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THE DIVIDED STATES OF AMERICA



12 JANUARY 2021

TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT

U.S. MARKETS OVERVIEW



As reported thoroughly in this and previous issues of the **Trends Journal**, draconian lockdowns persist and intensify in many nations across the globe.

With each passing day, more businesses go bankrupt, unemployment claims increase, suicide rates climb... and equity markets keep rising.

There is absolutely no connection between Wall Street and Main Street. As Gregory Mannarino and the **Trends Journal** continue to illustrate with facts and data, it's a Bankster-rigged game. Gregory's new article, "[DOLLAR DEATH: GETTING CLOSER](#)" reveals the true dangers of their money-pumping scheme and what to expect in the future.

On Main Street, yesterday *Bankrate.com* reported that a mere 39 percent of Americans would be able to cover an unexpected \$1,000 expense. Last year, 41 percent said they could.

If there were an emergency cost such as a car repair or medical bill, 38 percent would need to borrow money either by using a credit card or borrowing from family.

As for Wall Street, according to the U.S. Federal Reserve, America's richest owns 36 percent of privately-owned wealth, up sevenfold from 1990 when they controlled just 5 percent. The Fed reported that as of 2014, the top 1 percent of Americans owned as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent.

Since the COVID War was launched by politicians, the stock market shot up since it hit lows back in March, pushing up the riches of the world's billionaires by nearly \$2 trillion.

Biden Bubble?

The Dow set three consecutive record highs during the week of 4 January as investors expect a Democratic president and Congress to shower more stimulus on households and businesses.

During 2021's first week of trading, the Dow gained 1.6 percent, the NASDAQ added 2.4 percent, and the S&P 500 index grew 1.8 percent.

Energy, financial, and material shares led the gains. These industries rise and fall with the economy; rising stock prices here signal growing confidence about the economic recovery's future.

Investors are shrugging off recent, weak jobs reports and other economic trouble signs "because they're confident that more fiscal stimulus is coming," Michael Arone, chief investment strategist at State Street Advisors, commented to the *Wall Street Journal*.

As COVID vaccines enter people's arms, "we'll be able to push beyond the weakness... hopefully in the not-too-distant future," he said.

TREND FORECAST: Throughout this issue of the ***Trend Journal***, we continue to note that in virtually every business sector, from real estate to restaurants, hospitality to automobiles, the word on *The Street* is that when much of the world gets the COVID vaccine, businesses will bounce back, the economy will boom, and Happy Days will be here again.

Yes, there will be an economic bounce back. But it will be a sharp move upward followed by a long-term downturn as the “Greatest Depression” spreads across the globe. The economic devastation from the politicians’ COVID War has permanently destroyed the businesses, lives, and livelihoods of hundreds of millions.

Today, for example, in response to the new lockdown orders coming from the rulers of Ontario, Canada, with a population of 14.7 million, Dan Kelly, the president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), told Bloomberg, “I don’t know how many businesses are going to survive, quite frankly.” He said, “We at CFIB did an earlier estimate of 160,000 permanent business failures before the end of that pandemic. That’s seeming light to me right now... we forecast that while there will be a sharp spike upward.”

Yes, more than 160,000 businesses permanently closed, the majority of which will not reopen despite a splurge in vaccines being pumped in the arms of people.

Today, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the Canada-U.S. border will remain closed to all non-essential travelers until 21 February. As we keep noting, they make up these lockdown rules, times, and dates without a scintilla of scientific evidence to support them. For example, what brilliant bureaucratic health minister came up with February 21st? Why not 19 February or 9 March?

Why? Because these are the psychopathic, narcissistic, sociopathic, pathological liars that start wars, such as the COVID War, based on lies and have no strategic plans to fight to win and have no exit strategies.

Market Madness

Overseas, Japan’s Nikkei 225 index advanced 4 percent to reach its highest mark since 1990, bolstering the outlook for tech stocks after the nation’s government declared a state of emergency in Tokyo in an attempt to control surging COVID case numbers.

South Korea’s Kospi index jumped 4 percent to a record high on 8 January. Shares of Samsung Electronics shot up 7 percent after predicting a 25-percent boost in this quarter’s profits.

TREND FORECAST: *Again, the market's euphoria has been driven up by money junkies who are disconnected from the real Main Street economy. We maintain our*

forecast that there will be a sharp market selloff, pushing the indexes into bear market territory.

BITCOIN. In last week's **Trends Journal**, we warned, "Considering Bitcoin's surge, we do expect a market correction. After spiking above \$41,000 last week, Bitcoin fell some 10 percent, wiping \$150 billion off the cryptocurrency market in 24 hours."

We had also forecast, "The downward breakout point will be hit should prices fall below \$25,000 per coin." With Bitcoin trading at \$34,404 as we go to press, we maintain that forecast.

GOLD/SILVER. Gold had a down day today. After hitting a high of \$1,864, it closed down at \$1,856. With the dollar firming and U.S. Treasury yields rising, gold – a safe-haven hedge against the inflation and weak dollar – has been falling.

However, we forecast a continuing weakening of the dollar and rising gold prices as the Biden administration pumps in trillion of "stimulus" to artificially inflate the sagging economy.

We also maintain our forecast for silver, which closed at \$25.67 today to rise above \$50 per ounce this year.

OIL. Despite the spreading fear of rising COVID cases globally, reports of tighter oil supplies, expectations of a drop in U.S. inventories, and Saudi Arabia's plan to cut output by an extra 1 million barrels per day (bpd) in February and March pushed oil prices to an 11-month high. Today, Brent Crude closed at \$56.55 and West Texas Intermediate up 1.74 percent, closing at \$53.16.

For five straight weeks, U.S. crude inventories have been falling. Analysts expect them to drop by another 2.7 million barrels.

With many nations going into lockdown, and Beijing and Japan now imposing new state of emergency orders in areas throughout their countries, considering the hard realities of economic decline, we forecast, minus a wild card event such as military conflict in the Middle East, oil prices are near their peak.

However, considering the reality of how markets are rigged, i.e. JP Morgan Chase rigging the precious metals market, in a criminal, anything-goes world, oil prices can be artificially pushed higher by The Wall Street Gang. (See our 29

September article, “DON’T CALL THEM CRIMINALS – THEY’RE ‘WHITE SHOE BOYS!’”)

YIELDS RISE, DOLLAR DOWN AS DEMS TAKE CONTROL



The yield on 30-year U.S. treasury securities closed at 1.863 percent on 8 January, up almost a quarter-point since the year began, *TradeWeb* reported, as investors bet that soon-to-be president Joe Biden and a Democratic Congress will unleash “trillions” more stimulus money and federal spending by promising to take on expensive infrastructure projects and offering aid to states and municipalities. Those moves would drive brisker economic growth and, with it, inflation.

The 10-year Treasury yield also has topped 1 percent for the first time since March, closing last week at 1.13 percent.

When bonds’ yields rise, their prices fall. As a result, bondholders have seen the value of their investments sink so far this year. Thirty-year Treasury bonds have lost more than 4 percent this month and 10-year bonds are down about 1.5 percent, according to *FactSet*.

TREND FORECAST: *We also forecast that should the Democrats move forward with their proposed stimulus packages, the more cheap money they inject into the economy, the further the dollar goes. Additional stimulus spending will dump more dollars into world markets, further diluting its value unless the U.S. Federal Reserve raises interest rates, which it has pledged not to do at least through this year and possibly until 2023.*

Thus, the weaker the dollar gets, the higher gold, silver, and bitcoin prices will rise as “investors” seek safe-haven alternatives.

In 2020, the buck lost about 7 percent of its value against benchmark world currencies.

The Fed also has said it will allow inflation to rise above 2 percent without raising interest rates in response. Given a slow economic recovery, that could keep U.S. interest rates near zero for years.

Other countries will decide they “are not in a position to keep on printing [money] and doing fiscal policy without a constraint,” Steven Englander, chief of currency research at Standard Chartered, commented to The New York Times. “The U.S. will be slower to get there.”

Goldman Sachs has predicted the dollar’s value will decline 5 percent this year; Bank of America sees the buck sliding 2 percent against the euro in 2021.

China’s forceful economic recovery and rising currency value are likely to lift emerging markets, luring investors away from dollar-denominated assets and sending them to other countries and currencies in search of higher returns, analysts say.

IMPORTS, NEW UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS BOTH REMAIN HIGH



The U.S. economy lost a net 140,000 jobs in December, the first net loss since April. Economists had forecast a 50,000-job gain.

Once again, the leisure and hospitality industry – including hotels, bars, and restaurants – showed the greatest losses, hitting particularly hard among young, minority, and less-educated workers, labor economist Julia Pollack at ZipRecruiter noted to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Social restrictions stemming from the spiking rate of COVID cases cut 372,000 jobs from dining and drinking establishments.

Unemployment among Hispanics, which made up 28 percent of the country's food service workers in 2019, rose from 8.4 to 9.3 percent; the Black jobless rate edged down last month but remained higher than that for any racial group.

The official unemployment rate held firm in December at 6.7 percent, and the number of workers who have stopped looking for jobs or who are working part-time but want full-time work declined from 12 percent to 11.7, the U.S. Labor Department reported.

More recently, about 787,000 new claims for unemployment benefits from regular state programs were filed during the week of 2 January, down a fractional 3,000 from the week before as that figure was revised upward by 3,000.

New unemployment claims have been holding steady around 800,000 a week for much of the autumn and winter.

The number of new weekly claims is widely viewed as a barometer of layoffs.

Manufacturing added 38,000 jobs as consumers shifted spending from services such as travel and dining out to goods such as cars, appliances, and furniture. The health care and logistics industries are hiring legions to produce and distribute COVID vaccines; Catalent, a New Jersey recruiting firm, reported offering \$4,000 signing bonuses to draw applicants.

However, most U.S. jobs are in services, where employment is still not growing its way past the economic crisis.

The figure from 2 January continues November's weakness, when household incomes declined again and household spending also decreased for the first time in seven months, the U.S. Commerce Department reported.

During 2020, 9.37 million jobs disappeared from the nation's economy, the most in any year since 1939 and almost twice as many as the 5.05 million lost in 2009 during the depths of the Great Recession. About 22 million workers were laid off last year, and the economy added back only 9.4 million jobs in April through June, with slower monthly gains since then.

This month, the U.S. Labor Department also revised upward the peak of the nation's 2020 jobless rate in April, nudging it from 14.7 percent to 14.8.

Trade War Lost

Meanwhile, in November, the U.S. trade deficit in goods grew to a level not seen since 1992. Imports of appliances, cell phones, jewelry, and toys led to the increase. The overall deficit in goods and services widened 8 percent from October, reaching a span unequaled since August 2006.

"It's been a very unequal pandemic economy," Scott Brown, chief economist at Raymond James, said to the *Journal*. The lower-wage workers bearing the brunt of the layoffs typically spend little beyond necessities, he noted. In contrast, the top 20 percent of earners have felt little damage from the economic crisis and continue to spend.

But "if we get vaccines rolled out, then we're in line for a significant rebound in the second half of the year," Brown thinks.

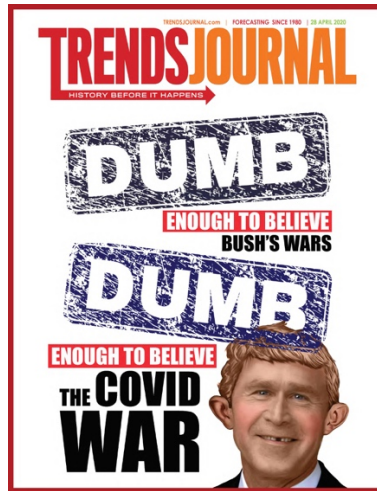
Economist Alfredo Romero at North Carolina A&T State University told the *Journal* he expects the U.S. to see a net job loss over the next few months and will not begin to add jobs back until the vaccine has been widely administered.

"It's now a race between the speed of vaccinations and the speed of contagion," he said.

TREND FORECAST: *We note the above quotes to illustrate the belief on The Street that the economic devastation inflicted upon the economy, which has destroyed businesses, lives, and livelihoods, will suddenly spring back to life when "vaccines roll out" and how fast "the speed of vaccinations" are injected into the population.*

Again, we find this to be a simplistic, narrow assessment of the greater socio-economic and geopolitical damage inflicted on society by the COVID War.

*"War" is what politicians referred to in their fighting the virus when they launched it last year. As we illustrated back then with our **Trends Journal** cover from 28 April, just as the people were dumb enough to believe Bush's wars, they were and still are dumb enough to believe the COVID War.*



We also made it 100 percent clear that just as they have an unblemished track record of starting wars and having no exit strategy (Korean War, Vietnam War, Afghan War, Iraq War, Syrian War, Libyan War, Yemen War, etc.), the politicians across the globe who launched the COVID War have no exit strategy.

Indeed, just yesterday, America's beloved and highly-touted COVID General, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo – whose state ranks more COVID deaths (39,808) and higher per capita death rate (204) than all but one state and most nations of the world – declared, "We will win the COVID War, and we will learn from the experience."

Win? As a result of the lockdowns, the state has raked up a projected \$8.7 billion deficit. And now the state's politicians, who get paid by stealing money in the name of taxes, are planning to impose new rounds of taxes.

Learn from the experience? Imposing draconian lockdowns such as destroying the New York City restaurant business despite a virus infection rate of 1.43 percent.

Learn from the experience? Pushing Manhattan's apartment vacancy rate to 13.3 percent in the third quarter of last year to the highest number in 24 years according to Cushman & Wakefield.

Learn from the experience? With only some 15 percent of people working in offices, all the business that depends on commuters is being destroyed, and tax revenues from those businesses have vanished.

Learn from the experience? Performing perfectly well with his daily broadcasts of selling steady streams of fear and hysteria, Cuomo received an Emmy award for his acting role from other actors.

Yes, the COVID War!

As we wrote when it was launched last year, just as the people marched off to Mussolini, saluted Stalin, and heiled Hitler, they obediently marched off to the COVID War.

NEW YORK CITY BUDGET BLUES



As a result of politicians' draconian lockdown orders, New York City will collect \$11.3 billion less in taxes through fiscal 2023 than it had expected according to a 6 January report from NYC's Independent Budget Office.

Through that time, employment in the City will remain below 2019 levels, the report added. New York City lost about 878,000 jobs in 2020. About 220,000, or 25 percent, returned in the third quarter.

Property taxes, which account for more than 40 percent of the city's budget, totaled \$59 billion last year, compared with \$100 billion collected in 2019, the report noted, adding that property tax receipts are likely to bounce back to around \$80 billion this year.

Sales tax revenues were down \$438 million in 2020, or about 5.6 percent year on year, but the office expects the figure will edge up by \$71 million this year.

The leisure and hospitality industry was decimated last year, and its long, slow recovery has set a weight on the City's economic future, the budget office said.

About 466,000 people worked in that sector at the end of 2019, with the pandemic and economic crisis erasing 217,000 of those jobs, or about 47 percent, by a year later.

NYC's hotel occupancy rate was about 40 percent last October, compared to 92 percent a year before, and 200 of New York's 700 hotels have closed their doors for good. Another 63 now are sheltering homeless persons.

TREND FORECAST: *With the exodus from New York City continuing and lockdowns still in place, we do not forecast a significant bounce back in the declining business sectors until the fear and hysteria motivation sold by the media and politicians is replaced with feelings of ease and enjoyment.*

Therefore, such industries and tourism and entertainment, which are key sectors for New York City, will not return to pre-COVID War levels for at least three years or possibly longer as the "Greatest Depression" worsens.

COVID WAR PUSHES UP BANKRUPTCIES



More than 7,100 U.S. businesses sought Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last year as the world's economic crisis crippled manufacturing, shut down exports, and kept consumers at home according to Epiq Systems, a legal services provider.

The number was about 29 percent above 2019's, the company noted.

As federal subsidies shrink or end, the pace of business bankruptcies could continue or even increase, Judah Gross, director of Fitch Ratings, told the *Wall Street Journal*.

As business failures soared in 2020, the number of bankruptcies among individuals plunged, even as millions lost their jobs and drained their savings. Federal unemployment payments, rent suspensions, mortgage forgiveness

programs, and other supports kept households afloat that otherwise would have sunk into insolvency, analysts said.

TREND FORECAST: *The worst is yet to come. Yes, there will be a bounce-back as more cheap money is injected into the equity markets and the general economy. However, consumer bankruptcies are a trailing indicator of national economic distress and are likely to rise significantly during the last half of this year, as Chris Kruse, Epiq's senior vice president, said to the Journal.*

U.S. MANUFACTURING STRONGEST IN TWO YEARS



Defying a glum outlook by analysts, U.S. manufacturing strengthened in December, according to the Institute for Supply Management (ISM).

