

## **SO FAR, NAFTA IS PAYING OFF WELL FOR AMERICA**

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### **Body**

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While I appreciate columnist Pat Buchanan's concern for Americans, he cannot possibly be more wrong in his analysis of the North **American** Free Trade Agreement (Commentary, Sept. 19).

The programs implemented are complex and it may take many years to know their impact on our economy. For instance, it will take 15 years for all of the tariff reductions to take effect in **NAFTA**. Yet Buchanan conveniently overlooks this fact to conclude that **NAFTA** is bad for the United States. His argument founders on three key points.

1. Trade Balance -- The true measure of **NAFTA**'s success from the U.S. standpoint is the increase or decline of the total value of trade. Through May 1994, U.S. exports are up by 14.9 percent over the first five months of 1993; U.S. merchandise exports to Mexico increased from \$16 billion to \$19 billion. 2. Immigration -- Buchanan's illegal immigration statistics to document Mexican migration to the U.S. are also misleading. One must consider the reporting process (the Immigration and Naturalization Service reports the number of incidents and not just the individuals). So a person caught 10 times will show up as 10 illegal entries. Buchanan's reasoning that the 40 million peasants (Mexico's 1990 census reported a rural population of 32.6 million of all ages) will stream to the U.S. would directly contradict his conclusion that job opportunities are growing in Mexico. If they were growing, immigrants wouldn't be coming.

3. Timing -- **NAFTA** was ratified by the U.S. Congress in November 1993 and the treaty went into effect on January 1, 1994. Buchanan has chosen to use statistics (illegal immigration for instance) which predate the treaty, a serious error in his argument.

Americans need policies that will guarantee our continued prosperity. However, slipshod examination of the facts and policy options will do little to **further** the debate among a concerned electorate. I hope that in the future Buchanan will bring responsible analysis to this important discussion.

-- Bruce Edgerton

Monterey

### **Notes**

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### **Graphic**

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