China has faced demographic problems for several decades now. For a long time, the Chinese authorities have been forced to take various large-scale and costly measures to regulate the birth rate in accordance with the needs of the state at the time. In 1979, when the birth rate was recognized dangerously high, the government launched the “One family – one child” policy. In recent decades, however, the situation has changed completely, as birth rates in China have been hitting record lows. As a result, in 2015 the “One family – one child” policy was abolished, and Chinese families were allowed to have two children.

At the end of June 2021, the State Council of the People’s Republic of China and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed various options for measures to support a higher birth rate, and also decided to allow families to have three children.

On August 13, 2021, the press secretary of the Legislative Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC), Tsang Tewei, said that the legislative bodies of China are considering draft amendments to the Law on Demography and Planned Childbirth. These changes will concern support measures for the families who have expressed their desire to have a third child. The press secretary also said that the main goal of the draft amendments is to improve the policy in the field of fertility to promote long-term and balanced demographic development of the country. These amendments are planned to be submitted for discussion at the upcoming meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress. The draft also eliminates the current restrictive measures, in particular, sanctions for violating the law, which did not allow couples to have more children than...
With over 1.4 billion people China famously has the biggest population in the world. In order to avoid provoking an overpopulation crisis, since 1979 serious fines and restrictions were imposed under the “One Family – one Child” policy on couples who had a second child. For example, for the birth of an “extra” child, parents could be expelled from the Communist Party. The introduction of such desperate measures was due to the fact that the average Chinese family had about 4-5 children at the time the above-mentioned policy started. If Chinese families were not ordered to have fewer children, the country’s population by now would likely have exceeded 2 billion.

One peculiarity of the Chinese mentality is that men are valued more than women. First of all, this is due to the fact that men are considered “breadwinners” and the key to a comfortable living in old age. That is why for a long time Chinese women, upon learning that they might be having a daughter, would rather have an abortion. This led to the fact that in the few recent generations there are noticeably more men than women. The current Chinese authorities do not yet see a way out of this situation, which is unique and unprecedented in world history.

One possible solution could be attracting women from the Southeast Asian countries with far lower living standards than China’s, but this is unlikely to produce any meaningful results. For one, language and cultural barriers between the spouses will definitely complicate family relations, preventing them from building any trusting bonds. The second reason is the sheer number of Chinese men who would potentially need wives, as there are dozens of millions of them. In the states that will send their girls to China, a demographic crisis may occur in the form of a shortage of women with all the ensuing consequences. Third, countries, knowing what consequences the mass outflow of women can cause, will not let them go so easily, because their governments, as well as their colleagues from the PRC, are worried about their prosperity and well-being.

The Chinese leadership realized the danger of the situation, and in 2015 allowed couples to have a second child, but this legislative easing did not change the overall situation, since all families have been used to having one child. Unfortunately, the birth rate stayed the same. This may be down to the fact that generations of one-child families have little to no idea how to raise two or more children. Also, a significant role was played by the fact that many men today literally do not have enough women.

It is necessary to take into account not only the state policy, but also many financial aspects. Despite the fact that the communist ideology has been proclaimed in China, and the country has been unilaterally ruled by the Chinese Communist Party since 1949, market capitalist relations are flourishing in the country at the moment, which have been adapted to all families having only one child. It is difficult to restructure such relationships, since many women will have to quit their jobs or switch to part-time work in order to fully raise two or more children. If this happens, the volume of industrial production in the country will decrease significantly.

The main reason why the Chinese authorities are concerned about the demographic situation in the country is the excessive burden that will fall on the pension system in the near future. One child and two adults means one adult and two old people in the future. That is why the CPC is doing its best to promote the growth of the birth rate, otherwise in a few decades the state risks facing the fact that most of the country’s population will be employed not in the service sector or agriculture, but in the care of the elderly. Of course, this will greatly affect the level of the state’s economy and shake its status as a world super power.

It is also very important to mention the psychological aspects. Generations of descendants from large families transformed the People’s Republic of China from a backward state, whose voice no one listened to, into a great economic power that can compete on an equal footing with the United States. As practice shows, there is unity and team spirit in many families where there are three or more children. Families with one child, on the contrary, often spoil their child, and therefore such children often become quite selfish and non-hardworking people. In China, this phenomenon is so widespread that the generation raised in one-child families is called “little emperors”. The question of whether this generation will be able to preserve and multiply what their parents have achieved is of concern to the Chinese government, which did not assume such a development of the situation.

To summarize the above, one can come to the conclusion that the concern of the Chinese authorities is justified. A small generation with a significant statistical imbalance in favor of men is growing in China. According to many experts and analysts, without decisive actions, China may face a real social and humanitarian catastrophe. Perhaps measures to stimulate the birth rate will change the situation, but, in any case, there is already a major demographic gap, and it will take many years to correct it.
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