

## Economic and Population Trends

### Commentary for April 11, 2004 — Shades of the Future

I had the opportunity to attend a 2-day conference in San Bernardino, California, near where I live. The conference was titled "Understanding the Middle East." Several important historical trends were mentioned that are important for everyone to know.

#### *Expatriate Money*

The first speaker at the conference was the Director of the Information Office at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington D.C. He cited a very surprising monetary figure that tells of the lack of confidence the people of the Gulf States (the small oil states near Saudi Arabia) and particularly Saudi Arabia have toward their own political stability and future economic hopes.

The Director said that the equivalent 1.2 trillion (that's 1,200 billion) dollars was sent and was kept outside of the Middle East Gulf states by the richest people and families in the region, and that 750 billion dollars of that was from Saudi money. That means that a huge amount of money that could be used for the benefit of the people of the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia has been shipped overseas to banks and to investments elsewhere other than their own countries. Why? It is done because their own countries are not seen as stable and safe places to invest their money.

The 3,000+ families that comprise the Saudi Royal family have consistently believed that at any time there could be an uprising by the lower classes and that their major assets were best kept out of the country. Most of the leading families of Gulf States feel the same way. Some day that money and investment will return to begin to provide the basics to the lower classes of their own countries.

#### *Expatriate People*

When people feel they can have a better life in a country different from where they were born, whether for economic or safety reasons, they will move themselves (and possibly their families) to countries with better conditions. So many people are moving and living in countries in Europe that there is a real possibility that the natives of those countries will be minorities within decades.

I heard actor John Rhys-Davies on a talk show the other day and he made some statements that were as surprising to me as those by the Saudi Information Office Director. Rhys-Davies has repeated his statements in several interviews. His words of one interview are below:

**"Europeans are having fewer and fewer children, while migrant populations, predominantly Muslim, are growing much faster. Most European fertility rates have dropped so much that they have declined below the break-even point, to the degree that populations are actually beginning to shrink. If the current trend**

continues, Rhys-Davies says, 'The population of Germany at the end of the century is going to be 56 percent of what it is now. The population of France will decline to about 52 percent.' Meanwhile, Muslim immigrants are having babies at a much faster clip, so that in time, they may become the majority population throughout Europe. 'Last year, 56 percent of the babies born in Brussels were Muslim,' Rhys-Davies notes. 'In a matter of 20-50 years, we are going to see two to three countries become predominately Muslim — Holland, France, and possibly Germany.'"

• *Andrew Leigh, "No Sean Penn"*

My reaction to this statement was, well, if God allows that to happen, then so be it. In the United States anyone who becomes a citizen is as much an American as I am. In God's view also there is no moral, social or political superiority or even significance to anyone's genetic lineage:

**"And has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."**

• *Acts 17:26–27*

**"YHWH looks from heaven; he beholds all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashions their hearts alike; he considers all their works."**

• *Psalms 33:13–15*

However, although we are all of one blood, there are differences between peoples and cultures, differences that can divide and cause conflict when individuals and groups confront one another. Cultures can be bad and good just like people can be bad and good.

### ***The Possible Future***

In the European Union today there are 15 million Muslims. Ten million of those live in France and Germany. By contrast there are only 700,000 Jews in the European Union countries. The political power of a unified Muslim voting bloc that is sympathetic to Palestine and the Palestinians is a recognized phenomenon. (See the article "[Europe's Muslim Street](#)" in *Foreign Policy* by Omer Taspinar.)

At present the larger European nations have unemployment approaching about double that of the United States (5.7% in March 2004). Many of the foreign immigrants, residents and 2nd generation citizens are employed in jobs that could be done by native-born citizens.

### ***World Population Increase***

While researching this Commentary after the conference I came across a website with some fascinating information regarding population trends (see "[World Population: Major Trends](#)")

- By the year 2050 India's population might be slightly larger than China's with both countries having about 1.5 billion people.
- The fastest birthrates will be West Asia and in Africa south of the Sahara.

- By 2050 the African country of Nigeria will reach over 339 million people. That is larger than the current population of the United States, and it represents a 10-fold increase in 100 years. Nigeria has the fastest growing population in the world.
- The population of Pakistan by 2050 will be 350 million people.
- The population of the world will double to about 12 billion people (about 6 billion currently).
- This world population increase will occur with most of the world experiencing declining birthrates.
- By 2050 Western Africa will have almost the same population as all of Europe.
- Eastern Africa will have many more people than all of South America, the Caribbean and Oceania combined.

