

# TRENDSJOURNAL

HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS

**DUMB**

**ENOUGH TO BELIEVE**

**BUSH'S WARS**

**DUMB**

**ENOUGH TO BELIEVE**

**THE COVID  
WAR**



28 April 2020

## ECONOMIC UPDATE

### U.S. MARKETS



Despite the greatest economic lockdown in world history, the Dow Jones Industrial Average built on Friday's gain of 260 points, adding another 358 points yesterday to close above the market makers 24,000 milestone at 24,133 on speculation that the broader economy is moving closer to reopening.

The NASDAQ added 95 points, ending the day at 8,730, driven up 1.7 percent by strong performances by large-cap tech stocks.

Today was a different story. The Dow snapped its four-day winning streak.

Again spreading fear, as he has since being anointed America's greatest COVID-19 expert with a documented track record of inaccurate predictions, Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, warned the virus would "not disappear from the planet" and to expect a "bad fall" season if an effective treatment for coronavirus is not found by then.

Expecting more of the worse to come, the Dow, after being up over 300 points in early trading, closed down 32 points... and slumping tech stocks drove the NASDAQ down 1.4 percent.

Oil lost ground after last week's minor uptick with Brent Crude closing at \$20.74 and West Texas Intermediate closing at \$12.99.

Gold closed at \$1,710, down \$19 from Friday's close at \$1,729 per ounce.

Bitcoin finished its trading day slightly above 7,440, remaining above its 10-day and 50-day moving average.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Despite Washington and the U.S. Federal Reserve pumping trillions of digital cash printed on nothing and backed by nothing, the U.S. dollar continued to strengthen, gaining 0.9 percent in value against 12 other currencies... including those of Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, the Eurozone, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Singapore, Sweden, and Switzerland.*

*The dollar remains the international choice for safety and the preservation of value since, regardless how dire the current and economic future is in the United States, the geopolitical and socioeconomic conditions of other nations are in greater jeopardy of sharp declines.*

*Therefore, since the dollar is still considered a safe-haven investment, gold prices have not been able to stabilize above our \$1,740 range required to then spike to \$2,000 and above.*

*As reality strikes following the un-locking of the locked down global economy that it will not bounce back in the hopeful V or W recovery championed by The Street, the U.S. dollar, as with other currencies, will sharply weaken, pushing gold prices much higher.*

## **OIL: THE ECONOMIC INDICATOR**



Oil prices bumped up last week by as much as 19 percent before falling yesterday, as Chinese demand began to grow again now that its' factories and economy are reopening.

That buoyed share prices in the oil and oil services sectors. Also, heightened tensions between the U.S. and Iran sharpened the risk of the Middle East oil region being the center of armed conflict. The euphoria faded, however, as the enduring reality of scant demand and massive oversupplies reasserted itself over the weekend.

It is estimated should oil demand remain weak, storage facilities will max out within 90 days.

### **U.S. Oil Industry's Collapse Ripples Across States**

The fracking revolution expanded the heft of the U.S. oil industry beyond its conventional centers in Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma – and the pain of the industry's collapse is spread just as wide.

States that quickly came to depend on the financial windfalls of oil and gas tax cash, and the jobs that came with them, include North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

For example, 15.3 percent of Alaska's GDP flows from oil. North Dakota takes 10.3 percent of its economic productivity from oil and gas. In Wyoming, the figure is 16.4 percent.

Now “it’s bleak in Wyoming,” said Pete Obermueller, president of the Petroleum Association of Wyoming.

During the week of 20 April, there were six drilling rigs working in the state, compared to 30 at this time last year.

Wyoming, with an extraction-based economy, was depending on steady oil sales to help it overcome weak natural gas prices and make a transition away from the coal industry, which has been decimated domestically by cheap fracked natural gas.

A late March survey of Louisiana’s oil and gas producers found many expecting to slash activities by as much as 70 percent by August, costing the state 24,000 jobs and as much as \$2 billion in lost wages.

Since the survey, the price of U.S. oil has fallen from above \$20 to below \$12, a level last seen more than 20 years ago.

The state’s producers have “instructed their field people to begin shutting in production immediately,” said Gifford Briggs, president of the Louisiana Oil and Gas Association.

In Oklahoma, oilfield service companies such as Baker Hughes and Schlumberger already have laid off hundreds of laborers.

Demand for oil “is contracting two or three times as fast as supply,” said Bob McNally, president of oil consulting firm Rapidan Energy. He called the price collapse and global oversupply of oil that has filled all available storage containers a “brutal but efficient” way to “persuade producers to keep oil under the crust.”

The industry’s collapse ripples through other sectors of the economy, affecting spending and employment in retail, housing, autos, and banking, among others.

A Wichita State University study of the economic impact of Kansas’s oil industry calculated that every dollar earned by an oil worker meant almost \$2 earned by workers in other fields; and that every job the oil industry gained or lost translated to three additional jobs created or erased in other sectors.

***TREND FORECAST:*** Should tensions continue to escalate in the Middle East, so too will oil prices.

*With the world transfixed on the coronavirus, barely reported are the acts of war and war talk in the region.*

*Over the past few weeks, Israel launched numerous airstrikes against targets in Syria. Yesterday's strikes near the capital city of Damascus killed at least seven people.*

*It was also reported by Syrian state media that two U.S. soldiers are missing in action after the vehicle they were in was attacked. The Pentagon denies the claim.*

*In oil-rich Libya, civil war rages as the former CIA-backed Gen. Khalifa Haftar announced that his Libyan National Army (LNA), not the UN-anointed Government of National Accord (GNA), has a "popular mandate" to rule, and he will be taking over the country.*

### ***Little Speed Boats "Harass" U.S. War***

*On 15 April, six U.S. military warships patrolling the Persian Gulf near Iran, some 7,000 miles from America, were followed by a group of lightly armed Iranian speedboats.*

*In response, U.S. naval officials described as "dangerous and harassing approaches," which included buzzing through spaces between the convoy and coming within ten yards of one of the ships.*

*For about an hour, the Iranian boats continued their maneuvers near the U.S. fleet, which was conducting a military exercise off the Iranian coast.*

*In response to the Iranian tactic, President Trump tweeted on 22 April: "I have instructed the United States Navy to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea."*

*The Vice Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, General John Hyten, supported President Trump's threat, adding, "Well, I'll just say that every capability that we deploy, every ship that deploys into harm's way has the inherent right of self-defense... What that means is if we see a hostile act, if we see hostile intent, we have the right to respond up to and including lethal force."*

*If tensions increase and military actions escalate, oil prices could sharply spike, possibly soaring above \$80 per barrel for Brent Crude. Should they reach near or*

*at that level, the high cost of oil in a rapidly declining world economy will push the global economy deeper into the “Greatest Depression.”*

## STOCK MARKET MYTHS, MARKET REALITY



Better late than never, finally mainstream market analysts from brokerage firms to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are parroting our trend forecast that the current economic crisis by far the worst since the Great Depression and perhaps even more disastrous in its impacts.

But stock markets have gained more than 20 percent in value since their March crash, technically qualifying as a new bull market.

As we, and our **Trends Journal** contributor, Greg Mannarino, have long noted, investors' euphoria is resulting from central banks and governments around the world continuing to prop up national economies with artificially cheap money to make markets appear healthy.

The global value of government rescue plans totals \$14 trillion so far, according to the IMF. This includes central banks' government and corporate bond-buying sprees as well as the banks' willingness to venture into new areas, such as the U.S. Federal Reserve's purchase of corporate junk bonds.

Indeed, this outright robbing of the taxpayers to bail out multinationals, hedge funds, private equity sectors, etc., is anathema to capitalism and a 5-Star Rating for corporatism.

Also, pushing markets higher have nothing to do with logic, but rather that automated stock-trading programs buy according to formulas, including triggering purchases when volatility drops below targeted levels.

Not only have tech stocks gained the most in recent days but even shares of travel and leisure businesses, which we forecast will at best modestly rebound, have risen 24 percent, cutting their losses to 37 percent this year.

Although it is being promoted in the business media that Bespoke Investment Group analyzed past stock market plunges and reports that when markets have regained half their losses, the worst is over, we disagree.

What is happening now is unprecedented. There is no model in history that compares with a global economic shut down imposed by politicians to fight the COVID-19 virus.

In the Great Depression, markets reclaimed 44 percent of their losses from their lows on November 29, 1929 to March 1930. But then they crashed again, losing 80 percent of their value and not regaining their 1930 high point until September 1954.

First-quarter earnings reports are grim, but the second quarter is likely to be far worse, even “horrific,” according to strategist Karen Ward at JPMorgan Asset Management.

## **MORE CHEAP MONEY INJECTED INTO BAILOUT FUND**



Stung by the failure of its \$2.2-trillion rescue fund to reach enough small businesses, the U.S. Congress has added \$484 billion in new money, including \$310 targeted again to the Paycheck Protection Plan.

Here's what's included:

- \$250 to replenish the Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP, which is designed to cover businesses' payroll costs and keep people off the unemployment rolls;
- \$60 billion will be administered by credit unions and small banks; the first tranche of money was handed out by Wall Street megabanks that dealt first with their corporate customers and had few relationships with mom-and-pop operations;
- Businesses applying for the money now must not only qualify for the forgivable loan but attest that they really need the money to keep operating;
- \$60 billion for Economic Injury Disaster Relief loans and grants, which can be as large as \$10,000, to small businesses, farms, and agricultural operations harmed by the shutdown. The money is administered directly by the Small Business Administration, not banks;
- \$75 billion to help hospitals cover the cost of battling the virus pandemic and replace income lost when elective surgeries were canceled;
- \$25 billion for virus testing, including the creation of a strategic plan to conduct testing nationally; \$11 billion of the amount is earmarked specifically for states and localities to conduct tests and trace contacts. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will receive \$1 billion of the money for contact tracing.
- \$2.1 billion for Small Business Administration administrative expenses.

With the economy still in general lockdown and businesses failing, Washington has pledged yet another round of money injections.

### **Rescue the Bigs, Screw the Smalls**

The \$349-billion PPP, part of the \$2.2-trillion CARES Act economic rescue plan, was intended to give small companies access to working funds they couldn't otherwise get. The money was designed as a loan that would be forgiven if the cash was used to keep workers on the payroll.

There are two principal reasons why it didn't work out as planned.

First, the original round of PPP funding was intended to underwrite companies with fewer than 500 workers. The program was widely criticized after large, publicly traded companies took advantage of a provision Republican senators inserted into the legislation that allowed companies to qualify if they had fewer than 500 workers *in a single location*.

More than 200 restaurant chains and other geographically diverse corporations strolled through that loophole and applied for at least \$854.7 million, according to data from public records obtained by FactSquared, an analytics firm.

