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Aug. 30, 2010

Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [David Mark](#)

Arizona immigration law a human rights violation? GOP's family feud?

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Roger Pilon

Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

Quite apart from Gov. Brewer's complaint, the Obama State Department's first report on human rights conditions in the U.S. -- submitted to the U.N.

Human Rights Council last week pursuant to a U.N. mandate that members conduct self-assessments every four years -- reads like a politically correct campaign brochure, touting everything from the administration's stimulus spending to ObamaCare to financial reform legislation as promoting "human rights."

We're told, for example, that America falls short on "fairness, equality, and dignity" in such areas as education, health and housing. And what's the evidence? Among other things, it's that unemployment for blacks and Hispanics is higher than for whites, that there's racial and ethnic disparity in home ownership rates, and that "whites are twice as likely as Native Americans to have a college degree." Or consider this claim: "Asian-American men suffer from stomach cancer 114 percent more often than non-Hispanic white men."

That's a "human rights" problem?

What the administration has done here is conflate real human rights -- the rights protected under the U.N. Convention on Civil and Political Rights, to which the U.S. is a party -- with specious "rights" -- the claims found in the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights -- which the Senate has refused to ratify. And all of this is submitted in a document to

be scrutinized by such human rights exemplars on the council as Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, and Cuba.

After the U.S. ambassador walked out of the predecessor U.N. Commission on Human Rights in 2004, following the admission of Sudan to the commission in the midst of ethnic cleansing in Darfur, we did not join the commission's replacement in 2006, the new U.N. Council on Human Rights, not wanting to lend that body any credibility.

Last year, however, the Obama administration joined the council -- part of its outreach to the world. Enough said.

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