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CORONAVIRUS 9/11

SPREADING TERROR

3 March 2020

CORONAVIRUS CONTAGION

CORONAVIRUS 9/11: SPREADING TERROR



Last week, you couldn't open a mainstream newspaper, turn on the TV news, or check out the news online without being met with another blaring headline about the spread of the coronavirus. Some examples:

- "Coronavirus: Two new cases confirmed in UK"
- "France bans large gatherings to slow spread of coronavirus"
- "High school student in Washington latest coronavirus community spread victim"
- "A Week of Coronavirus Anxiety in Google Searches"
- "James Kwan identified as first Australian to die from coronavirus"
- "Mexico Confirms First Case of Coronavirus"
- "Brazil confirms first coronavirus case in Latin America"
- "Iran's coronavirus death toll rises to 66, the highest outside of China"
- "2nd Death in Seattle Adds to Signs Coronavirus Is Spreading in U.S."
- "Nigeria confirms first case of coronavirus"

- “First case of Covid-19 diagnosed in east of Ireland”
- “Coronavirus: two patients die in France as four new cases detected in England”

TRENDPOST: *Is the mass fear and anxiety justified? Let’s look at the facts.*

Since December’s outbreak in in Wuhan, China, some 3,000 people have died from it in that country, a nation of 1.4 billion people.

As Gerald Celente noted in last Friday’s “Trends in The News” Special Report, compare this to the 1.6 million premature deaths in China every year that are a direct result of air pollution... facts ignored by the mainstream media.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), some seven million people worldwide die each year as a result of exposure to air pollution – a just tad higher than the 3,000 dead from coronavirus. Indeed, even if 500,000 should die if the virus spreads, the number still is negligible compared to the air pollution deaths for which there is no media hysteria or emergency government measures.

Moreover, 3,000 people dead in a global population of 7.7 billion equals the grand total of 0.00003896103 percent.

TRENDPOST: *As for the 66 Iranians having died to date from the coronavirus, absent from media coverage are the adverse health effects Iranians are suffering as a result of United States sanctions.*

According to Human Rights Watch, “The consequences of redoubled US sanctions pose a serious threat to Iranians’ right to health and access to essential medicines – and has almost certainly contributed to documented shortages – ranging from a lack of critical drugs for epilepsy patients to limited chemotherapy medications for Iranians with cancer.”

Most Cases are “Mild”

Also absent from the headlines is the fact that the vast majority of people who have contracted the virus have recovered, and most of the cases do not have serious symptoms.

According a study published by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, over 80 percent of the coronavirus cases produced mild symptoms from which people made full recoveries in a relatively short time. Worldwide, less

than 15 percent of those who have contracted the virus suffered significant symptoms and less than 5 percent were deemed “critical.”

Marc Lipsitch, a Harvard epidemiology professor, stated that government measures to stop the virus from spreading were ineffective and the disease is not the deadly pandemic the mainstream media and politicians portray it to be.

Professor Lipsitch said, “I think the likely outcome is that it will ultimately not be containable,” adding that many who test positive won’t even know they have it. “It’s likely that many will have mild disease or may be asymptomatic.”

Count With Your Fingers

As for the recent headlines voicing concern that the coronavirus has now spread to over 60 countries, look at the number of cases:

- Afghanistan: 1
- Austria: 1
- Brazil: 1
- Denmark: 1
- Egypt: 1
- Iraq: 3
- Nepal: 1
- Saudi Arabia: 1

Yet, we still get headlines such as the *Guardian*’s “Coronavirus map: How Covid-19 is spreading across the world.”

Countries that have had dozens of cases reported (very few serious) have reacted by shutting down institutions, putting people in quarantine who don’t even show symptoms, and banning people from where the outbreaks are the highest from entering countries.

In Japan, where just over 200 people have contracted the virus and four have died, every school is being shut down, affecting over 13 million students. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said a big part of the decision was to ensure the upcoming Tokyo Olympics won’t have to be canceled.

Compare the handful of Japanese who have died from coronavirus to those who committed suicide in Japan in 2018 over work-related stress: 2000.

In France, where less than 100 people have contracted the virus and only a few have died, authorities announced a ban on all public gatherings of more than 5,000 and shut down the Air Base in Creil, France, after some coronavirus cases were reported there.

In Hungary, despite not one case being reported, the government has imposed more vehicle checks on its land borders, and any traveler returning from a country with any infection will have to endure a quarantine.

In Singapore, where some 100 cases have been reported, the government arrested a healthy Chinese couple for not giving full information about their travel plans. The government has also stripped a number of people of their permanent resident status for not reporting their whereabouts to health investigators.