The ISM's December index tracking factory output rose from 57.5 in November to 60.7 in December. Economists had expected the pace to retreat to 56.6.

The survey's price index surged from 65.4 to 77.6, the highest since May 2018, indicating that demand for materials is rising quickly, driving up prices, and hinting that inflation might be looming.

A sub-index of new orders edged up from 65.1 to 67.9 to and a gauge of suppliers' deliveries jumped from 61.7 to 67.6, the latter indicating that manufacturers are optimistic their recovery from the economic crisis will continue.

As ISM official Timothy Fiore said in a comment quoted by the *Financial Times*, "Absenteeism, short-term shutdowns to sanitize facilities, and difficulties in returning and rehiring workers are causing strains that are limiting manufacturing growth potential."

TREND FORECAST: *We forecast there will be a sharp drop off in manufacturing in the first quarter of 2021 as nations impose strict lockdown rules that have shut down millions of businesses across the nation and around the world.*

RENTAL HOUSING BUILDING BOOM



As people lose their jobs and wages diminish, the “rent but can’t buy a house” trend will continue to escalate.

Just as they did back when the Panic of ‘08 hit, the Bigs will build new houses and buy ones in foreclosure to rent out to cash-strapped consumers.

New home construction is speeding at a pace not seen since 2007. Many of the buyers are not individuals but institutional investors who are betting that families want to exit the cities and live in suburbs even if they are unable to buy a home there.

“Every institutional investor is considering this space,” Trevor Koskovich, who sells property investments at NorthMarq, told *the Wall Street Journal*. NorthMarq was part of a \$235-million deal in which a Chicago investment firm bought five gated communities in Arizona.

No Money, No Home

Demand for space outside of cities combined with low interest rates has pushed home prices to record levels. However, that has placed homeownership beyond the reach of average earners in 55 percent of U.S. counties, compared to 43 percent a year ago, according to analytics firm Attom Data Solutions.

Landlords who own single-family houses report record occupancy and rising rents since last March.

As a result, builders now are putting up houses to sell wholesale in packages to investors.

For example, the *Journal* reported that the five Arizona projects bundled 943 one- and two-bedroom houses built by Taylor Morrison Homes for developer Christopher Todd Communities. The two are partnering to build more “rental villages” across the U.S. southwest.

The share of single-family homes built for investors will grow fivefold to 5 percent in the next few years, Darin Rowe, Taylor Morrison’s rental chief, told the *Journal*.

More than 50,000 such houses were built in the 12 months ending 30 September, compared to the 31,000 in a typical year, reported John Burns of Real Estate Consulting.

The figure does not include single house projects or houses in typical subdivisions that investors have bought, the *Journal* noted.

TREND FORECAST: *This trend began at the end of the Great Recession when investors who had bought up the thousands of foreclosed homes were seeking new ways to expand. It will continue to grow as the “Greatest Depression” worsens.*

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: BLEAK 2021



With lockdown rules keeping people home and the media and politicians selling heavy daily doses of COVID Case hysteria, the construction industry will slump this year.

While new home construction is up, most other sectors of the construction industry are languishing as clients delay construction in the face of an uncertain economy, according to a survey released 7 January by the Associated General Contractors of America (AGCA).

“Demand looks likely to continue shrinking, projects are getting delayed or canceled, productivity is declining, and few firms plan to expand their headcount,” AGCA CEO Stephen Sandherr said in a statement accompanying the survey results.

In 13 of 16 construction categories surveyed, builders expect markets to contract.

Lodging and office construction earned an outlook of -58, higher education -40, public buildings -38, and K-12 schools -27.

Two sectors that rated positively are seen as tied to efforts to vanquish the COVID virus: warehousing +4 and medical clinics and labs +11.

Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents said they had projects postponed from 2020 into this year; 43 percent had projects postponed last year that have not been rescheduled.

Eighteen percent of builders had projects scheduled to start between now and June that have been put off, and 8 percent had projects planned for that time period that now have been canceled altogether.

A third of companies said business has matched or beaten last year’s levels, with 12 percent seeing their work returning to pre-pandemic levels by July. Fifty-five percent think their business will take longer than six months to recover or are unwilling to say when business will return to normal.

Thirty-five percent of companies expect to add workers this year, 24 percent will lay off employees, and 41 percent will make no changes to their payrolls.

Among builders in southern states, 39 percent expect to add workers, while 17 percent do not. In the Northeast, 41 percent plan to cut workers; less than a quarter will expand their payrolls.

Restrictions on social movement are forcing projects to take longer to complete according to 64 percent of companies, with 54 percent saying projects are costing more due to the strictures.

CAR SALES SLUMP: 2021 JUMP-START?



The U.S. auto industry closed 2020 as its weakest year since 2012, but automakers see a rebound in 2021's second half as vaccines are widely distributed, the job market strengthens, and consumers begin to spend again.

Consumers bought about 14.5 million cars and light trucks last year, 15 percent fewer than in 2019 and the lowest number in eight years, as the industry was grappling with the Great Recession and Chrysler and General Motors pleaded for a federal bailout.

"We look forward to an inflection point in the U.S. economy in spring," Elaine Buckberg, G.M.'s chief economist, said in a *New York Times* interview. "Widening vaccination rates and warmer weather should enable consumers and businesses to return to a more normal range of activities, lifting the job market, consumer sentiment, and auto demand."

The industry will sell 15.8 million cars and light trucks this year, according to Alix Partners, a business consulting firm. That would be a gain of about 9 percent year-on-year but still about 7 percent below the 17-million annual average the industry has booked over recent years.

"If the vaccination rollouts happen well, you could see additional spending unleashed," Mark Wakefield, an Alix managing partner, told *The Times*.

“There’s a lot of disposable income out there,” Scott Keogh, CEO of Volkswagen of America, agreed. “I’m as optimistic as one can be. What is weighing on everything is how quickly we can get those shots rolled out.”

TREND FORECAST: U.S. auto sales are expected to fall 15 percent this year. But, in the new ABnormal COVID World, economic fundamentals don’t matter.

Once again, the ONLY reason the economy and businesses will bounce back according to the mainstream media buzz? It’s all about a vaccine shot in the arm: “Widening vaccination rates.” “If the vaccination rollouts happen well, you could see additional spending unleashed.” “What is weighing on everything is how quickly we can get those shots rolled out.”

Again, we disagree. Yes, there will be a quick bounce-back this spring/summer, but the damage done by the draconian lockdowns, which are unprecedented in world history, has pushed the world into the “Greatest Depression.”

Does that mean there will be no business, and the world economy will grind to a halt? No. Instead, it portends a future of slowing and declining economic growth.

TRENDPOST: Overseas, Chinese car sales fell 6.8 percent last year... the third straight year of declining auto sales. Ford Motors said Monday that it would halt auto production in Brazil, thus eliminating some 5,000 jobs.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Ford lost \$386 million through the first three quarters of 2020. Indeed, the implications of the COVID War are continually diminished by rising equity markets and hopes of vaccinations boosting up sagging markets while politicians, the media, and industry heads downplay the economic severity caused by the closing down of much of the world’s economy.

PEAK ROCK GOBBLES SHIPLEY DONUTS



Shipley Do-Nuts, a Houston-based coffee and pastry chain of about 300 stores in the southern U.S., has been bought by Peak Rock Capital, a private equity firm headquartered in Austin.

The purchase includes the Shipley Franchise Co. and the Shipley Do-Nut Flour & Supply Co. The price and terms of the deal were not made public.

Shipley was founded in 1936 as a wholesale supplier, selling a dozen donuts for five cents.

Shipley's acquisition is among 25 buyouts Peak Rock has completed in recent years with local and regional family-owned companies, including Louisiana Fish Fry and Natural American Foods.

TRENDPOST: *We continue to note these buyouts and acquisitions to illustrate how the COVID War will push more small businesses out of business, how the Bigs will get bigger, and the concentration of wealth will grow greater among the few.*

GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS



STOCK-BUYERS GO GLOBAL. Investors, i.e., gamblers, are looking beyond the booming U.S. stocks for bargains in Europe and the developing world, which they expect to rebound sharply as vaccines spread and COVID cases recede.

U.S. equities markets are trading at or near record highs. Other markets offer greater chances for profits without as much risk of a market correction is the word on The Street.

On 31 December, the S&P 500 index was trading at 22.68 times 2021's projected earnings, well above the five-year average of 17.78, according to the data firm FactSet. The ratio for MSCI's Europe Index was 17.65 times.

In contrast, the MSCI Emerging Markets Index was trading at 15.65 times earnings.

Also, U.S. markets are increasingly driven by tech stocks, which will weaken as the COVID War winds down; people will start going back to work, students will go back to school; people will go out to shop... thus making them less online and tech-dependent.

Technology shares made up half of the S&P index's 18-percent growth spurt last year; the tech-centric NASDAQ shot up 45 percent in 2020.

Guessing Game

The number of fund managers buying more than their usual shares of companies in emerging markets is at the highest number since November 2010, according to a December Bank of America survey.

China, whose economy is the only one of the major nations whose GDP will have risen in 2020, is also luring investors to developing nations, where China has a growing market share in several sectors. As Gerald Celente had forecast, the 20th century was the American century, the 21st will be China's since the business of America is war and the business of China is business.

Indeed, while China invests in business, despite the miserable economic conditions in the United States, just three weeks ago, Congress passed its largest defense budget in history with \$627.3 billion in base funding and \$68.7 billion in wartime overseas contingency operations funding.

Investors are "realizing that not only will they gain more diversification through international exposure but it also allows them to have more... exposure" to stocks whose share prices will rise as consumer economies rebound around the world, Sinead Grant, equities chief at BNY Mellon Wealth Management, told the *Wall Street Journal*.

IMF PREDICTS A "DARK WINTER." The global economy begins this year poised for growth, due in part to 2020's stronger-than-expected performance in some

countries, particularly the U.S. and Japan, Gita Gopinath, chief economist for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said in a 6 January *Yahoo* interview.

The year's stronger start, coupled with new stimulus spending, "should power recovery in the second half" of this year, she noted.

In the short term, however, the world faces a "dark winter" as new COVID strains continue to spread infection, she said, adding that "it's important that countries not prematurely withdraw" stimulus funding, citing recent bailout spending in the U.S. and Japan as examples of crucial short-term economic defense.

Also, "central banks should take a cautious approach to withdrawing any kind of support," she emphasized.

The U.S. Federal Reserve has pledged to continue its aggressive purchases of debt and keep interest rates near zero until the economic recovery makes "substantial further progress." However, some Fed officials recently have floated the idea of easing back of some aid measures this year.

Gopinath disagrees. "Interest rates are at historic lows and expected to be low for quite some time, which gives fiscal authorities space to use their toolbox," Gopinath said, pointing out that stimulus spending depends on low interest rates.

"Based on the... 2020 numbers," the IMF could upgrade its economic outlook for some regions, she said, but recovery in some developing countries could be delayed if vaccines are not available and used at a brisk pace in those areas. Her upbeat outlook assumes vaccines will be widely available and widely used by mid-year, she acknowledged.

In October, the IMF forecast a global growth rate for 2021 of 5.2 percent. The fund will release an updated forecast on 26 January.

TRENDPOST: *As we had noted at the onset of today's economic overview, the "experts," politicians, business executives, economists, and the media are all betting on a COVID Vaccine economic high for the future.*

VACCINE DELAY THREATENS ECONOMY RECOVERY, WORLD BANK SAYS.

The world's economy faces "a slow and difficult recovery at best," the World Bank said in a 5 January statement, warning that even a moderate delay in distributing the serums could slash this year's global growth rate in half.

The statement echoes the IMF's comment that the recovery is a race between vaccination campaigns and the continued spread of the COVID virus.

The bank is forecasting the world's GDP will grow 4 percent this year, ending the year 4.4 percent smaller than at the end of 2019.

That includes a 3.3 percent growth rate in the developed world and 3.4 percent among emerging economies. China will remain the outlier, growing 7.9 percent in 2021, the bank expects.

The forecast assumes vaccine campaigns will be expedited across both the developed and developing world, achieving widespread immunity by July, the bank emphasized.

If the campaigns are hobbled by logistical glitches or peoples' refusal to be vaccinated, ongoing COVID infections could lead politicians to continue restrictions on economic activity. In that case, the global economy's 2021 growth could be as small as 1.6 percent, the bank said.

Even with a successful worldwide vaccination campaign, the pandemic and economic crisis will continue to brake global growth, doing lasting damage to health, education, and corporations' financial well-being, said World Bank president David Malpass.

"If history is any guide, the global economy is heading for a decade of growth disappointments," he said in a statement accompanying the bank's forecast.

"Stimulus mechanisms are working to concentrate wealth at the top rather than adding wealth from the bottom up," he noted. "People at the bottom are going down even as people at the top are going up."

TRENDPOST: *We agree with both Mr. Malpass's assessment of the global economic future and the inequality of wealth distribution.*

SERVICE SECTOR STILL STRUGGLING. While the global manufacturing sector returns to life at a relatively quick pace, the world's service industries are struggling, IHS Markit reported.

In the U.S., the company's Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) in services measured 54.8 this month, down from 58.4 in October.

Ratings above 50 indicate expansion; higher numbers indicate stronger growth.

“Increasing virus case numbers took an increasing toll on the U.S. economy in December with business activity... growing at much-reduced rates,” Chris Williamson, IHS's chief business economist, told the *Wall Street Journal*. “The slowdown was especially steep in the service sector, where social distancing measures hit consumer-facing businesses.”

Europe's service-sector PMI climbed from 41.7 in November to 46.4 in December, indicating less weakness, although the European Central Bank estimates the continent's economy shrank by 2.2 percent in 2020's final quarter.

Also in December, China's Caixin service-sector PMI sank from November's 57.8 mark to 56.3.

In India, purchasing managers had forecast the HSBC service-sector PMI for India would rise from November's 53.7 to 54.0; instead, the index dropped to 52.3.

Australia was the service industry's bright spot for the month, with its PMI rising from 55.3 to 57.0.

KEEP STIMULUS COMING, PROTOCOLS IN PLACE, OECD URGES.

Governments and central banks must keep stimulus money flowing and social restrictions in place while COVID vaccines cultivate widespread immunity to the virus, Laurence Boone, chief economist for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), said in a 9 January BBC interview.

“These [stimulus] measures do make sense because the crisis is temporary,” she contended. “We're talking about temporary measures and a temporary increase in debt-to-GDP ratio.”

Once past the crisis, “we will have to take a step back, look at the evolution of public finances... not only since COVID-19 but also since the [Great Recession] and see whether governments are spending their money on the right priorities.”

The OECD has warned of worsening economic inequality around the globe.

As vaccine campaigns continue, mask-wearing, social distancing, and other anti-contagion protocols must remain in place, Boone stressed.

“We probably have another six to nine or 12 months ahead of us” when the measures need to be maintained, she thinks.

“I’m not saying it’s easy,” she said. “I’m saying... it worked in 2020.

The OECD has predicted the global GDP will return to pre-pandemic levels by 2022, a sunnier forecast than many other groups have made.

However, the recovery will be uneven, Boone said, with China leading the world with an 8-percent gain and the OECD’s 37 member countries averaging 3 percent.

WORLD BANK AGAIN WARNS OF “DEEP DEBT DISTRESS.” Many more countries, particularly those in the South, will come under “deep debt distress” this year, David Malpass, World Bank president, said in comments quoted by Dubai’s *Gulf Today* newspaper.

Zambia has defaulted on some of its debt, he noted, and African oil producer Chad will need to reduce its debt to avoid a financial crisis. Restructuring sovereign debt already is underway in Angola and Ecuador.

Many emerging nations were sinking under massive debt loads before the economic crisis struck.

Stretching out payment schedules, easing terms, cutting interest rates, or forgiving some debt outright will be crucial to a robust global economic recovery, Malpass said.

China, which owns about 65 percent of the outstanding debts among developing countries, in particular needs to address the pending debt crisis, he added.

Many nations have suspended debtor nations’ payments through June, which Malpass acknowledged as a key step, but said more must be done.

The World Bank already is spending \$12 billion to help poor nations acquire and distribute COVID vaccines, he noted. The bank also is urging developed nations to release more of their vaccine supplies to poor countries.

