

A whole new world

Bush's plan reaches a solid compromise between open- and closed-door policies

At first glance it appears to be simply another political move, but President George W. Bush's new immigration plan deserves support. With the presidential election looming around the corner and the incumbent's opponents emerging on the horizon, Bush needs to make some headlines and draw positive attention from voters. Although some political strategies will be used in 2004, his immigration plan is more substantive than just another ploy to attract more Hispanic voters to the republican side.



DAVID EGE

Simply put, Bush does well to oppose granting amnesty to illegal immigrants. According to The Washington Times, he says that the amnesty "encourages the violation of our laws and perpetuates illegal immigration." He is absolutely right. However, the other side of the issue is valid as well. Some would argue that America should not alienate itself from people of other nations who desire to make a living here. With the exception of pure-blooded Native Americans, virtually every person living in the United States has immigrant blood running through his veins. How can we deny others the same opportunity that we ourselves have had to live the American dream? At the same time, Americans cannot allow a massive migration of people into this country for obvious reasons. It would cause an unstable economy and bur-

den the current citizens unfairly. Heavy traffic, overcrowded schools, air pollution and increased taxes are problems that are associated with rapid population growth.

Bush's plan offers an alternative to both sides of the conflict. It calls for the delegation of more green cards — the first step to U.S. citizenship. But the main aspect is that it also grants three-year, temporary-worker cards to Mexicans who are currently in the United States illegally and have U.S. jobs.

An additional catch is that senior administration officials told The Associated Press that participating in the new temporary-worker program does not give the workers an advantage to applying for citizenship. This is good, because although they are given a break for now, the current illegal workers in this country will eventually have to be held responsible for violating laws.

Cecilia Munoz, vice president for policy at the National Council of La Raza and critic of Bush's plan, told the AP, "It appears to be all about rewarding employers who have been hiring undocumented immigrants while offering almost nothing to the workers themselves." Small business owners benefit immensely by hiring undocumented workers.

These workers, who often work in teams as skilled landscapers, carpenters, electricians and other blue-collar professions, are filling jobs that aren't as readily taken by native-born Americans. Many illegal immigrants have a strong work ethic because they know that residing in a country illegally prohibits them from relying on the government's social programs to make a decent living.

At the same time, the workers are getting paid much more

than they would if they stayed in their native countries, thus providing a better life for their families. This way, both parties would benefit.

These workers are currently illegal aliens and therefore have no rights.

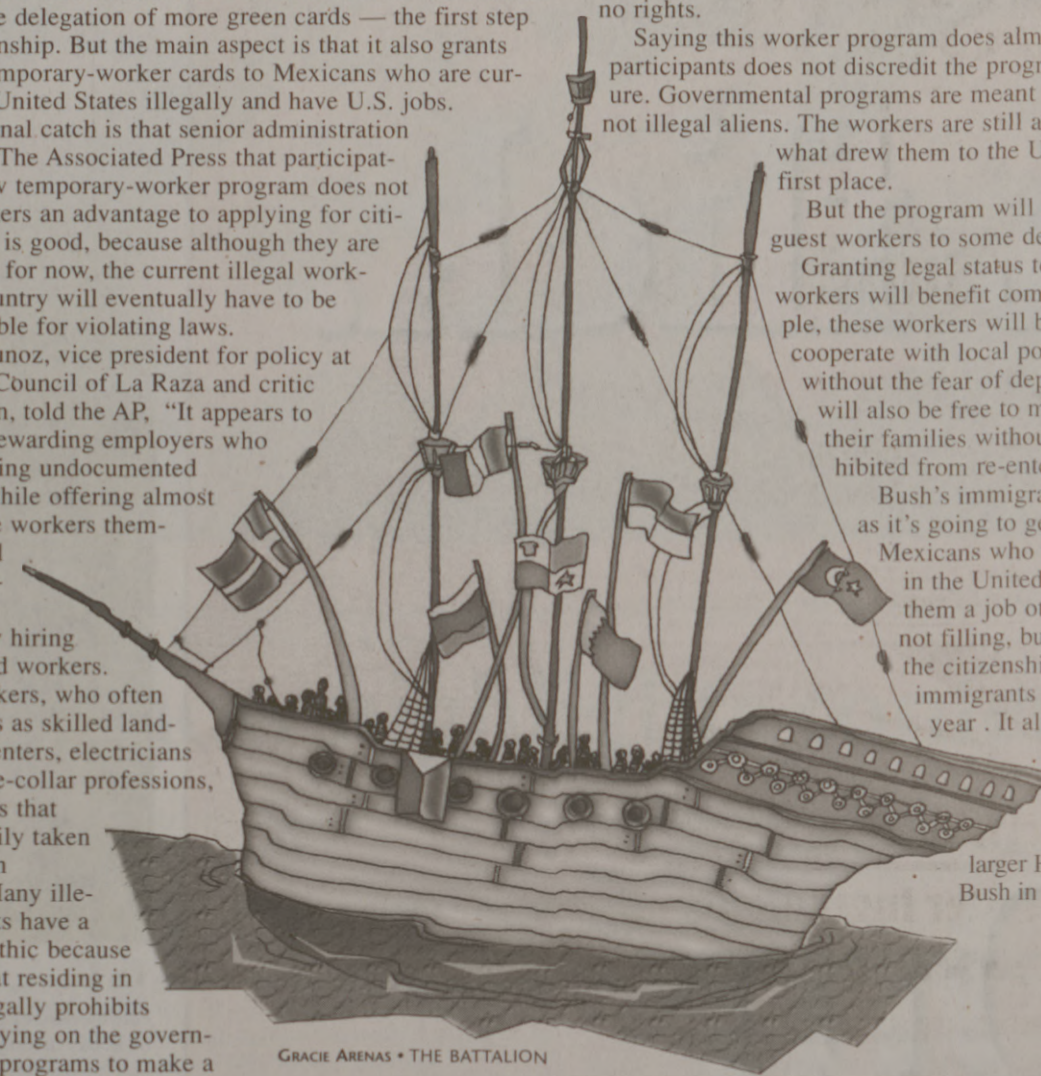
Saying this worker program does almost nothing for its participants does not discredit the program's success or failure. Governmental programs are meant to serve Americans, not illegal aliens. The workers are still able to work, which is what drew them to the United States in the first place.