Here in America, a nation of nearly 330 million people, so far there have been six reported deaths from the virus, all from the State of Washington. Four of the victims came from a single nursing home.

TRENDPOST: Just three months into the New Year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some 18,000 Americans have died from the seasonal flu, while four people died of coronavirus since that time.

In Italy, the WHO reported that some regional government officials have created an over-inflated perception of the virus problem by including people who tested positive for the virus but had never gotten sick in their reports of total cases. And, of the 34 Italians who have died from the virus thus far, 29 were elderly with serious health conditions before contracting the disease.

Responding to the government crackdown hitting the Italian economy, which is already on the brink of recession, the tourism board issued the statement, "In just over 48 hours we have gone from a safe country, without a single valid or logical reason, to be a European cluster. Part of that is due to hysterical communication that does not take into account the real security conditions of the country. The consequences are an avalanche of cancellations, missed reservations, and closing of the Italian travel market that have no justification."

TRENDPOST: The state of emergency and lockdowns imposed by governments not only have crippled many businesses but also exemplify the power of control governments have over its people.

In addition, the prohibiting of mass gatherings in nations have squelched the massive street demonstrations that had erupted across the globe among citizens protesting income inequality, government corruption, and lack of basic living standards, which was one of our [2020 Top Trends](#).

ECONOMIC UPDATE

CORONAVIRUS: ECONOMIC EPIDEMIC



The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 3,500 points last week, vaporizing about \$6 trillion in investors' assets.

After back-to-back 1,000-point drops during the seven-day rout, stocks last Friday shaved that day's loss to 356 points, indicating the virus-sparked panic may be fading and confidence cautiously returning.

Markets in Europe and Asia lost about 3 percent of their values last week.

As the stock market deepened its multi-day plunge, President Trump, in his version of "the fundamentals of the economy are sound" promo-booster, tried to convince money junkies on the Street to keep gambling, tweeting "the stock market is starting to look very good to me!"

After a seven-session down streak, on Monday, the Dow had its best day in a decade on bets central banksters would juice the markets with more cheap money, i.e., lower interest rates.

Early Tuesday morning, Trump blasted Federal Reserve for not lowering interest rates after the Australian central bank cut its rates to record lows.

Trump said, “Australia’s Central Bank cut interest rates and stated it will most likely further ease in order to make up for China’s coronavirus situation and slowdown... Other countries are doing the same thing, if not more so. Our Federal Reserve has us paying higher rates than many others, when we should be paying less.” The president said Fed Chair Jerome Powell, “called it wrong from day one.”

Shortly thereafter, in a no-surprise move, the Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate by 50 basis points because “The coronavirus poses evolving risks to economic activity.”

In light of these risks and in support of achieving its maximum employment and price stability goals, the Federal Open Market Committee decided today to lower the target range for the federal funds rate.

Still not happy with even the 50 basis point cut back, the largest reduction since the Panic of '08, which lowered the federal-funds rate to a range between 1 percent and 1.25 percent, Trump tweeted: “The Federal Reserve is cutting but must further ease and, most importantly, come into line with other countries/competitors. We are not playing on a level field. Not fair to USA. It is finally time for the Federal Reserve to LEAD. More easing and cutting!”

Yet, with the world in panic mode, the Dow dove nearly 800 points as all sectors of society – public, private, and personal – took measures to avoid catching the virus.

TREND FORECAST: As Gerald Celente has noted since last March, interest rates in the U.S. would be at zero to negative by October 2020.

Mortgage rates have plummeted since the beginning of the year to the lowest average since 2016.

Since U.S. mortgage rates track the direction of the yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which is now at an all-time low, mortgage refinancing will escalate.

We also forecast there will be a move away from densely populated big cities to rural areas.

And, should the virus contagion fears keep spreading, online shopping and home schooling trends will grow strongly.

Also, with the exception of health care/pharmaceuticals and related products and services, the economic downturn will crash markets and economies, pushing the world into the “Greatest Depression” this year, rather than in 2021 as previously forecast.

TREND FORECAST: *With central banks around the world lowering interest rates to pump more cheap money into the failing system, investors will bail out of volatile stock markets and seek safe returns.*

Indeed, in the wake of the Feds emergency rate cut to battle the economic effects of the spreading coronavirus, the 10-year Treasury yield hit an all-time low of 0.927 percent.

And, gold, the ultimate safe-haven asset, spiked some \$42 per ounce after the Fed slashed interest rates 50 basis points today. Thus, we forecasts that gold prices will hit \$2,000 per ounce when gold breaks above \$1,725.