These trends are not only surprising but staggering the mind to comprehend them. What in the world is going on? God is doing exactly what He intended to do in Genesis:

**“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. ... And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”**

• *Genesis 1:27–28, 31*

God’s command to be fruitful and to multiply continues His own act of creating man in His own image. The multiplication continues God’s creation and every human being who has lived in the past, is on earth today, and who will be born in the future also has God’s own image. God’s reproduction of Himself through His family.

### ***Stability and Cooperation Are Key***

Will Europe become Muslim and will all those billions of dollars stay outside of the Middle East? No. Economic stability will return to the Middle East. Many of the Muslims will return to their homelands from whence they came — with their money. Most of the immigrants and political exiles will leave Europe and the United States and other countries of the world and return home with money to invest in their homelands. This is the engine that will help make the countries of the Middle East prosperous in a surprising way.

In a column titled [“Mideast Miracle”](#) in the February 16, 2004 issue of *Forbes* Magazine, Editor and Chief Steve Forbes writes:

**“... in coming months Egypt will be initiating reforms that should dramatically transform its economy into a wealth-creating, wealth-distributing dynamo that will lead millions of Egyptians into a vibrant, increasingly democratic middle class. The country is set to become an economic miracle rivaling Ireland or Hong Kong. In doing so, Egypt will deal a devastating blow to global terrorism.”**

• *Steve Forbes, “Mideast Miracle”*

Mr. Forbes points out that most of the world's governments do not recognize the concept of ownership of private property. The idea is that government owns everything you have and they "allow" you the privilege of keeping what you have. This idea is changing in Egypt. It will change the Middle East. What will Egypt do? Forbes explains:

**"After several years of preparation, Egypt is about to commence a Japanese-like makeover of its society, one that will profoundly and positively impact the rest of the Middle East and the developing world. Reforms will create easy access to private property for all Egyptians, including those in city slums. All enterprises will be able to easily turn themselves into legal entities; previously, obtaining a business license had been a costly process that could take nearly two years. Not surprisingly, most Egyptian businesses are extralegal, part of the country's shadow economy."**

**• Steve Forbes, "Mideast Miracle"**

Forbes goes on to explain that most of the world's economy is "off the books" and represents dead capital, money that is socked away and cannot be used for investment. Growth and expansion is stifled because assets are not protected by law **"In Egypt's case, 88% of all enterprises are extralegal, as is 92% of the country's housing."** One estimate is that Egypt's shadow economy has accumulated assets of some \$248 billion that is not being used for long-term investment and purchases. When it happens, this simple act of the Egyptian government to make legal the reality of ownership will go a long way toward releasing a tremendous amount of credit and assets that is hidden (often expatriated to other countries). As Forbes writes:

**"Egypt and other developing countries do not lack for entrepreneurs; they lack institutions and legal structures that would enable their entrepreneurs to expand and truly flourish."**

**• Steve Forbes, "Mideast Miracle"**

I believe what Mr. Forbes has outlined is the mechanism by which prosperity of the world will grow to accommodate the additional billions of people that will be born in the next 50 years. It will be a time of expansion and economic growth. Egypt will become an economic powerhouse by virtue of being the first to use these "new" economic concepts (new to the Middle East). In the current system only a few "own" property or businesses. However, Forbes states that:

**"When people are brought into the formal economy and legal system, the rule of law takes on real life. People then know who owns what. Losses can be tracked and fraud attacked. Contracts and rules can be enforced. The current informal system [in Egypt and the Middle East] effectively excludes most businesspeople from having access to their national economies, not to mention the global economy."**

**• Steve Forbes, "Mideast Miracle"**

Anyone who has dealt with immigrants to Europe or the United States will note that they as a group of people are industrious, productive and entrepreneurial. Those same people would rather be industrious, productive and entrepreneurial in their own countries. All people want to better themselves and their families' situations. That will occur in the future. These same people who as immigrants in Europe and the United States will take back to their home

countries their learning, their skills, and their experience along with their profits to provide a catalyst to the coming worldwide prosperity.

For the present the United States and Europe will benefit from such economic “misfits.” When the concepts of ownership, the rule of law and contracts take effect, the Middle East will be transformed. It will not come from government intervention or “priming the pump” or from loans from the International Monetary Fund (the IMF). Prosperity will come when investment in native countries is seen to be secure and protected, so they might grow and prosper. Only then will markets expand and prosperity become generalized to the poorest. Each country and culture will make the changes in their own way and by their own process, but it will happen.