EUROPEAN ECONOMY DOWN, STIMULUS CALLS UP. Retail sales contracted at 6.1 percent across the Eurozone in November, more than the 3 to 4 percent that was expected, due largely to tightened restrictions on social movement.

The weak sales, coupled with falling prices, are sparking renewed calls among business leaders for government stimulus by European Union nations and the union's central bank.

November marked the fifth consecutive month of retail's weakness, falling 18 percent in France, where nonessential stores were ordered closed earlier than in other countries.

December's inflation rate was -0.3 percent, with energy prices falling and food prices rising more slowly than in the month before.

Price drops were the sharpest in Germany at -0.7 percent; analysts expect that trend to reverse this month now that the government has cut value-added tax rates.

TREND FORECAST: Yes, there will be more European Central Bank stimulus. In turn, the more cheap money pumped into the system, the higher precious metals and cryptocurrency prices will rise.

CORPORATE DEBT LOAD THREATENS LONG-TERM SOLVENCY. Even if a company's business rebounds as the economic crisis recedes, lingering debt may hamper its ability to turn a profit or even its survival, according to Howard Marks, founder of Oak Tree Capital, an investment management firm that specializes in buying distressed debt.

Driven by euphoria over COVID vaccines' deployment, markets ran "far ahead of economic fundamentals," he told the *Financial Times*, with markets "so bifurcated – high relative to historic valuations" with "bonds and credit offering... the lowest returns in history."

The recent junk-bond rally and opening-day soaring prices for IPOs is emblematic of markets' recklessness, Marks said.

Easy credit and markets' enthusiasm drove corporations to lard on more than \$2.2 trillion in new debt last year, according to MarketWatch, bringing the global total owed to at least \$5.4 billion, by conservative estimates. Syndicated loan markets poured in an additional \$3.5 trillion, the *Times* reported.

While companies hoarded cash and credit lines to survive the crisis, they also saw sales and revenue dwindle. That divergence has left even previously strong companies overleveraged, Marks said.

At least 515 companies are so precariously balanced between debt and revenue that they could easily topple into bankruptcy or require restructuring, S&P Global said in a recent analysis.

By September, 9 percent of companies with junk-rated bonds could fail, S&P warned.

TREND FORECAST: *When the overvalued equity markets, trading a near record-level price earning ratios, crash – the S&P 500’s forward price-earnings ratio is currently just below 23, near its highest level dating back to 2000 – so, too, will the debt bubble explode, dragging nations deeper into the “Greatest Depression.”*

ECONOMIC CRISIS SLASHES LIVING STANDARDS ACROSS SOUTHERN AFRICA. The global economic crisis cut per-capita incomes by 6.1 percent in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 and will shave another 0.2 percent this year before stabilizing in 2022, according to the World Bank’s just-released *Global Economic Prospects* report.

The loss “is expected to set average living standards back by a decade or more in a quarter of sub-Saharan African economies, with even more severe setbacks in Nigeria and South Africa – home to one-quarter of the region’s population,” the report stated.

“This reversal is projected to push tens of millions more people in the region into extreme poverty cumulatively in 2020 and 2021,” it added.

The report sees South Africa’s economy growing 3.3 percent this year, down from the 4 percent it had predicted last fall, and slowing to 1.7 percent in 2022. Heavy national debt and endemic problems such as chronic power outages will hobble recovery, the report said.

South Africa has seen the most severe COVID outbreak in the region, prompting officials to impose a draconian shutdown that halted almost all economic activity.

TREND FORECAST: *We note the declining economic conditions in South Africa to put into focus the current events prior to the COVID War that were ravaging that nation.*

As we have been reporting, South Africa's economy was in decline and massive demonstrations and riots were raging across the nation in 2019. People were

taking to the streets in protest of government corruption, rising poverty, lack of basic living standards, crime, and violence.

However, those protests were instantly silenced when the COVID War broke out and the government banned demonstrations.

We forecast they will again heat up as economic conditions continue to deteriorate. As Gerald Celente says, "When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it." Economically, the masses have lost it.

TRENDPOST: *It should be noted that South Africa, with a population of nearly 60 million people, has registered some 34,000 coronavirus deaths since last March or 0.056 percent of the population.*

Each year, nearly three times as many people, over 90,000 South Africans, die from diabetes according to International Diabetes Federation, yet there is no lockdown of the nation and little is being done by the government to reverse the trend. In addition, an estimated 28,000 South Africans die of tuberculosis.

€6 BILLION IN STOCK DEALS BREXIT BRITAIN. On 4 January, the first stock-trading day of the year, €6 billion worth of trade business left Britain and relocated to the European Union.

Trading in Europe-based stocks such as Deutsche Bank, Santander, and French oil giant Total SE happens freely across borders within the union. Now that the U.K. has Brexited the E.U., Brits can no longer trade those shares on their home exchanges.

The trades that were absent from British exchanges totaled about a sixth of trading volume on European stock markets for the day, the *Financial Times* reported.

The shift not only is costing the British government fees and taxes but also encourages U.K. firms to list on European exchanges to make trading in multiple countries easier, analysts pointed out.

"Bang and it's gone – the City," London's equivalent of Wall Street, "has lost its European share business," Alisdair Haynes, CEO of Aquis Exchange, a pan-European trading services firm, commented to the *Times*.

"Virtually all" euro-denominated trades that were taking place in Britain moved to the Paris bourse within hours, Haynes said.

CBOE Europe is a trading house that had offices in London and Amsterdam. After doing little business in 2020, the Amsterdam exchange is now hosting €3.3 billion in deals, the company reported. Turquoise, a London-based trading platform that offered investors access to markets across Europe, also has seen its trades shift to Amsterdam.

As much as 30 percent of E.U. stock trades had moved through Britain. However, the Brexit agreement between the E.U. and U.K. ignored financial services, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has publicly admitted.

TREND FORECAST: *Where is the U.K. economy going with Brexit? As for the trade implications, both with hard goods and financial, with more details still unclear, we are not prepared to make a forecast.*

However, as for its general economy, considering the vast, stringent new lockdown orders that will shut down the nation until March, despite a temporary bounce-back after restrictions are lifted, the U.K. will sink into the “Greatest Depression” faster than most of its former EU partners.

DENMARK LENDERS OFFER ZERO-PERCENT MORTGAGES. Borrowers with Denmark’s mortgage offices of Scandinavian financial giant Nordea Bank now can get a 20-year home loan at a fixed interest rate of zero.

Totalkredit, a division of Nykredit Realkredit, Denmark’s largest mortgage lender, will also offer 20-year mortgages carrying no interest, as will Jyske Bank’s mortgage office, the two have announced. Danske Bank, the country’s biggest bank, has hinted it may do the same.

Denmark has led Europe’s way to rock-bottom interest rates, having pegged rates below zero in 2012 to maintain the krone currency’s stable relationship to the euro.

Now, with central banks pledging to leave rates near or below zero indefinitely, according to Bloomberg, Danish lenders are hoping to jump-start the housing market in the wake of the global economic crisis.

The mortgages will be snapped up, Lisa Bergmann, Nordea Kredit, chief housing economist, told *Bloomberg*, adding that the bonds underwriting the mortgages are likely to be priced near record highs.

TURKEY’S MARKETS SURGE ON INTEREST RATE HIKES. Investors poured \$1.4 billion into Turkey’s stock markets and \$2.5 billion into in-country bonds in

November and December after the nation's central bank raised interest rates above the pace of inflation at its two most recent policy meetings.

The value of Turkish stocks is up 70 percent from its 2020 low and gained more than 10 percent in December alone, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

At its December meeting, the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey raised a key interest rate from 15 percent to 17 percent, lifting it above 2020's inflation rate of 14.6 percent. The change made lira-denominated investments profitable for the first time in more than a year.

Investors yanked about \$13 billion out of Turkey's markets in 2020 as the central bank pursued a disastrous policy of interest-rate cuts under pressure from president Recip Erdogan, who thought the cuts would kick-start the nation's feeble economy.

To prop up the sagging lira, Turkey's currency, the bank threw billions of dollars' worth of the country's foreign currency reserves into the markets to buy lira. Still, the lira slumped to record lows against the dollar late last year.

Now the lira is at its strongest since August 19, trading above 7.33 to the dollar on 6 January. The turnaround came at the direction of Naci Agbal, the central bank's new governor.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have been reporting, Turks have been growing increasingly desperate as the lockdown orders have taken a heavy toll on the nation, with 25 percent of the country saying they might not be able to meet their basic needs.*

Beyond the domestic economic devastation caused by the draconian measures, travel restrictions and curfews have crimped the country's important hospitality sector. Agbal also has pledged to curb inflation and rebuild Turkey's foreign currency reserves.

Thus, we forecast continuing economic weakness. Yes, there will be, and there is uplifting equity news, but there will be more pressure by President Erdogan to lower interest rates as the economy continue to decline, thus putting renewed downward pressure on the lira.

Also, currencies other than the lira have made up more than half of the country's bank deposits in recent weeks, the Journal reported, indicating Turks' lack of faith that the changes will result in long-lasting benefits.

*Turkey's markets also have benefited from investors' renewed interest in emerging markets, which we have noted in this **Trends Journal**. In search of higher returns, many are willing to take on higher risk on the assumption that the global distribution of COVID vaccines will revive developing nations' staggering economies.*

INDIA FORESEES 7.7-PERCENT ECONOMIC CONTRACTION IN FY 2021.

India's GDP will shrink 7.7 percent this fiscal year and end the period 3.9 percent below 2019's disappointing number, the National Statistical Office has predicted.

Dismal as it is, the forecast is more optimistic than those of other agencies. The World Bank foresees India's economy contracting 9.6 percent in 2021; the International Monetary Fund has predicted a 10.3-percent retreat.

Given that the economy withered by 15.7 percent in the fiscal year's first half, a 7.7-percent loss in the new year could almost be seen as a robust recovery, the *Financial Express* newspaper commented.

Government revenues have fallen sharply, while expenses have remained level. If the deficit were to double, it would equal 8.2 percent of GDP, forcing drastic revisions in the budget for fiscal 2022, the newspaper noted.

India's GDP contracted 23.9 percent in the first quarter of its current fiscal year and 22.6 percent from March through June. However, the shrinkage was kept to just 4 percent in the quarter ending with September, better than analysts had expected.

DEUTSCHE BANK SETTLES CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES FOR \$125

MILLION. German financial giant Deutsche Bank has settled a bribery case brought by the U.S. justice department and Securities Exchange Commission (S.E.C.) for \$125 million.

The bank allegedly paid about \$7 million over seven years to politically connected intermediaries in various countries to connect the bank to government officials.

Deutsche Bank had listed the payments in its records as “referral fees” and described them as money paid to consultants to help the bank find new customers.

As part of the settlement, the bank signed a deferred prosecution agreement with the justice department, essentially a form of probation.

“We take responsibility for these actions,” the bank said in a statement announcing the settlement.

The bank could show no invoices for the payments, the services paid for were often vaguely described, many who were paid received money over their contracted amount, or were paid without having a contract for services at all, the justice department's investigation found.

The agreement also settled charges against the bank that it had manipulated commodities markets by placing orders for goods, profiting in the derivatives market as prices for the goods rose. The bank then canceled the orders before the goods could be delivered.

The bank has a colorful history of criminality.

In July 2020, it paid a \$150-million fine to the S.E.C. to discharge allegations that it failed to report suspicious transactions by alleged sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. In 2019, Deutsche Bank paid the same agency \$16 million to settle an investigation that it had gained business in China and Russia through corrupt means.

TRENDPOST: *We also note this article to again illustrate the high levels of criminality and corruption. And how the Bankster criminal class gets monetary slaps on the wrist for their high crimes and misdemeanors while the little people of Slavelandia are prosecuted to the full extent of the law.*

No clearer example today than the brutal squads of COVID Cops breaking into people's homes, punching out non-mask wearers, and arresting protestors for not abiding by the draconian lockdown orders... that only the top politicians, as we have documented, are permitted to breach.

TOP TRENDS 2021: THE RISE OF CHINA



As we have forecast, the 20th century was the American century – the 21st century will be the Chinese century. The business of China is business; the business of America is war. While America spent countless trillions waging and losing endless wars and enriching its military-industrial complex, China has spent its trillions advancing the nation's businesses and building its 21st-century infrastructure.

The following overview of the current economic trends further paints the ups and downs of China's economic future.

CHINA SET TO RIVAL NEW YORK AND LONDON AS FINANCIAL CENTER.

China soon will emerge as a financial center equal to New York and London, predicts Raymond Dalio, founder of Bridgewater Associates, the world's largest hedge fund.

Last year was China's "defining year" as a global economic power, he said in a December interview with the *Financial Times*.

Although the country's financial infrastructure is less developed than the world's two other major investment hubs, it soon will grow to a scale that challenges New York's Wall Street and The City in London, Dalio said.

"China already has the world's second-largest capital markets and I think they will eventually vie for having the world's financial center," he noted. "Throughout history, the largest trading countries evolved into having the global financial center and the global reserve currency."

China's emergence "just looks like that all over again," he said.

As the **Trends Journal** has been reporting, China's economic recovery has been swift and relatively steady; its economic growth this year will far outpace that of any other country; and it offers higher interest rates and more room for stock prices' growth than many developed countries.

As a result, foreign investors flooded Chinese markets with more than \$140 billion in 2020.

China's authoritarian government can skew markets with unexpected unilateral actions, Dalio acknowledged, but "nothing's perfect" and "you've got to diversify," he pointed out. China's capital markets "are good investments and the world is underinvested there."

CHINA STOCKS SET RECORD CLOSE. China's CSI 300 of leading stocks listed on the Shanghai and Shenzhen markets closed 11 January at 5,441 after touching 5,542, its highest mark ever, during the trading day. On 5 January, the index gained 1.9 percent, closing at a then-record 5,368, its highest mark since 2008, and has kept climbing.

Chinese equity markets have gained about 50 percent in value after a brief plunge at the beginning of the pandemic early in 2020.

China's economic recovery has outpaced that of virtually every other nation and its interest rates are among the highest, convincing investors to put about \$150 billion in Chinese stocks and bonds last year.

Individual Chinese investors also have entered the markets, believing that stocks are still a good value and the government will ensure the market's stability, analysts say.

Also, in-country investors "don't have another alternative at this time and people's confidence is bouncing back," Ronald Wan, CEO of Partners Capital, said to the *Financial Times*.

The price surge has raised the specter of 2015's Chinese stock bubble, which was followed by a 40-percent market crash.

However, stocks are more reasonably valued now, observers point out, and far less borrowed money is being invested because the government clamped down on leverage after the 2015 debacle.

Still, the boom could fade during 2021's second half as vaccines are widely distributed around the world and other nations' economies recover, offering investors a wider choice of growing returns, Wan pointed out.

"At that point" China's stock exchanges "may see an adjustment," he said.

CHINA RISKS FINANCIAL INSTABILITY, IMF WARNS. China must quickly address rising debt and generous financial stimulus measures to avoid financial instability, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned in an 8 January report.

Lax treatment of non-performing loans and payment holidays for borrowers "run the risk of increasing moral hazard and undoing recent progress in strengthening bank transparency and governance," the report said.

Debt loads rose and creditworthiness deteriorated during the pandemic and economic recovery because banks were not vigorous in confronting delinquent borrowers. Small banks came under heightened financial pressures and some local governments saw debt rise as revenues shrank, the IMF noted.

China's economy will grow 7.9 percent this year, but "it's crucial to look below the headline number and what we see there is growth that is not yet as balanced as we would like to have," Helge Berger, head of the IMF's China mission, said in an 8 January *Bloomberg* interview.

"Growth is still relying heavily on... traditional public infrastructure investment," she noted. "What is lagging is consumption."

The IMF's report urges China to adjust fiscal policy to stimulate household spending and strengthen social safety nets.

"Establishing a reliable and effective social safety system that sends transfers to low-income households during economic downturns would provide high-impact support to the recovery," the report stated.

"It also would make growth more resilient by reducing the high household savings rate and reinvigorating economic rebalancing toward private consumption over the medium term."

Interest rates and the money supply should be flexible to control inflation rates and keep markets robust, the report suggested, adding that financial regulations need to be made stronger.

China has indicated it will attend to the IMF's suggestions this year but will not shift policies suddenly enough to unsettle the country's economic recovery.

GOING DOWN, GOING BUST, GOING OUT

CRUISE LINES TO STAY DOCKED. Carnival Cruises' flagship Carnival line, as well as its Princess and Holland divisions' ships, will stay in ports through March in the U.S. as the company works to satisfy health restrictions imposed by state and federal authorities. Its P&O Cruises Australia division suspended New Zealand trips through 25 April. Trips in the Caribbean and along the California coast have been postponed through 25 May, the company announced.

