

Re: What happened to Japan?

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From: Chief (*Chief_at_Home.com*)

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Jim Blair <see@sig.com> wrote in news:cdj1ul\$kc5\$1@news.doit.wisc.edu:

> Chief <Chief@Home.com> wrote:

>> Jim Blair <see@sig.com> wrote in news:cdgq5c\$4vl\$1@news.doit.wisc.edu:

>>

>>> Chief <Chief@Home.com> wrote:

>>>

>>> ...

>>>>

>>>> I have no worries about my life but I wish my grandkids could have

>>>> lived in a world better than the one I grew up in. It's not the

>>>> case.

>>>

>>> Hi,

>>>

>>> I predict that young kids today will have a lot better life and more

>>> opportunities than any previous generation. They will live longer,

>>> travel more, know more about just about everything (that they care

>>> to Google), etc.

>>>

>>

>> I don't see that happening. I see the ones with healthcare living

>> longer. That leaves out 40% of Americans. I see more opportunity for

>> those born to upper middleclass and above families – that leaves out

>> 75% of Americans.

>

> Hi,

>

> Average life expectancy keep rising, as it has for the last 100 years

> (or more). And that "average" includes those who die young.

>

Averages are deceptive numbers. You know that. this country while being the wealthiest by far is fairly low among industrial nations. 40% of americans without health care is a condemnation of the benevolence of corporate America. Companies like Walmart and McDonalds consistantly report record profits the workers consistantly don't share in those profits. Those companies do not have many jobs that offer any benefits. Wage stagnation has been a fact throughout this unrecovering recovery.

- >
- >>...*The rollback of environmental protections, labor safety laws,*
- >>*and general labor laws will only insure 25% live better.*
- >
- > *Real (ie inflation corrected) family incomes reached their all time*
- > *high in 2000 for all 5 income quintiles, not just for the "rich".*

Family incomes – another deceptive number. When today households routinely have two and sometimes three jobs to compare it fairly to the single worker families of the 60's one would have to double the income of the single worker family – wonder how it would compare then. Not only that but when both parents work the expenses do not just double, the tax rate is worse, the childcare expenses are high, transportation costs and more eat a goodly portion of one income. Come on Jim, you can not honestly believe in these arguments your using.

- >
- > <http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/histinc/f03.html>
- >
- > *Table F-3.*
- >
- >>
- >>*Globalism is good for every citizen on the planet – except the*
- >>*American citizen that has to live through the decades of changes.*
- >
- > *Some US workers lose when jobs move to India or China. But workers*
- > *there benefit. I say better the jobs go there than that they move*
- > *here for those jobs.*
- >

I say we fill our grad schools again with the bright shiny faces of American kids. You know as well as I do that the percentage of Americans kids doing grad work in the hard sciences have been declining for years.

- >>...*The same*
- >>*mistakes made in our education system – lower the standards to level*
- >>*the playing field are the same mistakes we are making to 'globalize'*
- >>*America. We are lowering our expectations for some distant fictional*
- >>*future with little concern for the common good.*
- >
- > *I think the fact that US student know they must compete with those in*
- > *Korea and China and India motivates them. (at least it motivates some*
- > *of them).*
- >

They can't compete without a stable family life and an even playing field. The stable family has disappeared at the same rate as the increase of dual worker families and single parent families.

- >>
- >>

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>>>>...*Both my
>>>>kids have good educations from top tier colleges but go in and out
>>>>of work occasionally. If they didn't have a good education, I could
>>>>see where they would be in trouble in today's world.*
>>>
>>> *Yes, education will (I predict) become ever more important.*
>>>

It will become less available if the current crop of republicans get their way.

