**The American WASP - A Master Race?  
By Sal Osio, JD/HispanicVista.com**  
  
Samuel B. Huntington is an academician, the Chairman for the Harvard   
Academy for International and Area studies. In his recent book "The   
Hispanic Challenge," a digest of which was published online, he has   
ignited a maelstrom of dissent and concern. At the core of his essay is   
his conviction that Hispanics, particularly Mexican-Americans, pose a   
threat to the United States: "The Unites States ignores this challenge at   
its peril."  
  
He concludes that American Hispanics ". no longer think of themselves as members of a small minority who must accommodate the dominant group and adopt its culture." His hypothesis is that the strength of America is grounded by WASP Americans - White Anglo Saxon Protestants. His theory is that WASPS have been able to dominate Americaby subjugating non-WASPS - Catholics, Jews and, in general, other Americans who do not trace their ancestry to England- thus retaining the American identity. Assimilation by non-WASPS to the dominant culture, ethics and values, which he assumes to be WASP, he claims, is the essence to America's strength and well being. Accordingly, assimilation by adopting the dominant culture preserves "the American dream." He then asserts that Hispanics, primarily by retaining their Spanish language and cultural heritage, have not assimilated and pose the threat to America.  
  
Huntington's thesis is dangerously close to Nazi Germany's philosophy   
promulgated by Alfred Rosenberg, who rationalized the Nazi credo that   
Germans were the Aryan race - the "Master Race." The Nazis justified the   
extermination of Jews, Gypsies and other non-Aryans, an ethnic cleansing   
political strategy, in order to protect and preserve the purity of the   
Aryan race. The similarity between theorist Rosenberg and Huntington is   
daunting. And it has the same ominous potential consequences in the hands  
of America's White supremacists. The implication is clear: WASPS must rise   
to the Hispanic challenge. In the alternative, he states, America will be   
split into two cultures - one English the other Spanish, similar, he says,   
to the disabling status in Canadawith a French and an English speaking   
and cultural society. And he asserts that America must become/remain   
monolingual and preserve its dominant WASP culture, identity, ethnicity ,

and values.  
  
To support his WASP supremacist theory, Huntingtonidentifies early   
Americans as WASP. He suggests that the Declaration of Independence,   
Constitution, government and institutions are based on "Protestant values   
of individualism, the work ethic, and the belief that humans have the   
ability and the duty to try to create a heaven on earth" - the American   
identity is WASP. To buttress his case he identifies Thomas Jefferson - a   
known agnostic and free mason - as the Protestant model who authored the   
American democratic philosophy. He neglects to mention that Jeffersonwas   
primarily influenced by and embraced the doctrines of French philosopher

Jean-Jack Russeau (1712-78) who is credited with the formulation of   
liberty, justice and equality for all men, the social contract between   
government and the governed wherein the people are the source and the   
beneficiaries of power - the concept of democracy. And it need not be   
pointed out that the only commonality between Russeauand WASP is the "W."  
  
Huntingtonmakes light of our early hypocrisy, word versus practice,   
wherein we enslaved the Black minority of Americans and held them in   
indentured servitude through the last century. And he implies that this   
non-WASP segment is not a problem because they have assimilated and are a   
stagnant minority, therefore, not a threat to WASP cultural dominance. He   
explains that residents from the U.S.annexed territories from Spain(e.g.   
Florida), France(e.g. Louisiana territories) and Mexico  
(Southwest) also assimilated and became subservient. He assumes, of   
course, that immigrants from Europe, Asia and Latin America, including   
Euro-Americans from France, Germany, Italy,Ireland, Poland and other   
countries, abandoned their heritage and submerged themselves to the WASP   
dominant culture. Never mind, St. Patrick's Day and the American Irish   
culture and tradition. In short, he does not conceive that America has   
evolved from a melting pot of immigrants into a culture and society that   
uniquely blends cultural values and traditions, which have created a bond   
that has become the American identity, which has replaced the earlier   
characterization of the WASP culture, and which now defines 21st Century   
America.  
  
Having committed himself to a WASP America, Huntingtonpredictably   
identifies Hispanics as a non-conforming group, and, therefore, the threat   
to the United States. They speak Spanish, he says. They multiply. They   
live in Hispanic populated communities. They have their own media. Their   
own political agenda. Their own religion. Their own food. Their own   
organizations. And soon, they will take over the United Statesand   
dominate WASP society or create a bifurcated country. OUCH!  
  
