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URGENT TREND FORECAST BY GERALD CELENTE

COVID WAR: CIVIL WAR 2.0

When people refer to me as a “futurist,” I say, “No, I’m a trend forecaster. I observe and analyze current events forming future trends. No one can predict the future… there are too many wild cards, whether man-made or made by nature.”

And now, in just five short months, two major wild cards have been dealt that have changed history.

The first, whether made by nature or man-made in a laboratory, COVID-19 has changed the world.

Never in history has such a minor event spawned such a major reshaping, for the worse, of the global economy and several billion people.

Day after day, economies across the globe closed down as politicians locked down nations, putting hundreds of millions out of work and destroying millions of privately owned businesses.

The socioeconomic and geopolitical implications, as we have been detailing in the **Trends Journal**, have been devastating. The "Greatest Depression" has begun.

The Worst is Yet to Come

Since the lockdowns began and millions lost their jobs, continually, I forecast there would be escalating crime and violence, warning, "When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it."

And then, in an unfortunate coincidence, with much of the world still locked down in misery and negativity, on 25 May, another terribly destructive, morally debilitating wild card was played in the United States with the murder of George Floyd by a Minnesota policeman, Derek Chauvin.

If this had happened 20 years ago, it would have come and gone, all but a few never would have known about it, and the police would have gotten away with it.

The police would have made up a story of why they killed the man, just as the Minneapolis police did when Chauvin killed Floyd, saying he was resisting arrest.

But in our new world of surveillance, their lie was caught on camera and played across the globe. The horror of watching it was heartbreaking for many and vengeful for others.

As many of us know, last Thursday, an unarmed African-American man, George Floyd, died in Minneapolis after a police officer, Derek Chauvin, kept a knee on his neck for over eight minutes while he was on the ground, handcuffed, pleading that he couldn't breathe.

Floyd was arrested by police after a store employee called 911, accusing him of passing a counterfeit $20 bill.

The entire incident was videoed on the phone of a bystander. That video, including the victim repeating “Please, I can’t breathe” and “Don’t kill me,” went viral, leading to the arrest of officer Chauvin. The three, additional policemen who were at the scene and watched have not been charged with a crime.

It was reported Chauvin had 18 official complaints on his record, two of which had led to department discipline.

The video set off a storm of protests, riots, looting, and violence not only in Minneapolis, where protesters torched a police station, but across the country including Detroit, Louisville, Dallas, Atlanta, New York City, and near the White House.

Police in military vehicles and riot gear confronted demonstrators in over 20 other cities, using tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse crowds. Police vehicles were set on fire and looting took place in a number of cities. Thousands have been arrested.

The Drama Continues to Unfold

Reacting to the violence breaking out on city streets across America in protest against the death of George Floyd, last Friday, President Trump went from aggressive threats to somber reflection in a series of tweets.

Early in the day, he tweeted, “These THUGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won’t let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you!”

After a flood of criticism about the tweet, including Twitter putting a warning label on the comment, saying it violated its policy against “glorifying violence,” Trump changed his tone.

Later on Friday, he tweeted, “We have peaceful protesters and support the rights for peaceful protesters – we can't allow a situation like [what happened] in Minneapolis to descend further into lawlessness, anarchy and chaos.”

It was reported President Trump was sequestered in a special protective bunker for some time due to escalating protests close to the grounds of the White House. The decision reportedly was made by the Secret Service after they heard loud, angry chants from the nearby park. This was the same bunker room occupied by then-Vice President Dick Cheney following the planes crashing into the World Trade Center buildings on 9/11.

A number of President Trump's critics started using the hashtag "#bunkerboy" to ridicule him.

On Saturday, Christopher Swanson, a sheriff in Flint, MI, made headlines by joining in with protesters. As they approached the Flint police headquarters, the sheriff, dressed in riot gear, took off his helmet, dropped his batons, and addressed the protesters: "We want to be with y'all for real so I took the helmet off and laid the batons down." He added, "The only reason we're here is to make sure you have a voice." He then joined in and walked alongside the demonstrators.

But, for the most part, looting and confrontations between police and protesters continued over the weekend, spilling over into Monday. Police used tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets in a number of cities.

This article from *AP* last night summed up the extent and reach of the crime wave and violence now sweeping America:

> "Vandals robbed malls and shopping centers in communities outside Chicago. They stormed stores across the San Francisco Bay in what appeared to be coordinated smash-and-grabs. Banks and a sleek, modern office building were burned to the ground in a San Diego suburb.
>
> As officials locked down city centers due to protests and violent unrest over police brutality, trouble has emerged in some neighborhoods and suburbs, leaving communities that felt insulated from the early unrest suddenly vulnerable and fearful.
>
> Many city and suburban officials blamed most of the mayhem on opportunists rather than those protesting the killing of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who pleaded for air as a white Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee against his neck.
>
> More than 100 people converged on an outdoor mall in Walnut Creek, a wealthy San Francisco suburb, carrying away garbage bags stuffed with merchandise. Video from news organizations and bystanders showed women hauling pricey purses out of stores. One woman was shot in the arm by someone in a vehicle that sped from the scene, police said.

> "We all understand the rage and the feelings that many have over what's happening in Minnesota. What we're concerned is that these people that are here have nothing to do with that; they are just here to make mayhem," Mayor Loella Haskew told KRON-TV.
>
> Walnut Creek was trending on Twitter Saturday with many posters threatening to stir up trouble in the wealthy and mostly white suburb.
>
> But the problems affected racially and economically diverse neighborhoods too.
>
> In West Philadelphia, a predominantly black neighborhood far from the city center, police on Saturday fired tear gas, people were seen running from at least one store with goods and police cars were ablaze or otherwise damaged. In Northeast Philadelphia, people ran into stores and emerged with merchandise.
>
> Even so, pop-up peaceful protests were scattered all over the Philadelphia suburbs — ranging from several hundred in public parks to a few people holding signs in supermarket parking lots."

As we go to press, Texas, Arizona, Georgia, Missouri, and Minnesota have all declared statewide states of emergency, and scores of cities are on curfew including San Francisco, Washington D.C., San Jose, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Milwaukee, Seattle, Denver, Jacksonville, FL, Los Angeles, Omaha, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Portland, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, Buffalo, New York Rochester, Syracuse, and New York City.

The last time New York City was put on curfew was 1943, when an uprising in Harlem was ignited after a white policeman shot a black soldier. Five people were killed during the protests.

TREND FORECAST: *The nation, already economically battered by the COVID shutdown, is now being dragged down deeper into the "Greatest Depression" as curfews, vandals, riots, and crime sweep across the country.*

The levels of negativity and despair will worsen as the heat of the summer clashes with desperation and outrage of the tens of millions – Black, White, Hispanic – out of work, who, with nothing left to lose, will be losing it.

The nation will become more militarized; violence and crime will escalate; and, minus a wild card of peace, compassion, love, and kindness from a higher order, America will begin its decent in "Civil War 2.0."

ECONOMIC UPDATE

U.S. MARKETS

America is a country in crisis.

Riots, looting, protests, vandalism sweeping across the nation: Police vs. the People following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin who, as videos show, knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

Already economically reeling from the government imposed lockdown, and with some 40 million out of work, with riots and violence intensifying, cities and states across the nation are now on curfew… shutting down economically shattered businesses that just began to partially reopen.

Yet, Wall Street, artificially propped up by the Federal Reserve monetary methadone injections, as it has been for decades, has no connection to Main Street.

Making the disconnect perfectly clear, Jim Cramer, *CNBC's* "Mad Money" host, said today, "At the end of the day, the market has no conscience. Investors are simply trying to make money."

While Floyd's alleged crime, buying a pack of cigarettes with an alleged fake $20 bill, was the cause for his arrest and murder, in America, Bankster Bandits and the Wall Street Gang are "too big to jail" for their economic crimes of stealing trillions and destroying the lives of millions.

Despite the week of social unrest, which we forecast will continue to wrack the nation throughout the summer, today the Dow closed up 267.63 points, the Nasdaq Composite rose 91 points, and the S&P 500 climbed 8 percent, pushing it up more than 40 percent from its late-March intraday low.

Gold prices fell some $13, closing at $1,725.40 an ounce.

Bitcoin is up 329 to 9,699; yesterday, it fell to 9,498, continuing to trade in its recent high range.

Brent crude closed up 3.44 percent at nearly $40 a barrel, and West Texas Intermediate spiked 4.12 percent closing $36.90 a barrel.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *As **Trends Journal** readers have long known, and guest contributor Gregory Mannarino continues to document, stock markets are Federal Reserve rigged and unrelated to economic fundamentals.*

The other phony market boosters over the past few weeks are the headline news that someone might have a COVID vaccine, so the markets go up; the vaccine trial failed, so the markets go down. Because of the cheap, fake money the Fed has poured into the market, gamblers can play the headlines without much cost.

To judge the real state of the economy, watch the prices of gold and Bitcoin. As they hold current levels or continue to rise, they signal how weak and precarious the economy really is.

Despite gold's selloff today, Gerald Celente's forecast holds: When gold solidifies above $1,740 per ounce, it will spike to $2,000 and above. Current trend indicators are that it will hit those marks before this year is over.

Oil prices bumped up last week as inventories reportedly shrank and easing of lockdowns in several countries began to stir manufacturing activity and more travel. Brent crude, the global benchmark for oil prices, advanced 1.8 percent on 26 May; crude for July delivery in the U.S. rose 3.3 percent the same day.

Prices also were buoyed by Russia's oil minister, who said he expects rising demand and falling supplies to bring the world's oil market into balance in coming months, a view echoed by several analysts ahead of this month's OPEC meeting when members will discuss future production levels.

TRENDPOST: *As March ended, analysts thought profits for companies that make up the S&P 500 index would fall 1.8 percent in 2020. Now that those companies have reported first-quarter earnings, those same analysts foresee the companies' profits plummeting by as much as 20 percent this year.*

Banks and companies in entertainment, travel, and discretionary consumer spending led the way down… and with the slew of new social distancing, mask wearing, and other government imposed restrictions, revenue will not bounce back to pre-COVID lockdown numbers.

Yet, stock prices continue to float above the dismal economic headlines.

While some analysts think markets already have priced in the bad news or are taking a long view toward a recovery next year, share prices actually are basking in the Fed's seemingly permanent willingness to feed the markets cheap money.

Because current stock prices are not based on fundamentals, they will stay disconnected from larger realities as long as the Fed props them up – a policy that will, at some point, change suddenly in the face of additional cataclysmic socioeconomic and geopolitical events.

BROKE AND BUSTED: CAN'T PAY RENT

As unemployment benefits and federal support runs out, U.S. renters face a rising wave of evictions at a time when they have no savings to pay deposits on new places to live or rent if they move in.

More than a third of Americans rent their homes. The majority of renters are low-wage workers with little money saved. In fact, according to the Federal Reserve report, 40 percent cannot cover a $400 unexpected expense. Thus, out of work and having spent what the government may have given them in unemployment benefits, etc., most or all of which has been consumed during the economic lockdown.