Perhaps the most egregious example is \$126.4 million applied for by three publicly traded companies owned in part by hotelier Monty Bennett. One, the Ashford Hospitality Trust, applied for 117 separate loans totaling \$76 million, according to publicly available regulatory data.

The loans treated each individual hotel owned by the trust as a separate business eligible for its own loan.

A round of public shaming has persuaded 11 companies to return \$75 million to the PPP. The 275-store Shake Shack has handed back its \$10-million loan; the Ruth's Chris Steak House chain gave up its \$20-million bequest.

The Ashford trust has received at least \$38 million in loans so far and has said it has no intention of returning any of the money.

The hotel industry has been among the most damaged by the economic shutdown, with an estimated 70 percent of its workers laid off, according to the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

Publicly traded companies are considered to have access to capital other than PPP funds and, therefore, should not have received any of the loans.

But analysts with Morgan Stanley have reported that public companies collected \$243.4 million from the PPP, a figure that has since grown as companies make required public disclosures.

The treasury department has given large, publicly traded companies until 7 May to return their loans.

In a guidance brief, the department stated that PPP borrowers must certify to the Small Business Administration that their loan was essential to continue their operations.

“It is unlikely that a public company with substantial market value and access to capital markets will be able to make the required certification in good faith,” the brief warned.

“Any borrower that applied for a PPP loan prior to the issuance of this guidance and repays the loan in full by May 7, 2020, will be deemed by SBA to have made the required certification in good faith.”

Companies that do not comply face “potentially other consequences,” said Steven Mnuchin, treasury secretary.

The program’s initial bias toward large, public companies grew, in part, from the PPP’s second major flaw: the government dispersed PPP funds among major banks, such as JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America, to accept and process PPP loan applications and hand out the money.

The big bank’s customers include a large proportion of big, publicly traded companies. When banks saw applications from those customers, they processed them quickly – good customer service is a hallmark of good banking practice – often ahead of other, smaller companies that the giant banks had never heard of.

By the time the big banks had taken care of their customers, there were only small puddles of PPP money left for everyone else.

The new round of PPP funding addresses that issue by setting aside \$60 billion to be managed by credit unions and small banks.

The new funding measure also mandates stricter oversight of the funds.

“The Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship will conduct aggressive oversight into the use of the PPP,” vowed committee chair Senator Marco Rubio. “If companies are not forthcoming, the committee will use its subpoena power to compel cooperation.”

Rubio and his committee championed the provision in the original bill that gave large companies with multiple branches access to the small business loan program.

***TREND FORECAST:*** As we have long noted, going back to the \$29 trillion the U.S. Federal Reserve secretly pumped into the banking system during the Panic of '08 and the hundreds of billions given to the too-big-to-fail financial institutions and businesses during the G.W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations, in America, it is socialism for the rich and capitalism for small business and the working class.

*As evidenced by the latest bailout scams, not only has the trend to enrich the Bigs continued, as also evidenced by President Trump's and Congressional approval of the 2017 tax cuts that went into to trillions of dollars in stock-buybacks and 82 percent into the pockets of the one percent... it has escalated.*

*As the "Greatest Depression" worsens, more small businesses will go out of business and the large players in the industrial, tech, commercial, and retail sectors will grow larger.*

## **BUDGET DEFICIT BALLOON, BUSINESSES GOING UNDER**



The new \$484-billion installment of federal rescue funds will balloon this year's federal deficit to about \$3.8 trillion, or 18.6 percent of GDP, the highest proportion since World War Two, according to the private, nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Budget (CRB).

Adding that amount to the national debt bloats the number to 106 percent of the GDP forecast for 2022, equaling the percentage record set in 1946.

In early March, the Congressional Budget Office predicted a national debt totaling 89 percent of GDP in 2025, with interest costs at 2 percent of GDP. The CRB sees the debt at 107 percent of GDP in that year but interest still costing only about 2 percent of the principal.

It is assumed that printing reams of money to bail out national economies won't automatically spark inflation. Inflation is set off when demand is high and goods are scarce. Intense demand is unlikely to return to the world's economy for a while as people pay down debt and tend to necessities such as car repairs and dental work in the wake of the current economic crisis.

Technical analyses suggest that inflation's rate will be about 1.5 percent five or ten years from now.

If inflation does perk up, the Fed can dampen it by capping yields on treasury securities, as it did in 1942 to control costs during World War Two.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Undoubtedly, with far more supply of products, as evidenced by tanking commodity prices, than demand and wages, when adjusted for inflation, declining before the COVID crisis, inflationary pressures are minimal.*

*With government debt levels rapidly accelerating and more nations failing to meet debt obligations in the near future, however, inflation will spike as currencies dramatically weaken, thus reinforcing our forecast for continually rising gold prices.*

## **Record Wave of Bankruptcies Looming**

A tsunami of business bankruptcies is on the near horizon, especially now that 4.4 million more American ex-workers filed for unemployment compensation during the week ending 18 April.

"The flood" of bankruptcies "is coming," said Nick Montgomery of New Generation Research, which monitors business bankruptcies. "It has just been slightly delayed as companies resist succumbing, and the markets try and figure out how to triage all of the corporate patients."

Indeed, businesses shut down by the political establishment exhaust cash and credit first, then file for bankruptcy only as a sign of abject defeat.

Often, creditors will loan bankrupt companies money to keep operating through Chapter 11 proceedings. Such financing is harder to find now, possibly persuading companies not to file yet.

Also, social distancing may be preventing lawyers and accountants from visiting business offices and plants to fully evaluate existing resources. Such inventories are necessary in bankruptcy proceedings.

“When unemployment claims shoot up, you tend to get an increase in bankruptcy filings three to six months later,” according to Mark Roe, a Harvard Law School professor. If a vaccine or cure for COVID-19 is not found soon, he added, “we should expect a surge” in bankruptcy filings starting in late summer or fall.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The economic shutdown will cause a massive reshuffling of the economy. Failed companies that own assets such as oil and gas reserves will be taken over by larger competitors. Retailers and others without assets that have intrinsic value are more likely to simply disappear into the shutdown and never return.*

### **What Will Recovery Look Like?**

Forecasters are not able to agree on what a genuine recovery will look like when the U.S. economy reopens on a large scale.

Optimists see a V-shape recovery: the steep drop in economic activity now under way, with pent-up demand pooling at the bottom; then, when businesses reopen, consumers rush back to stores and restaurants, propelled by the pent-up desire for the normal.

Other mainstream analysts see a U shape, with people still reluctant to return to public spaces at first, then suddenly flocking back after taking time to see if public spaces are safe.

Others think a recovery will look more like Nike’s swoosh – a sharp drop followed by a long, slow, gradual return to shopping, dining out, and children going to school.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The economic recovery that follows the lockdown is unlikely to follow a consistent, uniform shape.*

*Instead, the recovery is likely to vary by sector.*

*Parents might need to rush back to children's stores to replace clothing that kids have outgrown but still be reluctant to eat with their families in crowded fast-food restaurants. Everyone will need a haircut but far fewer people will have the money or the irrepressible urge to splurge on a new SUV since they can't even meet their current debt obligations*

*Similarly, recovery will vary by area.*

*With more than 22 million Americans out of work, the recovery, when it comes, is likely to happen in fits and starts, with people far more eager to pay overdue bills and sock away savings against the virus's next wave than to buy a new sofa or stock up on blouses from TJ Maxx.*

## **BIT BY BIT OPENINGS WON'T JUICE ECONOMY**



Across America, politicians are making up rules and doling out executive orders to resuscitate the dying economy that lack basic fundamentals relative to Main Street reality.

Vermont is allowing farmers markets to reopen for mask-wearing customers. Georgia is throwing open the doors to tattoo parlors and bowling alleys. South Carolina has permitted stores to open as long as only five people enter for every 1,000 square feet of shop space; restaurants and theaters can reopen this week. The state also is deferring to localities that might choose to keep lockdown orders in place.

But big retail chains such as Best Buy, The Gap, Macy's, Starbuck's, and TGI Fridays are sitting out the early stirrings of economic revival.

Best Buy is "still reviewing the orders [lifting lockdowns] but "for now we will continue operating solely with contactless curbside service across the country, including in South Carolina and Georgia," a company statement said.

Big chains say they are slow to open up because they worry about lingering contagion and its possible impact on workers, customers, and stores' liability should people in either group get sick. But, as we see it, it's more about the bottom line: stores cannot make enough sales to cover their overhead costs if only a few customers are allowed to enter the store at a time.

Before reopening, the chains would have to rehire thousands of workers, many of whom would make more money collecting federal and state unemployment benefits through 31 July than they would on the job.

They also would face stiff costs of constantly cleaning stores and merchandise even though customers may not return in large numbers for months.

## **Slow Motion**

Many of the companies say their plans to gradually reopen will be based on infection rates in local areas, their internal market analyses, and customer surveys in addition to state and local guidelines.

Theater chains AMC and Cinemark will reopen only gradually, based on the economics of each location. With blockbuster movie releases shelved indefinitely, many theaters would not be profitable showing lesser fare.

"The movie theater industry is a national one," the National Association of Theatre Owners said in a 22 April statement. "Until the majority of markets in the U.S. are open, and major markets in particular, new wide-release movies are unlikely to be available."

Restaurants, where people gather in close proximity to eat food prepared by strangers, will need special conditions to reopen, many analysts say.

Before turning the lights back on in its 840 stores, TGI Fridays will remove some seating to create distance between diners, install plastic partitions between tables, and require servers to be masked – although the masks will be colorful

and decorative. “We don’t want it to look like an operating room,” said CEO Ray Blanchette.

***TREND FORECAST:*** Again, business, particularly restaurants, cannot operate profitably with limited seating and social distancing restrictions. Thus, bankruptcy rates of both big and small operators that rely on customer traffic will dramatically escalate in 2020 and 2021.

## OUT OF MONEY, OUT OF LUCK



In a study released 23 April, the St. Louis Federal Reserve quantified the damage that the U.S. economic freeze is doing to those whose earnings are in the bottom 25 percent of incomes.

A majority of these people work in the service industry, which pays front-line workers poorly and has been among the economy’s hardest-hit sectors.

The Fed study calculates that short-term spending in the leisure, hospitality, lodging, and restaurant industries will fall 75 percent during the current crisis.

Although the bank expects overall consumer spending to shrink by 3 percent, spending by those in the lowest 20 percent of earners will drop by 5 percent, it said.

While upper-income earners might cut back on discretionary spending, those at the bottom have to slash purchases of some basic necessities more dramatically in order to have enough money for food, rent, and utilities.

“These consumption declines are deeply unequal – hitting those living in areas of highest financial distress the hardest,” the Fed paper noted.

Making the inequality worse: statistics show that the virus epidemic visited higher-income areas earlier than low-income areas.

That delivers a double blow to low-income people. First, customers stopped coming to their hotels and restaurants; then the virus moved into poorer neighborhoods and made them sick.

