

pendent” Iraqi newspapers to publish articles praising U.S. military operations.

The administration’s efforts seem geared far more to domestic strutting than to the survival of Iranian democrats. The profusion of U.S. money makes it far easier for the Iranian government to tar all reformers as fifth columnists and traitors. Iranian human-rights activist Emad Baghi bitterly complained, “We are under pressure here both from hard-liners in the judiciary and that stupid George Bush.” Vahid Pourostad, editor of the pro-reform *National Trust* newspaper, told the *Washington Post* that whenever the U.S. “came and supported an idea publicly, the public has done the opposite.”

It is unclear whether the Bush administration honestly wants to advance democracy in Iran or whether it is merely creating another pretext to start bombing. If the Iranian regime responds to Bush’s brazen intervention by rounding up reformers, further repressing free speech, acting even more paranoid, it may help Bush sway Americans on the need to bomb Iran in the name of democracy.

Thomas Carothers, director of the Carnegie Endowment’s Democracy and Rule of Law Project, warns that Bush policies are creating a “democracy backlash” around the globe. The U.S. has gone from being a “shining city on the hill” to championing barbaric practices that civilized nations have long condemned. While many Americans seem to pay attention only to Bush’s idealistic invocations, foreigners are not as gullible.

The administration seems to have learned nothing from its democracy debates of the last four years. But perhaps the rhetoric has all been a ruse. Perhaps invoking “democracy” is simply a smoke-screen in pursuit of the neoconservative goal of “benevolent global hegemony.” ■

James Bovard is the author of the just-published Attention Deficit Democracy and eight other books.

Lost in Translation

Open borders, closed minds

By Marcus Epstein

AT FIRST GLANCE, the National Capital Immigrant Coalition’s protest at the U.S. Capitol against HR 4437—a bill that would dramatically step up enforcement of laws combating illegal immigration—seemed a routine left-wing affair.

The speakers included labor leaders, Democratic politicians, clergy, minority spokesmen, the ACLU. Their speeches were predictable. America was frequently referred to as a nation of immigrants. Both legal and illegal immigrants were credited with sustaining the economy and were praised as hard workers who had strong family values. And predictably, supporters of immigration restriction were denounced as racists. The crowd was reminded that hatred is un-Christian, un-American, and above all not family value. One priest even said he was praying for congressmen who supported the bill, “because they have become atheists, because if they were Christians they would not have this kind of law.”

Kweisi Mfume claimed that not only slaves but also Asian immigrants built the District of Columbia. A congressman told the crowd, “If you are illegal immigrants, then so am I.” This wasn’t that surprising either. Politicians often go overboard when they start hyperbolizing to a rabble.

In spite of the racially diverse speakers, virtually all of the 10,000 demonstrators were Hispanics pronouncing their unalienable right to live and work in this country. That the crowd lacked African-Americans and white churchgoers to see their leaders speak from the podium

was not much of a shock either. A poll by the Pew Research Center in 2003 found that 77 percent of weekly churchgoers and 74 percent of African-Americans think that the government should do more to control who is coming into this country.

What genuinely shocked me as I walked around the west lawn of the Capitol—even with my low expectations—was how culturally alien the crowd appeared. It is not that they were anti-American Reconquistadors who wanted to take over the Southwest. There were a few signs quoting Che Guevara or Emiliano Zapata, but the overall tone to the protest was not radical. What was more striking than the demonstrator’s lack of hostility to America was their lack of affection for or even understanding of this country.

The *Washington Post’s* article described many of the protesters as carrying small American flags and accompanied the piece with a photo essay filled with Old Glory. In reality, while some of the demonstrators flew the stars and stripes, they were greatly outnumbered by the standards of various Latin American countries. One of the protesters was waving an upside down American flag. When I talked to him *en Espanol*, I realized that it wasn’t because he hated America or thought we were in distress. He was completely incognizant of how our flag is supposed to be flown. In some ways, this was worse than the flag burnings that accompanied protests against Proposition 187.

Though I could see the Capitol and the Washington Monument, I felt like I was in another country. Martin Luther King Jr. and Thomas Jefferson's names were dropped by the speakers, but I did not get the impression that the demonstrators saw themselves marching in either man's footsteps—or even knew who they were.

Most of the speeches were given in English and then translated over the loudspeaker into Spanish. Whenever a speaker delivered a crowd-pleasing line, there was utter silence until the Spanish version came. Then the throng would burst into applause and start chanting “Si, Se Puede.”—“Yes, We Can.”

Even the assimilationist clichés were in Spanish. The phrases “Somos un Pais de Inmigrantes” (We are a nation of immigrants) and “Somos Americanos” (We are all Americans) were printed on shirts and signs throughout the crowd. The few signs in English were not written in the most sparkling prose. “We Want Green Card” and “We Are Worker No Criminals” were some of the more eloquent ones.

Because the speakers extolled the crowd as great patriots, I decided to ask a few demonstrators what it meant for them to be American and why they loved this country. Unfortunately, most did not understand English. The few who did, and those who I managed to communicate with through my 202 level Spanish, knew nothing of Ellis Island, the Mayflower, or the rest of America's multicultural mystique. One congressman quoted George Washington out of context to suggest he supported open borders. He introduced Washington as the father of this country, but after it was translated into Spanish I suspected that this was news to the majority of the crowd.

My congressman, James Moran, made it clear that all you need to be an American is a job: “You become an American

by working hard and providing for your family. By that definition, you are true Americans.” This is quite different from what he usually says about patriotism when he comes to the neighborhood barbecue every Fourth of July.

I'm sure that Congressman Moran is correct that most of the people who were there work hard and care about their families. But even most people who believe this nation is a mere proposition would argue that Americanization requires more than just being a good-hearted person.