While many states banned evictions since the lockdowns, now more than 20 other states will allow renters who can't pay their rent to be thrown out.

What we had warned would happen as a result of governments draconian lock downs when they began in March, but was ignored by the media, is now finally being acknowledged by "experts."

Without additional government support and intervention, "We will have an avalanche of evictions all across the country," said Emily Benfer, a professor at Columbia Law School who monitors eviction law.

Nationally, about 90 percent of renters made their payments by late May, a rise in default of only about 2 percent from a year previous.

A May Census Bureau survey, however, found that 25 percent of respondents said they have little or no confidence they will be able to pay rent the next month.

Many renters already report paying their rent with credit card cash advances or by taking title loans on their cars.

A new $3-trillion federal aid bill, containing $100 billion in rental assistance, is likely to pass the U.S. House but not the Senate, where Republicans criticize the package as too expensive, pointing to already-generous federal unemployment benefits.

Those benefits end 30 June.

During 2016, when the unemployment rate was 4.7 percent, the U.S. logged 3.7 million evictions. The unemployment rate now is calculated near 20 percent, foreshadowing as many as 14 million households being put out on the street in the weeks ahead.

TREND FORECAST: *In December 2019, we named "Homeless and Helpless" as one of 2020's Top Trends. The worst is yet to come. And, during the upcoming "Summer of Discontent," we forecast riots, demonstrations, and violence to escalate to levels not seen in America since the 1968 protests.*

BARELY BACK IN BUSINESS

New York City, one of the hardest-hit COVID hotspots, is beginning to lift its economic lockdown, allowing construction, manufacturing, and "unessential" retail sales for curbside pickup to resume on 8 June.

As if it would have any effect of the economic devastation that has destroyed so many businesses, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, America's newly revered politician, boasted that resuming work on the new Penn Station railroad terminal and expansion of the Second Avenue subway will jolt the city's economy.

City "officials" are still making up their array of social distancing, disinfecting, and other COVID laws in hopes of maximizing the use of public transit that workers will need to get to and from their jobs.

Over in New Jersey, their supreme leaders will allow outdoor high-school and college graduation ceremonies to take place from 6 July if social distance is maintained. The state will issue guidance, i.e., make up rules based on not a shred of scientific data, on the maximum number of people that will be allowed to attend the events.

Restaurants Seek New Ways to Survive

Restaurants' business models are based on feeding as many customers as possible in each square foot of dining room space. But now that health regulations and public expectations force new strictures on eateries, including limiting occupancy to 25 or 50 percent of capacity, many are unsure how, or if, they will survive.

Restaurants reopening to dine-in customers, now allowed in 31 states, are spacing tables farther apart, installing Plexiglass partitions between tables, and allowing extra time between seatings so workers can clean and disinfect booths and tables after each use, all to comply with state and local mandates or guidelines as well as to assure customers they will be "safe."

Restaurant owners expect social distancing and other health strictures to be in force at least through August.

To meet the requirements, restaurants are hiring more workers and buying extra supplies while they watch their revenues fall by half or more because fewer tables are in use and the time between customers at each one is longer to allow for cleaning.

Making things worse: a recent survey of 2,500 Americans found that 75 percent of them plan to avoid eating in restaurants or dine out less often for the foreseeable future.

Almost half of Colorado's restaurant owners expect to close within three months under the state's 50-percent occupancy cap announced last month, a recent survey found.

In New York City, a 50-percent occupancy in a typical 75-seat restaurant would allow only about 20 diners at a time because employees have to be counted among the occupants, according to James Mallios, an attorney who owns restaurants there. Among 483 New York City restaurateurs, 61 percent told a recent survey they cannot survive with less than 70 percent occupancy.

A Denny's franchisee is closing 15 restaurants in New York City and letting 520 workers go; an owner of 49 IHOP restaurants in four states has filed bankruptcy.

Under the distancing and occupancy guidelines, owning a restaurant “is not a money-making proposition,” said Adam Werner, co-leader of consulting firm Alix Partners’ restaurant practice.

BUSINESS OWNERS GLOOM

Consumer spending continued to slump, more jobs disappeared, and few signs of economic recovery were visible, business owners told a U.S. Federal Reserve System survey in mid-May.

Restaurants and stores remained mostly closed at the time but many have since begun limited reopenings in several states.

In the Federal Reserve Bank of New York’s jurisdiction, business owners “tended to be less pessimistic about the near-term outlook than in [April’s survey] and those in manufacturing, construction, real estate, and health services expected modest improvement.”

Still, “the outlook remained highly uncertain and most contacts were pessimistic about the potential pace of recovery,” the bank noted.

U.S. Oil Industry Braces for Tidal Wave of Bankruptcies

Almost 40 percent of U.S. oil producers will not survive in business until 2021 if oil prices average $30 a barrel this year, petroleum executives told a survey by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

Since the pandemic began, 17 domestic oil drillers have gone bankrupt.

Prices for West Texas Intermediate crude, the U.S. price benchmark, crashed below $20 in March, but have since recovered.

Oil prices rose today to near three-month highs on expectations the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and others including Russia and the OPEC+ will agree to extend output cuts.

Should the $30 price range hold through 2020, 70 more oil companies will go bust, according to an analysis by consulting firm Rystad Energy. Other analysts have put the number as high as 250.

“We will need” U.S. oil prices “of $40 to $45 per barrel to eliminate the upcoming explosion in the number of financially distressed” domestic oil and gas companies, said Artem Abramov, Rystad’s chief of shale oil research.

Hundreds of small producers invested heavily – usually with borrowed money – in the shale oil boom. Shale wells are expensive to drill and produce abundantly, often for a short time, and typically require prices above $50 a barrel, and often much higher, for producers to profit.

But the shale boom flooded markets with more oil than the world could use, especially as the global economy slowed through much of 2019 and crashed in March. The rising tide of oil and collapse in demand has coincided with drillers’ loans coming due, leaving companies with no cash flow to pay their debts and also remain in business.

Fitch Ratings estimates that domestic oil producers could default on at least $43 billion in bonds and leveraged loans this year.

Since the pandemic began, leading U.S. oil producers have written off more than $38 billion in losses, Rystad estimates, compared to average annual losses of $2.9 billion since 2013.

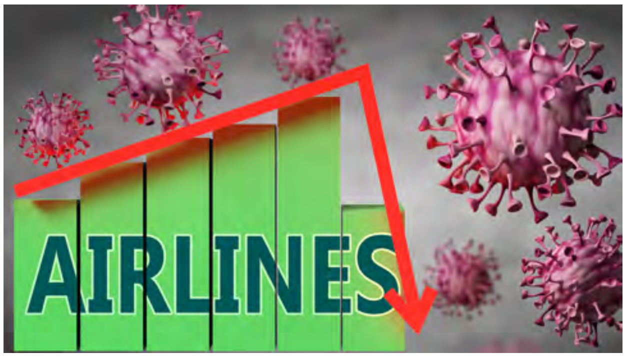
“The bottom line is that there is going to be a wave of bankruptcies and restructurings” in the U.S. oil industry, said Regina Mayer, KPMG’s head of global energy.

TREND FORECAST: *As global economies crawl toward recovery, the oil industry will still be confronting ever-cheaper green energy sources and the growing pressures from environmental advocates linking oil with climate change, etc.*

Those two forces, combined with a long, slow global economic revival, will hobble oil prices' rebound.

What will escalate oil price spikes is geopolitical conflict, which we forecast will escalate as economies deteriorate.

SLASHING JOBS: FLYING LOW, GOING SLOW



American Airlines, the world's biggest carrier by passenger miles, announced plans to cut about 5,100 employees from its management and support staffs.

"We will be a smaller airline with fewer flights," said Elise Eberwein, American's vice president for people and global engagement.

Delta, the second biggest carrier, is offering buyout and early retirement incentives to its workforce of 91,000.

Delta has brought work in-house that had been done by contractors, giving more workers more to do, but "ultimately we will have a workforce commensurate with the demand for flying," Ed Bastain, Delta's CEO, wrote in a letter to employees.

About 44 percent of Delta's workers already have taken unpaid leaves; about 29 percent of American's employees have done the same or retired early.

Both carriers will keep employees on the payroll through September, as required by their federal bailout agreements, but will begin notifying workers next month that they will be let go this fall.

Delta received $5.4 billion in federal aid. American took $5.8 billion and is now negotiating with the U.S. treasury for an additional $4.75 billion.

American, which carried more debt than any other U.S. airline before the shutdown, has been tagged by analysts as a candidate for bankruptcy. However, “bankruptcy is failure and I’m not going to do that,” vowed Douglas Parker, American’s CEO.

American is flying 20 percent of its pre-pandemic flights but has reported increasing demand and a 56-percent occupancy rate over the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

TREND FORECAST: *Airline travel will not return to pre-shutdown levels until at least 2023. And with all of the new travel related, enjoyment-sapping restrictions being made up by government officials across the globe, plus the loss of jobs… tourism/hospitality sectors, mom and pop, and industry giants will go out of business.*

Boeing Cuts 16,000 Jobs

Aircraft maker Boeing has laid off 6,770 people as part of its plan to trim its 160,000-person workforce by 10 percent.

The company announced last week it had cut 5,520 employees through voluntary resignations and retirements and had now come to the “unfortunate moment” when people had to be fired.

About another 4,000 workers will be turfed out in coming months, the company said.

Airlines postponed or canceled orders for new Boeing planes as travel was quashed during the global lockdown and those orders will be slow to resume; the airline industry itself expects at least a two-year recovery to pre-pandemic revenue levels.

Before the pandemic and lockdown, Boeing had been plagued by the indefinite grounding of its 737 Max, its most popular plane, after software glitches crashed two of the airliners and killed more than 500 people.

After the U.S. Federal Reserve announced its plan to prop up the bond market, Boeing was able to raise $25 billion in new private debt, allowing it to survive without accepting that same amount in federal aid as it had originally planned.

Amtrak to Cut up to 3,600 Jobs

Amtrak, which has seen ridership and ticket revenues plunge by 95 percent during the economic shutdown, will lay off up to 20 percent of its 18,000-person workforce in its new fiscal year beginning 1 October.

The national passenger rail carrier already has dropped $215 million in capital projects from its budget this year and plans to erase another $600 million in property acquisitions, station improvements, and other outlays.

The company is restarting service along key portions of its passenger-heavy northeastern corridor lines but forecasts that 2021's ridership will be about half that of pre-pandemic levels.

Amtrak, which had lopped hundreds of millions of dollars in costs from its budget in recent years, had projected making a profit in 2020 for the first time in its 50-year history.

Instead, it received $1 billion in aid under the federal CARES Act and says it needs another $1.5 billion to survive.

The rail line has an estimated $40 billion in backlogged maintenance projects for track and other infrastructure.

Before the pandemic, Amtrak's 300 daily trains were carrying about 87,000 passengers.

Amtrak also offers express package shipping services but does not carry bulk freight.

DEBT BOMBS AND PRICE CUTTERS

The owner of Miami's 66-year-old Fountainbleu Hotel, an icon of glamour for much of its time, is asking lenders to suspend interest payments on the hotel's $975 million in bonded debt because of "cash flow problems" since the hotel closed during the economic shutdown.