### ***The Other Necessity for Prosperity***

Another catalyst to prosperity in the Middle East and the world will be peace in the Middle East, in Israel, in Jerusalem and in the area around the Haram esh-Sharif. The process for peace may come from working from the particular (from the Haram) to the general (out to the Middle East and the world). Israel, which has long had proper laws of contracts and ownership for Israelis, has benefited and become prosperous from such laws. However, a drag on the Israeli economy is the huge bureaucracy and taxation. Also, it is questionable if Israel's economy could survive without huge amounts of economic and military aid from the United States to shore up their prosperity.

Dr. Ernest Martin wrote about this coming prosperity in the world before and during the End Times just before the Second Coming of Christ Jesus to this earth. In the article [“The Secret of United States Economic Success”](#) Dr. Martin shows that much of the economic success and power of the United States comes from a spirit of fair play, which is enforced by adherence to contracts, agreements, and the rule of law. Of course the power of the United States comes from unique blessings (See my article, [“The Power of the United States”](#)), but countries with lesser natural advantages have been just as successful for their respective population sizes. In the article by Dr. Martin, [“How Israel Will Conquer the Middle East”](#) Israel will not gain control of the Middle East by military force, but by economic cooperation and fair play with her neighbors, surprising as that may seem at the present moment. See the article [“Israel Should Cease its Military Conquests Post Haste!”](#)

I wrote a short commentary on the World Bank's willingness to intervene with investment to rebuild Iraq ([“World Bank Ready to Rebuild Iraq”](#)). That will not happen until social and political stability takes place in Iraq and in the region. In fact, while it is the current policy of the United States to avoid a civil war in Iraq, with its attendant social and political disruptions and loss of life, social and political stability may occur with Iraq becoming a federation of semi-independent states (like the European Union) with the Kurdish peoples in the north, Sunni Muslim tribes in the center and the Shiite Muslim tribes in the central and south of Iraq. I hope that a civil war will be averted.

Once that stability occurs the nations will assist Iraq to rebuild. Iraq will become an economic success and even a financial power. Elements of Jeremiah's prophecy about Babylon have not

yet happened (Babylon has never been covered by the sea — yet, see Jeremiah 51:42), therefore this prophecy is for the future:

**“And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he has swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall. My people, go you out of the midst of her, and deliver you every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord.”**

• *Jeremiah 51:44–45*

The nations are not flowing to Babylon, yet. But they will do so in the future until God punishes Babylon. Not only will the nations go to Babylon in great numbers but just before God’s punishment, some from Israel will be in Babylon. The context indicates they will be prisoners of some kind. God’s people are commanded to come out of her close to the time of the Lord’s anger. Indeed, great prosperity will be common in the world at the time of the end as the kings of the earth look to Babylon as a center of great commerce (Revelation 18:9–19).

## **Conclusion**

Just as Israel and Judah shall be gathered to return to the land, so too the expatriates of the nations will return to their homelands. They will not likely be forced to return, but most will want to return because of new opportunities and because of a desire for their homeland within a secure legal and economic structure. This will all be part of the revolution in thinking that is coming. Dr. Martin said it best in December 1999:

**“And, in the same context, Jeremiah said that even the Gentile nations will then observe how God reacts with His people Israel at that time. Jeremiah stated:**

**‘The Gentiles [the nations of the world] shall come unto you [unto Israel] from the ends of the earth, and shall say, surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit’ (Jeremiah 16:19).**

**So, not only will the Jewish people soon begin to refuse to sustain the false teachings of their philosophical fathers [Maimonides and Luria] and return to the teachings of their ancient fathers [Moses, the Prophets and also to the Jewish authorities who gave the New Testament]. Along with this, the Gentiles from all over the earth will also begin to look at their fathers and they will also recognize that ‘our [Gentile] fathers have inherited lies’ (Jeremiah 16:19).”**

• *Ernest Martin, “[The Greatest Revolution in History](#)”*

The economic and population trends in today’s world are powerful and frightening. However, it is clear that God is in control and He intends a general prosperity until the Day of the Lord. At that time God will bring righteous judgment to the nations of the world at the appearing of Christ Jesus back to this earth.

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