>>>>*Unless your one of the truly wealthy, education is the only way to
>>>>enjoy a somewhat decent lifestyle and that education is disappearing
>>>>as an option to the kids who by no fault of their own were born to
>>>>poor parents.*
>>
>>
>>>
>>> *Nonsense. Just about every kid in the US has the OPPORTUNITY for a
>>> "good education" IF THEY CHOOSE TO TAKE IT. The problem is that many
>>> do not: they spit in the face of that opportunity. But it is there
>>> for those who want it.*

That is not true in my experience. As a military officer I have had thousands of kids that society thought were not worth the effort in my units. Very few were not able to learn and many started college while on active duty. In every unit during the 25 years I was active duty I never met one that was not capable of more and most achieved more. In this country we take kids that live in poor families and because poor people live in poor school districts we give them a poor education. After they graduate they are faced with a poor job with a poor future. While they are living this poor life we show them the life styles of the rich and famous, show them BMW ads and CNN runs stories on whether to buy an American Yacht or a cheaper Chinese Yacht. After a while some join the military I took those kids who were totally defeated at the ripe old age of 18 and gave them opportunity, structure, and dignity. Those kids are the ones who are the members of the best military in the world and it is the best because of them. Those soldiers doing their jobs in Iraq or Afghanistan or putting out fires in the west are not the sons of the wealthy or in most cases not the sons of the middle class. They are the kids that some folks decided were not worth the effort and they were wrong. This country needs to have a national service requirement just so the average middle class and upper class kids can see that there is no birth right, no genetic difference, and no inherent laziness or stupidity among the lower classes.

>>
>>*That like saying since you can lead a horse to water but can't make it
>>drink no horses will be led to water. I disagree completely.*
>
> *You can send a kid to school, but you can't make him think.*
>

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Sure you can. If the kid see a light at the end of the tunnel he will seek the light. The republicans turn the light off and wonder why those stupid kids get lost. If a HS diploma made a difference they would seek it. Today it doesn't lead to a better job or a brighter future. We need to extend public education to 2 years of college or trade school.

>>

>>> *I worked with a recent MS in chemistry from the UW. His family was from China and I think he was born there. He went to grade and high schools in an inner city school system where most kids dropped out, but he learned enough to get a scholarship to the UW.*

>>>

>>

>> *Apples and oranges –*

>

> *No students and students. Those who want to learn and those who don't.*

>

>>...*The Chinese family structure is completely different*

>>*than today's American family ...*

>

> *Yes. And that is the problem. So the answer is to have the least of us to become third world? That is just silly – not an answer or a solution.*

>

>

>>...*and the solution is not for our poor to*

>>*become Chinese in their ability to sleep twenty to a room, eat rice*

>>*and fish day in and day out and sacrifice every aspect of their lives*

>>*for the future of their children.*

>

> *Actually it WAS the desire of families to work hard and to sacrifice*

> *for the future of their children that made the US great. And if/when*

> *we lose that, we will fall behind other countries (like China and*

> *India) that still have it.*

>

I disagree. The families that lived in this country for the first one hundred years were not less capable, less hard working. Public education helped some in the last part of the century. The labor reforms of Teddy Roosevelt help some and the inventiveness of Americans helped some. But it wasn't until after WWII, after the social and labor reforms of FDR and Truman that America became a great country. In my opinion those reforms would have been less or nonexistent without the tremendous struggle our fathers and grandfathers endured with the great depression followed by a world war. Because the struggle was shared by all Americans from all classes the shared sacrifice muted the normal conservative voices of the time. Today those voices are now back in the main stream and loudly preaching selfishness, greed, inconsideration and the protection of wealth to the detriment of the common good.