The bonds, sold last November by Goldman Sachs, carry a $4.3-million monthly payment predicated on a 75-percent occupancy rate for the hotel and a steady flow of customers through its dozen bars and restaurants, where trademark dinners can cost almost $200.

The bond sale was based on the hotel's valuation of $1.66 billion. The hotel's market value is now $1 billion, according to the CRED iQ real estate analysis firm, meaning the hotel is worth about as much as it owes.

CRED iQ's figure assumes the hotel's occupancy rate will not reach 80 percent until 2025.

However, CBRE, the national realty firm, expects hotel occupancy in general to return to 2019 levels by 2023, potentially buoying the Fountainbleu's worth.

The hotel is reopening and foresees a "hockey-stick" shaped return to solvency based on initial reservations, a company executive said.

The Fountainbleu's debt was packaged into an investment vehicle called single-asset, single-borrower bonds, or SASBs. The bonds are issued by marquee properties seen as carrying low risk. In 2019, these instruments made up about 40 percent of the commercial mortgage market's $120 billion in bonds not backed by governments, according to analysis firm Trepp.
That proportion is almost double the 21 percent of the market the vehicles took up in 2012.

Now the SASB market has slammed to a halt, leaving debtors and investors to negotiate their way out.

The value of SASBs now in arrears or being renegotiated was $7.8 billion as of 30 April, up from $681.6 million in February, according to Morgan Stanley, a more than tenfold increase.

Retailers Slash Clothing Prices

Macy’s, Ralph Lauren, TJ Maxx, and other clothing lines and stores are writing down the value of their on-hand merchandise by hundreds of millions of dollars.

Macy’s is writing down the value of its goods by $300 million, Ralph Lauren is taking a $160-million “inventory charge,” TJ Maxx wrote off $500 million, and Ross Stores took a $313-million write-down on its inventory and expects to sell much of it below cost.

Much spring clothing has been sitting on shelves in stores and warehouses since the economic shutdown began more than two months ago and is now outdated.

Gap has discounted much of its clothing by 50 percent, Levi’s by up to 50 percent, and American Eagle apparel has been marked down to 40 percent of its original prices.

TRENDPOST: *As we’ve said since the economic shutdown began, mass unemployment will lead to falling prices in a deflationary cycle. If you have money and a job, 2020 will be a great time to buy everything from jeans to appliances at bargain prices.*

REMOTE WORK = COMMERCIAL BUST

More than 75 percent of employees working at home during the economic lockdown would like to continue doing so to some degree, according to a survey by the IBM Institute for Business Value, with more than half saying they would choose it as their primary way to work.

More than 60 percent of corporate hiring managers told an Upwork survey they plan to expand home-working opportunities for employees after the lockdown ends.

Five hundred hiring managers contacted in late April are planning for 22 percent of their collective workforces to be working remotely in 2025, compared to 13 percent in late 2019.

Tech giants Facebook, Twitter, and Square have begun major initiatives to transition employees to home-based workers.

Telework allows companies to hire talent from around the world, not just where a corporation has an office. Remote work also enables corporations to adjust salaries to suit the cost of living where an employee lives and does not force workers to relocate to take advantage of job opportunities.

An economic analysis from the University of Chicago calculates that 37 percent of U.S. jobs can be done remotely. Jobs requiring a physical presence typically require less education, such as cab drivers and landscapers, and usually pay less than portable jobs.

TREND FORECAST: *The shift to working at home will redefine economic ecosystems, especially in urban centers. Commuters buy lunch, gifts, clothes, gadgets, and other items in locales where they work; as workers stay home, downtown stores and restaurants will lose their traditional customer base and gas stations along commuter routes will see business plummet.*

At the same time, owners of commercial real estate will face a reckoning as they slash rents to lure a shrinking base of tenants, forcing them to demand property tax concessions from cities that will struggle even more to maintain police, fire, and public works infrastructures.

DISNEY'S NEW WORLD, HOTELS HIGHER

The Disney Co. will reopen its Disney World theme park in Florida next month.

The Magic Kingdom and Animal Kingdom areas will open on 11 July; EPCOT and the Disney Hollywood Studios portions will reopen on 15 July.

Workers and guests will be required to be masked and submit to temperature checks before entering. Plexiglass panels will separate employees and customers in some areas and cashless transactions are preferred, said James MacPhee, the parks' senior VP of Operations.

Visitors must reserve tickets in advance, so Disney can control the number of people in the park at one time, and roving social-distance monitors will remind guests to leave space among themselves.

Life-size Disney characters will remain absent and fireworks displays will still be suspended.

The company did not specify the number of the almost 100,000 furloughed workers to be brought back to work.

Hotel Rooms in Demand Again

The rate of occupancy among U.S. hotel rooms was 32.4 percent and 11 million room-nights during the week of 16 May, compared to the low of 21 percent and one million room-nights during the week ending 11 April.

The May number still was only about half the occupancy rate of 61.8 percent at the beginning of March. Revenue per available room, a key measure of the industry's financial health, was $25.12 during the week in May, 74 percent below the same period in 2019.

The revenue figure is unlikely to return to pre-lockdown levels until at least 2023, according to an analysis by realty firm CBRE Group.

The industry's recovery also may be tiered. During the same May week, occupancy at budget inns was 44.2 percent but only 18.8 percent at luxury hotels, reports analysis firm STR.

Luxury hotels depend for much of their revenue on conventions and gatherings that use their ballrooms and banquet facilities but "what does a meeting or convention look like in a six-foot world," referring to social distancing, "is the $100-billion question," said Jan Freitag, an STR analyst, referring to the value of hotels' convention business.

The overall occupancy rate for 2020 will be about half that of 2019, analysts say, and daily average occupancy down about 22 percent.

TRENDPOST: *Again, as we continually note, with the slew of new regulations sweeping the planet that are being fabricated by government officials without a shred of scientific evidence, the new environments being created will not attract crowds as they did prior to the government takeovers.*

In effect, they have sucked the joy and fun out of life that, at virtually every level, is now regulated by official decree.

MORE RETAIL BANKRUPTCIES

Two additional retailers filed for bankruptcy last week.

Tuesday Morning, a Dallas-based discount home-goods retailer with 687 stores in 39 states, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on 27 May.

The stores were shuttered by the economic shutdown but about 80 percent have now reopened and are showing sales roughly 10 percent higher than a year previous, the company reported.

Still, the two-month shutdown did damage “that can be effectively addressed only through a reorganization in Chapter 11,” said CEO Steve Becker.

Tuesday Morning averaged about $1 billion in sales in recent years, but sales have been hampered by the company’s lack of an Internet presence and also by merchandise described by one analyst as a “jumbled flea market of whatever buyers could seemingly get their hands on.”

The company plans to emerge from bankruptcy with about 450 stores, permanently closing about 230.

Tuesday Morning’s creditors have advanced the company $100 million to keep it operating through bankruptcy; the company has asked them for $25 million in additional capital.

Tuesday Morning was joined in bankruptcy by the U.S. division of Belgian baker Le Pain Quotidien, which operates 98 upscale fast-food restaurants.

The company was poorly equipped to quickly transition to online and take-out sales when lockdown mandates were issued. In addition, most of the outlets are in New York City, where competition is especially intense among eateries.

Instead of shutting down the entire chain, Le Pain Quotidien hopes to sell its U.S. operation to competitor Aurify Brands for $3 million. The sale would enable 35 restaurants to reopen and rehire some laid-off employees.

Le Pain Quotidien’s U.S. division is one of several restaurant chains to go bust, including Craftworks Holdings, which operated Logan’s Roadhouse and other chains. Krystal, the southern U.S. burger chain, has sold itself out of bankruptcy to the Fortress Investment Group, one of its lenders, which also has bought Craftworks.

Bamboo Sushi, Bravo, Brio, and Quickfish are among other restaurant chains seeking buyers.

Retailers J. Crew Group, J.C. Penney, Neiman Marcus, Pier 1, Hertz Corp. and now the Advantage car rental company also have declared bankruptcy since the economic shutdown took hold.

TREND FORECAST: *There will be no retail recovery. Many major, debt-loaded retailers were in decline prior to the government mandated lockdowns that have now driven them into bankruptcy or put them out of business.*

While there will be no rush to the already declining malls, there will be retail upticks in mid to high end retail sectors in more upscale towns and villages.

BANKRUPTCY BONUSES

Hertz, the global car rental giant that filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on 22 May, which we have been reporting on in the **Trends Journal**, celebrated their failure by giving $16.2 million in cash bonuses to top employees. CEO Paul Stone pocketed $700,000 and Jamere Jackson, CFO, collected $600,000.

Hertz is not the only company that rewarded its leaders just before seeking court protection… it's an ongoing trend.

Retailer J.C. Penney paid $10 million to top executives just before going belly up.

Five top officers at Whiting Petroleum, the largest U.S. independent oil producer to go bust in the recent oil price collapse, shared $14.5 million in cash days ahead of the company's bankruptcy filing. Chesapeake Energy, another victim of the oil price debacle, earmarked $25 million in bonuses for its executive cadre.

The payments are considered "retention bonuses," which are incentives to keep top executives from leaving a company while it is in trouble.

Bankruptcy laws prevent companies from paying retention bonuses after bankruptcy has been filed, so the companies paid the bonuses before going to bankruptcy court.

Executives' incentives usually are based on a company's stock value and financial performance, but the economic lockdown and subsequent crash has rendered those metrics meaningless. The bonuses give companies an alternate way to hold onto leaders whom a company's board wants to retain.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *It's the same old story: corporate executives and leveraged buyout artists get rich when companies fail while workers are lucky to get a last paycheck before they're pushed out the door.*

This is an ongoing trend. When Toys 'R' Us – saddled with debt after Bain Capital, KKR & Co., and Vornado Realty Trust took the retailer private – went bust in 2017, top executives got $21 million in bonuses.

EUROPE

EC Announces Recovery Plan. The European Commission, the governing body of the European Union (EU), has laid out its plan for the continent's economic recovery.

The commission proposes a €750-billion recovery fund, with €250 billion available as loans to individual nations and €500 billion given as grants with no repayment required.

Giuseppe Conte, Italy's prime minister, called the €750 billion "an adequate figure," while Spanish prime minister Pedro Sanchez said it was "a starting point for negotiation."

Both Italy and Spain were among Europe's nations hardest hit by the pandemic and economic shutdown.

The balance of loans versus grants remains controversial with Austria, Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands, known as "the frugal four," arguing that a greater proportion of the bailout funds should require repayment.

In addition, the EU's budgets through 2027 will add another €1.15 billion focused on recovery.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *As we have noted in this issue in our COVID section, Sweden did not shut down its economy, and while it experienced a higher virus death rate than other Baltic states, its per capita COVID-19 death rate is about the same as France, the U.K., and other European nations that have been locked down.*

Moreover, as nations across Europe sink into recession, Sweden's GDP grew at an annual rate of 0.4 percent in the first quarter. Thus, while the lives lost in Sweden – 4,395 virus deaths out of a population of 10,000,000, or .044 percent – unlike other nations where suicide, addiction, and depression are skyrocketing, Sweden's businesses were not destroyed, people's futures not delayed by decades or ruined altogether, and other critical-care medical patients whose lives were saved instead, were among other trade-offs.

