

TRENDSJOURNAL

HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®



The New Normal *Valentine*

- Masked
- Tested
- Vaccinated
- Sanitized
- Afraid

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Inside

TRENDS ON THE U.S. ECONOMIC FRONT	2
TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT	23
TRENDS IN THE MARKETS by Gregory Mannarino	44
TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM by Bradley J. Steiner	47
TRENDS IN GETTING HEALTHY	52
TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY	57
SPECIAL REPORT: GAMESTOP	65
TRENDS ON THE COVID WARFRONT	72
TRENDS IN THE VACCINE ROLLOUT	87
TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS	107
TRENDS-EYE VIEW	126
THE ART OF TRENDS	129
TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE	130

TRENDS ON THE U.S. ECONOMIC FRONT



U.S. MARKETS OVERVIEW

THE BIG STORY VS. THE BIG PICTURE. The big story in America, the land of Fear and Hysteria, is the second Trump impeachment trial, even though he is out of office, and it may be unconstitutional.

As we had forecast when the first one began back in December 2019 when the House of Representatives voted to impeach President Trump for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, it was a total waste of time to follow it... and a waste of taxpayer money to launch it.

Again, we at the **Trends Journal** are political atheists. We identify, analyze, and forecast trends for what they are and not for what we want them to be, so we do not take sides.

So why was the Round #1 impeachment a total waste of time and taxpayer money? And why did we tell our subscribers not to waste their precious time and energy following it... and instead dedicate their resources to better understand what in the world is going on, what it means to them, and what to do to prepare for the future?

Because only imbeciles, idiots, and people with little minds who hated Trump so much they wanted to see him sink were dumb enough to believe that the Senate, which had a Republican majority, would vote to convict him.

And they didn't. Not even close.

Neither of the impeachment articles got the support of a two-thirds supermajority of senators. Fifty-two Republican senators voted against the charge of abuse of power, and all 53 voted against the charge of obstruction of Congress.

And while the Senate is now split 50/50 Democrat and Republican, since it requires a two-thirds majority to impeach him in Round #2, that will in no way happen.

Even if they did impeach Trump, what difference would it make to the lives and livelihoods of We the People? NONE!

Yet, the media keeps promoting the Presidential Reality Show[®], while the vast majority of the nation remains solidly ignorant of the current events that are forming future trends.

On the Economic Front

As evidenced by the data, America and much of the world are on the path of steep decline.

Never before in the history of the world have nations, states, and cities been locked down and businesses destroyed as they have to fight the COVID War:

cinemas, malls, theaters, concerts, fairs, trade shows, conventions, restaurants, bars, hotels, airlines, cruise ships, mom and pop shops, etc.... sinking, dead and empty.

Since the COVID War began one year ago, nearly four in ten of all the jobs lost since February 2020, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, were in the leisure and hospitality sector.

Multiply that number times all the nations, workers, products, industries, and related businesses that rely on hospitality and tourism – the economic, personal, and mental devastation is incalculable.

To make it 100 percent clear, yes, we forecast an economic bounce back, but what has been lost is lost. The millions of businesses that have gone bust are finished, and as the Congressional Budget Office concludes, the jobs that have been lost will not return until 2024... that is, of course, if politicians end the COVID War and do not start other ones, health-related or military.

While lost jobs will return, new ones, however, won't be created. The "Greatest Depression" has begun. As we have continually reported and Gregory Mannarino continually details, there is no connection between Wall Street and Main Street. Read Greg's new article, "[DEBT MARKET SUPER BUBBLE: A MONSTER.](#)"

On the Market Front

The S&P 500 index closed its best week since November, adding more than 15 points to end at a record 3,886.83. The Dow rose 92.38 points to 31,148.24 and the NASDAQ gained 78.55 points, finishing at 13,856.30.

Yesterday, stocks hit new record highs as hopes that new, larger rounds of monetary methadone, i.e., "stimulus spending" will be injected into the economy.

Investors were calmer this week; the CBOE Volatility Index, a proxy for investors' anxiety about the future, fell to 22, compared with 37 the week before.

The markets are also upbeat about the outlook for earnings growth and are pinning their optimism to two expectations: COVID vaccines will be the economy's salvation, and the U.S. Federal Reserve will keep interest rates near zero well into the future.

While The Street investors are betting that January's anemic jobs report will continue to pressure Congress to pass generous stimulus bills that will artificially spur economic growth, the picture on Main Street keeps getting darker.

No Rent, No Money

Due to last September's eviction moratorium imposed by the CDC that prevented property owners from evicting renters for non-payment, apartment owners are under severe economic pressure: "It's important to recognize that, after 10 months of severe economic distress, job loss, and decline in rent collections, everyone is hurting," said Bob Pinnegar, president and CEO of the National Apartment Association, that represents property owners, told *CNN* today.

Pinnegar also noted that "Without rent, owners can't afford maintenance or capital improvements necessary" and would not be able to pay their mortgages. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that since mid-January, some ten million renters were behind on their rent. This accounts for between \$30 billion to \$70 billion in back rent owed to landlords, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

We note this reality because, as we have been forecasting, government injections of cheap money into the system will not boost the real economy, and equities staying on artificial highs are unsustainable.

Unreality

The GameStop game, which had artificially juiced the stock up 400 percent in just one week, fell below \$50 a share today as the short squeeze squeezed out. (See our GameStop special report in this issue, “[THE GAMES CONTINUE.](#)”)

GOLD/SILVER. After taking a hit last week, Gold is trading back in the mid-\$1,800 per ounce range, while silver, boosted by the GameStop Gang, is trading in at \$27.30 per ounce. We maintain our forecast for gold to move above \$2,100 per ounce and silver to push about \$50 per ounce, essentially due to the unprecedented trillions of dollars central banks across the globe are pumping into economies and equity markets to artificially prop them up.

Thus, the more cheap money central banks print, the further the value of the currency falls and the higher safe-haven precious metals rise.

BITCOIN. Last week, bitcoin was trading at \$35,781, up some \$3,781 from the previous week. We wrote that the cryptocurrency had not broken below our downward break-out point and “still finding strength despite its pullback from its recent \$41,000 high.”

Bitcoin spiked on the news Friday that Elon Musk changed his personal Twitter bio to #bitcoin, pushing it to \$38,566 on Friday.

Next, Tesla, Inc., of which Musk is CEO, announced in its latest annual report that they bought \$1.5 billion of the digital currency and would soon start accepting bitcoin as payment for its products.

As we go to press, Bitcoin is trading at \$47,300.

Warning

As we have long been forecasting, there will be a push back by Banksters to reign in the power of cryptocurrencies as they go from “[DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH.](#)”

We reported that the chief of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, called for international bitcoin regulation last month claiming bitcoin is “a highly speculative asset, which has conducted some funny business and some interesting and totally reprehensible money laundering activity.”

At the end of January, the government of India said it will introduce legislation that “seeks to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India, however, it allows for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses.”

The “Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill” will instead “create a facilitative framework for creation of the official digital currency to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India.”

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our 5 January forecast for bitcoin: “The downward breakout point will be hit should the price fall below \$25,000 per coin.” On the upside, should bitcoin again break past \$41,000 into the \$42,000 per coin range, we forecast it will spike above \$50,000 per coin.*

OIL. Brent crude hit a 13-month high today, supported by OPEC+ cuts, high expectations that the U.S. money-pumping stimulus will generate demand, and the weaker dollar... the lower the dollar goes, the less it costs to buy commodities using other currencies.

“Support seems robust and the narrative sees the oil market swiftly burning through the remaining crisis-surplus, potentially running into tightness later this year,” Norbert Rücker, an analyst at Swiss bank Julius Baer, told *Reuters*.

We had forecast Brent Crude would trade in the \$50 per barrel range in 2021. But the wild cards being played, such as the OPEC+ cutting supply deal and massive stimulus packages, have artificially pushed oil prices higher.

Air travel, cruise ships, tourism, daily commuting to work, rising unemployment, etc., will not increase oil demand. In fact, these factors will diminish demand. However, as evidenced by the OPEC+ agreement and how the gamblers play

the markets, economic fundamentals have been overwritten by market speculation.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have been warning, should military tensions escalate in the Middle East, Brent Crude may well spike above \$80 bbl, which, in turn, will crash equity markets, push precious metals higher, and rapidly push economies deeper into the “Greatest Depression.”*

U.S. LABOR MARKET SINKS DEEPER



The U.S. economy created 49,000 net new jobs in January, about 43,000 of which were public-sector positions, the U.S. Labor Department reported.

That means the U.S. economy netted only 6,000 private-sector jobs last month.

Analysts had predicted 105,000 new jobs would appear in January.

The leisure and hospitality industry shed 61,000 jobs last month, retailers dumped 38,000 workers, transportation businesses dispensed with 28,000 employees, and manufacturers cut payrolls by 10,000.

The figures indicate a widening crisis: job losses were concentrated in face-to-face industries in December, while January's figures show employment weakening across the economic spectrum.

January's only job gains were among schools and colleges, which added 119,000 jobs; and the 81,000 workers taking temp jobs, an additional sign that employers are skittish about the future.

Even worse, December's net loss of 140,000 jobs was revised; the actual number was 227,000 lost jobs.

Reality

America has lost ten million jobs since politicians launched the COVID War last year and imposed draconian lockdown "Executive Orders," thus, by the real number, while equities keep rising higher, the real economy is stumbling lower.

“Officially,” January’s unemployment rate dropped from 6.7 percent to 6.3 percent as more people stopped looking for work and are considered to no longer be part of the labor market.

In the United Soviet States of Amerika, when an unemployed person stops receiving their unemployment check, which averages some 26 weeks, and they still can’t find a job, they are no longer counted as unemployed.

The fact is, the U.S.S.A. Bureau of Labor Statistics does not count those who are without a job as unemployed. It excludes those who haven't looked for work within the past four weeks and removes them from the labor force.

We note this to illustrate the inaccuracy of the “official” data and to exemplify the true economic fundamentals and the socioeconomic implications.

Debt Bubble

On 5 February, the Senate passed a “reconciliation” measure that skirts a filibuster and will allow the chamber to pass Biden’s plan by a simple majority. The measure passed on a party-line vote, with vice-president Kamala Harris breaking a 50-50 tie.

Prospects for the broad spending and investment plan, combined with Biden’s ambitious new plan to distribute vaccines, continue to boost financial markets and the hopes for a quickening recovery.

Again, because of the money being pumped into the economy, we maintain our forecast for the U.S. economy to stage a significant rally in the second half of this year.

However, Jerome Powell, Chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, and others have warned that any recovery is likely to be slow and reveal permanent structural damage to the economy.

Last month, more than four million people had been out of work for at least six months, the definition of “long-term unemployment.” The number is four times greater than before the economic lockdown began last March.

Those long-time jobless workers comprise about 40 percent of the total number of out-of-workers and do not include those who have stopped trying to find a job and those unable to work because of child care or other responsibilities.

Being out of work for months makes it harder to re-enter the labor force, studies have shown.

LIPTON NAMED COUNSELOR TO TREASURY’S YELLEN



The Biden administration named David Lipton, the former deputy director of the International Monetary Fund, to its international policy team.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Lipton was named counselor to Secretary Janet Yellen, who heads the department. The paper said that both Lipton and Yellen tend to see China’s economic growth as a benefit for the global economy and not the direct challenge that some perceive.

Lipton also served under former President Obama as Special Assistant while also being part of the National Economic Council. The **Trends Journal** had reported in detail that many of President Biden’s top officials were former members of the President Obama team, thus our forecast of the “Obama White House 2.0.”

In August 2019, Lipton appeared on *CNBC* and spoke about the U.S.’s trade war with China. He was the IMF’s managing director at the time, and he appealed to both countries to come together to work out an agreement due to the global economic slowdown caused by the coronavirus.

“Global trade is actually contracting, and that is not a good situation,” he told the network.

The Trump administration levied tariffs on Chinese imports into the U.S. to try to address the American trade deficit, but, in 2020, China recorded the largest trade surplus in world history, according to research firm Capital Economics.

In 2019, those tariffs shaved only 0.1 percent from China’s GDP, according to newly revised figures from that country’s National Bureau of Statistics.

Lipton moved into the role at the IMF after the resignation of Christine Lagarde. She took to Twitter shortly after the announcement of his move at the Treasury to congratulate him.

“His extensive economic experience and invaluable expertise make him an excellent choice for this role,” she tweeted. “I wish you the best of luck David!”

TRENDPOST: *Beyond the “China” issue, which was highlighted by the media and the White House as one reason for Lipton’s appointment, with “money” being the bottom line of any business or government, we note Lipton’s appointment as a key figure in the U.S Treasury to make it perfectly clear: the Banksters are in full control of the United States government. Lipton has an unblemished track record with the IMF, and Janet Yellen was the former head of the U.S. Federal Reserve.*

TRADE WAR? U.S. LOST IT



Go back to 2017. From the day Donald Trump took office until the COVID War began last February, a week did not go by where the “experts” used the ruse that the equity markets were moving up or down on the U.S. vs. China Trade War battle.

The U.S. Lost the Trade War

The annual U.S. trade deficit was \$481 billion in 2016 when Donald Trump became president and rose by almost a third to \$678.7 billion at the end of December 2020, according to a 5 February report from the U.S. Commerce Department.

It was the largest trade deficit since 2008, *Reuters* noted.

The deficit grew 17.7 percent in 2020 alone, rising from \$577 billion at the end of 2019. The global economic shutdown slashed demand for U.S. goods as well as U.S. production, while China’s economy hummed, supplying more goods than ever to the U.S. and the world.

“The Trump administration never had a feasible plan for reducing the trade deficit,” Mary Lovely, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, told *Politico*. “The 2017 tax cut ensured that the U.S... would continue to spend more than it produced, hence the... deficit.”

“Tariffs reduced imports from China, but these were mostly replaced with imports from other sources,” she noted.

The U.S. trade deficit with China specifically fell from \$419 billion in 2016 to \$311 billion at the end of 2020, due in large measure to tariffs Trump laid on \$350 billion worth of Chinese goods, according to *Politico*.

However, during Trump's term, the U.S. trade deficit rose with France, Germany, Ireland, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, the Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Also, imports from China spiked during 2020's last six months as the U.S. economic shutdown sent merchants and manufacturers looking elsewhere for supplies.

Under Trump's "Phase One" China trade deal, China bought vast amounts of U.S. corn during the last six months of 2020 but far less than the \$76.7 billion in total goods and services China had agreed to buy in 2020. The deal's 2021 benchmark is \$123.3 billion.

The U.S. Customs and Border Patrol collected \$74.4 billion in tariffs on imports during the U.S. government's fiscal year 2020. Despite Trump's claim that foreign governments paid tariffs, in reality, the tariffs were added to the cost of the items imported, raising prices for consumers.

Goods exported from the U.S. to China in calendar 2020 totaled \$110 billion, compared to about \$130 billion in 2017, census bureau figures show. Services exported to China carried a value of \$28 billion through 2020's first three quarters; the total services exported to China in 2017 were valued at \$55 billion.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast that the 21st century will be the Chinese century since the business of China is business and the business of America has been war.*

And as we have long forecast, manufacturers were leaving China for cheaper slave-labor manufacturing sources before Donald Trump's presidency.

As for the business of America being war, we have also noted the hypocrisy of the political mindset that taught Americans to fight and die against the Chinese in the Korean war and launch the Vietnam war to stop the spread of communism... but when it comes to doing business with them, “commies” don’t count.

Indeed, the same communist party that defeated America in the Vietnam war is still in charge. But now it’s a fine place to do business... a place where manufacturers can get products made cheaply and mark up the selling prices to make greater profit margins.

The same propaganda was sold to the Americans to hate those Chinese commies who hid behind the bamboo curtain... until it was time to do business.

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: *As the Founder of Occupy Peace and Freedom, we note this to not only express my disdain for wars based on lies that are launched by psychopaths but to illustrate how the bottom line – not morality, democracy, truth, or justice – has become the true meaning of America’s political system.*

Like I have said many times, “Do you think the United States would have invaded Iraq if their major export was broccoli?”

MOST CITIES LOST CONSTRUCTION JOBS IN 2020



Despite a boom in home remodeling, more than half of U.S. major metro areas lost construction jobs in 2020, the Associated General Contractors of America (AGCA) has reported.

Jobs were lost in 191 of 358 areas or 53 percent.

Houston, New York City, and Midland, TX lost the most; Indianapolis, northern Virginia, and Seattle added the most jobs in building.

Private non-residential construction declined 10 percent last year compared to 2019, and government-related building projects have been sliding since March, the AGCA noted.

The new year has begun no better for the building trades.

“A dearth of new construction work is forcing more and more contractors to lay off workers once they complete projects started before the pandemic hit,” lamented Ken Simonson, AGCA’s chief economist, in a statement announcing the year’s results.

The building trades lost a net 3,000 jobs in January, bringing the deficit to 256,000 fewer workers than a year ago, the AGCA’s latest report shows.

Home builders have regained all of the jobs lost last year; however, nonresidential construction – mostly commercial and government buildings and infrastructure projects – are still 259,000 jobs short of February 2020’s total.

The construction industry marked a 9.4-percent unemployment rate last month, the AGCA said.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast for continuing residential construction as long as interest rates remain low... and move lower, and the cheap government money continues to artificially prop up the economy. The commercial sector, however, will continue to decline.*

LEISURE TRAVEL DEMAND REDRAWS AIRLINE MAPS



With business travelers still off the road and leisure travelers beginning to return to the skies, U.S. airlines are abandoning the traditional hub-and-spoke routing system that served road warriors so well and launching more nonstop flights to fun-seekers' most popular destinations.

“Given the lack of business demand, we’re focusing on leisure travel and providing more service for customers traveling to visit family and friends,” Brian Znotins, American Airlines’ vice president of network planning, told *Bloomberg*.

For example, winter travelers leaving cities such as Boston, Cleveland, or Indianapolis in search of the sun no longer need to connect through Chicago or Atlanta; they now have direct flights to winter havens such as Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, and Tampa.

In the past, carriers offered only a few flights a week from the U.S. northeast to Baja California; now American, Delta, and United each are flying direct several times a week.

Hawaii and Caribbean destinations also are seeing more flights.

“Everything we do stems from demand,” Ankit Gupta, United’s vice-president for domestic network planning, said to *Bloomberg*.

Seeking to accommodate travelers wishing to visit relatives or their countries of origin, airlines also are arranging more direct flights to Bangalore, Ghana, and Tel Aviv.

Fares fell during the pandemic and remain as much as one-third below pre-pandemic prices. However, as more people are vaccinated and the

economy recovers, the number of travelers will rise and so will fares, experts say.

“There’s an opportunity for travelers right now,” Scott Keyes of the search website Scott’s Cheap Flights, commented to *Bloomberg*. Fee waivers and eased cancellation policies are still in place, he notes. “Once more people are vaccinated and willing to travel, the deals are likely to dry up,” he said.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast that, at best, the travel industry will not begin to strongly rebound until 2024.*

On the business travel end, with the world having instantly embraced video conferencing/Zoom and with businesses cutting back expenses, the business travel model will not fully bounce back. Not only will the airline industry, which profits highly from business travel, suffer financially, so, too, will hospitality and all related sectors.

LIFE INSURANCE SALES SOAR DURING PANDEMIC



Afraid the coronavirus will kill you?

Many are.

Applications for life insurance rose 4 percent year on year in 2020, insurance industry consulting firm MIB Group reported. It was the largest one-year jump since 2001 when MIB began tracking the number.

Younger applicants led the increase, with 7.8 percent more people under age 45 seeking coverage, compared to a 3.8-percent rise among people 45 to 59. There was a slight drop in applications among people 60 and older.

