



## Europe's Immigration Superiority Complex

(Published in *Brussels Journal*, August 6, 2007)

Soeren Kern

Analysis n° 211

August 30, 2007

Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero deserves a special award for transatlantic chutzpah. During his recent visit to Mexico, he ended the state dinner held in his honor by toasting Mexican President Felipe Calderón with a sterling example of post-modern pontification for which Spanish leftists are so famous: "[There is no wall that can obstruct the dream of a better life](#)," Zapatero proclaimed.

The "wall" that Zapatero is so worried about is, of course, the anti-illegal immigrant fence that, if everything goes as planned, will one day run along one-third of the 2,000 mile (3,200 km) border between Mexico and the United States...and not the twin razor wire-topped fences that separate the Spain's

north African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla from those people in Morocco and the rest of Africa who have dreams of a better life in Spain.

It could be that Zapatero was just trying to divert attention away from [a damning report by the New York-based Human Rights Watch](#) that accuses Spanish authorities of mistreating and neglecting hundreds of migrant African children at holding centers on the Canary Islands. Or perhaps he was still fuming that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, [during her recent six-hour stopover in Madrid](#), did not extend the long-awaited invitation for Zapatero to visit the White House.

Whatever the case may be, the fact remains that the United States and

Europe are facing many of the same challenges on the issue of immigration. But for a variety of cultural, historical and structural factors, the United States seems to do a far better job with immigration than does Europe.

Indeed, the United States, which officially passed the 300 million person mark in October 2006, is the largest immigrant-receiving country in the world. In fact, roughly half of the 100 million newest Americans are recent immigrants or their descendants; and many of them, as Zapatero probably knows, are from Mexico.

Europe, however, is also a magnet for immigration: It is set to attract up to one million immigrants this year. But the European experience with immigration is very different from that of the United States. Part of the reason is that in Europe, [many or most immigrants to the continent end up on welfare](#), while in the United States, almost all immigrants take one or more entry-level jobs and work their way up the economic ladder. Welfare is simply not the American way.

The result is that most immigrants to the United States, a country with no dominant ethnic group, are fully integrated into American society by the second generation, regardless of their country of origin. By contrast, most immigrants to Europe, where countries are built around a population base with a common ethnicity, are Muslims who are not easily integrated, no matter how long they have been living on the continent.

The challenge of integration is exacerbated by the fact that over the past 30 years, Europe's Muslim population has more than tripled. According to data compiled in the US State Department's [Annual Report on International Religious Freedom](#), there are almost 25 million Muslims living in Europe today. And instead of assimilating into mainstream European society, Muslim immigrants tend to cluster in marginalized ghettos all across the continent.

By contrast, [the first-ever, nationwide, random sample survey of Muslim Americans](#) finds them to be largely assimilated, happy with their lives, and moderate with respect to many of the issues that divide Muslims and Westerners around the world.

In Europe, Muslims already make up more than 25 percent of the population of Marseilles, 15 percent of Brussels and Paris, and 10 percent of Amsterdam, for example. And these numbers are rising fast. Indeed, demographers predict that the number of Muslims living in Europe may double again by 2015. Thus Princeton University's Bernard Lewis, one of the world's most distinguished scholars of the Arab and Islamic cultures, recently told the German newspaper *Die Welt* that: ["Europe will be Islamic by the end of the century."](#)

This unfortunate reality provides the political context for Zapatero's concern with the US-Mexico border. The Spanish prime minister, who like so many other European leftists is religiously fixated on building a

post-modern multicultural utopia, seems blinded to the fact that [runaway immigration combined with socialist mismanagement is creating a Eurabian horror story](#). Much easier, it would seem, for Europeans to criticize America than to acknowledge their own shortcomings.

Indeed, many analysts believe that the steady weakening of Europe is the underlying cause of growing anti-American and anti-Israel bigotry among Europe's elites, many of whom are bending over backwards to please Muslim immigrants in naive attempts to buy fake peace with radical Islamists. Says Fouad Ajami,

a well-known authority of the Arab world: "[In ways both intended and subliminal, the escape into anti-Americanism is an attempt at false bonding with the peoples of Islam](#)".

In Spain, meanwhile, dozens of would-be migrants have been killed and many more injured by rubber bullets or beatings in their bids to climb over the ten foot (three meter) fences around the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Zapatero's response? [He has just built a third perimeter fence in order to keep the immigrants from crossing](#). At least Spanish leftists are consistent in one thing: they are nothing if not consistently inconsistent.

[Soeren Kern](#) is Senior Analyst for Transatlantic Relations at the Madrid-based [Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos / Strategic Studies Group](#).