

TRENDSJOURNAL

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19 JANUARY 2021

TRENDS ON THE U.S. ECONOMIC FRONT

U.S. MARKETS OVERVIEW



As we have been reporting since late March of last year, when the U.S. Federal Reserve began injecting tens of trillions into the equity markets to prop them up as most of the world's economies locked down, it was a "right in front of your eyes" racket to keep the White Shoe Boys on their money-junkie high.

There has never been such an overt Bankster fraud like it in the History of the World.

Tens of millions of businesses locked down and out of business. Billions of people out of work and struggling to make ends meet. Restaurants, nightclubs, convention centers, theaters, cinemas, amusement parks, hotels, airplanes, resorts, cruise ships, fairs, festivals, commercial real estate, apartment rentals... the list goes on, dead and empty.

Yet, equity markets hit new highs... yes, indeed, Money Junkie highs.

What does all this mean for the workers of the world... the citizens of Slavelandia? Read Gregory Mannarino's new article, ["THE NEXT PHASE: NUCLEAR DEBT, SLAVE SOCIETY."](#)

Fake High

Pushing equity markets higher today is the "uplifting" news that European car sales plunged 23.7 percent in 2020, according to the European Automobile Manufacturers Association, which said the lockdowns "had an unprecedented impact on car sales across Europe."

As for the inner city apartments, as the financial markets hit new highs, the world's big financial centers – from New York to Toronto to London to Sydney – their rents are plunging.

An overview of the decline was detailed by *RHB Rental Housing* magazine, which lists the facts and data. They quoted Tim Lawless, Asia-Pacific head of research for data provider CoreLogic Inc. "Supply is high and occupancy has fallen off a cliff."

RHB wrote that "International students who normally bolster demand are stuck at home and young renters – the most mobile group in real estate – are finding fewer reasons to pay a premium to live in what is, for now, no longer the centre of things."

Beyond big city rents, as we noted last March, with colleges among the first to send students home and close down under the "New Abnormal" restrictions, with the ending of sporting events, etc., college towns will become ghost towns... "Rust Belts 2.0." From hotels, restaurants, taverns, retailers, renters... businesses big and small will shrink and/or go broke.

On the broader rental market front, as reported by *RHB*: Manhattan rentals are down 11 percent median monthly; rent for a studio in San Francisco tumbled 31 percent; rents in Toronto plunged 14.5 percent in the third quarter compared with the same period last year; Singapore rents are 17 percent lower than their peak in 2013; vacancy rates in the central business district of Sydney Australia, are down 13 percent... and the list goes on.

Duh!

And, now, with the bubble burst in sight, *CNBC's* headline story is a Deutsche Bank survey released today that found 89 percent of 627 market professionals they surveyed think some financial markets are in bubble territory.

Of those bubbles, bitcoin and U.S. tech shares are at the top of the list. Bitcoin is viewed as a more extreme case, with half of respondents giving the cryptocurrency a rating of 10 on a 1-10 bubble scale.

Deutsche Bank's survey showed U.S. tech stocks as the second biggest bubble, with an average score of 7.9 out of 10 and 83 percent of respondents giving it a tech bubble rating of 7 or higher.

"F" The Facts

Yesterday, Asian and European stocks were higher. Today, they were mixed in Asia, with Hong Kong's Hang Seng index climbing 2.7 percent on the news the government will extend social distancing measures... thus further crippling businesses that are suffering steep losses from prior-imposed restrictions.

Today, equities were slightly down in Europe after rising yesterday. As for the U.S., stocks edged up, bouncing back a bit from last week's downs on hopes of more cheap stimulus money and speeding up the vaccination push.

As we thoroughly noted in last week's **Trends Journal**... from heavy industry to high tech, across the business spectrum, the word from The Street is that once enough people get vaccinated, Happy Days will be here again.

Yes, we had forecast there would be a sharp bounce-back this spring and summer, but it will be temporary. What has been lost is lost. The "Greatest Depression" has begun.

GOLD/SILVER. While gold and silver prices edged up today, with markets climbing higher and expectations of an economic rebound, they have not bounced back to their start of the year highs.

Considering that governments, especially the United States, will pump in more cheap money to stimulate growth, we maintain our forecasts for gold \$2,100+ per ounce and silver \$50+ per ounce in 2021.

And while the U.S. dollar is near a four-week high, we forecast it will continue to weaken, which, in turn, will push inflation higher as it will cost more to buy less... thus, driving precious metal prices higher.

OIL. Oil prices climbed higher today on hopes that more money pumping by governments will juice deadening economies, thus pushing up oil demand.

As we had reported, Saudi Arabia's plan to cut output by an extra one million barrels per day (bpd) in February and March has pushed oil prices to an 11-month high. Yet, with more lockdown orders in place and fears of a deadly new virus wave spreading that will keep people at home and afraid to go out to eat and play, we forecast oil demand will remain particularly weak this winter.

However, as proven with the JPMorgan Chase Gang caught rigging the precious metals markets and fined \$900 million for doing so, so too are other commodity markets rigged... including oil. Thus, prices can move higher considering the many nations whose GDP is oil-export driven.

BITCOIN. As we go to press, bitcoin is down 1 percent, trading at \$36,117. We maintain our 5 January forecast when the cryptocurrency broke above \$41,000 that "we do expect a market correction"... which it did just a few days later, falling some 10 percent.

And, we maintain our 5 January forecast that, "The downward breakout point will be hit should prices fall below \$25,000 per coin."

JOBLESS CLAIMS SURGE



During the week of 9 January, the number of first-time claims for unemployment payments surged to 965,000 from 784,000 the week before, the U.S. Labor Department reported. The number was the highest since the week of 22 August.

Analysts had expected 800,000 new claims. The unemployment rate held firm at 6.7 percent.

Workers filing late because of the December holiday season, as well as the new \$300 weekly federal employment benefit enacted last month, could have drawn a higher number of applicants, Diane Swonk, Grant Thornton's chief economist, commented to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Hiring had been declining for five consecutive months, but it still showed gains before the net loss in January's first week. In November, job seekers outnumbered available positions by about four million, the Labor Department reported.

Nationally, the leisure and hospitality industries eliminated 498,000 jobs in the week.

Continuing claims added 199,000 in the most recent report, raising the number to 5.27 million, the first jump since late November.

New restrictions on social movement in several states swelled the ranks of the jobless, with 36 states and the District of Columbia all seeing increases.

Illinois, with Chicago's new clamp-down on eateries, fielded 51,280 new claims. California, with a range of dire social restrictions, saw claims rise 13 percent with 20,857 new applications. New York booked 15,559 new filings.

Claims in Florida, which has relatively few mandates on movement, doubled for the week to 50,747. Texas, which also has lax restrictions, noted 14,282 new claims.

Rising unemployment in states with business-friendly policies hints that the national jobs market may be continuing to weaken.

Also for the week, 284,000 new claims for the federal program paying benefits to out-of-work freelancers were filed. Before the current economic crisis, weekly claims averaged about 200,000.

In December, non-farm jobs declined by 140,000, the first slide since April, when the labor market began to recover last spring.

TREND FORECAST: Much of the world has entered a deep winter downturn. It is important to note that employment dove during the Christmas season, the time of year traditionally when employment rises during the shopping season.

Things already are worse: the actual number of people without work may be more than double the official 10.7 million, according to calculations by the private, non-profit Economic Policy Institute.

Allowing for the usual undercounting and misclassification, and adding in workers too discouraged to look for jobs, the true figure is about 26.8 million, the Institute contends.

In a 13 January statement, the U.S. Federal Reserve reported that all of its 12 districts are seeing reduced hiring. Thus, companies see a clouded future through the rest of the winter; an uncertain economy over the next several months also may be keeping workers from jumping jobs.

As we had forecast, the winter and early spring months will see a difficult economy until a temporary “Biden bounce” later in the year as vaccines are dispersed, warmer weather allows restaurants to resume outdoor service, and new stimulus spending keeps businesses and consumers afloat longer.

HIRING DOWN, LAYOFFS UP ACROSS INDUSTRIES IN NOVEMBER



At November's end, 1.6 percent fewer jobs were advertised than a year previous, the first slip since August, the U.S. Labor Department reported. At the same time,

layoffs jumped 17.6 percent to 1.9 million, as layoffs in the lodging and hospitality industries more than doubled due to new restrictions on social mobility.

Layoffs have largely affected low-wage jobs.

However, job postings for the highest-paying third of positions have declined at a rate faster than that of lower-paid jobs, which are now declining at the slowest pace, online employment broker Indeed reported.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *The shrinking number of job opportunities for higher-paid workers, compared with a more stable rate of offers for lower-wage workers, indicates that the shutdown's economic ripple is now reaching the economy's upper ranks. It also indicates that employers are uncertain enough about the future to not commit to new high-salaried employees.*

BIDEN DETAILS \$1.9-TRILLION “AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN”



Arguing that bold, broad actions are needed to pull the economy back onto its tracks, President-elect Joe Biden unveiled his \$1.9-trillion “American Rescue Plan” on 14 January.

Key measures include:

- \$20 billion for a national vaccination program, \$50 billion for COVID testing, and hiring 100,000 new public health workers;
- adding \$1,400 to the \$600 payments given to every American earlier this month, bringing the total payment to \$2,000, a figure that both Congressional Democrats and Donald Trump had urged as the previous bailout package was being finalized last month;

- a \$100 increase in the \$300 weekly federal unemployment benefit included in December's rescue bill, raising the payment to \$400. Gig workers, the self-employed, and people who have exhausted their state benefits also would receive the payments;
- \$25 billion in rental assistance for low-wage earners and the unemployed, doubling the \$25 billion for the purpose Congress allotted last month. Another \$5 billion would help renters pay their utility bills;
- \$350 billion in aid to state, local, and territorial governments, plus \$20 billion to the hardest-hit public transit agencies;
- extending the federal ban on evictions, due to expire 31 January, through September;
- extending the 15-percent expanded food stamp benefit from the end of June through September;
- subsidizing health insurance premiums through September for people who lost health insurance when they lost their jobs;
- expanding the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit for a year;
- raising the minimum hourly wage to \$15 and eliminating lower minimum wages for workers collecting tips.

Many of the initiatives were included in Democrats' version of the rescue plan negotiated last year. Senate Republicans negotiated a less-expensive compromise.

Now, with Democrats controlling the House, Senate, and presidency, Biden has decided to reprise the push for more expansive relief.

TREND FORECAST: *While negotiations in Congress over Biden's provisions are likely to reduce the result from the \$1.9 trillion proposed package, with Democrats in control of Congress, Biden will get what he wants.*

Should the stimulus number decline from its current level, it will be temporary, since the harshest downturn of the COVID War will be felt in the next two months. This economic slump will prompt Washington to pump in more stimulus.

And, when the U.S. equity market bubble bursts, yet bigger money pumping by both the Federal Reserve and the government will be injected to artificially prop them up. This, in turn, will drive precious metal prices higher as the dollar weakens.

FIRST-QUARTER DEFICIT ALMOST \$600 BILLION



The U.S. booked a budget deficit of \$572.9 billion in the first quarter of its new fiscal year, a fiscal hole of 60.7 percent, or \$216.3 billion, deeper than during the same period a year earlier.

The budget gap widened as spending zoomed up 18.7 percent to pay for pandemic-related health care and an array of federal bailout programs. At the same time, revenue edged down 0.4 percent to \$803.4 billion as businesses closed, temporarily or permanently, cutting federal tax collections.

In December alone, outlays totaled a record \$489.7 billion and revenue was \$346.1 billion, leaving a deficit of \$143.6 billion.

Much of the additional deficit was created by \$600 weekly federal unemployment benefit payments, which totaled \$80 billion from October through December. For the same period in the previous fiscal year, the figure was \$5 billion.

The figures do not include the additional \$900 billion signed into law at the end of December because the spending did not start until this month.

President Joe Biden has proposed another \$1.9-trillion stimulus round.

The Congressional Budget Office has forecast a \$1.8-trillion federal deficit this fiscal year, with the annual deficit reaching or exceeding \$1 trillion through 2030.

The estimate may be conservative.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have forecast, Washington's money-pumping injections to artificially prop up the sagging economy will be greater than currently proposed. We also forecast that the Biden administration will send bigger relief checks to individuals as well as large and small businesses, which will also increase the deficit.*

Again, the more cheap money pumped into the system, the deeper the dollar falls and the higher gold, silver, and bitcoin prices rise.

U.S. GDP WILL GROW 4.3% THIS YEAR



The U.S. economy will expand by 4.3 percent in 2021, according to a consensus of economists polled by the *Wall Street Journal*. Last month, the consensus had foreseen a 3.7-percent growth outlook for the new year.

What will drive it up?

The same lines that have been repeated for three months: a more aggressive vaccination program and the pending expansion of stimulus spending will brighten up the economic future respondents said... and have said.

Almost two-thirds of those surveyed expect vaccine distribution to boost growth “substantially” this year; more than a third thought the vaccine campaign will increase the economy’s production “modestly.”

The consensus showed an expectation of 2.2-percent growth in 2021's first quarter, 4.9 percent in the second quarter, and 5.2 percent in the third.

TREND FORECAST: Again, there will be the “Biden Bounce,” but it will be both artificial and temporary.

While his fans are pleased he is replacing Donald Trump as President, an analysis of his “new” team is essentially a replica of the Obama administration. And, it should be noted that overall GDP growth during Obama’s term averaged 2.0 percent. Of course, Obama was hit by the Great Recession, however, despite the massive quantitative easing and zero-interest-rate policy, growth remained tepid.

Now, Biden is coming into office at the onset of the “Greatest Depression.” With much of the fiscal and monetary policy measures already overextended, artificial expansion measures will be greatly limited.

CONSUMER SPENDING DECEMBER SLUMP



It was not a Merry Christmas. U.S. retail sales dipped 0.7 percent in December from November, the U.S. Commerce Department reported. Afraid of getting hit by COVID, running out of money, and locked down by politicians with tighter social restrictions, consumers reduced their store visits.

“Faced with rising transmission of the virus, state restrictions on retailers, and heightened political and economic uncertainty, consumers chose to spend on gifts that lifted the spirits of their families and friends and provided a sense of normalcy,” Matthew Shay, president of the National Federation of Retailers, said in a public statement.

Retail sales were worse than expected in both November and December, which is indicative of a deteriorating overall economy, since some 70 percent of U.S. GDP is consumer-driven.

December marked the third consecutive month of declining consumer spending after a buying spurt over the summer and early fall; spending dropped an adjusted 1.4 percent in November from October.

Spending fell among grocery, department, electronics stores, and bars and restaurants. Consumers upped purchases on clothing, gasoline, health and personal care products, and home improvement.

Despite weak sales overall, online retailers bested last year's figure by 32 percent, taking in \$188 billion.

Strong online gains were unable to boost consumer spending into positive territory over the holidays, indicating most shopping still takes place in the physical locations that economic shutdowns have restricted.

TREND FORECAST: *Also in December, the economy registered a net loss of jobs for the first time in eight months. This, coupled with consumers' reluctance to spend and inability to get money to spend since they are out of work, adds urgency to Joe Biden's proposed \$1.9-trillion stimulus plan, which may give each U.S. citizen another \$1,400.*

However, a quick flood of stimulus money will only temporarily energize the economy.

Also, because of lockdown restrictions, retail closures, general uncertainty about the future, and the COVID virus's media predominance that has gripped the nation in fear, consumer spending will remain depressed.

ECONOMY REMAINS FAR FROM FED'S GOALS, POWELL SAYS



The U.S. jobs market remains weak, Jerome Powell, chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, acknowledged in a webcast for Princeton University.

Also, inflation has barely begun to stir and remains far below the Fed's 2-percent target rate, he noted.

Therefore, "now is not the time to be talking about exit" from the Fed's policies of bond-buying and near-zero interest rates, he said, targeting rumors that the Fed could, or should, cut back on its bond purchases and other stimulus programs in the near future.

"The economy is far from our goals," Powell said.

The Fed has been buying \$80 billion in treasury securities and \$40 billion in mortgage bonds each month since June and will continue to do so until the jobs market has made "substantial further progress," the central bank has said.

"We'll let the world know" when the Fed decides to throttle back its bond purchases, Powell said, and "we'll do so well in advance of active consideration of beginning a gradual taper in asset purchases."

Keep Them Low

As for raising interest rates when inflation moves higher, Powell said, "When the time comes to raise interest rates, we will certainly do that... and that time, by the way, is no time soon."

Leaving the crowd on a high note, Powell declared, “We have to get through this very difficult period this winter... I’m optimistic about the economy over the next couple of years – I really am.”

TREND FORECAST: *As we have long forecast, Powell admits we are going to enter a “very difficult period this winter.”*

Under the Fed’s stated interest-rate policy adopted in 2020, the bank will not raise interest rates to cool an overheated jobs market unless there is a strong likelihood of inflation above the bank’s 2-percent target rate.

By flooding the markets with cheap money, the Fed’s policies are intended to spur borrowing, spending, and investment. We forecast these policies will also jumpstart inflation.

Should inflation move above the invented 2-percent range and economic conditions continue to deteriorate, we forecast the Fed will not raise rates. Moreover, as the “very difficult period this winter” takes a toll on the economy, the Fed may well drop interest rates into negative territory... which, in turn, will drive precious metals and bitcoin prices higher.

PRICE HIKES LURKING BEYOND PANDEMIC



Consumer prices rose 0.4 percent in December from November, putting them 1.4 percent above December 2019’s level, the U.S. Commerce Department reported.

Core prices – those other than food and energy – were up 0.1 percent on the month and 1.6 percent on the year.

The COVID War and economic shutoff have boosted prices for goods such as groceries, hand sanitizer, and electronics, *Wall Street Journal* analyst Justin Lahart noted in a 14 January column; but the same factors have slashed prices for many services, such as hotel nights and car rentals.

When vaccines have brought the COVID virus under control, prices for high-demand services could quickly spike, Lahart noted.

