RATIONAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES ARE NEEDED FIRST STEP WASHINGTON

-- It would seem to many that the famous German soccer star left the national team for good reason. One day he was at the top of the pantheon, the next he was being criticized in ways he was angrily convinced were discrimination because of his family background in Turkey.

Mesut Ozil, after all, was one of Germany's favorite sons. His grandparents had originally come from a small Turkish village, but that was many years ago. And so what if he had posed for a photo with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan? Ozil insisted the picture was simply the result of what is now being called in Europe loyalty to "dual heritage countries."

But what did become a big thing was the way it was all taken publicly in some parts of Germany.

A senior member of Chancellor Angela Merkel's party said Ozil's actions showed "disrespect" for Germany. The German daily Bild found Ozil "reveling in the victim role that has nothing to do with reality." And a state secretary in the German interior ministry told BBC Radio that Ozil was "naive," pointing out that the now-famous photo was taken only weeks before Turkish elections, which the increasingly repressive Erdogan won by staggering margins.

So there you have the two sides of this newest -- and deeply serious -- immigration brouhaha in Germany, but it's representative of all of Europe. Every day one reads increasingly bitter news of migration migraines that are becoming Europe's No. 1 sickness. But is there a middle ground that might offer us some solutions to our dangerous immigration situation? As someone who has covered these issues for more than four decades, I am convinced of the need for the rational and the reasonable in a world where greed and grievance, recrimination and resentment, are becoming the watchwords of the day. Here are four reasonable ideas:

First, a wise leader would see immigration from a historical point of view. Today, according to U.N. agencies, there are some 60 million desperate human beings wandering the world, seeking a better place to land. At the same time, climate change is driving people from formerly amenable homelands, and worse is to come, with water shortages, dried-up farm lands and the veritable destruction of low-lying countries swallowed by rising seas.

It's not enough to say, as many do, "This has always happened." This is different.

Second, immigrants themselves must drop the easy and tiresome cries of "racism" and "discrimination." There probably was racism in Mesut Ozil's case, but Turkey's Erdogan himself severely messed up the discussion and gained Germany's righteous anger by unconscionably campaigning for the votes of Turkish-Germans last spring -- in Germany.

Did the famous soccer player perhaps not understand this? Do immigrants not have responsibility for the stability of their countries of citizenship over their countries of heritage?

Third, there is no room -- not in today's world, and really not ever -- for sloppy sentimentality regarding immigration. Nation-states are absolutely necessary for the peace and prosperity of the world as it is organized, and those states have not only the right, but the responsibility, to maintain stable societies.

Those who embrace a sentimental doctrine of "open borders" or "everybody come" are as guilty of moral casualness and destroying stability as those who cruelly take children away from their parents at the border and then lose them.

Fourth, wise leaders would strive to understand the power of culture. When Angela Merkel brought a million unknown migrants into Germany, did she not realize they were mostly Muslim? Had she not read somewhere that Muslims in the Middle East generally have an inordinate hatred of Israel, and thus of Jews, which is not related to Germany's World War II horrors against the Jewish people? The multiculturalists' blithe notion of expecting all kinds of peoples, with all kinds of histories, to live together happily is perhaps the most profoundly irresponsible idea of all.

A big part of the answer is what Europe (though not the U.S.) is now starting to do: European governments are reaching down into the impoverished countries in Africa and the Middle East to start dealing with the problems at the roots. But that is a story for another day.

For now, let's begin with reasonable and rational immigration policies that protect the nation-state and its people first, and then attempt to deal with the poor of the world in their own societies. The alternative is the migration chaos we are seeing now, and believe me, it has only begun.

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