As a result, an economic recovery is likely to reach the poorest, and their service-industry employers, last.

“Those... service industries aren’t going to participate and that’s one reason to expect that any recovery will be very, very weak,” said Mark Zandi, Moody’s chief economist. “It’s going to be a slog. We’re going to get a bounce when businesses start to reopen, but... I think we’re in economic quicksand for a while.”

### **Millions Stopped Paying Credit Card Bills**

Millions of Americans have relied on credit cards in recent years to pay for doctors’ visits, home repairs, and other routine expenses as prices have soared further and further above wages, which have stagnated for more than two decades.

By the end of last year, consumer debt, excluding mortgages, topped \$4 trillion – a record level, well over \$10,000 for every person in the U.S.

Typically, if an American has one credit card, he or she has at least three and more likely four.

Now, as millions more are suddenly jobless, they are using credit cards to buy groceries, prescriptions, and other necessities.

Those monthly statements are now showing up in the mail and millions of people lack the money make the minimum monthly payments.

When money is tight, credit cards are often the first payments that people skip. Being late on a credit card does not trigger foreclosure or eviction from your home, repossession of your car, or cancellation of insurance policies.

So banks that have profited richly for years from customers’ bloated credit card balances now will share their customers’ pain.

Many card issuers such as JPMorgan Chase, Capital One, and Discover Financial Services are letting cardholders suspend their payments for a month or longer and a few are lowering or waiving late fees. Some are even erasing a portion of customer's account balances.

Discover and Synchrony Financial have reported allowing "hundreds of thousands" of cardholders to skip payments. Capital One, with about 120 million U.S. credit cards outstanding, said it has directed about 1 percent of those accounts into formal deferral programs.

Analysts expect card delinquencies and related bank losses to skyrocket later this year.

Stock prices for Discover and Synchrony Financial have shed more than half their value since 1 January.

Seeing card debt rise and the global economy slowing before the world heard of coronavirus, banks have set aside billions of dollars to cover card losses.

"For the next two years or so," being in the credit card business "will be much less profitable and more risky," said Brian Riley, director of credit advisory services at Mercator Advisory Group.

***TRENDPOST:*** As noted in the article in this week's issue, "U.S POLITICIANS WILL KILL 500,000 MORE WITH LOCKDOWN THAN COVID-19" by Joseph Maxwell, the economic shutdown will be more deadly to the poorest than the virus.

## TREND OF A LIFETIME



## Chip Sales Up as Workers Shift to Home

Intel, the largest U.S. chip maker, logged sales of \$19.83 billion in 2020's first quarter, a 23-percent jump from the same period last year.

Earnings per share jumped 51 percent to \$1.31.

With millions of people suddenly working from home, Intel's data-center division gained 43 percent in sales during the quarter. Sales of the division making chips for personal computers increased 14 percent, beating expectations.

The company's Internet-of-Things division, which makes chips for automated vehicles and smart appliances, dropped 3 percent in sales as carmakers and other manufacturers slashed operations in response to the economic crisis.

Micron Technologies, which also makes memory chips used in data centers, reported earnings that were better than expected. Texas Instruments, another chip company, has said it will keep its factories running at current levels to be ready when the economy returns.

Advanced Micro-Devices has lagged its rivals due to difficulties in its manufacturing operations. However, it has projected \$18.5 billion in sales this quarter, exceeding analysts' consensus of \$17.8 billion.

Intel's results, and its competitors' optimism, might be short-term, some analysts think.

With unemployment at depression scale and people reining in spending, sales of chip-bearing gadgets from smartphones to pickup trucks could suffer this year.

Chip industry revenues are likely to drop about 10 percent this year, forecasts Handel Jones, CEO of consulting firm International Business Strategies.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Chip sales might falter as this year progresses, but the industry will continue to grow next year and beyond as more and more work, schooling, and other activities move online. The current crisis is not only altering habits but also basic assumptions about where and how work and learning must be done.*

*Again, as we have long noted, as less and less students will be attending college and the home schooling trend grows as more parents work from home or are out*

*of work and at home, Gerald Celente's "Interactive U" online learning megatrend will sharply accelerate.*

*The current education model was invented by the Germans at the onset of the Industrial Revolution to teach workers in mass production facilities how to read, write, do math... and follow orders.*

*With interactive education, students will be able access the best and most accomplished experts in selected fields of study rather than the one-size-fits-all, outdated educational programming that is now the norm.*

*Trends are born, they grow, mature, reach old age, and die. The Industrial Age education model is dying, and the Interactive U. model is still in its infancy.*

*Thus, the Ontrendpreneur<sup>®</sup> opportunities that seize upon its growth will provide great rewards.*

## **BUSINESSES UP, BUSINESSES DOWN**



Retailers are swamped with unsold clothing.

Tens of billions of dollars' worth of spring and summer clothing are sitting in warehouses and store displays with no customers to buy them.

In most states and cities, "unessential" stores are still closed by government directive; and tens of millions of people are hoarding their money because they have lost their jobs and incomes or fear they will.

Saks Fifth Avenue, Nordstrom, J. Crew, and other national clothiers are offering discounts from 40 to 70 percent on a range of items; The Gap is selling its entire stock at 60 percent off retail prices.

“It’s Black Friday in April,” said Prashant Agrawal at Impact Analytics. Two-thirds of the clothing and accessory items the company tracked were recently selling at Black Friday prices or below.

But even those discounts are not clearing the shelves.

Since 9 March, online sales of clothing and accessories have sagged steadily against 2019’s levels, including a 20 percent drop in the week ending 6 April, reported Rakuten Intelligence, which tracks electronic receipts.

Outlets such as TJ Maxx and Burlington Stores that typically buy other retailers’ unsold inventory are closed, filled with their own stock, or both. Liquidators, which pay pennies on the dollar when retailers are desperate to dump inventory, already are overstocked with items from bankrupt stores.

Stores’ alternative is to warehouse the clothing until next spring and hope for better. But seasonal clothing “is not like wine that gets better with age,” said Manny Chirico, CEO of PVH Corp., which owns the Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger brands. “Your inventory gets worse.”

Faced with no other options, many retailers are giving away their goods.

Delivering Good, a nonprofit that receives retailers’ and manufacturers’ unsold clothes and gives them to poor families, is hearing from companies it hasn’t worked with before and recently was given 1.5 million pieces of women’s clothing.

For the foreseeable future, the retail clothing industry “will be a bloodbath,” said John Kernan, an analyst at Cowen Inc. “There will be old inventory everywhere.”

### **Hotel Industry: Rooms Are Available**

Eight out of every ten U.S. hotel rooms are empty on any given night, and the hotel industry has laid off 70 percent of its workers, according to the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

On average, full-service hotels are employing 14 employees, not the average of 50 on staff before the crisis. Resort hotels, which averaged about 90 employees per location as recently as mid-March, now are averaging five.

The industry is expecting to lose 50 percent of its revenue this year compared to 2019 and already is costing the U.S. economy \$2.4 billion a week in lost wages, according to Oxford Economics.

The effect of the pandemic and economic shutdown on the hotel industry is nine times worse than that of the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the association calculated. The forecasted occupancy rate for 2020 overall is expected to be proportionately lower than during the Great Depression.

“The CARES Act was an important first step... for the hotel industry,” said Chip Rogers, the association’s president, “but we need Congress to make important changes to the program to reflect the current economic reality.”

### **Lockheed Martin, Defense Contractors Fly Above the Chaos**

Lockheed Martin, like other prime defense contractors, has avoided financial damage from the U.S. economic shutdown.

The company posted \$1.7 billion in profits for 2020’s first quarter, about the same as a year earlier. Earnings per share edged up to \$6.08, compared to \$5.99 in 2019. Analysts had predicted \$5.80.

Lockheed expects sales of about \$64 billion and has trimmed its forecast by only \$250 million – about 4 percent – as a result of the virus and economic crisis.

Defense contractors are considered essential businesses and have remained open and working. Only about 1 percent of the U.S. military supply chain has been disrupted, the Pentagon reported.

Prime defense contractors’ shares have recovered virtually all of their value since the market collapsed in March.

***TRENDPOST:*** As he was leaving office, President Eisenhower warned about the growing power of military-industrial complex and its drive to perpetuate and expand itself. That power makes it too easy for politicians to take us to war when the economy needs a boost.

*With 26 million unemployed, small businesses shutting down, and schools and hospitals going begging, we should instead be redirecting defense dollars toward human needs at home and end the trend of starting wars abroad.*

## **Coca-Cola Sales Lose Their Fizz**

Coca-Cola has reported a 25-percent drop in worldwide sales as a result of the global economic freeze.

About two-thirds of its sales come from people buying fizzy drinks away from home and in restaurants, sports stadiums, movie theaters, and other public gathering places that have been shut down for a month or more.

Two-thirds of Coke's sales are outside of North America, which offers few better markets under the global shutdown.

The crisis may shift company strategy, at least in the near term, said CEO James Quincey.

As the crisis ebbs, consumers are likely to be conservative and price-conscious, he said. That might mean putting beverages in smaller containers or refillable bottles.

He also expects the company to de-emphasize novel and experimental drinks and concentrate more heavily on its familiar product lines.

Coke has cut its marketing and capital budgets and canceled several projects in development for niche markets.

***PUBLISHER'S NOTE:*** *We disagree with Mr. Quincey. This is exactly the time to take new directions, new approaches, new sales strategies and new products because, Mr. Quincey, a whole new world will emerge from today's economic destruction.*

*For more information on how to profit from future trends, please visit the [\*\*Corporate & Private Consulting Services\*\*](#) page of our website.*

## **Vice Media Mulls Layoffs Amid Lingering Financial Woes**

Vice Media, the largest "new media" company in the U.S., is considering laying off at least 300 workers, according to a leaked internal planning document.

Both the flagship Vice News and Refinery29, a site focused on women's issues and interests, face major cuts, the document indicates. The sites are expecting losses in ad sales of 39 and 33 percent, respectively.

The layoffs would save the company about \$40 million a year but, with fewer journalists to produce content, could cost about 30 percent of the sites' traffic, impacting ad revenues.

Vice was struggling before the economic shutdown took hold. It lost about \$50 million last year, fell 8 percent short of its \$650-million revenue target, and owes a large payment to TPG, a private investment firm, stemming from a 2017 funding deal.

The company is looking closely at its European offices in Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain, which have large staffs but generate modest web traffic.

The loss of ad sales is industry-wide, with Facebook and Google also seeing dramatic reductions.

Buzzfeed, GroupNine Media, and Vox Media also have taken steps slash costs, including cutting staff salaries and making both temporary and permanent layoffs.

### **Domino's Delivers, Hershey's Melts**

Stay-at-home mandates have boosted Domino's pizza sales by 10.7 percent from 23 March through 21 April compared to the same period in 2019.