France: Unemployment Soars, Consumer Confidence Falls. The French jobless rate jumped by a record 843,000 people or 23 percent in April, bringing the number of people out work to 4.57 million, according to the country's labor ministry.

Most of the increase came from workers on short-term contracts unable to find new gigs.

Meanwhile, the European Commission's May survey of business and consumer economic sentiment nudged up 2.6 points to 67.5, moving deeper into positive territory. Confidence in the service sector sagged slightly, but less than in April's poll.

Respondents also remained worried about losing their jobs or seeing their work hours cut and reported intentions to save more and spend less.

The survey sampled 135,000 businesses and 32,000 consumers. Analysts saw the poll's result as pointing to a slow economic recovery.

In April, retail sales in Spain fell at a record 31.6 percent and in Germany's non-financial businesses by 13.8 percent, the fastest monthly decline on record there.

"Households' worries about unemployment remain high and close to those seen during the global financial crisis," said Daniela Ordonez, an analyst at Oxford Economics.

TRENDPOST: *All signs point to a recovery that's not V-shaped or U-shaped or any shape. The recovery will have ups and downs, surges and craters that will vary country by country and by economic sector. The one common feature national recoveries will share is that they will be falling into the "Greatest Depression."*

CHINA

China Drops Yuan's Value. On 26 May, China lowered the official value of its currency, the yuan, to 7.13 per dollar, the lowest official exchange rate since February 2008.

China sees a cheap yuan as making the country's products more affordable abroad, boosting exports as it seeks to recover from its economic shutdown.

The yuan has weakened against the dollar steadily since 2018 as the U.S.-China trade war dragged along. At one point, the yuan fell below seven to the dollar, prompting President Trump to accuse China of manipulating its currency's value.

The yuan's value could sink to 7.3 or even 7.6 to the dollar this year if the trade war and economic pressures on China continue, analysts forecast.

A rising number indicates a weaker yuan; two yuan to the dollar is a currency only half as strong as a yuan that's worth the same as a dollar, one to one.

The yuan could end the year closer to a value of 7.05 to the dollar if trade tensions ease, predicted Iris Pang, China economist at ING Bank.

However, those tensions seem likely to continue. In May, the Trump administration banned U.S. trade with dozens of Chinese companies, including tech giant Huwei, which has been involved in 5G technologies rolling out in the U.S. and several European countries.

China's new crackdown on Hong Kong's demands for political freedoms could prompt additional U.S. retaliation.

TREND FORECAST: *History may be about to repeat itself. As noted in the "U.S./CHINA RELATIONS: THE NEW COLD WAR" article in this issue, history is repeating itself. In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, there was a currency war and a trade war with Japan, followed by World War II.*

In 2020, there is a currency war (the yuan is at 2008 lows) and a trade war with China at the onset of the "Greatest Depression." Will it be followed by World War III?

As Gerald Celente says, "When all else fails, they take you to war."

Electric Car Sales Lag. April was the first month in which electric car sales in China shrank while the overall car market there grew.
For the first time in 21 months, sales of gas-powered cars rose instead of dwindled. While sales were up 6 percent in that category, EV purchases plunged 27 percent.

As part of its plan to make China a leader in next-generation transport technology, the government had restricted sales of gas buggies and had set a goal of two million EV sales in the country this year. Now analysts expect 2020's sales to reach barely half that number.

Post-lockdown, Chinese authorities have eased restrictions on petrol-powered cars as part of a plan to stimulate the economy. At the same time, dealers are trying to clear out old gas-powered models, often selling them at a loss or on dramatically easy payment terms.

Also, gas prices in China have fallen by more than 30 percent, helping to lure drivers back to the familiar cars they already are comfortable with.

The government has intensified its EV efforts, pledging to build more charging stations, offering cash incentives for drivers to trade in gas guzzlers for EVs, and raising EVs' targeted share of China's car market in 2025 from 20 percent to 25.

Also, Chinese officials had begun phasing out subsidies for EV purchases but now have decided to extend them through 2022. The supports are generous, reducing the sticker price of a typical EV by about $13,000. Tesla also has cut the price of its Model 3 to under $42,000, so it qualifies for the subsidies.

Those efforts still might not be enough.

EV sales in China have mostly been made to fleets, not individuals. For example, in Shenzhen province, which has an all-electric taxi fleet, only 10 percent of EV sales have been made to individuals.

"People just aren't that interested," said analyst Robin Zhu at Sanford Bernstein.

TRENDPOST: *Electric cars will not be interesting to the mass market while gas prices are below $3 a gallon, which will be the case at least through 2021. Also, EVs have more appeal to younger people, who are less interested in owning cars than in taking public transport or calling an Uber. As we have been forecasting for several years, until there is a more advanced battery technology, the market power of EVs has been overhyped.*

JAPAN

Nissan Cuts Models, Closes Plants. Nissan Motor Co. has reported a $6.2-billion loss in its most recent fiscal year, prompting the company to reduce the number of models it makes, shut down plants in Spain and Indonesia, and make fewer vehicles in the U.S.

In April, Nissan's sales were 42 percent below April 2019's.

Now Nissan is seeking to cut $3 billion in annual costs as it seeks to deal with negative cash flow through 2021, according to company forecasts.

The company had built plants able to turn out seven million vehicles annually but has seen sales stall at about five million. The plant in Spain was designed to produce 100,000 vans a year, but the company has averaged annual sales of only about 15,000 vans across Europe.

"We must admit our mistake and correct course," said Makoto Uchita, Nissan's CEO.

Nissan will focus its business on the U.S., Japan, and China while Renault, its biggest shareholder, leads the company's efforts in Europe. Nissan will abandon Southeast Asia to Mitsubishi Motors, another of its partners.

TRENDPOST: *If car makers are unable to prevent defects in the mechanical systems they have been using for years, they will be even less able to convince drivers that automated cars are safe. Self-driving vehicles have been overhyped for years and will not capture a major share of the auto market until at least 2030.*

AUSTRALIA

News Corp Closes Papers, Cuts Salaries. Rupert Murdoch's News Corp is closing 36 of its local and regional newspapers in Australia by July and moving another 76 online, ending their print editions.

The company did not disclose how many employees would lose their jobs but said 375 staffers among the papers would be kept on, most in the state of Queensland in the country's northeast.

News Corp stopped printing several of the papers last month, citing the loss of ad revenue forced by the economic lockdown. At the time, it said the suspensions were temporary.

Although the company has touted growing online readership of its Dow Jones subsidiary's website, it has laid off hundreds of workers across its media properties this year, at its Move Inc. real estate business, and at Foxtel, an Australian cable TV service.

Last month, the company announced Murdoch would refuse his annual bonus and CEO Robert Thomson would forego 75 percent of his. Board members are reducing their compensation and executive salaries are being trimmed by 25 percent.

News Corp is the descendant of News Corporation, founded by Murdoch in Adelaide, Australia, in 1980.

TRENDPOST: *The "Death of Journalism" trend has been extensively covered in the* ***Trends Journal*** *over the past decade and a half.*

Bureaus have been closed across the globe and throughout nations. With fewer and fewer reliable sources of information covering government, corporate and social incidences occurring daily, as the saying goes, both ignorance and corruption flourish in the dark.

At the ***Trends Journal****, we are unrelenting in the pursuit of truth and are dedicated in providing you the facts, analysis, and forecasts of the current events forming future trends.*

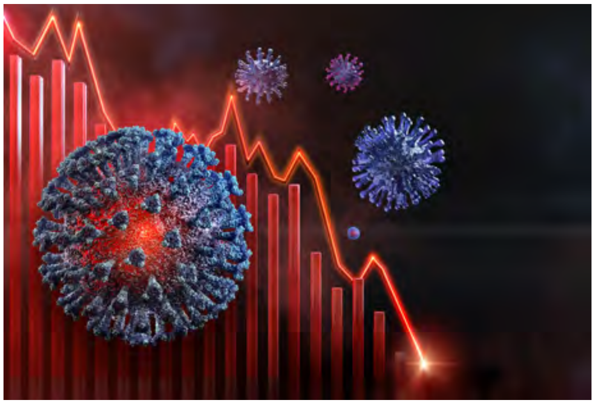
MIDDLE EAST

Emirates Airline to Begin Flying 15 June. Dubai-based Emirates airline, one of the world's largest carriers, will have all of its airplanes flying again in the summer of 2022, according to Sir Tim Clark, Emirates' CEO.

Clark's outlook for a two-year recovery for the airline industry is more optimistic than that of International Consolidated Airlines Group SA, British Airways' parent company, which has forecast a three-year path to recovery.

Late last month, Air France announced it would permanently retire its nine A380 Airbus jetliners and take a €500-million writedown.

WORLD



Lockdown's Job Losses Hit Young Hardest. One of every six people ages 18 to 29 has stopped working since economic shutdowns were imposed across nations, according to a survey conducted by the United Nations' International Labor Organization (ILO).

The result translates to as many as 200 million young adults worldwide who have lost their jobs.

Persons in that age group who still are working report having their work hours cut by an average of 23 percent.

The shutdown is "inflicting a triple shock on young people," the ILO said in a statement: their educations are interrupted, they are losing jobs, and there are new barriers to those trying to enter the workforce.

The global shutdown may create a "pandemic generation" that will spend much of its life trying to capture the income and career advancement it would have had opportunities to pursue if the world's economy had not crashed, the ILO warned.

Before the pandemic began, global joblessness among young adults already was at levels higher than those during the Great Recession, with 75 percent working outside of formal economies.

"We started from a situation of great hardship" and the shutdown "has made matters considerably worse," said Guy Ryder, the ILO's director-general.

The total number of hours worked by people of all ages in all countries will fall by about 10.7 percent in the current quarter compared to 2019's final quarter, the ILO said.

Such a loss could lop more than $8 trillion off the world's GDP this year.

TREND FORECAST: *The impact on young people's employment will ripple through every sector of the global economy: fewer of the new generation of adults will be able to afford to buy homes or cars, the newest gadgets, next year's fashions, or college for their kids.*

Marriage rates will fall; crime and drug abuse will rise as these victims of the shutdown find it harder to escape from a reality that is far more bleak than the one they were ready to step into.

OECD Countries Pile on $17 Trillion in New Debt. The 37 member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), are set to create at least $17 trillion in new debt as they enact bailout plans to revive their national economies.

Among the 37, average government debt will climb from 109 percent of GDP to 137 percent and add $13,000 to the debt carried by each of the 1.3 billion people living in those countries.

Those figures will rise if the economic recovery takes longer than governments and analysts hope.

As the Great Recession took hold in 2008 and 2009, debt among OECD member nations rose 28 percentage points to $17 trillion. The damage done by the current global economic shutdown "is expected to be worse" than that, the OECD said in a statement.