Buyers age 40 and under were 25 percent more numerous at Lincoln National Insurance, a leading provider of term life policies.

The typical customer was a 40-year-old man buying a 20-year, \$500,000 policy, the company said in a statement quoted by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance saw new-policy sales top \$1 billion last year for the first time, an 8-percent rise over 2019.

Sales expanded even though many companies discontinued some lines of coverage.

Insurance companies typically invest customers' premiums in bonds and profit from the interest, which shrank close to zero during the pandemic. As a result, companies trimmed their catalog of available policies.

The ever-present COVID virus inspired the suddenly-discovered need for coverage.

"You may catch COVID-19 on the way to the grocery store," one buyer said to the *Journal*. She has life insurance as an employee benefit but "if I were laid off, I wouldn't have it."

The pandemic made customers "realize that having life insurance is more of an urgent need than an item on a to-do list to take care of later," Rene Turner, a veteran sales agent with Primerica, told the *Journal*.

TRENDPOST: *The denial of death is pervasive throughout western culture. As we have detailed since the COVID War began last year, week after week, those who are dying from the virus are predominantly senior citizens and residents in elder care homes... plus those having 2.6 pre-existing chronic conditions.*

Yet, these facts are essentially ignored by the mass media (which most of the population tunes into), and instead of the general population doing what they

can to build their immune systems and stay healthy, they live in fear... and fear death.

MANHATTAN CONDO SALES BOUNCE BACK



In December and January, 21 percent more contracts for condo sales in Manhattan were signed than during the same months a year ago, reported UrbanDigs, an analysis firm.

Flats in the upper east and west sides were most popular, figures show.

The sales boost was propelled by pent-up demand colliding with fewer homes for sale and growing confidence among buyers that the pandemic and economic crisis are ebbing, analysts and brokers told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Sales cratered by 54 percent in 2020's second quarter, according to appraisal firm Miller Samuel and sales agency Douglas Elliman.

The city's population dropped by 70,000 last year, analysis firm Unicast reported. The exodus left a glut of empty units and drove prices down by 20 percent, with the average sale bringing \$2.7 million in December, Miller Samuel found.

“With the depletion of inventory, with the vaccine around the corner, people started to see a renewed positive opinion about the health of the city,” Sotheby broker Nikki Field told *The New York Times*.

TREND FORECAST: “The health of the city” will not rebound for years. Never before have so many people so quickly vacated Manhattan.

With working at home becoming an accepted practice of the new millennium following the outbreak of the COVID War, there will be far fewer people commuting back to the city, thus putting downward pressure on both commercial and residential real estate.

As we had long noted before the COVID War broke out, “For Rent” signs for commercial/retail leases were plastered across the borough.

Also, with tourism, a critical element of Manhattan’s economic foundation, dead and not expected to rebound for years, there will more downward pressure on the entire real estate market.

HEDGE FUND MAKES “GENERATIONAL BET” ON HOUSING



Pershing Square Capital Management, a hedge fund managing more than \$7 billion in assets, has increased its ownership share in Howard Hughes Corp. to almost 25 percent over the past seven months, according to public filings reported by the *Wall Street Journal*.

The Hughes company is beginning construction on 1,475 apartment units in Hawaii, Las Vegas, Maryland, and Texas.

The developments are located in cities that have seen migrants from colder northern states resettling in 2019 in locales with milder weather, lower home prices, and lower taxes.

The migration was underway before the pandemic but fear of the virus in close-packed urban areas and the ability to work from home sped up the trend, the *Journal* noted.

Pershing's investment in Hughes "is not a Wall Street bet," Pershing founder William Ackman told the *Journal*. "It's a generational bet."

Ackman also is chair of Howard Hughes' board.

TREND FORECAST: Yes, there will be rebounding economic and real estate growth in these areas as millions leave densely populated, high-tax, high-crime cities.

AMERICANS: GOING BROKE, MOVING OUT



When the COVID War broke out last year and the mainstream media pumped up a steady stream of fear and hysteria, we had forecast that people would flee big cities to escape the coronavirus and rising crime rates.

They did. A June survey by Pew Research Centers found that 28 percent of the people who moved out cited the risk of being hit with the virus as the most important reason.

That was then. A poll conducted in November showed that a third of respondents cited financial reasons as their primary reason to relocate while only 14 percent said they were concerned about being infected by the coronavirus.

With ten million fewer jobs in the economy than in February 2020 when politicians launched the COVID War, millions of Americans are struggling to stay financially afloat. According to the latest data, some 40 percent of those jobless in January were unemployed for over six months.

A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia showed that tenants who lost jobs during the lockdowns amassed \$11 billion in rental arrears; a broader measure estimated that as of January, renters owed \$53 billion in missed rent, utility payments, and late fees.

Heidi Shierholz, director of Policy at the Economic Policy Institute, a think tank, told *CNBC* that at the current rate, it would take about 29 years to get back to pre-recession levels.

TRENDPOST: *While the billionaires got over a trillion dollars richer since politicians launched the COVID War, some eight million Americans have fallen into poverty. A report from analysts at the University of Chicago released last month said the poverty rate in the U.S. went from 9.7 percent in June to 11.7 percent in November – the biggest yearly increase since the federal government began tracking the poverty rate in 1960.*

And in Slavelandia U.S.A., the “officials” have concluded that for a family of two, those earning under \$17,240 annually is considered the poverty rate.

To illustrate the absurdity of this calculation, considering that the average apartment rental rate in the U.S. is \$1,468 per month or \$17,616 a year, according to the American government, those making more than that, who, after paying rent, but do not have any money to eat, buy clothes, own a car, pay for health care, etc. ... are not impoverished.

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT



FOOD PRICES CLIMB TO SEVEN-YEAR HIGH

January's Food Price Index has risen 10 percent year on year, the highest level since July 2014, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) has announced.

Grain prices led the increase, with China buying large amounts of U.S. corn during the last half of 2020. At the same time, American grain production fell due to wide-scale drought.

South America, a leading exporter of corn and soy, also saw extended dry weather and a reduced harvest.

Now, after a rainless year, corn prices have jumped 45 percent and soybeans 56 percent; wheat prices have risen 11 percent, and rice 27 percent.

Expectations of even higher prices drove the costs higher as nation's sought to stockpile grain ahead of the new levies.

China is seeking to replenish its grain reserves and head off domestic grain price increases while it also seeks to rebuild the nation's hog herd, which has been devastated by African swine flu.

Years of inclement weather in the mid-2010s yielded bumper crops, scuttling prices.

Food shortages and higher prices risk an expansion of global hunger while the world is still dealing with the COVID pandemic, the UNFAO warned.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast for Dragflation: the economy will drag lower but prices of goods, services, and commodities will rise higher.*

The higher inflation rises, the further GDPs will fall, since the more something costs, the less products and services people can afford to buy.

Also, as inflation spikes, it will force central banks to raise interest rates, slowing their injections of monetary methadone, which have artificially inflated equities and economies.

We maintain our forecast that most prices will not rise because of supply and demand, but rather because the value of currencies will decline as central banks devalue them by printing trillions to "stimulate" sagging economies. Thus, the cheaper the currency, the more it costs to buy products.

Gold and silver will continue as the most precious metal safe-haven assets. We maintain our forecast of new rounds of artificial central bank monetary stimulus and massive amounts of government fiscal stimulus that will artificially prop up equity markets and economies.

INFLATION SPIKES IN EUROPE



Reversing five months of sinking prices, inflation shot from -0.3 percent in December to 0.9 percent in January, according to Eurostat, the European Union's statistics agency.

Reuters had foreseen only a 0.5-percent hike.

Taking food and energy prices out of the calculation, prices gained even more, rising from -0.2 percent in December to 1.4 percent last month.

In Germany, inflation surged from -0.7 percent in December to 1.6 percent in January.

The European Central Bank has decided an inflation rate of up to 2 percent is acceptable and would not require the bank to raise interest rates or adjust policies.

The rise was due not to spiking demand among consumers or export customers, but a confluence of singular events. Those included the end of a temporary reduction in Germany's value-added tax and a shortage of shipping containers, temporarily raising logistics costs for manufacturers and retailers.

Also, the method of calculating inflation was changed to give greater weight to items in greater demand, which yields a higher inflation rate.

Also, January brought a spurt of seasonal clothing and footwear sales by consumers who had postponed purchases during economic lockdowns in late 2020.

The price rise is a blip, not a trend, analysts say.

“We expect inflation to drop back again,” Andrew Kenningham, Capital Economics’ chief economist for Europe, said to the *Financial Times*. “The impact of the pandemic recession will ultimately be disinflationary.”

Morgan Stanley’s analysts “continue to see weak underlying price pressures and only a gradual pick-up in core inflation,” they wrote in a research note, adding that they expect Europe’s central bank to “talk down” the rise.

"In a year's time, core inflation will be stuck around 1 percent," Richard Barwell, chief of Macro Research at BNP Paribas Asset Management, commented to the *Times*. "We had a big fall in unemployment in the Eurozone in recent years and that didn't lift inflation to the [central bank's] target, so I'm not convinced Europe will escape its low-inflation trap so easily."

TREND FORECAST: *As noted in our article in this issue, “[FOOD PRICES CLIMB TO SEVEN-YEAR HIGH](#),” we maintain our forecast for Dragflation. Governments will flood failing economics with cheap money to artificially prop them up. The more cheap money they inject, the lower the value of the currency and the more it costs to purchase goods and services.*

TRENDPOST: *Other factors pushing up inflation are results of the lockdown that have slowed production and/or increased demand for various commodities.*

Ford, General Motors, Toyota, Volkswagen, and other carmakers are scheduling idle time at North American plants due to a shortage of the computer chips that populate today's vehicles.

General Motors will halt production at three plants in Canada, Mexico, and Kansas this week and will reduce production at a South Korea plant by half, the company announced.

The chips are in short supply because manufacturers shifted their production to chips for consumer electronics as auto plants shut down during the economic

freeze last spring and demand for computers and other electronic appliances soared.

SERVICE SECTOR REVIVES IN U.S., SLOWS ELSEWHERE



IHS Markit's Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for the U.S. service economy rose from 54.8 in December to 58.3 in January, the second-sharpest rise in more than five years, the market research firm reported.

Ratings above 50 indicate growth; the higher the number, the faster the pace.

In contrast, the PMI for Europe's service sector slipped from 46.4 in December to 45.0 in January, marking the damage done by continued severe economic lockdowns in several European countries.

Britain's service economy suffered the steepest drop, plummeting from 49.4 in December to 39.5 in January. To deal with the unrelenting spread of the COVID virus, the government imposed the tightest restrictions since April on businesses and personal mobility.

Caixin's service-sector PMI in China also slowed last month, sagging from 56.3 in December to 52.0 in January. The COVID virus's reappearance in four Chinese cities prompted localized shutdowns and contributed to the retreat.

Japan's au Jibun Bank calculated that the country's PMI in service industries slid from 47.2 in December to 46.1 in January as the government imposed a state of emergency in Tokyo and surrounding regions to deal with a resurgent virus.

TREND FORECAST: *We note this data to emphasize that there are no straight lines up or down in a global economy...or life.*

Yes, there will be bounce-backs and declines, but the trend-line remains the “Greatest Depression.” The locking-down of entire economies and destroying the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions is unprecedented in history... and the socioeconomic and geopolitical consequences are, and will continue to be, devastating.

Minus major unforeseen events, such as war, it will be at least five years before sustainable economic growth that is not boosted by governments and central banks will be restored.

EUROPE’S ECONOMY DOWN – CHINA, U.S. UP



The Eurozone’s economy shrank 0.7 percent in 2020’s final quarter, contributing to the region’s loss of 6.8 percent for all of 2020 compared to 2019, according to Eurostat, the European Union’s statistics agency.

For the year, economic output dropped 8.8 percent below 2019’s in France, 8.3 in Germany, 11 in Italy, and 5 in Spain, despite Germany and Spain showing a bit of growth in the year’s final three months.

Declines in those countries were the worst year-on-year performance since World War II.

In contrast, China’s economy grew 2.3 percent in 2020 while the U.S. kept its economic contraction to 3.5 percent, aided by 6-percent growth in the fourth quarter.

Economic lockdowns, continuing spread of the COVID virus, and a snail's-pace vaccine distribution is likely to hobble Europe's economic recovery through the first months of this year, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, while China and the U.S. continue to grow.

The U.S. economy will end 2021 1.5 percent larger than at the end of 2019; Europe's will be 3.3 percent smaller, the International Monetary Fund has predicted. The American economy is likely to return to its pre-pandemic size by the middle of this year, according to the *Financial Times*.

TREND FORECAST: *That the euro is at 1.21 vs. the dollar compared to 1.08 a year ago, makes only Bankster (non)sense.*

The dollar is slipping again, down to a two-week low on expectations of more stimulus injections into the economy. However, with much of the Eurozone in lockdown and recording the worst economic performance among major economies, the euro should be diving.

At some point, it will sink lower. And regardless of the "official" rate of exchange, it will be inconsequential since Dragflation will persist and it will cost more to buy goods and services regardless of the "printed" currency value.

OIL MAJORS REPORT RECORD LOSSES



ExxonMobil, the world's second-largest oil company, reported its fourth quarterly loss in a row for the last three months of 2020, tallying a \$22.4-billion loss for the year, the first negative year in the company's 150-year history.

The company's stock lost more than 40 percent of its value last year, during which ExxonMobil was booted out of the S&P 500 index and replaced by Tesla.

British giant BP booked a loss of \$5.7 billion in 2020, compared to 2019's \$10-billion profit. It was the company's first losing year since 2010 when its Deepwater Horizon platform exploded in the Gulf of Mexico.

ConocoPhillips lost \$2.7 billion last year against a 2019 profit of \$7.2 billion.

Royal Dutch Shell and French company Total are expected to report losses this week.

As the pandemic shut down the world's economy in spring 2020, petroleum companies continued to pump oil, despite a crash in demand amid a glutted market. U.S. crude futures briefly traded below zero at one point last spring, with benchmark Brent crude prices spending weeks in the \$30 range before rebounding now to pre-pandemic levels of about \$60 a barrel.

Brent's prices in futures contracts are sinking back toward \$50 later in the year, indicating investors' uncertainty about oil's outlook.

The oil industry has been weakened by an international divestment movement, demanding investment funds rid themselves of oil companies' stocks; consumers' ground shift to clean energy; and the growing popularity of electric vehicles, exemplified by GM's and Volkswagen's announcements that they will cease producing gas buggies in the next few years.

TREND FORECAST: *Political clout, or lack of it, is a function of financial might. As the oil industry's economic power softens, it will exert less control over politicians. Watch for renewed and re-energized pushes in the U.S. to curtail or repeal the industry's federally guaranteed depletion allowance and other tax breaks and financial privileges.*

However, with the oil mafia, i.e. OPEC+ in charge and Brent Crude and West Texas Intermediate rising, so too will their profits.

BANK OF ENGLAND SIGNALS NEGATIVE INTEREST RATES AHEAD



The U.K.'s central bank has told commercial banks to make needed changes to their processes and records systems to prepare for the country's benchmark interest rate to dive below zero.

However, that does not mean that negative rates are imminent, the bank added.

A negative rate would mean that the central bank would charge commercial banks to store their cash, giving banks an incentive to invest and make loans and, in theory, speed economic recovery.

However, banks could decide to offset the losses caused by negative interest rates by raising fees to customers.

The European Central Bank and Bank of Japan have held interest rates below zero for more than a year; the stimulation effect on their national economies has been inconclusive, analysts say.

The bank's monetary policy committee "was clear that it did not wish to send any signal that it intended to set a negative bank rate at some point in the future... it concluded that it would be appropriate to start the preparations to provide the capability to do so if necessary in the future," the minutes of the committee's February meeting noted.

At their most recent meeting, bank officials held rates at 0.1 percent and continued its brisk pace of asset-buying.

In November, the central bank forecast the U.K.'s economy to grow 2 percent this quarter. The new lockdown in place since December forced the bank to

reverse its outlook: the bank now sees Britain's economy shrinking 4.2 percent through March.

Analysts differ on whether a negative rate would revive an economic recovery.

TREND FORECAST: *With economies such as the U.K., COVID locked down and its economy diving, plus the unknown financial consequences of BREXIT, the pound will be pushed much lower if/when interest rates go negative.*

The lower the value of the currency, the higher the price of gold, silver, and cryptocurrencies will rise as citizens seek safe-haven assets.

INDIA TO PUMP IN CHEAP MONEY TO BOOST ECONOMY



India's government will seek to borrow \$11 billion from capital markets over the next six weeks to initiate capital projects before the country's fiscal year ends on 31 March, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in a statement reported by the *Financial Times*.

The nation's new budget raises capital spending to about \$75 billion, up almost a third from the previous fiscal year. The new budget forecasts a deficit of 6.8 percent over the coming year.

India also will privatize two government-owned banks; raise the limit on foreign direct investment in the insurance industry from 49 percent to 79 percent; and boost tariffs to protect domestic industries, she said.

The government had attempted to restrain public spending during the pandemic for fear of risking the country's credit rating. However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other financial agencies have been urging nations to "spend their

way out of” the current economic crisis, as the *Trends Journal* has been reporting in recent months.

India’s government “was worried about losing their investment-grade rating on sovereign debt,” economist Shilan Shah at Capital Economics told the *Times*. Now, “rather than just trying to show prudence, [the finance ministry] is trying to support the economy, which is one way of improving the public debt trajectory.”

India’s economy contracted 8 percent in 2020 but will grow 11 percent this year, the IMF has forecast, returning to its pre-pandemic level before 2022. The manufacturing sector already has regained its 2019 output level, IHS Market reported, although services lag.

Raising public spending while recovery is already underway risks inflation, analysts warn.

TREND FORECAST: *As with other nations, the stimulus injections will boost the Indian economy, but only temporarily. The nation had been in sharp decline before the COVID War and since the lockdown, the economy has greatly worsened. Plus, with the current farmer’s revolt, which we have been reporting on in detail since it broke out in November, and other protests that were shut down with the lockdown but expected to re-escalate... instability will reign and socioeconomic and political tensions will rise.*

The new policies “will stimulate the economy, no question about it,” Saurabh Mukherjea, CEO of Marcellus Investment Managers, said in a comment to the Times. “The concern is... you could end up overheating things in the next 12 months.”

ARAB GOVERNMENTS MUST MAKE ECONOMIC REFORMS, IMF WARNS



Governments in the Arab world must invest in technology and make economic reforms that accelerate recovery from the global shutdown, an official of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in a public warning reported by the *Financial Times*.

After the Great Recession, “it took the countries of the region much longer than the average emerging economy to regain their previous levels of growth,” noted Jihad Azour, the IMF’s director for the Middle East and former Lebanese finance minister.

The economies of the Middle East and North Africa contracted an average of 3.8 percent in 2020, the IMF has calculated, with government debt increasing by 5 percent of GDP for oil importers and 10 to 12 percent for oil exporters.

“The risk now is that there are countries that will not be able to regain their 2019 level” of economic output “until 2022 and some who won’t reach it for five years,” he said.

These nations risk another “lost decade” if they fail to deal with rising debt, a shrinking resource base, and widespread youth unemployment, he added.

Arab countries failed to confront these issues in the aftermath of the "Arab spring" uprisings a decade ago; now the loss of tourists during the pandemic, and the vitally necessary cash they infuse into these economies, have sharpened public discontent.

In January, thousands of Tunisians returned to the streets to protest their country’s lack of jobs and economic mobility. Youth unemployment there is 36.5 percent, according to the International Labour Organization.

“To accelerate the recovery, work should start now on investment in green infrastructure and digitalization,” Azour urged.

Governments also need to redirect spending away from subsidizing state-run businesses and invest in health, education, technology, and economic sectors that spark growth, he said.