The boost could be due, in part, to people receiving their federal stimulus payments and also people tiring of their own cooking while locked in at home, said CEO Richard Allison. He also noted that the average order size increased, indicating either a desire for leftovers or eating out of boredom.

Last month, Domino's announced plans to hire 10,000 workers to handle the extra business.

Chocolate-maker Hershey reported lower sales and profits in the first quarter than were expected. Although grocery store sales were up, sales vanished from the lucrative theater and mall venues.

The company also noted that consumers are tending to buy lower-priced candy as people find themselves under new financial constraints.

After the announcement, Hershey's stock price slumped 4.5 percent on 23 April.

***TREND FORECAST:*** Over 70 percent of Americans are overweight and some 40 percent are obese. By the numbers, the lockdown will add to a weight build up. And, as per the data detailed in previous ***Trends Journals***, the cost of obesity and overweight are risk factors for a wide range of chronic diseases together accounting for more than \$1.5 trillion in healthcare costs and lost productivity, according to a 2018 study from the Milken Institute Center for Public Health.

Moreover, as also reported in the ***Trends Journal***, those suffering from obesity are prime victims of COVID-19. As stated by Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko, who cited obesity as an underlying health condition for virus victims, "How can you even live that way... the virus attacks the weak."

Weight loss and how to build immune systems against further outbreaks of viruses, flus, etc. with Natural Healing remedies and modalities will be big business as a new health craze will be accelerated by the pandemic pandemonium sweeping the planet.

## ACROSS THE GLOBE



Despite focused government intervention, Europe's jobless have now surpassed 18 million in number during the past 35 days.

Figures show that as much as half of France's labor force is idle and a third of workers in Ireland are off the job.

About 59 million jobs in the EU and U.K., or about 26 percent, are at risk of disappearing, according to McKinsey & Co. The company estimates that 54 million U.S. jobs could be on the chopping block.

Several European governments are funding large portions of workers' salaries as long as companies keep the workers on their books as employed. The cost in France, Germany, and Spain alone could exceed €135 billion, which is more than \$146 billion.

For example, the Timson Group, with about 2,000 stores across Britain offering services such as key-cutting and shoe repairs, has furloughed 5,300 of its 5,500 workers but government aid is paying their full salaries.

These interventions, however, may not outlast the economic damage the shutdown has done.

No one knows when consumers will once again be comfortable eating in restaurants or staying in hotels. A slow recovery in those industries could mean that neither companies nor governments will be able to marshal enough cash for the businesses to hang on long enough to return.

"There will be a structural shift" in people's post-pandemic behavior, predicts Susan Lund, a McKinsey partner.

## **ASIA**

### **Taiwan Avoids Economic Crisis**

Taiwan, with a population of almost 24 million people, has confirmed only 420 cases of COVID-19 and six deaths even though it has left offices, restaurants, schools, and most entertainment venues open during the pandemic.

Although foreign tourists are absent, about 1.5 million Taiwanese flocked to the island's 11 most popular resorts during a spring holiday.

Taiwan also is among the few developed countries expected to show positive economic growth this year. The government is forecasting a 1.92-percent expansion of its GDP in 2020, slightly less than the 2.57 percent growth last year.

Although some economists expect the reduction in the pace of growth to be more pronounced, none are forecasting the contraction that is expected to plague many developed economies this year.

Taiwan's notable success in avoiding economic collapse is being attributed to closing its borders to other Chinese early in the epidemic, strict quarantine measures, health monitoring, and contact tracing, lessons the country learned from the 2003 SARS virus epidemic.

### **South Korea “At the Beginning Stage of a Crisis”**

South Korea's government has raised its economic rescue fund from \$120 billion to \$200 billion, aiming \$70 billion of the new amount at small businesses, workers, and the nation's hardest-hit industries.

“We are at the beginning stage of a crisis,” warned president Moon Jae-in. “A hiring freeze together with a corporate crisis is looming” and a “hiring shock like we have never experienced may be coming.”

The country's export-based economy saw outbound shipments fall by a third in the first 20 days of this month.

The April export numbers foreshadow a second quarter's economic performance that “will not be much better than the first quarter, even if domestic mobility recovers,” said Nguyen Trinh, an analyst at Nataxis bank.

Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore also have announced record economic bailout plans, committing \$287 billion, \$1.09 trillion, and \$63 billion respectively.

## **RUSSIA**

### **Russia Cuts Interest Rate, Forecasts Contraction**

Russia's central bank cuts its key interest rates by 50 basis points, or 0.5 percent, to 5.5 percent on 23 April, and projected a 4- to 6-percent economic contraction for this year.

The ruble weakened against the dollar by 0.8 percent after the cut was announced.

The virus pandemic is moving across the country but, more significant for Russia's economy, the world's oil market has collapsed and oil prices with it.

In mid-April, Russian oil producers were selling oil to Mediterranean markets at a price below \$9 a barrel, the lowest in more than 20 years.

Russia's government says it has enough cash reserves in its sovereign wealth fund to withstand five to six years of low oil prices without significant damage to its economy.

Still, the price collapse is especially dangerous for a country that, in recent years, has depended on oil for 16 percent of its GDP, 70 percent of its export revenue, and 52 percent of its national budget.

In announcing the rate cut, the Bank of Russia also said it sees the nation's returning to growth, expanding by 2.8 to 4.8 percent in 2021 and 1.5 to 3.5 percent in 2022.

## **AFRICA**

### **South Africa Announces Stimulus, Seeks IMF Loan**

Facing an unemployment rate of 30 percent and a looming hunger crisis, South Africa is launching a \$26-billion stimulus program, equal to about a tenth of GDP.

For the first time, the nation also is seeking a loan from the IMF.

When South Africa locked down its economy in late March, the country already was weakened by years of corruption, stagnant growth, and rising debt that recently caused Moody's to label its bonds as junk.

The lockdown crippled an informal economy of street vendors, tradespeople, and day laborers, many of which now have no work.

The finance ministry has predicted a 6-percent economic contraction this year, although some analysts expect the shrinkage to be worse.

The rescue measures will raise the nation's debt even more sharply but "may also help to protect the economy from a deeper contraction," said Razia Khan, chief African and Middle East economist at Standard Chartered Bank.

The government will refocus its current cash assistance program on the poorest South Africans and has promised a “risk-adjusted” reopening at an unspecified future time after the health crisis has passed.

## NOTES FROM THE FRONT LINES



**Tourists stay home.** Tourists have disappeared from Europe and are planning to stay away as the summer season begins. Valencia, Spain’s third largest city and a beachgoers’ mecca, saw 95 percent of its summer hotel bookings cancel between mid-March and mid-April.

Resorts are standing virtually empty across the Caribbean region, where tourism employs 2.5 million people and accounts for a third of GDP.

**Casinos crap out.** MGM Resorts International reported first-quarter revenues 29 percent below last year’s. The company also said it has seen large numbers of reservations canceled in the third quarter that have been tentatively moved into the last three months of the year. The company’s China operations lost 63 percent in 2020’s first three months compared to a year previous.

Revenues of resorts on the Las Vegas Strip gave up 21 percent of last year’s amount, bringing in \$1.1 billion in the first quarter.

**“Gap” doesn’t just mean jeans.** Gap Inc. reported it has used up half its cash reserves, even after drawing down all of its credit lines and skipping \$115 million in April rent payments.

The company shut all its North American stores last month and furloughed virtually of its workers.

Gap had \$1.7 billion in ready assets on 1 February. It has told the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that it should have about \$750 million on hand at the end of this month but that it might not be able to sustain operations much longer.

Gap's share price has fallen from \$18 on 1 January to about \$7 now.

**Start-ups slow down.** During the week of 13 April, governments received 20 percent fewer applications to start new businesses, down to 56,550 from 70,820 a year previous. Since mid-March, applications by businesses that would hire workers in addition to the owner shrank 35 percent.

The loss of start-ups not only costs new jobs that might have been created but also may rob the economy of the next Apple or Amazon, analysts say.

**DeBeers cuts diamond mining.** DeBeers, the world's second largest diamond miner, will cut production 20 percent this year, turning out between 25 and 27 million carats instead of the 32 to 34 million carats it had planned.

Factors forcing the decision include plummeting sales in the U.S. and China, the world's leading retail markets; the economic shutdown in South Africa, which accounts for half of the company's profits; and India's draconian economic lockdown. Indian workers cut and polish about 90 percent of the world's diamonds.

The global supply of rough diamonds could fall 40 percent this year, according to consulting firm Gemdax.

Anglo-American Diamond Holdings Ltd., DeBeers' parent company, has announced a \$1-billion cut to its capital spending this year and a \$500-billion reduction in its operating costs.

Alrosa, the world's largest diamond mining company, still plans to turn out 34.2 million carats this year.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As we have been reporting in the Trends Journal, diamond sales were declining before the virus pandemonium struck. With marriage rates falling, along with millennials income, diamonds are no longer "A Girl's Best Friend."*

*To reinvigorate sales, particularly as the “Greatest Depression” worsens, “luxury” items must be repositioned to target new markets with new messages in an unprecedented world of change.*

## **GLOBAL ECONOMIC COLLAPSE “UNPRECEDENTED”**



Economic activity in the U.S., Europe, and Japan simultaneously crumbled at a rate never before seen.

The rate of businesses going dark and workers losing their jobs has led JPMorgan Chase to forecast the U.S. economy contracting in this year's second quarter at an annualized rate of 40 percent, Japan's by 35 percent, the Eurozone's by 45 percent, and the U.K.'s by 59 percent.

In the U.S., IHS Markit's monthly Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) dropped from a grim 40.9 in March to a dismal 27.4 in April, the lowest mark since October 2009.

Readings below 50 indicate a business contraction.

The speed of the plunge indicates “that the second quarter will see an historically dramatic contraction of the economy,” said Chris Williamson, IHS Markit's chief business economist.

The Eurozone's PMI for April shows that Europe's economy has suffered an “unprecedented” collapse, IHS Markit said.

The 19-nation index fell from March's record low of 29.7 to 13.5, far lower than economists had expected.

“The ferocity of the slump... greatly exceeds anything ever seen before in over 20 years of data collection,” Williamson said, and “has also surpassed what was... imaginable by most economists.”

Before the global economic lockdown, the 20-year-old index’s record low reading was 36.2 in February 2009.

Japan’s index also struck a record low of 27.8.

The indices’ scores were worse than analysts had expected – “staggering,” one economist said – indicating that the second quarter’s economic performance might also be worse than already feared.

The service sector including hotels and restaurants plunged furthest, but manufacturing also dropped by a record margin because of the disruption in supply chains as well as the shutdown of customers’ businesses.