NO ENERGY IN ENERGY



U.S. energy stocks are performing farther below the S&P 500 average than at any time since Japan attacked the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor in 1941, according to the Bank of America.

Meanwhile, in mid-month, investors rushed to dump energy-related junk bonds, driving borrowing costs for the riskiest companies to their highest since August 2016.

The immediate causes: oil prices have fallen 15 percent this year from levels that already were low, and gas prices, now around \$2 per thousand Btu's, are near their record bottom.

Also, with the coronavirus shutting down large swaths of the world economy, the global oversupply of energy will swell even more.

Coal has crashed as well. Prices peaked above \$75 a ton in early 2019 and have sunk to around \$45 today. At least 11 U.S. coal companies have declared bankruptcy in the last three years.

Oil: Bad to Worse

Oil continued its long-term price slide, with Brent crude crashing down below \$50 a barrel and Texas intermediate under \$45.

Prices are expected to languish as the coronavirus's economic impact pares at least 400,000 barrels a day from world demand as factories close or reduce output and thousands of daily airline flights are canceled.

That much of a drop would take global oil demand to its lowest point in seven years, according to Warren Patterson, chief commodities strategist at ING.

OPEC and its partners are scheduled to meet on Thursday in Vienna. Prior to the coronavirus outbreak, Russia signaled they were against further production cuts from the 1.7 million barrels a day that have been taken off the market.

TRENDPOST: *The U.S. fracking boom has flooded markets with gas and oil in record volumes, adding to the global oversupply, and producers are still drilling new wells. Also, many oil companies went deep into debt to get in on the fracking frenzy, and those loans are starting to come due at a time when low prices are leaving producers short of cash.*

RETAILERS ON A SLIPPERY SLOPE



Macy's department store chain reports slowing sales and supplies due in part to the coronavirus.

The chain has about 70 stores for which Asians are a significant market. Sales have dropped, but "it's nothing to be concerned about yet," said Jeff Gennette, Macy's CEO.

He added that inventory coming from China also has slowed and the company is "watching this very, very carefully." The U.S.-China trade war has helped the company develop strategies to manage supply disruptions, he said.

Last week, Macy's posted profits of \$340 million for the three months ending 1 February, down 55 percent year-on-year.

In February, Macy's announced it would close 125 stores and lay off 2,000 people to cope with sluggish growth and sagging profits.

In a silver-lining announcement, J.C. Penney Co. projects that in-store sales will fall no more than 4.5 percent in 2020, compared to a 7.7-percent decline in 2019.

The sales dropped 7 percent in 2019's fourth quarter, better than the 7.3 percent analysts had forecast.

However, it was the sixth consecutive quarter in which sales had dropped off.

The company reported a quarterly profit of \$27 million against \$75 million for the same period last year. It also booked earnings of 13 cents a share, surprising analysts who had expected a 6-cent loss.

Penney's shares fell 5 percent on 27 February to 69 cents, capping a 34-percent decline over the last three months.

The New York Stock Exchange has warned Penney that it is out of compliance with listing requirements which mandate its shares not close below \$1 for 30 consecutive trading days. As a result, Penney may be delisted.

TRAVEL SUCCUMBS TO VIRUS



In response to the spread of the coronavirus, the U.S. has closed its borders to anyone who has visited Iran in the previous 14 days and is warning against travel to South Korea and parts of Italy. The Trump administration also has threatened to close the U.S.-Mexico border.

The strictures add to the travel industry's troubles.

Lufthansa, the German airline, has canceled flights to mainland China and scaled back routes to and from Hong Kong. Russia is canceling Korean flights, has suggested its citizens don't visit Italy, and is suspending visas issued to Iranians.

Delta and American airlines have canceled flights between the U.S. and Milan, Italy.

The virus scare has canceled as many as 25,000 airline flights a day, leading an airline trade group to warn that the cutbacks could cost the global airline industry \$30 billion this year.

Air France-KLM said it could lose €200 million in profits to the virus and more if China flights don't resume by mid-April.

As a result, many of Europe's airlines have halted hiring and frozen capital spending in hopes of remaining profitable during the coronavirus crisis.

Lufthansa's management circulated an internal letter urging all departments to cut costs.

Business travel, often the most reliable source of airline income, hasn't been spared.

A poll of 401 companies by the Global Business Travel Association found that almost 300 of the companies have canceled trips to Hong Kong and about 200 scrapped visits to Taiwan to avoid the coronavirus.

Now businesses are beginning to scratch travel to European countries for the same reason. About 100 companies have cut back, but only about 30 businesses said they have canceled most of the European travel.

Nestle has canceled all international travel for its 352,000 employees worldwide.

