

*Charlie Reese is a columnist with The Orlando (FL) Sentinel. This item appeared in their September 9, 1993 edition and is reprinted with permission.*

# America's Worst Problems Can Be Helped

By Charlie Reese

If you want to do something to preserve the environment, stop immigration.

If you want to do something about the crime problem, stop immigration.

If you want to get the U.S. economy out of the permanent doldrums, stop immigration.

If you want to stop the rise of political extremism, stop immigration.

Otherwise, all your efforts to preserve the environment, to bring peace to America's cities, to get people working again, and to make sure our politics remain moderate and pragmatic will ultimately be in vain. Numbers of people is at the root of all of the above.

Numbers of people is the key stress factor in causing environmental damage. Numbers of people of disparate cultures competing for fewer and fewer jobs is driving down the standard of living in the United States. Numbers of people and Congress' refusal to face the problem is lending weight to appeals made by political extremists.

It is not really an exaggeration to say that the world today has only one problem — population. It is not really an exaggeration to say that the greatest threat to planet Earth comes from one thing — population. It is not really an exaggeration to say that the greatest threat to the human race is one thing — population.

Since we live in the United States, our first step in controlling population growth should be to stop immigration, which is the main source of population increase. Bear in mind that population must always be measured relative to the carrying capacity of the area occupied by the population. Too many people is the point beyond which the area occupied can no longer sustain life.

In the past, surplus population just migrated to a new area. We are descendants of such a migration. What destroyed the world of the Native Americans

was not soldiers or congressional policies or treaties not kept — it was uncontrolled immigration. All the bad things that happened to the Native American happened because of population increase from immigration. And now it's our turn.

In the 1940s, our population was about 150 million. Now it's about 250 million. By 2020 it will be about 350 million. I can tell you from personal observation that just going from 150 million to 250 million has been going halfway to hell.

For a variety of reasons, population growth is not a popular topic. Conservatives, I suppose, believe growth means growth of sales and always use the lame excuse that economic development will cure the problem of population growth. That's a dead fish on a hot pier. Ask the people of India and the Chinese how population growth has helped their economies.

Religious folk sometimes equate population control with forced abortions and forced euthanasia, but surely there is a middle ground between extremes of doing nothing and doing terrible things.

Our first priority as Americans should be simply to stop immigration. I argue for stopping it completely because the way our political system works, if you argue for zero immigrants, you'll get some reduction, but if you argue for some reduction, you are apt to get no reduction at all. I would like none; but I'll settle for less.

What I would most like, however, is for the problem of population increase to receive the attention it deserves from journalists and politicians who, for some strange reason, find it more important to discuss allegations against rock singers and the marital affairs of English royalty or some vagary of the weather.

Misplaced priorities involving one's attention is probably the base cause of the demise of both individuals and countries. ■

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# The Closed Door

By Peter Brimelow

Immigration is on the world's mind. In the U.S. which had 974,000 legal immigrants last year, President Clinton just announced measures aimed at curtailing the estimated 300,000 illegal immigrants also arriving annually. In Germany, France and even in Australia, intakes have been cut back, and immigration has become a hot political issue. But there's one place immigration won't be reduced: Japan. There's already virtually none.

Japan is not discussed at all in University of Maryland economist Julian Simon's *The Economic Consequences of Immigration*, one of the most celebrated texts on the subject. Simon argues forcefully that immigration is a good thing economically. Yet Japan has still achieved the highest sustained long-run growth rate of any major industrialized country. How?

Interviewed by *FORBES* (April 2, 1990), Simon said: "How Japan gets along I don't know. But we may have to recognize that some countries are *sui generis*."

The recent political turmoil in Japan may lead to some fundamental changes. But immigration is not likely to be affected much, judging by *FORBES'* recent conversation with a Japanese consular official who wished to remain anonymous.

*FORBES*: I'd like to know the procedures to follow to immigrate to Japan and obtain Japanese citizenship.

Anonymous Japanese Official: [Complete surprise and astonishment] Why do you want to immigrate to Japan? ...There is no immigration in Japan.

*FORBES*: No political refugees or asylum seekers?

Anonymous Japanese Official: There might be three people a year who become Japanese. [chuckles]. And even they don't stay long, they try to go elsewhere, like the U.S.

He's not joking. Japanese entry statistics don't

seem to recognize the concept of an immigrant, as opposed to a visitor. So *FORBES* has used the stock of legal permanent foreign residents in Japan — roughly equivalent to U.S. green card holders — as a proxy for immigration flow.

In 1991 there were about 900,000 permanent foreign residents in Japan legally, significantly less than one percent of Japan's 124 million population. This proportion has remained remarkably stable. (Japan's illegal population is reportedly increasing but still minute at perhaps 300,000 total.)

By contrast, according to Washington, D.C.'s independent Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), foreign-born residents are almost 9 percent of the 258 million U.S. population. (This estimate includes some illegals, but CIS says this would wash with the undercount of legals.) And the U.S. foreign-born population is rising rapidly — according to one estimate, to 12 percent by 2010.

Since 1945 a mere 222,000 foreigners have acquired Japanese citizenship, including those who have married Japanese. By contrast, over 8 million have become Americans.

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***"Japan's zero-immigration policy may seem unpleasantly chauvinistic to most Americans. But it clearly has not prevented the most remarkable economic performance of the post-World War II era."***

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Underpinning Japan's radically different immigration policy: what appears to be a rigorous national consensus about what it means to be Japanese. This is a particularly unpleasant problem for the small Korean-descended minority in Japan. "It's only Westerners who think they can tell Koreans from Japanese," says Jared Taylor, a