>>>>...*If I were president for a day the first thing I'd do was make*

>>>>*public education extend through the first two years of college or*

>>>>*trade school and to four years or even higher for kids who choose a*

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>>>> *hard science.*

>>>

>>> *Kids can't be given an education: they can be given the opportunity*

>>> *to earn one. I agree that money should not be the limitation, but I*

>>> *think that today it is not.*

>>

>> *Of Course they can be given an education.*

>

> *They can be sent to school. But that is not the same thing.*

>

>> *...That's what the GI Bill after*

>> *WWII did successfully.*

>

> *Before WW II, going to a college was limited to the children of the*

> *wealthy few. But many more WANTED an education, and the GI bill gave*

> *them the opportunity. That plus the increase in (mostly state)*

> *universities.*

>

>

>> *...That's what public education did until it's end*

>> *result was less than what was needed to obtain a decent job. When I*

>> *graduated from HS I could have had any number of entry level jobs –*

>> *not so today. One must have a skill or a degree to obtain what my*

>> *generation did with a HS education.*

>

> *And in the centuries before that, if you could read and write you*

> *could get a good job. Yes, as Mason Clark said, today it takes 2*

> *years of college to get a high school education.*

>

>>

>> *Bush's father gave an education to young George.*

>

> *He sent Dubwa to Yale, but did he get an education? Or just a degree?*

>

>

>> *...Wealth doesn't mean a*

>> *kid is more deserving or more energized – just more able.*

>>

>>> *Remember that rich guy who went to a poor innercity Baltimore school*

>>> *(mostly white then but black now) who returned to his old grade*

>>> *school to give a pep-talk? At the last minute he decided he could*

>>> *not inspire them with words alone, so he promised them that anyone*

>>> *who graduated from highschool and qualified for a college, he would*

>>> *insure that they could afford to attend the college.*

>>>

>>> *Some 6 years later many in that class did graduate from highschool*

>>> *and get accepted to a college. They were motivated by his promise*

>>> *and the idea that they COULD do it.*

>>>

>>> *But it turned out that his promise didn't cost him very much. All*

>>> *those kids got full scholarships to college!*

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>>

>>*A good man – is that what the youth of today have to rely on – a
>>wealthy benefactor? The government could be and should be that
>>benefactor as it was for my generation. The participation of all of us
>>to the benefit of all of us. Not handled like a lottery where kids who
>>happen to come across the exception to the rule do well and the vast
>>majority do not.*

>

> *Note that he didn't actually give them money. He just made them
> appreciate an opportunity that they already had.*

>

>

>> *I went there for 6 months and flew all over Iraq meeting locals and
>>buying gear for my units. The decent Iraqis left Iraq years ago. They
>>live in France, England and to a lesser degree the US. What is left in
>>Iraq today are friends of Saddam and people that had dealings with
>>Saddam. Years of killing ones enemies eventually leads to a country
>>full of friends. That is the case in Iraq. The founding fathers lived
>>among people hundreds of years more civilized than the majority of
>>current Iraqi's. Giving the Iraqi's democracy is like giving eyeliner
>>to the pygmies in the rain forrest. It will be accepted but after a
>>few months it will be totally unrecognizable. The factions will erupt
>>and the country will undergo a civil war as soon as we leave. With
>>half the population strict moslms supported by Iran, the other half
>>moderate muslims and Kurds it ought a humdinger when it starts. They
>>still shoot at each other as well at our troops.*

>

> *It is likely that the Kurds in the north will appreciate our efforts
> and use the opportunity. And to a lesser extent, the Shiites in the
> south. The Sunni center may well be left with the sand and the
> terrorists, since the oil is in the north and south.*

I believe just as Tito was able to be the glue that held Yugoslavis together Saddam was the glue that held Iraq together. Both were despots. We kept both, aided both – it was at the time in our national interest. There were arguements to invade Iraq.

The one I believe was the real reason was the military was losing is ability to stage out of Saudi Arabia. The militant fundamentalist's were forcing the Saudi Royals to ask us to leave. The US remained safe during the cold war by basing close to the threat. We needed a base close to the threat. Afghanistan by itself could provide that because Saddam did have the weapons to reach across his border and would more than likely use them. He also remained a threat to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Saddam had to go.

It's an arguement that might have eventually gotten the approval of the American people. But Bush chose to fabricate, stretch, and obscure instead. Having the war might or might not have been a mistake – time will tell. Being dishonest was a mistake.