During the Great Recession, many economists contended that government debt exceeding 90 percent of GDP was unsustainable.

While that has proven not to be true, most economists agree that higher government debt places limits on economic growth; the more money the government uses up, that much less capital is available to businesses.

As a result of the current financial crisis, more countries face a future similar to Japan's after its financial boom ended in the 1990s, leaving it with ever-increasing debt piled against slow economic growth and an aging workforce, the *Financial Times* has predicted.

Japan's national debt has stabilized at about 240 percent of GDP.

Negative interest rates in France, Germany, and the U.K. have helped minimize short-term damage from the lockdown but will invite inflation as their economies recover. Governments could cut spending or raise taxes but either could spark a recession, economists warn.

Governments should avoid either of those actions, Adam Posner, president of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, told members of the U.K.'s parliament last week. "The most important thing is to get the economy growing faster than the debt," he said.

TREND FORECAST: *Stimulus measures such as negative interest rates and "quantitative easing," also known as pouring fake cheap money into national economies, will continue to push gold, silver, and Bitcoin prices up.*

Cash May Become Pandemic Victim. Government warnings to avoid handling cash during the COVID pandemic is accelerating society's switch to digital money.

The number of transactions at U.K. ATMs has fallen 62 percent during the economic shutdown compared to the same period a year earlier, with the value of cash withdrawals down by more than 40 percent in Britain and 90 percent in Spain.

Cash withdrawals rose in U.S. and Russia due to people's impulse to hoard cash in the face of uncertainty, analysts said.

Since 2017, a majority of retail purchases have been made with debit or credit cards; cash has fallen to second place.

"We all knew there would come a point where society was virtually cashless," said Natalie Ceeney, a British financial executive who led a 2019 study of cash's future. "We thought it would be in 10 or 15 years; COVID might have accelerated that to next year."

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *This new trend was thoroughly covered in our 24 March cover story, "FROM DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH."*

Digital money allows banks, vendors, and others to gather, store, and sell information about the stores you visit, the things you buy, the online sites you frequent, and enough other data for giant corporations and government agencies to know you down to your shoe size.

NOTES FROM THE FRONT LINES

U.S. Seeks to Thwart Iran-Venezuela Alliance. Two loaded, Greek-owned oil tankers bound for Venezuela turned around after the Trump administration threatened sanctions against the shipping company that owns them.

The sanctions likely would have barred the company from access to insurance and international banking services.

Liberia, where the two vessels were registered, pulled the ships' accreditation in late May under pressure from Washington.

The sanction threat was levied after three Iranian tankers loaded with gasoline arrived in Venezuela on 27 May. Two other tankers were reportedly en route to Venezuela when the sanctions were announced.

Iran and Venezuela, both under U.S. economic sanctions, have sought to evade the sanctions by establishing mutual trade relationships, which the U.S. is seeking to stymie.

Although Venezuela holds the world's richest oil reserves, the economic collapse under the regime of president Nicholas Maduro has been so complete that the country is now unable to supply its own petroleum needs.

Airline Stocks Gain Altitude. Airlines' stock prices have gone skyward in the past two weeks as travelers begin to book summer travel, some travel restrictions are being lifted in Europe, and after governments have indicated that more support for the industry might be forthcoming.

Germany will lift border restrictions on 15 June and Spain, a favorite summer vacation spot for Europeans, will end its required two-week quarantine for foreign visitors on 1 July.

Figures from the U.S. Transportation Security Agency show a gradual increase in daily passenger counts since April, further encouraging investors.

Share prices for American Airlines Group, Delta Airlines, Southwest Airlines, and United Airlines Holdings all rose more than 10 percent on 26 May. The stock price for International Consolidated Airlines Group SA, which owns British Airways, was up 20 percent.

Lufthansa's stock jumped 6.8 percent on 25 May after officials announced the German government will supply about $981 billion in aid.

Still, analysts are warning that airlines still are economically precarious.

"Opening up is coming more quickly than anticipated by some investors," said Seema Shah, chief strategist at Principal Global Investors. Stock-pickers think "the sector looks cheap, but it's cheap for a reason," she added.

U.K. Budget Airline Cuts 30 Percent of its Workforce. EasyJet, a U.K. budget airline, will cut its staff by 30 percent as it prepares to return to the air on 15 June.

"We want to make sure that we emerge from the pandemic an even more competitive company," said CEO Johan Lundgren.

By September, the company expects to be flying 30 percent of its former capacity compared to a year previous, he added.

Asian Carmakers Issue Recalls. Honda has recalled 1.37 million vehicles, including 770,000 in China and 160,000 in the U.S., to deal with defective fuel pumps.

Toyota recalled 3.18 million cars earlier this year, including 1.81 million U.S. vehicles, over a similar problem. Subaru recalled 118,000 U.S. cars on 16 April.

The defective parts have been traced to Denso, a major Japanese auto parts company, of which Toyota owns almost 25 percent.

Denso already was suffering business losses due to the economic shutdown's damage to the auto industry.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW

DEBT MARKET TIME BOMB

by Gregory Mannarino

Can you hear it? Tick, tick, tick....

In every sense, the debt market is a global disaster waiting to happen. When this mega-disaster hits, it will affect the entire world – not just the financial markets.

To understand where we are now, we need to look back to the financial crisis of 2008. What was the triggering event behind the '08 market crash?

It is always the same mechanism: a hyperinflated market trying to "determine fair value." The "job" of these markets is to do that very thing.

How a market determines fair value is a simple concept: You have buyers and sellers who "set" the fair market price for an asset, be it a stock, bond, currency, commodity, etc. When this fair-value setting mechanism is influenced by, for example, a central bank artificially suppressing interest rates, major distortions in the price action process occur. When these distortions attempt to correct themselves, market crashes occur.

In 2008, when the Dow dropped from 12,000 to 6,000, the Federal Reserve began a "Quantitative Easing Program" of widespread asset purchases and direct capital injections into the market, all in what has been a very successful attempt to re-inflate a massive stock market bubble.

Virtually non-stop since they began (going on 12 years now), the Fed has been involved in this scheme of Quantitative Easing. Despite their claim they had stopped at one point, QE never ended.

Proof? The Federal Reserve has kept interest rates artificially low since ’08. In order to do this, the Fed must get into the market and *make it happen.* They cannot just “say” they are going to keep rates low – they must print cash out of thin air and buy debt, in this case bonds, to artificially suppress rates.

So, here we have a mechanism in which the Federal Reserve has influenced the “flow of capital” across the entire spectrum of asset classes, via artificially suppressing rates, for over a decade. This has caused cash to move into assets where it had no business going and out of assets where it should have been going – thus causing epic distortions in the market.

This scheme has inflated the **mother of all bubbles** in the debt market. This debt bubble has pushed the stock market into yet another massive bubble, and, also, it has re-inflated the housing bubble.

We know for certain, at some point, the markets in aggregate will correct these monumental distortions… it is not a question of if, but *when*. Understanding that the debt market is in fact the mother of all bubbles, and, at any given time, it will correct itself to fair value allows us to understand how this will play out.

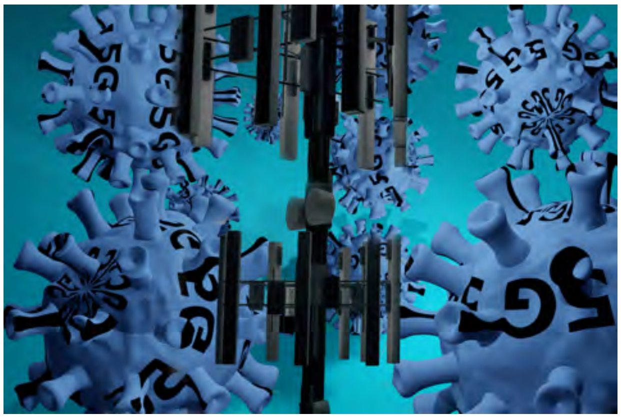
Just as artificially suppressed rates have re-inflated the stock market and the housing bubble, when the debt market corrects, rates will spike rapidly, putting intense pressure on the stock market and home values. A massive outflow of capital will occur from the debt market, causing rates to skyrocket, which, in turn, will cause a mass exodus **out** of stocks.

The bigger issue will be money velocity. When the colossal debt market sell-off begins, and it will, epic sums of cash and stocks quickly will bleed out.

All of this cash leaving these markets will not go to “money heaven.” Instead, it will move into alternate assets, such as gold, silver, Crude, and other commodities, and cryptocurrencies. Moreover, all of these “released” dollars will start chasing the same amount of goods. Henceforth, inflation, and possibly hyperinflation, will occur.

As I see it, holding onto physical gold and silver, as well as investing in cryptocurrencies, would be a way to hedge against the prospect of massive inflation.

FACT OR FICTION: DID 5G CREATE COVID-19?



by Bennett Davis

The COVID virus has created yet another playground of the imagination for those given to theorize beyond the evidence.

An easy hypothesis in circulation is that Big Pharma created and spread the virus, so it could reap fortunes selling cures and vaccines. Another, promoted by Donald Trump and others, is that the virus escaped, or was released, from a virology lab in Wuhan, the city where the virus first appeared in a general population.

In Hindu India, the virus is a plague unleashed by Muslims; in Muslim Pakistan, the virus is an attack by Jews.

One of the more sophisticated theories involves 5G, the newest or “fifth generation” of wireless radio-wave transmission systems.

Here, the idea is that the structure of 5G radio waves disrupts the biochemistry of our cells and poisons them. The virus is actually the poisons excreted from our cells, mixed with some proteins and other random biochemical elements.

5G waves are intense but travel only short distances. Therefore, areas wired for 5G can sprout antennas on every city block or residential corner, bathing residents in 5G waves wherever they go.

The theory is not wrong in claiming 5G is hazardous to human health. There is a growing consensus among researchers that 5G waves disrupt the biochemistry of living things and interferes with an organism's internal signaling. The **Trends Journal** has reported on these studies by credible scientists at reputable institutions for more than three years.

These studies indicate that these particular radio frequencies, when bombarding an organism over time, can increase risks of cancer, memory problems and learning deficits, depression, sleep disturbances, symptoms resembling the flu, and general "cellular distress," among a host of other ailments.

The theory that 5G radio waves create the current coronavirus grows out of this mounting evidence that the waves harm us at the cellular level.

The theorists begin by pointing out that Wuhan, the where the virus first became epidemic, was the first city in China to be thoroughly equipped with 5G antennas. The South Korean capital of Seoul – a metropolis hard-hit soon after Wuhan – also was an early adopter of widespread 5G.

The Diamond Princess cruise ship, a focus of world attention when hundreds of its passengers contracted the virus and were quarantined aboard for weeks, was fitted out with 5G wireless technology. Italy, another ambitious adopter of 5G, was Europe's earliest coronavirus hotspot.

The theorists see causation, not coincidence, in those facts.

The theory, however, has a fatal flaw.

The idea that 5G causes the virus seems to deny the idea that viruses can spread from one person to the other. Indeed, prominent advocates of "the 5G theory" seriously question, or deny outright, that a 5G-caused virus, or any virus, can be contagious.