“When everybody finally feels comfortable getting on a plane to see family, deals on flights could be hard to come by,” he wrote.

Also, prices for merchandise “might not ease up all that much, given that” a stronger economy will see more people back and work and ready to spend on long-delayed purchases, he added.

“Price gyrations would likely be temporary, but interpreting” long-term trends from them “could be hard,” Lahart concluded.

TREND FORECAST: *The U.S. Federal Reserve announced in August that it would no longer seek to hold inflation to 2 percent but could let it rise faster for brief periods without altering interest rates.*

It should be noted that inflation numbers are much higher than the government reports according shadowstats.com, which reports annual average inflation in the U.S was 8.9 percent in 2020.

Regarding the recently-released numbers, they noted, “December 2020 Year-to-Year Composite PPI Inflation held at 0.8% for a second month, with December Goods Inflation jumping to 1.1%, up from 0.4% in November, otherwise artificially depressed, as usual, by the mal-defined Services Sector (Bureau of Labor Statistics - BLS).”

We agree and maintain our forecast for rising inflation, which will devalue the U.S. dollar and push precious metals and bitcoin prices higher.

PRIVATE EQUITY FIRMS LOAD UP ON CHEAP DEBT TO BUY COMPANIES



Taking advantage of low interest rates, private equity firms are taking on more and more debt to buy more and more companies.

BC Partners is borrowing \$480 million to take over Women's Care Florida, lifting its debt to nine times its earnings. Odyssey Investment Partners is shouldering \$600 million in loans to buy Protective Industrial Products, leaving the company with seven times more debt than earnings. Clearlake Capital also is borrowing \$600 million, using it to buy a division of software company nThrive.

Interest rates on such loans are now about 6 percent, drastically lower than the 13 percent leveraged loans often commanded when the world's economies shut down last March, according to the Loan Syndication and Trading Association.

The buying frenzy "could see companies flip aggressively from" raising cash "and minding their balance sheets to buying aggressively to please their backers," UBS credit analyst Matt Mish said to the *Financial Times*.

"That could sow seeds for more problems in credit markets," he warned.

Meanwhile, a borrower-friendly credit market is expected to continue into 2021.

"We're doing a ton of M&As," John Gregory, chief of leveraged capital markets at Wells Fargo Securities, told the *FT*.

TRENDPOST: We note this article to again affirm that the Bigs will get bigger, small businesses will continue to shrink, the rich will get richer, and, in turn, median household income will decline, thus pushing down GDP growth, 70 percent of which is consumer-driven.

NYC APARTMENT RENTALS SNAP BACK?



In December, 5,459 apartment leases were signed in Manhattan, 94 percent more than a year earlier, according to real estate agency Douglas Elliman and research firm Miller Samuel.

For three-bedroom apartments, which averaged \$8,000 monthly rent, leaseings were up 171 percent from a year previous, the report noted.

This marks the third consecutive month of year-on-year increases and the largest jump in almost a decade.

Median rents continued to decline, falling 17 percent to \$2,800, including discounts and incentives. Rents also fell for studio and one-bedroom apartments.

Many landlords are offering two or more months' free rent; some go further, offering to pay for repainting and other changes to the properties.

Brokers report three groups are snapping up the flats:

- people who live in the city and are taking advantage of cheap rents to move to better digs;
- folks who fled the city during the pandemic and now are returning;
- families who cashed out of their suburban homes as prices soared and who want to experience city life.

All three groups comprise well-off renters who have been able to continue working through the pandemic; low-wage workers are frozen in place because evictions

have been banned, and they have no money to make deposits on new apartments.

Still, December showed 13,718 apartments available in Manhattan, a near-record total almost 2.5 times last year's number; the current vacancy rate of 5.5 percent is almost triple the historical average, Miller noted in the report.

December's gain is "a baby step in the right direction," Miller Samuel CEO Jonathan Miller said in a comment reported by *CNBC*. "I think we're in the preseason of recovery."

Mirroring strength in rentals, luxury apartment sales also increased in December, with flats priced above \$5 million chalking up a 23-percent boost in sales in 2020's fourth quarter, compared to the period in 2019.

TRENDPOST: *Leasings are on the rise not because people are flocking back to Manhattan but because prices finally fell to a level that makes sense in a city where fewer people want to live. Even with the number of rentals rising, commercial property owners still face a dire struggle to maintain their properties, pay the city's steep property taxes, and have any money left.*

And, with evictions prohibited by New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, it will push landlords deeper in debt, which will also lower city and state tax income.

OUTLOOK BLEAK FOR MORTGAGE-BACKED BONDS



Vacancy rates for urban apartments stand at or near record levels around the U.S., while millions of low-income earners have stopped paying rent but remain in their homes under state and federal eviction bans.

Those factors are jeopardizing the future of the \$1.2-trillion market in mortgage-backed securities, which bundle individual mortgages into packages sold to investors.

Research firm Trepp has found at least 50 mortgages on multi-family properties that have balances totaling \$1.5 trillion in which occupancy has shrunk 15 percentage points in 2020.

Occupancy of flats in San Francisco's luxury NEMA apartments, across 10th Street from Twitter's corporate headquarters, fell to 70 percent last year; New York's Chelsea29 building, with a fitness center and roof terrace, is 25 percent empty.

Dwindling occupancy has affected only 4 percent of loans that reported occupancy rates by late 2020.

"The number of loans struggling with low occupancy rates has to go up," Manus Clancy, Trepp's research director, commented to the *Financial Times*.

"In big cities, we're seeing occupancy sinking," he said. "It's expensive to live in these places...You can't do anything with the amenities and you're not going to the office. Those were often the reasons people stayed in their apartments. It's not surprising" that people are absconding to cheaper, more spacious homes farther away from city centers.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have noted, with remaining low-income tenants continuing to be jobless and not being evicted, landlords are increasingly unable to pay their mortgages and taxes. Thus, bankruptcies will escalate during the coming winter months as the economy falls into the "Greatest Depression."*

And, considering the flight from urban areas, even if tenants could be evicted, it would be difficult to find renters.

GOING DOWN, GOING BUST, GOING OUT



OIL INDUSTRY CUTS MORE JOBS. Royal Dutch Shell is lopping 330 jobs from its North Sea operations over the next two years, most of them office slots in Aberdeen.

About 1,500 Aberdeen workers already have taken voluntary buyout deals.

Shell also is vaporizing 900 jobs from its Netherlands center, about 10 percent of that locale's workforce.

The company will gradually shed more jobs as a major North Sea production platform is gradually decommissioned.

The company had to “remove a certain amount of organizational complexity” to “make the best of the core capabilities we need to succeed,” Shell CEO Ben van Beurden said in a statement announcing the layoffs.

Last September, Shell announced plans to lose 9 to 11 percent of its 83,000-strong global workforce by 2022 as it strives to cut at least \$2 billion annually in payroll costs.

Oil giant BP previously announced the elimination of about 10,000 jobs, roughly 15 percent of its global payroll, also mostly office spots. ExxonMobil is cutting the same percentage of its staff, about 14,000 workers and contractors, with almost 2,000 employees being dropped from the Houston management office.

CANADA'S AIRLINES FACE “EXISTENTIAL CRISIS.” Air Canada, the nation's emblematic airline, is dumping 1,900 workers and cutting 25 percent of its service routes.

The shrinkage means the airline is flying only about 20 percent of the routes and schedules it did at the beginning of 2019, the company said in announcing the new reductions.

Canadian air traffic last October was 83 percent below that of a year previous, Statistics Canada reported, leading Michael McNaney, president of the National Airlines Council of Canada (NACC), to tell the *Toronto Star* that the nation's airline industry is facing "an existential crisis."

Canada's government has enacted aid packages to the industry during the crisis but, despite promises, has not allotted aid to airlines specifically.

"If we don't get this right" – meaning government support for air carriers – "the economic recovery of the country overall will absolutely be undermined," McNaney said.

However, "before we spend one penny of taxpayer money on airlines, we will ensure that regional communities retain air connections to the rest of Canada, Canadian air carriers maintain their status as key customers of Canada's aerospace industry," and that customers receive refunds for tickets purchased for flights that later were canceled, a spokesperson for the country's transport ministry said in a public statement.

NORWEGIAN AIR FIGHTS FOR SURVIVAL. The Scandinavian airline has abandoned long-haul flights to the U.S. and Asia, closing bases in Britain and Spain, costing 2,000 workers their jobs, and will concentrate on short hops around Europe as it exits bankruptcy.

The airline's financial reorganization leaves shareholders with about 5 percent of the company and creditors holding 25 percent. Trading equity for debt will cut the amount the airline owes from about \$6 billion to \$2.5 billion.

The airline filed bankruptcy last fall after Norway's conservative government refused the carrier's request for a second bailout. The government has indicated that it is more open to supporting Norwegian under its new plan.

RENAULT CUTS PAYROLL, FACTORY SPACE. The French carmaker will cut its production capacity from four million cars to 3.1 million by 2025, closing at least some factories outside of France and turfing out 15,000 workers as part of a strategic shift "from volume to value," the company said.

The carmaker will halve its number of vehicle platforms from six to three and engine variations from eight to four, with 80 percent of its cars built in partnership with Nissan.

By 2025, the company wants 20 percent of its revenue to come from services and data.

DROPBOX STOCK SLIPS. The company's share price dipped more than 5 percent on 13 January with news that the company is cutting 11 percent of its jobs – about 315 positions – and COO Olivia Nottebohm is leaving.

The cut violates the company's commitment, made last spring, to keep staff, CEO Drew Houston acknowledged in a letter to staffers announcing the cuts. But "it's clear we need to make changes to create a healthy and thriving business for the future," he told workers.

Dropbox has adopted a "virtual first" employment policy, cutting employees who need to be at an office to do their jobs.

STARBUCKS CLOSING UP TO 300 CANADIAN STORES BY APRIL. As part of its five-year "transformation strategy," Starbucks will close as many as 300 of its Canadian stores by the end of March.

Previously, the company had announced plans to close up to 200 stores in Canada over two years.

Starbucks has said it is closing downtown sit-down stores now that, for many office workers, commuting is becoming a thing of the past.

Instead, the coffee giant is building suburban drive-through stores, expanding delivery services, and testing curbside pickup-only shops.

Canada's first pickup-only Starbucks, measuring about 30 feet square, opened last January in Toronto's business district.

EAGLE HOSPITALITY REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY. As a result of the lockdowns, which have devastated the tourism and business travel industry, the investment trust, which owns a portfolio of corporate, leisure, and airport hotels across the U.S., filed for bankruptcy protection in Delaware on Monday.

Last week, Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C., one of the largest hotels in D.C., which opened in 1918, filed for bankruptcy.

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT

FRANCE: 2021 WILL BE WORSE THAN 2020



Remember the mainstream media sideshow when the politicians launched the COVID War last year that wrecked the global economy, destroyed millions of businesses, and put billions out of work?

It was the “Greatest Shows on Earth” brought to you by Presstitute clowns and their sidekicks blasting across the airwaves that there was nothing to worry about because there would be a “V-shaped” recovery?

In the Land(s) of the Free, anyone who didn’t believe it was blackballed.

Now they are singing a new tune.

The COVID lockdowns and social constraints will wreak more damage on the French economy this year than they did in 2020, finance minister Bruno LeMaire said in remarks at a 12 January conference at the Institut Montaigne, a think-tank.

“The hardest is still to come and we’re going to have to show considerable strength of character,” he said. “There will be more bankruptcies in 2021 than in 2020... which will result in job losses... that will be difficult to absorb.”

The French government will continue to support French businesses, especially in the hardest-hit sectors, LeMaire promised, as the government readies new

measures to dispatch vaccines across the country and considers new strictures to stop COVID's spread.

The new restrictions are likely to reflect those recently imposed in Britain and Germany.

Hotels and restaurants were hoping to reopen on 20 January but now will not. The French hospitality industry is pressing the government to give as much as €3 million to each damaged business.

"We will not let them fail," LeMaire promised. "We will spend the money that is necessary."

The French government had predicted a 6-percent growth in GDP this year after a 9-percent plunge in 2020.

TREND FORECAST: *By what is going on and what is coming down, economic conditions will continue to deteriorate. It is a global economy and already this month, China has locked down four cities. Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands have extended social curbs beyond this month; Italy through April. Japan has lengthened its state of emergency, threatening the summer Olympic Games already postponed from last year.*

The new restrictions and the COVID virus's enduring strength make the possibility of 6-percent growth in France unlikely this year.

LAGARDE: KEEP THE MONEY FLOWING



Governments and central banks must not end economic stimulus programs too soon, even if inflation rates rise and economies seem to be recovering, European

Central Bank (ECB) president Christine Lagarde said in 13 January comments at the Reuters Next economic forum reported by the *Financial Times*.

Although pent-up consumer demand is likely to bring an early jolt to economic numbers, “any kind of tightening at the moment would be very unwarranted,” she said. “We cannot rely on the pent-up demand, which might lead to some additional movement on the inflation front.”

The pandemic and economic shutdown curtailed consumer spending and boosted savings rates, deflating consumer prices, she noted.

Prices also have been pushed down by the euro’s rising value, making imports cheaper.

In December, the euro’s value reached a three-year high against the American buck.

Although falling prices can launch a deflationary cycle with more goods than consumers are buying, “we shouldn’t write off” the prospect of inflation, Lagarde warned, noting that prices already were rising in the U.S., China, and other countries early in 2020.

The ECB forecasts a 1-percent inflation rate across the Eurozone this year, rising to 1.4 percent in 2023. The bank has set a target rate of just under 2 percent before it adjusts its policies or interest rates.

The bank also has predicted 3.9-percent GDP growth in Europe this year, a figure that is still “very plausible” despite the COVID virus’s continued strength, Lagarde said, noting that the forecast already incorporated the virus’s recent return.

TREND FORECAST: The tune is changing. The worst is yet to come.

In its annual survey just released, the World Economic Forum listed infectious disease and its implications on people’s livelihoods as one of the most dominant global risks over the next two years.

They also cautioned the consequences of asset bubbles and price instability. Repeating precisely what we had forecast for several months, the WEF warned, “The immediate human and economic cost of COVID-19 is severe. The ramifications – in the form of social unrest, political fragmentation, and geopolitical

tensions – will shape the effectiveness of our responses to the other key threats of the next decade.”

EUROPE BRACES FOR INFLATION



Across Europe, investors and policymakers are expecting to see prices rise across a broad range of goods and services as central banks hold to policies of cheap money and a new U.S. stimulus initiative boosts global spending.

The five-year inflation swap rate for the euro – essentially a gauge of what investors think the inflation rate will be over the next five years – reached 1.35 percent on 12 January, its highest in more than a year.

“This is quite a remarkable move,” Jorge Garayo, a strategist at Société Générale, told the Wall Street Journal. “It has surprised us.”

In Germany’s bond market, the so-called “break-even rate” has passed 1 percent for the first time in a year; Italy’s rate is higher than it has been in more than two years.

The higher a break-even rate is, the faster investors expect prices to rise.

The U.S. break-even rate has been above 2 percent so far this month.

Inflation is usually bad news for bonds, which pay a fixed rate of return even if prices rise, which makes money worthless.

In November, the Eurozone continued to see deflation – falling prices for goods and services – at a rate of -0.3 percent; the trend was expected to continue through December.

The European Central Bank has targeted 2-percent inflation as acceptable without the bank needing to raise interest rates or adjust other policies.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast for Dragflation: an economy that will continually be dragged lower as the "Greatest Depression" worsens and high costs of essentials and supplies decrease and values of currencies decline. And again, we suggest going to www.shadowstats.com for another view of inflation, with the reminder to "Think for Yourself."*

CORPORATE BOND MARKET RISKS SHAKEOUT



Having climbed to \$900 billion globally, the market for corporate bonds is becoming increasingly risky, fund managers warned in a 16 January *Financial Times* article.

Lending standards had become less stringent before the pandemic arrived, pushing worldwide corporate bonded debt from \$575 billion in 2016 to \$887 billion last June. Then, during 2020's economic crash, banks became less interested in lending to smaller businesses, seeking borrowers with high bond ratings.

Meanwhile, fund managers had stockpiled \$300 billion in liquidity by the end of 2019 to snap up those new bond issues.

Also, corporate bonds are harder to sell than government issues. That earns corporate debt an "illiquidity premium," boosting interest rates more – a heady enticement in a world where central banks' interest rates hover near zero.

Combining those factors with interest rates pushed to rock bottom by central banks created a roaring market for corporations looking to borrow.

As a result, many corporations with risky balance sheets got loans anyway.

TREND FORECAST: *As the global economies sink deeper into the “Greatest Depression,” the “borrowing of cheap money” game that has artificially propped up corporations will end as businesses go bust and bankruptcies balloon.*

EUROZONE FACES DOUBLE-DIP RECESSION



Locked down under new restrictions imposed as the COVID virus returned in strength, Europe's economies have again weakened and now face a double-dip recession, a variety of data show, as reported by the *Financial Times*.

A double-dip recession happens when a period of contraction is followed by a short growth spurt, then another slide into recession.

Visits to stores, restaurants, and workplaces across the Eurozone have fallen so far this month, according to foot-traffic analysts, as has consumer spending. Consumer confidence also has shrunk, surveys have found.

The region's economy contracted around 2 percent in the final three months of 2020, economists estimate. The virus's persistence and a slow roll-out of vaccines point to another contraction in this year's first quarter, sparking Europe's second recession in less than two years, many predict.

A recession is defined as two consecutive quarters of economic contraction.

Strictures on businesses and social mobility in Germany and the Netherlands are now more stringent than those imposed last spring. German consumers spent 25 percent less in this month's second week than in the same week in 2019, reported

research firm Fable Data. Only groceries were spared in the contraction, Fable noted.

The Eurozone's industrial production was buoyed last fall, however, by returning demand for exports. That strength helped soften the economic blow. Still, there is no guarantee that manufacturing's performance can be relied on to continue, economists warned.

