

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: I have attached a file an essay I wrote that encompasses my thoughts on the deportation efforts of the Trump administration. It was originally intended as a response to a part of a response question for LMU transfer admissions. The last paragraph summarizes my thoughts on the issue, but I encourage you to read the whole thing. For the second half of the essay, I dive more into the idea of what it means to be American. I used the controversy of film star Anthony Mackie as inspiration. I have copied and pasted an excerpt from my essay below: "To wrap things up, my goal with this essay was to open up dialogue on this hot issue and present a more accurate description of what exactly it means for someone to be an "illegal immigrant." The illegality of an immigrant's status has little bearing on the decisions and conduct of said immigrant in the nation they migrate to. In other words, the connection between "illegal immigrant" and "national security threat" is null, weak, and dishonest at best. One can violate the immigration laws of a nation and be a net contributor to the economic and cultural prosperity of a nation. While I can agree with the deportation of violent criminals, whose crimes include offenses such as rape, murder, sex trafficking, terrorism, etc., I absolutely do not agree with the conclusion that all illegal immigrants fit the description of a "national security threat" and condemn this designation as much as humanly possible. This begs the question: if most illegal immigrants aren't criminals, and they are a net positive to the nation economically, why do people still illegally immigrate to our borders? Simply put, timing is everything. You don't have the time to decide whether death and/or struggling to survive is worth going through over a better opportunity elsewhere. It's better to expand our generosity by creating easier paths to citizenship than to reduce the hopes of hard-working people to villainous intent." [End of Og LMU essay]

A Path Forward

In a time when chaos seems to be the norm and polarization reigns supreme as the most influential force in U.S. politics, I find myself ever more focused on a brighter future. Be it in my personal life, professionally, or the state of the country, I can't help but remain optimistic. Nothing has been more chaotic and polarizing than recent changes in leadership in the White House. The issue I want to explore today concerns the ongoing mass deportation the Trump administration has started. Many proponents of the operation argue, and very simply, that illegal immigrants are violating U.S. immigration laws and therefore are criminals that should be deported effective immediately. The supporting rationale behind this argument is that illegal immigrants, by virtue of their status as such, pose a threat to national security. After giving it some thought, I came to the conclusion that this assumption is false and has many weaknesses that I will reveal and present an alternative perspective on what exactly is threatening about an illegal immigrant.

So, before I lose some folks who by now might dismiss me as some libtard, leftist lunatic, I want to clarify that I agree that illegal immigration is just that, illegal, and this serves as a great opportunity for all of us to come together and come up with policies, systems, and procedures that work in tandem to curve the amount of illegal migration we see. However, the solution to this issue that Trump and Republicans propose and have used so far is too simple-minded and short-sighted in scope. The logic of mass deportation relies on the assumption that any illegal immigrant, regardless of whether or not they have committed a crime, is a threat to national security. Particularly when it comes to the non-criminal element of the illegal immigrant population (which is the vast majority), this belief couldn't be more wrong. An illegal immigrant who participates in the workforce and pays taxes is the least threatening kind of person. If you aren't convinced this person doesn't pose a threat, I will use a thought experiment of what an illegal immigrant's journey might look like:

TE 1: Immigrant X flees from Venezuela to escape the violence of a rising gang, Tren De Aragua (TdA) in their neighborhood,

political turmoil, and the economic instability the country is facing. Immigrant X decides to make the journey to the U.S., traveling first on foot through the Darien Gap in Colombia and Panama. From Panama, they find fellow migrants who are being smuggled by migrant smugglers, also known as Coyotes (a Spanish word in fact). After a long and treacherous journey, Immigrant X and the other migrants are finally and successfully smuggled through an illegal port of entry at the southern border where there is a gap in patrol routes during the night. Fast forward a little, and we meet up with Immigrant X who has now been working at a restaurant that specializes in Italian food in Dallas, Texas for 8 years. They have also never committed any crimes for the simple fact that it would mean their immediate deportation. During those 8 years, Immigrant X has also been trying to obtain legal status but to no avail since the process is painstakingly long, even for those who enter legally.

Now, if you're still with me, that's great! Because here is the most important part of this thought experiment. Ask yourself this question: Is this illegal immigrant, who comes to work, pays taxes, and has overall been a net positive within my community a threat to the safety of myself and the nation? For me, it's simple. HELL NO! In fact, illegal immigration is only a civil offense! Do people whose worst misdeed is a civil violation then deserve to be ripped from loved ones and thrown into internment camp-esque confinements? I'm not going to accuse the Trump administration of outright replicating the Holocaust, as there simply isn't any evidence of it, but it sure as hell isn't any better than the treatment of Japanese Americans during WW2. The same logic was used against them based on fears that the Japanese Imperial Army was infiltrating the U.S. And of course, once again the rationale was that Japanese Americans and those who recently immigrated posed a "national security threat" because they were of Japanese descent, and therefore potential spies. The running opposing theme I have presented here can be understood as follows: Status DOES NOT immediately equal intent of danger. I cannot honestly say that this hypothetical immigrant, who did break immigration law, is a threat to my safety and the safety of others. It would be incredibly disingenuous and cruel of me to say so. I genuinely cannot perceive Immigrant X as being the same threat to the nation as someone like a member of Tren De Aragua, whose violent conduct within their own country and

within our borders should be met with the fullest extent and might of our law enforcement. Yet, I am expected to believe that an illegal immigrant such as Immigrant X poses the same threat as TdA. It would be intellectually dishonest of me to believe so.