Primarily Huntingtonrelies on the premise that Hispanics speak Spanish.   
He views this as a schism with mainstream WASP America. And he overlooks   
the fact that Spanish speaking Hispanics are primarily foreign born. He   
ignores factual data, readily available, such as the McKinsey Quarterly  
(1998) and a similar study by VNV Spectra in 2003, that only 28% of   
America's 40 million Hispanics are Spanish language mono-cultural (the   
foreign born 1st generation) and that 59% are acculturated (2nd  
generation) and that they become assimilated from the 3rd generation   
onward - not unlike other immigrant groups. In 2003 a study by RAND   
Corporation found that Hispanics climb up the economic ladder in   
successive generations, similar to other immigration groups: ". counter to   
the prevailing view that there is something in the system that holds   
Hispanic immigrants back." The Pew Hispanic Center, National Survey of   
Latinos, 2002, relying on the 2000 U.S. Census, finds that 78% of 3rd   
generation Hispanics are English language dominant and 22% are bilingual,   
in contrast to 4% and 24%, respectively, of the 1st generation (foreign   
born). The study also found ". that native-born Hispanics expressed an   
overwhelming preference, 71%, f or English language . withanother 20%   
choosing both English and Spanish equally." So much for the assumption   
that Hispanic immigrants retain their native language ad infinitum.  
  
What either confuses Huntington, or he chooses to ignore, is the   
difference between acculturation - the preservation of the cultural traits   
while adopting a complementary set of skills from the > mainstream  
- and assimilation - the replacement of native customs with the mainstream   
culture. Through the 3rd generation, Hispanics tend to acculturate and,   
thereafter, to assimilate. The acculturation phase is readily explainable   
- the annexation of the Southwest territories from Mexico and their   
proximity to the Border, and, in South Florida, the Cuban immigration of   
the 60's and the proximity to the Hispanic Caribbean.  
The Hispanic Challenge - if a challenge or threat at all - is the path of   
acculturation leading to assimilation - from the 3rd to the 4th generation   
immigrant, and beyond. This process is now accelerated through   
convergence. According the U.S. Census Bureau (1994) over 26% of 2nd   
generation Hispanic women and over 33% of 3rd generation Hispanic women   
marry outside their ethnicity. Is there a threat from a group who is   
following the path of assimilation into the American mainstream, like   
other immigrant groups did before them, only because they are growing in   
size or because their ethnicity is not WASP?  
  
If Huntington fails to make a valid claim to his thesis that Hispanics are   
a threat to the United States, is his revival of the WASP configuration   
not a political statement? Exclusionary, and a call to arms against an   
immigrant group? Is it the rationale for a white supremacist movement?   
Does Huntingtonhave a hidden agenda . topromote the sale of his book   
through inflammatory propaganda, which will be embraced by white   
supremacist Americaand hate groups . a significant readership? Is the   
affiliation with Harvard coincidental? Or does HarvardUniversity endorse   
Huntington's views? Would he have any credence were it not for his   
affiliation with HarvardUniversity?  
  
The real issue, which is a concern to all of us, particularly to the   
American Hispanic community, is illegal immigration. Hispanic statesmen   
have addressed this issue repeatedly on HispanicVista.com commentaries.   
The consensus is that the solution is simple: Enforce existing sanctions   
against employers who hire undocumented workers. However, the consequences   
to the agricultural and service sectors of the U.S. economy would be so   
catastrophic, without the labor subsidy, that the application of existing   
law may not be an option. Accordingly, other solutions need to be   
considered, including the President Bush proposed Guest Worker Program.  
  
Why didn't Huntingtonaddress the real issue? After all, the problems on   
which he based his underlying thesis are essentially related to   
foreign-born undocumented Hispanics laborers from Mexicoand Central   
America.  
  
It's obvious that Huntingtonprefers burgers, fries and catsup to tacos,   
beans and salsa. But, would he not be well advised, like modifying his   
thesis, that he change his eating habits after checking out the dietary   
consequences of his diet preference?  
  
The cultural contribution by Hispanics to our society, much the same as   
the contributions of other immigrant groups before them, enrich our nation   
and bestow a distinctive flavor to the American culture. Multiculturalism   
is an asset, not a threat or liability, that enriches our social   
experiment and defines our American identity. Dare we imagine an America   
without the soul of our Black brethren, without the spirit of the Irish,   
without Italian music, without German sciences, without English   
literature, without French cuisine, without Japanese electronics, without   
Indian meditation, without Chinese art ... and without Mexican fiestas,   
mariachis, margaritas and apetitos?  
  
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