

Population bomb: 9 billion march to WWII

Commentary: Can anyone halt this economic explosive?

By Paul B. Farrell, Wall Street Journal MarketWatch, June 28, 2011

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif. (MarketWatch) — Sshh. Don't tell anyone. But "while you are reading these words, four people will have died from starvation. Most of them children." Seventeen words. Four deaths. That statistic is from a cover of Paul Ehrlich's 1968 provocative "Population Bomb."

By the time you finish this column, another five hundred will die. By starvation. Mostly kids. Dead.

But global population will just keep growing, growing, growing. Why? The math is simple: Today there are more than two births for every death worldwide. One death. Two new babies.

Bomb? Tick-tick-ticking? Or economic bubble? Population growth is a basic assumption hard-wired in traditional economic theory. Unquestioned. Yes, population is our core economic problem. Not a military problem. But the bigger this economic bubble grows, the more we all sink into denial, the closer the point of no return where bubble becomes bomb, where war is the only alternative.

Yes, folks, ultimately population growth is an economic nuclear bomb, tick-tick-ticking a silent countdown to global disaster. In denial, we march a self-destructive path to WWII.

Simple math: One death + two births = America's poison pill

Worldwide population doubled to 3.5 billion between the Great Depression and the Great Society. One generation, from the '30s to the '60s when "The Population Bomb" was published. Since the '60s, we've doubled again. This year global population shot past seven billion. Two billion living in poverty, surviving on less than two dollars a day. We do live in a globalized economy. And the math is simple: One death, two births.

Warning: This economic bomb will not stop tick-ticking any time soon. Why? Scientific American said population is "the most overlooked and essential strategy for achieving long-term balance with the environment." No wonder Bill McKibben, author of "The End of Nature," warns: "Act now, we're told, if we want to save the planet from a climate catastrophe. Trouble is, it might be too late. The science is settled, and the damage has already begun."

We're on suicide watch and yet population control, the world's No. 1 economic issue in "off the table." Why? Last year Mother Jones made it abundantly clear why. In "The Last Taboo," columnist Julia Whitty asked: "What unites the Vatican, lefties, conservatives and scientists in a conspiracy of silence? Population." That hot-button issue ignites so many powerful reactions. Politicians won't touch this third rail.

Our denial is a massive “conspiracy of silence.” Yes, we’re all in this global self-destructive conspiracy. Families love making babies. Economists obsess about their population-growth assumption.

Stockholders demand earnings growth. Wall Street is insatiable. Corporate CEOs shoot for quarterly targets to get ever bigger bonuses. The global Super Rich see population growth as opportunities to increase their wealth, widening the wealth gap. We’re all in this rat race together, in a “conspiracy of silence.”

Population is the key economic power driving all economic issues

Yes, you can forget “Peak Oil.” Forget global warming. Forget debt, deficits, defaults. Forget commodities, scarce resource depletion. Forget all other economic, political, military problems. Yes, forget all of them. None of them matter ... if our leaders fail to deal with the world’s out-of-control population bomb. Nothing else matters. Nothing.

Still, the silence is defining. We’re trapped in this deafening “conspiracy of silence.” Neutered. Blind to this suicidal path, incapable and unwilling to face the greatest single economic challenge in history. Won’t wake up till it’s too late.

Why? Deep in our hearts we see no acceptable universal solution. So we wait ... until this economic bomb stops tick-tick-ticking. Explodes in our faces. Till the wake-up call, a total economic collapse. Till then, the silence is deafening. We stay in denial. Waiting.



The above is from a longer article at:

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/population-bomb-9-billion-march-to-wwiii-2011-06-28?pagenumber=1>

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