But the program will actually benefit the guest workers to some degree.

Granting legal status to undocumented workers will benefit communities. For example, these workers will be more likely to cooperate with local police and report crimes without the fear of deportation. The workers will also be free to make trips back to see their families without fear of being prohibited from re-entering the country.

Bush's immigration plan is as good as it's going to get. It helps millions of Mexicans who wish to make a living in the United States by giving them a job other Americans are not filling, but does not undermine the citizenship process that legal immigrants must endure every year. It also allows U.S.

employers to legally hire its own job-seeking citizens. This plan will gain a larger Hispanic vote in for Bush in the end, and rightly so.



GRACIE ARENAS • THE BATTALION

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Israeli wall protects with a proven method

In response to an increase in suicide bombings and terrorist activity over the past months, the Israeli government has opted to build a wall around the West Bank, separating it from the rest of Israel. This security barrier is intended to protect Israeli citizens from attack by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups.



DAN ROSSELL

Recently, the United Nations, the organization that created Israel in 1948, has denied the nation's right to defend itself. On Dec. 9, The Washington Post reported that the United Nations called upon the International Court of Justice in The Hague to make a ruling on the legality of the wall.

Security barriers such as the one in Israel should clearly be allowed by international law. They are necessary for operational security during war time.

According to BBC News, the United Nations formally condemned the wall in October. In November, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Anon issued a report stating that the wall is illegal and demanded its removal. These attempts by the United Nations regarding the security barrier were clearly ignored by Israel, as it views the wall as necessary for security. However, a ruling that approves such walls from The Hague, the world's authority on international law, will have a greater impact.

To the United Nations, the issue is a matter of legality. However, the United Nations denies Israel the right to defend itself against terrorist acts. The British government created "peace lines" between Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland to stem violence between the groups. Currently, U.S. forces in Iraq employ similar security checkpoints to protect U.S. military personnel. Thus, a ruling condemning the use of security barriers will, according to The International Herald Tribune, "impair the ability of democratic nations to deal with difficult security challenges."

The legal precedent of security walls dates back to the Geneva Convention, which requires that civilians in occupied areas be treated humanely. If anything, this will make life easier for Palestinians in the occupied territory. Previously, the Israeli Defense Force had a large presence in the West Bank both guarding roadblocks and enforcing a strict curfew. The security fence eliminates the need for this military presence and effectively makes life easier for the Palestinians. In fact, much of the hostility between Palestinian citizens and the Israeli military has ceased simply because the soldiers are no longer in close proximity to Palestinian neighborhoods.

Recently, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

announced that the government would consider changing the path of the fence for "humanitarian reasons." The Israeli government has even offered compensation to Palestinian farmers who were separated from their fields due to the building of the security wall.

The Palestinians' main concern is the issue of land. The Palestinian Authority fears the wall is an attempt to establish borders and seize land. The Israeli government claims the wall is purely for defense and is in no way meant to be a territorial border. Even calling the defensive barrier a "wall" is a stretch. Only a small portion of the wall is concrete, and this exists solely in areas deemed as "hot spots," or places where violence from the Palestinians was common. The rest of the barrier is made up of fence line, ditches and patrol roads — something, the Israelis claim, that is easy to destroy. Even if the wall can be deemed a border, it gives Palestinians control of more than 90 percent of the West Bank. The Israeli government has realized that it will have to give up land to the Palestinians in exchange for peace, and the Palestinians have to make compromises as well.