Manufacturing jobs disappeared faster than at any time since April 2009. U.S. factories making big-ticket items such as cars and machine tools received 14.4 percent fewer orders in April than in March, a worse decline than analysts had expected. Orders for transportation-related products, such as trucks and airplanes, were down 41 percent.

The rate of the service sector’s job loss was unprecedented.

The overall PMI rating in Germany, Europe’s biggest economy, was 17.1. France, the region’s second-place economy, rated 11.2, reflecting France’s far stricter social and economic lockdown. For Germany’s service sector alone, the score was 15.9, down from 31.9 in March; France’s was 10.4, falling from 27.4 a month earlier.

Prices for goods also shrank, indicating that “... this crisis is deflationary in the short-run,” said analysts at ING Economics.

France’s office of national statistics said that economic activity across the nation had decreased 41 percent and had been reduced to “vital functions.”

Weighed down by the array of negative news, U.S. consumer sentiment in April was 26 percent less positive than in April 2019 and 19 percent lower than last month, according to a University of Michigan survey.

## Remittances to Fall 20 Percent

The money that immigrants working in one country send to their relatives in other nations is projected to drop by about 20 percent because of the virus-inspired economic crisis.

From \$714 billion last year, the figure will be closer to \$514 billion this year, the steepest slide in at least 20 years, the World Bank predicted.

India, the largest recipient nation, took in \$83 billion in 2019 but that figure is expected to shrink by 23 percent in 2020. Many Indians work in Arabian Gulf nations, where oil and hospitality industries are mainstays. Both were decimated when the world's economy closed down.

Transfers to developing countries in Europe and central Asia will contract most, plunging more than 27 percent.

In part, the figure will fall so sharply because migrants often work in the shadow economy and either do not qualify for government rescue payments or choose not to expose themselves to government record systems.

For many families in developing countries, these payments from distant relatives are often the largest and most reliable source of income.

In 2019, foreign remittances exceeded direct foreign investment in low- and modest-income countries, the World Bank reported.

The payments have been key in keeping many families financially afloat and their loss could drop 500 million people into poverty this year, according to Oxfam, a global charity.

***TREND FORECAST:*** As economic conditions decline across the globe, riots and demonstrations that were raging before the COVID crisis in protest of lack of basic living standards, government corruption, crime, and violence – that have been now tamped down under government controlled lockdowns – will dramatically escalate as the poor get poorer.

*Civil wars will rage and violence will spill across borders in many of the poorest nations and masses will flee for safer grounds, thus reigniting the anti-immigration trends that have been quelled with COVID-closed borders.*

*Again, history is repeating itself: currency wars, trade wars, Great Depression, World War II; currency wars, trade wars, “Greatest Depression,” World War III.*

## COVID-19: SPECIAL REPORT

### JUST THE FACTS, MINUS MEDIA/POLITICAL HYPE



As the emerging data continues to indicate, COVID-19 is more of a nasty flu than the evil enemy created by the mainstream media. Still, it continues to serve the dubious purpose of boosting sagging media ratings and augmenting power-hungry politicians' political influence.

Since the outbreak of the virus in January, the **Trends Journal** has been reporting data showing that COVID-19 death estimates have been dramatically exaggerated by health organizations, politicians, and select media/government “medical experts.”

But the seasonal flu has not shut down the global economy in spite of the fact that:

- 1) As many as 63,000 have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. to date, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and
- 2) Up to 656,000 may die worldwide from the seasonal flu this year.

Note that the seasonal flu did not cause massive unemployment, the economic devastation of many millions, the destruction of millions of businesses both big and small, dangerous food shortages, and the untold suffering of countless people from government-imposed social isolation.

To date, of a global population of 7.7 billion, according to Johns Hopkins University, some 211,000 have died worldwide from coronavirus.

***TRENDPOST:*** *The mainstream media and politicians have ignored the fact that the “killer” coronavirus flu has not been as deadly as advertised. Equally significant, however, has been the deafening silence from the Presstitutes and politicians about all the other diseases that are killing tens of millions each year from the poisons pumped into the earth, water and air; the pesticides and chemicals infused into our food supply; and the prescription drug epidemic (the fourth ranking cause of death).*

## **Back in the States**

Governor Andrew Cuomo, who imposed draconian lockdown measures in New York State, and who now is a media “celebrity” anointed as one of the foremost COVID-19 authorities, finally disclosed what the **Trends Journal** has been reporting for months: the virus was not nearly as deadly as hyped. Cuomo stated:

“Early antibody testing for the coronavirus in 19 New York counties suggests up to 2.7 million people could have been infected in the state alone, meaning the real death rate may be much lower... If the infection rate is 13.9%, then it changes the theories of what the death rate is if you get infected. 13% of the population is about 2.7 million people who have been infected. If you look at what we have now as a death total, which is 15,500, that would be about 0.5% death rate.”

Unmentioned by his adoring media fan club was why he closed down the entire state, put millions out of work, increased hardships among the citizenry, destroyed businesses, and sapped the joy out of life with a “killer” disease that has, in fact, only a 0.5 percent death rate.

Also important to note (but again ignored by the fear mongers), on 3 March, the WHO published its estimate for the percentage of deaths from COVID-19 to be 3.4 percent. That’s 6.5 times the amount of people who actually have died in New York State, the epicenter of the disease in the U.S.

Noting that the death rate from COVID-19 is far less than previously estimated, on 21 April, the Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Health and the University of Southern California reported the “preliminary results from a collaborative scientific study suggests infections from the new coronavirus are far more widespread – and the fatality rate much lower – in L.A. County than previously thought.”

According to Neeraj Sood, Professor of Public Policy and the lead investigator, “We haven’t known the true extent of COVID-19 infections in our community because we have only tested people with symptoms, and the availability of tests has been limited... The estimates also suggest that we might have to recalibrate disease prediction models and rethink public health strategies.”

***TRENDPOST:*** Again, unmentioned in the news reports of the changing data is the fact that if COVID-19 was the most deadly outbreak in a hundred years, as they contend... then given that evidence proves a much greater number of people have been infected than thought; millions, not a few hundred thousand, would have already died worldwide.

## VOICE OF REASON AND HARD DATA



It’s not as though the hard evidence to combat the hype of media and politicians hasn’t been provided.

On 17 March, Dr. John Ioannidis, Professor of Epidemiology and Population Health at Stanford University School of Medicine, published the below excerpts in the journal *Stat* from the International Statistical Institute:

“The current coronavirus disease, Covid-19, has been called a once-in-a-century pandemic. But it may also be a once-in-a-century evidence fiasco....

Reported case fatality rates, like the official 3.4% rate from the World Health Organization, cause horror — and are meaningless. Patients who have been tested for SARS-CoV-2 are disproportionately those with severe symptoms and bad outcomes. As most health systems have limited testing capacity, selection bias may even worsen in the near future.”

Dr. Ioannidis, whom we quoted in the 31 March **Trends Journal**, specializes in population health and pandemics such as COVID-19. He estimated in mid-March, based on the data at hand, a death rate close to 0.05 percent.

Dr. Ioannidis continues:

“A population-wide case fatality rate of 0.05% is lower than seasonal influenza. If that is the true rate, locking down the world with potentially tremendous social and financial consequences may be totally irrational. It’s like an elephant being attacked by a house cat. Frustrated and trying to avoid the cat, the elephant accidentally jumps off a cliff and dies....

[With] lockdowns of months, if not years, life largely stops, short-term and long-term consequences are entirely unknown, and billions, not just millions, of lives may be eventually at stake.”

### **Hard Data or Crazy Numbers?**

A recent study out of Belgium confirms another important insight we have noted in the **Trends Journal**: doctors, hospitals, and eldercare homes are regularly reporting COVID-19 as the cause of death not by fact, but by assumption.

Belgium, a relatively prosperous, high-standard-of-living nation with a good health system, has been ranked as having the highest death rate from COVID-19 of any country in the world.

Belgium reported that more than 50 percent of the deaths there were in eldercare facilities.

Only 4 percent of reported deaths, however, were confirmed by a coronavirus test, while 96 percent were only “suspected” of dying from the virus.

Belgian virologist Dr. Marc Van Ranst responded to these findings: “If you count everyone who dies in our 1,500 care centers, it’s as if no one ever dies from something else anymore. Then you get crazy numbers.”

The questionable strategy of counting those suspected of dying from COVID-19 as actual deaths is happening in many places to hype up the “crazy numbers.”

In our 14 April **Trends Journal**, we reported that Scott Jenson, a medical doctor who also happens to be a Minnesota state senator, held up a state Department of Health letter directing physicians to list COVID-19 as the cause of death even for those not tested but just assumed to have had it.

Dr. Jenson stated, “I worry about that sometimes we’re so darn interested in jazzing up the fear factor that sometimes people’s ability to think for themselves is paralyzed.”

Dr. Jenson also noted that in the U.S., it pays to pad the coronavirus death numbers: “Right now Medicare has determined that if you have a COVID-19 admission to the hospital you’ll get paid \$13,000. If that COVID-19 patient goes on a ventilator, you get \$39,000; three times as much. Nobody can tell me, after 35 years in the world of medicine, that sometimes those kinds of things [have an] impact on what we do.”

And, as for those most at risk, a 22 April *Wall Street Journal* report shows that the virus has killed over 10,000 in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes.

But the actual number is likely much higher. This is because many states, including Washington – where the virus first struck and one out of five nursing homes were hit by the disease and more than 200 deaths have been linked to them in early April – have not yet disclosed numbers of actual virus deaths from elder care facilities.

Moreover, virtually omitted from the mainstream news is the CDC report that states: “Eight out of 10 deaths reported in the U.S. have been in adults 65 years or older; risk of death is highest among those 85 years or older. The immune systems of older adults weaken with age, making it harder to fight off infections. Also, older adults commonly have chronic diseases that can increase the risk of severe illness from COVID-19.”

## VACCINE WILL SAVE THE DAY?



As of 20 April, around 97 percent of Americans and nearly four billion people in some 70 countries were under shelter-in-place orders of some kind.

A number of countries in Asia and Europe have loosened restrictions and, to varying degrees, nations have let businesses reopen.

President Trump has encouraged governors to start reopening their economies, but a wide split remains on whether to loosen the restrictions and, if so, how to do it in stages.

Decisions to open up or stay closed are politically divided, rather than fact based, with Republicans pro “open” and Democrats pro “stay closed.”

What remains the main criterion being promoted by the media and politicians that will bring back “normalcy” depends on how long it will take to develop a COVID-19 vaccine.

The European Union committed €80 million to biotech company CureVac to develop a COVID-19 vaccine.

America’s Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority has pumped \$484 million into Moderna, a biotech company, to create a vaccine. The federal agency Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), announced nearly \$1 billion for a vaccine development.

### **A Shot in the Dark**

Whether or not a vaccine can kill the virus, commenting on the investment to find one, Richard Hatchett, a physician who worked with Presidents G.W. Bush and

Barack Obama, said, “We want to make investments up front, at risk, even before we know the vaccines work, to be able to (immediately) manufacture them at a scale of tens or hundreds of millions of dose.”