BYE BYE BIZOU. The Quebec-based chain of 85 jewelry stores across eastern Canada will permanently close 24 sites this month, *La Presse* reported.

The company, which filed for bankruptcy last fall with \$9.5 million in debt, attributes its woes not only to the economic crisis but also to shoppers migrating to Amazon.

POUNDLAND SHUTS STORES. Poundland, the British chain of more than 800 stores selling items for £1, is putting 44 stores into "hibernation" indefinitely during the nation's current lockdown.

The chain has been deemed an "essential retailer" because it sells food, over-the-counter medicines, and other staples.

The 44 shuttered shops are likely those that underperformed during previous lockdowns when the company "learned valuable lessons about how buying patterns change" when people are ordered to stay home, Austin Cooke, the company's retail director, said in a comment quoted by *Yahoo Finance*.

HALF OF SWISS HOTELS, RESTAURANTS FACE BANKRUPTCY. Nearly half of Switzerland's hotels and restaurants will be bankrupt within a few months without federal aid if the nation's government implements plans to keep these businesses locked down through February, trade group GastroSuisse warned in a 10 January statement.

About 98 percent of Swiss lodging and dining establishments are already in desperate need of support, according to a GastroSuisse poll of 4,000 businesses.

During November and December, the nation's hospitality sector carried out a second round of layoffs. Extending the shutdown by an additional six weeks would force thousands of more people out of their jobs, the group said.

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS *by Gregory Mannarino*

DOLLAR DEATH: GETTING CLOSER



And here we go.

Unlike anything we've seen before, we are about to witness a massive tsunami of debt being unleashed.

This past Friday, with the stock market hitting yet another record high, we heard it right out of the mouth of President-elect Joe Biden. He detailed that a new, multi-trillion-dollar stimulus package is coming. This is no surprise to **Trends Journal** readers, as I wrote previously that the last stimulus package would be the first of at least three more.

The effect of this is far-reaching. First, no amount of "stimulus" being piled on, which, actually, is debt, will re-stimulate the economy. What it will do is vault the stock market even higher and steal yet more purchasing power away from the dollar. Nothing in this environment of fakery and propaganda is what it seems.

We are in the midst of the largest transfer of wealth ever to be seen in the history of the world; an acceleration into a new feudal system. Make no mistake about it – this is all deliberate and by design.

Mass debt expansion is about to affect the stock market in two primary ways:

1. It will continue to inflate it.
2. It will bring forth a multiple expansion cycle. What this means is investors will be willing to pay even more to own shares of stock.

There is another effect as well: the faster the economy free falls, the higher stock prices will go.

There is a shadow government that runs the world, and that is the central banks. The central banks are 100 percent in control of the economy, the markets, politics, and, therefore, the world. They rule and govern it all. We The People no longer matter; it is the corporate agenda. They have taken our voices.

We have entered a new paradigm, with a new set of rules being forced upon us... this is something I have warned for years would happen. This new paradigm will bring with it a deeper, darker police state and epic debt expansion.

Over the last few years, we have watched an extremely dangerous merger occur: the joining of corporations and a new American government philosophy. The definition of a merger of corporate power and a government is defined as fascism. Under this new regime, the shadow government (central banks) will exert more power and control, and, as it unfolds, the middle class will continue to be eliminated.

The rich and well-off, who have seen their wealth balloon, will see it grow even more as the middle class gets destroyed.

Understand, wealth is not really created or destroyed – it is simply transferred from one group's reality to another, and this is going to accelerate rapidly.

MARKET FORECAST: *Within a short time, things are going to become even more unrecognizable as a new paradigm, with its new set of rules, further sets in, with its end goal being to completely replace the current one.*

by Gregory Mannarino, TradersChoice.net

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM *by Bradley J. Steiner*

In Memoriam:

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

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

THE HEART & SOUL OF SELF-DEFENSE



A great revelation that very few who study “martial arts” ever get is self-defense – one of the most important functions of martial training – is dependent not on extensive physical expertise, acrobatic skills, agility, flexibility, and a vast array of “secret” techniques and maneuvers, but upon attack mindedness, extreme offense (technically), and animal ferocity.

This is not popular to tell someone who enters a posh “dojo” (the Japanese term for training gym) in an upscale section of the city and is asked to purchase an expensive course of instruction, a uniform, and to pay a membership fee.

Most, instead, would prefer to hear the bullshit:

“Here you will learn how to overcome any opponent, no matter how big or strong. Don’t worry, you don’t need much strength – just know-how. Our school teaches you the secrets and mysteries of the ancient, unbeatable fighting arts. After training with us, you will be easily able to defend yourself – even against weapons or more than one attacker!”

To be fair, not every school presents such claptrap; but many do, and it is dangerous to buy into such nonsense. Real self-defense entails risk and, if an attack is very serious and launched by a determined and perhaps armed or assisted violent felon, you can expect to get hurt, even if you are successful in defending yourself. (Now that's *not* what people want to hear, is it?)

For more years than I care to remember, I have been teaching people not what they "want to hear," but that which they need to hear, understand, appreciate, assimilate, and apply. That is what I am teaching you now.

When a person is subject to a sudden, violent attack by a dangerous felon, he must be capable of shifting his mindset to "wild animal" and discarding instantly all traces of decency, restraint, forbearance, fair play, human concern for others, and mercy. None of these things will do anything to help someone defend himself. All they will do is make the intended victim a greater victim and less likely to survive the criminal's attack.

To effectively be able to deal with a violent predator, you need to start thinking of OFFENSE: Attacking your assailant. And doing so brutally and with techniques that may be relied on to stop violent attackers who are strong, experienced, ruthless, likely on drugs/under the influence, and almost certainly deranged to some degree. Add to all this a determination to either not get caught and go to prison – or to go back to prison – which often prompts these beasts to do horrific things to their victims in a frenzied state of violence.

We who are in this professionally (not as professional sportsmen or as professional classical martial arts people, but as professional combat instructors) know very well what works under the worst possible conditions and against the most dangerous attackers. It has all been wrung out and established in actual warfare. The techniques are simple, uncomplicated, easily learned, readily retained, and adaptable to all sorts of varied situations where serious violence threatens. And with only a small percentage of counterattacking (i.e. purely defensive) actions, the heart and soul of real-world, doable self-defense techniques is *Offense*.

This means to proactively, relentlessly, and, yes, with cruelty and savagery, go after the individual who attacks you with furious, aggressive actions of your own. This attitude, this tactical imperative, this underlying strategy, this guiding mandate for the use of technique, is THE CORE AND ESSENCE of effective, practical preparation. It is the heart and soul of self-defense... REAL self-defense.

The truth is you need very few techniques with which to defend yourself. If you have no interest in pursuing combatives training to a high level of expertise, merely go to YouTube and look at my “[American Combato](#)” videos. Study the series of excellent technique presentations by Prof. Mark Bryans. He shows sufficient techniques that a person who had mastered them would find more than sufficient to drop some lump of street manure in an emergency – but only if those techniques have been thoroughly mastered and are delivered with murderous fury and determination.

My [DVD course](#) provides much more than anyone should need to be able to defend himself IF he works and trains hard to master the contents, and IF his attitude in any emergency situation is that of KILL OR BE KILLED!

I fully appreciate many will dismiss my words as “too violent,” “too extreme,” or simply too much for them. They are free to do so, of course. I hope, however, that you take this to heart.

If you do take this message to heart, then you will begin to ready yourself realistically and fully “just in case.” The urban setting today is none too safe or peaceful... or even reasonable. Violence erupts daily and seriously in all of our major cities, and often over nothing.

All who are urbanized and who – despite the drawbacks – see a much more compatible lifestyle for themselves in a metropolitan area, need to accept there is certainly a greater likelihood of violent intrusion and danger from predatory humans in a metropolitan area than is likely to be found in a remote, small town.

Be ready. Be prepared. The first-class intelligence you require (unavailable from any mainstream sources today) is right here in TRENDS, as you doubtlessly already know. But don’t forget the mindset, skills, and tactical savvy that also must be acquired... and which requires a degree of physical action to master.

Do what is necessary now to ensure the nasty side of urban living is not something that will catch you unaware, should it ever come to you.

It is far too late to develop the skills and acquire the proper mindset when catastrophe strikes. Hopefully, it will never strike you and yours. But, if it should, make sure you are well-prepared and have attained mastery of the heart and soul of self-defense, no less than the mechanics.

The truth will keep coming to you right here in my Survivalism column for the **Trends Journal**. Meet my efforts to inform and instruct you halfway, please, and you'll be able to focus on the benefits of urban living, while, at the same time, being ready for the inevitable hazards.

by Bradley J. Steiner

TRENDS ON THE COVID WARFRONT

STUDY: MASKS HARMING CHILDREN



By August of last year, over 100 countries had nationwide mask-wearing mandates according to the Council on Foreign Relations. That didn't count the United States which, while it didn't have a federal mandate, currently had 38 states where governors required them.

On 17 September, the CDC made clear its position when it comes to masks on young people: "Children 2 years of age and older should wear a mask."

In mid-December, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly recommended that children engaging in most sports should be required to wear cloth masks, claiming they decrease COVID-19 spread and most children can tolerate wearing masks during physical activity. On its website, the AAP states, "Younger athletes may find wearing a cloth face mask challenging and may need to be reminded and/or assisted by parents/coaches."

FU Science

Were these strong recommendations that children be required to wear masks based on sound, scientific evidence?

No.

As confirmed in a new study from Germany published by staff members at the University of Witten/Herdecke Medical School:

“There are no manufacturer-independent studies on the use of masks for children and adolescents that are certified as medical products for occupational safety in professional applications.

In addition, due to the unknown materials used, there are no findings on the potential protective effects or side effects of the often home-made ‘everyday masks’ worn by the majority of children. In view of the ongoing measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, and, in particular, the varying obligations for children and adolescents to wear masks in school over a longer period of time, there is an urgent need for research.”

The University’s findings provided the first data showing the consequences of children regularly wearing face masks. Conducted last fall and including over 20,000 participants, the results show over two-thirds of parents reported their children had suffered significant physical and psychological problems from regularly wearing face masks.

Twenty-four different health complaints were reported. Among them:

- Headaches (53 percent)
- Concentration difficulties (49.5 percent)
- Impairment in learning (38 percent)
- Drowsiness (36.5 percent)
- Shortness of breath (29.7 percent)
- Dizziness (26.4 percent)
- Unwillingness to play (17.9 percent)
- Nausea (16.6 percent)
- Feeling of weakness (14.7 percent)
- Abdominal pain (13.5 percent)
- Accelerated breathing (12 percent)
- Tightness in chest (8 percent)
- Fainting spells (2.2 percent)

The researchers concluded,

“Several thousand children seem to suffer from wearing the mask or who may experience health problems from the mask... Adults need to collectively reflect the circumstances under which they would be willing to take a residual risk upon themselves in favor of enabling children to have a higher quality of life without having to wear a mask.”

Absent from the mainstream media is the fact, according to the CDC, that fewer than 1 percent of all virus-related hospitalizations and deaths across the country involve people aged 24 years and younger. Instead, the politicians and Presstitutes keep selling lies that it makes perfect scientific sense to lock them down, mask them up, and instill them with fear and hysteria.

TRENDPOST: *As research shows and as reported in the **Trends Journal**, children are not nearly as likely to spread the virus as are adults. And, children are significantly less susceptible to the virus, and those who do get infected rarely have significant symptoms. According to the CDC, the virus recovery rate for 1-to 20-year-olds is 99.997 percent.*

Among several studies confirming this was the 16 June data published in the journal Nature Medicine, conducted by the Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, which stated,

“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown a markedly low proportion of cases among children. Age disparities in observed cases could be explained by children having lower susceptibility to infection, lower propensity to show clinical symptoms or both, compared with adults.”

TRENDPOST: *Over the past three months, the **Trends Journal** has kept subscribers up-to-date on the scientific data showing the fallacy of mandatory mask-wearing and lack of hard evidence that wearing cloth face masks offers any real protection from COVID.*

Here are links to some of our articles on the subject:

[***DANISH STUDY: MASKS OFFER VERY LIMITED PROTECTION***](#)

[***FACING THE TRUTH, PART I: THE GREAT MASK-QUERADE***](#)

FACING THE TRUTH, PART II: MORE EVIDENCE MASKS ARE INEFFECTIVE

“MASKS ARE A POLITICAL AGENDA”

DOCTORS: WEAR MASKS, GET SICK

MORE EVIDENCE: MASKS OFFER “LITTLE, IF ANY, PROTECTION”

HONG KONG OPPRESSION: COVID “COMMAND CENTER”



The **Trends Journal** closely covered the massive street protests in Hong Kong beginning in March 2019 in reaction to the Fugitive Offenders legislation, which would have allowed China to extradite Hong Kong criminal suspects to the mainland.

Hong Kong’s government could not quell the protests of millions of citizens taking to the streets, despite fierce physical police retaliation.

The extensive protests led to a widespread political victory in November 2019, as pro-democracy candidates won 85 percent of seats up for election, a clear repudiation of the Beijing-backed government led by Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam.

Despite this historic victory, during the contentious, months-long struggle, Gerald Celente, who had frequently appeared on Hong Kong media, forecast the protests would be stifled, freedoms would be lost, and Beijing would rule.

That forecast became abundantly accurate last week.

On Wednesday, over 50 pro-democracy citizens, including politicians and campaigners involved in the November 2019 elections, were arrested in early morning raids in what the *Guardian* newspaper described as a “complete crackdown.” The crime they were arrested for was “subverting state power” by participating in prior political campaigns. Last May, the Beijing government pressured Hong Kong leadership to impose a new national security law, leading to the recent arrests.

COVID Cover

Last Tuesday, just a day before the mass arrests, yet another policy move was made to tighten Beijing’s grip over the citizens of Hong Kong. Chief Executive Carrie Lam said their new “Command Center” was needed to better track the movements of those infected with the virus. Ms. Lam said, “We are doing quite well currently on the testing, quarantine, and isolation front, but the tracing of close contacts of confirmed cases could have been done better.”

Anyone who tests positive is sent to a hospital until they test negative, and people they have been in contact with are sent to quarantine camps.

The implication is Hong Kong is suffering from a major COVID-19 health crisis. But, here are the facts:

As of last Thursday, a total of 154 Hong Kong residents had died from COVID-19 out of a population of over 7.5 million (0.002 percent). Among the entire Hong Kong population, just over 9,000 were even infected.

And even this incredibly small amount of infection and fatality rates have been going down, not up. The *South China Morning Post* reported that data “show a downward trend in the daily caseload and marked the fewest new infections since 26 were recorded on November 20.”

Despite the very low rates of infection, on 8 January, Dr. Chui Tak-yi, Under Secretary for Food and Health, was quoted in the *Hong Kong Free Press* saying, “Even though the cases are declining, I appeal to the public not to take part in unnecessary gatherings, to avoid crowded places and to wear a mask at all times.” Otherwise, he claimed, there would be “risk of a rebound.”

According to the *Morning Post*, regarding the new “command center”:

- “Manpower for the command center, to be housed in a community facility along with hundreds of computers and telephones, would be drawn from the police force, customs, immigration, and other departments.” Some officers from those departments were already carrying out pandemic control work for the Department of Health.
- “Between 200 and 300 extra officers from various departments will be pooled.”
- “Police will continue to use their supercomputer to analyze clusters for the Department of Health, and detectives from regional crime units can carry out any necessary investigations.”
- “Disciplinary officers would be responsible for calling patients confirmed as infected to identify their close contacts, while clerical staff would input data for executive officers to analyze... The results will be passed to the department’s Centre for Health Protection, which would arrange for affected residents to be sent to quarantine camps.”

TRENDPOST: As Gerald Celente forecast when the virus first broke out in China last January, Beijing would use COVID to achieve what they were unable to accomplish before the virus struck Wuhan: lock down Hong Kong to stop the protests.

*Beyond Hong Kong – from India to South Africa, from Chile to Algeria – as noted in the **Trends Journal**, nations across the globe that were in the grips of social unrest before COVID have been locked down, and the protests that were threatening ruling governments have been prohibited.*

FLAWED COVID TEST RESPONSIBLE FOR “MASS HYSTERIA”



Since March of last year, the **Trends Journal** has published numerous articles revealing the flawed nature of the PCR test, what the CDC has been calling the “gold standard” test for identifying those infected with COVID.