To wrap things up, my goal with this essay was to open up dialogue on this hot issue and present a more accurate description of what exactly it means for someone to be an "illegal immigrant." The illegality of an immigrant's status has little bearing on the decisions and conduct of said immigrant in the nation they migrate to. In other words, the connection between "illegal immigrant" and "national security threat" is null, weak, and dishonest at best. One can violate the immigration laws of a nation and be a net contributor to the economic and cultural prosperity of a nation. While I can agree with the deportation of violent criminals, whose crimes include offenses such as rape, murder, sex trafficking, terrorism, etc., I absolutely do not agree with the conclusion that all illegal immigrants fit the description of a "national security threat" and condemn this designation as much as humanly possible. This begs the question, if most illegal immigrants aren't criminals, and they are a net positive to the nation economically, why do people still illegally immigrate to our borders? Simply put, timing is everything. You don't have the time to decide whether death and/or struggling to survive is worth going through over a better opportunity elsewhere. It's better to expand our generosity by creating easier paths to citizenship than reduce the hopes of hard-working people to villainous intent. [End of Og LMU essay]

A continuation . . .

As an alternative to mass deportation, I propose that the U.S., Mexico, and the nations where other immigrants may come from, work together in a joint effort to curb illegal immigration between the U.S. Mexico border. My proposal could even serve as a model for a global upgrade in how immigration is handled and consequently the policies that would arrive from this perspective. The first part of my proposal relies on cooperation between the U.S., Mexico, and other national governments, set up and run what I'll refer to as a "Migration Corridor" where the surrounding area around legal ports of entry have infrastructure built to act as an outpost for migrants to camp at. There are already existing areas along the southern border that function similarly to what I have in mind, this proposal expands on that by dedicating more resources between both the U.S., Mexico, and other nation governments. Some key components of this infrastructure would be a building dedicated to creating all necessary legal documentation for people who express a desire to immigrate to another country. Supporting infrastructure would be dedicated as temporary living quarters for traveling migrants passing on by. This could be something as simple as setting up camp sites with tents, basic lodging tools, and other outdoor amenities. Cost effective and easy to set up. All of this would be funded by the participating governments to lighten the financial strain a large project like this may have on their budgets. In short, an administrative building (like an embassy with representatives from all involved nations) that creates, manages, and distributes all legal documentation and simple living quarters/arrangements for migrants to handle their basic needs (food, water, shelter). Even setting up a financial office to help facilitate the exchange of currencies and tax considerations could be implemented as well. The finer details could be negotiated between nations.

Once these migration corridors are established, the U.S., Mexico, and other national governments can put out joint statements detailing where these corridors (and their adjacent legal entry points) are located in their respective languages. Most of this work would include the distribution of key immigration info, and where to get documentation and resources. Some of this can be outsourced to existing private and public organizations that already support immigrant populations in this manner today. For example, a local church in El Paso, Texas can have its members and other members of the community collect and distribute food, clothing, and water to these migration corridors. A non-profit organization that helps immigrants with filing for various legal documents like H2A Temp visas

and requests for asylums could handle the production and distribution of all pertinent info related to where legal points of entry are and what you need to move between national borders. This all sounds like a lot but it can be done. It's just a matter of having the will to do it.

Another Point of View . . .

I want to take some time now to examine another issue related to the topic of immigration. National Identity. The question I seek to answer is: What does it mean to be American? I was inspired by the recent controversy with the action star Anthony Mackie and his comments about what Captain America, a popular comic book hero from the Marvel comics, represents. His answer shocked many and even myself at first. When I looked into it, I came across an article by Forbes which highlighted how the previous actor, Chris Evans, who played the role for about a decade, made similar remarks about the character in a 2011 interview. He even said that Captain America should really just be called "Captain Good, haha." Below I have copied and pasted the exact quotes of both actors.

Anthony Mackie: "Captain America represents a lot of different things and I don't think the term 'America' should be one of those representations. It's about a man who keeps his word, who has honor, dignity and integrity."