The GDP of former Eurozone member Britain lost 2.6 percent in November when a second economic shutdown was mandated, following six consecutive months of growth.

Although November's contraction was far less dire than the 18-percent plunge seen last April, any sustained economic recovery is now further away.

"We should expect the economy to get worse before it gets better," Rishi Sunak, chancellor of the exchequer, told Parliament on 11 January.

GERMANY'S ECONOMY POSTS SECOND-WORST LOSS IN ALMOST 70 YEARS



Germany's GDP shrank 5 percent in 2020, its worst performance since contracting 5.7 percent during 2009's financial crisis and the second-worst since the 1950s, the country's statistics office reported, referring to the outcome as a "deep recession."

Economists had forecast a 5.1 loss for last year.

The actual decline was closer to 5.3 percent, the *Wall Street Journal* reported because 2020 had more workdays than 2019.

TREND FORECAST: *Of the European economies, Germany's will remain the strongest. As the "Greatest Depression" worsens, there will be strengthening populist movements among hard-hit EU nations to pull out of the euro and the European Union.*

LAGARDE CALLS FOR GLOBAL BITCOIN REGULATION



Bitcoin, the world's leading cryptocurrency, must be governed by coordinated global regulations, Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank, said on 13 January at the Reuters Next economic forum.

Her call for controls echoed that of other policymakers in several countries.

The digital currency "is a highly speculative asset which has conducted some funny business and some interesting and totally reprehensible money-laundering activities," she said, referring to unspecified criminal investigations.

"Regulation has to be applied and agreed upon at a global level because if there is an escape, that escape will be used," she contended.

TRENDPOST: *Following Ms. Lagarde's crypto warning, bitcoin dropped some 6 percent. We note this for two reasons. First, there will be a digital euro in the near future, and the EU does not want competition. Second, the central Banksters have no control over cryptocurrencies and, as such, they will not permit completion at any level. They demand complete control of currencies, and with their launching of digital ones, they will be able to track where it was spent, on what, when, and where... allowing governments to grab full taxes on all monies spent. (See our 24 March article, ["FROM DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH."](#))*

SOUTH KOREA: MOST JOB LOSSES IN 21 YEARS



In December, 628,000 South Koreans lost their jobs, the tenth consecutive monthly decline in employment and the greatest one-month loss since February 1999 amid Asia's financial crisis, Statistics Korea reported. The late 90s crash erased 1.27 million jobs from the country's payrolls.

The largest share of December's losses were in leisure and hospitality, the statistics agency noted.

"For the whole year, the face-to-face service sectors suffered the largest job losses and temporary workers, young adults, and those in their 30s took a beating," agency official Jeong Dong-myeong said in a press conference announcing the numbers.

In December, for the second month in a row, manufacturers dropped 100,000 workers.

The government has forecast GDP growth of 3.2 percent this year, reversing 2020's 1.1-percent contraction, the worst performance this century.

However, with the COVID virus lockdowns escalating around the world, exports were slashed 15.4 percent year-over-year during the first 10 days of this month which in turn spiking up unemployment last month according to the Korea Customs Service.

The Customs Service also reported that the country's outbound shipments stood at \$11.2 billion in the 1-10 January period, compared with \$13.2 billion a year

earlier. Their data showed imports decreased 22.9 percent on-year to \$11.8 billion in the 10-day period, resulting in a trade deficit of \$636 million.

“Economic indicators of some industries, such as manufacturing and information technology, are showing improvement but immediate employment action by the industries are unlikely” due to uncertainties surrounding the global economic recovery,” economist Kim So-young commented to the Korea Herald.

TREND FORECAST: *We note this serious economic decline of export-dependent South Korea to illustrate the severe damage the COVID War lockdowns have taken across the globe.*

TORONTO'S VACANCY RATE HITS 50-YEAR HIGH



Apartment vacancies in Toronto reached 5.7 percent in 2020's fourth quarter, according to real estate research firm Urbanation, a 1.1-percent increase year over year and a 50-year record.

During the quarter, average rents in Toronto proper dove 10 percent to \$2,337, compared to a year earlier. In contrast, average rents in surrounding locales fell just 2.2 percent to \$2,139.

Landlords are offering incentives to fill the empty flats, including up to two months rent-free, Urbanation reported.

As in the U.S., many of Toronto's working residents fled the city to reduce their chances of catching the COVID virus or to find cheaper, more spacious digs when they were allowed to work from home.

“Rents have a long way to go before returning to their peak and supply will continue to be a headwind in the near term,” Shaun Hildrebrand, president of Urbanation, said in a statement accompanying the report.

He expects “some improvement” as vaccinations ease people’s minds about living in the city and working in offices.

ISRAELI STOCK MARKET GETS A SHOT IN THE ARM



After struggling to gain just 4.3 percent in 2020, Israel’s TA-125 stock index already is up 6 percent this month, due to the country’s rapid distribution of COVID vaccines, analysts say.

Israel’s successful vaccination campaign makes it more likely to see an economic rebound sooner than most other countries, luring investors to bet on its stocks.

The country of nine million has vaccinated a quarter of its population in about four weeks.

“Israel is going to be the poster child of how countries get their populations vaccinated and recover,” equity strategist Sean Darby at Jeffries, a financial services firm, said in a comment quoted by the *Wall Street Journal*. “The market hadn’t appreciated how quickly the vaccine could be rolled out.”

Investors are putting money into stocks that will ride the wave of an improving economy, such as banking and energy.

Share prices for Israel’s three largest banks have jumped 7 percent this month after plunging 20 percent last year.

Israel's economy will grow 6.3 percent this year, the country's central bank has predicted, after contracting 3.7 percent in 2020.

TRENDPOST: *Israel has one of the highest COVID vaccination rates in the world. We note this to observe not only what the effect will be as per an economic bounceback, but to observe what side serious effects from the jab, if any, will occur among the population in the coming months.*

LATIN AMERICA FACES SLOW, PAINFUL ECONOMIC RECOVERY



The economies of Latin America, where the pandemic has done the most damage, will take at least until 2023 to return to pre-pandemic levels, Carlos Jaramillo, head of the World Bank's operations in Latin America and the Caribbean, said to the *Financial Times*.

"It will only be a gradual recovery," he said. "I don't think we're expecting anywhere a quick bounce-back."

At the end of this year, the region's economic production will still be 4.8 percent less than in 2019, according to the International Monetary Fund's forecast.

The region was the world's slowest-growing before the pandemic struck. Draconian lockdowns in Argentina, Peru, and other nations failed to stem the virus's spread and crippled economies across the area.

With 8 percent of the world's population, Latin America has reported a quarter of the world's COVID-related deaths.

Three factors will hobble the region's return to a pre-pandemic economy, analysts say:

- COVID's continuing spread;
- countries' lack of resources to spend for stimulus;
- insufficient political support for economic reforms that could boost growth.

Brazil's economy will grow about 3.2 percent this year, according to many economists, after contracting 4.9 percent last year and is expected to lead the region in recovery. Mexico, Latin America's second-largest economy after Brazil's, spent little to stimulate its economy, leading to a 9-percent GDP loss in 2020 but a smaller debt load.

Argentina and Ecuador, both in a debt mess before the pandemic crashed their economies, have restructured their loans from the IMF but are now facing domestic political unrest.

Argentina's economy could do well this year "relative to expectations, but that's because expectations are very low," Claudio Irigoyen, Bank of America's chief Latin American economist, said in a comment quoted by the Times.

Ecuador's looming presidential election may return populist Andres Arauz to power, riding a wave of opposition to austerity measures imposed by the restructuring agreement with the IMF. He has promised to void the deal.

Political churn also is roiling Chile and Peru.

Noting that Latin America is the region with the greatest economic inequality, financial officials say that an economic recovery is a chance to correct imbalances that stir unrest.

Many of the countries have begun bringing broadband access to the poor, reforming taxes, investing in public services, and liberate small businesses from a burdensome welter of regulations.

The World Bank's Jaramillo welcomed these moves as first steps.

"This crisis has been particularly harsh on the poorest and particularly comfortable for the middle and upper-middle class," he said. "This is not something that should be sustainable."

TREND FORECAST: As you will note in our Geopolitical section, we report on the massive human caravan of several thousand Hondurans heading to the United States to escape poverty, crime, government corruption, and violence wracking their nation. This trend will continue to escalate as the "Greatest Depression" worsens.

As we forecast, regardless of the nation, there will be strong anti-immigration movements to stop refugees from flooding into more prosperous, safe-haven nations.

TOP TRENDS OF 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 POSTS 2.3-PERCENT ECONOMIC EXPANSION IN 2020. China's economy grew 2.3 percent in 2020 and surged 6.5 percent in the year's final quarter, meeting exactly or beating a range of economists' projections, according to the country's National Bureau of Statistics.

The figures also bear out expectations which we have been reporting that China's would be the only major economy to show positive growth last year. While the rest of the world locked down, closing down productivity and restricting social movement, China opened up.

China's economy crashed briefly a year ago as the virus began to spread. However, they did it (since hard facts and data by their government are questionable), and the nation was only briefly locked down.

Subsequently, their economy rebounded quickly, in part thanks to a government-directed emphasis on manufacturing, infrastructure building, and exports to serve a crippled world.

That emphasis left consumers behind; the country's consumer economy contracted 3.9 percent in 2020.

Consumer spending in China accounted for 54.3 percent of last year's GDP, the statistics bureau said. In the U.S., consumer spending typically supports about 70 percent of the economy.

As we have been reporting, last fall, the government announced a "dual circulation" economic strategy that would continue to boost its export industry while aggressively cultivating a flourishing consumer economy to serve its 1.4 billion customers.

Retail sales in China will grow more than 10 percent this year, especially as consumers there spend savings to satisfy pent-up demand as the consumer economy expands, predicted Bruce Pang, chief of strategy research at China Renaissance, in a research note.

CHINA GAINING ON U.S. AS WORLD'S LEADING ECONOMY. China will account for 16.8 percent of global GDP growth last year, up from 14.2 percent in 2016, according to Moody's Analytics.

In contrast, U.S. growth last year was 22.2 percent, virtually the same as its 22.3-percent number in 2016, Moody's noted. However, the U.S. GDP remains 50 percent larger than China's, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

This year, China's share of global production will rise to 19 percent and pass 20 percent by 2025, when the U.S. will account for only about 14.8 percent of the

world's economic output, Sohaib Shahid, a senior economist, predicted in a 15 January interview with the *Financial Times*.

China's rapid recovery since its COVID pandemic has focused on supporting manufacturing and small businesses. State-owned banks suspended debt payments for businesses; the government made loans at cheap rates to small firms.

The consumer economy was slammed shut and factories were required to meet strict standards to keep workers healthy.

In China about 4,600 people have died of COVID; in the U.S., with about a third the population of China, more than 400,000 – about ten times as many – have died.

By early April, about 97 percent of China's largest businesses had reopened, the National Bureau of Statistics reported.

The country's response to the virus and economic recovery made it the world's manufacturing and export hub for much of last year. As such, it gained market share in a range of industries and geographic regions around the globe, especially in Asia, but also in Europe.

China shipped about 15.4 percent of the world's exports in November, compared to 13.7 percent late in 2019, Oxford Economics reported. The growth rate in exports was the country's fastest in more than three years, yielding a \$75-billion trade surplus for that month alone.

The volume of China's exports was up 7 percent, year over year, during the last six months of 2020, according to Shahid.

China's trade surplus was \$460 billion during the 2020's first 11 months, 20 percent above 2019's amount during the same period, he noted, adding "this shows the extent to which the pandemic has forced countries to increasingly rely on Chinese goods."

About three-quarters of companies, including 70 percent of U.S. firms, expect to draw more of their supplies and parts from China through 2022, a November survey by HSBC Holdings found.

Also, China now is striving to expand its lagging domestic consumer economy, which will further strengthen its manufacturing sector.

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

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

China's GDP will expand by as much as 9 percent this year, Morgan Stanley has predicted, while in the U.S, the economy will grow by about half that much, according to a broad group of analysts and economists.

The country not only has a growing influence on corporate earnings but also as a financial center.

Its CSI stock index has risen 32 percent in the last 12 months, almost doubling the U.S. S&P's 17-percent climb. China also logged a record number of initial public stock offerings and secondary listings, accounting for 43 percent of the world's total listings, data firm Refinitiv said.

Foreign direct investment in China's economy overall swelled 6.3 percent during the first 11 months of 2020, compared to the same period a year earlier. In contrast, foreign direct investment in Canada in 2020 slid 32 percent and 61 percent in the U.S. last year.

Foreign holdings of Chinese bonds topped \$500 billion in December, a 49-percent gain during 2020, analysis firm Bond Connect noted.

The MSCI China Index, which tracks Chinese stocks traded around the world, rose 27 percent last year; MSCI's AC world index was up 14 percent.

"China was becoming increasingly assertive in recent years," Shahid said. "The pandemic has exacerbated that. China's strong recovery will only increase its dominance."

CHINA EXPORT VALUE REACHED RECORD AMOUNT IN 2020. Trade War?

Forget about it!

In 2020, China exported \$2.6 trillion worth of goods and services, 3 percent above 2019's level and a new record, China's Administration of Customs reported last week.

December's exports were more than 18.1 percent above those a year earlier, far above economists' expectation of a 12.9-percent hike.

In December, China exported 34.5 percent more to the U.S. than it did in December 2019, giving it a \$29.95-billion trade surplus with America for the month. For the year, China reaped a record \$316.9-billion surplus from the U.S., China's government said, despite Donald Trump's efforts to balance the books with China by levying tariffs on its goods.

China's strong fourth-quarter export record added 0.3 to 0.4 percent to the country's 2020 GDP growth, economists reckon.

The country's demand for imports dipped 1.1 percent for the year, even though they rose 4.5 percent in November and 6.5 percent in December as China's economy gained added strength.

The difference between the value of imports and exports left China with a \$535-billion trade surplus for the year, including a \$78.17-billion positive difference in December alone.

China's quick recovery from the pandemic and economic shutdown left it as the world's chief supplier of goods through the first half of 2020, turning out medical equipment and electronics.

As the crises began to ease around the globe later in the year, Chinese factories added a wider range of goods while other countries still struggled to restart their manufacturing base.

China's export strength survived the 6.1-percent rise of its yuan against the dollar, which makes Chinese goods more expensive in many parts of the world.

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS *by Gregory Mannarino*

THE NEXT PHASE: NUCLEAR DEBT, SLAVE SOCIETY



Over the course of 2020, the Federal Reserve's balance sheet nearly doubled. Only a fraction of people are aware of this hyper-ballooning debt. It's being called the "Rescue America" plan. Yes, that's right. The new Biden administration is about to unleash the equivalent of "nuclear" debt on America.

The "Rescue America" plan promises to compound multiple trillions of dollars more debt on our already debt-saturated nation. In truth, this "Rescue America" plan is simply going to continue what began under the Obama administration with the TARP program and was continued under the Trump administration. But, now, under Biden, it's about to go nuclear.

What's really behind nuclear debt?

As I have been explaining in my articles for the **Trends Journal**, we are about to experience a new phase of debt issuance and asset acquisition by the Federal Reserve. Moreover, it is going to expand exponentially. We are in the middle of an economic meltdown, by design, and a stock market that continues to defy.

The public is being lulled into a slave-society deception, becoming dependent on "the government." The government, as being portrayed to the public, is not the government at all. The real government, the world shadow government, is the central banks, and here in the United States, it is the Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve is the government, and it has been their goal since their inception in 1913 to one day be the lender and buyer of last resort... and we are there now. The

shadow government is creating a global society of dependents, people who rely on them. In other words, a slave society.

The effect of a slave society will be more people willing to surrender more of their rights and freedoms for government support. The worst part is that people will submit willingly.

Today, again, by design, the middle class is under direct attack, being forced to suffer and become desperate. Make them beg, and then the government will step in to “rescue them.” They are becoming slaves.

The real government wants to “own it all,” which is something I have outlined for years, and that includes the people themselves by causing them to be dependent on the system.

MARKET FORECAST: *Nuclear debt will give way to a whole new set of rules, and a deeper, darker Police State, which is already beginning to manifest itself.*

Nuclear debt will keep pushing the stock market to record highs. I forecast assets such as cryptocurrencies to gain as well. The place to be remains anti-debt units, like physical gold and, more so, physical silver.

By Gregory Mannarino, [TradersChoice.net](https://www.TradersChoice.net)

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM *by Bradley J. Steiner*

In Memoriam: our beloved friend, Bradley J. Steiner, passed on December 5, 2020.

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.

YOU NEED AN IRON WILL



The big question:

Do you have the necessary will to do what is required to remain safe, to survive, to secure your loved ones, and to prosper as Western society continues to decline?

Make no mistake about it: We are at that point. It's time for toughness, resolve, action, and will on the part of the good humans left among us if we intend to survive.

“Self-defense” must encompass much more than mastering personal unarmed and armed combat skills and preparing one's person, home, and place of business to remain secure while brainless animals riot, rant, rave, vandalize, and worse. Yes, armed and unarmed combat is essential... but much more is needed.

Americans are going to confront atrocious conditions that have not yet previously been experienced in our Nation. For example, our school system – elementary through graduate levels in the universities – has been in a state of abominable decline for more than 70 years now. And it keeps getting worse!

To deal with it, we who see what is happening need not only to counteract it (by educating ourselves and seeing to proper home education for our young) but also to remain calm and quiet as the garbage who feed on and off of this “system” continue to exploit it and to participate in it.

To be an overt enemy of the insanity is to invite its wrath; and since the savages now enjoy political power, overt confrontation means serious trouble – possibly ruin. In your mind, however... and in the minds of your young whom you will be educating correctly... there must be a steel wall blocking out any acceptance of the prevailing manure.

Your will must be such that you adhere passionately, stubbornly, resolutely, and unwaveringly to your faith in God; your commitment to liberty, free enterprise, self-reliance, personal defense, and autonomy; and all that is rational, just, and right.