These goals can be accomplished not by austerity but “by revisiting the tax system and sharing the burden differently,” he pointed out, including expanding social safety nets for “those who need it.”

CUBA GOING CAPITALIST?



In a major policy reversal, the Cuban government will permit small, private businesses to operate in most sectors of its economy, state-run news outlets announced on 6 February.

The list of permitted activities is being expanded from 127 to more than 2,000, the announcement said.

The island’s economy has suffered for decades under tight government controls.

In 2020, Cuba’s economy shrank 11 percent, forcing the government to implement long-stalled economic reforms, including deregulating the peso, state-run businesses, and foreign investment.

Still, "the self-employed are not going to have it easy due to the complex environment in which they will operate, with few dollars and inputs in the economy," Pavel Vidal, a former economist at Cuba's central bank and now a professor at Colombia's Pontificia Universidad, told Reuters.

TREND FORECAST: *Unlike Donald Trump, who imposed harsh sanctions and travel restrictions on Cuba (allegedly to gain favor with Cuban nationalists living in Florida to win their vote in the Presidential election, which he did), we forecast the Biden administration will loosen them up, as did President Obama.*

When restrictions ease, Cuba, only 90 miles off the coast of Florida, will become both a travel and retirement destination for Americans.

ITALY'S FABLED WEDDING INDUSTRY NEARS COLLAPSE



Italian landscapes from Tuscany's countryside to Sicily's dramatic hills have made the country a favorite site for luxury weddings and spawned a multi-billion-euro industry to host them.

The pandemic and global shutdown have changed that.

Over the past 12 months, an estimated 9,000 weddings for foreign couples have been canceled, according to Italy's Confindustria business group, and 85 percent of the 210,000 domestic unions that were scheduled for the scenic venues did not materialize.

The crippled wedding industry and its 46,000 paralyzed businesses will account for at least a third of the €10 billion Italy's tourism industry will lose this year, Confindustria estimates.

Tuscany and Lake Como, the Amalfi coast, Apulia, and Sicily will be the hardest hit, the group predicted.

Apulia, a quaint region of whitewashed villages and miles of the Mediterranean coast, generated €1 billion in wedding-related commerce in 2019, a number expected to plummet by 90 percent this year.

“International weddings are the most lucrative for local economies because they’re generally luxurious and last three to seven days,” Michele Boccardi, president of the Assoeventi wedding trade group, said in a comment quoted by the *Financial Times*.

But couples are “having second thoughts on [their wedding] destination even for 2021 and 2022,” Liz Linklater, a London wedding planner, told the *Times*. “Many are opting to stay home and do something local.”

TRENDPOST: *We note this article from the Financial Times to illustrate the deep and lasting devastation inflicted upon hundreds of millions of lives and livelihoods across the planet as a result of draconian lockdown rules.*

Again, minus an unforeseen event, be it man-made or made-by-nature, it will be at least five years before businesses fully bounce back and new jobs are created.

GOING DOWN, GOING BUST, GOING OUT

BIG BANKS SLASHING BRANCHES. In late January, TD Bank announced the closure of 81 of its 1,223 U.S. branches by April, joining KeyCorp, Huntington Bancshares, the Bank of Hawaii, and National Bank Holdings in shutting branches as deposits, withdrawals, and other transactions increasingly take place online.

From March through May 2019, Wells Fargo saw a 35-percent jump in digital deposits to checking accounts, the bank told the *Financial Times*.

The pandemic and restrictions on movement sped up KeyBank’s digital transformation by five years, CEO Christopher Gorman said last September, as reported by *Forbes* magazine.

The number of U.S. bank branches dropped by 5.1 percent from 2017 through 2020, with more than 4,400 branches disappearing during that period, according to the National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

Since 2008, when the Great Recession struck, more than 13,400 bank branches have been shuttered, about 14 percent of the U.S. total, the coalition reported.

Bank mergers also have added to the number of closures.

The loss of branches is especially devastating to rural and low-income urban areas where financial services often already are scarce, noted Jesse Van Tol, CEO of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

SEARS CLOSES 20 PERCENT OF REMAINING STORES. In late January, Sears announced the pending closure of another ten of its remaining 46 U.S. stores.

Sears began 2019 with 489 stores. The remaining Sears stores are likely to close within a year.

Transformco, which owns Sears, also owns Kmart, which has shriveled its number of locations from 360 to 30 in the last two years.

CHESAPEAKE ENERGY CUTS WORKFORCE BY 15 PERCENT. Chesapeake, an early and prominent company in the shale fracking boom, will dispense with 220 workers, or 15 percent of its staff, under a plan that will infuse \$1 billion into the company and bring it out of bankruptcy this week. The arrangement leaves lenders in control of the business.

Most of the cuts will be made at the company's Oklahoma City headquarters, Chesapeake said in an e-mail to employees.

L'OCCITANE INC. GOES BUST. The beauty products retailer with more than 150 U.S. stores has filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy in New Jersey.

The move does not include the L'Occitane en Provence brand, its subsidiaries, or any operations outside the U.S.

The pandemic and economic shutdown robbed the company of its ability to continue to pay high rents in posh locales. L'Occitane said it will use the bankruptcy process to renegotiate rent rates with landlords and “right-size” its number of brick-and-mortar stores.

CANADA’S “AIRPORT TOWN” LOSES 290 JOBS. Gander, a Newfoundland town of about 11,600 residents, is losing 600 jobs from its Gander International Airport, which also is used by aircraft of Canada’s air force.

Sixty percent of the disappearing jobs are among airline employees; 40 percent are among ground crews and others who work for the airport itself.

The airport accounts for 20 percent of the jobs in town, which pay salaries and wages 20 percent above the region’s mean annual income.

Before the pandemic, the airport managed a dozen flights a day among six airlines; currently, only the regional PAL short-hop carrier is flying in and out of Gander.

Gander officials have joined the chorus of voices imploring the Canadian government for financial aid for the airline industry.

AIRLINES WARN OF MORE JOB CUTS. At least 14,000 United Airlines employees may lose their jobs when the current \$15 billion in federal aid to air carriers dries up on 31 March.

Hawaiian Airlines has put 900 workers on notice and American Airlines’ flight attendants union said the airline has told it to expect layoffs.

MPA LAYS OFF 200. The Massachusetts Port Authority (MPA) is dispensing with about 200 workers in the face of historically low traffic at Boston’s Logan

International Airport. The layoffs are part of the agency's plan to reduce its' roughly 1,200-person workforce by 25 percent, MPA noted.

Staff reductions began last fall, with eligible employees being offered a \$20,000 buyout.

The MPA will lose \$400 million through 2024, it has projected, forecasting air passenger traffic to be about 30 percent of pre-pandemic levels over that period.

JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP TRIMMING 1,500 WHITE COLLARS. The British conglomerate of retail and financial service businesses is lopping 1,500 corporate office jobs as part of a five-year turnaround plan revealed last November to save £300 million.

The company also will close eight of its department stores and four grocery stores, shedding an additional 1,324 jobs. Workers losing their jobs will be redeployed within the company as possible; those not finding new berths will receive funding for retraining for other work.

The partnership also announced it will repay a £300-million government support loan two months ahead of schedule.

BRITISH AUTOMAKERS SEE MORE LAYOFFS AHEAD. The 10,000 jobs the U.K.'s vehicle makers dumped last year was only the beginning, analysts say, after the industry suffered its worst sales year in 2020 since 1984.

Vehicle production plunged 29 percent last year to 920,928 units, the first time since 2009 that the industry has turned out less than a million cars and trucks, according to Britain's Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Last year's layoffs were the tip of "an iceberg," society CEO Mike Hawes told the *Financial Times*.

Britain will not equal 2016's record 1.7 million vehicles produced for years, he added.

"Over the next few years, we need to make sure that we retain what we currently have."

2020 SALES "FELL OFF A CLIFF," SAYS RETAILER. Peter Higgins, cofounder of British clothier Charles Tyrwhitt Shirts Limited, did not reveal the degree of revenue loss for 2020 but warned that "a few more" of its more than 400 stores could close this year, in addition to four already shut down in 2020.

Remaining stores have survived on a combination of rent cuts, rent deferments, and staff layoffs, he said to the *Financial Times*.

The company attributes its troubles to white-collar workers no longer needing to dress for the office or social events.

If the COVID vaccines are deployed quickly enough to lift Britain's current lockdowns by mid-May, the company could break even this year, co-founder Nick Wheeler added.

DSW LAYS OFF 92 IN TRANSITION. The Ohio-based shoe and fashion accessories retailer will terminate 92 customer service jobs at one Ohio location and shift most of the rest of the remaining reps to a third-party call center.

The company will work to place the jobless workers within its stores or distribution centers in the area, a spokesperson said in a statement announcing the changes.

Designer Brands, DSW's parent company, earlier revealed plans to abandon as many as 100 of its 669 North American storefronts as shoppers stay home and buy online, although it will retain "a physical presence in most geographic markets," the statement said.

LUBY'S SHUTS DOWN. The Texas cafeteria chain lost \$3 million in the first quarter of its fiscal year and the company's liquidation is "imminent," according to government documents reported by Austin television news station *FOX 7*.

"The likelihood is remote that we will return from liquidation," Luby's stated in the documents.

Last June, Luby's announced that would sell off all its assets to pay debts; in September, the board of directors approved a plan to dissolve the company. Nine of the restaurants are still open but will close before the end of this year unless the company sells them to a new owner willing to keep them open.

VIPLUS LAYOFFS WILL HAVE "DOMINO EFFECT." The Australian milk producer Viplus has laid off 31 workers at its plant in Toora, a farming community of 681 people, because "business and economy and the international markets aren't rebounding as quickly as everyone had hoped," CEO Jon McNaught said.

The layoffs will have an economic "domino effect" on the little town and surrounding area, local merchants said.

KNOTEL BOOTS TENANTS, FILES BANKRUPTCY. On 29 January, the shared-workspace landlord e-mailed tenants in its two million square feet of New York City office space, telling them to gather their belongings and clear out by 3 PM.

On 31 January, the once-billion-dollar company filed for U.S. bankruptcy and announced it was being bought by Newmark, the 92-year-old international real estate services firm.

Newmark, Knotel's largest investor, will provide \$20 million to see the company through bankruptcy, Newmark said in a statement reported by *Business Insider*.

Knotel acknowledged losing more than \$202 million during the first ten months of 2020 as the economy crashed, tenants were unable to pay rent, and Knotel

owed monthly lease payments on as much as five million square feet of office space in several countries.

The company then was hit by dozens of lawsuits from creditors and property owners.

The bankruptcy applies only to Knotel's U.S. operation.

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS by Gregory Mannarino



DEBT MARKET SUPER BUBBLE: A MONSTER

When you think of a monster, what comes to mind? Frankenstein? Godzilla? The Creature from the Black Lagoon?

The truth is there is a real monster among us now, one with the potential to wipe out a large portion of the global population... literally!

That monster is the Super Bubble that now exists in the debt market. This monster is gaining power every day and will at one point unleash its terrible wrath on the world.

We are living in an illusion – an illusion that appears real as global debt continues to balloon and central banks inflate. The glue, so to speak, holding this entire charade together is mass debt issuance being fueled by world central banks, none more so than the Federal Reserve.

Just to maintain the illusion of the current environment, the Federal Reserve must increase their debt every second.

Today, the debt is higher than it was last week, but has the environment improved? Has the economy gotten better?

Next week, there will be even more debt, and the economy will still not have improved.

No amount of debt issuance nor any amount of asset purchases by a central bank can improve the economy. All they are doing is maintaining a false reality... that will get very real at some point in time.

America's economy is in a freefall collapse with no end in sight, yet, again, the stock market continues to hit record highs. This phenomenon is something I predicted years ago. The faster the economy collapses and the worse the economic news gets, the higher the stock market will go as long as the central banks continue to issue more debt.

How high will the stock market will go? Just look at the Federal Reserve's balance sheet, which nearly doubled in 2020.

Keep Your Eyes on the 10-year Bond Yield

The 10-year yield is the benchmark; it is also the key to understanding where cash is going. If the 10-year yield falls, it means cash is making its way into debt market-seeking safety. If the 10-year yield rises, cash is making its way *out* of the debt market, and it is seeking places to go.

For over a decade, the Federal Reserve has been involved in a scheme to inflate the stock market by suppressing rates. They do this by creating massive sums of cash out of thin air and buying the debt. This mechanism is also known as Quantitative Easing. QE has worked perfectly in that it has successfully propped

up the economy... but it has created a huge stock market bubble on the back of inflating the debt market Super Bubble.

A Moment of Reckoning is Approaching

There will come a time when an uncontrolled sell-off in the bond market will occur. I believe this occurrence will be no accident.

An uncontrolled sell-off in the debt market will cause the 10-year yield to spike rapidly, and this will put enormous pressure on the stock market. Once this happens, equity markets will plummet worldwide, and everyone will be looking to sell at the same time. A pan-equity sell-off will mean a global stock market crash on an epic scale being fueled by rapidly rising bond yields. This mechanism will also put enormous pressure on real estate.

What I am outlining here will be a global crisis beyond anything ever seen before, and, make no mistake, none of this is by accident.

Problem, Solution, Reaction (PSR)

Every engineered crisis follows the same PSR pattern, and this one will be no different. What we need to do is raise awareness that this is the scenario that will unfold. The only question is when.

As the debt super bubble implodes, the flow of credit will stop. Transactions will stop. Resources will become scarce, and basic survival needs will become hard to get. Therein lies the potential for pandemonium to break out on the streets – what will be a grim situation, indeed.

The debt market super bubble is, without doubt, one of the greatest dangers facing us today.

by Gregory Mannarino, TradersChoice.net

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM by Bradley J. Steiner



IT'S UP TO YOU

The martial arts and self-defense field in America today offers many variants, styles, methods, and systems of defense that no one can blame a prospective student for being confused and frustrated when trying to decide what to study.

Now, obviously, I make no pretense of being unbiased here. I developed a comprehensive system of all-in combatives and self-defense in 1975 – [American Combato](#) (Jen-Do-Tao) – and I believe it to be the best in the world for its purpose. But I am not unaware that there are other excellent systems and other teachers that are highly competent to teach personal defense and attack. Nor am I of a mind to dismiss other quality systems. I welcome polite, honest, and respectful dialog with persons who train in other methods.

For your clarification, and to be sure you get what you want and need for self-defense, what you need to understand is that close combat and

self-defense is a *specialty*. It is not true that sporting forms of fighting, no matter how “rough” or “tough,” or classical/traditional forms of antiquated art, no matter how impressive and spectacular, make a sensible choice if your purpose is self-protection and/or close-in, military-type hand-to-hand combat, *per se*.

While true that young, strong, competition fighters are almost always able to defend themselves well, and that classical martial artists who have many years of competent instruction and training behind them and are young, tough, and either black-belt experts or the equivalent in whatever form of training they follow can readily *adapt* their skills to handle actual emergencies, self-defense and close combat is a field unto itself.

Self-defense and close combat is what you want if managing actual, dangerous crises is your single purpose. It provides a precise, efficient, straight-line path to your objective. No irrelevancies, and no prolonged activity that barely relates to what you’re after.

Two absolute truths that will clear matters up for you in deciding what to study, and with whom to train, are:

- All quality systems of practical, actual combat methodology emphasize, in different ways perhaps, *very similar skills*, and
- The crucial factor once you’ve undertaken the study of a quality, practical, *authentic* system is YOU; your attitude, your devotion to training, and your gut-level willingness to use that which you have learned with everything in you when the you-know-what hits the proverbial fan.

All worthwhile approaches to self-defense and close combat will emphasize blows of the hands, feet, knees, elbows, and head. They will stress gouging, clawing, biting, and a few select combat throws and choking skills. They will recognize and integrate modern weapons into the training and will also teach the use of weapons-at-hand (i.e. improvised weapons). They will stress

mindset and powerfully-inculcated mental conditioning so you are ultimately capable of transitioning into a murderous, wild animal when your life is at stake.

I have found that, so long as quality techniques have been mastered, mental conditioning is 90% of what will enable you to prevail in combat. Pay no attention to anyone who believes that the mental side of this is less than 50%, at least. You will be encouraged to get and remain in excellent condition, and there will be no nonsense taught about “strength isn’t necessary” or “size, youth, and agility don’t matter.”

It will be stressed – correctly – that proper training can enable someone to defeat a stronger, younger, better-conditioned individual... but the fact that strength, age, size, agility, and all-around fitness matters and comprise factors to be considered and respected will never be downplayed by any professional who knows what he’s about.

Despite the popular mythology, the proven combat principle of always staying on your feet, and always avoiding, if at all possible, going to the ground with your adversary will be strongly emphasized. (Naturally, you will be taught what to do to defend from the ground, if necessary; and you will be taught the very simple procedures for handling an exceptional situation wherein you are on the ground with an enemy – and how to get back on your feet!)

The principles and tactics of personal security and protection in your daily activities, and home and family defense will be a part of the program as well.

You can see why, necessarily, self-defense and close combat is an entirely separate study than sport or tradition. Its syllabus is quite complete and packed with its own essentials.

Watch out for the mean-spirited “politicians” (and they are legion) who are constantly attacking other approaches, systems, teachers, and schools. These malcontents – in general, the product of their past unsuccessful training and experiences with a teacher or a system – offer low-quality instruction and seek

to inflate their pathetic image by attacking others. You don't want to expose yourself to this kind of toxic psycho.

Once you have found a good, competent teacher who is teaching a quality approach, the rest is up to *you*. Just as possessing the finest violin ever made will not automatically make a masterful violinist out of you, being a student in the best system of close combat ever devised will not, *without your protracted devotion to study and training*, transform you into a confident, formidable proponent of the art of defense.

You *must* put in the effort. You *must* train. One of the points I hammer home repeatedly in [my DVD course](#) is the need for practice – ideally for at least 30 minutes every day – if confidence and competence are truly desired. The nice thing about close combat and defense training is that, given a quality system, within five to nine or so months, a serious student can be much better prepared to handle a real emergency than someone with years of experience in competition or classical arts training.

Combative skills are indeed *simple*, but it takes repetitive work and discipline to master them. There is no overnight miracle or weekend success. Train! Practice! You may be able to learn how to do a technique in a matter of ten minutes, but being able to do that technique speedily, correctly, and accurately under stressful combat conditions may take several hours of drill over a week or more of time.

Please keep all of this in mind as you work on material I have covered in previous articles in my Survivalism column in the **Trends Journal**. *Reading* the articles is not enough. You must work at mastering their content.

I remember hearing a marvelous piece of advice years ago. The advice is aimed at counseling a person on how to succeed in any critical endeavor.

This is the advice: “Pray for assistance as though it all depended upon God; and work as hard as you can as though it all depends upon *you*.”

Let me paraphrase that bit of wisdom so it applies very specifically to your mastering the self-defense ability and confidence that you desire:

“Search out and find the very finest system of personal combat and defense you are capable of locating, as though the system you choose will, alone, determine how well you will ultimately be able to defend yourself. Then train in that system with all of your heart, mind, body, and soul, as though your successful use of what you learn in that system depends 100% upon you, alone.”

I have been a student of the combat arts, survival, and cognate disciplines since the 1950s. I promise if you genuinely follow that advice, success is assured.

In Memoriam:

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved friend, Bradley J. Steiner. May his soul rest in peace.

In his legacy, we are fighting the “Brad Steiner fight” – the good fight. The fight for each person to be the person they want to be and to protect themselves when their lives are being viciously threatened by enemies of Freedom, Peace, and Justice.