As per the head of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the company has raised nearly \$1 billion to come up with a COVID-19 vaccination. CEPI is a vaccine development consortium supported by private donors and a number of governments including the UK, Germany, and Canada.

As reported in last week’s **Trends Journal**, Governor Cuomo stated that his control over the people of New York state would remain until a successful vaccine was proven ... and that New Yorkers would be the guinea pigs: “It’s over when people know I’m 100% safe and I don’t have to worry about this. When does that happen? When we have a vaccine.”

The push for mass vaccinations before allowing citizens to get back basic constitutional rights, such as privacy and the right to assemble, etc., also is being trumpeted by dozens of influential “health experts” quoted repeatedly on mainstream media.

What these proponents are also understating is, according to many virologists, not only will a vaccine likely take well over a year to produce, there will be no guarantee it will be successful. This is due to the complexities of viruses such as COVID-19.

Thus, when and if a COVID vaccine does arrive, it may well be no more effective than the flu shot. From data collected to date, according to the CDC, the 2019-2020 influenza vaccine has a 45 percent effective rate.

## **More Questions**

Viruses mutate, particularly RNA viruses such as COVID-19. As stated by Dr. Mark Schleiss, an infectious disease specialist with the Institute for Molecular Virology at the University of Minnesota, “In the world of RNA viruses, change is the norm. We expect RNA viruses to change frequently. That’s just their nature.”

So, to be effective, scientists not only have to find a vaccine that works on the current strain of coronavirus, but also correctly guess which strain it may mutate into in the near future.

As Dr. Perri Klass, a pediatric infectious disease doctor at NYU Langone Health, wrote on 16 March:

“I find myself fantasizing about a Covid-19 vaccine that will get us back to living our lives. About a triumphant announcement that the trial was a resounding success, and science has won, that there is a safe effective vaccine in production, and that we should all line up to get our shots – a vaccine that will give us back freedom of association, freedom of travel, freedom from the various kinds of worry, anxiety and fear that are filling our news cycles and our minds. It’s a comforting fantasy, but for now it’s just a fantasy.”

CyberNews.com asked Americans how they felt about possibly giving up their privacy during the government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Some of their findings include:

- 89 percent of Americans either support or strongly support privacy rights.
- 52 percent believe retaining personal privacy is more important than surrendering it to the authorities in order to fight the spread of coronavirus.
- 65 percent would disapprove of the government collecting their data or using facial recognition to track their whereabouts.
- 27 percent would give an app permission to track their location.
- 30 percent would grant an app permission to display their location to others if they were infected.
- 79 percent were either somewhat worried or very worried that intrusive tracking measures enacted by the government would continue long after the pandemic subsides.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Politicians will continue to promote the “fantasy” of a perfect vaccine that will guarantee our safety. And, in doing so, it will increase their rapidly expanding authoritarian controls.*

*With the mainstream media continuing to turn up the fear and anxiety dial – and with over 80 percent of Americans identifying “Fear of the Virus” as their main*

*concern – not only will basic constitutional freedoms remain in jeopardy, so too will be our right to choose whether or not we will get vaccinated.*

*Already, in many states and nations, anyone attending public and private schools, including infants, must be vaccinated.*

**TRENDPOST:** *With so much money at stake as to what company might win the “Successful Vaccine Sweepstakes,” political manipulation of science has already reared its ugly head.*

*Last Wednesday, Dr. Rick Bright was fired as director of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA).*

*Why? According to Dr. Bright, he was removed for advocating a thorough review of the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, which President Trump had been promoting as a potential coronavirus cure. Dr. Bright stated the White House advocated putting “politics and cronyism ahead of science.”*

**PUBLISHER’S NOTE:** *We are not advocating the use of any stated drug or “cures” for COVID-19. What we are noting is that political pressure, not solid science, will most likely determine what drugs the government will deem most effective to be injected into our bodies.*

*At this time, most Americans are looking forward to getting vaccinated. According to a Seton Hall University poll, 72 percent said they would not attend games until a vaccine is developed.*

## **FIGHT FOR FREEDOM: GO TO JAIL**



Across America, confrontations have been erupting. They have taken place between police and citizens who are angry over shelter-in-place restrictions imposed on them by “Executive Orders” from politicians that have locked them down and put them out of work.

Here are just a few:

- In Idaho, a mother who was allowing her two children to use a playground was handcuffed after challenging the police. Deaf to the screams of people yelling to the police, “You don’t want to do that... her kids are here! Her kids are here! What is going to happen? Who’s got her kids?” The brave squad of cops dragged the woman off to jail.
- In Alabama, a 39-year-old woman was arrested for having a party in her home with about 40 friends. Irrate, she reportedly coughed in the face of the arresting officer and yelled something about the coronavirus. Her bail was set at \$23,500.

Neighbors had called police to complain of hearing music coming from the house. Police smelled the odor of marijuana and included possession in the charge along with breaking the state’s ban on large gatherings. The county in which the arrest took place has had no reports of anyone dying from COVID-19.

- Police broke up a funeral attended by about 70 orthodox Jews in Lakewood, NJ. Some of the attendees resisted being dispersed and 15 were arrested.

The prosecutor, Bradley Billhimer, stated, “This ban applies to everyone. To be blunt, ignoring the governor’s order places lives at risk – not just the lives of everyday citizens, but the lives of our brave men and women in law enforcement who are required to respond in order to break up these unlawful gatherings.”

- On 18 April, a Wisconsin teenager with coronavirus was threatened with arrest for posting an Instagram photo showing her in the hospital wearing an oxygen mask. The following day, a sheriff’s deputy arrived at her hospital bed demanding she remove the post or he would “start taking people to jail.”

The charge, he said, would be disorderly conduct. A lawyer for the Marquette County Sheriff's Department, defending the police against a lawsuit filed by the accused teenager's parents, stated that the girl's photo and message "caused distress and panic within the school system and law enforcement acted at the request of school health officials in good faith effort to avoid unfounded panic."

- In Florida, thousands are reacting to Facebook's 20 April announcement it was banning information about any event that defies a state government's social distancing orders and will focus on "removing content that advocates for in-person gatherings defying government health guidance." Facebook did say it would permit information about events that are within a state's safety guidelines.

Yet, in Florida, gatherings can have more than ten people so, in effect, Facebook is banning any post calling for a significant protest.

The "Reopen Florida" group's Facebook page reads, "This is a group of like-minded people joining together with the purpose of compelling Governor DeSantis to end the unconstitutional shutdown of our schools, libraries, parks, beaches, businesses and economy and REOPEN FLORIDA!"

- On 20 April, hundreds of protesters assembled in Sacramento, the state capitol of California, with placards reading: "I need to go back to work" and "Paychecks are essential."

Many broke the social distance requirement and most did not wear masks, as required. Dozens of cars and trucks circled the area honking horns.

One of the organizers of the event, Sara Thornton, responded, "People need to get back to work, get back to life, get back into contact with their loved ones' whom they're isolated from, they need to be able to have a paycheck. This is the grounds they will enslave us upon [sic]."

Last Tuesday, around 1,000 people assembled in downtown Raleigh, NC to pressure Governor Roy Cooper to end the shutdown. This rally was larger than the one held the previous week, and organizers said more would continue to show up every Tuesday until the state is re-opened.

- On 22 April, the second rally in less than a week took place in Virginia. Hundreds gathered on sidewalks around the state capitol and hundreds more in cars honked horns. One protester, who owns a small boutique store, told a reporter, “As small business owners, we have the right to open up just like the big box stores do... we’re letting fear drive our decisions.”
- Last Wednesday, hundreds gathered in Albany, New York’s state capitol, with demonstrators, both young and old, holding signs that read, “My small business is essential.”

One demonstrator pointed out, “We have a maximum of maybe 50 deaths in the whole 518 area code. Why are we treated the exact same as New York City? We're not the same at all.”

Responding to the protest outside, Governor Cuomo said,

“Economic hardship, yes, very bad, not death. Emotional stress from being locked in a house very bad, not death.

Domestic violence on the increase, very bad, not death, and not death of someone else.”

See, that’s what we have to factor into this equation. Yes, it’s your life, do whatever you want; but you’re not responsible for my life.

***TRENDPOST:*** As for Governor Cuomo’s “very bad, not death” refrains, conveniently, he ignored the fact that healthy people who are hit with the virus are not dying after being infected. The governor’s brother Chris, the CNN Presstitute, was featured for weeks by the cable network at his home saying how sick he felt.

*As we have continually reported, the hard data clearly shows those who are COVID-19 victims are the elderly, the obese, and people with pre-existing chronic ailments. Especially at risk are people with high blood pressure, diabetes, and those suffering from heart and lung disease... such as smokers, of which 480,000 died last year in America.*

*Governor Cuomo, via his “Executive Orders,” anointed liquor stores as an essential business. At the same time, he arrogantly dismissed businesses such as restaurants, bars, dry cleaners, hair salons, hotels/motels, music*

*venues etc., and the millions of people who are going broke, as irrelevant: “You want to go to work? Go take a job as an essential worker,” he said.*

- On Friday, one of the largest protests to date took place in the capital city of Madison, WI, with citizens demanding an end to stay-at-home orders from Governor Tony Evers.

Governor Evers has extended the shutdown of all non-essential businesses through 26 May. While most of the protestors did not wear masks and were not practicing social distancing, police on the scene did not arrest anyone or try to disperse the crowd.

### **Angry Citizens Start Suing**

A number of groups around the United States are directly confronting governors with lawsuits, claiming the strict lockdowns imposed in states are in violation of constitutional rights.

On 30 March, a Pennsylvania manufacturer of musical bells filed suit on the basis of the way in which the state ordered non-essential businesses closed. The lawsuit specifically cited: “It shocks the conscience, and is arbitrary and capricious, to allow employees – and the small businesses that employ them – to privately bear without compensation the cost of the COVID-19 closure orders, orders which were issued for the public purpose of slowing the spread of the novel coronavirus across Pennsylvania.”

In Columbus, OH, bridal shop owner Tanya Rutner Hartman filed a lawsuit on 16 April against the state’s Health Director, Dr. Amy Acton, challenging the basis on which she ordered the closing of all non-essential businesses. She is being defended by a city organization, the 1851 Center for Constitutional Law, which takes cases protecting constitutional rights.

And in Michigan, a lawsuit may have already had an effect without being tried. On 19 April, a group of motorboat enthusiasts filed suit against Governor Gretchen Whitmer, who banned the use of these recreational boats as part of the state lockdown. Last Friday, despite extending the overall shutdown through 15 May, the governor announced the lifting of a number of restrictions including the use of motorboats.

