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# Demography No Laughing Matter In Russia

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In Russia's Ulanovsk region, Sept. 12 is Conception Day.

Workers are given the day off, and encouraged to go home and do their best to conceive a new Russian. The hope is to have a bumper crop of babies on Russia's national holiday, nine months off.

Conception Day has occasioned much mirth and ribald humor. But for Mother Russia, the issue of her children is no laughing matter.

Two decades ago, the Soviet Union was three times the size of any of the other giant nation-the United States, Canada, China, Brazil-and the third most populous, with nearly 300 million people. Came then the great crack-up of 1990-91.

The Baltic republics-Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia-broke free first. Next were Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova in the west; Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus; and Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in Central Asia.

These amputations removed a third of the territory and half the population of the Soviet Union. Yet the remnant, Russia, remained twice as large as any other nation and still boasted a population of 150 million.

Since the 1990s, however, Russia has been losing population at a rate of 750,000 a year-not to emigration, but to death. By one count, the Russian population is down to 143 million. President Putin has predicted that only 124 million Russians will be alive in 2015. In 2000, the United Nations projected that, at its present birth rate, by 2050 Russia's population would fall to 114 million.

In a 2005 study, the United Nations estimated that, together, Ukraine and Russia will lose 50 million people-25 percent of their combined populations-by mid-century. The Slavs are dying out, and the geostrategic implications are enormous.

In a few decades, Turkey, which seeks entry into the European Union, will become Europe's most populous nation. Like Xerxes' bridge of boats across the Hellespont, Turkey will be the Asian land bridge into Europe, the Bridge of The Prophet into the homeland of the Christians.

As critical, the vast majority of Russians live west of the Urals, while east of Novosibirsk (New Siberia City), all the way to Kamchatka, the tiny Russian population is departing or dying out. Yet, in timber, oil and minerals, this is the most resource-rich region on earth. And south of Siberia lies the most populous and resource-hungry nation on earth.

American children born today may have Chinese for neighbors across the Bering Strait from Alaska.

Nor is it only the Slavic peoples who are expiring.

So, too, are the native-born populations of Western and Southern Europe, as the empty nurseries of Europa fill with bawling Muslim

babies.

Americans of European ancestry are also declining as a share of the U.S. population, down from near 90 percent into 1960 to 66 percent today. Anglos, as they are called now, are now minorities in our two largest states, Texas and California, and, by 2040, will be a minority in the nation that people of British and European stock built.

Last month, the Census Bureau projected the U.S. population would grow by 167 million by 2060, to 468 million.

And immigrants and their children will constitute 105 million of that 167 million. That would be triple the 37.5 million legal and illegal immigrants here today, which is itself the largest cohort of foreigners any nation has ever taken in.

With the 45 million Hispanics here to rise to 102 million by 2050, the Southwest is likely to look and sound more like Mexico than America. Indeed, culturally, linguistically and ethnically, it will be a part of Mexico.

Like Russians, Americans of European ancestry are failing to reproduce. Yet, a closer look reveals that population growth remains healthy among the religiously devout-evangelical Christians, Catholic traditionalists, Muslims and Mormons. Among the secularists, however, birth rates are far below Zero Population Growth-and the possibility of extinction looms.

One recent study found that the Jewish population in the United States fell by 6 percent in the 1990s, from 5.5 million to 5.2 million. Orthodox Jews, however, are known for families of five, eight or 10 children.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and have dominion ... over every living creature." So reads Genesis. And so European Man once preached and practiced. But having lost his empires along with his faith, European Man no longer sees himself as commissioned by God.

Indeed, he no longer believes in God. Among our best and brightest are many whose purpose is to enjoy life to the fullest and to end it, when the time comes, as painlessly as possible.

Which seems to suit the rest of the world-China, India, Islam, Africa, Latin America-fine, as all look forward to a magnificent inheritance.

If demography is destiny, the West is finished. And, if so, does it really matter all that much who rules in Baghdad?

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