No matter what evil may be going on around you, you must remain impervious to its influence and secure in the knowledge that your values are right, reasonable, healthy, and correct. And you must exercise **an iron will** as the sewer waters rise, so as not to have your soul and your intellect drowned in the socialist muck.

Yes, you need self-defense abilities and confidence, with and without weapons, more than ever – now that the threat to your dignity, well-being, safety, and autonomy are coming from many who now act under the color of law. It was bad enough when all you had to concern yourself with was being able to defend against violent criminals who were social outcasts and offenders whom the system stood ready to prosecute and imprison. Now, God help us, you witness legal officers in positions of state authority who act to prosecute law-abiding citizens when these individuals clearly act in self-defense. Acting now in self-defense against those vermin who are politically protected and in favor can bring you grief. It takes an unwavering will to confront and sustain oneself in the face of this! It is not easy... and I would bet it will be more difficult as the months and years roll by.

In my many years of self-defense training, I have discovered that successful candidates for marvelous, elite military units such as the army’s Special Forces and the Navy’s SEALs were in no sense “supermen.” What enabled them to pass the rigors of training and cope with the demands of military missions was an indomitable WILL.

These men did not comprehend the notion of “quitting,” “giving up,” “surrendering,” “retreating from a mission,” etc. No matter the obstacles; regardless of the dangers; despite the odds; no matter what “almost everybody else” might have assessed as hopeless, pointless, or too great a challenge, these warriors remained steadfast!

Sure, they possessed weapons skills, and only a damn fool would try to tackle one of them in unarmed combat... but their distinctive trait, their unalterable mindset that saw them through to accomplishing whatever their task or mission, was an IRON WILL.

Many of these men whom I knew (during the Vietnam era) lived through trials and hardships and challenges that would make coping with that which we as private citizens now face in urban America seem like a stroll in the park. Like the strong spirit and iron will of taekwon-do and the other martial arts and ways that I assimilated, the iron will of true warriors is, much more so than mere muscles and guns, what sees them through to victory.

LEARN THIS LESSON NOW, AND PREVAIL!

by Bradley J. Steiner

TRENDS ON THE COVID WARFRONT

NEW STUDY: LOCKDOWN LUNACY



A peer-reviewed study published on 5 January in the *European Journal of Clinical Investigation* studied restrictive measures imposed to stop the spread of the coronavirus in ten major countries. Its conclusion:

“We do not find any significant benefits on case growth of more restrictive NPIs (non-pharmaceutical interventions). Similar reductions in case growth may be achievable with less restrictive interventions.”

The study, titled, “Assessing Mandatory Stay-at-Home and Business Closure Effects on the Spread of COVID-19,” compared the results of harsh lockdown policies in England, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the U.S. with two major countries, Sweden and South Korea, which allowed businesses to stay open and never forced stay-at-home restrictions.

Using a mathematical model, the four researchers from Stanford Medical College were able to determine that the government-imposed restrictions on business and basic social connections offered “no clear, significant beneficial effect on case growth [infection rates] in any country.”

The researchers added, “We do not question the role of all public health interventions, or of coordinated communications about the epidemic, but we fail to find an additional benefit of stay-at-home orders and business closures.”

While acknowledging that no study can perfectly compare countries when it comes to viral transmission rates given the complexity of the issue, by using tested mathematical models, the medical researchers were able to determine, backed by peer-reviewed analysis, that “there is no evidence that more restrictive lockdowns contributed substantially to bending the curve of new cases in England, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, or the United States.”

But the researchers went even further, noting the data showed evidence that more restrictive measures led to an increase in the viral spread:

“It is possible that stay-at-home orders may facilitate transmission if they increase person-to-person contact where transmission is efficient such as in closed spaces.”

They also added the important conclusion that even if small benefits do exist from lockdown policies, they “do not match the numerous harms of these aggressive measures. More targeted public health interventions that more effectively reduce transmissions may be important for future epidemic control without the harms of highly restrictive measures.”

Regarding “numerous harms of these aggressive measures,” on 29 April, the executive director of the UN World Food Program, David Beasley, warned, “There is also a real danger that more people could potentially die from the economic impact of COVID-19 than from the virus itself.” He estimated over 100 million people could face starvation due to the global lockdowns.

In addition, evidence keeps growing that lockdowns are creating massive mental health issues from depression to suicide. (See our 12 January article, “[LOCKDOWN BLUES: MILLIONS GOING MAD](#)” and the 21 October *BBC* article, “[Covid: Lockdown had ‘major impact’ on mental health.](#)”)

TRENDPOST: *As for locking people down, the curfews, etc., as we have continually reported in the **Trends Journal**, this past May, Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York State’s lockdown czar, said, “Overwhelmingly, the people were at home... We thought maybe they were taking public transportation, and we’ve taken special precautions on public transportation, but actually no, because these people were literally at home.”*

Despite the overt failure of these lockdown laws, they persist, and, in many nations, those protesting them are arrested and fined for disobeying these draconian, unscientifically-based rules.

TRENDPOST: *It should be noted that one of the co-authors of this study, Jay Bhattacharya, professor of medicine and economics at Stanford, was among the scientists who published the “Great Barrington Declaration.” (See our 13 October article, “[THE GREAT BARRINGTON DECLARATION: NO COVID FEAR.](#)”)*

This document encouraged governments around the world to end lockdown impositions, which including getting young people back to school while putting more protections in place for the elderly and those most vulnerable to the virus. The Great Barrington Declaration, which can be found online at <https://gbdeclaration.org/> thus far has been signed by over 50,000 medical practitioners and public health scientists in 43 countries.

DRUG LORD: COVID IS “FOREVER”



The word from the top of Big Pharma is to prepare to live in fear until COVID kills you or until you die.

Last Wednesday, the chief executive of Moderna, one of the drug companies delivering millions of COVID-19 vaccines, said it should be expected that “we are going to live with this virus forever.”

It “is not going away,” Bancel added, saying, “Health officials will have to continuously watch for new variants of the virus, so scientists can produce vaccines to fight them.”

And from Bill “The Vaccinator” Gate’s *Microsoft News*, their anxiety-producing headline last Thursday blared: “The Moderna CEO Just Made This Scary Prediction About COVID.”

Panic in the Air

From a *CNBC* article quoting Bancel, *Microsoft News* wrote:

“Researchers in Ohio said Wednesday they’ve discovered two new variants likely originating in the U.S. and that one of them quickly became the dominant strain in Columbus, Ohio, over a three-week period in late December and early January.”

As we noted in our 12 January article, [“‘MUTANT’ STRAIN: DEADLY MEDIA HYPE & FEAR,”](#) the mainstream media uses “deadly” words to describe what is a natural process with all viruses: they mutate into different strands.

TRENDPOST: Moderna's drug king, CEO Stephane Bancel, who was the source of the "scary" headline about us having to live with COVID "forever," has cashed in personal Moderna stock worth about \$40 million, according to an NPR report on 4 September.

The report included this comment from Daniel Taylor, associate professor of accounting at the Wharton School, about Bancel cashing in stock: "On a scale of one to 10, one being less concerned and 10 being the most concerned... this is an 11." The article added that "Taylor said Moderna's stock-selling practices appear well outside the norm, and raise questions about the company's internal controls to prevent insider trading."

COVID-19 VACCINES: TRACKING ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS



Earlier this month, former *New York Times* reporter Alex Berenson of *Breitbart* said, regarding side effects from the COVID vaccines, that "the data are showing many more such events than are reported with flu shots."

Ron Paul's "Institute for Peace and Prosperity" picked up Berenson's reporting, confirming it was backed by data from a federal reporting system that health officials use to track and study "adverse events" associated with vaccines, ranging from mild side effects to serious health problems.

Severe allergic reactions to COVID-19 vaccines were occurring at a rate of 11.1 per million vaccinations, compared to 1.3 per 1 million with flu shots, according to Nancy Messonnier, director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

According to a 14 December report on the website *Medical News Today*, “It is important to note there is no drug – not even the most common painkiller – that is entirely free from side effects.”

The medical site says data collected so far showed some 2.7 percent of those who received a COVID-19 vaccine reported a “Health Impact Event,” which means a person is “Unable to perform normal daily activities, unable to work and/or required care from a doctor or health care professional.”

CDC VAERS Data

The CDC compiles adverse vaccine reaction data via a reporting system called the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). The VAERS website contains the disclaimer that it “often lacks details and sometimes can have information that contains errors.” Still, as of mid-January, 55 persons were listed in the database as having died from the vaccine.

So far, the pharmaceutical giants haven’t responded to requests for comment on the reported deaths. One involved Gregory Michael, a healthy 56-year-old obstetrician in Florida who received the Pfizer vaccine. After reportedly feeling unwell, he was admitted to an intensive care unit with thrombocytopenia, a blood condition. He succumbed to the illness, which was attributed to a reaction from the vaccine.

The data so far regarding the BioNTech vaccine, which had been approved first in the U.K. and U.S of “very common side effects that may affect more than one in ten people, include:

- pain at the injection site
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- chills
- joint pain
- fever

Common side effects, which may affect up to one in ten people, are:

- injection site swelling
- redness at the injection site
- nausea

A more serious concern is the severe reaction to the vaccines by those with significant allergies. On 6 January, *USA Today* reported, “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said early safety monitoring has detected 21 cases of anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction, after receiving the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.”

The article added,

“In 86% of the cases, symptoms began within 30 minutes of vaccination, and 81% of them occurred in people with a history of allergies or allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis events. Most of the patients who reported having this severe allergic reaction – 90% – were women.”

It was also noted that while flu vaccines can cause problems with allergy sufferers, the issue is far more prevalent and serious with the COVID vaccines.

On 20 December, after the first vaccines were administered in the U.K., *CBS* reported, “British health officials have warned that people with a history of ‘significant’ allergic reactions to vaccines, medicine, or food should not be given Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine.”

California Pausing Vaccine

Yesterday, *Forbes* reported another problem with allergic reactions to the Moderna vaccine:

“California’s state epidemiologist urged Covid-19 vaccine providers Sunday to pause distribution of one Moderna vaccine lot while the manufacturer and federal government investigate a ‘higher than usual’ number of allergic reactions.”

The state said it was urging providers to use other vaccines and pause distribution of the Moderna lot “out of an extreme abundance of caution” while the manufacturer, the CDC, and the FDA review the vaccine lot “and related medical information.”

While much rarer, there is medical concern about a potential link between the COVID vaccines and facial paralysis. On 17 December, *Web MD* published an article stating,

“The FDA issued a staff report on Tuesday that recommends monitoring people who take the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for potential cases of Bell’s palsy, or facial paralysis.

The report said 4 of 30,000 participants in the Moderna clinical trial had Bell’s palsy, including 3 participants who received the vaccine instead of the placebo. Similarly, 4 out of 43,000 participants in the Pfizer clinical trial had Bell’s palsy, and all 4 received the vaccine.

The paralysis occurred between 22 days and 32 days after the shot, the FDA staff said. Two of the Bell’s palsy cases in the Moderna trial have resolved.”

At least 13 Israelis have reportedly suffered facial paralysis after being administered the Pfizer vaccine. This comes a month after the FDA saw similar issues in the U.S. but denied they were tied to the vaccine.

This past Saturday, *Microsoft News* published the article, “EUA [Emergency Use Authorization] may be revised in case vaccine shows safety issues.” The FDA director-general, Eric Domingo, said in an interview the EUA requires revision depending on the results of an investigation into the deaths of 23 Norwegians who died after being injected with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

All 23 of those who died within days of getting the vaccine were nursing home residents. The article stated that depending on the outcome of the investigation, the vaccine may not be recommended for the elderly.

TRENDPOST: *As reported, the COVID-19 vaccines in circulation only went through a few months of trial period before released under the FDA’s Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Typically, vaccine trials last at least a year if not longer.*

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

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

It's also important to understand the distinction between “efficacy” and “effectiveness” when evaluating vaccines.

The Medical News Today article states, “Despite news outlets frequently using them interchangeably, efficacy refers to how a vaccine performs under ideal lab conditions, such as those in a clinical trial. In contrast, effectiveness refers to how it performs in the real world.”

In any vaccine trial, those accepted as volunteers are healthier and younger than the population at large. And they cannot report any chronic health conditions. (While volunteers are younger, they are rarely very young children or women who are pregnant.)

So, while the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine reported 95 percent efficacy during its trial, the Oxford/AstraZeneca 70 percent, and the Moderna 94 percent, their effectiveness will likely be much lower. The CDC website report states that flu vaccines, for example, are “effective” between 40-60 percent of the time, depending on the year.

As the Medical New Today article makes apparent, it is expected that when a vaccine is released, its “effectiveness” will be lower when administered to the general population. The effectiveness is significantly influenced by the preexisting health of those getting the vaccine in the general public. Since the general population, particularly in the U.S., has epidemic levels of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and other conditions that suppress the immune system, long-term adverse effects from the vaccine may be quite different than those of the healthy volunteers in the short clinical trials.

TRENDPOST: *Despite the U.K. government admission in the 25 November data that death rates had dropped so significantly it no longer saw the need to keep publishing COVID-19 fatality data, Yahoo Finance published this on 15 January:*

“November’s slump in output came as most of the U.K. returned to lockdown to control the spread of COVID-19. Non-essential businesses were shut in England between 5 November and 2 December, while similar restrictions were in place across the rest of Britain.”

CALIFORNIA COVID UPDATES: REALITY & ABSURDITY



- *USA Today* reports that even as Los Angeles Governor Gavin Newsom announced last week that mass vaccinations would be organized at L.A.'s Dodger Stadium, a "substantial number of health care workers – who are first in line for the vaccine – are rejecting the shots."
- Approximately 50 percent of the hospital workers in Riverside County, adjacent to Los Angeles, have turned down getting the injections despite the more than 200,000 reports of COVID infections. Orange County Public Health Director Kim Saruwatari pointed out, "Some of them are saying, 'You know, not yet,' that they just want to see how things go."
- The Los Angeles City Council approved a motion last Wednesday to increase enforcement of mask-wearing in public. It calls on city departments to step up the issuing of citations. Councilman Paul Koretz said, "It's my understanding that LAPD and Building and Safety and Street Services have been very modestly enforcing the mask mandate included in the mayor's March 19 safer-at-home executive order. Given our current situation, we need to tackle this issue with renewed vigilance."

Will Goofy Get Vaccinated?

On 29 September, the Walt Disney Company announced it lost \$4.2 billion in the second quarter and was laying off 28,000 people due to lack of attendance caused by the coronavirus. The original Disneyland in Orange County, CA, shut down as soon as the virus appeared last March.

Now the famous theme park will finally re-open its gates – not for amusement rides, but to become the county's first super vaccination site. According to Orange County Supervisor Andrew Do, "The Disneyland

Resort, the largest employer in the heart of Orange County, has stepped up to host the county's first Super POD site – undertaking a monumental task in our vaccination distribution process.”

Smart Mask?

For those looking to adhere to mandatory mask-wearing and be tech-fashionable at the same time, there's a new self-sanitizing mask being designed for you by Razer Inc, a Singaporean-American multinational technology company headquartered in Queensland, Singapore, and Irving, CA. As promoted on the Razer Inc. website:

“The World's Smartest Mask... Face the new normal with protection that's far from average. Introducing our prototype of the most intelligent mask ever created – a design focusing on five key areas to ensure the highest degree of safety with the best quality of life enhancements. The ‘smart mask’ features medical-grade filtration systems with removable ventilators and filters and has a clear, transparent face area so you can enjoy more seamless social interaction with others as they'll be able to see you, speak and pick up on your facial cues easily.”

Lights installed inside the mask light up your face in dark environments and “thanks to a built-in mic and amplifier combo, our patent-pending technology ensures your speech isn't muffled even when you're masked up.”

And since any self-respecting mask-wearer wants to be fashionable, the smart mask will offer “16.8 million colors and a suite of iconic effects... turn heads while you stay safe with two customizable lighting zones.” Currently in development, no price tag has been stated.

- Last week saw this headline story in *USA Today*: “At least two gorillas test positive for COVID-19 at San Diego Zoo.” According to the article, “The park's executive director, Lisa Peterson, told the *Associated Press* on Monday that eight gorillas that live together at the park are believed to have the virus and several have been coughing.”

It is thought the infection came from a person on the wildlife care team who tested positive. The gorillas are being fed vitamins and given extra fluids. The park's executive director said, “Aside from some congestion and coughing, the gorillas are doing well.”

TRENDPOST: *The article didn't mention whether zoo animals will now be required to wear masks or get vaccinated.*

Regardless, the media keeps selling fear and hysteria. Remember back in August when there was a dog in North Carolina that died after testing positive for the virus? It was a headline story... one dead dog... oh, how they love to spread fear and hysteria.

This was the headline:

First dog to test positive for COVID-19 in North Carolina dies

And, remember, this is one of the top TV news broadcasts in the United States. [Listen here](#) to the seriousness and fear spread by the Presstitutes.

LOCKDOWNS SPREADING



Countries around the world are continuing to implement lockdowns, curfews, and strict travel restrictions in hopes to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but they have faced new calls from residents who say these mandates have done little – if anything – to stop the spread.

Lockdowns across Europe have kept about 230 million inside their homes, yet hospital systems in the U.K. and other countries are being packed with new patients. Many of these countries are seeing even more cases and deaths than they did at the beginning of these lockdowns when masks were not required and many businesses were not forced to close.

Health officials have warned the rate of infections is likely to increase, considering the new variant first located in Britain is even more contagious.

“Every time the virus replicates, it’s an opportunity to mutate,” Ben Bimber, a research professor at Oregon Health and Science University, told *NBC News*. “If there are more people infected, there’s simply more virus out there and it has more opportunities to mutate.”

FRANCE. Paris announced last week that all visitors from countries outside the EU will be required to present proof they tested negative for the virus within 72 hours before their trip, *The New York Times* reported. The paper also said these travelers will have to isolate for seven days and then be retested. The paper said it is unclear how Paris will enforce the measures.