On Monday, Attorney General William Barr stated that the Justice Department will get involved if it perceives the lockdown orders to combat coronavirus are

overly restrictive and alerted federal prosecutors “to be on the lookout” for local and state measures that might transgress on constitutional rights.

Some legal experts have defended the safety measures imposed by governors and asserted lawsuits filed against states would fail.

James Hodge, law professor at Arizona State University, is quoted on the website of the American Bar Association: “Lawsuits are unlikely to be successful unless they are challenging “a truly egregious practice... The idea that you’re going to walk into court and object vehemently and successfully against known, proven public health social distancing measures that are being employed currently is not a winner.”

***TRENDPOST:*** *Is not shutting down an entire economy based on models that inaccurately forecast death rates, rob people of their Constitutional Rights, and destroy their businesses and livelihoods a “truly egregious practice”?*

*And as for Mr. Hodge to claim the social distancing measures being employed are “proven health practices,” according to the findings, as reported in the **Trends Journal**, they are scientifically questioned and each country makes up what the social distance should be.*

## **Over There**

As Trends Journal subscribers well know, one of our Top 2020 Trends was the **“New World Disorder.”**

Long before the spread of the COVID-19 hysteria, there were massive, ongoing street protests, riots, and civil unrest throughout Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America. People took to the streets angry over government corruption, lack of jobs and, in many instances, unacceptable basic living conditions.

Then, in an instant, throughout the world, the street protests were quashed by government “stay at home” lockdown orders despite extremely low COVID-19 death rates.

For example, India was reeling from massive protests raging against a new citizenship law that targeted Muslims, as well as from workers’ strikes and demonstrations over poor living conditions and government corruption. These demonstrations were immediately shut down when the government ordered a lockdown on 24 March... despite registering only a handful of COVID-19 deaths.

Indeed, more than a month later, a grand total of 881 people (out of a population of 1.3 billion) had died in the country from the virus.

## Enough is Enough

There are signs people have had enough of the global shutdown.

In suburban Paris, last Tuesday marked the fourth consecutive day of confrontations between police and demonstrators, irate over the heavy-handed tactics used to enforce the nationwide lockdown.

Nine people were arrested for setting fire to a school. The protest was sparked by an incident on 20 April when residents filmed a policeman who appeared to have deliberately opened his police car door in the path of an approaching motorcycle.

In Lebanon, protests took place in the capital, Beirut, and in the northern city of Tripoli. To date, just 80 COVID-19 deaths have been reported in this nation of nearly seven million people.

As previously reported in the **Trends Journal**, before the spread of the virus, Lebanon was in economic collapse with its currency in free-fall, and banks refusing to allow depositors to withdraw their money. There was a lack of confidence among its citizens in the government's recovery plan.

Since then, for the first time, the government defaulted on its debt.

## BILL OF NO RIGHTS: YOUR APP IS WATCHING



On 10 April, Google and Apple announced a joint project creating a tracking app for mobile phones that will allow government-controlled health agencies to monitor the movements of anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, as well as any person who comes in contact with that person.

While governments around the world have actively been seeking modern technology to extend their control, the collaboration between Apple and Google can put contact-tracing capability into three billion phones around the world.

Almost 300 leading academics signed an open letter cautioning, “We are concerned that some ‘solutions’ to the crisis may, via mission creep, result in systems which would allow unprecedented surveillance of society at large.”

*Note:* “mission creep” is a military reference to a shift in objectives during the course of a short-term strategy that frequently results in unplanned, long-term commitments.

Both Apple and Google claim users will have the choice whether to turn on the contact-tracing app or leave it off. Proponents say using the app will help lessen the fear people have of catching the virus and, therefore, is worth relinquishing some privacy by permitting this level of surveillance.

Increased surveillance of citizens based on a stated attempt to slow the spread of coronavirus is taking place in at least 30 countries, according to OneZero, a research publication that covers tech and science. Collating data from dozens of countries, research showed that two of the most significant surveillance efforts are in Hong Kong and Argentina.

In Hong Kong, anyone arriving at an airport is forced to wear an electronic-tracking bracelet synced to their cell phone’s GPS.

In Argentina, anyone discovered to have broken the country’s shelter-in-place orders must download an app that traces their location.

Other countries actively pursuing electronic surveillance of citizens include most dictatorships and democracies. Among the list are Australia, China, Germany, Iran, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Russia, the UK and, as already illustrated, the United States.

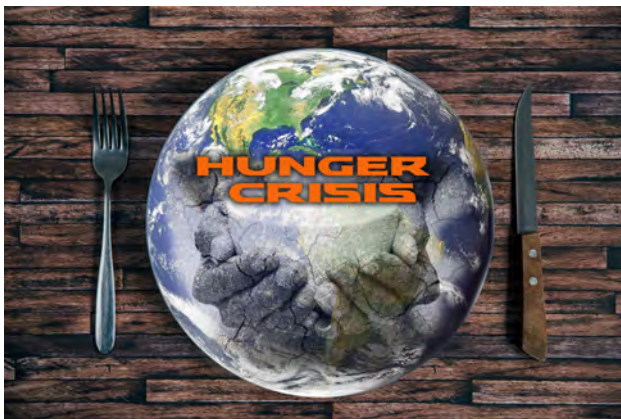
***TREND FORECAST:*** *With the vast majority of citizens obeying and supporting political COVID-19 orders, a LX/Morning Consult poll showed that 75 percent of*

*U.S. adults said they would likely get a coronavirus vaccine, if and when it passes clinical trials.*

*Considering the draconian “Executive Orders” imposed on people around the world to obey lockdowns, social distancing, etc., there will be strong government measures to force citizens to be vaccinated.*

*In the absence of strong social movements, those who refuse to be vaccinated will be denied inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. States, nations, and businesses will impose travel restrictions, denial of government medical benefits, and entrance to varied locations such as theme parks, stadiums, etc.*

## **POLITICIANS CAUSE WORLDWIDE HUNGER CRISIS**



By shutting down the global economy to deal with COVID-19, political leaders around the world are creating a global famine on a scale never seen before.

Politicians and their medical “experts” are already making the case that the global quarantine and shelter-in-place restrictions were the reason so few have died compared to earlier estimates in the millions.

While we don’t know for sure how many would have died if the shutdown of economies around the world were not imposed, we are now getting a very clear look at the catastrophic pain and suffering the shutdowns have caused.

Shelter-at-home orders, travel restrictions, and the closing of business activity worldwide has brought a virtual halt to global trade making it extremely difficult to keep food being delivered to countries in desperate need. Those who were

barely able to put food on the table for their families before the coronavirus shutdown are now rapidly running out of hope.

The result: David Beasley, head of the World Food Program, in addressing the United Nations Security Council on 21 April, stated the economic shutdown “could soon double hunger, causing famines of ‘biblical proportions’ around the world by the end of the year.” He added, “Millions of civilians living in conflict-scarred nations face being pushed to the brink of starvation.”

In Africa, where food shortages were already at dangerous levels, restrictive measures imposed by governments to fight the spread of COVID-19 have pushed countries past the breaking point.

Excessive fear of the virus was generated by a report issued by the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa released on 17 April, which claimed between 300,000 and 3.3 million Africans could be killed by the coronavirus.

At the time this excessive estimate of deaths was made, Algeria, the African country hardest hit, reported 348 deaths out of a population of 43.8 million. As of last Friday, on a continent with over a billion people, there were 1,297 deaths from COVID-19.

And yet, severe restrictions imposed by governments responding to the report have increased food shortages to the point that riots broke out in South Africa.

On 18 April, police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to break up an angry group of citizens reacting to orders that keep them quarantined in cramped living conditions and forced to wait until needed food and supplies are provided. At the time of the imposed restrictions, not one death from coronavirus had been reported in the country.

In South Sudan, where food shortages already existed from a prolonged war, the economic shutdown made it virtually impossible to deliver food to a country with few good roads, forcing citizens to wait for bags of grains to be dropped from planes. While millions face starvation, not one death has yet to be reported in the country from coronavirus.

### **“We Are Dying not from the Virus but from Hunger”**

From India to Honduras, riots and looting are increasing as citizens worry about where their next meal will come from. According to the World Food Program, the

closing of schools around the world has caused over 368 million children to lose meals provided there.

In poor neighborhoods throughout Latin America, people are breaking quarantine restrictions and raiding supermarkets in desperate searches for food as political leaders impose more authoritarian controls in the name of protecting citizens from COVID-19.

In Honduras, large groups are taking to the streets to protest the curfew orders of President Juan Orlando Hernandez, which put hundreds of thousands out of work and created a huge shortage of basic food items. During last month's protest, whereby transport workers blocked highways to the capital, one of the protesters told a reporter, "We live day by day and have no fixed income. If we don't work, we don't eat. My four-year-old daughter is asking for food, and I have no money to even buy beans." As of last Friday, 47 Hondurans had died from coronavirus in a country of nearly ten million.

In Bogota, the capitol of Columbia, dozens of protesters surrounded the mayor's office to demand the local government deliver on their promise of food and supplies in the midst of the strict quarantine. One protester told a reporter, "We look like skinny cows, we no longer have breath to walk. We are dying not from the virus but from hunger."

As the global economic shutdown continues, agricultural production and supply routes will continue to suffer. This is unprecedented. Previous hunger pandemics were regional, not global. The causes were extreme weather, wars, political chaos, and, for the past year, the global slowdown, reported in detail in the **Trends Journal**.

But this hunger crisis is the first to be caused by political leaders purposely closing down the entire global system of trade and supplies, crashing oil prices, throwing tens of millions of people out of work, and creating the worst economic conditions since the Great Depression.

### **We've Heard This Story Before...**

In response to the hunger pandemic caused by the global economic shutdown, Takeshi Kasai of the World Health Organization stated that people have to expect a "new way of living until a vaccine finally arrives." That will likely take over a year, if a successful vaccine is found at all.

Meanwhile, David Beasley of the UN's World Food Programme warns that an "additional 130 million people could be pushed to the brink of starvation by the end of 2020 due to the economic shutdown." To date, 211,000 have died from COVID-19.

## NO LOCKDOWNS, NO PANDEMIC



As previously reported in the **Trends Journal**, Sweden was one of several nations that did not impose any official lockdown orders on its population.

The government did suggest citizens practice social distancing and use their judgment to slow the spread of COVID-19, but all restrictions were voluntary rather than top down government control.

Elementary schools have remained open. Restaurants, cafes, bars, and parks are open. No businesses have been shut down.

High schools and universities are closed, however, and no sporting or cultural events are occurring that attract an audience of over 50. Public transportation usage is down significantly.

Unlike most countries where political leaders issued executive orders giving them full control, in Sweden, it was left to the medical profession to determine how best to deal with the virus.

Relying on early data and projected simulations, Sweden's medical team determined it would not seriously harm the vast majority of those who got infected.