TRENDS IN GETTING HEALTHY



NATURAL LOVE IN THE TIME OF COVID

by *Gary Null, PhD*

As the COVID-19 panic rolls on, health-minded people are eager, and sometimes desperate, to know whether there are ways to strengthen the body's immune system to protect themselves. Following the first cases of the virus in the U.S. and announcements indicating it would spread rapidly across the nation, I have received numerous requests from my radio and internet audience for information about how they can best protect themselves from infection. Most ask about what foods and supplements may confer protection.

It is impossible for us to avoid exposure to SARS-CoV-2 in every case. We contract and harbor numerous viruses during our lives but are usually asymptomatic. Therefore, no nutrient will prevent infection; however, many will certainly strengthen our defense mechanisms and can protect us from developing a serious symptomatic infection.

Most of us have been infected with a coronavirus strain at some time in our lives. Along with many other common viruses, coronaviruses are associated with a common cold. It is only during the past 19 years that newer strains have become more virulent and pose greater respiratory risks. The first was the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak between 2002-2004 and then the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2014. Since then there has been a remarkable number of studies published to find natural sources to prevent and treat SARS infections.

My producer and I have scoured the peer-reviewed literature on the National Institutes of Health's Library of Medicine database to identify compelling studies that may warrant vitamin, antioxidant, and botanical supplementation as a means to protect ourselves from coronavirus and other viral infections. These have been shown to either have strong antiviral properties in general or have known biomolecular effects to strengthen the immune system against microbial infection. We are not offering prescriptions. This is just a summary of some important medical information about certain nutrients and botanicals to make better-informed decisions for strengthening your immune system and to protect yourself from serious SARS-CoV-2 symptoms.

Very early into the pandemic, Shengjing Hospital of China Medical University published a paper recommending people have a nutritional evaluation before any conventional treatment. The [paper recommends](#) people follow a regimen with Vitamins C, D, and E, Omega-3 fatty acid, Selenium, and Zinc.

I would also follow the [recommendations](#) by Dr. Paul Marik in the pulmonary and critical care division at Eastern Virginia Medical School and include a daily intake of quercetin. Quercetin, a flavonoid abundantly found in apples, grapes, onions, and green leafy vegetables, has a synergistic antiviral effect and increases Vitamin C's immune-modulatory properties. I always recommend Vitamin C be taken with quercetin. Vitamin D is also crucial because serious Covid-19 illnesses and deaths appear among those who are most Vitamin D deficient.

It is necessary to supplement zinc. A common regimen for treating SARS CoV-2 infections now prescribed by maverick American physicians and more

improvingly in other nations is a combination of hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), the antibiotic azithromycin, and zinc. Zinc has been shown to ward off and reduce the onset of colds and flu-like symptoms.

[A 2010 study](#) by scientists at Leiden University's Center for Infectious Diseases concluded that zinc will block the replication of coronavirus.

Another important nutrient that has an excellent history to back its efficacy is the important antioxidant N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC). Our lungs are especially susceptible to oxidative stress, which becomes a pathway for microbial infections and can trigger inflammatory cytokines. NAC is one antioxidant shown to reduce clinical symptoms following viral infections. [Johann Goethe University Department of Virology](#), for example, recommends NAC to decrease inflammation due to respiratory viruses such as influenza.

There is strong evidence that severe coronavirus cases and deaths are associated with cytokine storms besides secondary infections such as pneumonia. One cytokine in particular, NLRP3, is associated with SARS-CoV infections. The amino acid Melatonin has the unique property of inhibiting NLRP3 elevations after infection. For this reason, it can prevent NLRP3 cytokine storms contributing to acute respiratory distress syndrome and acute lung injury that are characteristic of severe SARS infections.

Early last March, we stumbled unexpectedly upon a botanical compound, Glycyrrhizin Acid (GA), which surprisingly has been studied at a number of different medical institutions to treat the first SARS virus. GA is an active antiviral molecule found in licorice. In the ancient medical systems of China, India, and Greece, licorice is found in their pharmacopeias for treating sore throats, bronchitis, and respiratory infections.

During the past 15 years, GA research has been impressive. In early 2005, German scientists at Goethe University and the Russian Academy of Sciences identified the molecule's antiviral activity against SARS coronavirus. It had a ten-fold increase in anti-SARS activity compared to other potential treatments tested. One conjugate had a 70-fold increase.

That same year, a separate Chinese Academy of Sciences study arrived at similar results. Virologists at Frankfurt University Medical School [investigated several antiviral compounds](#) to treat patients admitted with SARS infections. Of all the compounds tested, licorice's GA was the most effective. The scientists concluded, "Our findings suggest that glycyrrhizin should be assessed for treatment of SARS." That study was later replicated at Sun Yat Sen University in China.

Another botanical I would recommend is astragalus, commonly prescribed throughout Asia. Its active compounds, saponins, are well researched and recommended for their effectiveness against viral infections and over-stressed respiratory conditions. Beijing University of Chinese Medicine completed an analysis of previous research looking at the benefits of astragalus herbal formulas against the SARS and H1N1 swine flu. In three studies, among participants who took the formulas against SARS, none contracted the illness. Nor did any contract H1N1 influenza in four additional studies.

I could recommend many other supplements and botanical medicines to complement the above; however, in my opinion, what I am offering seems to be the best selection for your buck and is supported by the medical literature. Other ways to supplement a stronger immune system would include foods that increase the body's nitric oxide (such as dark chocolate, rhubarb, beets, pomegranate, and leafy greens), elderberry, Echinacea, olive leaf, and extracts from the plant *Bupleurum*.

However, none of these nutrients, foods, and botanicals can prevent a person from being in contact with an infected person and contracting SARS CoV-2 themselves. Nevertheless, they will strengthen the immune system and effectively fight infection. Besides, they are safe and not expensive.

A hard lesson we are learning is that the U.S. government has no noteworthy competence in dealing with national health crises let alone a pandemic. We are only good at pouring money into the personal coffers of elites and pharmaceutical companies who won't turn down a good opportunity to

capitalize on disasters. If the tiny virus is David, certainly the U.S.'s cumbersomeness and huge bureaucracy is Goliath. Therefore, we need to be responsible for our health to protect us from COVID-19. If progressive voices are unable to leverage themselves to change the face of our civilization for a potentially sustainable future, then the tiny SARS-2 virus is determined to do it for us.

TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY



By *Joe Doran*

VACCINE PASSPORTS WILL END UP TRACKING EVERYTHING

As previously reported in the **Trends Journal**, tech giants including Microsoft and Oracle are partnering with health care companies on a Vaccination Credential Initiative (VCI) that will essentially result in “SMART Health Cards” that can function as vaccine passports.

Many, including Dr. Joseph Mercola, a leading expert in natural health, are warning the initiative will almost certainly seek to coerce people into a global “vaccination-record infrastructure.” Dr. Mercola said, “If implemented, [it] will be used to modify human behavior to great effect, reaching far beyond just the issue of COVID-19 vaccines.”

The SMART Health Cards, which are being designed to work across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries, would contain a yet-unspecified

amount of personal data. Governments are already suggesting the “vaccine passports” would be necessary to return to normal travel and many other activities, including attending public events.

But, according to civil liberties advocate Silkie Carol of Big Brother Watch,

“Vaccine passports would create the backbone of an oppressive digital ID system that could easily lead to a health apartheid that’s incompatible with a free and democratic country... This dangerous plan would normalize identity checks, increase state control over law-abiding citizens, and create a honeypot for cyber-criminals.”

According to *Mercola.com*, the push for cards that might comprehensively track travel, health, relationship, and economic activity is something that goes far beyond a desire to combat the current pandemic. “The same individuals and entities appear time and again, pointing to a coordinated push to not only implement such a system but manufacture consent for such a system among the global population.”

Down Under

Stuart Robert, Australia’s government services minister, said Friday that those in the country who receive the COVID-19 vaccine will be able to prove their inoculation by using an app on their smartphone, according to a report.

ABC.net.au reported that these “proof of vaccination” certificates could also come in paper form.

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM HIGHLIGHTS “TECH FOR GOOD”



The recent World Economic Forum’s “Davos Agenda” virtual summit highlighted several “Tech For Good” innovations that appeared to tout not just the utility, but the superiority of AI and robotics compared to humans.

One featured article chronicled what happened when AI and humans met in a strawberry-growing contest (spoiler alert: AI won). The AI and robotics takeover are not seen as a problem by the WEF, potentially rendering billions of humans “non-essential” in the eyes of elites. The organization sees the prospect as a sweet success, as it termed the AI strawberry victory, merely needing good governance: “Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies such as AI are forecast to deliver huge productivity gains – but need the right governance, according to the Global Technology Governance Report 2021.”

Another article depicted automated online censorship of human beings in a favorable light. It focused on an MIT study that showed the optimal placing of warning labels in “false” stories. According to the article, “The research helps inform tools that social media platforms could use, as they look for better methods to label and limit the flow of misinformation online.”

A piece on how AI might soon assist space exploration sounded eerily similar to “Hal 9000” from the sci-fi classic *2001: A Space Odyssey*. An AI assistant called Cimon could soon be used to “reduce astronauts’ stress by performing tasks they ask it to do.” According to the WEF, handing over tasks to AI poses no risks, and should not be limited to earthbound applications. Designing missions, and overseeing the clearing of junk around Earth’s orbit, are just a few of the jobs that AI assistants like Cimon might perform.

STATES LEADING PUSH-BACK AGAINST BIG TECH



Tech companies would no longer be able to ban political candidates, and they would have to provide opt-outs of content filters for citizens of Florida if new measures by Governor Ron DeSantis are enacted.

“The core issue here is this: are consumers going to have the choice to consume the information they choose or are oligarchs in Silicon Valley going to make those choices for us?” DeSantis said in a speech announcing the proposed regulations. “No group of people should exercise such power, especially not tech billionaires in Northern California.”

This past October, a 16-month congressional investigation determined that Big Tech companies held “monopoly power” in key business segments and abused their marketplace dominance to profit and protect themselves from political scrutiny and regulation. But with the new Biden administration saturated with tech operatives and advocates, it appears doubtful the Justice Department will act on the 450-page report, compiled by the House Judiciary Committee’s antitrust panel. The report concluded that there was “significant evidence” showing anticompetitive conduct by Apple, Google, Amazon, Facebook, and others, which stifled consumer choice and weakened democracy.

POLAND TAKES A STAND AGAINST TECH CENSORSHIP



Poland is proposing the establishment of a “Freedom of Speech Council” that would guarantee its citizens are not arbitrarily censored or manipulated by Big Tech companies. According to Deputy Minister

of Justice Sebastian Kaleta, the Council would determine what Big Tech can and cannot remove from its platforms. Kaleta said the purpose would be to stop companies from imposing restrictions beyond the laws that govern and protect speech in his country.

“We have watched with alarm as a consortium of ever more powerful, monopolistic Big Tech companies have done what was once unthinkable: de-platforming a sitting U.S. president,” said Kaleta in a *Newsweek* opinion piece. “For us, this example—which has alarmed presidents and prime ministers across Europe and, indeed, the world—is merely the straw that broke the camel’s back. The debate about who and what social media companies should be able to ban is now firmly in the public eye.”

Kaleta noted that Poland’s experience with Soviet-imposed communism and censorship is deeply ingrained. And he dismissed the trope that the Big Tech companies were merely “private companies,” and that those who didn’t agree with their policies should just go and build their own platforms. “The rapid exclusion of Parler has finished off this argument once and for all. With Amazon refusing to host Parler, and Apple and Google removing the app from their app stores, Big Tech killed the competition before it could even meaningfully take off.”

AMERICA DRIFTS TOWARD CHINA’S “TECHNO-AUTOCRACY”



American democracy has been destroyed from the inside, and the nation has become a thoroughly co-opted satellite of China. That’s the provocative analysis of a recent piece by Lee Smith in the magazine *Tablet*. Smith chronicles the history of how America won the Cold War

against Russia’s brand of communism, only to succumb to a betrayal of elites to China’s tech-driven model of suppression and control.

Smith says that in the 1990s:

“Just after defeating communism in the Soviet Union, America breathed new life into the communist party that survived. And instead of Western democratic principles transforming the CCP [the Chinese Communist Party], the American establishment acquired a taste for Eastern techno-autocracy. Tech became the anchor of the U.S.-China relationship, with CCP funding driving Silicon Valley startups, thanks largely to the efforts of Dianne Feinstein, who, after Kissinger, became the second-most influential official driving the U.S.-CCP relationship for the next 20 years.”

The difference in the way America faced threats from Russia versus the way the country has handled China has led to tragically different outcomes, according to Smith. Though often ridiculed, American leaders during the Cold War didn't trade with Russians, allow business partnerships, or the infiltration of universities or the purchase of American media, sports, and other assets. Most of those restrictions have not applied to China since at least the year 2001 when China was allowed into the World Trade Organization. Today, Smith notes almost every major American industry is vested in China. And, more and more, they are forcing Americans to play by CCP rules.

THIS WEEK IN SURVEILLANCE



Bank of America handed over customer information at the request of Federal authorities to help them track Capitol protesters. Among the customer information handed over was data about whether they were in DC between 5-6 January, airline and hotel purchases, and

weapons purchases. The fishing expedition snared at least one customer, who, after being interrogated by authorities, was found to be innocent of any

wrongdoing. Serious questions about the legality of the incident are being raised.

A meta AI surveillance system dubbed “Anveshak” (the Hindi word for investigator) is making news for its ability to turn a vast network of CCTV cameras into one massive surveillance network that utilizes AI algorithms to track an individual’s movements. Civil liberties advocates point out that surveillance systems have been repeatedly abused by governments to track political activity, not just criminal events. Anveshak, created by the Indian Institute of Science, can hone in on anyone, no matter where they are, creating an omnipresent watchful eye that would sound the death knell of any meaningful human privacy.

Baltimore has terminated a contract with Persistent Surveillance Systems, which ran an Aerial Investigation Research (AIR) for the city’s police department. Planes equipped with special technology were employed to monitor the city from above for up to ten hours each day. “Baltimore’s termination of its unconstitutional spy plane program is a hard-fought victory for all Baltimoreans, especially for the Black leaders who challenged this and the communities of color who are disproportionately targeted by this surveillance,” said ACLU attorney Brett Max Kaufman.

An independent audit called for by the city found that Baltimore’s police department lied about the scope of the program and the length of time surveillance footage was stored.

ELON MUSK: TECH OUTSIDER?



Along with David Portnoy of Barstool Sports, Elon Musk was one of the few prominent figures who signaled support for the Reddit WallStreetBets traders. Portnoy ended up abandoning his stake in GameStop and posted his capitulation on Twitter. Portnoy, on a segment with Tucker Carlson on *FOX News*, had earlier

called for those who shut down traders to be jailed, pointing out it was blatant “market manipulation.”

Musk’s support for the Reddit outsiders, meanwhile, has centered on crypto. After he tweeted “Doge” on 4 February, Dogecoin gained more than 50 percent. The man behind Tesla later tweeted “Dogecoin is the people’s crypto.” News outlets noted that Musk’s tweets over the last two weeks about different companies and cryptocurrencies have contributed to moving the markets. With Ethereum futures launching on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and other cryptos like Bitcoin making huge recent gains, digital currencies are quickly becoming more popular with average investors.

SPECIAL REPORT: GAMESTOP



THE GAMES CONTINUE

By [Joe Doran](#)

This past week saw Treasury Secretary Janet Yellin get involved in the GameStop saga, despite an apparent conflict of interest. Fall-out continued in the markets, with physical silver prices de-coupling from paper and Elon Musk tweeting support for “the people's crypto,” Dogecoin. We also learned more about how hedge funds, banks, and online brokerages may have manipulated unsavvy retail investors.

Below are some important stories this week in the ongoing “GameStop” trend.

GAMESTOP PEELED THE MASK OFF THE MARKETS. When the NYSE, cheap brokerage trading apps like Robinhood, and social and legacy media all came down to halt the rally in GameStop stock last week, it opened the eyes of millions. “It’s a rigged game,” found a whole new meaning. The game was insiders vs. outsiders, Wall Street Hedge fund stock “shorters” vs. a Reddit

group called WallStreetBets, buying up stocks of companies unfavored by the Bigs.

GameStop stock went from around \$15 in early January to nearly \$400 when the Wall Street powers, hemorrhaging billions on bad short bets, leveraged their power to stop the game in progress. In an unprecedented move, traders were allowed only to sell GameStop stock, not buy. The shorters took new positions based on the high price levels, and when the rigged game successfully crashed the stock, the insiders won. But it was a pyrrhic victory. The outsider “degenerates” will certainly take lessons from the battle and strike again.

TRENDPOST: *Communication and censorship played a big part in the story. The young app traders communicated on Reddit and Discord boards. When their collective buying drove their favored stocks up, the censors kicked in. A discord server hosting a WallStreetBets board was taken down. A hundred thousand bad reviews of the Robinhood trading app were deleted by Google. And MSM outlets engaged in a smear campaign of the Reddit traders while lauding the “sensible” actions taken against them.*

Tech companies and media giants acting in unison in favor of corporate behemoths took on another dimension with the GameStop saga. This time, they crushed a politically diverse group of young people who grew up on the internet. They know how to use technology better than many of the ossified interests on the inside. Eyes wide open, the “Youth Revolution” will adapt, using encrypted apps, cryptocurrencies, and other means to ramp up their insurgency.

TRENDPOST: *A legal suit filed in California claims the popular Robinhood brokerage app precipitated the suicide of a young trader. The family of Alex Kearns says their son spiraled into a leveraged debt trap because of the app’s aggressive tactics targeting inexperienced “investors.”*

“How was a 20-year-old with no income able to get assigned almost \$1 million worth of leverage?” were the last words of Kearns, according to the filing. At the time of his death, Robinhood had notified him that his account had a negative balance of \$730,000.

The suit filed in Santa Clara court alleges, “Though Alex was merely a senior in high school when he opened an account with Robinhood and had little or no income, Robinhood determined he was qualified enough to enter into the world of trading sophisticated financial options.”

Kearns reportedly began trading options using the app while he was a freshman at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST “WAIVED” FOR YELLIN. Before she was confirmed as President Biden’s new Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen pledged that she would recuse herself for one year “from when she last made paid speeches to the companies.” But Yellin received a waiver from ethics lawyers at the Treasury just in time to lead a meeting last week of top U.S. market regulators concerning the GameStop saga.

The hedge fund Citadel paid Yellin an \$810,000 speaking fee last October. It has been directly involved in the battle between Wall Street shorters of certain stocks and Reddit app traders who drove up prices on those stocks, including GameStop. Buys were suddenly shut down by brokerages including the popular Robinhood trading app. According to IBT, 35 percent of the platform’s trading revenues come via Citadel. Secretary Yellin is also expected to appear later this month in congressional hearings over matters surrounding the controversy, including the House Financial Services Committee, led by Maxine Waters.

WALL ST. CONCERNED ABOUT “GAMIFICATION” OF STOCK MARKET.

“Protecting investors” and preventing “gamification” of the markets (i.e., gambling on stocks) is suddenly of high concern in the wake of small-time traders inflicting damage on mega Wall Street hedge fund short bettors. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellin moved to initiate meetings with the heads of the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Reserve Board, the New York Fed, and the Commodities Futures Trading Commission to discuss “whether recent activities are consistent with investor protection and fair and efficient markets.”

The SEC, meanwhile, stated, “We will act to protect retail investors when the facts demonstrate abusive or manipulative trading activity that is prohibited by the federal securities laws. Market participants should be careful to avoid such activity.” The SEC was signaling it saw no problem with Reddit traders being shut down last week by brokerages connected with hedge fund losers like Citadel. Instead, the SEC appeared to be warning that actions against groups like the Reddit “WallStreetBets” are being contemplated.

Some have pointed out that the activities of hedge funds, compiling dossiers on targeted companies, taking out short bets against them, then sending proxies out to the financial media to talk down those companies, is the real manipulation and “gamification” problem.