After his initial comments, which was at an early showcase of the upcoming *Captain America: Brave New World* film in Rome, Italy, he sought to clarify his remarks saying:

"I'm a proud American and taking on the shield of a hero like Cap is the honor of a lifetime. I have the utmost respect for those who serve and have served our country. Cap has universal characteristics that people all over the world can relate to."

Chris Evans, in an interview with CBM (comicbookmovie.com) expresses a similar interpretation of the character's ethos saying:

"Ha, well, to me, I'm not trying to get too lost in the American side of it. This isn't a flag waving movie. It is red, white and blue, but it just so happens that the character was created in America during war time, when

there was a common enemy, even though it is Captain America. I've said before in interviews, it feels more like he should just be called Captain Good. [Laughs] You know, he was created at a time when there was this undeniable evil and this guy was kind of created to fight that evil. I think that everyone could agree that Nazis were bad and he, Cap, just so happens to wear the red, white and blue."

It was at this point in the article when I started to agree for the most part that the criticism of Anthony Mackie was a bit unfair. I don't know if Chris Evans caught slack back in 2011 (apart from maybe hardcore comic fans) so if that's the case then yes, it is totally unfair to claim Anthony Mackie isn't patriotic when Chris Evans effectively said the same thing. Despite all this, what really got me thinking, and what ultimately led me to the question of what does it mean to be American, was when I read text directly from the comics in the bottom of the Forbes article. It reads:

"Listen to me, all of you out there! You were told by this man, your hero, that America is the greatest country in the world! He told you that Americans were the greatest people, that America could be refined like silver, could have the impurities hammered out of it and shine more brightly. He went on about how precious American was, how you needed to make sure it remained great. And he told you anything was justified to preserve that pearl of the great price that is America!"

"Well I say American is nothing! Without its ideals, its commitment to the freedom of all men, America is a piece of trash! A nation is nothing! A flag is a piece of cloth! I fought Adolph Hitler not because America was great, because it was fragile! I knew that liberty could be easily snuffed out here as in Nazi Germany! As a people we were no different than them! When I returned, I saw that you nearly did turn America into nothing!"

Once I read this it reminded me of this other comic book, known to the Japanese as manga, called Jujutsu Kaisen. One of the characters is named Gojo and he is

considered the strongest in the verse in modern times. His best friend turned enemy Geto, at the climax of their friendship that results in his eventual turn to darkness, asks Gojo a question that echoes similar sentiments to the Captain America comics and his live-action counterparts. The popular question amongst anime/manga fans that Geto asks Gojo is:

“Are you the strongest because you’re Satoru Gojo or are you Satoru Gojo because you’re the strongest?”

To transcribe this question into a context relating to my initial question, I ask, for all who reads this that are American or want to be: Is America great because of the ideals we hold to be self-evident, or is it our practice of these ideals that we hold self-evident that makes America great? In simpler form, is it the idea of America itself that makes it great or the people who live by those ideals? For me the answer is clear. It is our practice and action of these ideals in our everyday lives that makes it great. If I had to use one word it would be Integrity. Doing what’s right even when nobody is looking and especially when you are the global hegemon of the world. Now I ask my fellow Americans, why is it that we believe in the American values as written only until we’re confronted with someone who we consider an “outsider?” Can we honestly tell ourselves that we are living up to the standard based on the ideals we hold self-evident when some of us are so quick to justify the cruel treatment of an outsider? Shouldn’t any human being be afforded the same respect and honor we expect from one another as Americans?

Because the hard truth is that it’s hard to believe America is great when so many choose to demonize the outsider because they “aren’t American” as if there is a requirement to be ethnically “American.” Our culture and national identity are built upon the ideals we consider ordained by God or some universal good that all humans deserve. When we humiliate and terrorize others, be it mindless mass deportation, underhanded tactics used to remove leaders we don’t like, or blatant

imperial conquests, we fail to live up to those ideals, our integrity fractured and with it fades away that awe inspiring notion of greatness we believe America to be. For some of our own citizens, this kills their belief altogether and there are plenty of unflattering examples throughout this country's history that contribute to this. I say this with respect, love, honor, and belief in those ideals written in the Constitution. But as I have suggested throughout this portion of the essay, it is our actions as the people of this country that make those words we hold dear and this nation great. Failure to do so, to commit to those ideals results in the elimination of inspiration and hope that American dream evokes. We are the first and last line of representation of these American values. So, let's carve a path forward for everyone who takes that journey of faith to the land of opportunity where we can all enjoy Freedom, Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness, united as one.

As a final remark, I must say, immigrants like Immigrant X make up the vast majority of stories you will hear about legal and illegal immigrants. Many of which I have befriended, be it they are immigrants themselves or the children of them. If this is what an invasion of aliens looks like where they come in not with guns, swords and spears but hard work, determination, and hope for a better tomorrow, then I say, BRING ON THE INVASION! And I guess that makes me a libtard, leftist lunatic after all.