Al Gore: A "Reinventor" Par Excellence

Sept. 27, 2000

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The claim that Al Gore invented the internet has been a favorite target of political jokes, but Al Gore's role in "reinventing" the INS is no laughing matter. He was a driving force behind the perversion of Immigration and Naturalization Service procedures in order to "invent" a million votes for Clinton-Gore in November 1996.
Al Gore was the Administration's point man in charge of the plan developed in early 1996 to put a million aliens on the fast track to citizenship even if they didn't qualify and even if they had criminal records. Gore was responsible for keeping the pressure on INS to make sure the aliens were naturalized by September 1, the last day to register for the presidential election.

INS Administrator Doris Meissner was at first reluctant to go along with these shenanigans. But she finally acquiesced in Gore's plan to remove alleged "bureaucratic roadblocks" to speedy naturalization.

The "smoking gun" documentation came to light sort of as an aside in the new book "Sellout" by David P. Schippers, his own story as chief investigative counsel for the House impeachment of Bill Clinton. Before Schippers was ordered to limit his investigations to the Monica case, he had focused on the politicization of the INS.

Schippers uncovered a memo written early in 1996 from Doug Farbrother of the National Performance Review (NPR) to Bill Clinton reminding the President that he had "asked us to expedite the naturalization of nearly a million legal aliens." Farbrother set forth the plan "to force some serious `reinvention' on INS" by "appointing one of our proven NPR reinventors as Deputy INS Commissioner" and moving the existing Deputy elsewhere.

The National Performance Review is now called Vice President Al Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government, according to its website www.npr.gov. This confirms Gore's peculiar obsession with reinventing things.

Dr. Elaine Kamarck in Gore's office responded to Farbrother on March 21, 1996 in a solid-cap memo: "THE PRESIDENT IS SICK OF THIS AND WANTS ACTION. IF NOTHING MOVES TODAY WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE SOME PRETTY DRASTIC MEASURES."

A March 22 memo to Al Gore from Doug Farbrother then reported that he told INS "to waive stupid rules, move money from one account to another as needed, and recruit and hire people locally instead of through the slow centralized process." Farbrother added that each city manager in the major cities was to be given "a project budget to spend as needed."

Farbrother's memo spelled out other details of the plan to circumvent customary procedure: "delegate hiring authority, waive extensive background investigations on new employees, allow the cities `overhire authority.'" This carried out the suggestion originally made in a February 15 memo from HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros to Clinton and Gore suggesting the use of "volunteers" from Hispanic action groups to "process" naturalization applications.

In a subsequent fax, Farbrother wrote that he had instructed INS Commissioner Doris Meissner to "get the results the Vice President wants."

In a memo addressed to Al Gore on March 28, Farbrother restated the goal to "produce a million new citizens before election day." The game plan was to "blast INS headquarters loose from their grip on the frontline managers" and to "make Doris Meissner delegate broad authority to her field managers" in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York and Miami.

A March 29 memo from Farbrother to Elaine Kamarck revealed his concern lest this plan be exposed as "a citizenship/Clinton voter mill."

This ingenious 1996 "voter mill" paid off big time. An audit by the accounting firm of KPMG Peat Marwick uncovered some of the results.

The newly naturalized citizens who were qualified to vote by this Gore project included more than 75,000 who had arrest records when they applied, an additional 115,000 citizens whose fingerprints were unclassifiable for various technical reasons and were never rechecked, and another 61,000 people who were given citizenship without submitting any fingerprints at all.

Federal law requires that an alien's application for citizenship must be accompanied by a complete set of fingerprints, which must be cleared by the FBI to determine if the applicant has a criminal record.

Schippers sent the FBI a list of 100 of these new citizens who had committed documented heinous crimes prior to naturalization and discovered that 20 percent were arrested for serious crimes after citizenship was granted in 1996. No one knows how many thousands of criminals were granted citizenship whose fingerprints were never checked at all.

Schippers uncovered some of the additional ways that alien applications were processed. INS agents were directed to relax the testing for English, to complete every interview within 20 minutes, and to ensure that all applicants passed the Civics test by continuing to ask questions until they got a sufficient number right, sometimes asking 25 questions to get four or five correct answers.

Crooked politicians have always stuffed the ballot box in traditional ways, but Al Gore must be given credit for one of the most ingenious. Is the same plan in the works for this year's election?