**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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