More than 300 respondents also reported canceling some meetings or events, and about 80 said they had canceled “many.”

On 25 February, the German cities of Cologne and Frankfurt canceled two large trade fairs. The cancellations will slash revenues for local hotels and restaurants.

The cutbacks are rippling through travel hubs, with Dubai’s hotel occupancy rate down as much as 18 percent during the first half of February. Marriott warned it could lose \$25 million a month in franchise holders’ fees if the coronavirus kills travel for an extended period.

BANK STOCKS HIT BY VIRUS



Share prices for many of Europe’s biggest banks closed down as much as 7 percent last week, dropping further than many market indexes hit by the coronavirus scare.

Standard Chartered PLC, which focuses on Asia, has warned of new difficulties meeting its 2020 profit targets. It has temporarily halted face-to-face services in many Asian branches, has allowed some clients to delay mortgage and loan payments, and has waived fees on personal loans.

HSBC said it could face \$600 million in disrupted loans if the virus epidemic extends its economic infection beyond June.

Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase, and HSBC have restricted or banned travel to virus-affected areas and many conferences and other events have been canceled.

CAR PARTS MAKER CLOSES ITALIAN PLANT, WARNS MORE TO COME



MTA, a European manufacturer of auto electronics, has shut its plant in Codogno, Italy, and warns if the plant doesn't reopen quickly its other European factories will halt production, which would stop the assembly lines at BMW, Peugeot, and FiatChrysler factories across the continent.

Europe's carmakers and parts suppliers have relied on stockpiled components to weather the loss of shipments from China during the coronavirus outbreak so far. MTA's announcement is the first indication that those stockpiles are running out.

China's factories are gradually reopening after more than six weeks of widespread closures. But that won't soon relieve Europe's parts problem, analysts say.

China's plants are restarting slowly with only 50 to 80 percent of workers returning; many are working from home when possible and others are still avoiding public transportation or personal contact for fear of the illness.

"What we are receiving today was shipped four to five weeks ago," said Friedolin Strack, an official of BDI, a German industrial trade group. "The shortages will be coming in the next few weeks."

ITALY WARNS OF ECONOMY'S SHORTFALL



A manufacturing slowdown is one of several factors that has led Italy to tell its European Union partners that the country is unlikely to meet its economic performance projections because of the coronavirus outbreak.

It also has warned the union that members should be ready to offer aid if Italy's economy is severely damaged by the illness.

Virus cases are concentrated in the Lombardy and Veneto regions, which account for a third of Italy's economic output and half its exports.

Italy's GDP could lose 0.2 percent to the virus this quarter, the Bank Italy estimates. That would follow a contraction of 0.3 percent in 2019's last three months, the largest drop in six years.

Even before the virus arrived, many analysts were predicting Italy would tip into a recession this year.

Italy has become a European center of the infection, reporting more than 650 cases and more than 27 deaths as of 28 February.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte expressed confidence that Italy will contain the disease "in the coming days."

CHINA'S ECONOMIC WOES RIPPLE WORLDWIDE



The International Monetary Fund cut its estimate for China's growth rate this year to 5.6 percent, down from the 6 percent it had forecast in January.

About a third of global economic growth is driven by China's economy, up from just 3 percent in 2000. Also in 2000, China made up 1.2 percent of world trade; that number now is about 33 percent globally and 41 percent across Asia.

Much of Vietnam's economy is derived from importing semi-finished products from China and exporting them worldwide. Since the virus epidemic took hold, more than half of those companies are having trouble getting goods from China, the American Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam reports.

START-UPS STARVING FOR FUNDS, ASK FOR BAILOUTS



Budding Chinese businesses were running short of funding because of China's economic slowdown that began last year. Now the coronavirus has shut down large swathes of Chinese commerce and canceled entrepreneurs' face-to-face meetings with possible backers.

Venture capitalists typically like to meet entrepreneurs personally to get a “feel” for them. Without that personal contact, wallets often stay closed.

Also, angel investors are uncertain of the post-virus economy and are waiting to see what conditions the epidemic leaves in its wake.

In January and February, the number of venture deals dropped 64 percent from the same period in 2019, and the amount of venture capital committed to new deals dropped 66 percent during that time.

Now many of those start-ups are laying off workers, cutting pay for those who remain, and begging the government for bailouts.

To persuade government officials to help, companies “need to seriously look at slimming down by pausing, shuttering, merging, and refocusing,” said David Wei at Vision Knight Capital. “Executives and entrepreneurs cutting their pay is a must. If employees have to suffer, people at the top should suffer more.”