>>

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>>>>...*The current administration's tired old trickle down*
>>>>*policy isn't working any better than it did under Reagan.*
>>>
>>> *Actually the US economy has been better than ever for the last 20*
>>> *years. Low inflation and low unemployment and just two shallow and*
>>> *short recessions. That is good by historic standards.*
>>>

Actually it hasn't for half the population.

>>*The economy in 60's was better than the 70's and the 80's. It perked*
>>*up in the nineties and has dwindled since. In the early 70's the*
>>*minimum wage was hooked to one half of the average manufacture workers*
>>*hourly wages. Nixon change it to 'at the whim of the politicians'*
>>*who's own raises are automatic unless they vote to stop them. In the*
>>*60's a HS grad could work for minimum wages and with a buddy share an*
>>*apartment, buy a car and start living the American dream. Today the*
>>*minimum wage is a joke. Families are now working two and three jobs to*
>>*live where one job was sufficient before. That is not progress by any*
>>*stretch of the imagination.*

>
> *The federal minimum wage is not the measure of much of anything. The*
> *average income of families is. And that has increased since the*
> *1960's.*

>
Answered above.

>>
>>*Unemployment numbers and the way they are figured has changed several*
>>*times and just like a 1200 sat test result today is not the equal of*
>>*1200 sat test result in the 60's the unemployment figures of 5.6 are*
>>*more like 10%–12%.*

>
> ??? *An even larger fraction of the population is now in the workforce*
> *than was in the 1960's*

>
Not a good thing – no one to raise the children.

>>..*A recent study shows a 25% unemployment rate for black males.*

>
> *And what was that figure in 1960?*

I'll look around for the number. I doubt it was more.

>
>>*That's bad whether your a liberal or a conservative. The current Bush*
>>*policy of not extending unemployment insurance is only to avoid seeing*
>>*a more realistic jobs picture. The articles I've read indicate that*
>>*170,000 to 240,000 jobs are needed each month to break even ...*

>
> *Break even with the 1.6 million immigrants each year? I hear Kerry*
> *wants to create 10 million new jobs for those 8 million Americans he*
> *say want a job. So are we to assume the other 2 million jobs are for*

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> *the immigrants that will come for them?*

Arguing Bush's job creation with pessimistic speculation isn't going to work. Bush will go down as the first president since Hoover to have a net jobs loss. That is a dismal performance. To argue that doing anything different might set another record is a little weak.

>

> *I predict that by November the economy will be a plus for Bush. Kerry*

> *should push stem cell research as his difference with Bush.*

>

By November the cash from refinancing will have been spent. Consumer debt will take a toll on American families as the interest rates go up. I predict a depression if Bush goes four more years. The consumption is driven not by purchases of goochi handbags, face lifts and rolex watches but by bread, clothing, shoes, and Chevys. What Reagan did to give Bush I a recession Bush II will finish.

>

>>.... *Supply side economics*

>>*has never worked to do anything other that shrink the middle and*

>>*enrich the upper.*

>

> *The US has been operating in the Reagan Supply Side for the last 20*

> *years, and we have done OK. Both as compared to Europe and Japan, and*

> *as compared to the past. Remember there were 2 recessions during the*

> *1960's.*

>

> *And what do you mean "shrink the middle"? How do you define "middle"?*

> *(I say lots of "middle income" people have moved up to "upper income"*

> *during the last 20 years.)*

>

Many more have moved down.

>>...*It's time to put that puppy to bed once and for all. Not once*

>>*has a raise in the mininum wage decreased the availability of jobs*

>

> *Hey lets make it \$20 per hour since we KNOW that this cannot possibly*

> *cost any jobs.*

>

Extreme examples don't make a point.

>>...*and*

>>*not once has enriching the rich benefitted the poor.*

>

> *When poor people become rich, is that enriching the rich?*

>

The exception to the rule.