Following the SEC’s statement, one former senior counsel in the SEC’s Division of Enforcement provided a defense of Reddit traders. “There may have been some bad actors, but the narrative in the media does not suggest a traditional pump and dump,” said Philip Moustakis, now a counsel at the law firm of Seward & Kissel. “There is no indication yet that the Reddit crowd was engaged in coordinated actions or disseminated false and misleading information.”

Meanwhile, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), which regulates brokers and broker-dealers, dialed in on the “game-like” features of trading apps like Robinhood as being problematic. “[Our] focus includes risks associated with app-based platforms with interactive or ‘game-like’ features that are intended to influence customers, their related forms of marketing, and the appropriateness of the activity that they are approving clients to undertake through those platforms.”

CITADEL: STOCK SUGAR DADDY OF NINE ONLINE BROKERAGES. Citadel, which had a financial interest in throttling the GME stock rally, was paying virtually all the top online trading brokerages to direct stock order flows to the mega hedge fund. That’s according to legally required filings uncovered by Pam and Russ Martens of wallstreetonparade.com. The list of brokerages includes

Robinhood, E-Trade, TD Ameritrade, Charles Schwab, WeBull, Ally Invest Securities, First Trade, and TradeStation. Fidelity Brokerage Services was also directing stock and option orders to Citadel Securities, but it was only receiving payments on the option orders.

For those wondering how apps like Robinhood can offer free trades, it's because they receive cash rebates from players like Citadel for trades directed to it. Many are suggesting those brokerages shut down buys of GameStop and other stocks in late January to help their hedge fund backer. Funds controlled by Citadel were taking huge losses from stock rallies of companies they had bet would go down in value. The rallies were snuffed out when Robinhood and others allowed traders only to sell those stocks, but not to buy them.

Citadel has been fined multiple times for manipulating market trades. For example, in 2020, FINRA fined Citadel \$180,000 for failing to mark 6.5 million equity trades as short sales. And the fund has previously been fined for using illegal means to either drive up or crash stocks to take profits. As far as the GameStop debacle, Citadel's relationship with brokerages may have paid off in more than one way. "There was a high probability that no matter what online brokerage firm Redditors sent their GameStop orders to initially, Ken Griffin's Citadel Securities was getting a piece of the action in the end," Pam and Russ Martens pointed out.

HEDGE FUNDS CAUGHT WITH THEIR SHORTS DOWN. In the lead-up to the GME buy-and-bust craze in January, some Reddit traders on WallStreetBets noticed that shorts were being taken on seemingly more GME stock than even existed.

Now there is more information that appears to confirm that "naked short" betting was indeed happening. According to Investopedia, naked shorting "is the illegal practice of short selling shares that have not been affirmatively determined to exist. Ordinarily, traders must borrow a stock, or determine that it can be borrowed before they sell it short. So naked shorting refers to short pressure on a stock that may be larger than the tradable shares in the market."

Despite being made illegal after the 2008-09 financial crisis, there are loopholes in rules and discrepancies between paper and electronic trading systems that allow the practice to still happen. GameStop shows up on the SEC's list in its latest "Fails-to-Deliver" report, which comes out twice a month. It isn't conclusive proof that certain interests were engaging in naked short-selling, but it does raise a red flag that it's a distinct possibility. "GameStop has been experiencing huge fails to deliver since at least December 18, when an aggregate of 872,523 shares had failed to deliver on their settlement date," according to wallstreetonparade.com. "The figure of fails had been 10,874 just two days earlier, on December 16."

On 14 January, GameStop still had an aggregate of 621,483 shares that had failed to deliver.

ROBINHOOD APP HOLDING USERS CAPTIVE. First, the Robinhood trading app deprived its users of the ability to buy stocks they wanted. Now some users are complaining to customer service and the FTC that Robinhood is preventing them from liquidating their accounts to move to other brokers.

Robinhood enraged its user base when it cut off buys of multiple stocks last week, in the now-infamous GameStop saga receiving scrutiny from industry regulators and political overseers. At one point, the formerly popular trading app piled up 100,000 negative reviews on Google Play, before Google summarily wiped away the bad press.

Now users are reporting Robinhood is making it difficult to stop using their service. "You send your complaint into the void with little hope that anyone will get back to you. I just want the money I made so I can close my account and be done with this service," one Robinhood client wrote.

Complaints about Robinhood have been flooding consumer watchdog groups and the FTC. They aren't only about the stoppage of a trader's ability to buy certain stocks or poor customer service. One Robinhood user alerted the

FTC that the ability to “continue depositing money is still active but withdrawing money or trading stock is completely blocked.” Other users, including some prominent traders, have described similar experiences. Tim Maloney of ETF firm Roundhill Investments told *CNBC* he had been prevented from withdrawing money from Robinhood.

TRENDS ON THE COVID WARFRONT



MORE LOCKDOWNS = MORE MURDERS

Just as we had forecast last March, when American politicians – starting with California Governor Gavin Newsom and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo – launched the COVID War and locked down their states, violent crime would rise. (See our 21 April 2020 article, “[CRIME ON THE RISE DURING THE GREAT LOCKDOWN.](#)”)

In 2020, murder rates rose at record levels. Last week, the National Commission of COVID-19 and Criminal Justice released a study that reported there were 1,200 more murders in 2020 compared to 2019.

Data from 34 major U.S. cities found a 30-percent increase over the 12 months. Those involved in the survey found the numbers “troubling” and with “no modern precedent.”

In 2020, New York City saw a 41 percent jump in killings that resulted in the bloodiest year the Big Apple has seen since 2011. Police Commissioner Dermot Shea said at a press conference last month there has been a confluence of issues that have contributed to the violent year. There have been anti-police protests in major cities across the U.S. after the death of George Floyd and the coronavirus outbreak.

The newly-released study said that at the beginning of the pandemic, the homicide rate in many cities dropped, thanks largely to the lack of interaction between people during the time period. But the homicide rate jumped during the summer months.

“COVID-related restrictions may have had an initial suppressive effect on homicides, but the waning of those restrictions, coupled with the strain on at-risk individuals and key institutions – aggravated further by the lack of outreach to such individuals – have all likely contributed to elevated homicide rates in 2020,” the report said.

TRENDPOST: *As Gerald Celente has long noted, “When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it.”*

Again, we have warned the worst is not only yet to come, it will become a way of life. Gangs will grow in power as well. Expect thefts, robberies, and violent crimes all to increase now and when the shut-ins end.

For the first time in a decade, Los Angeles hit the 300-homicide mark; Chicago has had 700 homicides and 3,000 shootings, which mark a 50 percent increase through the first 11 months of the year; New York City has experienced a 95 percent increase in shootings compared to 2019, and a 38 percent increase in homicides.

*The extent of the damage caused by the coronavirus is not yet known, but the **Trends Journal** has warned that the subsequent lockdowns would lead to an epidemic of despair among the young and old.*

*Knowing at the onset of the COVID War last February that crime would dramatically escalate, we added our “Survivalism” column as an essential element of the **Trends Journal**.*

FRENCH HOSPITAL FEDERATION: “LOCKDOWN NATION”



Frédéric Valletoux, the president of the Federation of French Hospitals, said last Friday that the country should implement another nationwide lockdown, despite most hospitals not being overwhelmed with COVID patients and which are operating at safe levels.

France 24 reported that Valletoux issued the warning shortly after Prime Minister Jean Castex resisted calls for a new lockdown.

“We must stick with the current restrictions we already have in place,” he said. “But the situation today does not justify a new national lockdown.”

The country has a 6 PM to 6 AM curfew and enforces border and social-distance rules.

Karine Lacombe, the head of infectious diseases at Paris’ Saint Antoine hospital, told a local radio show that the country will likely have to reinstate some kind of lockdown.

“We’re still at a high plateau in France. And to bring it down, new restrictive measures will be inevitable,” she said, according to *Reuters*.

TRENDPOST: *Absent the mainstream media coverage, which is intent on selling fear and hysteria, are the hard facts.*

Lock down France again? Continue the curfew? Why?

In the nation of 67.06 million, France has registered 78,794 deaths over the past year. Compared to New York State, for which America's media champions its Governor Andrew Cuomo for bravely and intelligently fighting the COVID War and which has a COVID death rate of 230 per 100,000 people... France's death rate is 113.5 per 100,000.

And, according to statista.com, 92 percent of the reported COVID deaths in France are people 65 years of age older... and 78 percent are over 75.

Yet, rather than design and implement strategies to address those most susceptible to dying from the virus, as with other "democracies" across the globe, the leaders ignore the scientific data and impose draconian lockdowns that have destroyed countless millions of lives and livelihoods.

U.K.: LOCK DOWN OR OPEN UP



U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson took to Twitter on Friday to assure businesses and citizens that he has a plan in place to start to reopen the economy after recent COVID lockdowns.

His move comes after Mark Harper, the chairman of the COVID Recovery Group who has been skeptical of the effectiveness of these measures, said it would be nearly impossible to "justify any restrictions" after adults there get inoculated, according to the *Yorkshire Post*.

Dr. Susan Hopkins, England's COVID strategy chief, told the *BBC* last week that any decision to end the current lockdown must be implemented "very slowly, very cautiously."

Matt Hancock, Britain's Health Secretary who said last week he used the 2011 movie *Contagion* to help inform him on the vaccine rollout, told the *BBC* that health officials "have to follow the data."

Boat Party Bust

About 70 people were fined last week after they broke COVID regulations and took part in a party on a boat.

The *BBC* reported that each person could face up to an €800 fine, while the organizer could be on the hook for a €10,000 hit. The boat was moored in North Acton last Saturday. The report pointed out that England banned all parties with more than 15 guests.

TRENDPOST: *The fear-spreading so-called Health Secretary, with not a scintilla of professional health expertise and who moronically watches Hollywood movies to determine what health measures are best for the nation, ignore the hard data and scientific facts.*

Like the media and the "paid to put out what they are told" bureaucrats, the British government fails to note the low COVID mortality rate for the very young who have been very punished by the lockdowns.

As for busting the boat party, there is conflicting data as to whether those who are considered asymptomatic can spread the virus.

Also, as with much of the world, the virus death rate in the U.K. is predominantly among the elderly and those with pre-existing chronic conditions including obesity, type 2 diabetes, asthma, cancer, heart disease, etc.

Since the virus broke out last February, now, a year later, according to the U.K.'s National Health Service, only 388 people aged under 60 with no underlying health conditions have died from COVID.

The NHS reported that between 2 April to 23 December, just under 2,000 previously healthy people died from the virus after testing positive.

As we continue to note, rather than taking measures to protect those most vulnerable, as with other nations, in the locked-down U.K., more businesses and lives are being killed by the draconian mandates than healthy people dying from the virus.

PUBS IN IRELAND GET RARE LEGAL VICTORY



The Dublin High Court ruled that the insurance firm FBD is on the hook for tens of millions of euros after months of insisting that the COVID-19 outbreak should not be categorized in policies' "business interruption" clauses, *Politico EU* reported.

The report pointed out that the 7,000 pubs in the country have been closed since last St. Patrick's Day. FBD covers 1,300 of these establishments. The company claimed the clause was not written with a global pandemic in mind.

The report said a similar decision was made in favor of British pubs, so FBD put aside €30 million over the summer in case it lost in court. The company said it accepted the verdict and will begin making payments.

TRENDDPOST: *The country of nearly five million has recorded 3,674 deaths since last February. The median age of those who died is 86, according to the Irish Times.*

Yet, again, draconian lockdown measures are imposed that destroy far more lives than the virus, and governments continue to ignore hard data.

TOP 10 TRENDS FOR 2021: *Can't go to college, can't get a job, can't move out of your parent's house, can't pay off your debts, can't buy a new car... can't, can't, can't. The American Dream, or the dream of any youngster around the world, has become a COVID nightmare.*

As we have forecast, there will be strong anti-lockdown, go-out-and-play, speakeasy, Roaring 2021 movements launched by 18-to 29-year-olds who view COVID as an "old person's disease."

ROME & MILAN ENTER "YELLOW" CATEGORY



Last weekend, both Rome and Milan experienced their first "yellow" category restriction, which essentially means the COVID risk is considered to be lower than when the two major cities were in the "orange" category.

The status change allows people in these cities to move about more freely in some famous locations such as the Colosseum and the Borghese Gallery.

"We still need the utmost caution if we don't want to reverse the gains made in past weeks," Roberto Speranza, the country's health minister said.

While the Italian government announced the easing of restrictions last Monday, the country still has a 10 PM to 5 AM curfew and a nationwide mask mandate.

As reported in the **Trends Journal**, Italy's response to the coronavirus forced former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte to resign last week after arguments within

his governing alliance about how to approach the EU's €200 billion economic recovery package, which is the bloc's largest relief proposal.

Italy, under Conte's rule, was the first nation outside of China to lock down last year. Italians have seen some of the toughest lockdown rules in the E.U., with citizens barred from traveling outside the region in which they live.

Mario Draghi, the former head of the European Central Bank, has taken the lead role in the country to try and help it "overcome the pandemic," complete its vaccination campaign, and respond to "the needs of citizens."

TREND FORECAST: *There will be strong populist movements springing up throughout Europe and nations across the globe against established political parties that will be targeted for imposing strict lockdown rules, which have destroyed millions of businesses and hundreds of millions of lives. We see this playing out in Italy.*

Matteo Salvini, the leader of the far-right League, and another far-right politician are demanding early elections after Conte's downfall. The Guardian reported that Salvini said he seeks a "serious plan for cuts in taxes and bureaucracy, plans for schools, works projects to open—and obviously a prospective to vote."

NETHERLANDS: LOCKDOWNS EXTENDED



Mark Rutte, the Dutch prime minister, announced last week the country will continue its strict lockdown policies that include a 9 PM curfew, social-distancing mandates, and the closure of bars and restaurants for at least a month.

The Hill reported the lockdown that is currently in place will extend, at minimum, to 2 March. *The Associated Press* pointed out this same curfew imposed last

month led to violent protests across the country. Bars and restaurants have been forced to close since October. Rutte said he is particularly concerned about the new variants that are spreading.

The country of 17.28 million has recorded a total of one million cases and 14,355 deaths. The *AP* reported the country has seen a 20-percent decline in new cases. Government health officials say they want to keep the trend going in the right direction.

Rutte warned that people shouldn't get too comfortable and said it seems unavoidable that there will be yet another wave to sweep across the country thanks to the U.K. variant.

HUNDREDS MARCH IN SWITZERLAND AGAINST COVID RESTRICTIONS



About 500 people took to the streets in the Swiss town of Zug on Saturday to protest COVID-19 restrictions in the country that have forced the closures of restaurants and bars.

The protest was observed by police and remained peaceful, according to *Reuters*. Those that took part held up signs that read, “Wearing a mask is modern slavery.”

One protester told the news wire service he was there to make a statement that the “citizens are the ones who are in control, and the state should be there to serve its citizens.”

A woman who identified herself as a grandmother also said, “I don't want my grandchildren to grow up in a world where so much is forbidden.”

The country of 8.5 million has recorded more than 530,000 COVID cases and 9,000 have died as of last Friday.

KUWAIT: FOREIGNERS NOT WELCOME



The government of Kuwait last week suspended the entry of foreigners, put a curfew on malls, and forced health clubs and barbershops to close for at least a month.

The country of 4.3 million has registered a total of 996 COVID deaths since last February (0.023 percent) or 0.00209 percent per month over 11 months.

The ban on the entry of foreigners will span two weeks. Relatives and domestic workers are exempt from the regulations.

Only 1,000 passengers will be allowed to enter the country. Since 24 January when the government announced the restrictions would be put in place, some 60,000 airline reservations were canceled.

Travel bureaus in Kuwait are not alone, as the worldwide travel industry saw a decline of 42 percent in 2020, Investopedia reported.

Because they are making these numbers up, Tareq Al Mezrem, a spokesman from the Kuwaiti Cabinet of Ministers, said last Wednesday that beginning 21 February, all visitors will be forced to stay in quarantine at a hotel for seven days on arrival in the country and pay for it out of their own pockets. The *Gulf News* reported that upon completion of the quarantine inside the hotel, these visitors will be forced to quarantine for an additional seven days inside a home.

On Saturday, salon workers in the country held a protest calling for the government to allow their businesses to reopen. The rallies were effective. Another government spokesman said Prime Minister Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said he would reconsider the move.

TRENDPOST: *Why are relatives and domestic workers exempt? Because in the madness of making up rules and regulations to fight the COVID War without any basis of scientific data, it appears the virus knows how to avoid those the government categorizes as exemptions and only attacks “foreigners.”*

And why are 1,000 and not 950 or 2,320 passengers per day allowed to enter the country? For the same reason: they are making this up.

Again, the implications of the lockdowns are destroying millions of more lives and livelihoods than the virus.

DUBAI SUSPENDS WEEKEND BRUNCHES



Further illustrating the idiocy and irrationality of COVID Lockdown rules being implemented by governments that lack scientific data, last week, Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing said venues should “postpone any activity that leads to

large gatherings such as weekend brunches.” (Are weekday brunches still allowed?)

TRENDPOST: *Again, we note these mandates being imposed on populations to illustrate how politicians are making them up without providing scientific data to justify them.*

For example, Dubai has decreed that shopping malls and hotels can operate at 70 percent capacity, all bars and pubs must close immediately, and restaurants and cafés must close by 1 AM.

This, of course, compares to New York State, where restaurants have to close at 10 PM, and France where the curfew is 6 PM to 6 AM, or Italy’s nationwide 10 PM to 5 AM curfew.

Yet, when the public opposes these made-up orders and demands freedom, the COVID Cops beat them up and arrest violators.

COVID CURFEWS: ANOTHER FAILED POLICY



As with all other lockdown policies imposed by political leaders around the world, there is no verifiable scientific evidence that curfews significantly slow the spread of the coronavirus.

An article published by *The New York Times* on 23 January confirms this in a sub-headline that reads, “A restriction more often used in natural disasters, or to quell unrest, has never been tested against a pathogen like the virus.”

No Evidence Curfews Work

As the writer of the 23 January *Times* article points out, “The virus thrives indoors, and clusters of infection are common in families and in households. So, one daunting question is whether forcing people into these settings for longer periods slows transmission—or accelerates it.”

The Times quotes Maria Polyakova, an economist at Stanford University, who said, “In general, we expect that staying at home mechanically slows the pandemic, as it reduces the number of interactions between people.”

“The trade-off is that the reduction in economic activity especially hurts many workers and their families in the large service sector of the economy.” She questions, “So is the curfew worth the price?”

Not understanding the lockdown logic, Dr. Polyakova states, “Assuming that nightclubs and such are already closed down anyway, for instance, prohibiting people from going for a walk around the block with their family at night is unlikely to reduce interactions.”

Stay Home, Spread the Virus

The article goes on to confirm that stay-at-home orders accelerate the spread. In a study published in *Science* on 15 January titled “Transmission heterogeneities, kinetics, and controllability of SARS-CoV-2,” co-authored by epidemiologists and statisticians in both China and the U.S. and backed by over 60 links to medical and scientific resources, it states clearly and emphatically,

“The duration of exposure to an infected person combined with closeness and number of household contacts constituted the greatest risks for transmission, particularly when lockdown conditions prevailed. These findings could help in the design of infection control policies that have the potential to minimize both virus transmission and economic strain.”

Jon Zelner, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Michigan, pulled the rug out from any defense of imposed curfews. He was quoted by *The Times* saying,

“With respect to curfews, I think that it is hard to understand what the positive impact of them is going to be... what I worry about with relatively vague or poorly reasoned orders is that it erodes the trust people need to have to follow these.”