Highlights include:

- According to *The New York Times* article of 29 August, “In three sets of testing data that include cycle thresholds, compiled by officials in Massachusetts, New York and Nevada, up to 90 percent of people testing positive carried barely any virus,” a review by the *Times* found.
- Last September, a Portuguese appeals court used the evidence of the flawed PCR Test to order the release of four German tourists who were forcibly quarantined after one of them tested positive.
- The Center for Evidence-Based Medicine (CEBM) published on 17 September the following critique of the PCA test for identifying those with infectious rates of the coronavirus: ‘A PCR test might find the virus it was looking for. This results in a PCR positive, but a crucial question remains: is this virus active, i.e. infectious or virulent? The PCR alone cannot answer this question... if the PCR detects the virus in the human sample, this detection might correspond to a virus that is now incapable of infecting cells and reproducing.’”

Here are links to several of our articles:

[COVID GOLD TEST PROVES TO BE “WORTHLESS”](#)

[PRIMARY COVID-19 TEST: “ERRORS AND FLAWS”](#)

[LEGAL RULING IN PORTUGAL: PCR TEST FOR COVID IS FLAWED](#)

Adding to the concerns about the flawed “gold standard” test, a Belgian physician specializing in critical care, Dr. Pascal Sacre, wrote an article published on several websites titled, “The COVID-19 RT-PCR Test: How to Mislead All Humanity. Using a Test to Lock Down Society.”

Dr. Sacre begins with the statement, “It is time for everyone to come out of this negative trance, this collective hysteria, because famine, poverty, massive unemployment will kill, mow down many more people than SARS-CoV-2!”

Like a number of the other medical professionals cited in previous **Trends Journal** articles, Dr. Sacre points out that political leaders and their health “experts” have been extensively using the flawed, hyper-inflated rates of infection based on the PCR test to justify the unprecedented global lockdowns.

The basic premise for the lockdowns is that a “positive PCR test proves a person can spread COVID-19.” But, as the ample evidence highlighted above using sources ranging from *The New York Times* to the Portuguese Appeals Court shows, this equation is false, as a large number of those said to test “positive” showed virus amplifications so small they were not infectious.

Dr. Sacre refers to one of the most damning critiques of the PCR test in a medical study published on 13 August in *Eurosurveillance*, Europe’s journal on infectious disease, epidemiology, prevention, and control. The study states:

“Understanding the duration of infectiousness in persons who test positive for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is critical to developing evidence-based public health policies on isolation, contact tracing, and return to work. Virus detection by reverse transcription-PCR (RT-PCR) from respiratory samples is widely used to diagnose and monitor SARS-CoV-2 infection and, increasingly, to infer infectivity of an individual. However, RT-PCR does not distinguish between infectious and non-infectious virus.”

As Dr. Sacre writes, the significant misuse of this test, “justifies all restrictive government measures: isolation, confinement, quarantine, mandatory masks, color codes by country and travel bans, tracking, social distances in companies, stores and even, even more importantly, in schools.”

TRENDPOST: *Despite the proof of failing government dictates to win the COVID War, politicians continue to impose lockdowns, business closures, travel restrictions, social distancing, mask-wearing mandates, etc., that have destroyed millions of businesses and hundreds of millions of lives and livelihoods across the globe.*

Completely ignored in the media and banned by politicians are the facts of who is dying from the virus and why, as well as natural healing health recommendations to build up immune systems by eating healthy, vitamin therapy, etc. Indeed, such recommendations would be censored or debased by a media that makes billions running Big Pharma’s “get drug-addicted” drug ads.

LOCKDOWN BLUES: MILLIONS GOING MAD



A survey commissioned by Vida Health, which provides therapeutic programs tailored to individuals suffering from chronic illnesses, found that since the COVID War began last year, more than one in every six Americans entered therapy for the first time.

The poll also found 45 percent of the 2,000 people surveyed said they had considered seeking treatment for mental stress since the arrival of the coronavirus, while only 15 percent reported no increase in significant psychological stress.

The arrival of winter combined with continued isolation from COVID restrictions has intensified mental stress. Sixty-two percent of respondents say they suffer depression worse during the winter season.

Almost 90 percent of those surveyed suffered at least some level of serious mental trauma in 2020, specifically:

- Little interest or pleasure (52 percent)
- Trouble falling or staying asleep (52 percent)
- Feeling depressed or hopeless (51 percent)

Teachers Among the Most Stressed

Given the constant closing, opening, then closing again of schools around the U.S., it's no surprise that teachers are among the most stressed-out Americans.

This past autumn, almost 75 percent of the largest school districts in the United States banned students from classrooms. Suddenly, students were forced to learn remotely, and nearly half of all schools nationwide were restricted to virtual

learning. The hybrid form of classroom teaching allowed only part of the week took place in just 27 percent of schools.

According to a *USA Today* report on 4 January,

“Between the unpredictability, the isolation, and the newfound challenges in reaching their students – who mental health experts worry are also struggling – what little mental health support is extended to teachers feels like nowhere near enough.”

The article included an interview with a Massachusetts high school teacher and mother of three who counted on her weekly therapy session to keep her going. But, last fall, like so many teachers, “she found herself juggling an impossible burden: educating students in a pandemic while stewarding her own family through the crisis.” She couldn’t find time for her much-needed therapy session.

As the article states, “The stress on her is so great, she isn’t sleeping. Before the pandemic, she suffered migraines every few months and called in sick on those days. Now, she has one a week, an increase she attributes to stress. She makes herself work through the pain. She’s exhausted.”

The article also quoted a middle school teacher from the state of Washington who felt psychologically defeated: “I spend all day staring at a screen and kind of generating enthusiasm into the void that Zoom is, and I end the day so tired, and so done, and so frustrated. The moments of joy I used to have are so much rarer.”

No Surprise

The warning signs of over-stressed teachers have been present since last summer. As written in a July study published in the journal *Teachers College Record* by researchers at the Boston University School of Education,

“When teachers return to work in the fall, the schools they re-enter will look quite different from the schools they left behind in March. Schools are anticipating substantially increased demand to support student mental health, as many will return to school having experienced loss and grief, months of social isolation, and heightened rates of familial violence and poverty. To meet the needs of these youth, it will be crucial to support the mental health and wellness of teachers and school staff who provide their care.”

The mental health crisis has spiked to such a degree that relief is nowhere in sight. Last September, a survey from The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards showed:

- “80 percent of teachers found remote learning to be a serious obstacle.
- 20 percent were working at least 15 hours longer each week compared to pre-COVID.
- 31 percent had to spend more out of pocket money on teaching
- Only 28 percent report their school or district provides adequate access to mental health support for students and teachers.”

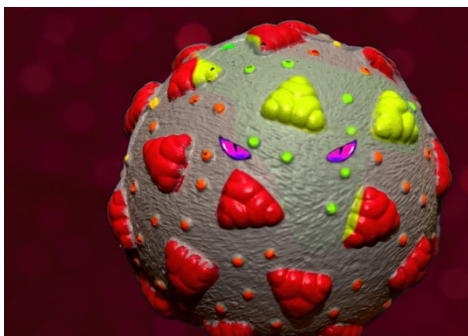
TRENDPOST: While the survey commissioned by Vida Health shows one in six Americans entering therapy for the first time due to increased levels of stress since the arrival of COVID, many health professionals are concerned that the U.S. mental health system, as reported by the Washington Post, “is vastly underfunded, fragmented and difficult to access before the pandemic – is even less prepared to handle this.”

Psychiatrist Dr. Susan Borja of the National Institute of Mental Health revealed, “That’s what keeps me up at night. I worry about the people the system just won’t absorb or won’t reach. I worry about the suffering that’s going to go untreated on such a large scale.”

TREND FORECAST: We forecast the true mental toll on young people, who are filled with energy and a lust for life and are being forced to live locked-down lives, will have long-lasting negative implications.

Most significantly, they hunger for new messages, sounds, styles, and products to lift their spirits and motivate positive ambitions and desires.

“MUTANT” STRAIN: DEADLY MEDIA HYPE & FEAR



After the COVID War was launched last February when the Silicon con artists declared a national emergency and set the stage for the work-at-home trend that would skyrocket their online/virtual businesses, the fear and hysteria sold by the media was the “soaring” virus death rates. Again, as we have continually reported, the media rarely mentions who is dying from the virus and why, nor the 99.8 per cent recovery rate.

When the virus deaths declined, the Presstitutes kept the hype going by reporting on the spiking number of “cases.” Thus, it went from a COVID Pandemic to a COVID Casedemic. Again, the Presstitutes failed to mention the high recovery rate or the proven scientific failure of the common PCR tests being administered.

Despite the lack of any scientific evidence there is a new strain of COVID posing an increased health threat, in December, the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine published an article with the headline:

The Mutated Virus Is a Ticking Time Bomb

Staying on the path to fear, on 20 December, it was first being reported that a new strain of coronavirus had been detected. *Science* magazine published the headline:

Mutant coronavirus in the United Kingdom sets off alarms, but its importance remains unclear

“Sets off alarms,” indeed.

The article notes that just two weeks after the discovery of the new strain on 8 December, the new coronavirus variant is:

“Causing mayhem in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe. Yesterday, U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced stricter lockdown measures, saying the strain, which goes by the name B.1.1.7, appears to be better at spreading between people. The news led many Londoners to leave the city today, before the new rules take effect, causing overcrowded railway stations. The Netherlands, Belgium, and Italy announced they were temporarily halting passenger flights from the United Kingdom. The Eurostar train between Brussels and London will stop running tonight at midnight, for at least 24 hours.”

But, as the article in *Science* magazine points out, “Researchers have watched SARS-CoV-2 evolve in real-time more closely than any other virus in history. So

far, as is normal with viruses, it has accumulated mutations at a rate of about one to two changes per month.”

Every virus mutates in natural cycles. It’s what makes a vaccine challenging: by the time any vaccine has been tested and distributed, the virus it is intended to defeat has changed into a new variation.

As has been its intention from the outset of COVID, mainstream media sources continue to use fear-driven words to amp up emotions. Thus, we get headlines in the U.S. such as:

Mutant strain of coronavirus reaches the U.S.

The U.S. has reported its first case of the highly contagious new strain of COVID spreading in the UK.

— the *Guardian*, 30 December

The UK’s mutant COVID-19 strain is ‘probably’ in the Bay Area, UCSF epidemiologist says

— *Microsoft News Service*, 8 January

Sounds like an alien invasion in a science fiction drama.

Here’s the opening paragraph of reporting in the Microsoft News Service:

“There are multiple confirmed cases in Southern California of the mutated COVID-19 strain from the United Kingdom, and UCSF epidemiologist Dr. George Rutherford said it’s very likely the strain is in the Bay Area.”

Yet, while the headline and opening paragraph induce fear and anxiety about a mutant strain, buried further down in the article is the reality:

“‘It [the new mutation] doesn’t strike me as being very widespread,’ Dr. Rutherford said. ‘There will probably be a handful of cases, but there’s no reason to think they’re not up here by now. The only question is how many there are, and how best to go about finding them. People often forget we’ve already had one switch to a dominant strain last year, and I don’t think the changes here to spike protein will have any effect on vaccines.’”

Reality vs. Hype

On 1 January, Dr. Linda Nabha, an infectious disease expert at the University of Pittsburgh Department of Medicine, was asked to comment on the new coronavirus strain. Dr. Nabha said, “I think it was bound to happen, I am not surprised. It’s natural for viruses to mutate. What it means is the genetic code of the virus changes just a little bit... that is not uncommon to have a different strain of the virus.”

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

Despite the reality noted by these experts, the hype has been ongoing, as evidenced by these headlines:

Fauci: Mutant coronavirus strain must be taken “very seriously”

— *The Hill*, 28 December

**Scientists rush to determine if mutant strain of coronavirus
will deepen pandemic**

— *San Diego Union*, 7 December

France uncovers mutant, fast-moving COVID-19 Strains

— *NY Post*, 17 September

And, just last week:

**Britain’s Mutant Coronavirus Strain Has Swamped the Nation,
but a Worse Variant Has Already Arrived**

— *Daily Beast*, 5 January

Even a quick look at available scientific data confirms that the coronavirus is doing what all viruses do. As *C/net* reported on 12 December after interviewing several leading epidemiologists,

“Viruses are always changing. They mutate... the coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, is no different. This is no cause for concern and isn’t unexpected – thousands of mutations have occurred since SARS-CoV-2’s genome was sequenced in January.”

This hasn't stopped U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson from using the ramped-up fear of a new COVID variant to do what so many political leaders have done: Lockdown.

On 4 January, Johnson ordered most schools to close and citizens to isolate at home except to purchase necessities until at least mid-February.

U.K. Health Secretary Matt Hancock stated the government-enforced restrictions in place, since the lockdown last spring, are "no longer strong enough." He added the new strain "was out of control" and that "it will be very difficult to keep it under control until the vaccine has rolled out."

False Reporting Continues

Now we learn that just last Friday, a false report regarding a contagious mutation came from Dr. Deborah Birx, a leading member of the White House coronavirus task force. The faulty analysis, which warned of a surge in infections, was included in the recent weekly report received by all 50 state governors and appeared on *CNN* and many other news sources. It read:

"This fall/winter surge has been at nearly twice the rate of rise of cases as the spring and summer surges. This acceleration suggests there may be a USA variant that has evolved here, in addition to the U.K. variant that is already spreading in our communities and may be 50% more transmissible... Aggressive mitigation must be used to match a more aggressive virus."

CNN reported that White House officials were warning of a "fast-spreading 'USA variant' of coronavirus."

According to *The New York Times*, a scientist with the CDC wanted to challenge Dr. Birx's analysis but only "speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation."

The CDC did release a statement clarifying its position on the new viral variant:

"Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are monitoring all emerging variants of the coronavirus, including in 5,700 samples collected in November and December.

To date, neither researchers nor analysts at the CDC have seen the emergence of a particular variant in the United States.”

TREND FORECAST: *Despite the lack of scientific evidence that a new, more deadly COVID strain exists, the media and politicians will continue to promote “More Fear Ahead.” In doing so, the media will continue to keep their ratings from tanking, and politicians will seize on the opportunity to further exert their control over their constituencies, i.e., the plantation workers of Slavelandia.*

CALIFORNIA ORDER: STAY HOME



Go back to March. Which was the first state in the U.S. to lock down hard?

California.

The Golden State’s ruler, Governor Gavin Newsom, ordered the 40 million people in the nation’s most populous state to not leave their homes. Newsom had declared,

“I don’t believe the people of California need to be told through law enforcement that it’s appropriate just to home-isolate, protect themselves... We are confident that the people of the state of California will abide by it and do the right thing.”

Now, nearly ten months later, the “right thing” proved wrong. With California being one of the most locked-down, masked-up states in the union, Newsom has again asked residents to stay home, and they should limit any non-essential travel within the state to 120 miles to prevent the virus’s spread to additional counties.

The state already has a stay-at-home order in place from November requiring face masks for any activity that includes people from outside one's household.

TRENDPOST: *In California, to date, there have been some 30,000 deaths attributed to the coronavirus since last March. This compares to some 40,000 virus deaths in New York State with a population half the size of California.*

We note:

- 1. The mainstream media champions New York's Governor Cuomo as a COVID War hero despite registering 10,000 more deaths in a state half the size of California.*
- 2. The draconian California lockdowns, as with those in most of the world, have not worked. We again quote Governor Cuomo who said back in May it's "shocking" most new virus hospitalizations are people who had been staying home. Yet, despite this hard fact, more people are being forced to stay home.*
- 3. Nearly 42 percent of the virus deaths in California are, according to the California Department of Health, those aged 80 years or older and, in total, 83 percent of all virus victims were 60 years or older. Yet, despite these facts, the entire state, which is the world's fifth-largest economy, has been locked down, destroying the lives and livelihoods of tens of millions.*

FAUCI FREAKOUT: YOU'LL BE SORRY



Dr. Anthony Fauci, anointed by the Presstitutes and politicians as the top disease expert in the U.S., said in an interview last week the death toll from COVID will rise

over the coming weeks due to American's who disregarded warnings to not congregate over the holidays.

“As we get into the next couple of weeks in January, that likely will be a reflection of the holiday season travel and the congregate settings that usually take place socially during that period of time,” he told *NPR*. “We’ve seen following most events that require travel and... have people, you know, understandably getting together in a social setting. So, we believe things will get worse as we get into January.”

