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alloys, copper, iron ore and chemical propellants — necessary to build cellphones and rocket launchers were around during Washington's time. In fact, they were around at the time of the cave man. There is only one answer for why cellphones, rocket launchers and millions of other things are around today but were not around yesteryear. The growth in human knowledge, human ingenuity, job specialization and trade led to industrialization, which, coupled with personal liberty and private property rights, made it possible. Human beings are valuable resources, and the more we have of them the better.

The greatest threat to mankind's prosperity is government, not population growth. For example, Zimbabwe was agriculturally rich but, with government interference, was reduced to the brink of mass starvation. Any country faced with massive government interference can be brought to starvation. Blaming poverty on overpopulation not only lets governments off the hook but also encourages the enactment of harmful, inhumane policies.

Today's poverty has little to do with overpopulation. The most commonly held characteristics of non-poor countries are greater personal liberty, private property rights, the rule of law and an economic system closer to capitalism than to communism. That's the recipe for prosperity.

Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University. To find out more about Walter E. Williams and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at www.creators.com.

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