SOUTH KOREA: SAMSUNG HOLDS ECONOMY’S FATE



Samsung, the manufacturer that delivers 12.5 percent of South Korea’s annual GDP and 45 percent of its exports, continues to lay off workers as the number of coronavirus cases passed 1,500 last week, growing thirtyfold in a matter of days.

The company, which employs more than 180,000 nationwide, closed one plant after a worker tested positive for the virus and the other 1,500 workers were sent home under quarantine for two weeks.

If the virus spreads unchecked, Samsung could close more chip-making plants for longer periods, which would be “the worst-case scenario for the Korean

economy,” said Park Chong-hoon, research director for Standard Chartered Bank in Seoul.

Samsung’s computer chips make up 20 percent of the country’s exports, 12 percent of South Korea’s corporate tax revenue, and 25 percent of the capitalization in its main stock market.

Tens of thousands of other workers make parts that supply Samsung factories. “If just one of the key domestic parts makers suspends production, it will wreak havoc on the entire supply chain, as Samsung has sole vendors for some parts,” according to Kim Yung-woo, an analyst at SK Securities.

The computer chip market softened in 2019, but Samsung and South Korea were counting on a rebound this quarter to buoy government revenues and business investment.

Based on that expectation, in December, the government predicted 2.2-percent GDP growth for 2020. Analysts now believe the rate will be less than 1 percent for the year after contracting by -.04 percent or more this quarter.

AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR GOING SOUTH



Australia’s dollar struck a ten-year low against U.S. currency last week, dropping another 0.8 percent in one day after new figures showed unemployment edging up.

The Aussie is down 15 percent against the U.S. dollar in the past two years, now worth US\$0.65 compared to US\$0.78 in January 2018.

Australia's two economic bedrocks are commodity exports and trade with China. Recent massive wildfires across the country have curtailed mining and resource harvesting and have destroyed infrastructure and other assets.

And China's economic slowdown, which has been exacerbated by the spreading coronavirus fears, will prove deadly to sectors of the Australian economy.

Before The Reserve Bank of Australia reduced interest rates today by a quarter percentage point to a record-low 0.50 percent after the coronavirus began to choke key exports, including foreign education and tourism, Australia's central bank had cut interest rates three times in 2019 to spur its sinking economy.

GEOPOLITICAL ROUNDUP

INDIA: "BRUTAL AND UNCHECKED VIOLENCE"



The protests that began in December, which spread across India following the new citizenship law discriminating against Muslims, continues to escalate.

Last week, over 40 demonstrators were killed and 200 wounded as Hindu mobs attacked Muslims who were continuing the nationwide protests against the citizenship law.

In addition to police and security forces using drones to identify and then accost protesters, mobs of nationalistic Hindu protagonists set fire to Muslim homes, businesses, and four of New Delhi's mosques.

According to many witnesses, the police stood by and did nothing to prevent the mobs from attacking Muslim demonstrators and raiding Muslim homes, beating people with blunt instruments.

A physician at a New Delhi hospital said, “There were so many people brought in dead on the spot in ambulances, cars and bikes. There were so many injuries. They were beaten up with iron rods and sticks.”

The attacking mobs were primarily members of Hindu Sena, who have been part of the anti-Muslim hate campaign encouraged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party over the past few months.

Timing is Everything

The timing of the recent rise in violence coincided with President Trump’s visit to India, where he was center stage at the nation’s 110,000 seat Motera Stadium. The president entered the huge stadium as the Village People’s hit song, “Macho Man” blared through the loudspeakers.

Trump praised Mr. Modi as a leader who promoted religious freedom even as videos were circulating on social media showing New Delhi police encouraging a group of Hindu supremacists to attack Muslim protesters while standing by as they set vehicles, buildings, and mosques on fire.

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: *President Trump praised Modi for championing tolerance stating, “They have really worked hard on religious freedom. We talked about it for a long time and I really believe that's what he wants.”*

In contrast, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom criticized the Modi government for failing to protect Muslims, stating, “The brutal and unchecked violence growing across the Delhi cannot continue.”

TURKEY/SYRIA: THREATS & ULTIMATUMS



As reported in last week's **Trends Journal**, the threat of an expanding war is ever present as Turkey seeks to maintain a military presence in Syria's northwest region of Idlib.

This region has been controlled by rebels trying to oust the Syrian government led by President Bashar al-Assad since 2011, but, over the past few weeks, the conflict has escalated dramatically as Syrian forces push hard to get the territory back under control.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said he would not let the Syrians regain control of their Idlib region: "We would like to remind those who try to corner Turkey by forcing their own agenda onto it, that we are not guests in this region, but its masters."

Mr. Erdoğan's head of communications stated, "The illegitimate regime which turned its guns on our soldiers will be retaliated against."