TRENDPOST: Despite scientific evidence that curfews and lockdowns are counter-productive, many political leaders across the globe continue to impose them.

They haven't learned the clear lesson revealed in New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's botched orders last spring when he had to admit "shock" that his stay-at-home orders backfired and the majority of people entering hospitals with severe coronavirus reactions had been following his orders. (See our 28 July article, "[STAY AT HOME, GET SICK.](#)")

ESTONIA: GET VACCINATED, SKIP QUARANTINE



Estonia said last week that travelers in the country who can prove they were vaccinated can skip its mandatory quarantine orders, according to a report.

Travel & Leisure reported these visitors must prove they received the shot or had

the virus within the last six months. Most travelers must quarantine for ten days on their arrival.

Since the COVID War began a year ago, there has been a grand total of 466 deaths in a nation of 1,327,076 or 0.0351 percent of the population or 0.00292 percent. That equates to about three people per 100,000 have died from the virus.

The Independent newspaper called the nation's vaccination requirement for travelers of "immunotourism."

"Hopefully other countries will follow the Estonian lead, but by being first, it will benefit from travelers who cannot wait to escape as soon as it is legal to do so,"

Neil Taylor, a guidebook writer who has homes in London and Tallinn, told the paper.

TRENDS IN THE VACCINE ROLLOUT



FACEBOOK: ANTI-VAX BAN

Facebook announced yesterday it will dish out \$120 million in free advertising to health departments and non-government organizations that promote getting tested for COVID and getting vaccinated.

For those who dispute the efficacy of the tests and the safety of the vaccine, the world's largest social media network said they will censor and banish all who disagree with their beliefs.

The Facebook monopoly will also promote the “get vaccinated” campaign by providing details from local health departments that direct people where and when they should go to get vaccinated.

The promote vax/ban anti-vax Facebook campaign will roll out globally in more than 50 languages, so everyone across the globe will get their message.

TRENDPOST: *Censorship, a megatrend we have been forecasting for years, continues to accelerate as overtly illustrated by the latest Facebook announcement.*

For entire societies to believe only what a few tell them to believe and ban all those who disagree – be it anti-vax, anti-war, anti-tax, etc. – is the way of the New World Order, a key component of the Great Reset.

Unless there is a universal movement for Freedom, Peace, and Justice, draconian control measures that abrogate Constitutional and Bill of Rights will continue to escalate.

VACCINE SIDE EFFECTS



The U.K.'s National Health Service (NHS) found that about one in three who received the COVID vaccine reported some kind of side effect, the *BBC* reported... but this was barely reported in the western media and was in and out of the news.

The most common was soreness around the site of the Pfizer-BioNTech injection. There were no serious problems, the report said. The participants sent their feedback in via an app, and the data was crunched by King's College London.

About 37 percent said they felt some local after-effect, like pain or swelling, and 14 percent had "at least one whole-body (systemic) after-effect—like a fever or chills." About 22 percent experienced a similar reaction after the second shot.

Dr. Anna Goodman, who has been running trials of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, warned that those who are vaccinated still need to practice social distancing because protection is not 100 percent.

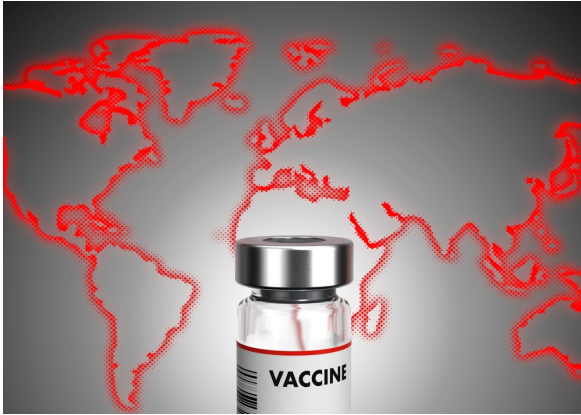
COVID VACCINES: OVER 500 DEATHS IN U.S. SO FAR

As of 29 January, the CDC's self-reporting system for adverse vaccine events, called [VAERS](#), has compiled data that lists over 500 deaths from mRNA COVID vaccinations in the U.S. The system also contains approximately 11,300 reports of adverse effects from the vaccinations. Some recent tragic incidents include:

- Drene Keyes, a 58-year-old resident of Virginia, died from anaphylaxis within a few hours of receiving the experimental Pfizer mRNA COVID injection, according to *CBS* affiliate WTKR.
- Kristi Simmonds, a North Carolina RN, experienced tremors and neurological problems following her vaccination; she recorded a video showing her symptoms and warning others.
- Tim Zook, a California healthcare worker, died in late January after receiving his second dose of the COVID vaccine.

VAERS is considered inadequate by many experts for compiling accurate data about the scope of potential problems related to vaccines, as not all who experience side effects submit reports into the system. Currently, the CDC is initiating a project to implement a more accurate system for tracking vaccine-related data and incidents.

VAX ROLLOUT: FAST FACTS



Many states in the U.S. approached rates of 20,000 vaccinations per 100,000 in population this past week. States with the highest levels of vaccination included Virginia, West Virginia, Maine, North and South Dakota, Vermont, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Colorado, Oregon,

and Alaska. States with low levels of vaccine takers included Idaho, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, and Alabama, which averaged 3,000 to 6,000 vaccinations per 100,000.

In long-term care facilities, where many people who are most vulnerable to COVID-19 reside, the most populous states of New York, Florida, Texas, California, Pennsylvania, and Illinois have administered the highest rates of vaccinations.

The CDC reports that the number of Americans who have received at least one vaccine dose is edging toward 30 million.

From 8 January, when there were more than 300,000 reported COVID cases, numbers declined to 125,000 reported cases on 3 February. California saw the largest spike by far in cases of any state during that period.

Global Numbers

Israel and the United Arab Emirates lead the world in vaccinations. Much of Western Europe, except France, are reporting relatively high vaccination rates. China has vaccinated only about 2 percent of its population so far, and Russia has yet to reach one vaccination per 100 in population.

Globally, reported cases of COVID have seen the highest rates over the past week in Portugal, Monaco, Andorra, Czechia, Gibraltar, and Israel.

MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING FOREVER, SAYS BIDEN SPOKESPERSON



For anyone who thought the availability of a COVID vaccine or “herd immunity” would lead to a return to anything like normal life in America, guess again. In a recent press conference, President Biden’s press secretary placed no time frame on precautions that many say are devastating the country more than the virus itself. Spokesperson Jan Psaki said,

“I’ll reiterate it here today—it’s not just a vaccine. It’s obviously an incredible medical breakthrough and we want every American to have one, but even after you’re vaccinated, social distancing [and] wearing masks is going to be essential.... And we’ll need to continue communicating about that, through health and medical experts.”

TRENDPOST: *The COVID War has taken its toll on the U.S. economy, and if draconian government mandates persist, economic conditions will greatly worsen. As reported in the **Trends Journal**, the COVID lockdowns drove the U.S. economy down by 3.5 percent into 2020, the worst contraction since 1946. A November 2020 U.S. Census Bureau Small Business Pulse Survey showed that 75 percent of small businesses reported suffering large or moderate negative impacts during the lockdowns.*

“IT’S A LACK OF TRUST PROBLEM”



In our 5 January **Trends Journal**, we reported a survey by the American Nurses Foundation found that “nearly half (44 percent) of nurses say they are not comfortable having conversations with their patients about COVID-19 vaccines.” (See our article, “[MASSIVE VACCINATION](#)

[CAMPAIGN.](#)”)

Now, a *New Yorker* article published on 2 February documents how many health care workers not only are having trouble advocating vaccinations for patients, they are holding off from getting injected themselves.

As the *New Yorker* reported,

“In December, the governor of Ohio, Mike DeWine, said that sixty percent of the state’s nursing-home staff had declined the vaccine; in North Carolina, the number is estimated to be more than fifty percent. According to the C.E.O. of PruittHealth—an organization that runs about a hundred long-term-care facilities across the South—seventy percent of employees in those facilities declined the first dose.”

Many of the nurses said they were hesitant because of the rush to get the vaccines out, bypassing normal safety trials. As one nurse clarified, “I think they removed a lot of barriers to get it done faster... There’s no way they’ve been studying it for long enough.”

Kia Cooper, a nursing aide for almost 20 years, has a suspicion the drug companies are profiting from the vaccines: “I do wonder if it’s a money thing. These are big companies trying to force these products on everyone. You have to wonder, are they doing it for us or are they just trying to make money?”

In addition to concerns over Operation Warp Speed's rush to get out a vaccine and suspicions over the massive profits involved, a professor at Harvard Medical School, David Grabowski, revealed why so many minority health care workers are suspicious of the vaccine:

“In many cases, vaccine hesitancy is not a lack-of-information problem. It's a lack-of-trust problem. Staff doesn't trust leadership. They have a real skepticism of government. They haven't gotten hazard pay. They haven't gotten P.P.E. [personal protection equipment]. They haven't gotten respect. Should we be surprised that they're skeptical of something that feels like it's being forced on them?”

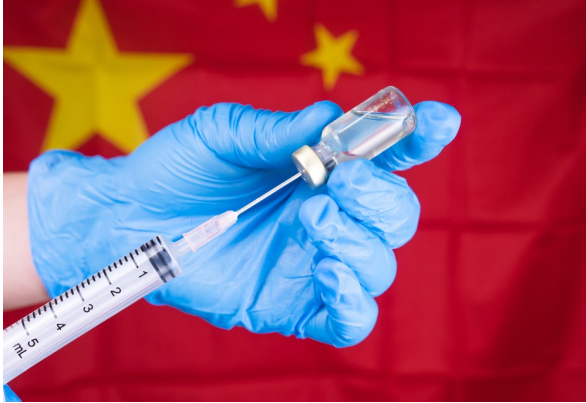
Forced Vaccinations?

Watch for tensions to rise if companies and organizations start to require getting vaccinated as a requirement to stay employed. According to the 16 December guidelines issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), in most cases, a vaccination mandate is not a violation of federal law.

The guidelines currently state, “If a vaccine is administered to an employee by an employer for protection against contracting COVID-19, the employer is not seeking information about an individual's impairments or current health status and, therefore, it is not a medical examination.” The EEOC confirmed that anyone proving certain disabilities or religious opposition might be exempt.

Professor Grabowski noted that if health care companies start to mandate vaccinations, they might find themselves losing many workers who are much needed: “It's a very fluid workforce. A number of employees would just say, ‘No, thanks,’ and nursing homes would be even more understaffed than they already are. That's a very dangerous place to be.”

MACRON WARNS OF CHINESE VACCINE



French President Emmanuel Macron said Thursday there are lingering questions about the Chinese vaccine, and he even suggested that an ineffective vaccine could help develop a new virus variant.

Macron said there has been “no information” about the trials of the vaccine from Sinopharma and Sinovac. *Fortune* magazine reported that neither company published its Phase III trial data and only produced claims of their effectiveness. Sinopharm claims its shot is 79 percent effective; Sinovac has not released its data on efficacy.

This was not the first time Macron has expressed doubt about some of the vaccines. He pointed to AstraZeneca’s vaccine and claims that it is not effective to those over 65, the *South China Morning Post* reported.

A new survey showed lingering concerns about getting the COVID-19 vaccine, despite assurances from national health organizations that the inoculation is perfectly safe for most people.

The Guardian reported that about four in ten people in France and more than 25 percent of Americans say they definitely will not be taking or are unlikely to take the first round of vaccines. Kantar Public carried out a survey that showed about 11 percent of Americans and 13 percent of the French trust their governments to produce an effective vaccine.

Emmanuel Rivière, Kantar’s director of international polling, told the paper that vaccine hesitancy “remains for large minorities in France, Germany, and the US, where citizens can be twice or three times as likely to trust their family doctor as they are of the central government. This will clearly need to be reflected in governments’ campaigns.”

TRENDPOST: Given that the COVID-19 vaccines were approved under Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA, Dr. Charlie Weller, Head of Vaccines at Wellcome Trust in London, made clear, “As vaccine rollout is just beginning, many unanswered questions remain. Ongoing monitoring will help us identify any consistent patterns of adverse events.”

This was a more polite way of stating what the head of the infectious disease unit at Samson Assuta Ashdod Hospital told the Jerusalem Post in November: “There is a race to get the public vaccinated, so we are willing to take more risks.”

SWISS REJECT OXFORD/ASTRAZENECA VAX



Switzerland announced last week that it would not administer the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine because the data “available and evaluated to date [is] not yet sufficient,” the country’s health agency said.

The *Financial Times* reported there have been concerns about the effectiveness of the shot with people above 65, and countries such as Sweden and Germany have advised against its use in the older population. The paper said the U.K. has already rolled out the vaccine, and its government said it is safe for those over 65.

Bern has approved the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines. The *FT* reported that the Swiss are apprehensive about getting the vaccine, with about one-third saying they would refuse the jab, the report said.

LEADING EXPERT: WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS



Last Thursday, the website of *Medscape.com* contained an interview conducted last fall with Dr. Paul Alan Offit, Professor of Vaccinology at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and former chief of the Division of Infectious

Diseases (1992–2014).

Some of the key points he made included:

- “It’s all happening at warp speed, and at some level, that’s disconcerting. A lot of the language that surrounds this— ‘warp speed,’ ‘finalist,’ ‘race for a vaccine’ —scares people that either timelines are being inappropriately truncated or, worse, that safety guidelines are being ignored.”
- “I wish there was a little more humility from some of these [vaccine] companies. They’re always sort of pounding their chests as to how they’re going to have this vaccine. I think, just in the past day, the CEO of Pfizer said, ‘I think we can have a vaccine by the end of October.’ I’m sorry; are you on the Data Safety Monitoring Board?”
- “For people who are considering these issues, I think what worries them the most is a vaccine-induced immunopathology. In other words, look at the measles and RSV vaccines of the 1960s. Those were two inactivated vaccines which, when given to people, actually put them in a worse position.”
- “You’re only going to know about rare adverse events once these vaccines are out there because even in a best-case scenario, they are tested on 20,000 or 30,000 people, not 20 million or 30 million people. So, you’re only going to know about a rare adverse event post-licensure.”

- “You worry that you could induce a massive cytokine response, which is what happened to Jesse Gelsinger, who unfortunately died. But you always wonder when you’re giving that many viral particles whether you could trigger that sort of response.”
- “I think these products [vaccines] cannot be recommended for someone who is greater than or equal to 65 unless there are clear safety and efficacy data in that age group... If we don’t have adequate data in the greater-than-65-year-old group, then the greater-than-65-year-old person shouldn’t get this vaccine, which would be a shame because they’re the ones who are most likely to die from this infection.”
- “Children are not going to be in the initial trials; everybody in these initial trials is greater than 18 years old. So, I’m certain that these vaccines are going to start to roll out before we’ve ever tested them in children. Then the question becomes, how do you test them in children when you have products which have been approved and shown to work?”

TRENDPOST: *The interviewer, editor in chief of Medscape, Dr. Eric J. Topol, is quoted as saying, “The issue is that people in these trials are not very representative of Americans; they’re largely a White population. Underrepresented minorities are not well represented, nor are the aged or children.” This reveals one of the major flaws of the safety trials. In addition to the vaccines being rushed out after only a few months of trials, the volunteers who participated in the safety trials were primarily white and under the age of 65. As the AARP reported on 28 September, “Older Adults, Minorities Underrepresented in COVID-19 Vaccine Trials.”*

TRENDPOST: *As we have been reporting, the hard numbers prove the vast majority of COVID victims are elderly. That fact is mostly ignored by the media and politicians who promote mass lockdowns.*

However, when an elderly person dies from the vaccine, the Prostitutes and the bureaucratic flunkies immediately note it... thus writing off the death as though it was time to check out of life regardless of the shot in the arm.

Yesterday, for example, this was the headline and leading paragraph from the New York Post following the death of a man who was vaccinated in Manhattan:

***Elderly man collapses, dies shortly after getting
COVID-19 vaccine at Javits Center***

“An elderly man collapsed and died in Manhattan on Sunday morning shortly after receiving a COVID-19 vaccination at the Javits Center, a health official said.

The man, in his 70s, fell as he was leaving the building about 25 minutes after his vaccination, according to a statement from New York state health commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker.”

There you have it. Because the person was “elderly” and died after he got a COVID shot in the arm, it was no big deal. But, as the data proves, while the vast majority of COVID victims are elderly, or, as with Canada, some 80 percent of virus victims from nursing homes, those facts are ignored by the media and politicians who champion the locking down of entire nations.

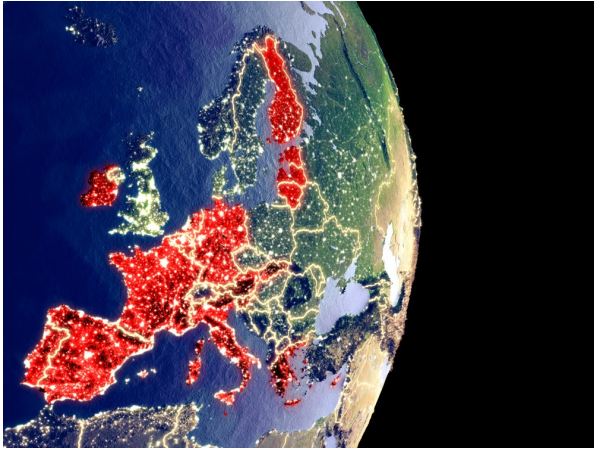
The hypocrisy is there for all to see, but the masses, regardless of their education and professions, are blinded by what imbeciles, morons, and cowards call “the news.”

TRENDPOST: *NBC and other media sources reported last Friday that a Virginia minister died the same day she got vaccinated. She waited the mandatory 15 minutes after getting the shot, left, then returned later with severe reactions. She was rushed to the hospital where she died.*

Despite the woman dying after getting the vaccine, NBC stated on its website that there was “no indication the vaccine was at fault.”

As LifeSite News reported on 1 February, “At least 271 people have died after being vaccinated for COVID-19 as of January 22, according to U.S. government data released on Friday. The deaths were reported to VAERS, the vaccine injury tracking system for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC).”

COUNTRIES REJECT NEWEST VACCINE



On 29 January, the coronavirus vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford was approved by Europe’s drug regulator, the European Medicines Agency (EMA). It was first used in the U.K. As reported on *CNBC* at that time, the executive director of the EMA said, “With this third positive opinion, we

have further expanded the arsenal of vaccines available to EU and EEA member states to combat the pandemic and protect their citizens.”

Note the use of the word “arsenal,” which militarily compliments the frequently used phrase “War on COVID-19” that the mainstream media, politicians, and their bureaucratic “health officials” use to get people to obediently march off and follow their orders to fight in the COVID War.

Last Wednesday, just days after the announcement there was a new vaccine being administered, *Euronews* ran the headline:

France, Poland, Sweden latest EU countries to rule out AstraZeneca jab for elderly

This announcement follows earlier recommendations by Germany and Italy to not allow older citizens to get the AstraZeneca vaccine. Just as there has been no agreement among countries as to safe social distance measures and

mandatory mask-wearing, there was no agreement on what the age limit should be for this vaccine. Germany limited its use to those under 65 while Italy put the maximum age at 55.

The reason so many countries are warning older citizens not to get this vaccine is that the EMA approved the extensive use of it despite noting the vast majority of volunteers in the safety trials were between 18-55 years old.

The EMA stated, “There are not yet enough results in older participants to provide a figure for how well the vaccine will work in this group. However, protection is expected, given that an immune response is seen in this age group and based on experience with other vaccines.”

Note the phrase “protection is expected.” Not scientifically verifiable. Not even most probable. Just “expected.”

The EMA confidence that “protection is expected” comes despite its admission that “currently available clinical trial data do not allow an estimate of vaccine efficacy in subjects over 55 years of age.”