Fauci, the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health, was interviewed Saturday at a virtual conference held by the Association of Performing Arts Professionals. He was asked when theaters might be able to open up again. He said the end is in sight when 70 to 85 percent of the population gets vaccinated.

“If everything goes right, this will occur sometime in the fall of 2021, so by the time we get to the early to mid-fall, you can have people feeling safe performing onstage as well as people in the audience.”

The paper reported the industry lost up to \$14.8 billion in 2020.

Fauci said these performances could look very similar to how a Broadway show used to look, except those in the audience will be asked to wear masks, which he said will likely have to occur for some time.

The Cuomo Flip

In defiance of Fauci's recommendation, New York's lockdown King, Governor Andrew Cuomo, said that despite most people not yet vaccinated, the state must “reopen the economy” or else there will be “nothing left to open.”

Cuomo also tweeted, “We simply cannot stay closed until the vaccine hits critical mass. The cost is too high.”

TRENDPOST: *As we continually have been reporting with facts and hard data, the masks people are wearing are not working.*

*Additionally, as we point out in this **Trends Journal**, nations and states are re-imposing lockdown regulations that are proven failures, yet, the media keeps giving center stage to those whose pronounced failures resonate across the globe.*

TRENDPOST: *As for Fauci's claim that life will return to a semblance of normal when 70 to 85 percent of the nation gets vaccinated (a number he keeps ramping up – he said 60 to 70 percent a month ago), what difference does it make who or how many get vaccinated?*

Indeed, as we have noted, if the vaccine is reliable, then those choosing to get vaccinated are safe from the virus.

Thus, why force those who do not believe in the vaccine to get vaccinated, since those who got the shot are said to be safe?

Similarly, if those who believe wearing a mask makes them safe, why force those who don't want to wear masks to wear them, since those wearing masks believe they are safe?

These points are ignored by the mainstream media, which instead propagandize that for the good of all, all must comply.

SELLING FEAR: COVID KILLS NINE NUNS



Forget about what's going on in Yemen. Who cares about Tigray? Are the French finally leaving Mali after they tried to regain control over their colony?

No, a big story in last week's *New York Times* was a convent near Albany, N.Y., which announced last week that a COVID outbreak in December resulted in some 47 residents coming down with the virus, including nine nuns who died.

The convent said 21 employees tested positive for the virus and recovered. Those who died were between the ages of 84 and 98 years old.

“We have lost nine beloved sisters – wonderful, dedicated members of our religious community,” Sister Joan Mary Hartigan, the director of the convent said.

TRENDPOST: *Once again, to young people, this is an “old person’s” disease.*

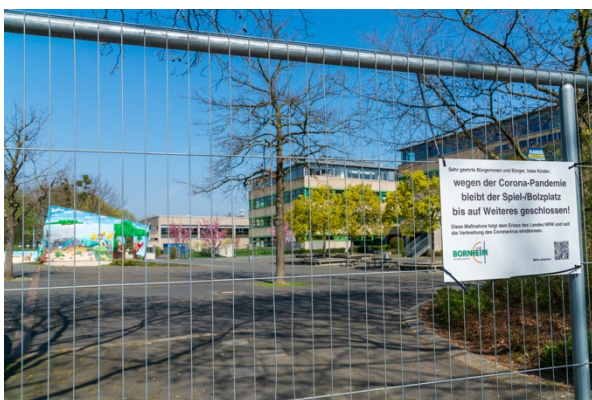
Why would this be a major story? Did the victims have pre-existing chronic conditions? Was the 98-year-old on her way to her 100th birthday party, and the virus struck as she was waltzing out the door?

As evidenced by the Times reporting, this is a “sell fear” story. Again, as evidenced by the numbers across the globe, age has proven to play a major role in the death rate during the COVID outbreak.

There is no denying this virus is contagious and scary for many people, but only a small percentage of the population is at risk. We should protect them, and the rest of the population should be permitted to live freely. The recovery rate among 1-to-20-year-olds is 99.997 percent and, on average, the virus recovery rate is 99.7 percent.

The Heritage Foundation reported that through 23 December, 92 percent of those who died from COVID were over 55. (The CDC said those above the age of 85 were at greatest risk if they contracted the virus.)

EU: LOCK DOWN SCHOOLS



Once again, facts don’t matter, and politicians’ dictates rule.

In this **Trends Journal** and many others, we have reported on the low virus infection and death rate among young people and their extremely high recovery rate.

Yet, despite the misery being imposed on children and working parents, countries in Europe have ordered school closures in hopes of slowing the spread of coronavirus cases... a reversal from their approach this past autumn to in-person schooling.

Markus Söder, the prime minister of Bavaria, said he sympathizes with parents and understands how important it is for children to receive an education. He said deciding to close schools was a “difficult decision.”

The *Financial Times* reported last week that Denmark, Ireland, Germany, and the U.K. issued orders to close down in-person classes.

The paper reported British Prime Minister Boris Johnson went as far as to urge parents to send their children to school only to announce closures a day later, citing the more contagious coronavirus variant in the country. The new orders will be in place until the middle of February at a minimum.

“It’s clear we need to do more together to bring this new variant under control while our vaccines are rolled out,” Johnson said.

Denmark’s Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has also issued strict coronavirus guidelines that include no more than five people allowed to convene in public, mandatory face masks, and restrictions on alcohol sales.

TRENDPOST: *Again, facts don’t matter – political dictates do. The Financial Times, along with our reporting, have noted that data showed schools were not considered infection hotspots.*

The University of Minnesota released a study last Friday that highlighted the low risk of COVID transmission while inside a classroom. A study conducted from 15 August to 11 October showed there were only 773 community-acquired infections in a school district of 90,000 in North Carolina.

According to the study, “The authors noted that because public schools are central to not only education but to public health and the economy, their closures have a significant impact on children and families and can be safely avoided.”

Yet, again, not only are facts and data ignored, the implications of the continuous fear and hysteria measures being beaten into young people by governments, the media, and education systems, plus the lack of social interaction that is vital for development... are also being ignored.

MEDICS: DON'T JAB ME!



Despite the hundreds of millions of dollars spent worldwide attempting to convince people to take the virus vaccine and the constant pumping of the need to take it by media and politicians, resistance to getting the shot continues to grow.

Beyond convincing the public to sign up to take the shot, there is growing resistance among people to return for the second shot to achieve the proper immune response.

The Financial Times reported last week that half the nurses in a hospital in Germany have said they have no interest in taking the COVID vaccines, which have been approved for the public. The report, citing a poll of 2,000 hospital workers, also found that a quarter of doctors did not want to take the vaccine.

“Promoting vaccination of health care workers is very important,” Jens Spahn, the German health minister, said, according to the paper. “We work in an environment full of vulnerable people, it is our responsibility to get it. If people see health care workers are unconvinced, how will that affect our society?”

Despite assurances from health officials and the urgent need to achieve herd immunity, hospitals have reported the side effects from the COVID vaccines are more severe than the usual flu vaccinations.

Authorities in Miami, FL, said last week they were looking into the death of a doctor who died 16 days after taking the Pfizer vaccine. *The Associated Press* reported it was “highly unusual.” The CDC said in a statement it planned to evaluate the death and “provide timely updates on what is known and any necessary actions.”

The CDC said some of those who have taken the vaccine have had “severe allergic reactions” that required medical intervention ranging from hospitalization to treatment with epinephrine. Health officials have said 70 to about 85 percent of the population would have to have antibodies to achieve herd immunity.

The FT reported that 13 Italian doctors are being investigated after allegedly promoting anti-vaccine propaganda.

Pierpaolo Sileri, the country’s deputy health minister, said he is perplexed that nurses and doctors would flinch at getting the vaccine. “If they still have doubts after seeing everything that’s happened, [they] are probably in the wrong job,” he said.

TREND FORECAST: *As social media and mainstream media censorship increases with each passing day, so, too, will the banning of those who question the efficacy and/or safety of the COVID vaccine or the right of human beings to decide for themselves whether or not to get the injection.*

As evidenced by the draconian dictates being imposed upon populations across the globe, there will be strong government demands requiring all citizens to get vaccinated, with those unwilling to do so denied certain rights such as air travel, school attendance, government/medical jobs, etc.

As we have forecast, “Anti-vax” will be a platform of populist movements in many nations.

COVID STATE OF EMERGENCY IN TOKYO



Japan’s Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced a state of emergency in Tokyo due to a spike in coronavirus infections.

Fumie Sakamoto, an infection control manager at St. Luke's International Hospital in the city, said there are too many cases to trace at the moment and the "state of emergency is coming too late."

The New York Times reported that Suga has been accused of taking too long to declare the emergency.

The Jiji Press, the country's news agency, reported that shortly after Suga announced the emergency, crowds seemed to be unfazed, and the city's metropolitan area looked like its usual Saturday.

A Tokyo resident interviewed told the news agency he saw more people out and about than at the beginning of the outbreak in April. He also said he doesn't have much fear of the disease because he doesn't know anyone who has been diagnosed.

The Times reported that as of last weekend, the country of 126.5 million recorded a total of 258,393 cases and 3,746 deaths.

Reuters reported that the month-long declaration encompasses Tokyo and three nearby prefectures. Residents have been asked to stay indoors after 8 PM unless they have an urgent reason to leave. The report said many owners of small restaurants have suffered financially since the beginning of the outbreak, and the second emergency order will be another thrashing.

"Customers usually start flocking in around seven. If we can only serve alcohol until seven, there's no point in staying open in the evening," the manager of Setouchi Lemon Shokudo told *Reuters*.

He said the business is down about 70 percent since early 2020, and it makes business sense to stay closed. "The damage is less if we close," he said.

TRENDPOST: *Once again, facts don't matter – fear, control, and hysteria do. Since the COVID War began last February, there have been 640 virus victims in Tokyo, a city of 14 million... or 0.00457 percent of the population.*

*As we reported in the **Trends Journal** in November, as a result of economic pressures from the virus lockdowns, more Japanese committed suicide in October than died of the virus in all of 2020.*

A report from the CDC last summer found that one in ten respondents had seriously considered suicide the previous month, twice the rate observed in 2018. In America, among 18-to 24-years-olds, the rate was one in four.

A study by the British Journal of Psychiatry last October found that thoughts of suicide had increased during the first six weeks of lockdown, with women and young adults affected the worst.

Yet, the lockdowns, which have not worked before and are being re-imposed... are killing millions more businesses, lives, and livelihoods than the virus.

HARDER EUROPEAN LOCKDOWNS



German, British, and French leaders issued new lockdown measures last week they say will help their countries gain control of the coronavirus outbreak that is infecting people at record numbers.

But is the virus infecting these nations the flu of 2021?

Knut Wittkowski, former Head of Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design at Rockefeller University, says the sharp drop in influenza cases is because what is being reported as COVID cases are the flu: “Influenza has been renamed COVID-19 in large part.”

Mr. Wittkowski notes that according to CDC figures from late September to 19 December, there were just 0.2 percent flu cases as compared to 8.7 percent, the cumulative positive influenza test rate in 2019.

He told Just the News there may be a substantial number of influenza cases included in the “presumed COVID-19” category of those who have COVID

symptoms, which influenza symptoms can be mistaken for, but are not tested for SARS RNA. Mr. Wittkowski said those patients “also may have some SARS RNA sitting in their nose while being infected with influenza, in which case the influenza would be ‘confirmed’ to be COVID-19.”

He said flu and COVID-19 viruses are “more similar than people want to acknowledge.”

Fail and Re-Fail

As we have continually noted, despite draconian lockdown orders that were imposed throughout much of the world when the COVID War was launched, despite their inability to lower the case rate, politicians are doubling up on their lockdown rules.

As *Just the News* notes, “Data indicate that more than nine out of every ten Americans in most states are wearing masks in public regularly; those numbers have been above 80% since the early fall. Yet average positive COVID-19 tests have multiplied by nearly seven times since the spring peak.”

GERMANY. “With every relaxation now, the likelihood of even longer necessary restrictions is greater and greater,” Helge Braun, the head of German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s office, told *Reuters*.

The report said the number of confirmed cases in Germany reached 1.84 million, and the virus death toll is now at 37,607. Merkel extended the country’s lockdown until the end of January. Ms. Merkel said,

“It is the beginning of the year with mixed feelings. There is the hope we associate with this new year, the justified hope that step by step we will get the coronavirus under control and get our freedom back.”

Selling more fear and hysteria, the German chancellor warned,

“There is this dangerous second wave of the pandemic that our country is in, like so many European countries. These next weeks of winter will probably be the most difficult phase of the pandemic.”

In addition to school closures, the new orders put travel restrictions on residents who live in coronavirus hotspots, which means 200 cases per 100,000 residents.

Members of one household cannot meet more than one person from another household.

“We must be especially careful now,” Merkel said. “We are in a new and extraordinary situation.”

TRENDPOST: *As we have reported, most of the virus victims are “grandparents” and those suffering from 2.6 pre-existing chronic conditions. The average age of COVID victims in Germany, depending on available data, is between 77 to 82 years old.*

To date, the country of 84 million had a total of 40,000 deaths since March. This compares to New York State, with a population four times smaller than Germany’s (19.5 million) that has approximately the same number of people who allegedly died from the virus.

Therefore, rather than lock down the entire nation, destroying businesses, lives, and livelihoods, Germany, as with the rest of the world, should be advising and assisting those most at risk to take strict precautions while letting the rest of its citizens live “normal” lives... and end the lockdown orders that have already failed to stem the virus.

U.K. Britain’s Matt Hancock, the health secretary, told the *BBC* that the country’s health system is under serious strain. There were 54,940 new cases on Sunday. He said staying home was the “most important thing we can do collectively as a society.”

Professor Chris Whitty, England’s chief medical officer, told the *BBC* if the country stays on its current trajectory, hospitals will begin to be overcrowded, which could lead to “avoidable deaths” because some people could be turned away from hospitals.

Some British citizens expressed coronavirus fatigue last week and used the police action against two women as a way to express their frustration.

The two women said they were surrounded by police cars because they took a walk by a reservoir, which was five miles from their home. They were both fined €200 and said they were intimidated by the officers.

Derbyshire police responded to criticism by saying that driving to exercise was not in the “spirit” of the lockdown orders, the report said. The women said their

cars were surrounded and were blamed for having a “picnic” because they were carrying hot drinks.

Another video showed footage of U.K police surrounding a woman for allegedly leaving her house more than once in a day and of another woman being hand-cuffed and led away by the COVID Cops, repeatedly telling them, “I was sitting on a bench.”

A viral video also emerged that showed a group of police officers in the U.K. sitting down at what looked like a mall cafeteria during a break without masks. A citizen walked up to the group and asked them what tier the country was in (Tier 4) and why they were allowed to sit without masks while the rest of the country cannot.

The police gave the inquisitor some backtalk and went on doing what they wanted... which the masses of Slavelandia are not allowed to do.

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

Since the virus broke out in February, now, some ten months later, according to the United Kingdom National Health Service, only 388 people aged under 60 with no underlying health conditions have died from COVID.

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

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

TRENDPOST: *Where have we seen this before? Politicians and law enforcement officers disregarding the very laws they put into place and enforce. Last week, we reported on Ontario’s Finance Minister Rod Phillips stepping down after he was caught vacationing in St. Bart’s while health officials in his province told citizens to avoid travel due to the risk of spreading COVID. These politicians are drunk on their power, and they will not easily give it up.*

Albert Einstein famously said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. The lockdowns in the countries that are being extended did not work the first time, so they're foolishly doubling down again on them. It's always dangerous when politicians say, "Trust us."

The Guardian reported last week that a top police commissioner in England has requested his officers be allowed to enter private homes to break up illegal gatherings during the lockdown.

"For the small minority of people who refuse entry to police officers and obstruct their work, the power of entry would seem to be a useful tool," said David Jamieson, the head of the Labour Party police and crime commissioner for the West Midlands Police.

Nigel Farage, who became a household name during the country's Brexit fight, called out the request by police forces to barge into homes amid the coronavirus outbreak.

"Before COVID, an Englishman's home was his castle. Not any longer! Our liberties are being destroyed," he said.

SWEDEN. Yesterday, Sweden's new emergency lockdown law, which allows the government to impose COVID War orders, went into effect.

"We see a great risk that we will be in a difficult situation for some time ahead," said Prime Minister Stefan Lofven last Friday, pledging to use the law's powers "in the near future."

The emergency law allows the government to limit the number of people in shops, businesses, and public places and can fine transgressors. Last Thursday, while not mandatory, the government recommended wearing face masks during rush hour on public transportation.