Despite opposition, the wall has been extremely effective at accomplishing its goal. Critics argue that the wall will spur increased Palestinian attacks and harm the peace process. However, many believe the wall will benefit the peace process. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger argues that the fence will make Palestinians more accommodating and make Israelis more willing to take risks to achieve peace.

The wall has also been proven effective at its immediate goal of saving lives. The Israeli government reports a decrease in suicide bombings since the construction of the wall. More importantly, since Israeli soldiers guard the checkpoints leading to and from the West Bank, the wall almost entirely eliminates Palestinian terrorist groups such as Hamas from targeting Israeli civilians. If terrorists can't get to Israeli markets and schools, they can't attack them. While terrorist activity against soldiers is no less deplorable, at least soldiers are trained to defend themselves and fight back.

In a place as desperate as the Middle East, solutions require desperate measures. While the Palestinians have a valid claim to having a state of their own, no progress can be made until the violence stops. The security barrier is a justified action and a step toward peace. The Israeli government has the right to protect its citizens against terrorist attacks. A ruling by the World Court condemning such action would be a travesty to justice.

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Democrats Kerry, Dean are missing the mark

In a startling turn of events, the once-considered long shot John "comeback kid" Kerry pulled off a significant upset over his fellow contenders in last week's Iowa caucus. Yet, more attention was given to what many consider to be the processional implosion of former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean.



MATT YOUNGER

According to a Jan. 7 Iowa poll, Dean led all candidates while Kerry sat in third place and Sen. John Edwards, D-NC, sat in last. After the Iowan electorate caucused in its 1,994 respective precincts, it was clear that the tide had turned. Kerry took 38 percent of the vote, Edwards a stunning 32 percent and Dean stooped to an underwhelming 18 percent.

Mudslinging directed at Dean from the other candidates plausibly accounted for part of his swan dive. But perhaps other reasons are to blame. Could it be Dean's hard-hitting leftist rhetoric and disdain for President George W. Bush that caused Iowa to shy away? Perhaps such bold comments such as America not being a safer country since the capture of Sadaam Hussein didn't sit well with Democrats from Iowa. It was even suggested that Dean stop tearing down his neighbor, Bush, and address contentions with more civility and class.

This is not to suggest Dean doesn't have the right to address his concerns; he certainly does. Rather, it simply brings attention to Dean's common method of dealing with criticism, using anger. Perhaps Dean will learn a lesson from the two senators ahead of him who seem to have a better grip on channeling their anger.

The Democrats may be coasting down a road that ultimately leads to a dead end. Some wonder if democratic issues and concerns are enough to penetrate the heart of the American electorate and force Bush out of the White House.

In a brief victory speech, Kerry presented a list of issues addressing Bush's shortcomings as president, noting that he is willing to take the president head-on regarding national security. As most people probably know, Kerry proudly served his country during Vietnam and was extolled as an American who saved the life of a fellow soldier. In and of itself, this is a remarkable and commendable accomplishment from a decorated hero who deserves appreciation and respect. But this alone is not the basis for qualifying oneself as a military leader capable of handling the most powerful army in the world. Being a model of order-taking is worlds away

from being the person who gives the orders. And today, America requires a president who understands the latter.

Understanding America and its current needs is a vital part of the presidency, and all too often liberals forget that less than three years ago, U.S. national security was breached and all Americans' lives changed forever on a gloomy day in September. The majority of this country seems to understand that national security takes top priority over other liberal agendas that are often overemphasized, as is evidenced by Bush's 60 percent approval rating for his third year in office.

But what is odd and blatantly hypocritical are the vicious attacks from democratic candidates dealing with issues that plague their own party. For example, Kerry's boldest statement in his victory speech addressed the need to rid the White House, and Washington, of controlling interest groups. Yet one couldn't help but notice the sea of Kerry signs flailing in the audience with that all-too-familiar Planned Parenthood logo proudly printed on the bottom.

Liberals are notorious for playing the game of blaming all of society's problems on the president. From the sad truth that poor people live in this country to the fact that people are out of work, it always comes back to the president's failure to take action. Leftists love to ignore this country's recent quarterly review indicating it to be the most productive growth in the past 20 years of our country's economy.

It is time to remember that the United States' ability and privilege to hold such caucuses cannot happen unless a freedom exists that is preserved and protected. No campaign has any merit whatsoever unless it is grounded in that fundamental truth. Bush understands that truth in his heart. Some call him a liar. Others appreciate his leadership. All should admire his courage.

Kerry told those watching on Monday night that some person brought him a four-leaf clover, and from there, everything seemed to pick up the pace. Maybe those who support a Democratic nominee should consider a good luck charm for their favorite candidate. But be mindful of the fact that it will take more than luck to stop Bush this November.

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