It turns out less than ten percent of the volunteers in the safety trial were 65 years of age or older. As we note in this **Trends Journal**, elderly people are dying and suffering “side effects” of the vaccines, but this is dismissed and negated by the mainstream media.

The report last Wednesday included this boost of confidence from Sir Mene Pangalos, the company’s Executive VP of BioPharmaceuticals R&D: “Together with the new findings on reduced transmission, we believe the vaccine will have a real impact on the pandemic.”

Note Sir Pangalos’s phrase, “We believe the vaccine will have a real impact.”

If it were a scientific fact, it would not be about a belief system, but rather based on quantitative analysis.

Feel Safe?

Yesterday, it was reported that the U.K. variant of COVID broke out at a nursing home in the Belm district of Osnabrück, Germany, despite all of its residents having been shot up with two doses of the BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine.

The report followed news that South Africa suspended its “shoot ‘em up” vaccination campaign after findings proved the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine had limited effect against the South African variant.

TANZANIA SAYS NO TO VACCINES



On 27 January, Tanzanian President John Magufuli announced,

“My fellow Tanzanians, let us stand firm, some of these vaccines are not good for us. I really urged the ministry of health to

be very, very careful with all the vaccines which are imported into our country, not all vaccines are of good intentions to our nation.”

According to *Microsoft News*, Africa’s director for the WHO tweeted, “Science shows that vaccines work and I encourage the government to prepare for a COVID vaccination campaign.”

Another of the WHO director’s tweets included, “Urging Tanzania to ramp up public health measures such as wearing masks.”

Despite encouragement by the WHO, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on 3 February that Tanzania’s Health Minister, Dr. Dorothy Gwajima, said the country had no intention of importing COVID-19 vaccines because “we are not yet satisfied that those vaccines have been clinically proven safe.”

President Magufuli added, “We in Tanzania managed to stay for a year with the coronavirus. Even here, no one has put on a mask.” Magufuli has previously stated his belief that vaccines are part of a devious foreign plan to spread illness and steal Africa’s wealth. He referred to the vaccines as “satanic.”

The *Wall Street Journal* article pointed out that last May, “Mr. Magufuli insisted that Tanzania had conquered the pandemic and that test kits showing positive results were faulty.”

TRENDPOST: *We have continually reported scientific research confirming the standard PCR test for COVID-19 is faulty, as verified in our 12 January article “[FLAWED COVID TEST RESPONSIBLE FOR ‘MASS HYSTERIA.’](#)” The basic premise for the lockdowns is that a positive PRC test proves a person can spread COVID-19. But, as ample evidence proves, this equation is false, as a large number of those said to produce “positive” results showed virus amplifications so small they were not infectious.*

It should also be noted that as of last Saturday, despite no lockdowns, no social distancing orders, no curfews, no mandatory mask edict, etc., only 21 Tanzanians have died from the coronavirus out of a population of 60,661,000 (0.000035 percent). Yet, this fact is ignored by mainstream media intent on selling fear and hysteria and power-hungry politicians who have used the Executive Orders to rule over the masses.

LATEST MORONIC HYPE: GET THE JAB, FIND ROMANCE



Political leaders, government health officials, and the mainstream media are pushing as hard as they can to convince Americans to get vaccinated. The latest lure: get vaccinated, get laid.

On 23 January, *The New York Times* published an article with the sub-headline “Getting the vaccine is the hottest thing you could be doing on a dating app right now.” This quote is from a spokesperson for OKCupid, a popular dating app.

The article notes,

“Dating app companies confirmed that vaccination has become a hot topic on their platforms. On Tinder, vaccine mentions in user bios rose 258 percent between September and December. ‘Those who have gotten the vaccine are using their status as a way to spark conversation with potential matches about their experience,’ Dana Balch, a Tinder spokeswoman, wrote in an email.”

As for the OKCupid spokesperson quoted in the headline, he is quoted confirming, “Those who indicate they have already received the vaccine are being liked at double the rate of users who say that they are not interested in getting the vaccine... Basically, getting the vaccine is the hottest thing you could be doing on a dating app right now.”

The “Happily Inoculated”

The Times article goes beyond dating services to illustrate how getting vaccinated can get someone other classy advantages:

- “Knightsbridge Circle, a luxury travel service in London that charges 25,000 pounds a year for membership will fly members who were 65 or older to the United Arab Emirates to receive privately obtained vaccines.”
- “A leisure class of the newly vaccinated will mean that hotels, catering services and other businesses will be scrambling to employ bartenders, servers and other staff who are also vaccinated, the better to ensure the safety of all. A vaccination will begin to represent not only safety from the virus but also, for some, a leg up in the job market.”

- “Social media communities for the newly vaccinated (and those interested in being newly vaccinated) have quickly been established. One subreddit, r/Covid19VaccineRats, was created last month by Jamal Fares... he expected it to become a social hub where people might read tales from and about the happily inoculated.”

The New York Times article concludes this about those who get vaccinated: “Some of them will be among the most privileged people in the world.”

TREND FORECAST: *The Hornblower Group, which operates cruise ships out of 19 ports including San Francisco, the Port of New York, and Niagara Falls, announced that as of 1 July, all passengers must be vaccinated.*

We forecast a great divide between businesses that will require vaccinations and a sizeable public sector that will oppose taking the COVID shot. Those demanding “no shot, no entry” will lose considerable market share both short and long term by banning non-vaxxers.

And, as we have forecast, there will be growing anti-vax movements spreading across the globe that will challenge establishment political parties.

ISRAEL: EVERYONE 16 AND OVER TO GET VACCINATED



Last Thursday, Israel’s government announced its “fastest COVID-19 vaccination program in the world” would be expanded even more.

The drive to get everyone in the country 16 and older injected began 20 December when the first Israeli to get vaccinated was Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

As of last week, about a third of Israel's population of just over nine million has already received the first of two doses. The country's health administration confirmed that close to two million received both shots.

But, as the *Wall Street Journal* reported last Thursday,

“Infections have continued to increase in recent weeks despite a month-long lockdown that has included a total ban on international flights since last week. Israel increased fines for those violating the lockdown earlier this week but enforcement remains a challenge, particularly among Israel's hard-hit ultraorthodox community.”

Maintaining the “we're at war” language favored by many political leaders in discussing COVID, Mr. Netanyahu stated on 2 February, “We will be on the way to victory over the coronavirus, of course, if there are no surprises such as new mutations that we are not familiar with and which could enter Israel.”

TRENDPOST: *As we reported in our 12 January **Trends Journal**, it is common for any virus to mutate numerous times, with the vast majority of new variants less contagious:*

Dr. Linda Nabha, an infectious disease expert at the University of Pittsburgh Department of Medicine, was asked to comment on the new coronavirus strain. Dr. Nabha said, “I think it was bound to happen, I am not surprised. It's natural for viruses to mutate. What it means is the genetic code of the virus changes just a little bit... that is not uncommon to have a different strain of the virus.” (See our article, “[‘MUTANT’ STRAIN: DEADLY MEDIA HYPE & FEAR.](#)”)

Dr. William John Moss, an expert in molecular biology and immunology at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, agreed: “So all viruses mutate, and RNA viruses mutate particularly, so this virus has always been mutating, just slowly and kind of steadily.”

Mr. Netanyahu, however, emphasized that his government will end the continuing lockdown after 90 percent of those over 50 get vaccinated over the next two weeks. His hard push comes at the same time the Wall Street Journal reports that in Israel “health-care providers have been struggling in recent days to use all of their vaccine supplies as initial enthusiasm for the campaign has diminished, fewer people are showing up for shots and the proportion of people in the target groups still to be vaccinated shrinks.” In fact, over the past week, the number of those lining up for the shots dropped by more than 50 percent.

TRENDPOST: *To date, about 5,000 Israelis have died from the coronavirus out of a population of 9,200,000 (0.05 percent).*

As for who is dying and why, according to data reported by The Jerusalem Post, it is the elderly and infirm:

“The data illustrated that in the first wave of the virus (March-May 2020), the average age was 81, whereas in the second wave (June - October 2020), the average age was 79, according to the newspaper. In the current third wave, the average age is 77. The loss of life following the virus is apparently greater than initially estimated.

The data also indicated the risk factors that the deceased had suffered from: 1,463 (33%) suffered from hypertension, 1,140 (26%) were diabetics, 923 (21%) had heart disease, 353 (8%) suffered from chronic lung disease, 131 (3%) suffered from immunosuppression and 46 (1%) suffered from chronic liver disease. Some of the deceased suffered from more than one risk factor, according to Israel Hayom.”

There it is, in black and white, the indisputable fact: elderly with chronic illnesses are the vast majority of virus victims.

Despite the data, governments are not taking measures to protect the most vulnerable and instead are making up rules for social distancing, mask-wearing, capacity limitations, curfews, etc., which lack a scientific basis and destroy the lives and livelihoods of entire nations.

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS



CHILE: ON EDGE

Violent protests erupted on Friday in Chile in the southern city of Panguipulli after a police officer shot a young street juggler for what had been reported as his refusal to give the officer identification papers.

Videos emerged showing the cop firing shots at Francisco Martínez Romero, 27, as he was juggling two “blunt” machetes made of tin. In response, the juggler ran toward the cop firing the bullets, who shot him in the chest.

Protestors set several government buildings on fire, leaving the city – a tourist destination known for hot springs and glacier-fed lakes – without many public services.

As the **Trends Journal** has been reporting since 2019, massive demonstrations were raging throughout much of the country as hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets in protest of government corruption, lack of basic living standards, police brutality, violence, and crime.

However, as with many nations – such as India, France, Lebanon, Columbia, Algeria, South Africa, etc., where protests were also raging throughout 2019 for the same reasons – when governments launched the COVID War and imposed draconian shelter-in-place orders, they banned the protests.

“There’s a lot of tension in general in Chile,” Boris Van Der Spek, the editor of *Chile Today*, told *Al Jazeera*. “There’s a lot of human rights violations, oppression by the Chilean police in the shanty towns near the capital, which we never hear of.”

Protests also broke out in Santiago, and *Reuters*, citing local media, reported that protesters set barricades ablaze and threw rocks at police.

TREND FORECAST: *One of our Top Trends for 2021 was “New World Disorder 2.0.”*

The riots and demonstrations that were spreading across the globe in 2019, as millions took the streets in protests, which were banned by governments when the COVID War broke out, will again resume.

National unrest will escalate into civil wars, some of which will spread into regional wars. The immigration crisis will dramatically escalate as millions flee their embattled countries seeking safe-haven nations. New, anti-establishment, anti-immigration, anti-rich (“off with their heads”) class-warfare political parties will be formed.

MODI VS. INDIA’S FARMERS: LOST FREEDOMS FEARED



We have been reporting since mid-November on the protests of hundreds of thousands of farmers in India, in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s push for

deregulation laws that farmers fear will sink them deep into poverty.

They contend the new farm laws, passed in September in secrecy, strip them of earning potential, allowing major conglomerates to come in and crush their businesses.

Now critics say Prime Minister Modi has taken actions that affront basic freedoms by shutting down social media platforms, banning free speech, and doing what he can to stop the protests.

On Saturday, thousands of farmers again blocked highways. In response, Modi's government sent security forces. The three-hour "chakka jam" of some 10,000 protest sites fanned out across the country. Authorities in New Delhi erected barricades and barbed-wire fences to seal out further protests in the city.

"This kind of barricading—this is not the Pakistani border," Mahender Singh Dhanger, 65, told *The New York Times*.

"We will keep fighting till our last breath," Jhijan Singh, 80, told the *Associated Press*. Singh was at a protest site in Ghazipur. He said Modi should know that "either he will remain or we will."

Two weeks ago, farmers held a massive truck rally that turned violent when some farmers drove their tractors away from the major movement and confronted police. Leaders representing the farmers blamed the violence, on India's Republic Day, a "dirty conspiracy" by infiltrators to destabilize the peaceful movement.

Silenced

In response to the ongoing protests, Modi's governing Bharatiya Janata Party cut off electricity and water near some of the camps, blocked internet access in some parts of the country, and erected barbed wire and planting spikes in the streets to keep the tractors from coming into New Delhi.

Last week, at the “valid legal request” from the Modi government, Twitter froze some accounts deemed problematic.

Gyan Prakash, a professor of history at Princeton, told the *NYT* that the only time in recent memory that can be compared to the crisis unfolding in India is in the 1970s, when Indira Gandhi, the prime minister at the time, imprisoned political adversaries.

India, like most countries around the globe, has been dealing with adverse effects from the draconian COVID War lockdowns, which will contract the country’s economy by a record 7.7 percent, according to government projections.

On Friday, Narendra Singh Tomar, India’s agriculture minister, defended the new laws, which seemed to indicate that Modi’s government is in no hurry to strike a deal with the protesters. With more than half of India’s 1.4 billion people employed in agriculture, accounting for 15 percent of the country’s \$2.9-trillion economy, the farmers are not backing down.

TREND FORECAST: *Despite government actions to quell the protests, we forecast they will continue and increase until farmers’ demands are satisfied.*

As economic conditions continue to decline in India as the “Greatest Depression” worsens, other demonstrations that were halted during the COVID War lockdowns will continue to escalate.

India’s military/police forces will violently clamp down on protesters. The government will try to stop the demonstrations, but with hundreds of millions of Indians losing everything and with nothing left to lose, they will not back down until the government meets some of their demands.

As Gerald Celente notes, “When all else fails, they take you to war.” Be it escalating skirmishes with neighboring Pakistan or China over ongoing border disputes or a wild-card event... the farmers’ protests will be instantly shut down should war break out.

UGANDAN POLITICAL WAR: YOUTH REBELLION



Bobbi Wine, Uganda’s opposition leader who lost last month’s election to incumbent Yoweri Museveni, announced he is seeking to overturn the election in court.

Wine, who pulled in 35 percent of the vote in the 14 January election to Museveni’s 58 percent, has been a vocal critic of what he called an intimidation campaign on election day and “cooked-up results.”

Wine, a musician, had been challenging Museveni, who has held office for 36 years. In the lead-up to the election, the country has seen its worst violence in years.

Dozens were killed in protests that were seen by outside observers as a youth movement that turned its back on the entrenched political class. The protests were sparked by one of Wine’s earlier arrests for holding a rally amid the coronavirus outbreak. Anyone who was caught wearing red – the color of Wine’s opposition party, called the “National Unity Platform” – was arrested.

Wine took to Twitter last Friday claiming that Museveni’s administration has abducted children “in the thousands” because their parents supported him. He said some of these children were tortured and murdered.

The country’s Supreme Court has already ruled three times that the irregularities in the country were not substantial enough to overturn the election, the *Associated Press* reported.

TREND FORECAST: *We note this dispute for three essential reasons. First, the unrest in Uganda is one among many in the horn of Africa, as we have been*

reporting. As economic conditions continue to decline, unrest, civil wars, and regional wars will escalate and refugee problems will accelerate, thus increasing anti-immigration populist movements in neighboring nations and Europe.

Secondly, the supporters of Wine are primarily the youth, who, as we have forecast, will be the major force in creating new anti-establishment movements across the globe.

Finally, while the Ugandan election disputes are reported in the mainstream media without denouncement of the protests as alleged voter fraud – and championed as an important movement – when there were protests against allegations of a rigged presidential election in the United States, it was denounced as an outright lie by the American media.

Indeed, from the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960 to the “hanging chad” Florida victory that brought George W. Bush into the White House, complaints of election fraud are riddled in American history.

There was an interesting interaction last month between Senator Rand Paul and ABC News’ George Stephanopoulos. Presstitute Stephanopoulos, a former Bill Clinton advisor and de facto press secretary now masquerading as a fair journalist, asked the Kentucky Republican to accept the fact that the election was not stolen.

Paul responded that the debate should continue and noted how these allegations of voter fraud never got their day in court. Stephanopoulos and Paul continued their back-and-forth. It culminated with the host saying there are no “two sides” to this story: you either believe the election was fair or you are wrong.

CHINA BOYS FEMININE: MAKE THEM MANLY



China's Education Ministry issued a notice last week warning that a troubling number of young men in the country have become too "feminine" and called on schools to begin "cultivating students' masculinity."

The initiative, called the "Proposal to Prevent the Feminization of Male Adolescents," urged schools to tap former athletes to serve as role models for these students. President Xi Jinping is a known soccer fan, the *BBC* reported.

The report said the proposal may not have been a complete surprise because a Chinese delegate warned in May that many young men in the country have grown "weak, timid, and self-abasing."

The New York Times reported the ministry wants educators to focus on the "spirit of yang," which is seen as a masculine attribute. The paper said the proposal was vague and had no clearly-stated goal or timeline.

The paper pointed to a social media post inside the country that could be an example of the underlining message in the new initiative. "It's hard to imagine such effeminate boys can't defend their country when outside invasion looms."

The paper said that the Chinese have expressed recent interest in seeing to it their young men take to masculine pursuits. Young boys have been sent to boot camps that focus on manly development. Some in the government blame pop stars and single-mother households for the trend toward feminization.

The Chinese boy band TFBoys has raised concern in the country. The pop stars are seen by many as feminine, thus a bad influence on the country's young men. *News.com.au* reported that journalists on state media questioned male celebrities in the country who wear makeup.

The *BBC* reported that reception to the proposal in China has been cold, and many called the message blatantly sexist.

“There are 70 million more men than women in this country,” one Weibo user posted, according to the network. “No country in the world has such a deformed sex ratio. Isn’t that masculine enough?”

(China has a population of 715 million males and 685 million females, amounting to about 1.4 billion people, according to Statista.com.)

TREND FORECAST: *The Chinese Way: You Will Obey! China is the world leader in understanding and enforcing the practice of government control of its people.*

We have been reporting on how, from Beijing to Hong Kong, the government’s focus on influencing young minds to embrace the teachings of nationalism has intensified.

Indeed, one of our Top Trends for 2021 was that the 21st century will be the “Chinese century.”

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s goal has been to achieve the “Chinese Dream” of national rejuvenation. Xi’s goal was to “mobilize all the sons and daughters of (ethnic Chinese) to work together for the greater national interests and the realization of the Chinese Dream” – to be the world’s top power.

Xi understands to achieve that he needs a military that can intimidate and is ready to fight. We’ve already seen the trend with Beijing’s increasing tensions over the Taiwan Strait when just three days after Joe Biden was sworn in as president of the United States, the Chinese air force simulated a missile attack on a U.S. aircraft carrier, the Theodore Roosevelt, while also breaching Taiwan’s airspace.

While we do not forecast that China will soon invade Taiwan, which it has long regarded as its territory, it will continue to exert power to eventually take it over.

In March 2019, when demonstrations broke out in Hong Kong, considered a self-ruled city under the “one country, two system” deal it had cut with the U.K. when they returned their “colony” to Beijing, we had forecast protests would be halted, and it would become a one-system Chinese city... and it has.

Should China aggressively confront Taiwan, the U.S. and its NATO ally’s words will speak louder than their actions.

As we have noted, being that the U.S. has not won a war since World War II (and did so in part with the assistance of Russia), the Pentagon is well aware that war with China would be catastrophic, considering the size and power of China’s military.

TURKISH STUDENTS: YOUTH REVOLUTION



As reported in this **Trends Journal**, the Chinese government is taking measures to de-feminize its male population.

Over in Turkey, however, students at Istanbul’s Bogazici University last week protested the appointment of Melih Bulu as the school’s new president over allegations he targeted LGBT freedoms in the past, the *Financial Times* reported.

The report said the protests at the school started in January and have persisted. About 150 were arrested last week.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan gave himself the right to name the heads of these universities in 2016, without having to consider objections from students and staff, the report said. Erdogan once said there was no place for LGBT in a “moral” country. He called the protesters terrorists with links to Kurdish militants.