I did not get the impression that anyone there cared about America as a nation of immigrants, a melting pot, or even a multicultural salad bowl. Instead they are making a relatively good living and don't want to go back to their home countries.

This is a completely understandable sentiment. If you can go to another nation, maintain your culture and language, live among your co-ethnics, and make a lot more money than you would in your homeland, who wouldn't want to do so? The question that not one of the speakers or protesters even attempted to address is whether America can successfully accommodate the billions of hardworking people around the world who would love to come to this country.

I have joked that to some conservatives, all assimilation means is learning English and voting Republican. Even by these meager standards, the protesters came up short. Few spoke English, and none were sporting the “Viva Bush” or “Soy Republicano” pins and bumper stickers that were handed out by the various Hispanic Republican groups at CPAC a few weeks earlier.

Over two dozen business, libertarian, and conservative groups, including Americans for Tax Reform, the Republican Liberty Caucus, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers, have stated their oppo-

sition to HR 4437, but they had no presence at the rally. In fact, the protesters and speakers were openly hostile to big business and the Republican Party. At one point, they started chanting, “Bush: Escuchan. Somos en la lucha”—“Bush: listen, we are going to fight.” Many protesters had anti-Bush posters, as if he were the driving force behind anti-immigration sentiment. There were also a number of signs endorsing Hillary Clinton *para el Presidente*. Nobody gave the president any brownie points for guest-worker and amnesty proposals. For all his pandering to illegal immigrants, they still saw him as the racist enemy.

Realizing that virtually no one there knew a word of English, a friend of mine who is interning on Capitol Hill began to speak very loudly of his desire to deport many of the people in attendance. There was no response. Then I translated, “Deseo deportar inmigrantes ilegales” and protestors shouted back—in Spanish. ■

Marcus Epstein writes from Alexandria, Virginia.

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Roe in the Balance

The progress and setbacks of the pro-life movement after 33 years of legal abortion

By Michael S. Rose

EACH YEAR on the Jan. 22 anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, pro-lifers turn out in the nation's capital by the hundreds of thousands. At this year's March for Life, a decidedly hopeful mood prevailed despite grim weather. For the past 33 years, since the 1973 ruling in which the Supreme Court claimed that the state and federal governments lack the authority to ban abortions, the pro-abortion crowd has had the upper hand, with both the mainstream media and the courts on their side. That's changing.

High-profile abortion pushers who thrive in apoplexy mode now routinely gnash their teeth in public statements. Agitated by President Bush's new Supreme Court appointments and the wave of recent state legislative restrictions on abortion, Nancy Keenan, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, believes it all spells doomsday for her movement. She has been sounding the alarm: *Roe v. Wade* will soon be dismantled. Yet even the apocalyptic auguring falls flat. Despite NARAL's aggressive opposition to the latest Bush nominee—the only nominee since Robert Bork on record stating he believes the Supreme Court erred in its decision on *Roe*—Keenan's troops were unable to harass Samuel Alito significantly, let alone scuttle his confirmation.

Judicial and legislative developments since the Alito hearings are enough to give NARAL heartburn for years to come. Their terror alert began on the day of Alito's debut when the high court agreed to reconsider the legality of partial-birth abortion. After being mired in

litigation for years, the law that prohibits doctors from performing the barbaric late-term procedure is expected to be upheld by the Roberts Court.

On Feb. 27, the Supreme Court ended a 20-year-old legal battle over protests outside abortion clinics. Justices ruled 8-0—Alito did not participate—that federal racketeering laws cannot be used to outlaw the presence of pro-life demonstrators near clinic entrances.

But the major political asteroid hit the next day when South Dakota became the first state in 14 years to pose a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade*. The Senate voted 23 to 12 to prohibit virtually all abortions in the state. Even the typical exceptions for rape or incest, favored by President Bush—who said through a spokesman he does not support the ban—were rejected by South Dakota lawmakers, and doctors who perform abortions would be charged with a Class 5 felony, punishable by up to five years in prison. Before Gov. Mike Rounds even signed the bill into law on March 6, Planned Parenthood had already threatened a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the ban. Prepared for that eventuality, pro-life activists say they have already raised over \$1 million to fund a protracted legal battle.

Similar bans are being proposed in six other states—Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky—and the Tennessee Senate recently passed a proposal to amend its state constitution to not include a right to abortion. Further, all 50 states now have abortion-restricting legislation either on the books

or in the works in some form. Proposals in 21 states would require doctors to inform women seeking abortions that their babies will likely feel pain during the procedure. Fetal pain bills have already passed in Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Other state legislatures are focusing on preventive measures such as requiring waiting periods, pre-abortion counseling, and ultrasound images before an abortion.

Understandably, pro-abortion forces fear a continued legal avalanche that will eventually give the Supreme Court the opportunity to reverse *Roe v. Wade*. Although neither Bush appointee said he would vote to overturn *Roe*, abortion proponents fear that both Roberts and Alito would add to the pro-life voices of Scalia and Thomas. That leaves a five-vote majority to uphold the precedent of *Roe v. Wade* in the unlikely event that a case comes before the Supreme Court before the retirement of Justice John Paul Stevens, who turns 86 in April, or Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 73 and rumored to be in ill health.

Ironically, Pierre's most notable critics are not the ho-hum hystericals of the pro-choice movement. The South Dakota ban has unleashed a flock of pro-life Chicken Littles decrying the Black Hills "hardliners" who, they fear, might undermine their strategy of passing less sweeping laws that restrict access. Neocon oracles like the editors at *National Review* have doomed the ban to be overthrown, the result of which would reinforce *Roe* as a "super-duper precedent." It appears that South