

## Children as political tools

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Children as political tools is nothing new. It is claimed that Genghis Khan, when he assaulted well defended cities, would put babies in catapults and throw them over the city walls just to show how brutal he could be. Sympathetic and terrorized defenders presumably were weakened in their resolve. Jack Weatherford, in *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, claims that Genghis Khan was not the bloodthirsty barbarian he has been depicted as, but in fact was much better than the Europeans that he was attacking.

Similarly, is President Trump responsible for illegal immigrants streaming into our country which results in the separation of families, or rather is it the fault of Congress for totally failing to develop any comprehensive immigration solution? President Obama almost had it done but refused to put border security ahead of legalizing illegals.

Odd as it may sound, there is nothing about this in United States politics. From the very founding of our country, there was a battle between those who were looking for cheap labor to settle the vast, empty expanses of our nation as opposed to those who wanted to preserve the British character of our population. There was always one political party looking for votes, and the other interested in preserving the status quo. Throughout our history, the United States has lurched back and forth between welcoming people from overseas and then repudiating the new entrants.

The question of whether we should welcome illegals is a relatively new debate, however. When the United States and every other nation in the world turned away Jewish refugees during the European Holocaust, the issue was not over the legality of the immigrants. The United States and the Free World in general simply did not want new immigrants, especially if they were Jewish, unless of course it was Albert Einstein or Sigmund Freud. The ordinary Jew was not welcome.

The United States today is not seeking to butcher or destroy anyone, let alone illegal immigrants. The comparison of Donald Trump to the policies of Nazi Germany is an

argument that should turn off any person with reasoning ability and a good conscience.

The children who are being separated from their parents at the border are illegal. They are streaming into the United States for a variety of reasons, and numerous presidential administrations have done nothing about it. Some of those immigrants are fleeing totalitarian regimes, poverty and political prosecution, and others are just looking for a better life in the United States. U.S. immigration laws, like the immigration laws of every other country, do not permit anybody to enter the country who would like to, any time they want to. Refugees in Europe are fleeing war and oppression from regimes that the West has helped to finance.

Let us look back and reflect upon the picture of illegal immigration in a more holistic form. We have adopted trade policies in general that enable other nations to pay their labor as little as possible so that goods could be sold in the United States. We have never demanded and enforced employment parity in trade negotiations. These bad trade policies have helped to foment and create an underclass throughout the world seeking a better life in the United States. We have also supported totalitarian regimes in many places through the short-sighted American foreign policy. Industry in this country is constantly in search for cheap labor, regardless of how it gets here. Our foreign policy in the Middle East has turned vast portions of that region over to Russia and Iran. Is it any wonder that people in those places would want to get out? Syria is a hellhole which has killed 500,000 people at least, while the Obama administration fritted away America's last bit of credibility.

Sounds of children crying fill the news. We are told through "*unverified reports*" that those children's tears are the result of heartless Trump policies.

While it may be difficult to separate ideology from facts, it is worth appreciating that we need to make both an economic and moral decision as to whether we want to accept immigrants, from what nations and under what conditions. Likewise, to the extent that someone enters this country illegally with or without children, what should we do with them? Should we let it be known that all illegals are welcome, because eventually they may become voters for one party or another? Should we enforce immigration laws or should we simply do away with them? Whatever

immigration laws we have, someone is going to try to break them and then we will be dealing with the heartbreak of separated families.

How do we address America's thirst for cheap labor? Do we encourage nations overseas to exploit their own people through unbalanced trade agreements, or do we let those people into our own country in the hopes of revitalizing America's rusted out factories?

A reasonable immigration policy would permit legal immigration of those with useful skills, while protecting our borders from improper, criminal and illegal activity. Politicians will have to run on the question as to whether we should accept refugees based upon poverty, political oppression, family separation, and a myriad of other factors. These may not be comfortable decisions to make, but we are not advancing the cause by throwing mud at one another.

Neither President Trump nor President Obama wanted to see America harmed by immigration policy determinations. They would both say that immigrants should be considered based upon core American values and that our borders should not be an open sieve. The reality is, however, that Democrats see immigrants, both legal and illegal, eventually supporting their political ambitions while Republicans fear the opposite. Both parties are acting out of self-centered concepts as to what is best for the future of that particular party. Self-interest, of course, is what makes political parties and voters do what they do.

Americans of all stripes need to sit down and come up with a policy, which develops reasonable criteria to accept immigrants and even refugees, while protecting our national borders, ideals and institutions. It is my prediction that the current imbroglio will lead to such a compromise. Let us pray for common sense, in any event.

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