France 24 reported there is a growing concern in the country about the psychological effect on college students that are unable to attend in-person classes. President Emmanuel Macron said in October it was “hard to be 20 in 2020.”

The report said that 2021 is already looking “depressingly familiar” to last year after the country implemented a new nationwide 6 PM curfew.

“These measures were necessary given the situation. While worsening, it remains relatively better than many countries around us, but I took them because the context, notably with the evolution of the virus, means we have to have utmost vigilance,” Prime Minister Jean Castex said.

TRENDPOST: According to *statista.com*, 92 percent of the people that died of the virus in France were 65 years of age or older. Again, rather than taking measures to protect those most susceptible to the virus, as with other nations, instead, draconian lockdown measures are imposed that have destroyed the lives and livelihoods of tens of millions... and have sucked the joy and beauty out of life.

BRITAIN. Similar to France, Britain also requires visitors to test negative before arrival followed by a 10-day isolation period. *Reuters* reported the country is dealing with its third wave of infections.

The Guardian reported Prime Minister Boris Johnson said last March that Britain could “send coronavirus packing” within weeks.

But, last week, Chris Whitty, England's chief medical officer, told the *BBC*, "We're now at the worst point of this epidemic for the UK. In the future, we will have the vaccine, but the numbers at the moment are higher than they were in the previous peak – by some distance." He said he expects the next few weeks to be the "most dangerous time."

"We're now at a situation where in the UK as a whole, around one in 50 people is infected, and in London it's around 1 in 30," Whitty said. "There is a very high chance that if you meet someone unnecessarily, they will have Covid."

TRENDPOST: *The fear-spreading expert failed to note that COVID has a very low mortality rate for the very young who have been very punished with the lockdowns. Also, there is conflicting data as to whether those who are considered asymptomatic can spread the virus.*

In addition, 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 U.K.'s National Health Service, only 388 people aged under 60 with no underlying health conditions have died from COVID.

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

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

GERMANY. German Chancellor Angela Merkel last week called for stricter coronavirus restrictions in the country. She hopes to meet with state premiers by next week to discuss further measures to combat the virus.

Berlin recorded 22,368 new cases on Friday and another 1,113 fatalities. The country of 83.02 million recorded a total of 44,994 deaths since the beginning of the outbreak.

Der Spiegel reported that Merkel could consider new requirements including more contact tracing and citizens having to wear higher-quality face masks.

TRENDPOST: *In the new ABnormal, facts don't count; fear, hysteria, and government control do.*

As we have reported, most of the German virus victims were elderly and suffered from pre-existing chronic conditions.

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

Of those German deaths, 89 percent were over 70 years old, and people over 60 years of age account for 96 percent of the virus victims according to statista.com... a solid fact that is continually ignored by the Presstitutes who continually sell fear and hysteria.

Therefore, as we continue to emphasize, 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.

IRELAND. The Republic of Ireland announced last week it will demand all travelers test negative for COVID on arrival into the country, and anyone who disregards the mandate could face fines and imprisonment.

The mandate would impact anyone arriving in the country except those in Northern Ireland. The tests would need to be performed within 72 hours. Those who fail to produce the information could face six months in jail and/or a €2,500 fine. (Children are exempt.) These individuals will have to fill out a Passenger Locator form, so authorities could monitor locations. The country is under a "Level 5 Lockdown," which is the most severe.

The Journal, an Irish publication, reported on Sunday there were 1,928 people hospitalized in the country of nearly five million. About 195 are in ICUs. The country recorded 13 additional deaths. The median age of those who died was 83 years old, with ages ranging from 66 to 97.

TRENDPOST: *The Trends Journal continues to stress, as we have since the media and politicians launched the COVID War, that COVID is dangerous for only a small percentage of the population. The fact that countries are implementing*

these lockdowns and crushing an entire generation will cause long-lasting mental and economic pain.

NETHERLANDS. The Dutch government last week announced it would extend the country's lockdown to prevent the spread of the new variant of the coronavirus.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte said at a press conference the country has no other choice.

"The figures are not going down sufficiently and now we have to deal with the British variant of the virus. What we see coming out of Britain and Ireland is heartbreaking and alarming," he said. *The Financial Times* reported there are at least 100 known cases of the British variant in the country.

Hugo de Jonge, the country's health minister, said he hopes all residents over the age of 60 will receive the vaccine by the summer and the entire country of 17.28 million will receive the vaccine by the fall.

The lockdown extension sparked protests in Amsterdam last weekend, which were broken up by riot police who used a water cannon, *Reuters* reported. Some of the signs included, "Freedom: Stop this Siege." Protesters chanted, "What do we want? Freedom!"

TRENDPOST: *A poll conducted by NOS showed that four out five people consider the extension of lockdown laws acceptable, and 72 percent support the government's strategy in fighting the COVID War. The government said that by autumn, the entire population will have been vaccinated, and people over 60 will have been vaccinated by summertime.*

AUSTRIA. On Saturday, several thousand Austrians took to the streets of Vienna to protest the draconian lockdown restrictions imposed on them by Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, who is in talks with his government to further extend them.

Mask-less demonstrators, many chanting, "Make Influenza Great Again" and holding signs reading, "Kurz Must Go" marched through the city center.

Unlike the "democracies" of Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, etc., there were no reports of COVID Cops breaking up the crowds and arresting protestors.

In its third lockdown, Austria, a country of nine million people, has registered some 7,000 virus deaths since the COVID War was launched last March... or 0.077 percent of its population.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have forecast, the longer the lockdowns last, the higher the citizens' temperatures will rise, sparking more anti-lockdown protests. It will be a building block in the formation of new "populist" political parties.*

LEBANON. The small Mediterranean country announced last week that it would impose a 24-hour curfew for essentially all businesses and force even grocery stores to implement a delivery-only service, according to *The New York Times*.

TREND FORECAST: *We have been reporting on the dire economic contraction of Lebanon's economy and the riots and protests that wracked the nation in 2019 when thousands continually took to the streets to protest skyrocketing unemployment, government corruption, violence, crime, and lack of basic living standards.*

When the COVID War broke out in March, the country used it not only to lock down the nation but also to stop the protests... as they did in nations such as India, Chile, Columbia, Peru, Bolivia, South Africa, Hong Kong, Algeria, France, etc., where protests against the establishment governments had been raging.

Yet, with Lebanon, a nation of nearly seven million and recording 1,905 deaths since the COVID War broke out or 0.027 percent of the population, now being forced into tighter lockdown, this will worsen the already dismal economic and politically-unstable nation. Despite the new draconian lockdown orders, protests and unrest will escalate.

CANADA. Residents in Canada have expressed frustrations over newly announced lockdown guidelines and have called out examples of hypocrisy from officials who flouted their own COVID rules.

"People are very angry and frustrated at being told they can't sit in the backyard with friends or visit relatives while members of government are flying all over," Lorian Hardcastle, a professor of health and law at Calgary University, told the *Financial Times*.

Hardcastle was likely referring to Rod Phillips, Ontario's former finance minister, who was caught vacationing in St. Bart's last December. The paper reported about two dozen other politicians and senior officials who were forced to issue

apologies for traveling during the outbreak, including two members of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government.

The paper reported that Quebec and Ontario have announced new lockdown guidelines. Quebec announced a four-week curfew, and Ontario extended school closures.

TRENDPOST: *Canada, a country of 37.59 million, has averaged 7,616 new cases and 137 deaths per day during the period between 8-14 January, the CDC reported. There has been a total of 17,995 deaths as of last Sunday. Some 70 percent of the deaths are reportedly from eldercare homes. But, again, rather than protect those most vulnerable, rulers of the land lock down the masses.*

TUNISIA. After three days of protests and people taking to the streets to oppose new rounds of draconian lockdown rules, Tunisia, the nation that launched the Arab Spring back in 2011, is again ablaze.

According to the German news agency *DPA*, police used tear gas to disperse demonstrators and arrested over 600 demonstrators.

On Sunday, Amnesty International condemned the arrests and called for the immediate release of the protesters, stating, "Nothing gives security forces permission to deploy unnecessary and excessive force including when they are responding to acts of sporadic violence."

TREND FORECAST: *When the COVID War began last March, we had forecast that already deteriorating economic conditions would worsen, and the protests raging in 2019 would escalate. The longer nations impose lockdown laws, the greater the scale of protests, and the more destabilized governments will become... sinking already economically-depressed countries into civil unrest and civil wars.*

ANOTHER COVID FRAUDSTER CAUGHT



One after another, those who tell “We the Little People of Slavelandia” what to do, what to believe, and how to do it, they, the privileged ones, do as they wish, breaking the rules we must obey.

Last week, it was revealed that Michel Bissonnette, the executive vice-president of the CBC/Radio-Canada’s French service, took a holiday vacation to Miami, FL, during most of December, despite Canada’s advisory opposed to all non-essential international travel.

“Canadian citizens and permanent residents are advised to avoid all non-essential travel outside of Canada until further notice to limit the spread of COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself, your family and those most at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 in our communities is to choose to stay in Canada,” read the alert released on 14 March 2020.

A spokesperson, i.e., company propagandist shill, spewed out a line of B.S. that Bissonnette, once in Miami, followed guidelines to the letter and did not visit any retail stores or any restaurants. The company said when he returned to Canada, he quarantined for 14 days. He was in Florida to tend to “business regarding [a] property.”

TRENDPOST: While the “Bigs” do what they wish and get a free ride for doing what they want, in Canada, yesterday, it was reported that a mother from Simcoe, Ontario, was hit with an \$880 fine for allegedly breaking the province’s stay-at-home order.

Global News reported that Natasha Kohl said she was simply dropping her children off at her father-in-law’s home for child care while she ran a few errands.

“I think it’s crazy because I did explain to the officer it was my father-in-law who had the kids and he clearly watched me pick up my three kids from the house,” she told Global News.

TRENDPOST: *Michel Bissonnette is just the latest high-profile individual who got caught disregarding the guidelines that politicians and the news media continue to sell to the little people.*

It’s hard to narrow our favorite example of so-called VIPs disregarding COVID guidelines. You have Dr. Deborah Birx, who announced she will resign after traveling over the Thanksgiving holiday. Then there is Ontario’s Finance Minister Rod Phillips, who visited St. Bart’s and tried to cover it up by posting a video on social media that made it seem like he was nestled up in Ontario when he was actually on a pure white beach.

Oh, and then there’s Chicago’s Mayor Lori Lightfoot, who ordered the city to lock down but then celebrated in the middle of a crowd after Joe Biden’s presidential victory in November. She responded to criticism by saying, “There are times when we actually do need to have relief and come together, and I felt like that was one of those times. That crowd was gathered whether I was there or not.”

Among the highest of the lowlifes is the U.S.A’s Gavin Newsom, who was the first governor to issue an executive order that locked down California’s 40 million people last March... prohibiting them to even go to the beach.

Lockdown King Newsom, who has been one of the most outspoken critics of those breaking social-distancing orders and mask-wearing, was seen at a large table with other guests without wearing a mask, eating \$400-a-plate meals with other members of the “club” at the posh restaurant French Laundry in Napa Valley.

A few days later, the head of lockdowns in San Francisco, Mayor London Breed, was also caught chomping down at the French Laundry.

ITALY: CUT OUT CONTI



After weeks of fierce criticism, three Italian ministers announced last week they will resign from Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte's ruling coalition due to Rome's response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Matteo Renzi, the former prime minister, said last Wednesday that two ministers from his Italia Viva party would resign, which was seen as a major blow to Conte. *CNBC* reported Conte appealed to the ministers and told them that a government collapse in the middle of a health emergency could be catastrophic for the country.

With the nation again in lockdown and its GDP down some 10 percent, 75 percent of Italians polled said Conte cares little for them and is only interested in his political survival.

"There will be a reason if Italy is the country that has the highest number of deaths and a collapse in GDP," Renzi said, according to the *Financial Times*. He blamed the government's handling of the outbreak for the crisis.

Yesterday, Conte won a vote in Parliament's lower house by 321 to 259, a margin that gave him an absolute majority in the 629-seat chamber. Tomorrow, he faces a vote in the upper house Senate, where the government has only a slim majority.

TREND FORECAST: As Italy's economy sinks deeper into the "Greatest Depression," the populist movements and protests will grow significantly stronger. Anti-vax, anti-tax, anti-immigration, anti-EU, anti-establishment will be key platform elements.

Indeed, significant elements of the new party formations against government control are emerging, according to Off-Guardian.org. Italian restaurant owners coordinated a day of defiance called “#IoOpro” or “I am opening.” It was the largest countrywide act of civil disobedience since the lockdowns were imposed by Prime Minister Conti last March.

Over 50,000 restaurants reportedly opened up in defiance of Italy’s lockdown rules, with patrons calling out the police, yelling, “Get out! Get out! Get out!... We pay your wages from our taxes, you work for us... Get out! Get out! Get out!” Italian opposition MP Vittorio Sgarbi told restaurateurs to “open up, and don’t worry, in the end, we will make them eat their fines.”

As more people are going broke and busted, and with nothing left to lose before they lose it all, there are also “Open Up” movements in Switzerland and Poland called the #Wirmachenauf and #OtwieraMY, respectively. Red State reported that over 500 restaurants in Mexico coordinated defiant re-openings as well.

TRENDPOST: *Ignored by the media is the hard fact, according to New York's Governor Andrew Cuomo, who has imposed and re-imposed harsh restaurant lockdown mandates along with New York City mayor Bill de Blasio, that the virus infection rate from restaurants is 1.4 percent.*

Despite this tiny percentage, severe restrictions have been placed on the restaurant business while they permit mass gatherings and big box stores to remain open.

NO MASK: NO MONEY, NO FOOD



HSBC, the international bank, warned clients their accounts could be closed if they fail to adhere to mask guidelines amid the coronavirus outbreak.

“Our branch colleagues are key workers, continuing to go to work in our branches every day so that customers who need them can access essential financial services,” Jackie Uhi, the head of branch network for HSBC UK, told *FNLondon.com*. She continued, “If individuals put themselves or our colleagues at risk, without a medical exemption, we reserve the right to withdraw their account.”

The bank made headlines in December when it froze the account of a church located in Hong Kong that reportedly backed the city’s pro-democracy movement, which prompted an international backlash.

The bank’s move is part of a growing “must wear mask” trend spreading throughout the U.K., with its largest supermarkets including Tesco, Asda, Morrisons, and Sainsbury’s declaring mask orders. Asda, for example, said any customer who refuses to “wear a covering without a valid medical reason and be in any way challenging to our colleagues about doing so, our security colleagues will refuse their entry.”

TRENDPOST: Last week, *The Atlantic* magazine ran a story about masks, noting, “America is swamped with fraudulent medical-grade masks, some of which are only 1 percent effective.” And those are actual face masks, not a bandana loosely tied around someone’s mouth.

Since the COVID War began, we have been reporting studies proving the inefficacy of mask-wearing. (See our 3 November articles, “[FACING THE TRUTH, PART I: THE GREAT MASK-QUERADE](#)” and “[FACING THE TRUTH, PART II: MORE EVIDENCE MASKS ARE INEFFECTIVE](#).”)

On Sunday, in issuing his new lockdown orders that will last until 7 February, Austrian chancellor Sebastian Kurz said masks must be worn on public transport and in shops.

The masks Kurz ordered the people to wear are single-use, filtering face-piece respirators (FFP2). The Guardian reported, “Some virologists warn a new compulsory mask rule could end up being counterproductive.”

“In theory, the move to more professional masks is welcome,” Jonas Schmidt-Chanasit, a German virologist and Professor of Arbovirology at the University of Hamburg, told the Guardian. “But I’d be wary of simply copying the Bavarian model without considering the possible downsides.”

The professor said, “In most cases, FFP2 masks will be ineffective if they aren’t professionally fitted: people will end up breathing through the gap between mask and face rather than through the designated filter.” They noted that virologists also say beards can prevent the masks from sealing properly around the face.

“I can see how FFP2 masks could be a useful emergency solution for workplaces where you cannot easily guarantee safety ventilation,” Schmidt-Chanasit said. “But I am skeptical of making them mandatory on public transport, where there are other ways to avoid the risk of aerosols, and where passengers may be forced to wear masks for longer than the 75 minutes advised by regulatory authorities.”

BIDEN: RAMP UP SHOTS, PREPARE FOR “DARK WINTER”



President-elect Joe Biden told a press conference on Friday that one of his top priorities as president will be to increase COVID-19 inoculations and promised his administration plans to “manage the hell out of this operation.”

Biden did not mention how he will convince those who refuse to take the shot that the vaccine is safe, but he said he wants to create more places where people can receive a free vaccine. *The New York Times* reported that Biden gave a somber assessment of where the country stands in its fight against the virus and said the U.S. will remain in a “very dark winter.” He said, “Things will get worse before they get better.”

The paper reported Biden has said it is his goal to get “100 million COVID vaccine shots into the arms of the American people” by the time he reaches his 100th day in office.

A recent poll showed nearly half of the Republicans living in Alaska said they will refuse the vaccine, according to *Alaska Public Media*. This compares to 13 percent of Democrats who were polled.

Mike Porcaro, a conservative talk radio host in the state, said, “That surprises me. Forty-five percent seems real high.”

“It’s not so much due to any inherent anti-vaccine type views,” Matt Larkin, a Republican strategist whose firm conducted the survey, told the outlet. “It’s more specifically around how quickly this was developed. And people wanted to take a wait and see approach.”

The Times also points out that Biden’s announcement comes a day after he said he would push a \$1.9 trillion stimulus to help businesses deal with the economic impact from government-mandated lockdowns. Biden also called for new funding for 100,000 public health workers that will focus solely on vaccine education and contact tracing.

TRENDPOST: *As we have been reporting in the Trends Journal, the COVID vaccines in circulation were approved under the U.S. FDA’s Emergency Authorization Use protocol after only two months of safety trials. Full safety trials typically take years, not months.*

As reported in our 15 December issue, four of the 21 members of the FDA Advisory Committee did not vote in favor of releasing the vaccines. One of them, Dr. Oveta Fuller, Associate Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Michigan, explained, “My vote wasn’t, ‘No, never,’ my vote was, ‘No, not yet’... I was actually surprised at the vote. I thought there would be a lot more ‘no’ votes.”