Unlike most free nations, i.e., democracies/republics where the COVID War has raped the citizens of their Constitutional and Bill of Rights, Sweden's constitution does not give its leaders the power to impose a state of emergency... thus now national lockdown.

TRENDPOST: While the mainstream media continues to deride Sweden for not imposing harsh lockdown orders, compared to most, their coronavirus death rate is much lower than nations and states that imposed draconian measures.

For example, to date, there have been some 14,000 virus victims in Michigan, U.S.A., compared to Sweden's 9,440 COVID deaths with a population a bit larger than Michigan's. Yet, the press praises Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer for imposing strict lockdown measures while continually deriding Sweden, despite Sweden having a lower death rate and not destroying the businesses, lives, and livelihoods of its citizens.

FRANCE. Currently, in France, some 25 departments are under a 6 PM to 6 AM nightly curfew or soon will be. The government has said it will not rule out stricter measures if its COVID situation worsens. But, yesterday, it was reported the government reaffirmed they have no plans for a third national lockdown.

CANADA. Beginning Saturday and running for the next four weeks, Quebec's supreme leader has declared a strict curfew, and the COVID Cops have vowed to enforce it.

"The main reason for the curfew is to prevent gatherings, even the smallest ones," wrote the province's Premier François Legault on Facebook. "It's the addition of all the small breaches of the rules that feeds the virus," he declared.

The COVID Cops have been given the power to stop and question anybody outdoors that goes out during curfew.

"The police will also be very visible this weekend," the province's Public Security Minister Geneviève Guilbault said in a tweet Friday. "Let's stay at home, save lives."

Residents in Montreal are facing new COVID rules that limit gatherings and establishes an 8 PM to 5 AM curfew, which is enforced with fines of up to \$6,000.

"There will be about 100 extra police officers circulating in the city, to patrol, to be in the streets, to show that they are present, so people understand how important this is," Mayor Valérie Plante told CBC's Debra Arbec last week.

The new guidelines will be enforced throughout Quebec, and 740 tickets have already been issued. Premier Legault praised the police effort and said he hopes they "give fewer warning but more fines." He said, "So what we are asking

Quebecers is... apart from working, apart from going to school, apart from getting food, you have to stay home.”

To date, there have been some 8,600 virus-related deaths in Quebec since last February of a population of some 8.5 million or one-tenth of one percent.

Moreover, and ignored in all of the reporting of these new lockdown orders, some 70 percent of the virus deaths in Canada are attributed to elderly people in nursing homes.

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS

UGANDA’S PRESIDENT SUED BY OPPOSITION CANDIDATE



Bobi Wine, the opposition leader front-runner in Uganda, sued the Ugandan president and some of his top officials over allegations of widespread human rights abuses in the country that he claims were orchestrated by the administration.

The Associated Press reported that Wine was seen in a virtual press conference last week being confronted by Ugandan police officers. Wine had been telling his followers he petitioned the International Criminal Court.

The AP reported viewers watched officers drag Wine out of his car while he addressed those watching, saying, “As you can see, I’m being arrested.”

Wine told the officers they are an embarrassment to the country. The report said the candidate was able to carry on campaigning, but 23 members of his campaign were arrested.

Deadly protests have broken out in the country in recent weeks. Attendees have been beaten, tear-gassed, arrested, and put in solitary confinement, *The New York Times* reported. *Reuters* reported 54 people have been killed.

The election is this Thursday, and 17.6 million are expected to vote. Wine is joined by nine other hopefuls.

Wine, 38, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, was released from jail late last year after being charged with breaching the country's coronavirus rules. He posted a video from the courtroom on his Facebook page, according to *The Times*, where he struck a defiant tone. "It's been tough. It's been hell. We shall be free or we shall die while trying to be free. We are not slaves," he said.

Wine is trying to defeat President Yoweri Museveni, 76, who is attempting to win his sixth term. The paper said Museveni recently signed a bill that no longer caps the age of the country's president at 75.

The Times reported that Museveni approaches the election in a good position. The anger against him in the country is real, but the opposition has shown signs of fragmentation.

Museveni has been praised for his handling of the coronavirus outbreak. Uganda, a country of 42.72 million, reported only 290 deaths linked to the virus. But the economy and job prospects for many remain bleak. The World Bank reported about 700,000 people in the country reach working age each year, but, on average, there are only 75,000 new jobs created.

The Washington Post reported that Uganda is a young country, where two-thirds of the voting public is under 30 years old. The paper pointed out that means Museveni has been president for as long as some of these voters have been alive. Wine is Museveni's toughest competition, and he could turn out a vote featuring "the frustrated young vs. the fearful old."

Wine's complaint was filed in The Hague and blamed Museveni's government for abusing protesters and assaulting political figures, *The Times* reported.

Martin Okoth Ochola, Uganda's police chief, held a news conference last week and was asked about allegations from his officers. These authorities insist that rallies for Wine violated COVID guidelines and the government is trying its best to protect the people.

“You are insisting you must go where there is danger. Yes, we shall beat you for your own sake to help you understand that you do not go there. Yes, we shall use reasonable force to ensure that you don’t go where there is a risk. Actually, I have no apology,” the chief said.

TREND FORECAST: *We note this movement to further illustrate the tensions and unease throughout the region: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Central African Republic, Sudan, Libya, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, etc.... civil wars, civil unrest, refugee crisis, hunger, corruption, violence raging throughout the area.*

As the COVID War takes more casualties, destroying millions of businesses and hundreds of millions of lives and livelihoods, civil wars will escalate into regional wars.

TOP TREND FOR 2021: “YOUTH REVOLUTION”

To young people, as the data proves, the virus is an old people's sickness, not theirs. As more young people struggle to find jobs, pay for education, unable to move from their parents' homes, not allowed to go out and play... they will rebel, starting and joining anti-establishment movements, political parties, and creating new sounds and styles.

BEIJING: NO W.H.O. REPRESENTATIVES ALLOWED



A WHO team that was supposed to visit China to study the origins of the coronavirus outbreak was turned back by Beijing, despite the fact their arrival was not unexpected.

China has already been criticized over its handling of COVID’s early days. Epidemiologists say it is imperative to learn about the virus’s origins, and the

delay is preventing breakthroughs. The move by Beijing also prompted rare public criticism from the WHO, which has been accused by President Trump of providing cover for China.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO director-general, said to reporters that China told the scientists they did not have the needed paperwork to gain entry into the country.

“I am very disappointed with this news,” he said at a news conference in Geneva. “I have been in contact with senior Chinese officials and I have once again made clear that the mission is a priority for WHO and the international team.”

China announced early Monday that the WHO team will be allowed in later this week.

Huang Yanzhong, a senior fellow for global health at the Council of Foreign Relations based in New York, called China’s move a “bad omen.” He said, “It’s not like the [team’s] arrival was unexpected.”

The CDC said the coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan in December 2019. The pathogen is believed to have originated in bats and somehow made a jump to human hosts. *The Washington Post* reported that the WHO has been negotiating with China for about a year to allow a team inside the country.

Peter Ben Embarek, a food safety expert leading the mission, told the paper “everything is on the table,” but the scenario that would be “least surprising” is that the virus somehow jumped from bat to another animal and then to humans.

One of the reasons scientists are focused on the wet market is because 70 percent of the first 41 confirmed cases were either customers or workers there. Some of the animals sold included live wolf puppies, bamboo rats, and foxes.

Hua Chunying, a spokeswoman from the Chinese foreign ministry, said tracing the source of the virus is a complicated issue, and “to ensure the international team’s work progresses smoothly, they must go through the necessary procedures.”

TRENDPOST: *In March of last year, much of the world called it the “Wuhan Virus,” naming it for where it first broke out. Then it became the “Chinese Virus.” Now, nearly a year later, those on one side of a political divide call it the CCP virus, i.e, the “Chinese Communist Party” virus.*

TREND FORECAST: Beyond the coronavirus, tensions between Western nations and China will continue to escalate throughout the coming decades as China gains economic dominance over America and much of the western world.

“China 2021” is one of our Top Trends for 2021. As Gerald Celente has forecast, the business of China is business; the business of America is war. The 20th century was the American century, the 21st century will be the Chinese century.

DEMOCRATS: IMPEACH TRUMP



The United States House of Representatives will meet on Wednesday to consider the articles of impeachment for President Trump.

Democratic leaders want to remove President Trump from office, and they don't want him to be able to run again in four years, so they are rushing to get Republican support to impeach him (again) with less than two weeks remaining of his presidency.

Trump was widely blamed for instigating the violent protest last week that breached the Capitol while a joint session of Congress was taking place to confirm the Electoral College vote for Joe Biden. The chaos led to five deaths. Two were reportedly not related to attacks or violence, while one was a Capitol police officer who was allegedly beaten by protestors. A woman was shot in the neck by police.

Eighty-two people were arrested. The FBI has released dozens of photos seeking the public's help to identify some of the protesters.

The full political effects from the incident have likely not been fully felt by Trump, who said he will not be attending the 20 January inauguration. Biden responded he doesn't want him there.

The question now is how many Republicans are willing to turn on a president who received 74.2 million votes. (Biden received 81.2 million.) Senator Lindsey Graham, a Republican that was seen as a top ally for Trump during his first impeachment, abandoned the president during a floor speech after the protesters were cleared out on Wednesday.

"Trump and I, we've had a hell of a journey. I hate it to end this way. Oh my God, I hate it. From my point of view, he has been a consequential president. But today, first thing you'll see. All I can say, is count me out, enough is enough."

TREND FORECAST: *Two days later, surrounded by security guards, Graham was called out by Trump supports as a "traitor to the country" as he walked through the Washington National Airport. ([Click here for video.](#))*

We note this because we forecast this is the beginning of the formation of a new political party to replace the failing Republican Party. As we had noted in 2016, we identified Donald Trump as the most likely candidate to defeat Hillary Clinton since he was considered an outsider while the party candidates were considered un-motivating establishment members who lacked the "populist" appeal.

Back Peddlers

Republican senators who said earlier they would challenge some of the state's election results stood down after the unrest. Senator Kelly Loeffler – the Georgia Republican who Trump ardently campaigned for but lost the election – had announced she was going to challenge the Presidential election results in Georgia, but the riot changed her mind.

"I cannot now in good conscience object to the certification of these electors," she said. "The violence, the lawlessness, and siege of the halls of Congress are abhorrent and stand as a direct attack on the very institution my objection was intended to protect: the American democratic process."

Representatives David Cicilline, Ted Lieu, and Jamie Raskin wrote up the articles of impeachment, and more than 150 fellow Democrats signed on. Lieu took to Twitter on Saturday and said his colleagues would introduce the articles on

Monday. He said there are videos of Trump inciting “the mob” and also of the mob attacking the Capitol.

“This isn’t a close call,” he said.

Judd Deere, a White House spokesman, told *Reuters* that impeaching Trump with 12 days “remaining in his presidency would only serve to further divide the country.” Graham and House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy also asked Democrats to just let the Trump term play out.

Who’s to Blame?

Trump’s supporters say the president never incited violence, and what happened at the Capitol was the result of millions of Americans who felt the president never got his day in court. They still question how a candidate like Biden, who represents the establishment in Washington, could somehow influence 80 million Americans to vote. They also say Trump called for calm and told his supporters, “This is not who we are.”

Rudy Giuliani, Trump’s attorney, said Trump ended his speech at the rally saying, “Go peacefully and patriotically.”

CNN reported late Saturday that a source said Vice President Mike Pence did not rule out invoking the 25th Amendment, which was never used before and allows the vice president and majority of the Cabinet to seize control from a president. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer urged Pence to take the action.

Reports indicated Pence is angry about the way Trump has treated him for not refusing to accept the Electoral College certification. Trump tweeted, “Mike Pence didn’t have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution.”

USA Today reported Senator Jim Inhofe told a local news outlet last week he never saw Pence “as angry as he was today.” The paper reported Trump’s rebuke was remarkable because Pence had been considered a loyal ally and competent vice president.

Todd Belt, a presidential expert at George Washington University’s Graduate School of Political Management, said it was rumored Trump would step down

before the inauguration so Pence could pardon him, but that is seen as less likely now.

It is generally agreed Trump could still be impeached if he is found guilty after leaving office, which, given the new Democrat-controlled body, would only require 17 Republican votes.

TRENDPOST: *As this issue's cover illustrates, this is a new America: a DIVIDED STATES OF AMERICA.*

While the breaching of the Capitol building was riotous, as we viewed it, there are serious, lingering unanswered questions, such as, "How could an un-armed mob swarm the building?" It was not as though there were scores of heavily-armed, fit military squads that broke through. Rather, it was a cross-section of flag-waving, everyday people, some dressed like clowns and others just average.

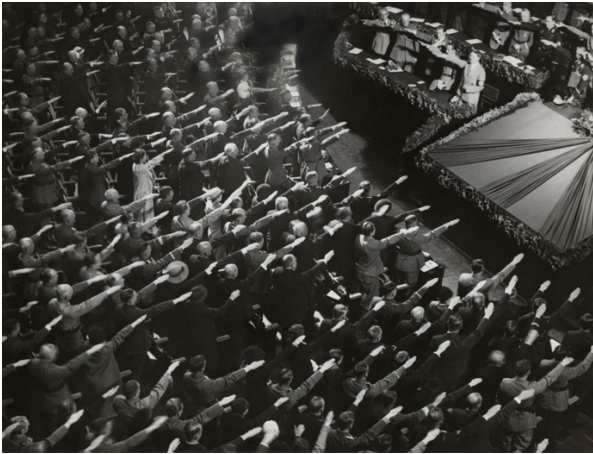
In fact, leading up to the 6 January rally, the mainstream media ran stories on how the police and Pentagon were prepared for the worst of what was yet to come.

Instead, as videos show, the Capitol police opened the gates and doors to let the mobs into the building.

In any event, it also illustrates the low level of preparedness of America's military institutions, which, by far, have the largest defense and police budgets in the world.

If they were unable to secure the Capitol with weeks to prepare, what would America's response be to a planned military attack on Washington or a terrorist attack?

DON'T MENTION HITLER, DON'T SAY "AUSCHWITZ"



Congresswoman Mary Miller issued an apology last week after a comment she made about Adolf Hitler during a “Save the Republic Rally” outside the U.S. Capitol.

Miller, the Illinois Republican, has insisted her comments at the rally were taken out of context. She said some politicians are “trying to intentionally twist my words into something antithetical to my beliefs” and insisted she is “pro-Israel,” according to *CNN*.

The report said Miller seemed to be reading from text that had already been prepared. She told the audience it is up to each generation to instill values into the next generation. “Hitler was right on one thing. He said, ‘Whoever has the youth has the future.’ Our children are being propagandized,” she said.

The backlash was swift, and some have called on her to resign.

Senator Tammy Duckworth, a Democrat from Miller’s state, called her remarks “absolutely repugnant, obscene, and unacceptable for any American – let alone a supposed ‘leader’ serving in Congress.” She said such a comment was “disqualifying for an American-elected official.”

Miller, who won the 15th Congressional District of Illinois in November, told her constituents she would stand for “our God-given constitutional rights, the rule of law and a culture of freedom.”

“I sincerely apologize for any harm my words caused and regret using a reference to one of the most evil dictators in history to illustrate the dangers that outside

influences can have on our youth. This dark history should never be repeated,” she said.

TRENDPOST: *Why was it wrong for someone to say they believed Hitler was correct in his belief that “Whoever has the youth has the future”?*

This is, in fact, one of our Top Trends for 2021: “Youth Revolution.” We forecast this trend to illustrate the power this demographic has and how important they are in shaping future socio-political movements.

However, in today’s narrow-minded, “politically correct” world, censorship is the new ABnormal.

Gerald Celente has been noting since the coronavirus hysteria broke out in February that history is in many ways repeating itself. Just as the masses of people obediently obeyed Mussolini, saluted Stalin, and heiled Hitler, they have done so by believing in their political leaders. Today’s leaders have marched them off to fight in the COVID War.

When Celente ridiculed the masses for obeying their leaders rather than questioning them with facts and said in one of his Trends in the News broadcasts, “All aboard, next train to Auschwitz... and put on that mask,” he was censored by LinkedIn.

INDIA’S FARMERS KEEP FIGHTING



Today marks the 48th day of Indian farmers’ protests over Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s new farm laws they say were designed without their knowledge, stripping them of earning potential and allowing major conglomerates to come in and crush their businesses.

Modi's administration disagrees with these protesters and insisted the new laws are urgent and allow farmers to increase earning potential. *The New York Times* reported one of the protests includes farmers who have used their heavy equipment to block four main entries into New Delhi.

