't do that when a few hundred dollars will get them across the border to a better life.

And these people are desperate enough to face the dangers of dying in the desert, or in a sealed boxcar, to get here. You can't stop a flow like that, but you can and should control and monitor it.

Next, we should offer no state benefits to immigrants. Workers who pay taxes should be able to get a driver's license, send their kids to school and, should they retire here, collect benefits they paid for.

There is just no obligation to give illegal immigrants welfare or other benefits they have not paid for. If they are not working and can't support themselves, they'd be better off at home.

Finally, we should be suspicious of government officials who want tight border controls. There's an element in government that wants to know everything — who does what, goes where, has how much — but that information can be used for a lot of reasons.

We need to decide if we are ready to deal with a government with that kind of power, or if government can be trusted that much.

The bottom line is, immigration reform, badly as it's needed, isn't likely to happen any time soon. It makes too much sense.

— Steve Haynes



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Visiting embassies highlight of trip

One of the highlights of our yearly trips to Washington is a visit to an embassy.

Over the years, I've visited Chili, Greece, Costa Rica and Saudia Arabia.

Because of the visit to the Costa Rican embassy, I was able to be part of a delegation to that beautiful country about a year ago.

And while I've never visited Greece or Chili, the embassy staffs made me want to go.

I can't exactly say the same about the Saudi embassy. I'm sure it's an interesting county, but not exactly female friendly and many of the most interesting places are off limited to non-Moslems.

This year, I was slated to visit India but a friend asked Steve and I to accompany a group to the embassy of the United Arab Emirates.

We were greeted in a beautiful room, all polished marble with a stained-glass ceiling towering over full-grown palms. We trooped into a huge reception room with a table big enough to seat 15-20 people comfortably and sat down to chat with the ambassador, who spoke excellent English.

After visiting for about an hour and exchanging lapel pins — an American flag for him and crossed American and UAE flags for us — we thanked our host and said we needed to be going.

Oh no, he said, you have to have a bite to eat first. Arab hospitality and all that.

As we had been talking, attendants had



cynthia haynes

• open season

placed an array of Mideastern foods on three long tables behind us. The spread included rice, grilled lamb, kabobs, hummus, pita bread, olives, fruits and many tasty but unidentifiable tidbits. Over to the side were sodas and fruit juice.

We ate too much, especially since we were heading for a banquet, but the food at the embassy was a lot better than the steaks at the National Press Club.

Before we left, the ambassador invited us to visit not just the embassy but the country.

The UAE, about the size of Maine, is a rough triangle on the Persian Gulf between Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Like the United States it's a collection of smaller units, but unlike the U.S., the central government has only limited powers and most decisions are made by the emirs. It's sort of what the Confederacy might have become.

But, unlike the Confederacy, the UAE is rich, very rich, in gas and oil.

It is estimated that 10 percent of the world's oil and huge gas reserves are contained within this tiny desert country.

"We take that as a responsibility to the world," said UAE ambassador Saqr Ghobash. The country, he said, has an "open sky" policy and with its strategic location between east and west, and more than 100 airlines use its airports.

The country has a population of 4 million, but of those most are foreign nationals, including "guest workers" from India, Pakistan, Egypt, the Philippines and other Muslim countries. Only about 15-20 percent of the population are citizens.

There are no taxes. Oil money pays the bills.

The country has sea, desert, mountains, palm trees, camels, men in long white robes and Arab headdresses, women in colorful outfits, beautiful architecture and lots of history. It's not a great place to visit in the summer, when the temperature can get to 118 degrees in July and August, but between November and March it's warm and comfortable.

While many women in the emirates wear some sort of head covering, the country gives them full citizenship and they take their place in both education and the government.

Would I like to visit? You bet.

Will I get a chance? Who knows. I'll keep my head scarf packed and my passport up to date, but I'm not planning to go any farther than Topeka for awhile. I wonder how the food will be?

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Who hates America?

If you believe the media and the crybaby left, the entire world hates the United States of America. I don't believe that.

The reality is they don't hate us; they just love our money and wish they could get their hands on more of it. That's all the rest of the world ever cared about.

Sure, a lot of the French hate America, but they hate every nation that isn't France.

Lefties across the globe hate America because they are insanely jealous of our prosperity and our standard of living, but they are not anything like a majority.

Ask yourself this: Why does half the world want to come here to live in such a hateful country?

If you really want to know who really hates America, don't look abroad. Look right here in the United States for the real hate-America crowd; look at the left-wing crazies who run the Democrat party.

Think about it. America is at war. Tens of thousands of Americans in the armed forces are fighting that war, and more than three thousand of them have given their lives battling terrorists sworn to destroy this nation.

Yet aside from Osama bin Laden and his crew of merciless killers, the people most dedicated to seeing the United States defeated in a battle for the future of the world are the liberal Democrats now trying to run Congress.

You really have to hate America and its people to lust after the defeat of your own country.

Sure, they don't come right out and say it. They cover their tracks by calling a headlong — and shameful — dash for the exits a "redeployment," their way of saying cut and run. They say they fully support our troops, while they mutter about cutting the budget and leaving them defenseless far away from home.

As the new strategy for winning the war in Iraq begins to take hold, they refuse to recognize any of the signs of progress. Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid and the despicable John Murtha announce to the nation that we are losing the war, and moreover, can't possibly win it.

You really have to hate America to stand on the sidelines, root for an enemy triumph and



michael reagan

• making sense

do everything you can to make sure we lose a war.

If you want to know who really hates America, look at the Democrats who jumped on the media bandwagon to attack Walter Reed Army Medical Center, charging that they have not given good medical care to our wounded troops coming back from Iraq when they are fully aware that these wounded heroes have received the finest medical care ever a given to anyone, soldier or civilian, in the entire history of the world.

Thousands of wounded members of our armed forces who would have died of their wounds in previous wars, are alive today as a result of the medical care available at Walter Reed and other military hospitals.

But what do we hear from the likes of Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid? Praise for the great care

the Army and Navy have provided for the wounded and disabled? No.

Instead we hear allegations that slyly suggest that the conditions in substandard living quarters are in actuality symptoms of poor medical care being given to our troops. That's a flat-out lie, and you have to hate America to tell it.

The fact of the matter is that those veterans forced to live in substandard quarters and receiving extraordinary medical care were victims, not of the Army, but of the federal bureaucracy which operates under rules and restrictions dictated by the Congress when it was under the control of the Democrats.

Moreover it was the Congress which allowed Walter Reed to be scheduled to shut down in 2010 — just three years from now — putting it in that category to deprive them of adequate funding.

You really have to hate America to attack — for purely political reasons — a system of medical care that is saving huge numbers of Americans. These people have no shame.

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