But the idea that viruses can't be spread from person to person flies in the face of a century of lab experiments and also human experience, including our experience with COVID.

For example, the most intense infestation of the COVID virus in the U.S., aside from nursing homes and prisons, is in the Navajo Native American reservation in the U.S. southwest. The infection rate there on 17 May was 2,344 infected people for every 100,000 residents. But the reservation is spread across desert country devoid of 5G antennas; any concentration of 5G antennas is so distant that the waves can't reach the reservation.

On 10 March, 61 people gathered in a church in Mt. Vernon, WA, for choir practice. They sang and snacked together for almost three hours. One had been suffering cold-like symptoms for a few days before the event. Over the next few weeks, 53 of the 61 came down with COVID, three were hospitalized, and two died.

Mt. Vernon isn't scheduled to receive 5G service until at least 2022.

There have been thousands of recorded cases of people living in small cities and rural areas lacking 5G service who contract the virus.

Also, a pattern of infection has been established in which the virus spreads through a population, some of those infected are hospitalized, after which the number of cases rises among the caregivers.

That pattern indicates person-to-person spread; if 5G is broadcast among a general population, caregivers should be contracting the virus in tandem with the general populace, not after they come into concentrated contact with sick people.

While there are serious health concerns surrounding 5G, the notion that it causes the COVID virus isn't one of them.

COVID-19: SPECIAL REPORT

COVID FEAR & HYPE MORE DEADLY THAN VIRUS

As detailed and forecast in the **Trends Journal**, since the mainstream media began peddling COVID Hysteria this past January, and politicians across the globe seized on it by issuing unprecedented, draconian lockdowns based on unsubstantiated, non-scientific, made-up orders, we warned of the dire socioeconomic and geopolitical implications that are now unfolding.

The riots ripping across the United States are but one example of the unprecedented convergence of man-made disasters that will destroy lives and destroy nations if we stay on the ruinous path paved by politicians.
We have entered the "Greatest Depression." The implications of millions of businesses going out of business and hundreds of millions out of work and out of money will kill tens of millions.

Rather than reviving Franklin D. Roosevelt's message during the Great Depression that "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," when it comes to COVID-19, from the media and politicians, instead, we constantly hear their emotionally paralyzing message: "The only thing we have to keep fearing… is fear itself."

Ignored by Fear Mongers

Out of the mainstream news is the story from Rome of Italian doctor Alberto Zangrillo, head of the San Raffaele Hospital in Milano, which had been hit hard by coronavirus, who said on Sunday, "In reality, the virus clinically no longer exists in Italy."

Dr. Zangrillo called out the politicians and their "experts" for spreading COVID Fear, saying, "We've got to get back to being a normal country. Someone has to take responsibility for terrorizing the country."

Indeed, it was the cover of our 3 March **Trends Journal**: "CORONAVIRUS 9/11 – SPREADING TERROR."

Now much of the world hides behind their masks, abhorring human contact, living in terror that COVID will kill them.

Germany's COVID Con Game

There's a battle going on in Germany between the government and their Presstitutes to silence a leaked report from their Interior Ministry that defied the official lines of COVID Hysteria. The report said politicians were overestimating its dangers, and the new virus was no more dangerous than many other viruses.

They noted, as the facts continue to substantiate, that those who would die from the virus were near the end of their lives and were weakened by pre-existing illnesses.

They also pointed out, as we have in the **Trends Journal**, that 1.5 million people worldwide died from the 2017-2018 flu compared to 250,000 (at the time of the leaked report) from coronavirus.

In 2017-18, 25,000 Germans died of the flu. Today, 8,618 have died from COVID.

How much clearer can it be? Why do so many believe what they are being told?

We know why, and we have been writing about it since the end of January: Media and Political Puppet Masters Peddling COVID Hysteria.

Yinon Weiss, a bioengineer, recently stated in RealClearPolitics, "Leaders relied on these faulty models. Dissenting views were suppressed. The media flamed fears and the world panicked." Also stated by Mr. Weiss,

- "Among people under 65, the odds of COVID-19 death are roughly in line with existing baseline odds of dying in any given year.

- If you are a healthy individual under 50 years old, the survival rate of those infected by the virus is 99.99 percent.

- The median age of Italian COVID-19 deaths is over 80, not a single person under 30 had died, and 99 percent of those who did had preexisting illnesses.

- The whole linchpin of the lockdown argument is that it would have been even worse without such a step. Sweden never closed down borders, primary schools, restaurants, or businesses, and never mandated masks, yet 99.998% of their people under 60 have survived, and their hospitals were never overburdened."

TRENDPOST: *Although we have reported many of the facts above in previous* ***Trends Journals****, we continue to do so to illustrate the numerous COVID Fallacies promoted by the mainstream media and politicians, which generally have been accepted as truth by the vast majority of the public.*

Now, there is a push by the media and their favored "experts" to criticize Sweden for not imposing dictatorial lockdown measures, hyping what they want to fabricate their case.

For example, they've pointed out that Sweden's death rate is higher than other Baltic states including Norway, Finland, and Denmark. When measuring per capita deaths per population, however, Sweden – where events with more than 50 people were banned and universities and secondary schools shut down, but few other restrictions were imposed – its per capita COVID-19 death rate is about the same as France, the UK, and other European nations that have been locked down.

Moreover, with 4,395 deaths out of a population of 10,000,000, or 0.044 percent, and with over 50 percent of the virus victims chronically ill from elder care homes, Swedes have not suffered the dire financial hardships of those locked down.

For example, Denmark's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to fall by an estimated 5.25 percent due to the lockdown, which will be worse than the 2007-2008 financial crisis, while Sweden's GDP grew at an annual rate of 0.4 percent in the first quarter.

TRENDPOST: *As we continue to note, the media whores who keep selling fear and hysteria ignore the fact that previous virus and flus were as deadly or more deadly than COVID-19. According to World Health Organization data published in 2017 (when Sweden had 230,000 less people), "Influenza and pneumonia deaths in Sweden reached 3,589, or 4.74% of total deaths."*

This metric holds true worldwide. By the sheer facts, the coronavirus was/is artificially pumped up into an epidemic by money-hungry media that was losing viewership (see our 5 May article, "CNN – How Low Can You Go?") and power-hungry politicians who pumped it up to epidemic proportions.

Believe the "Experts"?

When the virus fist hit China, as we have long noted in the **Trend Journal**, the media kept promoting inflated virus death projections. Among them was Imperial College epidemiologist Neil Ferguson, whose deeply flawed model, predicting some two million people in the United States would die from the virus, contributed to the lockdown hysteria.

Mr. Weiss also noted, "This is the same Neil Ferguson who in 2005 predicted 200 million could die from the bird flu. Total deaths over the last 15 years turned out to be 455. This is the same Neil Ferguson who in 2009 predicted that 65,000 people could die in the U.K. from the swine flu. The final number ended up around 392. Now, in 2020, he predicted that 500,000 British would die from coronavirus."

TRENDPOST: *To date, with some 40,000 COVID related deaths in the U.K., the Imperial College projection was just 460,000 off the mark. As for its U.S. fatality projection, they missed it by 1,890,000, yet this is essentially ignored… and they keep quoting the Imperial College's latest forecast models.*

Mr. Weiss goes on to note further inaccurate forecasts including America's most "respected" experts in the world including America's favorite, Dr. Anthony Fauci.

- "On Feb. 17, just a month before the first U.S. lockdown, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the longtime director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said that this new strain of coronavirus possessed 'just minuscule' danger to the United States." In early March the U.S. surgeon general said that 'masks are NOT effective in preventing [the] general public from catching coronavirus.'

  As late as March 9, the day Italy started its lockdown, Dr. Fauci did not encourage cancellation of 'large gatherings in a place [even if] you have community spread,' calling it 'a judgment call.'"

- "There are now places like Santa Clara County in California, entering its third month of lockdown despite COVID-19 patients occupying less than 2 percent of hospital capacity and none on ventilators. Yet there are 2 million county residents effectively under house arrest. Some doctors and nurses in the area had their pay cut by 20 percent so hospitals could avoid bankruptcy, reflecting perhaps the epitome of this senseless catastrophe."

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *As the media keeps counting those who died from the virus, they omit the hard facts and scientific data of who is dying and why.*

And for the general public, as the 28 April ***Trends Journal*** *cover illustrates, the vast majority are "DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIEVE BUSH'S WARS, DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIVE THE COVID WAR." Also oblivious to the hard facts and scientific data, the majority believes what Presstitutes sell them and obediently follow their leader's orders.*

SELLING MAYHEM, THE MEDIA MISLEADS

Despite new data confirming COVID-19 is less deadly than estimated, mainstream media continue to pump out story after story ramping up fear and creating false narratives in support of extended lockdowns.

As reported last week in the **Trends Journal***,* the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently lowered its estimated death rate from 1 percent all the way down to 0.26 percent. This drop is even more significant when compared to the 8 March estimate of the World Health Organization (WHO) that the death rate would be 3.4 percent.

On 25 May, journalist Daniel Horowitz, in an op-ed piece for *The Blaze,* wrote the following regarding this much lower estimate by the CDC, "We destroyed our entire country and suspended democracy all for a lie, and these people perpetrated the unscientific degree of panic. Will they ever admit the grave consequences of their error?"

Among other points made by Mr. Horowitz:

- "Four professors with backgrounds ranging from medicine to economics attempted to quantify the number of lives lost from the devastation of the lockdown itself – something our government failed to simulate when it embarked on this novel policy. Using health and labor data as well as actuarial tables, they projected 65,000 lives lost *per month* of lockdown in the U.S. – greater than the loss from the virus.

  That number was calculated by dividing the estimated $1.1 trillion lost from economic productivity per moth of lockdown by $17 million because the best estimates predict one life lost from suicide, alcohol or drug abuse, or stress-induced illnesses per $17 million lost"

- "As the authors note, stroke patient evaluations are down 40 percent, nearly half of cancer patients have missed treatments, two-thirds to three-fourths of routine cancer screenings have been delayed, nearly 85 percent fewer living-donor transplants have occurred.

  They estimate that the total years of lost life per month of shutdown from these missed treatments and diagnosis are 500,000! In total, they estimate that the lockdown, over its entire duration, has caused the loss of 1.5 million life years, as compared to 800,000 life years of the virus itself."

- "Thousands of deaths from COVID-19 were a result of six governors ordering nursing homes to accept patients with a confirmed diagnosis of the coronavirus, despite knowing that nursing home residents are the most vulnerable to the virus. "An astounding 62 percent of all [Covid-19] deaths were in the six states confirmed to have done this, even though they only compose 18 percent of the national population."

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *See our article "NURSING HOME NEGLIGENCE" in this issue for more details on this important subject.*

LOCKDOWN LUNACY: ANXIETY & DEPRESSION ACROSS AMERICA

According to a new survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, about one third of Americans show signs of clinical mental health disorders as a result of the enforced lockdown over the past months.

In early to mid-May, about one million households were contacted with 42,000 responses about how the coronavirus lockdown has affected employment, finances, and health, among other subjects.