Ajay Veer Singh, who has joined the protest with his grandfather, told the paper that Modi's government "sold everything else. Only the farmers are left... Now they want to sell the farmers to their corporate friends, too," he said.

Economists reportedly support Modi's deregulations, which affect the country's 146 million farms.

India, like most countries, has been dealing with the adverse effect of the coronavirus on its economy, which is expected to contract by a record 7.7 percent according to government projections. The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India, or Assocham, released data on Sunday that offered some reason to be optimistic: it showed "decisive signs" the country will benefit from a "V-shaped" recovery.

"With India about to roll out its vaccination program with approvals of the two vaccines, the accruals of the economic benefits would be significant, especially to sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and entertainment, which were hit hard during the pandemic," Deepak Sood, the secretary-general of Assocham told *The Times of India*.

The paper reported the outdoor protests have shown few signs of slowing, describing a scene in the village of Singhu:

"In between rain showers, which significantly worsen the impact of winter temperatures dipping below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, young protesters tried to drain puddles as the elderly sought to stay dry. At night, they curled up in the back of their covered trucks, or by the hundreds in large, often leaking shelters."

At least 25 farmers died during the protests, mainly due to natural causes and from being outside in the elements.

The Financial Times reported farmers generally produce a low quantity of goods, and the country's agriculture minister vowed a higher earning potential for these workers under the new laws. The agriculture industry used to provide a third of the country's GDP, but that output has dropped to about 15 percent.

The paper asked Singh if he is concerned about his grandfather coming down with coronavirus, since many farmers are packed so tightly together. Singh said his grandfather “doesn’t fear corona... he fears for our future.”

TRENDPOST: *Yesterday, India’s top court condemned Modi’s government over its handling of negotiations with farmers’ unions. The court is planning to create a special committee to work through the impasse and is considering ordering a stay on the laws. On 15 January, the government and farmers are scheduled to meet. It will be the ninth round of talks between them.*

TREND-TRACKING LESSON: *The success of the farmers’ protests is evidenced in their resolve to peacefully fight for their rights without backing down. As Gerald Celente continues to note, one of the most important elements of protests is to continue with them day after day, night after night, week after week, month after month... however long it takes to win the battle.*

Unlike India’s farmers, who work with their hands and are strong and hearty, today’s demonstrators in the Western world take to the streets one day, make a big deal about it, and they go home. For success to be achieved, the resolve to protest must continue until demands are satisfactorily met.

Indeed, the Berlin Wall began to fall in 1989 when protests sprang up across eastern Europe opposing Soviet Union control. Then, a month after protests began in East Germany, around half a million people gathered in Alexanderplatz in the heart of East Berlin, refusing to leave until the wall came tumbling down.

IRAN SEIZES OIL TANKER



South Korea's chief delegate was sent to negotiate with his counterpart in Iran after Tehran's Revolutionary Guards seized a 9,797-ton oil tanker as it sailed the Strait of Hormuz.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said five of the crew's 20 members are South Korean.

Tehran's act of aggression reportedly stemmed from Seoul's decision to freeze Iranian assets amounting to some \$7 billion held in the country's banks due to U.S. sanctions. *The Financial Times* reported that Iran has requested some of the funds – about €180m – so it could buy vaccines while the country deals with the coronavirus outbreak.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, said Friday that he barred any coronavirus vaccine produced by British and U.S. companies.

"They are completely untrustworthy," he said. "If they were able to create a vaccine... why do they want to give it to us? Why don't they use it themselves?"

Khamenei's comments came in the form of a tweet, which was later removed. The paper reported 1.2 million people in the country have been infected by the virus, and there have been 56,000 deaths. Iran has a population of about 81 million.

The money was seized after the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear agreement based on nuclear enrichment activities. President-elect Joe Biden has said he hopes to restore the deal.

The FT reported that Woori Bank and the Industrial Bank of Korea hold some of the funds. The paper reported Ali Rabiei, a spokesman from Tehran, denied there was a hostage-taking.

"But even if there is any hostage-taking, it is done by the Korean government. It has seized more than \$7 billion of our money under baseless excuses and does not even let us use it for goods which are not apparently subject to sanctions at a difficult time for our people when imports of medicine are very important," he said.

Nikkei Asia reported Iran seized the Hankuk Chemi in the waters off Oman early last week based on so-called environmental concerns, but it was seen as a message to countries aligned with the U.S.

TRENDPOST: *With President Trump – who unilaterally pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Iran nuclear deal in 2018 and ordered the assassination of Iran’s top military commander, Qasem Soleimani, last January – out and Biden in, we forecast easing tensions with Iran.*

Absent a wild card event, there will be an easing of sanctions against Iran and a renewal of the nuclear deal, which Biden had favored as vice president under Barack Obama.

EUROPEAN UNION SNUBS GUAIDÓ



Go back to January 2019. Remember the big geopolitical news?

With Nicholas Maduro poised to be sworn in as President of Venezuela on 10 January, the U.S. implemented a coup attempt with its coronation of Juan Guaidó as the country’s interim leader... in effect dismissing Maduro from office.

President Trump’s administration launched the propaganda campaign branding Maduro’s victory as “heavily rigged,” “fraudulent,” “a sham,” “a joke” and “a disgrace.”

But, in fact, the elections in Venezuela were regarded as among those closely monitored and legitimate. Several international monitoring organizations observed the elections and affirmed their fairness. For example, the African Nations’ delegation stated:

“The Venezuelan people who chose to participate in the electoral process of May 20 were not subject to any external pressures... As such, we implore the international community to abide by international law and the principles of self-determination and recognize what we consider to be a free, fair, fully transparent, and sovereign election.”

Despite this proclamation, President Trump declared, “Maduro is no longer president of Venezuela. I will continue to use the full weight of United States economic and diplomatic power to press for the restoration of Venezuelan democracy.”

Vice President Mike Pence weighed in with a video stating, “On behalf of the American people, we say: estamos conustedes. We are with you. We stand with you, and we will stay with you until Democracy is restored.”

To bring democracy to Venezuela, the Trump administration hired Elliott Abrams, Iraqi warmonger/cheerleader/criminal and champion of Latin American death squads that slaughtered tens of thousands.

Fast Forward

As we had forecast since the attempted American-led coup d’état that much of Washington’s allies supported, Guido did not have the backing of the Venezuelan people nor the military, thus the U.S. would fail in their effort to overthrow the Maduro government.

The European Union sent a clear message to opposition leader Juan Guaidó last week after it referred to him as one of the “political actors striving to bring democracy to Venezuela” instead of the country’s interim president, according to a report.

The Financial Times reported the snub was seen as a message to Guaidó that European leaders are growing impatient with President Nicolas Maduro’s grip on power in Caracas. A senior diplomat told the paper Guaidó is now considered to be “primus inter pares,” which translates to first among equals among the country’s population.

Guaidó, who has seen his opinion polls in the country sink within the past year, has been recognized by 60 countries, including the U.S., as Caracas’s legitimate leader. But he has been faced with a lack of support at home and increasingly abroad. *Axios* reported in July that President Trump indicated he did not care either way about Guaido, despite the support he received from Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

The FT reported that Guaidó was not formally viewed by the EU as the country’s interim president due to objections by Italy and Cyprus, but he benefited from the same treatment by other members that an interim president would receive.

Allies of Maduro officially took control of the country's National Assembly last week, and they seem to be consolidating power. Guaidó couldn't successfully unify the opposition and has been left with no real power.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement, "President Guaidó and the National Assembly are the only democratic representatives of the Venezuelan people as recognized by the international community."

TREND FORECAST: *The sanctions President Trump's administration imposed on Venezuela in its effort to overthrow the Maduro government have caused deep economic pain among the nation's population and economy. We have written extensively on this subject in the **Trends Journal** since the U.S. launched the coup attempt, which was supported in the most part by both the U.S. Congress and the media.*

With Guaidó all but gone and Joe Biden in as President, while it would appear that tensions between the two nations will ease, considering Biden's record of being pro-war and supporting foreign entanglements, we hesitate to forecast warming relations between the two nations.

LATIN AMERICANS GOING POPULIST?



Populist candidates in Latin America have benefited from a frustrated public due to economic damage caused by the COVID War and aim to give establishment candidates in upcoming elections a run for their money.

Christopher Sabatini, a senior fellow for Latin America at Chatham House, a think tank, told *the Financial Times* these politicians are "only slightly more popular than used car salesmen."

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean said last month that South America has been the region's "hardest hit" by the coronavirus outbreak, both in "public health and economic development."

The FT report said many residents in these countries say their government officials did little to stop the virus's spread despite enforcing economy-killing lockdowns. The paper spoke to a banker who said these frustrations have boiled over.

"Any crazy guy in these countries who promises great things is going to get elected," he said.

The report said one leader who has increased in popularity is Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, who has been opposed to lockdowns and once called the virus mere "sniffles."

Oliver Stuenkel, an associate professor of international affairs in São Paulo, told *The New Yorker* during the summer that Bolsonaro knows "it's hard for a Latin-American leader to remain in office with an economy that gets as bad as it is now. So, in the states where governors imposed social-distancing strictures, he'll say the coming economic slump wasn't his fault but *theirs*. If the numbers level out, he'll say, 'Look, it wasn't that bad after all.' And even if they are bad, he can easily construe some narrative that actually they really weren't."

Arturo Valenzuela, a former U.S. assistant secretary of state for the region, told the *FT* there is a "new generation of leaders coming out of civil society organizations saying they have had enough of the status quo. They want to change politics."

TREND FORECAST: *We have been forecasting surging populist movements throughout much of the world as economic conditions worsen and anti-establishment movements increase.*

It should also be noted that before the COVID War lockdowns, there were demonstrations, riots, and civil unrest erupting in Chile, Columbia, Peru, and Bolivia as people took to the streets protesting corruption, violence, lack of basic living standards, crime, and violence.

Reaffirming our forecast, in November, Finland's Prime Minister Sanna Marin said she has concerns that the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent lockdowns could create a "breeding ground for populist movements across Europe."

"When you're closing in the economy and people's workplaces, it will cause political instability. Populists come with easy answers to difficult problems, but their solutions are rarely the right ones," she said... as if the establishment's solutions are the correct ones.

Again, as the "Greatest Depression" worsens, populist movements will escalate.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW

LOS ANGELES: HAIL, HAIL, THE GANGS ALL HERE



As we have been warning since politicians locked down nations, states, and cities, there would be sharp rises in violent crime, and people would be leaving densely populated cities for safe-haven suburbs and ex-burbs.

With people losing everything and having nothing left to lose, they are losing it. LAPD Chief Michel Moore said last week he was concerned at the “velocity” of violence in Los Angeles after announcing the city had nearly 100 more murders in 2020 than in the previous year.

The Los Angeles Daily News reported that police pin most of the blame on gang violence and access to illegal firearms. Moore told reporters he believes the COVID outbreak and subsequent lockdowns played a role in the 349 killings – the highest number in a decade. Shootings also increased by up to 40 percent.

What is old news to **Trends Journal** subscribers is new in the news today. Police say economic hardships have put more residents on the streets. City gang-intervention workers, who would generally be at hospitals “working to quell further

acts of retaliation,” are having a more difficult time gaining access inside these locations.

“You can only make inferences [based on] what’s happening and what’s not happening,” Paul Vernon, a police spokesman said. He said the lockdowns played a major role in these violent trends since the beginning of the outbreak.

The Los Angeles Times reported the city has seen a decrease in other crimes such as small-scale property theft, rapes, and robberies.

TREND FORECAST: *Los Angeles has joined other cities like New York, Chicago, and Minneapolis that have all seen notable increases in killings in 2020. COVID has kept children and teens home from school, and, as we reported, the economic fallout from lockdowns has hit minority communities particularly hard.*

Not only will killings continue to rise in 2021, so, too, will gang violence as more down, out, and desperate young adults ban together in the fight for money and power.

Indeed, “Survivalism,” one of our Top Trends for 2021, will attract wider audiences of everyday people who will want to do what they can and learn what they can to protect their lives, loved ones, homes, businesses, etc.

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE by Bennett Davis

PETROPLASTICS OUT, PECTIN PLASTICS IN



The world may be turning away from petroleum as a vehicle fuel, but humans still use almost 600 billion plastic bottles made from petroleum each year. A small fraction is recycled into new materials; the vast majority are trashed and clog our oceans, waterways, garbage dumps, and roadsides, where their breakdown residues enter the food and water chains and, ultimately, our bodies.

Now VTT, Finland's national technological skunkworks, has created a practical alternative to the ubiquitous PET petroplastic that bottles and other food containers are made from.

A VTT research team has designed a process that uses catalysts to turn orange peels, beet pulp, and other food waste containing pectin, a fibrous plant polymer, into a plastic called PEF.

Because it's made from plants, PEF is entirely recyclable and biodegradable. Sourcing, manufacturing, and recycling it leaves only half the "carbon footprint" of PET. Just as important, PEF is a stronger barrier against contaminants than PET, meaning food and drinks stored in PEF containers have a longer shelf life.

The process of producing PEF can be readily scaled to commercial size, the developers say.

TRENDPOST: *Petroleum-based plastics evolved in a world in which oil was cheap and endlessly plentiful, where convenience was king, and no one thought of the world as a closed-loop system.*

Now, petroplastics are understood as environmentally lethal as well as a waste of resources.

VTT's PEF process is one among a growing catalog of alternatives that can equal or beat PET's cost and benefits while making plastic a benign component of the emerging circular economy.

Before 2030, oil-based plastics will virtually disappear from consumer products.

RAPALOG DRUGS MAY EXTEND HEALTHY LIFE



Two recent trials indicate that the family of rapalog drugs may extend humans' healthy lifespan.

The family's best-known member is rapamycin, which is used in organ transplants to suppress rejection.

In studies, rapalogs have shown an ability to extend the healthspans of yeast, worms, flies, and mice by as much as 20 percent. That would extend today's average human life from 78.6 years to 94.3.

Scientists have theorized that rapalogs impinge on so-called mTOR proteins inside cells that tell the cells which other proteins to make. These mTORS have been linked closely to the degeneration that marks the aging process.

To test the idea in humans, researchers at the Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research injected 200 people with a rapalog called RAD001 over a series of weeks and then gave the subjects a flu vaccine.

Compared to people who received a placebo, those who took RAD001 had a 20-percent more effective response to the flu vaccine. The rapalog also seemed to suppress the absorption of a biomolecule that weakens the immune system as we age.

Last July, scientists at Novartis spin-off ResTORbio published the results of a study in which 264 people were divided into four groups: one took RAD001, another took a rapalog called BEZ235, a third group took both, and the fourth got a placebo. After six weeks, participants were given a flu vaccine.

A year after the study, the researchers found that the groups taking the drugs, individually or together, had 36 to 42 percent fewer respiratory infections during the study period and 33 to 38 percent fewer infections of any kind. The study team also found the drug-takers had produced more genes that help defeat viruses of all kinds.

A strong immune system helps people resist the general deterioration associated with aging, indicating rapalogs may extend healthy life.

Next, researchers will test rapalogs on people with specific chronic deteriorations, such as diabetes.

TRENDPOST: *As medicine finds biologically-based ways to manage or cure a broader range of diseases, more research will be focused on extending human healthspan. By mid-century, biochemical methods will be in place to ensure that health and vitality can endure into our second century of life.*

NEW SUPERCAPACITOR COULD REPLACE BATTERIES



In today's lithium batteries, the problem is cobalt.

It's necessary to stabilize lithium, boost the amount of energy a battery can store, and extend a battery's life. But mining it is damaging to human health and Mother Nature, soaring demand for lithium batteries threatens a cobalt shortage, and most of the world's deposits are in Africa and Russia, neither of which is easy or risk-free to deal in.

All of these factors make it expensive – so much so that the cobalt in batteries can account for as much as half their cost.

Now, thanks to engineers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, we may be able to dispense with cobalt as a battery staple.

The researchers have developed cathodes that use iron, aluminum, and an alloy of nickel and lithium in place of cobalt. In tests, these batteries retain 88 percent of their charging capacity over 100 charge-and-discharge cycles. Using another recipe of the same materials, test cells held onto 72 percent of their charging capacity after 200 cycles.

The developers say the cells can be made within existing battery-making processes and factories.

Next, the scientists will test larger versions of the new battery in appliances and electric vehicles.

TRENDPOST: By 2030, toxic heavy metals will no longer need to be part of our batteries, which increasingly will be made from environmentally neutral materials that are relatively easy to recycle and re-use.