Sweden has experienced a somewhat higher death rate than its Scandinavian neighbors.

Yet, the number remains small considering just over 2,275 deaths had been recorded from COVID-19 in a country of ten million people (0.023 percent).

Staying on-trend with other nations, one-in-three coronavirus deaths in Sweden have taken place in care facilities for the elderly.

As previously reported in the **Trends Journal**, research shows the vast majority of people who contract COVID-19 experience either no symptoms or those so mild they never report to a doctor.

## **Japan**

Dr. Shigeru Omi, the leading medical advisor to Prime Minister Abe, recommended a strategy similar to Sweden. On 23 April, he stated, “Japan wants to bring down the number of cases but it’s impossible to bring it down to zero because of the nature of the disease... that’s why we want to balance the maintenance of socio-economic activity with managing this outbreak.”

Based on this strategy, social distancing has been voluntary. While the prime minister did officially declare a “state of emergency,” he did not impose a strict national lockdown.

Some businesses considered most vulnerable to spreading the virus, such as gyms, have been asked to close down, however, restaurants and parks are open.

Dr. Omi added, “If 80 percent of physical contacts can be avoided, we expect to reduce the level of infections dramatically, even without locking down our citizens.” The doctor has clarified that while he wanted to see expanded testing for all citizens not feeling well, he saw no reason for testing healthy people.

As of yesterday, just 375 Japanese citizens have died from COVID-19 in a country of over 126 million people (0.0003 percent).

## **Taiwan**

This island nation of almost 24 million has seen only six deaths from COVID-19. No national lockdown was imposed.

Schools, businesses, restaurants, and the majority of entertainment and cultural venues have stayed open. And, unlike hunkered-down citizens in countries such as the United States, during April, some million and a half Taiwanese citizens travelled to resort areas for vacations.

Ironically, during February, when coronavirus infections were first reported, sales at retail establishments and even restaurants actually went slightly up.

One of the main reasons seen for Taiwan's highly successful containment of COVID-19 was preparedness. After the 2003 SARS virus epidemic, Taiwan set up interrelated agencies with the responsibility to detect any pandemic early and establish containment strategies, such as insuring needed supplies would be adequately stockpiled.

## **Belarus**

As reported two weeks ago in the **Trends Journal**, in Belarus, there is no lockdown.

We noted that its president, Aleksander Lukashenko, stated that in other countries, the cost of the lockdowns to deal with coronavirus outweigh their benefits, referring to the moratorium on business and pleasure as “frenzy and psychosis.”

Also, he emphasized the importance of putting in extra protection for the elderly who are most at risk.

***TRENDPOST:*** While many mainstream media outlets have not attacked Sweden, Taiwan, and Japan for not imposing draconian lockdown measures, we noted they referred to the Belarus strategy as “risky.”

*In this past Sunday's New York Times, a headline blared: “‘There Are No Viruses Here’: Leader of Belarus Scoffs at Lockdowns.”*

*The article goes on to state in a subhead: “Under the autocratic rule of President Aleksandr G. Lukashenko, Belarus has yet to impose any restrictions to slow the virus. No, everything is not fine.”*

*The article states just 63 people have died from the virus, but they write in detail that the numbers must be manipulated. Yet, then they note: “though Ukraine with four times the population has fewer reported cases.”*

*The Times does not accuse the Ukrainian government, an ally of America, as a number manipulator.*

*Using name-calling with words such as “autocrat” to describe President Lukashenko is a term the western media would use to call the “Kings of the Middle East” and other dictatorial leaders whom their governments partner with for massive wars of destruction.*

## **TRENDS-EYE VIEW**

### **ENERGY: A KEY TO THE FINANCIAL MARKETS**



*by Gregory Mannarino*

On 24 April, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin affirmed what I stated would happen over a month ago: “The U.S. government will be taking stakes in energy companies.”

Mnuchin’s statement was backed by President Trump, who stated: “The energy companies need help.”

Keep in mind these are publicly traded companies which have been involved in massive stock buy back programs for years (buying shares of their own companies) – but now they “need help”?

Understanding the bigger picture is simple: Energy is a key component of the financial markets, so if energy companies are “propped up,” it gives the entire stock market a boost. This boost to the financial markets is made greater by propping up the price of crude oil, as well.

Recently, we witnessed a major drop in the price of crude followed by an historic run higher after President Trump threatened to militarily strike Iranian targets. In fact, immediately after the President's threat, crude oil achieved an unprecedented gain of over 40 percent in just two days.

### **What Is Really Going On?**

By the "government" taking stakes in energy companies (effectively nationalizing them), it puts a hard floor under the energy sector, which also puts a floor under the entire stock market. Also, this action removes price discovery and any semblance of a free market.

### **Crude Oil is the Lifeblood of the Financial Markets**

The energy and financial sectors of the market are dependent on the price of crude oil being high. High crude prices allow energy companies to reap larger profits; of course, banks providing the financing also benefit. Moreover, the Wall Street investment banks have massive investments in crude oil itself. This results in high crude prices providing a win-win for both the energy companies and the investment banks.

### **Look Here, Not There**

The present state of the U.S. economy is **we have no economy**.

The illusion of the stock market keeps people in a deliberately-induced state of perpetual distraction. The mainstream media outlets, which are all fed the same script, have the masses focusing on stock market gains as the economy free-falls, tens of millions lose their jobs, and small businesses shutter forever.

Every effort will be made to nationalize corporations – especially energy producers. This action allows the government to pick the winners (large corporations) and create the losers (U.S. small businesses).

Government nationalizing/taking stake in energy companies is a ploy not only to prop up the stock market in a dead economy, but also to advance its real agenda: National Socialism in the New America.

Welcome to the New World Order.

## U.S. POLITICIANS WILL KILL 500,000 MORE WITH LOCKDOWN THAN COVID-19



*by Joseph Maxwell*

With most eyes glued to the TV, lost in the Presstitute's hysteric narrative is the scientific data of how the unprecedented draconian lockdown orders issued by politicians will kill hundreds of thousands more than the coronavirus... just in America.

A 16 April report from the Center on Poverty & Social Policy at Columbia University, "Forecasting Estimates of Poverty During the COVID-19 Crisis," states that if the U.S. unemployment rate hits 30 percent, as Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis President James Bullard predicts, the poverty rate will rise from 12.4 to 18.9 percent.

With the current U.S. population around 329 million, the Center's estimate would increase the number of Americans living below the poverty line from 40.7 million to some 62.1 million.

That is over 21 million suddenly forced into poverty by the economic shutdown!

### **Worse than Before**

A 2011 study by Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health concluded that poverty, combined with other associated categories, such as income inequality and low levels of education, caused 874,000 U.S. deaths in the year 2000.

Since 33.3 million Americans lived in poverty in that year, those 874,000 deaths amounted to a 2.62 percent mortality rate among the impoverished.

If we apply this 2.62 percent mortality rate to the 21 million Americans soon to be impoverished as a result of the shutdowns, that comes to 550,200 who are likely to die in just the first year alone!

Let us not forget, this is on top of the 1.06 million or 2.62 percent of the 40.7 million already in poverty who were destined to die before the shutdowns were imposed.

So, when we compare the current U.S. figure of 58,568 deaths from COVID-19 to the projected additional 550,200 deaths caused by the shutdowns, it is reasonable to assume that by deeds of the politicians' economic shutdown, they will be responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of more people than the virus will.

## **SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS GROWING ABOUT 5G HEALTH DANGERS**



*by Bennett Davis*

As of 23 April, more than 251,000 people – including tens of thousands of physicians, physicists, medical researchers, and public health officials, as well as officials of several thousand scientific and health-related organizations – have signed an international appeal titled “Stop 5G on Earth and in Space.”

The appeal “urgently call[s] for a halt to the deployment of the 5G wireless network, including 5G from space satellites. 5G will massively increase exposure to radio frequency (RF) radiation [which] has been proven harmful for humans and the environment. The deployment of 5G constitutes an experiment on humanity and the environment that is defined as a crime under international law.”

The appeal is addressed to “the UN, WHO, EU, Council of Europe, and governments of all nations.”

This appeal is not the only one.

As of 19 April, 353 scientists and public health officers have signed the “5G Appeal,” which calls for a moratorium of the rollout and lays out scientific evidence that 5G radio waves can harm human health.

The appeal is directed to the governing bodies of the European Union, calling on them to halt all 5G deployment on the continent.

Rolling out 5G commercially as planned “will substantially increase exposure to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields (RF-EMF) on top of the 2G, 3G, 4G, Wi-Fi, [and other frequencies] for telecommunications already in place,” the appeal says. “RF-EMF have been proven to be harmful for humans and the environment.”

As evidence, the appeal cites a variety of studies:

- A report from the U.S. National Institutes of Health found a significant rise in instances of brain cancer and a rare kind of cancer that grows in the nerves around the heart among rats under prolonged EMF exposure.
- Researchers at Egypt’s Menoufiya University found that “inhabitants living near mobile phone base stations are at risk of developing neuropsychiatric problems and some changes in the performance of neurobehavioral functions.”
- A study from Turkey’s Marmara University shows that exposure to EMFs can reduce the body’s production of nitric oxide, a key compound that lets cells communicate with each other.
- Lengthy exposure to EMFs before birth can lead to a greater chance of children being born with autism-spectrum disorders, scientists at Arabian Gulf University report.
- Radio frequency radiation damages trees close to mobile phone base stations, according to a study involving scientists at the Spanish National Research Council and Pompeu Fabra University.

The appeal claims “an increasing part of the European population is affected by ill health symptoms that have for many years been linked to exposure to EMF and wireless radiation in the scientific literature.”

The appeal’s authors invoke the “Precautionary Principle” adopted by the United Nations: “When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm.”

They also point to the European Environment Agency’s warning that “there are many examples of the failure to use the Precautionary Principle in the past, which have resulted in serious and often irreversible damage to health and environments... harmful exposures can be widespread before there is both ‘convincing’ evidence of harm from long-term exposures and biological understanding of how that harm is caused.”

The appeal’s supporters point out that the European Union’s safety standards for electromagnetic exposure were drafted before many of the concerning studies were carried out. Some of these studies point to EMF damage at exposure levels lower than current “safe” standards permit.

The appeal’s signers call on the EU to halt 5G deployment, convene an independent study group to review and conduct research, to revise EMF safety standards based on the newest science, and to educate the public about EMF’s dangers.

The appeal resembles the “EMF Scientist Appeal” to the United Nations that has been signed by more than 230 scientists in more than 40 countries. The scientists have studied EMF’s effects on living organisms and express “serious concerns regarding the ubiquitous and increasing exposure to EMFs” because of “growing scientific evidence” of their harm.

The group calls for tighter safety guidelines based on new science, safer technologies, public education around EMFs’ hazards, and the establishment of public radiation-free “white zones.”