The *Associated Press* reported that one of Erdogan's moves was to launch two new departments in Bogazici University, which critics say he will use to employ his loyalists. Bulu has links to his ruling party, the *AP* reported.

The news wire reported students at the school sent Erdogan a letter that called Bulu's appointment "petty tricks."

"Your attempts to pack our university with your own political militants is the symptom of the political crisis you have fallen into," the letter read.

According to the Global Academic Freedom Index, Turkey gets 9.7 points out of 100, which is among the lowest in the world, according to *Modern Diplomacy*. Turkey has the same academic freedom as countries such as Syria and Turkmenistan.

Erdogan blamed Ayse Bugra, an emeritus professor at the school, for instigating the protests. The *AP* reported she is married to a civil society leader who has been in prison on charges of espionage.

Human rights groups have criticized Erdogan's recent attempt to consolidate power. Last month, Ankara passed a law that grants new controls by the government over nongovernment organizations (NGOs) that threaten any dissent in the country.

Tarik Beyham, the director for Amnesty International in Turkey, told the *Financial Times* that the legislation allowing the interior ministry to use vague terrorism charges to cease these groups' activities means these groups could be shut down "without a chance for appeal."

"It raises the possibility that all rights groups may be abolished in Turkey," he said.

Erdogan's attempt to label these student protesters as terrorists seems to be a familiar strategy.

Can Candan, a film studies lecturer, told the *FT* it is “obvious” Bulu was appointed to the role at the university to follow out instructions by Erdogan’s government.

“This struggle is not just about Bogazici,” he told the paper. “It’s about the whole system of higher education in Turkey. The right to quality, free, independent, higher education—that is what’s at stake.”

TREND FORECAST: *As a Top Trend for 2021, the Trends Journal forecast that a “Youth Revolution” would break out in nations across the globe.*

As for Turkey, Erdogan has a solid track record of crackdowns on speech and civil rights. And, in 2016, his government convicted thousands after a failed coup attempt.

Mayor of Istanbul from 1994-1998, Prime Minister of Turkey from 2003-2014, and President since 2014, in complete control of the nation, Erdogan will harshly crack down on any movement and/or protest that threatens his leadership.

However, with over 22 percent of its youth unemployed and Turkey being one of the worst-performing emerging markets in 2020, despite harsh crackdowns on dissent, with millions of young people facing bleak futures and with nothing to lose, they will take to the streets and organize new political movements to replace the establishment.

U.S. PANEL: KEEP FIGHTING LOSING AFGHAN WAR



October will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the United States’ invasion of Afghanistan. The war was launched under the guise of capturing Osama Bin Laden and ridding the nation of its Taliban

leadership because they both were, allegedly, responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

The U.S. government, however, contends that 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens. But rather than invade Saudi Arabia – a staunch U.S. ally to which Washington has sold hundreds of billions of dollars in weaponry and subsequently supported their war against Yemen, which has devolved into the worst humanitarian crisis on earth, the U.S instead invaded Afghanistan.

More War

Despite the war costing American taxpayers trillions, destroying the nation, and with the Taliban on brink of recapturing control, the Afghanistan Study Group – a panel appointed by the U.S. Congress – said last week that the U.S. should reconsider its 1 May deadline to withdraw forces and instead keep troops in the country.

The panel is led by General Joseph Dunford Jr., a retired four-star Marine general, who told *The New York Times* that it is not in anyone’s best interest for a “precipitous withdrawal.”

All told, the U.S. launched the war in Afghanistan, the longest in American history, which began in 2001 and has killed over 157,000 people and left hundreds of thousands dying from war-related causes. Also, some 3,500 U.S. and NATO soldiers have been killed.

There are currently 2,500 U.S. service members in Afghanistan. (The same number of troops that are in Iraq.) *Defense.gov* reported those numbers represent the lowest since 2001 and were a goal of the Trump administration. The report said that at its height in 2011, under the Obama administration, there were 98,000 troops in Afghanistan.

The Times’ report said the Taliban has warned if American troops do not leave the country by the 1 May deadline, an earlier cease-fire agreement will be disregarded, and attacks on U.S. assets will resume. The Trump administration brokered the deal with the Taliban.

A senior U.S. official told the *Los Angeles Times* that the ultimate decision is going to be a “tough call.”

“If we stay after the deadline, the Taliban is likely to take that as a sign we are not leaving and start attacking us,” the source told the paper. The paper also pointed out that President Biden has kept Zalmay Khalilzad in his position. Khalilzad negotiated the deals during the Trump administration.

Mr. Dunford said the group found that the correct number of U.S. troops in the country would be 4,500, nearly twice the current amount.

The *Los Angeles Times* pointed out that Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III will meet with NATO officials in Europe to discuss the future of troop deployment in Afghanistan.

Representative Ro Khanna called the report “unacceptable.” “Those who had any part in getting us into this 20-year war should not be opining about keeping us mired in it,” she said, according to the *L.A. Times*.

TREND FORECAST: *The way the mainstream media portrays the panel makes it appear as though it is an open-minded group without an agenda... while, in fact, it is being led by a leader of the military/industrial/intelligence complex.*

Considering his war record, we forecast that with Joe Dunford leading the Afghanistan Study Group, more U.S. war and illegal interventionism will be the option.

Nicknamed “Fighting Joe” for the role the Marine general played in the invasion of Iraq in 2003, General Dunford also assumed command of the U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) in 2013. In 2015, then-President Barack Obama nominated Dunford to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff until September 2019.

TRENDPOST: *The Afghanistan Papers, internal government documents released by the Washington Post in early December, exposed the lies and deceptions told to the American people by Washington and the Pentagon. The papers documented how top generals knew the war in Afghanistan was a calamity that could not be won.*

In December, we reported on the papers. Yet, despite these facts of horror, media Presstitutes, who get paid to put out what their corporate pimps and Washington whoremasters tell them to, have essentially blacked out the Afghanistan papers from the news.

ICC TO PROBE ISRAELI WAR CRIMES



The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced last week it was investigating the Gaza War, or Operation Protective Edge, named by Israel when the war was launched in 2014 after the court determined it maintains jurisdiction over the territories.

Israel called the ruling a political move without legal standing while Palestinians praised the investigation. *Axios* reported that Tel Aviv plans to urge allies to send a “discreet message” to head prosecutor Fatou Bensouda and try to talk her out of pursuing war crimes charges.

The report said Israel is concerned about international warrants being issued for its military leaders and the investigation could add momentum to the Boycott, Divestment, Sanction (BDS) campaign against the country.

Ned Price, a spokesman from the U.S. State Department, said last week it objects to the ICC decision.

“Israel is not a State Party to the Rome Statute. We will continue to uphold President Biden’s strong commitment to Israel and its security, including opposing actions that seek to target Israel unfairly,” Price said, according to *Axios*.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the ICC’s ruling, once again, proves that the body cares little about the law and is simply a political body.

“The court ignores real war crimes and instead persecutes the state of Israel, a state with a firm Democratic regime, which sanctifies the rule of law, and is not a member of the court,” Netanyahu said.

The Times reported that Netanyahu called the ruling “pure anti-Semitism” and pointed to how the ICC refuses to even look into the atrocities committed by Iran and Syria “almost daily.”

The court is reportedly looking into allegations that Israel used a disproportionate use of force in the 2014 war. *The Times* also reported that the court is looking into Israel’s response to protests back in 2018.

In 2015, a U.N. investigation found that both Israel and Palestinian militants could have committed war crimes during the conflict, the *BBC* reported. The fight lasted for 50 days and ended in a truce, the report said. But the deal was reached after 2,251 Palestinians were killed, including 1,462 civilians. Israel suffered the deaths of 67 soldiers and six civilians.

Muhammad Shtayyah, Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, called the decision to investigate a “message to the perpetrators of crimes, that their crimes will not be subject to a statute of limitations, and that they will not go unpunished.”

TREND FORECAST: *As the ICC moves forward, tensions in the Middle East will rise. As Gerald Celente has long noted and history shows, “When all else fails, they take you to war.” As we have been reporting, tensions have been building in the Middle East with Iran being a main target of Israel.*

As we have reported since November 2019, Netanyahu has been under the pressure of a criminal indictment on charges of fraud and bribery, and he has twice failed in previous elections to put together a winning coalition.

In March, Israel will hold its fourth national election in less than two years. Since last summer, thousands of Israelis have taken to the streets, primarily in Jerusalem near Netanyahu's residence, demanding he step down.

Two weeks ago, Israel's military chief, Lieutenant-General Amir Kohavi, said if President Biden renewed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal that President Trump abandoned, his nation may take offensive measures against Iran. "A return to the 2015 nuclear agreement, or even if it is a similar accord with several improvements, is bad and wrong from an operational and strategic point of view," the Israeli Defense Force commander said.

He went on to say, "In light of this fundamental analysis, I have instructed the Israel Defense Forces to prepare a number of operational plans, in addition to those already in place."

IRAN TO FREE S. KOREA SHIP CREW WHEN IT GETS ITS MONEY BACK



Iran and South Korea announced last week an agreement was reached to release the crew of a 9,797-ton oil tanker seized last month as it sailed the Strait of Hormuz, but there seem to be lingering issues.

The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said last week that the ship's 19-person crew will be able to leave, *Nikkei Asia* reported. The ship's captain, however, must remain in the country.

The New York Times reported that South Korea vowed swift action to address the \$7 billion in Iranian funds that are being held in its country's banks due to U.S. sanctions. Last month, the *Financial Times* reported that Iran requested some of the funds – about €180m – so it could buy vaccines while the country deals with the coronavirus outbreak.

The money was seized after the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear agreement based on nuclear enrichment activities. President Biden has said he hopes to restore the deal. *The Times* reported that Biden has not indicated he will drop some of the sanctions against Iran.

Nikkei Asia reported that Iran seized the Hankuk Chemi in the waters of Oman early last week based on so-called environmental concerns, but it was seen as a message to countries aligned with the U.S. The ship was carrying 7,200 tons of ethanol.

South Korea issued a statement after Iran announced it would release the crew. “The two vice foreign ministers said their governments took an important, first step toward restoring confidence between South Korea and Iran,” the statement read. “They agreed to restore their countries’ traditional, friendly ties of supporting each other when they face difficulties by resolving the issue of the frozen fund.”

TREND FORECAST: *As Gerald Celente has said, “In the Bronx, they used to say, ‘Money talks, bullshit walks.’” The bottom line of the South Korea/Iranian conflict is money, and until Iran gets their money back from South Korea, the captain will remain in custody. And, if they do not get it soon, other South Korean-flagged ships sailing in the Persian Gulf will be captured by Iran, and their crews will be held until they get their money back.*

MYANMAR PROTESTS SURGE, JUNTA CLAMPS DOWN



Thousands of people in Myanmar took to the streets over the weekend, decrying the military coup that we reported last week when Myanmar's military detained the country's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and declared a state of emergency.

This past weekend, the protests escalated with tens of thousands more participating in protest marches. As tensions escalated, shots reportedly were fired, and water cannons were used by police to stop the rallies.

The mass protests – the largest Myanmar has seen since the 2007 crisis – have so far been largely peaceful, but the country remains in a volatile state since the coup began on Monday.

The protesters are demanding the release of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, and others arrested by the military and for the civilian government to be back in power. The generals have declared a year-long state of emergency and ousted Myanmar's leadership, accusing Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy Party (NLD) of rigging last November's general election.

Over the weekend, rallies have been staged in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city, and other places in support of Suu Kyi. The Nobel Peace Prize laureate is loved by many in her country, despite her reputation being tarnished in recent years, with many accusing her of turning a blind eye to the genocide of Rohingya Muslims during her time in power.

People were carrying red balloons symbolizing the state counselor's party, waving NLD flags, and giving three-finger salutes to denounce the military. The marches caused traffic problems as crowds clogged the streets for hours.

In addition to going on marches, the protesters were trying to make themselves heard by banging pots and pans during evening hours. The traditional ritual is usually used to ward off evil, but it has been repurposed for a political cause.

The ruling military has reportedly cracked down on social media, curbing the opposition's ability to organize.

Facebook confirmed on Thursday that telecom providers in Myanmar were told to temporarily block it, while monitoring group NetBlocks Internet Observatory reported "a near-total internet shutdown" in the country on Saturday.

It remains unclear how many people were arrested along with Suu Kyi. A local activist group claims over 130 people may have been taken into custody. Sean Turnell, an Australian economic advisor to the ousted counselor, is the only foreign citizen reported to be among those detained. He messaged *Reuters* about his imminent arrest on Saturday before contact with him was lost.

The coup was condemned by a number of countries and the U.N., while the U.S. threatened the country's military leadership with sanctions.

Protesters in Yangon rallied again yesterday, raising three-finger salutes that are symbols of resistance and carrying placards saying, "Reject the military coup" and "Justice for Myanmar."

In response, Myanmar's military cracked down on the protesters, issuing decrees that banned peaceful public demonstrations in the country's two most-populated cities and imposed an 8 PM to 4 AM curfew in Yangon and Mandalay, where the largest demonstrations were held.

TREND FORECAST: The military will quash the protests, and U.S. and ally sanctions will have a minor impact on a nation that has strong economic and geopolitical bonds with neighboring China.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW



TOXIC METALS FOUND IN BABY FOODS

An investigation conducted by a committee in the U.S. House of Representatives found that some top baby food brands were selling products that contained “dangerously high levels” of toxic metals and called on ways to ensure regulators enforce tougher standards.

The discovery of toxic metals in baby food came after major companies including Gerber; Beech-Nut Nutrition Company; Nurture, Inc., which produces “Happy Baby” products; and Hain Celestial Group, which offers “Earth Best” organic baby food handed over internal testing results requested by the congressional committee.

That list included Campbell Soup, Walmart, and Sprout Foods. The report noted, “The subcommittee is greatly concerned that these companies might be obscuring the presence of even higher levels of toxic heavy metals in their baby food products.”

Some of the products had over 90 times the safe amount of arsenic, 177 times more lead, 69 times more cadmium, and five times more mercury. These four toxins are all listed in the top ten most dangerous chemicals for infants and children by the WHO.

Democratic Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi, who heads the committee, said last Thursday, “Dangerous levels of toxic metals like arsenic, lead, cadmium, and mercury exist in baby foods at levels that exceed what experts and governing bodies say are permissible.”

He said it was “shocking” that some of the products have hundreds of parts per billion of these dangerous metals even when “in a lot of cases, we should not have anything more than single-digit parts per billion of any of these metals in our foods.”

Brian Ronholm, director of food policy at Consumer Reports, stated the findings are particularly troubling since even minute amounts of these toxic substances can damage an infant’s developing brain. All of the heavy metals detected have been shown to increase the risk of cancer and chronic disease. “It’s especially troubling that some companies knew of the high levels of heavy metal contamination and still sold the products.”

According to *WebMD* Health News Center, while the four leading companies, Gerber, Beech-Nut, Nurture, Inc., and Hain Celestial Group voluntarily agreed to give the congressional subcommittee the internal reports, other companies refused to comply.

The subcommittee expressed exasperation that even an organic food company like Hain proved toxic:

“In 100% of the Hain baby foods tested, inorganic arsenic levels were higher in the finished baby food than the company estimated they would be based on individual ingredient testing. Inorganic arsenic was between 28% and 93% higher in the finished products.”

CNN, reporting on this story, noted, “One of the most shocking revelations in the report is that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not yet set minimum levels for heavy metals in most infant food.”

TRENDPOST: According to SGS, the Swiss multinational company providing inspection, verification, and testing services, “The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has almost no requirements for baby foods and generally includes these products with all foods.”

We note this story, which hardly made headlines and vanished from the mainstream media in just one day, to illustrate how Presstitutes keep banging the COVID War drum while ignoring the health implications of millions of children who have been swallowing these toxic laced foods over the decades.

THE ART OF TRENDS

“Snow Much Fun” by *Stephen Green*



TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE



By *Ben Daviss*

“LIVING ROBOTS” MADE FROM FROGS

At the University of Vermont, scientists have tinkered with cells scraped from frogs’ embryos to make something that’s not a traditional robot but a “biological machine” – perhaps even a new life form.

The creation has been dubbed a “xenobot” because the cells used to make the living robots were taken from the African clawed frog, formally known as *Xenopus laevis*.

The scientists programmed the university’s “Deep Green” supercomputer with basic rules about how the frogs’ skin and heart cells behave, then told the machine to organize digital versions of a few hundred of the cells into life forms that could carry out simple tasks the researchers assigned, such as forward motion.

The computer assembled the cells randomly thousands of times. If a creation showed promise, the computer kept and refined it. After the algorithm's hundredth run, the researchers chose the best candidate to be built and tested by Tufts University biologists.

A microsurgeon separated frog cells one from the other and cultured them. Then the living cells were connected following the blueprint designed by the computer.

The manufactured organisms, about four-hundredths of an inch in size, not only were able to move but spontaneously began working together to herd scattered pellets to a central point. Scientists also built xenobots with a pouch in the center that could carry objects.

Xenobots can heal themselves if cut; after about a week, they die and become dead skin cells.

The creators see their xenobots traveling through human arteries to scrape away plaque, deliver medications, or gather data for medical tests.

TRENDPOST: Xenobots' parents have created not just tiny, living robots but a snapshot of a future in which synthetic biology will create larger, more complex life forms specifically designed to carry out more complex tasks. As the ability to create and control life advances, ethical questions will multiply faster than our ability to understand them.

EDUCATING THE QUANTUM WORKFORCE



An increasing number of companies looking for technology workers want those new hires to have a basic understanding of quantum information science and are expecting

schools to offer relevant basic courses in their curriculums.

The discovery that more and more companies now want new employees to be “quantum aware” comes from a study carried out in November by researchers at the University of Colorado and the Rochester Institute of Technology, which interviewed executives at 20 U.S. tech firms.

The study’s authors urge colleges and universities to weave quantum science principles into courses in computer science, physics, software engineering, and other technical subjects.

Quantum technology is still largely in development, but quantum-based computers, optical and imaging devices, sensors, and similar equipment will be entering the market rapidly within a few years. Companies will need not only engineers to design and build them but also to help consumers understand their usefulness.

Quantum technology exploits a quirk of quantum physics that, under certain strict conditions, boosts computer speeds by orders of magnitude.

TRENDPOST: *The 2030s will be the “quantum decade” in which quantum information systems transform computers’ performance and reconfigure our concepts of their power. Combining quantum computers and artificial intelligence will create computing power that is unimaginable by today’s standards.*

EXPERIMENTAL DRUG “DE-AGES” THE BRAIN



As we age, our immune system tends to go haywire. It can become sluggish in responding to infections, fail to recognize intruders entirely, or, as is common, begin to attack our healthy cells, leading to the

low-grade inflammation that has been identified as a cause of ailments from cancer to dementia.

A key culprit is a hormone called prostaglandin E2 (PGE2). White blood cells in the immune system produce more of it as we age, and it's been shown to inflame those cells, causing them to malfunction.

In tests with mice and cultured human cells, researchers at Stanford University charted the process by which PGE2 disrupts those immune system cells – and then saw the cells revert to youthful vigor when an experimental drug blocked PGE2 from binding to the cells that produced it.

The result: elderly mice receiving the drug reversed cognitive decline, performing as well as youngsters in a series of cognitive tests, such as remembering their way through a maze.

The new drug “de-ages the brain,” the researchers said.

Further animal tests will be conducted before human trials can be planned.

TRENDPOST: *Inhibiting an old body's production of PGE2 could not only rejuvenate the brain but prevent a range of diseases now associated with aging. If the drug proves its effectiveness in human trials, in the decades ahead, we may routinely get injections of it the way older folks get B-12 shots now.*