Some of the key findings from the survey:

- Responding to questions used for evaluating mental health issues, 24 percent showed signs of clinical depressive disorder and 30 percent for anxiety disorders.

- The response to a particular question about depression showed a 100 percent increase compared to the same question asked in a 2014 survey.

- New York, the epicenter of the virus outbreak, was the 12th highest state in terms of percentage of these mental health symptoms. In Mississippi, a staggering 50 percent of those polled said they were suffering anxiety and depression. Iowa showed the lowest, but it was still with about 25 percent of citizens reporting significant symptoms.

- Among young adults and women earning under $25,000 a year, the rates of depression and anxiety were significantly higher. Almost two-thirds of those struggling financially said they were suffering from constant anxiety.

- In Ohio, which has been under one of the most restrictive lockdowns of any state, dramatic spikes in calls to crisis lines continue. In the city of Dayton, for example, a crisis hotline had more than 1,200 calls in less than a month. Drinking problems, the inability to deal with stress, and a doubling of accidental drug overdoses were among the issues most reported.

This data from the recent Census Bureau survey mirrors previous studies reported in the **Trends Journal**, including the 2 April poll conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation showing nearly half of respondents experiencing impaired mental health and the 11 May data published by the American foundation for Suicide Prevention, which showed over half reporting more anxiety and depression than before the shutdowns.

TREND FORECAST: *As economic conditions and nations sink deeper into the "Greatest Depression," substance abuse and suicide rates will sharply rise.*

Also, as forecast, the homeless crisis will greatly worsen, and crime, from the top of the corporate ladder to the man-on-the-street, will escalate. As Gerald Celente says, "When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it."

COVID CURE: STAY HOME, GET SICK

Not surprisingly, along with the increase in mental health sickness as a result of the national lockdown, people are reporting spikes in physical health issues as well. A few key facts from a survey of 2,000 Americans conducted by Onepoll and commissioned by the health advocacy website "Naked Nutrition":

- About half said they will never get their pre-quarantine bodies back.

- The average American has put on about five pounds since lockdowns were ordered.

- Almost two-thirds feel less healthy now than a few months ago – the main reasons being lack of exercise and eating unhealthy foods.

- Of the vast majority surveyed, about 70 percent did not think home workouts were as effective as the health routines they had before the shutdown.

It should be noted that according to Sustain, a non-profit alliance for better food and farming, "Junk food companies are coming up with innovative ways to sell junk food to us during lockdown." The group's Children's Food Campaign Coordinator Fran Bernhardt notes:

> "Brands are seizing this moment to build brand loyalty from children. While busy parents are juggling working from home with childcare responsibilities, brands have started offering themselves as babysitters.
>
> Milkybar introduced its #80AwesomeThingsToDo in mid-April. Around the same time, McDonald's launched their new 'family fun hub' – filled with children's ebooks, activities and games featuring children's cartoons and of course, that red and yellow children's meal box synonymous with the brand.
>
> Deliveroo has started quizzes featuring questions about their service, while Krispy Kreme #DesignForDoughnations competition harnesses flourishing lockdown artistry via drawing their next doughnut."

TRENDPOST: *In previous issues of the* ***Trends Journal****, we have reported that sales of big brand highly processed foods, canned goods, and soda are on the rise.*

It should be noted that after elder care and death of patients with previous chronic conditions, studies confirm people with obesity and Type 2 diabetes are among the highest at risk to die from coronavirus.

Thus, eating large portions of unhealthy junk foods as they are locked down puts more people, young and old, at greater COVID and other health risks:

“Type 2 diabetes used to be known as adult-onset diabetes, but today more children are being diagnosed with the disorder, probably due to the rise in childhood obesity. There's no cure for type 2 diabetes, but losing weight, eating well and exercising can help manage the disease.” – Mayo Clinic

BOOZE BINGE ESSENTIAL

While governments closed down restaurants; forbid haircuts; and banned weddings, funerals, barbeques and going to the beach as “nonessential,” the political royalty christened booze as an “essential” means of life that even the deadly COVID could not kill.

Miserable, locked down, out of work, no fun, isolated, depressed, and stressed out, “essential” alcohol sales from liquor stores are on the rise, and so, too, are alcohol consumption rates. Bloomberg reports sales for liquor delivery services are up 400 percent!

“I expect we’re going to see pretty significant increases in what I call unhealthy alcohol use,” said Sarah Wakeman, an addiction medicine doctor at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Addiction health practitioners worry about the unprecedented global shutdown. Adam Leventhal, director of the University of Southern California Institute for Addiction Science, stated on 27 May, “A pandemic of this magnitude affecting the entire globe is something we’ve never seen before.”

In China, where the pandemic started, alcohol consumption jumped some 7 percent during the lockdown. A study in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry published on 14 April stated that the extended lockdown "showed higher rates of anxiety, depression, hazardous and harmful alcohol use, and lower mental wellbeing than usual ratio. Results also revealed that young people aged 21 to 40 years are in more vulnerable position in terms of their mental health conditions and alcohol use."

TREND FORECAST*: Unfortunately, as economies sink deeper into despair, so, too, will the human spirit of so many who have been morally and financially devastated by these unprecedented political maneuvers that have, within just a few months, sapped the vestiges of liberty, love, joy, and beauty from the planet.*

Beyond alcohol, as we had forecast for months, drug addiction, legal and illegal, will continue to claim more victims in the coming years as the "Greatest Depression" worsens, civil unrest escalates, military clampdowns tighten… and geopolitical tensions intensify.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *This is not gloom and doom. I am a trend forecaster, a visionary. What I see coming in the not too distant future is the onset of World War III.*

We have seen how easy delusional masses put trust in their governments and follow their orders. Just as easy as they march us off to the COVID War, the Yemen War, the Syrian War, the Libyan War, the Iraq War, the Afghan War, the Serbian War, the Gulf War, the Vietnam War, the Korean War… the political freaks are marching us into World War III.

What can stop it?

Peace and beauty.

Evolving to a higher spirit.

Creating art to express the true meaning of life.

GOVERNOR CUOMO: MASKING THE TRUTH

Last Tuesday, in an attempt to convince New Yorkers to wear a mask virtually everywhere, Governor Cuomo made the following claim at his daily press briefing, “Wearing a mask has got to be something you do every day. When you get up, when you walk out of the house, you put the mask on. This is cool.” He added that wearing a mask “should be part of our culture to encourage mask-wearing.”

The governor was even more emphatic a few days later, on 28 May, when he announced that stores in the state can prohibit anyone from entering who is not wearing a mask. “If you don’t want to wear a mask? Fine. But you don’t have a right to go into that store if the store owner doesn’t want you to.”

This follows Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order, which went into effect on 17 April, that everyone in the state over two years old had to wear a face covering while out in public and not able to guarantee six feet of social distance.

Last Thursday, the governor also doubled down on the claim that masks are effective at limiting the spread of COVID-19: “I’ve been working to communicate this message about masks and how effective they are. They are deceptively effective. They are amazingly effective.”

Returning to his new theme that wearing a mask is “cool,” Cuomo declared, “We have to culturalize the masks, we have to customize the masks for New York, to get New Yorkers to wear them.”

TRENDPOST: *After loudly proclaiming the importance of wearing a mask at his press briefing, the governor got up and walked out of the room leaving his mask on the table.*

Unmasking the Evidence

The mask issue has become controversial on two fronts.

On the political front, an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll showed 76 percent of Democrats wore masks outside of the home, considerably more than the 59 percent of Republicans. The issue in many ways is heating up between those willing to stand against threats to individual rights and those willing to obey the orders of political leaders claiming they know how to best protect the public at large.

Advocates for the wearing of masks also say it's a sign of support for doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers.

While a number of medical professionals have confirmed that professionally made surgical masks can be effective at limiting the spread of COVID-19, they've made it clear the limited supply needs to be reserved for medical staff and healthcare workers.

Two Sides of the Mask

As for the cloth masks worn by most of the public, the variety Governor Cuomo also promoted, a number of medical authorities have stated that cloth masks, as well as surgical masks, are not only ineffective at stopping the spread of COVID… they can make the situation worse.

Some key points:

- On 31 March, the Surgeon General, Dr. Jerome Adams, stated that when it comes to wearing masks, "the data doesn't show" any effectiveness: "What the World Health Organization and the CDC have reaffirmed in the last few days is that they do not recommend the general public wear masks."

  The Surgeon General added, "Wearing a mask improperly can actually increase your risk of getting disease."

- While the CDC reversed its position on 8 April and is now advocating wearing masks, the WHO, the United Nations public health agency, updated its position against wearing masks. On 4 May, WHO released the following guidance: "There is currently no evidence that wearing a mask (whether medical or other types) by healthy persons in the wider community setting, including universal community masking, can prevent them from infection with respiratory viruses, including COVID-19."

Dr. April Baller, public health specialist for WHO recommends, "If you do not have any symptoms such as fever, cough or runny nose, you do not need to wear a mask. Masks should only be used by health care workers, caretakers or by people who are sick with symptoms of fever and cough."

- Dr. Russell Blaylock, a board-certified neurosurgeon, wrote an editorial on 18 May for *Technology News* that stated, "As for the scientific support for the use of face masks, a recent careful examination of the literature, in which 17 of the best studies were analyzed, concluded that, 'none of the studies established a conclusive relationship between mask/respirator use and protection against influenza infection.'"

  Also said by Dr. Blaylock, "Keep in mind, no studies have been done to demonstrate that either a cloth mask or the N95 mask has any effect on transmission of the COVID-19 virus."

  Dr. Blaylock goes on to cite that wearing a mask, particularly non-professionally made cloth varieties can actually cause health problems. "Several studies have indeed found significant problems with wearing such a mask. This can vary from headaches, to increased airway resistance, carbon dioxide accumulation, to hypoxia, all the way to serious life-threatening complications."

- May Chu, clinical professor in epidemiology at the Colorado School of Public Health, points out that masks recommended for public use "impede only about 2 percent of airflow."

TRENDPOST: *Despite these facts above and others we have noted in previous issues discounting the effectiveness of masks, the mainstream media and politicians keep selling the need to wear them, and the majority of the population – as evidenced by both political party majorities believing they should wear them – obediently believe what they are told.*

NO MASK: NO GO

The classic George M. Cohan tribute has a brand new meaning. According to a New York Times/Siena College Research Institute poll taken 17-21 May, New Yorkers feel it will be too risky to attend Broadway shows before the end of the year.

Their #1 concern: other theatergoers will show up without masks or will violate social distance rules.

The poll also revealed a wide-ranging anxiety over attending all forms of theater and music concerts if they in fact are open to the public by Labor Day weekend. According to the poll, almost 60 percent of New Yorkers who went to a Broadway show in 2019 said they would not go back out of fear others would not keep proper social distance. Fifty-five percent voiced a concern about others not wearing masks.

A full 90 percent of those polled said they would only attend a show in the theatre district if they knew the theatres were being disinfected by professional cleaners between every show.