AIRLINES & BUSINESSES: NO JAB, NO ENTRY



Tech companies and non-profits are working to develop digital passports for fliers to prove they have received the coronavirus vaccine, a report said.

The Financial Times reported companies like Microsoft, Oracle, and Salesforce are working to make digital cards a reality. The project is called the “Vaccination Credential Initiative.”

“Individuals are going to need to have to produce vaccination records for a lot of aspects of getting back to life as normal,” Paul Meyer, the chief executive of The Commons Project, told the paper. “We live in a globally connected world. We used to anyway – and we hope to again.”

The project hopes that anyone who received inoculation could update their records on Apple Wallet or Google Pay as an encrypted digital copy.

The CDC reported that over 30 million COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed in the U.S. as of last Thursday.

TRENDPOST: *The Trends Journal has warned that companies and governments would eventually require COVID passports to gain entry anywhere, and if you refuse to take the shot, you will have no freedom to live in society.*

Back in April, Dr. Anthony Fauci, touted by politicians and Presstitutes as America’s top disease expert, told CNN that Americans who have recovered from the coronavirus could eventually receive immunity cards, since many who have had the disease develop antibodies.

Ron Paul, the former Libertarian nominee for president, slammed the idea of doling out immunity cards and said, “The plan that they have is when things are getting back to normal, yes, people can return to their work, and they do things and go to the golf course if they get a stamp of approval. Your liberties are there if you get a proper stamp from the government.”

So, now, not only will you need to get a shot from the government, but you will also, essentially, need to get a stamp to prove you got the shot.

The coronavirus outbreak is going to dictate every single element in our lives. Austin Beutner, the head of the Los Angeles County School District, the second-largest in the country, said last week that once shots become available for kids, they must be inoculated or they cannot attend in-person classes. Even though drug companies admit a sufficient amount of testing on the young has not been

completed, Beutner said the step will be “no different than students being vaccinated for measles and mumps who were tested for tuberculosis before they come on campus. That’s the best way we know to keep all on the campus safe.”

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast that strong anti-tax, anti-vax, anti-immigration, anti-establishment political “populist” movements will sweep across America and Europe.*

DOLLAR GENERAL: GET JABBED FOR FREE



Discount chain Dollar General announced last week it intends to pay hourly employees four hours salary if they receive the COVID-19 vaccine, becoming one of the first major companies to announce such an offer.

“We felt the right thing to do was to breakdown these barriers to vaccination,” Toss Vasos, the company’s chief executive, told *The Wall Street Journal*. Vasos said his company also considered workers who have child-care obligations.

The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said companies can mandate the vaccine for workers but they must make accommodations for medical or religious requests.

Trader Joe’s and Instacart Inc. also announced they would offer employees compensation to take the vaccine.

In a statement, Instacart CEO Apoorva Mehta said, “Our goal with the introduction of our new vaccine support stipend is to ensure that, when the time comes, Instacart shoppers don’t have to choose between earning income as an essential service provider or getting vaccinated.”

CBS News reported that Trader Joe's is offering workers two hours of pay to get the shot.

TRENDPOST: *With the new Biden administration in power, the push for mass vaccinations will accelerate state and nationwide. According to a USA TODAY/Suffolk University Poll, 46 percent said they will take the vaccine as soon as they can. Thirty-two percent said they will wait for others to get the shots before they do so themselves, while 20 percent said they would not take the jab.*

NY NURSING HOME COVID DEATHS ON THE RISE



Nursing homes in New York announced last week that COVID remains a serious risk for their residents, and they reported at least 200 weekly deaths for the last three weeks of December, according to a report.

The Wall Street Journal reported there have been more than 8,100 confirmed and presumed coronavirus deaths at these facilities in the state.

The paper said that stats and the federal death toll have discrepancies because the state does not count deaths which include residents who died at hospitals. As we have been reporting, the federal government did not mandate nursing homes report virus deaths until mid-May, after the first wave of fatalities eased.

We have also reported Governor Cuomo made it mandatory that elder care facilities take in hospital patients who had the coronavirus.

According to a report from the New York State Department of Health, “6,326 COVID-positive residents were admitted to [nursing home] facilities” following

Cuomo's mandate that nursing homes accept the readmission of COVID-positive patients from hospitals.

As we reported in the **Trends Journal**, on 25 March, New York State's Health Department, following "killer" Cuomo's orders, issued a directive stating, "No resident shall be denied re-admission or admission to the [nursing home] solely based on a confirmed or suspected diagnosis of COVID-19." The directive also said nursing homes "are prohibited from requiring a hospitalized resident who is determined medically stable to be tested for COVID-19 prior to admission or readmission."

Cuomo reversed that rule in May.

Maggie Barnes, a spokeswoman for a nursing home at the Ira Davenport Memorial Hospital in the state, told the paper it is a serious challenge trying to keep residents safe.

"It takes so little for this to wiggle its way into a facility, and it's such a vulnerable population. And then you're chasing it, playing defense rather than offense."

TRENDPOST: *NBC News pointed out last month that over 39 percent of deaths tied to COVID involved residents and staffers in nursing homes across the U.S.:*

"As early as March or April we were advocating for families to be able to even get information about the state of their loved ones," Elaine Ryan, vice president of state advocacy and strategic innovation at AARP told the news network. 'We were asking, 'what's happening? Do the staff have enough PPE? Is there any infection control?' The lack of transparency by nursing homes early on was just extraordinary.'"

The reason these facilities were able to be about as transparent as Beijing is with WHO scientists is because, in many cases, these homes have politicians in their pockets.

The Guardian reported in May – during the catastrophe at the facilities in New York – that in 2018, when Governor Andrew Cuomo was in a tough campaign for office, he received a "flood of cash" from the Greater New York Hospital Association, a lobbying group for hospital systems, including some that own nursing homes.

Last March, the donation seemed to pay dividends. Cuomo signed a new law that “quietly” shielded these hospitals from the threat of lawsuits tied to the virus. (The law was eventually rolled back in August.)

As we have continually reported, rather than taking measures to prevent those most susceptible to the virus, politicians and the COVID Cops target young people gathering at bars and lock down restaurants, despite a 1.4 percent virus infection rate, destroying millions of businesses and tens of millions of lives with lockdown rules that lack scientific data.

RESTAURANTS REOPEN & RISK FINES FROM STATES



Restaurant owners across the U.S. have decided to reopen their establishments despite states' COVID mandates and the risk of fines because they are at the end of their financial ropes.

The Wall Street Journal reported Saturday that restaurant owners in states such as Michigan, Illinois, and California are dealing with the stark reality there is no clear end in sight for lockdowns, and there is a good chance COVID's new variant will increase the number of people infected with the virus.

The paper interviewed the owner of the Glen Oak Café in Glen Ellyn, IL. The owner said he can keep the restaurant open due to deliveries and a \$57,000 federal loan, but he's "not making anything."

The health department in Glen Ellyn told *the WSJ* it has received 228 complaints about indoor dining since last year's ban went into effect.

COVID has decimated the entire restaurant industry, according to the paper. There were 372,000 jobs cut nationwide in December, and restaurants in many states have seen up to a 70 percent drop in sales.

Health officials say these bans are necessary because a person cannot eat and wear a mask at the same time.

The Associated Press reported that restaurants across Oregon have also decided to open despite the state mandate that started on 1 January.

“We’re not going to back down because our employees still need to eat, they still need that income,” Bryan Mitchell, the owner of the Carver Hangar in the town of Boring, told the *AP*. “The statement that we’re making is, ‘Every life is essential. You have the right to survive. Nobody should tell you what you can and cannot do to provide for your family.’”

Governor Kate Brown said restaurants that don’t follow state guidelines are risking the health of the community and face hefty fines.

“We can’t waver in our response to the virus now when the end is finally in sight and resources are on the way. We are better than this,” Brown said.

Stan Pulliam, the mayor of Sandy, OR, pointed out that over 300 small businesses have joined the so-called “Open Oregon” coalition. He told the *AP* these businesses cannot survive if the lockdown continues. Mr. Pulliam commented,

“These are individuals that are to the end of their rope. Their decision is not to thumb their nose at the governor. It’s really a decision to open up or lose everything they’ve worked for their entire lives... We’re saying, ‘Hey, if you’re going to open, let’s do this right.’”

TRENDPOST: *Again and again, we note the unscientific lunacy of the closing down of restaurants and putting millions out of business and tens of millions out of work.*

According to America's famed Lockdown Lord, NY Governor Andrew Cuomo, back in December, when he ordered New York City's restaurants must stop serving meals indoors, he said only 1.4 percent of virus cases could be traced to restaurants and bars.

THIS WEEK IN COVID COPS: “DIE HARD” EDITION



Fighting the COVID War has become something of a COVID Cop comedy. Sadly, however, the victims of clampdowns pay the price.

The following is a rundown of some of the latest incidents related to COVID lockdown and enforcements, which range from repressive to ridiculous.

- Someone (probably not a fan) spied actor Bruce Willis browsing unmasked through the aisles of a Los Angeles RiteAid. He was asked to leave and did so without making a purchase.
- Several underground LA parties were raided by police, who made close to 200 arrests for violation of lockdown orders. According to *CBS News*, the crackdown was carried out by the Sheriff department’s super-spreader task force, whose goal is to “reduce the spread of COVID-19 and the risk to vulnerable populations in California.”

Dr. Brad Spellberg of the L.A. County-USC Medical Center admitted they have not seen a post-December COVID surge, though he claimed if one were to occur, “the entire Southern California health care system will fall apart.”

- In Manassas, VA, a security guard was charged for being too enthusiastic carrying out orders to remove a patron from a Chipotle restaurant. After a 42-year-old man entered without a mask, the guard, Wayne Eric Witherspoon Jr., allegedly dragged the customer out of the establishment while striking him repeatedly. The guard was arrested on a charge of malicious wounding.
- In Nova Scotia, Halifax, police ramped up lockdown enforcement, issuing

\$1,000 fines to individuals not wearing masks, including one to a Bedford restaurant delivery driver. According to police, a “Health Protection Act” enforced there requires everyone to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth while present in a public place.

- Limiting excursions out of the house to once a week in the U.K. may have been too generous, it seems. Ministers seeking fresh clampdown momentum gave police the green light to get even tougher on citizens in forcing compliance with COVID restrictions.
- Montreal police made a cheery announcement that they had handed out 34 fines over the holidays for COVID violations. Their associates in Verdun were busy anew in mid-January, rifling through lunchboxes in efforts to ascertain whether citizens out and about were indeed “essential” workers. A Verdun resident filed a complaint after being accosted on a bus on the way to her job in the snow removal business. She said she presented a letter that attested to her employment.

Not satisfied, officers insisted on seeing the contents of her lunch. She refused at first until threatened with a fine. “My complaint was that he had no right to search my personal belongings and also that he threatened to give me a ticket if I didn’t do what he said,” the woman later explained about her formal complaint.

VAX COUNT IN U.S. AND BEYOND



As of 15 January, close to 12.2 million doses of the COVID vaccine have been administered, and nearly four people per hundred have received at least one dose, according to national statistics compiled by the CDC.

States with the highest vaccination rates included West Virginia, Alaska, North Dakota, and South Dakota, averaging about seven vaccinations per hundred in population.

Vermont, Missouri, Tennessee, and Connecticut were close behind. States with the lowest vaccinations per capita included Idaho; the contiguous southern states of Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia; and, strange as it might seem, California. Nevada, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Hawaii also were all relatively low on the list. Large states including Texas and Florida currently placed in the middle of the pack.

It's estimated that vaccinating everyone in the U.S. would require somewhere between 100 and 200 doses per hundred people across each state and territory, which amounts to a total of as many as 660 million doses.

Of course, that remains a huge hypothetical, since, across the world, many people say they intend to decline the vax. In any case, rolling out that many vaccinations represent a considerable logistical challenge, and some states, including the ones where state authorities have clamored for it the most, are experiencing public snafus and accusations of mismanagement of the process.

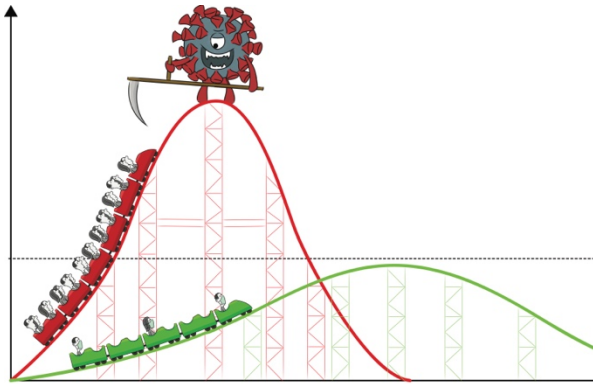
Still, the U.S. rate of vaccination is currently far outpacing most of the rest of the world, though Israel and the United Arab Emirates top all nations, with 25 and 16 vaccinations per hundred people, respectively.

Overall worldwide rates of vaccinations stand at just 0.49 per hundred people. In general, Europe, including Russia, and large nations including China, Turkey, and Iran are in the average range, with around one vaccination per hundred people. Huge swaths of the planet, including the whole African continent, Australia, and much of South America except for Argentina, have near-zero vaccination rates.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have been reporting in the **Trends Journal**, virtually the entire political and financial sectors have declared that life and business will return to normal when most of the world is vaccinated.*

Considering the slow rate of the vaccine rollout, the “recovery” they anticipate will not appear until vaccine rates increase significantly.

CANADIAN DOC DEBUNKS COVID FATALITY RATE



Would the average person believe that the median fatality rate for COVID for those under 70 years old is 0.05 percent?

Yes, if you read the data we have provided in the **Trends Journal**. A newly released peer-reviewed study by Dr. Ari Joffe, a specialist in pediatric infectious diseases at the Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton, Canada, says just that. Joffe's paper, "Rethinking the Lockdown Groupthink," also states that repercussion harms of the COVID lockdowns are ten times greater than any quantifiable benefits. Joffe's paper reports:

"Initial data falsely suggested that the infection fatality rate was up to 2-3 percent, that over 80 percent of the population would be infected, and modelling suggested repeated lockdowns would be necessary... But emerging data showed that the median infection fatality rate is 0.23%, that the median infection fatality rate in people under 70 years old is 0.05%, and that the high-risk group is older people especially those with severe co-morbidities."

Meanwhile, the associated damage of lockdowns has had quite severe effects according to Joffe, who is also a clinical professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta in Canada.

Joffe said that emerging data on the subject of lockdowns – and their consequences – show a shocking set of so-called "collateral damage" issues caused by the lockdowns. He estimates that millions of people globally could be adversely affected by a continuation of the practice.

Among his findings:

- Food insecurity (82 to 132 million)
- Severe poverty (70 million)
- Maternal and under age-5 mortality from interrupted healthcare (1.7 million)
- Infectious diseases deaths from interrupted services (millions with tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV)
- School closures for children (affecting children's future earning potential and lifespan)
- Interrupted vaccination campaigns for millions of children
- Intimate partner violence for millions of women

TRENDPOST: *The Canadian expert cannot easily be dismissed as a partisan on the subject. He was, actually, an early proponent of lockdowns. Yet, this information and analysis are silenced in the mainstream media, and, instead, a general public lives in fear of dying from the coronavirus.*

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS

ISRAEL BOMBS SYRIA



Israel launched an air attack in Syria on Wednesday that killed some 40 Syrian soldiers and reduced a weapons depot and other sites to rubble, a report said.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported the targets were in various cities, including some that border Iraq. Tzachi Hanegbi, Israel's settlement affairs minister, said, "Israel is determined to prevent Iranian military entrenchment in Syria."

The Jerusalem Post reported that Tel Aviv has carried out more than 1,000 airstrikes aimed at various targets in Syria over the past five years, but the ferocity

of the recent assault in the eastern part of the country stands apart. “They eviscerated a warehouse, a military headquarters, and other sites. Two dozen people were reported killed, including Syrian soldiers and members of Iranian-backed groups,” the report said.

The paper repeated rumors that Tehran is still planning to seek justice over the killing of General Qassem Soleimani. U.S. President Donald Trump had ordered a drone strike that killed Soleimani last year when he arrived at the Baghdad International Airport.

In selling their bombing missions to the media, the word is that “both Israel and the U.S. are operating under the assumption that Iran’s retaliation is in the works, and they are taking steps to promote caution, vigilance, defense, and deterrence – perhaps in coordination with one another,” Amos Yadlin, a former head of Israeli military intelligence, told the paper.

TRENDPOST: As Gerald Celente has long said, “When all else fails, they take you to war.” Since November 2019, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been under the pressure of a criminal indictment on charges of fraud and bribery, and he has twice failed in previous elections to put together a winning coalition.

It is suggested that Netanyahu’s priority is to retain his position as prime minister, since there is a legal loophole he can jump through that allows an indicted prime minister to remain in office. And, once in office, he would introduce legislation to stop his trial from moving forward.

Should military exchanges escalate between Iran and Israel, Israel will focus on the war drums beating rather than worsening economic conditions and/or corruption charges.

ANOTHER ETHNIC MASSACRE IN ETHIOPIA



Unidentified gunmen raided a village in the western region of Ethiopia last Tuesday and killed at least 80 people in what was called an ethnic massacre by witnesses and the country's human rights commission.

The killings occurred as the country is embroiled in a conflict in its Tigray region during an effort by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to consolidate power.

As we have reported, Tigray has traditionally held a lot of sway in the country of 110 million, ruling the nation for the last three decades.

Ahmed's government blamed Tigray leadership for violating "the constitution and endangering the constitutional system." He launched the major offense because Tigray held its election in September without approval, despite a countrywide voting ban allegedly due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Ahmed was the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for ending the country's conflict with Eritrea, and he has spoken about bringing the country and its ethnic enclaves together.

