

Two articles on
America's and Trump's Walls

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Uyless Black

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Wednesday

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What walls should America be building?

First of two parts

By UYLESS BLACK
Guest Opinion

The first responsibility of a national government is to protect the nation's borders. The United States government has failed in this responsibility.



Black

However, it is not just the federal government that is to blame. No one has benefited more from having our borders breached than businesses.

Count this writer among this company. In the 1980s, my partners and I may have hired illegal immigrants. I say "may" as we did not check their credentials. So, I am not casting stones from a glass house.

Recently, oversight has tightened on hiring

illegal immigrants and the 2008 financial breakdown led to the decline of immigrant flow across the border. But for many years, there were few restraints on hiring an illegal entry into this country. Before I retired, I spent much of my time traveling and staying in hotels. I came to know several hotel managers.

During our conversations, they would sometimes express that they benefited (as did their customers) from having low-paid immigrants (many of them illegal) cleaning rooms, doing yard work, repairing facilities, and staffing kitchens.

Of course, many hotels and hotel chains adhered (and still adhere) to the letter of the law. Nonetheless, I am speaking of facts about illegal immigration that still exist today.

For example, the prevalence of illegal immigration workforces in America is huge.

Whether we like or dislike Uncle Sam's oversights is not the issue. Underground economies are detrimental to any nation's government and that nation's citizenry.

In America, as studies show, this activity continues to be subsidized by the government to the tune of billions of dollars a year (health care, food stamps, and such). The illegal immigrant flood has slowed down some, but this inundation has altered the cultural landscape of much of America.

A huge, sudden influx of immigrants into any country creates a culture of balkanization: one of fragmentation and associated conflicts. These large foreign populations do not weave easily into the fabrics of their new country.

I feel like a foreigner when I visit my hometown in New Mexico. The two "cowboy" museums in the town are destined for the dust-

bin. Why should Latin Americans care about America's cattle drives or the Lincoln County Wars and Billy the Kid's involvement?

Nonetheless, I am in favor of legal but gradual immigration. I also favor immigration based on merit. A potential immigrant possessing skills should be given first preference on entering our country. I recognize many people may oppose this idea. They are looking for low-wage, low-skilled labor. After all, someone has to plough the furrows of America's gardens.

I have empathy for those souls trying to get to America. In their shoes, I would be following their tracks. But the practice of illegal immigration is detrimental to the welfare of this nation.

Whatever their situation was in their native countries, and many of their lives were imperiled, their plights must be subordinated to our country's well-being. If not well-being, then for fairness to those seeking legal entry.

Why do I take this stand? Among others, for practical reasons.

America cannot absorb a continuous, massive influx of immigrants. Consider modern day Belgium, France, Germany, and Sweden. Not only are their cultures changing, the huge immigrant population is breaking-down their social services and their cultural heritages.

A country cannot take care of its citizens if it cannot take care of its borders.

See part two on Friday.

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Uyless Black lives in Hayden with his wife Holly and his French Poodle, Milli.

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Friday

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Op/Ed

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President Trump is on target to demand re-negotiating trade and immigration deals. Some have led to large outflows of capital and to loss of jobs.

The president is also on target to protect our borders, but not with a fence. The most effective wall is to keep the mass of foreigners home while having some of them legally emigrate gradually to our land where they can absorb our customs and cultures.

Stemming illegal immigration requires measures beyond the brick and mortar of building a physical wall on our southern border. At Mexico's expense! How ridiculous is that?

It requires participation on a partnership basis in talks with Mexico, and Central and South American countries, where America yields enormous leverage. In these talks, we look to our own interests, but we do it with participation, not seclusion.

It is a tough nut to crack. Where is the line drawn? It is estimated that in 2016 alone, \$69 billion was sent from the U.S.'s foreign workers to people south of our border. Forty percent of this amount went to Mexico. Poorer and less populated counties depend even more on this flow of money. Studies show 20 percent of the GNP of Honduras and El Salvador come from remittances of workers in the United States. Are we as a moral nation going to cut off

20 percent of a country's GNP? If it comes from illegal immigrants, I believe we have no choice. We cannot ignore this problem. To do so only makes it worse.

I want those two cowboy museums in my hometown to stay open; to keep upcoming generations

aware of New Mexico cattlemen and Billy the Kid's unsavory, yet mesmerizing history. I want a gradual, legal influx of foreigners to take in the history and culture of



Uyless Black

Guest
Opinion

New Mexico and America.

It is indeed possible. I lived in Santa Fe, N.M., for a while. The Latinos and Native Americans in that city were as "Americanized" as any Anglo living there. Granted, they held on to aspects of their cultural past, as well they should, as it gave them cohesion and pride. But they stood at attention when listening to our national anthem.

In the long run, given fairly recent history of massive illegal immigration, is a dream of cultural and lingual assimilation possible? At this juncture, none of us can know. But consider:

"Immigrants made up roughly 17 percent of the U.S. workforce in 2014, according to Pew Research Center; of those, around two-thirds were

in the country legally. Collectively, immigrants made up 45 percent of domestic employees; they also comprised large portions of the workforce in U.S. manufacturing (36 percent), agriculture (33), and accommodation (32). Another Pew study found that without immigrants, the U.S. workforce is expected to decline from 173.2 million in 2015 to 165.6 million in 2035; the workforce is expected to grow to 183.2 million if immigration levels remain steady, according to the report."

With a wall, physical or legal, who is going to be making hotel beds or mowing our lawns? America opened the gates to massive immigration decades ago. The immigrants are out of the gates and into the pastures and factories of America's workplaces and societies.

I do not see how this fact can be reversed. But we do know this truth: The preservation of and respect for a nation's heritage and culture is the glue that binds together the citizens of that nation. When balkanization of a nation occurs, that nation essentially becomes no longer a nation but an assemblage of tribal factions.

The goals of the Trump administration should be:

First, find ways to cut down the flow of massive influxes of immigrants, which I am not confident a giant wall will prevent. Whatever the means, our nation's borders must be sealed against illegal entry. It is an insult to legal residents.

Second, document the immigrant population for purposes of taxation and accountability.

Third, extract a "cost," whatever it may be, for breaking our laws.

Then what? Do we deport them and their children? I do not have the answer to this question. I defer it to the citizens of this country who employ them to make beds and mow lawns.

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Uyless and his wife, Holly, reside in Hayden.