All Out War

Last Thursday, Syria launched an airstrike in Idlib, killing over 30 Turkish soldiers and wounding dozens.

Following the airstrike, Erdoğan called Russian President Putin, claiming to warn the Russian leader to back off his troops from Idlib: "I asked Mr. Putin 'what's your business there? If you establish a base, do so but get out of our way and leave us face to face with the regime'."

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *In September 2015, Russia was invited by Syrian President Assad to fight rebel groups funded and supported by the United States, which, as with Turkey, has illegally invaded and occupied a sovereign nation.*

Among the western media and their politicians, however, the illegality of invading, bombing, destroying, occupying, and murdering several hundred thousand people in a sovereign nation is ignored. Indeed, President Trump voiced his support for Turkey's invasion and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called the Syrian/Russian attack on Friday "despicable and braze."

Turks Ramps Up War

The day after the Turkish soldiers were killed, President Erdoğan ordered a major military offensive, killing 50 Syrian soldiers and ten members of the Lebanese Hezbollah militia supporting Assad.

Turkish drone and artillery bombardments hit over 200 targets in the Idlib region, the largest offensive yet of the entire conflict.

On Sunday, Turkey shot down two Syrian jets. Turkish Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar claimed eight Syrian helicopters were destroyed along with over 100 tanks, dozens of artilleries, and three air defense systems.

TRENDPOST: *The escalation of war has worsened the Syrian refugee crisis in which over five million citizens have fled the nation. One million now have fled Idlib as Syria and Russian forces fight to expel rebel forces occupying the region and the Turkish military fight to occupy it.*

GREECE: STOP THE HUMAN WAVES



Over the past two decades, millions of migrants have fled war torn nations destroyed by the United States and its allies – Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, etc., and poverty stricken countries of Africa, seeking refuge in Europe.

Hundreds of thousands have made dangerous trips on makeshift boats from the coast of Turkey to cross the Aegean Sea to eastern Greek islands, landing them at the shortest distance to a gateway into Europe. Doctors Without Borders has stated, “Greece has become a dumping ground for the men, women and children that the European Union has failed to protect.”

Responding to the call to address the horrific overcrowding and life-threatening conditions of the Greek migrant centers, on 10 February, the Greek government announced it would use emergency legal power to accelerate the expansion of migrant campus housing refugees and asylum seekers on the islands.

Anti-Immigrant Anger Erupts

After the Greek government secretly shipped construction machinery and hundreds of riot police officers to Lesbos and Chios islands, last week more than 1,000 people were at the migrant centers attacking police. Some 45 police and a dozen protesters were wounded in the standoff.

Despite the opposition for more refugee camps, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who was able to win election this past July in part due to his promise to take a hardline on migration, stated his commitment to keep building them. “We understand there is a problem of trust that was created over the previous years. But the closed facilities will be built and we are calling on the public to support this,” his office spokesperson said.

TREND FORECAST: “Human Waves,” one of our Top Trends for 2019, of refugees seeking safety in foreign nations, will continue to escalate as global economies decelerate and geopolitical unrest accelerates. Populist and nationalist movements to secure borders will continue to replace established parties in nations most affected by the “Human Wave” crisis.

AFGHANISTAN: GIVE PEACE A CHANCE



After a successful seven-day truce period, last Saturday, the United States officially signed a peace agreement with the Taliban. While the agreement has conditions to be met in the future, this appears to be the best chance yet for the U.S. to finally extricate itself from the longest war in its history.

The U.S.-Taliban peace deal was signed in the Middle Eastern State of Qatar and calls for the withdrawal of all U.S. and allied troops over the next 14 months, with the Taliban committing to ending all acts of terrorism within Afghanistan.

The agreement also calls for some 5,000 Taliban prisoners currently under the supervision of the Afghan government to be released ahead of talks between Afghan groups scheduled for 10 March in Oslo, Norway.

This last point, however, was contested on Sunday by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who was not invited to the peace agreement signing in Qatar.

Mr. Ghani stated in Kabul that the U.S. was not in a position to instruct his government on how to deal with Taliban prisoners: "The request has been made by the United States for the release of prisoners and it can be part of the negotiations but it cannot be a precondition."

Mr. Ghani went on to say that any release of prisoners was his government's decision, not the U.S.

TRENDPOST: On Saturday, President Trump confirmed he would be open to meeting directly with Taliban leaders to make this deal work. While there are serious issues still to be settled to keep the agreement intact, as Gerald Celente has forecast, Mr. Trump will use the end of the long, costly Afghan war as a major campaign issue in his pursuit for re-election.

