

From Birth to Battle

By Brad Edmondson

The war with Iraq is over. Our diplomats are making treaties with our enemies and sending weapons to our friends, as they have always done. They are missing the cheapest and most effective way to promote peace. They should send teachers.

Emerging research shows that women who can read have fewer babies than women who are illiterate. One of the best examples comes from India, where a group of demographers compared birthrates with illiteracy rates in 326 districts. Indian women in virtually illiterate areas have an average of 6.1 babies, according to William Retherford, a researcher at the East-West Center in Honolulu. When female literacy hits 40 percent, the total fertility rate drops to 4.2. At 80 percent, fertility is just high enough to keep the population growing slowly.

Other research shows that literate women tend to marry later, says Retherford. Once married, they are likely to enroll their children in school rather than putting them to work. Literate women are more likely to have interests outside the family. They know more about hygiene, so their children are more likely to survive. They are also more likely to use birth control.

The literacy-birthrate connection relates to war when you make another connection. The world's most warlike countries also have the world's highest birthrates.

In the 1980s, ten armed conflicts resulted in more than 100,000 deaths.

Five began before 1980, according to *World Military and Social Expenditures*. By far the largest was the Iran-Iraq war, which killed an estimated 1,000,000 civilians and soldiers. The Iraq-US war killed another 120,000, according to the Population Reference Bureau (PRB).

Iran and Iraq have annual birthrates of 45 or 46 births per 1,000 population, and nearly half (45 percent) of their populations are aged 15 or younger. The average birthrate for less-developed countries, excluding China, is 35 per 1,000, with 40 percent of the population aged 15 or younger, according to PRB. Even by Third World standards, Iranian and Iraqi women have a lot of babies.

The birth-to-battle connection also holds true for the other eight warring countries. Afghanistan lost 725,000 people to civil war and Soviet intervention. Ethiopia lost 539,000 to civil war and famine since 1974. Some 506,000 have died in Sudan, followed by Mozambique, 415,000; Angola, 341,000; and Uganda, 308,000. Each of these countries has a birthrate of 44 or more, with 44 to 49 percent of the population aged 15 or younger. Guatemala's birthrate is 40 per 1,000, and 138,000 have died in a civil war since 1955. Indonesia massacred 106,000 residents of East Timor between 1975 and 1989. Indonesia's birthrate is only 27 per 1,000. But in more developed countries such as the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, the annual birthrate averages just 15 per 1,000, according to the PRB.

Saddam Hussein found it easier to wage war than to develop a sound economy. Rather than face widespread unemployment and unrest among young Iraqi men, he simply enlisted them and sent them to die. Young Iraqi women will not check their childbearing as long as Middle Eastern culture discourages their education. The war may be over, but the birth-to-battle machine will keep running until we offer an alternative.

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Dan Stein wrote this column for the Miami Herald of May 18, 1991 explaining that six months after then-Congressman Pete Wilson voted in favor of a bill to dramatically increase immigration, now-Governor Pete Wilson is contending with budget shortfalls caused by that very increase. Mr. Stein is executive director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) in Washington, DC.

STATES, COUNTIES FOOT BILL FOR UNCHECKED IMMIGRATION

By Dan Stein

If people in Florida are casting a wary eye toward that other state noted for sun, fun and bountiful agriculture, it is perfectly understandable.

Both states have large and rapidly growing populations spurred by domestic and foreign migration. Both are feeling the strains of overdevelopment, scarcity of water, and the costs of rapid growth. Florida and California are also struggling to cope with a phenomenon that many had convinced themselves could not occur in these meccas of growth — recession.

While Florida has been hurt by the recession, California has been staggered by it. California's projected budget shortfall of nearly \$13 billion this year is about the size of the combined GNPs of the oil-rich Gulf states of Oman and Qatar.

Nothing grabs a person's attention like the prospect of higher taxes or reduced services. And with the prospect of both staring Californians in the face, people are beginning to examine the state's balance sheets more closely.

In the space of a few days in April, both the governor and the chief executive officer of Los Angeles County came to the same conclusion: Large-scale immigration is imposing enormous fiscal burdens on California and particularly on its largest county, Los Angeles.

Similar effects have been felt in Florida, and Dade County in particular. Sen. Connie Mack, in a letter to President Bush about a year ago, complained that the influx of immigrants was draining state, county, and municipal resources.

Mack's former Senate colleague, Pete Wilson, is now governor of California. He is getting a first-hand lesson in the costs of immigration. During an April 16 meeting with California-newspaper editorial writers, Wilson complained that uncontrolled

immigration (particularly illegal immigration) to his state was a prime contributor to California's budget woes. Wilson said that, while Washington's unwillingness to control the nation's borders "makes a fiction of the immigration law," federal law continues to impose new and costly burdens on the states.

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Wilson noted that federal law "requires states to provide a Medicaid program for illegal immigrants, as well as immigrants here legally, as well as "refugees," and that "the children of illegal immigrants be schooled at state expense." The cost to Florida, Mack has stated, "is expected to exceed \$100 million" to respond "to the basic needs of this influx" of new immigrants.

While the states are bearing the brunt of these costs, only the Federal Government can set and enforce immigration policy. Echoing Mack's call "for the Federal Government to assist Florida," California's governor last month asserted that the "Federal Government ought to be paying a greater share" of the burden.

Someone who needs very little convincing is Los Angeles County's chief administrative officer, Richard B. Dixon. On April 22, Dixon's office released a study that enumerated the staggering costs of illegal immigration being borne at all levels of government. Dixon estimates that in the last fiscal