>

>>...*The recent retail*

>>*sales data was a perfect picture of the outcome. The extremely small*

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>>luxury goods sector grew while the large discount sector remained
>>flat. To think all the road workers, retail clerks and lower
>>management folks have started buying BMWs is fairly foolish. The
>>facts don't support the words of this administration. Four more years
>>of the same may well bring about a depression. In my lifetime this is
>>the worst president, the worst administration and the worst congress I
>>have ever experienced.

>

> I can remember when Nixon was the worst president ever. He was going
> to cancel the 1972 (or was that the 1976?) election and rule as
> dictator. And this was a certainty, as my Leftish friends KNEW from
> inside information.

>

Again extremes only point out the lack of a reasonable argument.

>>...Just the
>>other day I saw something that I never expected to see. A government
>>TV Ad warning pregnant women to not eat fish because of high mercury
>>content. An entire food group judged to be bad for our unborn
>>children. Amazing, especially when one looks at the recent increases
>>in the allowable limits of mercury emissions. So instead of lowering
>>the output of mercury our government decided the best course was to
>>just spend a few million of TV ads.

>

> ??? Mercury has been in fish for decades. Only now they warn people
> about it. Is that BAD?

>

Yes – extremely bad. The solution is to reduce the output or at least
maintain. Bush increased the allowable levels.

> If you want to reduce mercury emissions (as well as CO2), support
> shutting down coal power plants. And nuclear is the only technology
> that is ready to replace them now.

>

We need a visionary leader and a manhattan project to find the next
source of cheap sustainable energy. Not a man with one foot in the era of
Mckinnley and the other in his mouth.

>>

>>Our TV's are inundated with get rich schemes, miracle cures for every
>>desease and ailment known to mankind, and even fountains of youth in a
>>pill. In my generation the fleecing of the public would not have been
>>allowed by the FDA or the government. Today it's common. In my time
>>punishment was reserved to a court of law. Today banks, video stores
>>and just about anybody selling anything on credit punish their
>>customers with grossly high late fees.

>>

>>I read an article that said the Blockbusters primary source of income
>>was late fees. In my time they were allowed to recover the cost
>>incurred but not allowed to profit from anothers inability to pay on
>>time.

>

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> *Er, a late fee is not because someone could not PAY on time. It is*
> *because they didn't return the item on time. I say that means that*
> *money is less important to them than time.*

>

Strange the courts didn't see it that way. Blockbusters was forced to repay millions in overcharged late fees.

> *I also see people buying bottled water for \$1.75 a pint, when standing*
> *beside a drinking fountain (and Madison city water is the best there*
> *is, at least as good as anything in a bottle).*

>

> *I say this means those people have more dollars than sense.*

>

>>

>>*There is a severe shortage of gentlemen in this country.*

>

> *There may be just the two of us ; -)*

I agree. We'd make a great set of reasonable talking heads.

>

>

>>>>

>>>>*Do you teach?*

>>>

>>> *I did for 15 years (chemistry, physics, geology, astronomy.*

>>> *oceanography) but not for the last 15 years.*

>>

>>*I retired from the military but start teaching at a community college*

>>*this fall.*

>

> *Good for you. I hope you have students that are there because they*

> *want to learn. Will you be teaching them to field strip an AK 47?*

> *(just kidding).*

I flew for twenty five years and you would never guess in a million years what I'll be teaching.

3D computer animation. Us right brained liberals are all frustrated artists at heart.

I really can't wait to show these kids the opportunity that exists today in that field. I'll bet in a few years John Wayne and Cary Grant will be acting again as digital stars. Someday a digital actor will win the academy award for best actor in a feature film. Instead of one grossly overpaid actor walking to the podium a troop of dozens will accept the award – a liberals dream. Turning the wealth of one into the success of many instead of one more Cezanne for the rec. room.

I'm outta here for a couple of weeks – time for a vacation. The stress of retirement has taken it's toll.