Since the war began, thousands of civilians have been killed, and over 50,000 Ethiopians have fled into bordering Sudan.

Getting Worse

The New York Times reported the latest massacre occurred in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, which sits on the country's border with Sudan.

Ethnic militias have also formed across the Tigray region and have taken part in campaigns of rape, looting, and killing, according to reports from the country. The conflict in Tigray has extended federal forces.

The Times reported the military resources of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital region, are being spent fighting in Tigray, and troops that normally would be able to defend vulnerable villages are deployed elsewhere. The paper described a chilling scene that left women and children dead in the streets with "horrific wounds."

Witnesses of the carnage in the village of Daletti told *The Times* that the attackers were from the Gumuz ethnic group and most of those killed were ethnic Amhras and Agaws, who are a minority in the area. After the bloodshed, homes were burned to the ground, and witnesses told the paper an old man was beheaded.

The area had been hit with earlier ethnic attacks, which prompted Ahmed to visit the area in December. But two days after he left, a hundred more were killed in an armed attack, the paper reported, citing human rights groups.

TRENDPOST: *As Gerald Celente has long noted, "When all else fails, they take you to war."*

While Ethiopia's economy had been steadily growing and was strong, the COVID War has severely damaged it.

The World Bank reported that 42 percent of the country's businesses have closed and 37 percent reported no revenue in March or April. Indeed, as the "Greatest Depression" worsens, economic conditions will deteriorate and civil unrest, which had been quelled, will escalate.

And, the more tensions rise, the more people in this highly-populated nation will seek refuge in safe-haven European nations, which will, in turn, boost populist political party movements throughout the Eurozone.

INTERNET FREEDOM: HONG KONG UNDER ATTACK



Hong Kong Broadband Network (HKBN), a major internet provider in the city, announced last week that it disabled access to *HKChronicles*, a pro-democracy website, after a request by officials who cited the new security law that prompted months of protests.

HKChronicles reportedly “doxxed” pro-Beijing influencers, police, and their families. *Reuters* reported HKBN was informed about the policy change shortly before the announcement. Sources told the news wire they expect future crackdowns.

One of the main concerns about a new Hong Kong security law, which came into effect on 30 June, was that it was vague, and it likely would take a long time to see how Beijing invokes the law. Hong Kong observers see the move as the possible first step toward Internet censorship in mainland China, which operates the “Great Firewall of China.”

In July, shortly after the announcement of the national security law, President Trump said Hong Kong “will be treated the same as mainland China. No special privileges, no special economic treatment, and no export of sensitive technologies.”

HKBN is a company in Hong Kong that approved Internet domains. The company announced its new mandate requires it to reject any sites that could prompt “illegal acts.”

“The government has the responsibility to explain the justification and the rationale of the action,” Wong Ho Wah, a leading figure in the city’s tech community, told *Reuters*.

TRENDPOST: We note this story to emphasize the hypocrisy of the U.S. whose media and politicians condemn other nations for censorship, while American's in the so-called "Land of the Free" have had their free speech censored not only by Hi-Tech but also the mainstream media, which features who they want and sells what they want while banning opposing sides or those with different views.

Indeed, when the President of the United States, love him or hate him, is overtly censored as has Trump, welcome to the United Soviet States of Amerika. (See below cover of our 16 June 2020 issue.)



As we had warned in "Censorship," one of our Top Trends for 2019:

Governments across the globe, regardless of what political doctrine they profess, in collusion with social media giants, will accelerate the "Censorship 2019" trend. But the opportunity exists to circumvent the media monopolies by creating alternatives.

Indeed, these are the times for alternatives, but it will take big money to make the big move back toward freedom of speech.

UGANDA: ELECTION RIGGED? WORSE TO COME?



Bobbi Wine, Uganda's top opposition candidate, said his compound in the country's capital, Kampala, was breached by security forces Friday and he was "under siege" shortly before it was announced he lost his bid to unseat the country's six-term president, *The New York Times* reported.

"The military has jumped over the fence and is now taking control of our home," he tweeted, according to the paper. "None of these military intruders is talking to us. We are in serious trouble."

Wine, a musician, had been challenging President Yoweri Museveni, who has held office for 36 years. *The Times* reported that by last Friday, 50 percent of the vote had been counted and Museveni had a comfortable lead, attracting 62 percent of the vote compared to Wine's 29 percent, and Museveni was declared the winner. Wine blamed widespread fraud and violence for the election outcome.

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

The Times pointed out that leaders in East Africa have used COVID to advance their agenda and put in place restrictive laws to snuff out dissent.

Indeed, the same could be said for Ethiopia, which is waging war against its Tigray people for holding elections when the ruling government said they could not be held because of the coronavirus.

The paper said that outside countries, such as the U.S., would normally try to intervene, but protesters in Kampala have watched the U.S.'s response to its protests and likened the actions to human rights abuses.

Wine has been critical of how the votes were tallied during a government-mandated Internet blackout that occurred during the election.

Tibor Nagy, the top U.S. diplomat to Africa, called Uganda's electoral process "fundamentally flawed," according to *NPR*. He cited reports of the denial of accreditation to election observers, violence, and harassment of opposition figures.

"We continue to urge restraint and rejection of violence by all actors as Uganda's election results are announced," Nagy said. "The immediate and full restoration of Internet connectivity is essential. The U.S. response hinges on what the Ugandan government does now."

TRENDPOST: *As we have been warning when the COVID War was launched last year, as economic conditions deteriorate and the "Greatest Depression" worsens, civil unrest will erupt into civil wars. Civil wars will intensify and spread into regional wars, which will, in turn, escalate a major refugee crisis.*

INDIAN FARMERS BLAST COURT: NOT BACKING DOWN



Indian farmers lashed out at a recent ruling by the country's Supreme Court, which we reported in the **Trends Journal** last week, that called for a temporary halt to the controversial farm bill signed into law by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The court called on experts to mediate between the farmers and Modi's government to come up with a solution. *The New York Times* reported farmers in

the country said these four experts, who were hand-picked by the court, have already expressed support of Modi's farm law they say leaves small farm owners vulnerable to takeovers by larger companies.

"This is the government tactic to reduce pressure on itself," Balbir Singh Rajewal, one of the leaders of a farmers' union, told the paper. "All the committee members are pro-government. All our people who so far justified the government laws – they are writing articles to justify the government law. We have decided that our agitation will continue."

Protests have broken out in New Delhi comprised of farmers who say Modi's push for deregulations means the government could end up paying a minimum support price for their goods. Farmers have blocked roads and burned their crops in response to the legislation. These farmers believe the deregulation will lead to small farms becoming insolvent and eventually being taken over by larger rivals.

The Times reported the protests have continued for six weeks, and many farmers have braved the winter cold to express their contempt for the law they said was passed without their consultation. *The Times* reported that there is a "large tractor" demonstration set to take place in the heart of the capital by the end of the month.

TREND FORECAST: *As economic conditions continue to decline in India as the "Greatest Depression" worsens, farmers' and other demonstrations will continue to escalate in 2021.*

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

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

MIGRANT CARAVAN FROM HONDURAS HEADS TOWARD U.S.



No surprise. An old trend has new life. It was happening before the COVID War, and, now, with economic conditions deteriorating while corruption, crime, and violence are rising, people are escaping their downtrodden nations to find safe-havens.

A migrant caravan from Honduras is making its way to the U.S. due to worsening conditions at home and the hopes that a Biden administration may be more welcoming.

The International Committee for the Red Cross told the *Associated Press* last Friday that the Central American country has suffered through the coronavirus outbreak and two devastating hurricanes last year. Hundreds of thousands of residents were displaced.

The caravan entered Guatemala and is on its way to Mexico.

“We lost everything, absolutely everything,” Any Ortega, who is in the caravan, told *The Los Angeles Times*. The paper reported she was living with her three children under a bridge in Honduras. She said the flooding from the storms devastated entire neighborhoods, and the government did little to help.

The paper said there are about 7,500 people in the caravan.

TREND FORECAST: *Regardless of the nation, as economic conditions further deteriorate, there will be strong anti-immigration movements to stop refugees from flooding into more prosperous, safe-haven nations.*

In the United States, it will be one of the first major challenges for the new Biden administration as the mass of people reach the American border. What will he do?

We forecast that while it will appear the U.S. will welcome them in, in reality, few will be allowed in.

It was reported that an unnamed Biden transition team member, i.e., a cowardice shill, told NBC News, “The situation at the border isn’t going to be transformed overnight. There’s help on the way, but now is not the time to make the journey.”

RAND PAUL: CAPITOL SECURITY “RIDICULOUS” AFTER RIOT



Senator Rand Paul said in an interview last week that the newly-implemented security apparatus at the Capitol is an overreaction and seems to have turned the city into a “militarized zone.”

More than 20,000 armed National Guardsmen have descended on the Capitol after the riot on 6 January while Congress certified the Electoral College vote for Joe Biden. Five people died and dozens were arrested. The FBI continues to search for those seen in photos from the scene.

Federal authorities initially came out and said the rioters wanted to assassinate “elected officials,” but they have since backtracked and said there was no “direct evidence” to support those claims.

Paul appeared on *Fox News* last week and said the federal government held due to form: “They either underreact or overreact.” He continued,

“So, I think there was too little security, obviously, last week, and now we’re going to become a militarized zone. And they’re checking congressmen as they come in to see if they have a sharp pencil or sharp pen. So, it’s gotten ridiculous. And so, we’ll see what happens and whether it’s permanent. But

most people who write about civil liberties say that in times of war, or in times of stress, or in times of crisis, you lose your civil liberties very quickly.”

Paul was likely also referring to the newly-installed metal detectors at the entrance to the chamber in the Capitol. *NBC News* reported at least 12 Republican members stepped around the detectors.

“This is bulls---,” Republican Rodney Davis told the officers, according to the report.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in response, has pushed for a new rule that would fine members \$5,000 for first-time offenses and \$10,000 for a second.

“Many House Republicans have disrespected our heroes by verbally abusing them and refusing to adhere to basic precautions keeping members of our congressional community, including the Capitol police, safe,” Pelosi said in a statement. She called it a “tragic” but necessary step.

USA Today reported that Lauren Boebert, a Republican from Colorado, said the metal detectors would have done little to stop the chaos that occurred at the Capitol and called it “just another political stunt” by a Democrat trying to capitalize on the incident. She said,

“Government, once it grows large, never wants to give up on this. But yes, we have to resist this. And we have to have security, obviously. But I think living in a wartime state with... we have troops in the capitol. They’re staying in the capitol. There platooning and camping in the capitol. So, I understand, that happened last week with that. But going forward, this week, I think we-- there’s a danger of overreacting.”

TRENDPOST: *Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser announced last week that the security measures in the city will be the new normal after the riot at the Capitol and will continue long after Joe Biden’s inauguration.*

“We are going to go back to a new normal,” she said.

Violent protests broke out across Washington, D.C. several times last year including one in August that reportedly required President Trump to be “rushed” to an underground bunker “used in the past during terrorist attacks,” according to The New York Times.

Bowser did not feel the need to take action after the commander-in-chief was rushed into a bunker, but now she has decided to take the security threat in the Capitol seriously. Perhaps if members of Congress and Bowser took a more serious approach to the unrest over the summer, the breach could have been avoided.

Moreover, while the government has imposed strict “security rules” for We the People following 9/11 – that the most “advanced” military/intelligence complex was unable to prevent and failed as well in stopping the Washington riots of 6 January – now Washington politicians are living with the loss of freedoms they have forced on the general population.

TRUMP CARD: JOKER’S WILD



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced last week that the city would cut business ties with the Trump Organization after this month’s riot at the Capitol, which Democrats blame solely on President Trump and his rhetoric.

“The city of New York will no longer have anything to do with The Trump Organization,” de Blasio said, according to *the Financial Times*. “The lawyers looked at it. It was clear as a bell: that’s grounds for severing the contracts.”

The fallout from the riot at the Capitol has been swift. Social media sites Twitter and Snapchat announced they would permanently ban Trump and some of his followers.

Michael D’Antonio, a *CNN* contributor and Trump biographer, said, “It’s a huge problem for him. He created toxicity for an important part of his market. I don’t know if some will ever come back. Most brands try to avoid controversy. I feel like he’s forced the hands of the companies that decided to disengage.”

Last week, the PGA announced it had canceled its contract with the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, N.J.

Deutsche Bank also announced it would no longer do business with Trump's company, according to a report in *Bloomberg*. CNN reported Signature Bank said it would begin to close Trump's personal bank account.

The *FT* reported New York City has maintained deals with The Trump Organization that include two ice skating rinks, a carousel, and a golf course in the Bronx. These facilities generate about \$17 million a year for The Trump Organization. *The Times* also reported that Cushman & Wakefield, the real estate company, said they informed the Trump family they would no longer work with them in leasing properties.

The paper reported that Eric Trump, the president's son who works in the family business, declared the fallout is nothing more than "political discrimination."

TREND FORECAST: While an NBC News poll released on Monday found that 43 percent of voters nationwide gave Trump a positive job approval rating, just barely down from 45 percent who said the same before the November election, we forecast as time moves forward, Trump's potential to run for office again, as well as his popularity, will be greatly diminished.

Indeed, a poll released today by Gallup showed his final job approval rating of 34 percent. However, according to Gallop, it is not the lowest rating among presidents. Harry Truman left office with a 32 percent rating, and Trump is tied with Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush for the second-lowest.

Moreover, with the hospitality and commercial real estate sectors in economic meltdown and losing events at a number of them, including the PGA, The Trump Organization, reportedly burdened with over a billion dollars in debt, will sink him lower.

It was reported that Deutsche Bank, Trump's biggest creditor, and two other banks announced they are cutting ties with him. We also forecast that beyond the financial pressures, lawsuits and attempts by Democrats to charge him with crimes and violations will further sap the energy out of a Trump revival.

Indeed, The Hill reported that New York State prosecutors are ramping up their investigation into Trump's business dealings, which could lead to criminal charges.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW

TWITTER'S KING MULLS MORE CENSORSHIP



Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey drew criticism from free-speech advocates when he announced last week that President Trump would be permanently banned from his social media platform. Reports indicate the tech billionaire is considering additional steps to censor more accounts.

“We are focused on one account right now, but this is going to be much bigger than just one account, and it’s going to go on for much longer than just this day, this week, and the next few weeks, and go on beyond the inauguration,” Dorsey said in a video leaked to the guerilla news site *Project Veritas*.

The video, which was reportedly leaked by a Twitter insider, said the next steps will be to shut down accounts tied to the QAnon conspiracy.

The Associated Press reported that those who follow the conspiracy believe there is a high-ranking government official known as “Q” who has been dropping cryptic clues on online message boards. One of their theories, according to the *AP*, is that Trump is waging a secret campaign against enemies in the “deep state” and a child sex-trafficking ring. About 70,000 accounts accused of peddling the conspiracy have already been banned from the site.

“The moves we’re making today around QAnon, for instance, is one such example of a broader approach that we should be looking at and going deeper on,” Dorsey said.

Many conservatives, who claim that big tech companies “shadow ban” content, believe the next steps will be a crackdown on all conservative content.

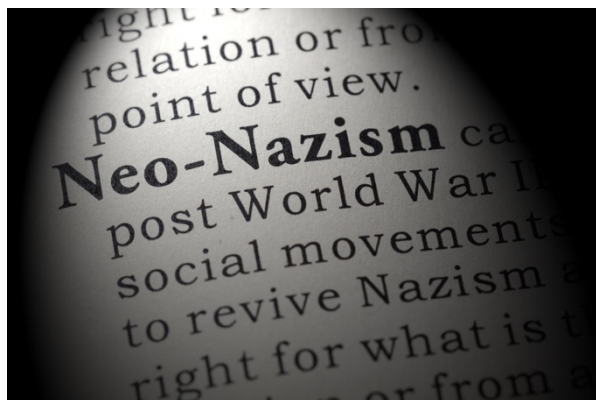
Twitter’s defenders point out that the company is allowed to post and delete any content it wants, and if you have a problem with that, then go somewhere else. But the only problem is there is no place for them to turn. Parler, which was seen as a long-shot challenger to Twitter’s dominant position, went dark last Sunday after Amazon Web Services announced it would no longer host the free-speech platform.

Business Insider reported that Amazon said Parler was unable and unwilling to “remove content that threatens the public safety, such as by inciting and planning the rape, torture, and assassination of named public officials and private citizens.”

TREND FORECAST: *We have reported extensively on censorship in this and other issues of the **Trends Journal** over the past several years.*

While it is difficult and costly to create free speech mediums, it does provide one of the most lucrative OnTrendpreneur® opportunities of the 21st century.

STATEN ISLAND BOROUGH PRESIDENT: NO “HEIL HITLER”



Oh “heil” no.

Leticia Remauro, a Republican from New York’s Staten Island, found herself in hot water last week after she said “Heil Hitler” while protesting the state’s coronavirus lockdown.

The New York Times reported that Remauro is running for borough president and was outside Mac's Public House, a bar that has also clashed with city and state officials over COVID mandates when she made the comment.

A video showed Remauro outside the bar during a protest on 2 December. She said there was an urgent need to reopen the economy, so they could pay the salaries of the officers who were seen outside the bar. She said the police officers were doing their job, but "not for nothing, sometimes you're got to say, 'Heil Hitler,' not a good idea to send me here, we're not going to do it."

She apologized in a statement to the paper and said her comment does not represent "anything I feel or think about the horrors of the holocaust or the enduring trauma impacting survivors and subsequent generations of the vital forever necessity of holocaust education."

The Times reported Remauro works at a marketing firm that was recently hired by Nicole Malliotakis, New York City's only Republican, who won in the district in November. Malliotakis separated herself from Remauro in a Twitter post shortly after the controversy.

"At a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise across our city and especially on Staten Island, there is no excuse for such words being uttered," she said.

TRENDPOST: *In politically correct, censorship America, every word must be spoken as told.*

Last week, we reported that Congresswoman Mary Miller issued an apology after a comment she made about Adolf Hitler during a "Save the Republic" rally.