And while there was again a political divide to wearing masks and social distancing, 86 percent of Democrats said they would want assurance that wearing masks was required to attend a performance, while 68 percent of Republicans agreed… the majority still fear getting hit by COVID-19.

TRENDPOST: *Beyond Broadway, the vast majority of mainstream media's select group of "health experts" are telling the public not to expect large gatherings such as sporting events, weddings, concerts, etc., to take place until 2021… at the earliest.*

Unmentioned in their coverage is the great financial and emotional cost of these cancellations and the vast amount of related industries, businesses, services – and their products and employees – that will go down as a result of these shut downs.

NURSING HOME NEGLIGENCE

As frequently reported in the **Trends Journal**, it has been well known for months that the population most vulnerable to dying from COVID-19 are the elderly, particularly those in nursing homes with significant health conditions.

This first came to light in March, when Italy, suffering the worst death toll from the virus after it spread from China, reported the average age of Italians dying from COVID-19 was 80 years old.

On 13 April, the International Long-Term Care Policy Network found that in Ireland, which had the most accurate data collecting at the time, 54 percent of deaths from coronavirus occurred in elder care homes.

And, according to a London School of Economics report, Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, and Belgium have 42 to 57 percent of virus deaths from elder care homes.

Thus, about 50 percent of the COVID-19 victims were from nursing homes.

Don't Tell Anyone

Yet, for months, nursing homes in the U.S. have not been required to report data on deaths from coronavirus.

Only recently, on 8 May, did the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) finally get around to making it mandatory for nursing homes to report this data. Even this was a weak move by the CDC, as its new order does not require elder care facilities to send it reports before 17 May.

Initially, the CDC had issued a rule that nursing homes were to send in this important information dating back to the beginning of the year, but that rule was optional. Many facilities opted not to comply.

David Grabowski, professor at Harvard Medical School, stated on 22 May, “We’re gong to get a very incomplete picture of the pandemic in nursing homes because facilities don’t have to submit information about the early impact of the virus. How do we understand what’s happening if we only have data back to early May?”

To date, only 36 states are submitting data, and less than half of those are identifying individual nursing home locations.

TRENDPOST: *Considering nearly 50 percent of those dying from COVID-19 are elderly people from nursing homes suffering from chronic illness, and the others are diabetics, obese, suffering from respiratory ailments, heart disease etc., the actual death rate of the total global population is minuscule.*

Thus, politicians shutting down the global economy and enforcing a variety of made-up social distancing, mask wearing, and other laws was, and is, unwarranted, destructive… and far more deadly than the virus.

CUOMO’S DEADLY TWO-STEP SHUFFLE

Governor Andrew Cuomo's reign as America's most popular warrior against COVID-19 may be coming to end due to his bungling of the nursing home issue and then lying about it.

In a 27 May Siena Research Institute poll, only 44 percent think the governor handled the nursing home issue well.

As reported in the **Trends Journal***,* on 25 March, New York's governor reversed a previous order and dictated that nursing homes in the state must accept COVID-19 patients who were being discharged from hospitals. This order came despite clear knowledge that nursing home residents were the most vulnerable to the virus.

As a result of Governor Cuomo's new directive, over 4,500 patients recovering from COVID-19 were sent to New York nursing homes, according to a count conducted by the *Associated Press*.

On 19 April, long after his revised policy pressured nursing homes to accept infected patients, the governor referred to nursing homes as the "optimum feeding ground for this virus."

Since the reversal in policy went into effect, more than 5,000 nursing home residents have died from COVID-19 in New York State.

Faced with a flood of criticism, the governor did another about face and rescinded the order on 10 May. When confronted about his deadly decision in March, the governor first blamed the nursing homes: "Any nursing home could just say, 'I can't handle a COVID person in my facility.'"

But a review of the record shows the governor's 25 March order included no option by nursing homes as to whether they could reject a COVID-19 patient. It was only on 29 April, well after the order was issued, that the health department made it known nursing homes could refuse an infected patient if not able to provide proper protection to residents.

Governor Cuomo followed up his placing the blame on the nursing home failures by then insisting it was the Trump administration at fault. On 20 May, he proclaimed, "Anyone who wants to ask why did the state do that with COVID patients in nursing homes, it's because the state followed President Trump's CDC guidance. So, they should ask President Trump." The governor added, "I think that will stop the conversation."

It didn't.

Cuomo has been called out for lying. On 18 March, the CDC stated, "Once COVID-19 has been introduced into a long-term care facility, it has the potential to result in high attack rates among residents, staff members, and visitors."

The agency warned, "It is critical that long-term care facilities implement active measures to prevent introduction of COVID-19."

On 29 May, Seema Verma, the administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, directly contradicted the governor's claim he was following federal guidelines: "Under no circumstances should a hospital discharge a patient to a nursing home that is not prepared to take care of those patients' needs."

TRENDPOST: *Once again, while New York State has the highest death rate in the country, over 10,000 of the 29,000 COVID-10 victims were from nursing homes, and not 5,000 as Cuomo claims. According to reports, when the pandemic first hit, New York reported how many nursing home residents died from COVID-19, whether they died at nursing homes or after being hospitalized.*

However, the state Health Department changed the reporting rules as the toll escalated by omitting nursing homes in which virus victims died after going to the hospital – and only counting those who died in the homes.

Once again, as the data proves, the lockdown should have been for those most susceptible to the virus while freeing the rest of society to live as they had before the draconian government measures were enforced.

And again, when the elderly who were chronically ill are eliminated from the grand total of those who succumbed to coronavirus, the number of deaths among 7.7 billion people on the planet is insignificant.

GEOPOLITICAL

AFGHANISTAN WAR: THE END IS NEAR

As Gerald Celente forecast two years ago, as part of President Trump's strategy to get re-elected, he will bring an end to the Afghanistan War in time for the November election.

The news now is President Trump and the Pentagon are debating how to bring troops home by this fall.

On 29 February, the U.S. signed an agreement with the Taliban, which set a timetable for U.S. troop levels to be lowered from some 12,000 to 8,600 by July and then total withdrawal by May 2021.

But on 27 May, the President tweeted, "We are acting as a police force, not the fighting force that we are, in Afghanistan. After 19 years, it is time for them to police their own Country. Bring our soldiers back home but closely watch what is going on and strike with a thunder like never before, if necessary!"

In the event of a full withdrawal of U.S. troops, the approximately 17,000 NATO troops representing 39 nations and partner countries stationed in Afghanistan would most likely leave.

This October will mark the 19th year of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, the longest war in its history.

On 7 October 2001, President George W. Bush ordered the invasion of Afghanistan stating the purpose was to capture Osama bin Laden, leader of the organization Al-Qaeda, which, according to U.S. intelligence, was behind the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on 11 September 2001.

Bin Laden denied any involvement, and, as we have reported in detail in the **Trends Journal**, President Bush refused to negotiate, provide evidence… or even talk to the Taliban regarding bin Laden's role in the attack.

Long forgotten is the report that 15 of the 9/11 terrorists were Saudi's, one of America's treasured allies.

Since initiating the war back in 2001 and giving it the name "Operation Enduring Freedom," the justification shifted to a fight with the Taliban, which the Bush administration cited as a direct threat to the sovereignty of surrounding countries.

As Gerald Celente had forecast – and, at the time, was chastised for and banned from the major media he frequently appeared on – the U.S. military would not win in Afghanistan: "If Alexander the Great couldn't pull it off. If the British at the height of the British Empire couldn't beat them and the Russians couldn't beat the Afghans, neither will the American military."

TREND FORECAST: *Considering the unprecedented COVID War that has ravaged America's economy and now the nationwide protests and riots following the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police, ending the Afghan war, barely a memory in most American minds, will do little to boost Trump in the polls on Election Day.*

U.S./CHINA RELATIONS: THE NEW COLD WAR

Last Thursday, the National People's Congress finalized the legislation giving China's government the authority to impose strict security measures on Hong Kong residents. Showing unanimity, the Chinese legislature passed the strict, new control measures with only one dissent among the 2,878 votes.

Beijing said the new law was enacted to stem the influence of foreign interference in Hong Kong and to protect against a repeat of the anti-government riots that began last year… that we have covered extensively in the **Trends Journal**.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, citing a 1992 law that the state department must track Hong Kong's autonomy, notified Congress the city no longer has the requisite level of independence from the mainland.

"This decision gives me no pleasure," said Pompeo, "but sound policy making requires a recognition of reality. It is now clear that China is modeling Hong Kong after itself."

Following Pompeo, on Friday, President Trump said he would begin to remove Hong Kong's preferential trade and customs status with the United States.

By officially declaring to Congress that Hong Kong's independence is threatened, measures are being taken by Washington that affects the special trade status Hong Kong has under U.S. law, affecting billions of dollars in U.S. investments there.

In response, Chinese Foreign Ministry in Hong Kong accused the U.S. of interfering in China's affairs, promising "strong countermeasures."

And, yesterday, Regina Ip, a member of Hong Kong's Executive Council and Legislative Council, told *CNBC*, "If the U.S. freezes Hong Kong assets, or Chinese assets, Beijing could take counter measures. There are no specifics yet, although the Chinese [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] have said that if the U.S. imposes sanctions on Hong Kong, there will be counter measures."

TRENDPOST: *The U.S. has more to lose. The U.S. exports about $30 billion worth of goods to Hong Kong each year but imports only about $5 billion worth.*

Thus, China could retaliate by extending its trade policies to apply to Hong Kong, which the policies now do not. If China did so, new tariffs would burden the $30 *billion in U.S. exports to Hong Kong, likely reducing trade volume and resulting revenue to U.S. companies; more U.S. jobs could be lost.*

Riots and Rebellion

Last Wednesday, thousands of Hong Kong residents took to the streets to oppose the new laws resulting in hundreds of arrests. The city's politicians who oppose the mainland's new security laws cited the threat to Hong Kong as a center for capital investment and exchange.

Last Tuesday, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce issued a statement of deep concern with the new security laws and specifically called on Beijing to "peacefully de-escalate" the heated conditions in Hong Kong and to preserve the "one country, two-systems" principle.

TREND FORECAST: *With the U.S. in social and economic turmoil – COVID Hysteria and now besieged with protests, violence, looting, and riots following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police – the riots and protests in Hong Kong and the harsh crackdowns by its government are not big mainstream news.*

We forecast a new cold war between China and the U.S. will quickly heat up, especially as global economies go down.

History is repeating itself. In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, there was a currency war and a trade war with Japan, followed by World War II.
In 2020, there is a currency war (the yuan is at 2008 lows) and a trade war with China at the onset of the "Greatest Depression." Will it be followed by World War III?

We fear so. Whether with China, Iran, or another "enemy," as Gerald Celente says, "When all else fails, they take you to war."

This would be the war to end all wars… and most life on the planet.

If we do not fight for peace, we will die in war.

The evidence of how quickly and deadly it can occur could be no clearer than now.

With a blink of a cosmic eye, the entire world changed as obedient citizens marched to the orders from their leaders to fight the COVID War.

Indeed, the 28 April ***Trends Journal*** *cover illustrates: "DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIEVE BUSH'S WARS – DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THE COVID WAR."*