Also, most notably, there is minimal coverage in the mainstream media or political celebration of the U.S.-Taliban peace deal that will end the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan after 19 years.

Indeed, when America launched the Afghan War in 2001, there was strong patriotic support, but, now, with an end in sight, there are no celebrations of bringing home the troops or admission of the costly, murderous mission's failure.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW

PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW®: DEMS FEAR “THE BERN”



Former Vice President Joe Biden won a clear victory in the South Carolina Democratic primary last Saturday, breathing life into his campaign after poor finishes in the first three primary states.

Mr. Biden won 48.4 percent of the vote along the lion's share of delegates while Bernie Sanders finished second with close to 20 percent of the vote.

Billionaire Tom Steyer, who spent some \$250 million in ads since announcing his candidacy last July and more than \$20 million in South Carolina, came in third.

But following the primary election, Steyer and two other Presidential Reality Show contestants, former Mayor Pete Buttigieg who finished fourth and Senator Amy Klobuchar who came in sixth, announced they were dropping out of the race and throwing their support to Biden.

Super Tuesday Today

Polls show that tonight's Super Tuesday 15 state primaries, representing over one third of all the delegates up for grabs in the primary season, show Bernie Sanders as the favorite to with win the most delegates in the two largest states, California and Texas.

Mike "Billionaire" Bloomberg, who spent over \$500 million dollars of his own money for campaign ads, is polling well enough to likely siphon significant delegates from Sanders and Biden.

DNC: Anybody But Bernie

As it did in 2016, when it used its leverage to keep Bernie Sanders from winning the nomination over Hillary Clinton, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) controls 775 so called “Super Delegates,” consisting of party mayors, governors, congressional leaders, ex-presidents, ex-vice presidents, and former DNC chairpersons.

And, as in 2016, the DNC and party loyalists have made it clear they loathe the idea of Bernie Sanders as their candidate and will do everything in their power to make sure a moderate such as Joe Biden or Michael Bloomberg is selected.

Of the Super Delegates who have made public endorsements so far, 77 have come out for Biden, 24 for Bloomberg, and 23 for Sanders. Adding the total for the moderates and comparing that to the total for the progressives, over 70 percent of the Super Delegates are committing so far to favor the “moderate” candidate.

These un-elected Super Delegates will be able to cast votes and leverage power if no candidate has amassed the required 50 percent of delegates after all the primaries are done, followed by no clear winner after the first ballot taken at the convention.

If Bernie Sanders can’t get to the 50 percent total coming in, it’s most likely the DNC will again enrage the socialist Sanders segment of the party by manipulating the process in favor of an establishment candidate.

Many powerful Democrats are unleashing a very public anti-Bernie campaign. In January, a documentary was released about Hillary Clinton’s 2016 run against Senator Sanders. The media played up the part of the documentary where Clinton remarks about Senator Sanders, “Nobody likes him, nobody wants to work with him, he got nothing done... It’s all just baloney and I feel so bad that people got sucked into it.”

Bill and Hillary Clinton’s close aide and political advisor James Carville was highly visible last week on cable news programs trashing Bernie: “If you’re voting for him because you think he’ll win the election, politically, you’re an idiot.”

(Note: This is the same James Carville who stated in a September 2016 interview about the Clinton/Trump presidential race: “It’s hard to look at it right now and come to any other conclusion than it is going to be a pretty sizable win for the Democrats. It’s pretty hard to see anything else.”)

One of the Democratic Party's biggest financial donors, Lloyd Blankfein, former CEO of Goldman Sachs, has made clear his dislike for Sanders, tweeting: "If Dems go on to nominate Sanders, the Russians will have to reconsider who to work for to best screw up the US. Sanders is just as polarizing as Trump AND he'll ruin our economy and doesn't care about our military. If I'm Russian, I go with Sanders this time around."

And while former President Obama has stated he would not inject himself into the primary fight, he did call Biden to congratulate him on his South Carolina victory.

Warren vs. Sanders

As the establishment wing of the Democratic party aggressively works to sink Sanders, even the anti-monopoly, anti-bankster candidate Senator Elizabeth Warren, who has performed miserably in primaries so far, continues to pull valuable votes away from Sanders by staying in the race. According to a memo written by her campaign manager, Ms. Warren is willing to cost Bernie the nomination on the slight chance that she could emerge as the nominee in a brokered convention.

TREND FORECAST: Should Joseph Biden win the Democratic nomination, we forecast that, minus a black swan/wild card event, President Trump will handily defeat him on Election Day. Indeed, the young, Hispanic, and black voters who support Bernie Sanders will not come out in large numbers to support Biden, thus he will lose key swing states.

