

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Demographics changing the world

A century ago, when colonialism was at its height, white Europeans controlled most of Africa and Asia.

After the Second World War, the Europeans lost their colonies as they gained independence. America, its power enhanced in the aftermath of the war, dominated the world.

As America relinquishes its role as world leader under the Trump administration, birth rates are creating a very different world from the one we've experienced in recent generations.

Demographers have long known that as people become more affluent and women become more educated, birth rates fall.

A look at the chart, below, tells the story. In 1950, European countries had among the highest populations on earth.

But their birth rates have been falling dramatically ever since.

In fact, countries like Spain, Italy, Japan and South Korea are projected to have half the population in 2100 that they have today.

Even the United States does not have enough births to retain its present population. We are growing only because of immigration.

China's population will peak within 15 years and be overtaken by India as the most populous nation on earth. Nigeria will become the third most populous country in a few decades, overtaking the United States.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

In one sense, this might be good news, because we already have more people than the earth can sustain.

But the amount of resources each person consumes has a much greater impact on the earth than the total number of people. In fact, people in the developed world consume about 32 times more resources per capita than poor people in countries like Kenya.

As people become wealthier, worldwide, consumption increases much faster than population growth.

And then there is the problem of the elderly. The percentage of elderly people

in Pottstown, in Pennsylvania, in the United States, and most countries of the world is increasing. The percentage of working age people is declining.

Who will pay the taxes? Who will pay for Social Security and pensions? Who will pay for healthcare for the elderly?

For decades, England has encouraged immigration from its former colonies to sustain its working age population. Likewise, France, from North Africa. Germany has long welcomed "guest workers" from Turkey.

But if most countries have declining populations, where will future immigrants come from?

The fastest growing area of the world is Sub-Saharan Africa. Countries unafraid of diversity may look there to recruit new citizens.

Ten countries with highest population Figures in millions

1950		2020		2100	
China	554	China	1,439	India	1,450
India	376	India	1,380	China	1,065
U.S.	159	U.S.	331	Nigeria	733
Russia	103	Indonesia	274	U.S.	434
Japan	83	Pakistan	221	Pakistan	403
Germany	70	Brazil	213	D.R. Congo	362
Indonesia	70	Nigeria	206	Indonesia	321
Brazil	54	Bangladesh	165	Ethiopia	294
United Kingdom	51	Russia	146	Tanzania	286
Italy	47	Mexico	129	Egypt	225