

ARROGANT, ELITIST FRIENDS OF AMNESTY AT IT AGAIN

By Don Feder

It's been a month since the Senate amnesty bill went down in glorious red, white and blue flames, but it's bitter proponents are still at it – calling the patriots who killed the monstrosity “bigots,” “Mexi-phobes” and “racists.”

From the left you would expect. But in this contest, the loudest and most obnoxious race-baiters were on the right.

In the still-at-it crowd was Gerard Baker, a Brit neo-con and U.S. editor of the *London Times*. A July 15 New York Post column was almost unrelieved name-calling.

The bill “that would have regularized the status of 12 million illegal immigrants, mostly Latinos, as well as enforcing border security more effectively” (by sending a message to millions of potential illegals “c'mon in, the amnesty's fine”) was defeated by a “roar of nativist and, at times, at times, thinly disguised racist hysteria from the great American heartland. Little Napoleons on TV and talk radio strutted and howled.” Which would you say we say we did more, Gerard old chap, strutted or howled. Say, maybe we did they simultaneously.

After informing us that the attempt to preserve our national sovereignty was “as ugly as it was absurd” and “based on “right-wing paranoia,” Baker actually got around to trying to propound an argument, to wit: “America has absorbed waves and waves of immigrants through its history.”

That would be waves and waves of *legal* immigrants (those whose American journey didn't begin with a felony). We also note that the immigrants of the past (all four of my grandparents

included) came here at a time when America had a labor shortage, when our population was a quarter what it is today. They came here will to learn English and identity with their adopted land – when you didn't “press 1” for the language of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution.”

They did not come here expecting the country to adapt to them – with bi-lingual education, bi-lingual ballots, court interpreters, racial quotas, etc. They did not come bearing ethnic grudges, believing that a large part of our country belongs to their native land (in the case of many Mexican illegals).

Say, maybe that why amnesty proponents are so fast to resort to ad hominem -- there are no rational arguments for what they call immigration reform.

That's why the case for the amnesty bill consisted of almost unrelieved screeching, especially from establishment Republicans. “We're gonna tell the bigots to shut up,” blathered South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham. Opponents of the bill suffer from “anti-immigrant rage” and “national chauvinism,” said former Bush speechwriter Michael Gerson. Calling those who oppose illegal immigration “anti-immigrant” is like saying that who are against drunk-driving are anti-motorist.

No one screeched louder, no one was more hysterical, no one was downright nastier than pseudo-Hispanic Linda Chavez (whose people have lived in this country longer than the average DAR member).

In a May 25 column (“Latino Fear and Loathing”), the one-time Bush cabinet nominee began by thoughtfully observing, “Some people just don't like Mexicans – or anyone else from south of the border.”

Among other things, we think “Latinos are “dirty, diseased, indolent and more prone to criminal behavior.” It’s true that those with a 5th. grade education (the average illegal from points south) is less productive than the average American. It’s equally true that without a screening process (how do you do background checks on illegals) you’ll get a fair number of killers, rapists and thieves.

More Chavez braying: Opposition to amnesty is driven by “fear of the other.” Once us “xenophobes” advocated “forced sterilization and eugenics coupled with virtually shutting off legal immigration from ‘undesirable’ countries.” Today, we must content ourselves with building border fences and “rounding up aliens on the job,” while our white sheets get musty in storage.

Finally, Chavez reaches a fevered pitch, “We need to quit pretending that the ‘No Amnesty’ crowd is anything other than what it is: a tiny group of angry, frightened and prejudiced loudmouths backed by political opportunists who exploit them. Gerard Baker can take raving lessons from Linda Chavez.

I assume Senora Linda has never read a poll on immigration. The tiny group of angry, frightened, prejudiced loudmouths includes:

- The 93% who think illegal immigration is a serious problem (April 12-15 McLaughlin Associates survey)
- The 74% of Americans and 63% of Latinos who believe we need to “stop the flow of illegals before we address what to do about those who are already here” (survey sighted above).
- The 61% of Americans who say there are no conditions in which they would support “giving legal, green-card status yo millions of illegal immigrants.” (ditto)

- The 69% of the American people who would support an immigration bill “that focuses exclusively on reducing illegal immigration and enforcing the borders.” (Rasmussen Reports Poll, taken June 11-12)
- The 84% who believed that the Senate amnesty bill would not succeed at reducing illegal immigration and enforcing border security (Rasmussen)
- And the 56% who opposed the Senate bill (versus the 38% who supported it) (late June Zogby Interactive poll)

Does Chavez believe the 67% of Latinos who would repeal sanctuary city ordinances, the 53% who would deny citizenship to anchor babies and the 67% who favor a temper-proof national identity card think Mexicans are “dirty, diseased, indolent and more prone to criminal behavior”?

Here’s something to ponder while contemplating charges that the overwhelming majority of Americans are racist-bigot-hate-mongers for opposing Amnesty. In a paper for the National Bureau of Economic Research, Harvard economist George Borjas and his associates estimate that between 1980 and 2000, the immigrant influx (mostly illegal) generally “explains” 20 to 60% of the decline in wages, 25 percent of the decline in employment and 10% of the incarceration rates among African-Americans with a high-school education or less.

Or, to put it more concretely, a decade ago, I was in Los Angeles talking to a group of folks Baker would call nativists who can barely disguise either “racist hysteria.”

One of the night-riders, a middle-aged black man, who complained: “I’ve lived in South Central all of my life. But my kids can’t get a job at McDonald’s unless they speak Spanish.” He also mentioned illegals in his neighborhood living 16 to a house and keeping chickens and goats in the yard. Unlike Chavez, his

perspective on illegal immigration isn't tinged with nostalgia. His knowledge of the crisis is more than theoretical.

He told me of another black man, a friend of his working as a welder for \$20 an hour. One day, he boss told him that, sorry he could hire two Mexican brothers (undocumented workers as they say) for \$10 an hour, so the American was out of a job.

As I mentioned earlier, I'm two generations away from the boat. (Most Americans who opposed the amnesty travesty can recall immigrant ancestors.) I can assure you that the native Americans of their day did not greet my grandparents at the dock with confetti and a brass band.

Big deal. They came here legally. They learned English (in the case of my maternal grandfather, notwithstanding toiling 12 hours a day in a tailor shop). They obeyed our laws and identified with this country.

It's almost demeaning to have to say it, but I could care less if a new American is brown, black, yellow or fuc