

Assessing America's Place in the Global Network

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Body

To the Editor:

In "The Crossroads Nation" (column, Nov. 9), David Brooks concludes that to be the "crossroads nation," America needs to finance research, improve infrastructure, fix immigration, reform taxes, encourage study abroad by college students and take advantage of veterans.

By my count, at least three (and possibly more) of these goals require a significant government role. Given a Republican Party with a strong Tea Party faction explicitly pledging to cut "nonessential" spending and remove government from our lives, it would be helpful to know how he envisions these things coming about.

Brian Williams Lewisburg, Pa., Nov. 9, 2010

To the Editor:

If we don't reform our immigration laws to make it easier for skilled immigrants to stay here after graduating from one of our universities or move here after obtaining much needed skills in their home countries, we don't stand a chance of becoming the essential destination in the 21st century.

We may be "well situated to be the crossroads nation," but unless foreign-born travelers can get on the road to the United States with a legal right to stay and work here, there will be no roads to cross.

Kenneth Gilman New York, Nov. 10, 2010

To the Editor:

Last week one of my undergraduate finance students asked me how I can be optimistic about the future of our country, given the negativism and acrimony of the recent election and all that has happened to our economy these past three years. I hesitated; yes, I'm optimistic, but I couldn't put my finger on why.

Thank you, David Brooks, for cutting through the fog and making such a clear, rational argument for what was only a vague instinct.

Robert Elliott Chicago, Nov. 10, 2010

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