HI-TECH SCIENCE

AI FINDS "AMAZING" NEW ANTIBIOTIC



by Bennett Davis

Using a machine learning program, artificial intelligence software at MIT has designed a new antibiotic able to kill dozens of bacteria, including some that defeat all other known antibiotics.

The developers called the find “amazing” and believe it ranks among the most important antibiotics ever discovered because of its range of effectiveness.

The new drug is named Halicin; “-icin” is a common ending for antibiotic names and “Hal” salutes the computer in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey.

The researchers designed their computer model to look for chemical features that make molecules effective at killing E. coli bacteria. To do so, they showed the model about 2,500 compounds, including 1,700 FDA-approved drugs and a set of 800 natural remedies with diverse structures and a wide range of bioactivities.

The resulting machine learning project, which can screen more than a hundred million chemical compounds in a matter of days, was designed specifically to imagine potential antibiotics that can kill bacteria using different mechanisms than those of existing anti-bacterial drugs. Halicin was the result.

In tests, E. coli bacteria didn’t become resistant to Halicin within a 30-day treatment period in mice. In contrast, in no more than three days, the bacteria developed a defense against ciprofloxacin, a common antibiotic used to treat a range of infections.

Halicin also was found to do no damage to healthy tissue or to beneficial bacteria that live in the human digestive tract.

TRENDPOST: Antibiotic resistance is a high-priority health emergency as bugs that once succumbed to antibiotic treatments no longer do. Halicin is the first of a new generation of antibiotics designed and tested by computer that can defeat resistant bacteria and will replace older drugs as human clinical trials are completed.

AI programs such as this one also can be refined to custom-design therapeutic compounds for individuals based on their unique body chemistry.

PLASMA DESTROYS PFAS



by Bennett Davis

Perfluoroalkyl substances, a family of more than 5,000 “forever” industrial chemicals, have widely contaminated U.S. water supplies (see Trends Journal, 28 January 2020). Some are known to cause cancer; little research has been done on the health effects of most of them.

The only ways to get rid of PFAS have been to filter them out of water and then burn them, using large amounts of energy.

Now, thanks to work at Drexel and Clarkson universities, there’s a new way to break up PFAS: blast them with plasma.

Plasma is considered the fourth state of matter, along with solids, liquids, and gases. It’s created by putting heat or electricity into a gas.

The key to turning PFAS into less toxic compounds is to break the strong bond holding its carbon and fluorine atoms together. When Drexel researchers blasted PFAS with a hot plasma using plain air, about a quarter of those bonds broke.

Also, the plasma blasts work with far less energy than incineration and without adding new chemicals to the mix and without making additional harmful byproducts.

Experiments using different gases may produce more powerful results.

Clarkson scientists tested a plasma decontamination method on groundwater samples taken from Wright Patterson Air Force Base. (Military bases are notorious PFAS contamination sites.) The method reduced PFAS contamination

level below the health limit of 70 parts per trillion that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed.

TRENDPOST: *As the world continues to run short of fresh water, more attention will be devoted to finding and funding new ways to clean contaminated water. A new service sector will grow as a result.*

MAKING CLEANING FLUID FROM GARBAGE



by Bennett Davis

Veles, a New York start-up, is making a household cleaner from garbage.

The company collects food waste, feeds it into a biorefinery, and extracts the ingredients that make up its namesake cleaner: water; acetic acid (related to vinegar); lactic acid (good for killing germs and breaking things down); and alcohol.

Veles then adds a dash of fragrance and markets the result in a recyclable aluminum bottle.

Co-founder Amanda Weeks has persuaded local trash and wastewater haulers to bring their loads to her biorefinery instead of a landfill farther away, saving the haulers money and time.

The cleaner then sold in an aluminum bottle but Weeks prefers that her customers refill it instead. She's working with nearby retailers to install tanks where consumers can pump their own.

Because it's early days, a 16-ounce bottle of Veles costs \$20 but Weeks says the price will fall as the company scales up.

She says that if every U.S. household used a bottle of Veles every month, 175 million gallons of water a year would stay out of the waste stream.

But her larger aim is to see biorefineries making similar products in every population center and Veles already has opened a demonstration plant in New Jersey. Her longer-term goal is to foster biorefineries selling recycled waste to makers of consumer products and chemicals, helping to close the loop on the circular economy.

TRENDPOST: *More entrepreneurs, especially those under age 40, see business as a way to carry out social missions, particularly environmental purposes. Two-thirds of global consumers, including 73 percent of Millennials, say they're willing to spend more money for a product that helps achieve environmental goals.*

Businesses with a clear social purpose or goal increasingly will outcompete those that don't.