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.

Backing down as Remauro did, Miller said, "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."

Double Standard for a Lemon

CNN's anti-Trump anchor Don Lemon doubled down on his earlier comment when he referred to Trump supporters as Nazis, while a Republican congresswoman who mentioned the name "Hitler" faced calls for expulsion.

Shortly after the riot at the Capitol, Lemon – once again – unloaded on Trump voters and defended his position that anyone who voted for the president is essentially in league with the KKK and neo-Nazis. Said Lemon:

"If you voted for Trump, you voted for the person who the Klan supported. You voted for the person who Nazis support. You voted for the person who the alt-right supports. You voted for the person who incited a crowd to go into the capital and potentially take the lives of lawmakers."

The anchor stood by his comment the following night, saying, "They're allowed to their own opinion and I believe what I said last night."

TRENDPOST: Welcome to double standard America. It is fine for CNN Lemon Presstitute to moronically and arrogantly call the 74,223,744 Americans who voted for Donald Trump neo-Nazis and not be called out for it.

But anyone who mentions Hitler, such as Mary Miller and Leticia Remauro, is labeled anti-Israel and "absolutely repugnant, obscene and unacceptable for any American," as expressed by the quacking Senator Tammy Duckworth, a Democrat from Miller's state.

TREND TRACKING LESSON: NYT PROMOTES AGENDA



Oklahoma, which does not have a statewide mask mandate, is experiencing its highest coronavirus infection rate since the beginning of the outbreak, *The New York Times* reported last Thursday. Their headline read:

“Oklahoma, With No Mask Mandate, Faces Surge in Cases”

The Times wrote, “Oklahoma is in the grip of a frightening surge of the coronavirus, the worst it has yet seen and one of the worst in America’s winter,” and that the outbreak is the third-worst in the country.

Why?

Outside the Oklahoma city of Ardmore, there is no statewide mask mandate, according to *The New York Times*.

What the Toilet Paper of Record – which constantly has championed their COVID War Hero Andrew Cuomo for his draconian lockdown, social distance, restaurant shutting, mask-wearing orders – left out of the article the fact that the COVID death rate in opened-up Oklahoma is far less than New York’s.

According to statista.com, New York’s COVID death per 100,000 people is 211, the second-highest in the U.S., compared to “No Mask Mandate” Oklahoma with a virus death rate of 71 per 100,000.

We note this article to again emphasize how selling agendas and “not fair and accurate” reporting are the protocol of the “Paper of Record” and America’s mainstream media.

TOILET PAPER OF RECORD: FULL OF CRAP



It was a two-color story that gobbled up nearly two-thirds of a page in *The New York Times* last Thursday with the headline:

10% of Congress Has Been Infected at Some Time

The paper had outlines of Congress broken up in red and blue with the seats darkened of those who got the virus. Below that was a list of names of those who have reported testing positive for the virus.

Of course, left out of the article is the fact that testing positive does not mean coming down with the virus. As we have detailed, the tests are often faulty. (See our 29 September article, [“COVID GOLD TEST PROVES TO BE ‘WORTHLESS.’”](#))

Since the COVID War began last March, Luke Letlow, the Congressman-elect from Louisiana, died from the virus in December. It was reported he died from a heart attack that occurred during a procedure to remove blood clots.

TRENDPOST: *We have included this fear-spreading article to again note the absence of a minor mention by The Times that since the virus broke out, while numerous members of Congress had the virus, of the 535 members, one died... possibly not of the virus but as a result of a medical procedure.*

Yet, the average reader who scans the headlines and sees the graphic, without reading the entire article and analyzing the facts and dates not provided, is left with a false perception.

ALL THE PRESIDENT’S APPS: TECH COUP 2021



In a whirlwind week of unprecedented tech censorship, the world witnessed President Donald J. Trump silenced in the waning days of his presidency.

The pretext for the digital coup was a chaotic breach of the Capitol building during a massive MAGA protest in Washington, DC, on 6 January. The President had called for the protest himself on the date Congress was set to tally state elector slates.

Dozens of House members and a smaller group of Senators had committed to debating questions of voting fraud during the Constitutional process.

The protest was quickly labeled an “insurrection,” though order was restored so quickly that Congress was able to reconvene in the evening to vote and certify Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 Presidential election. Democrats and their allies in the media, Silicon Valley con artists, and the entire corporate world moved swiftly to control the narrative of events.

In nearly one fell swoop, President Trump was permanently barred from his accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms owned by the big-tech corporations, including Instagram.

When Trump tried to communicate via the official White House account, it, too, had been suspended.

Software company Salesforce cut off the Trump campaign from their service. Payment processor Stripe also cut all ties and denied its services, and Shopify closed its web sales platform from the campaign’s use. This was the same company that shut down payment processing in 2018 for GAB, a free speech platform offering an alternative to Twitter. Even banks such as Deutsche Bank, as we have noted, announced they would no longer do business with Trump enterprises.

The coordination between pols and corporate and media entities was an “informal” whirlwind of purging and pontificating. But the lines between the actors were evident.

On 11 January, journalist Glenn Greenwald said,

“Having elected officials with power over tech companies direct those companies to censor those with different ideologies is despotic: a merger of state and corporate/monopolistic power. But the 9/11 framework is in play: if you dissent from any of this, you’re pro-Terrorist.”

Indeed, the entire Republican base was quickly framed as a “domestic terrorist” group.

Double Standard

Never mind that Democratic leaders including Kamala Harris and the media had cheered on months-long BLM and Antifa “mostly peaceful protests” in 2020, which saw businesses and government buildings burned to the ground, cops beaten, and dozens murdered and maimed. The riots caused billions in damage.

But, now, Democrats defended the police and the use of the National Guard. They moved to vilify not only those who had entered the halls of Congress but Republicans including Senators Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley, who had backed efforts to debate voting fraud.

Calls were made to add them to “no-fly” lists, and corporate powers moved against them and others including Ron Paul.

Media attention and the Sunday talk shows instantly pivoted from coverage of the “dire” COVID fear and hysteria of hospital capacity shortages and rising case numbers to “Impeachment, Act II” and possible use of the 25th Amendment to remove Trump.

When President Trump, via surrogates, indicated he was considering moving to Parler, a free speech rival to Twitter with a relatively tiny base of users, the technocracy swiftly moved against that platform. Amazon AWS storage and web services powering the platform were yanked, and Parler went dark.

The power moves of the Technocracy were alarming enough to provoke concern from world leaders, many of whom could hardly be characterized as staunch Trump allies. German Chancellor Angel Merkel said the digital censorship was troubling. The French government had a stronger reaction, with Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire calling out the censorship as “the digital oligarchy.”

U.K. Health Secretary Matt Hancock weighed in, saying it was time to consider tighter regulations of the social platforms, given their increasing penchant for making editorial decisions.

Thierry Breton, the EU’s commissioner for the internal market, weighed in, observing,

“The fact that a CEO can pull the plug on POTUS’s loudspeaker without any checks and balances is perplexing. It is not only confirmation of the power of these platforms, but it also displays deep weaknesses in the way our society is organized in the digital space.”

Indeed, the crackdown on the American president was egregious. Even the ACLU was stirred to issue a lukewarm condemnation:

“It should concern everyone when companies like Facebook and Twitter wield the unchecked power to remove people from platforms that have become indispensable for the speech of billions.”

By 12 January, another censorship milestone was reached when the President traveled to the Alamo in Texas to highlight his accomplishments with building a (partial) wall along stretches of the southern border.

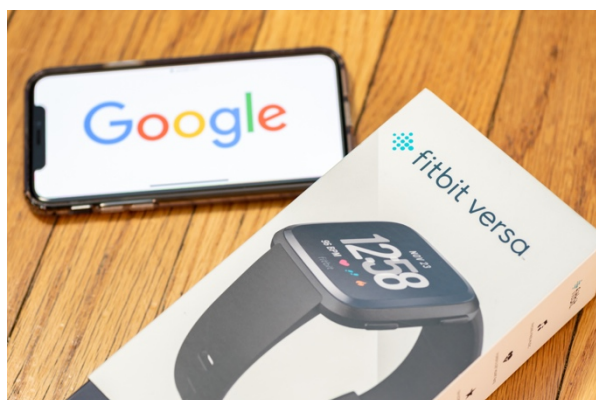
Though over 800,000 watched on YouTube via the Trump-friendly *RSBN* network, none of the major over-the-air networks covered the speech. Cable news networks including *CNN*, *MSNBC*, and even *FOX* also blacked it out.

Instead, they counter-programmed with an FBI and DC-district federal prosecutor news conference that aired at the same time, outlining an expansive plan to go after hundreds and possibly thousands of Capitol protesters that had violated the law.

TRENDPOST: *Again, love or hate Trump, “Censorship” is the new American “Normal.” We have detailed it extensively in this **Trends Journal**.*

Following the President’s remarks, YouTube suspended Trump’s account, barring uploads and comments, effectively silencing any video of the President’s border speech on the world’s most frequented video platform. The death knell of the Trump presidency was sounded, not by tweet and bombast, but by the eerie absence of it.

GOOGLE FLEXES WITH FITBIT ACQUISITION



Google data and tracking just got bigger. On 15 January, Fitbit, a leader in wearable health and fitness analytics tracking technology, announced it was being bought out by Google, the world's largest tech and human data-mining company. The move will expand Google's already huge capacity to track and mine human data.

Founded in 2009, Fitbit has become synonymous with wearable fitness devices and associated apps, which allow users to track everything from heart rate to sleep time and quality, to periods of daily exercise or even just movement (in the guise of step counts), and more.

The company has sold more than 120 million devices in over 100 countries since 2009. The company estimates it has tracked 275 trillion steps and logged 15 billion hours of sleep of its users, among other data.

A statement sent out to users by Fitbit CEO James Park about the Google buy-out said in part:

"I have no doubt that this acquisition will create so many opportunities. But I also want you to know that many of the things you know and love about Fitbit will remain the same. We'll stay committed to doing what's right, to putting your health and wellness at the center of everything we do and to offering a no-one-size-fits-all approach with choices that work across both Android and iOS.

The trust of our users will continue to be paramount, and we will maintain strong data privacy and security protections, giving you control of your data and staying transparent about what we collect and why. Google will continue to protect Fitbit users' privacy and has made a series of binding

commitments with global regulators, confirming that Fitbit users' health and wellness data won't be used for Google ads and this data will be kept separate from other Google ad data."

Park also sought to reassure the Fitbit user base that Google would permit Fitbit customers to connect to third-party services in conjunction with their devices, as opposed to being locked into only Google's offerings of health and wellness apps. He said this and other commitments by Google demonstrated that the technology giant would be an "ideal" partner to help further the Fitbit mission to make everyone in the world healthier.

TREND FORECAST: Across the business spectrum, from heavy industry to high-tech, from retail to restaurants, the "Bigs" will continue to gobble up the smalls... growing gigantically. There will be new rounds of anti-trust movements that will accelerate as the "Greatest Depression" worsens and "populist" political movements gain strength.

"UNCONTROLLABLE" AI CLOSE TO REALITY



The tech website "Interesting Engineering" referenced an alarming new report by the prestigious Max Planck Society that assessed human's capability for controlling killer Artificial Intelligence technologies. According to the report, science is rapidly approaching the point where AI will effectively break out of human control, something previously only presaged by doomsday blockbuster sci-fi movie franchises like *The Matrix* and *Terminator* and the supercomputer HAL from *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

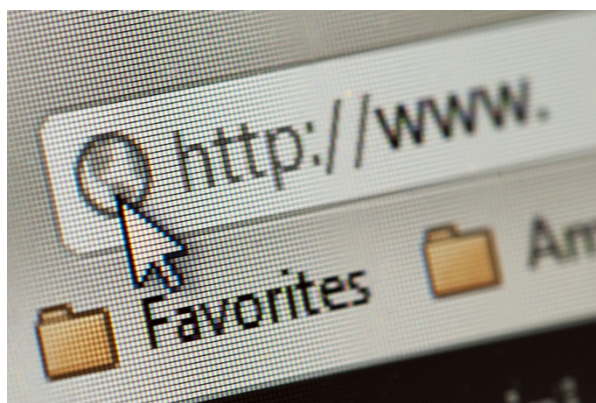
The research institute's paper was published last week in the *Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research*. It explores whether humans will retain the ability to react effectively to a scenario where a "Skynet"-style AI decides it would be in the earth's interest to end humanity.

According to the paper's authors, this is something people need to be thinking about and planning for, in much the same way that other crisis scenarios involving biological weapons, or an EMT event, are game-planned,

"A super-intelligent machine that controls the world sounds like science fiction," study co-author Manuel Cebrian said. But Cebrian believes that AI's capability of making and carrying out impactful decisions for humanity, without answering to any authority beyond itself, is just around the corner.

The report advises the development of a "containment algorithm" that can simulate the dangerous behavior of a super-intelligent AI and prevent it from doing anything harmful. "There are already machines that perform certain important tasks independently without programmers fully understanding how they learned it. The question, therefore, arises whether this could at some point become uncontrollable and dangerous for humanity."

WORLD WIDE WEB INVENTOR WANTS DO-OVER



In 1980, during his off-hours as a consultant software engineer at CERN, the Swiss Particle Physics Laboratory, Sir Berners-Lee wrote a private program for storing information. He said the motivation was to mimic the way the human brain stores and accesses information.

The engineer's work evolved to become utilized as a decentralized data retrieval system more famously known as the World Wide Web. But, now, Berners-Lee is working on what he hopes will one day supersede the current internet. He has formed a start-up called "Inrupt" to fix what the engineer sees as some of the problems that have plagued and disrupted the digital web he originally helped build.

He has pointed to closed platforms owned by huge corporations including Facebook and Twitter as an impetus for imagining something different. “People are fed up with the lack of controls, the silos.”

In a bit of irony or perhaps sly disruption, the announcement of “Inrupt” came via this Twitter post:

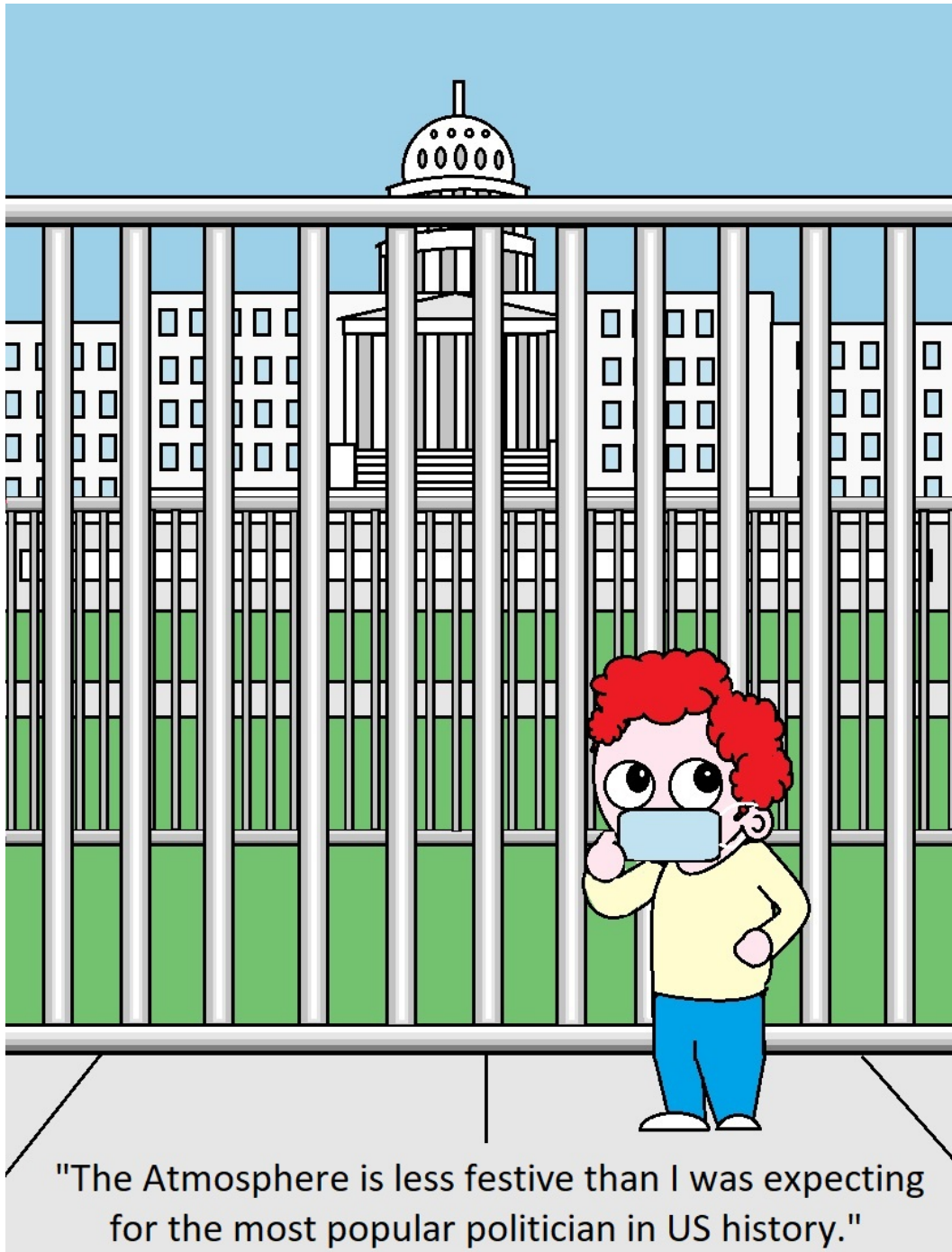
“Today, @johnwbruce and I will join @marjoriepaillon in conversation at this year’s @WebSummit Conference. We’ll discuss the ongoing work of @Inrupt and our efforts to change the way the web works, so it works better for us all.”

The company is reportedly already working on a pilot program and has signed up the U.K.’s National Health Service (NHS), the *BBC*, and government services in Flanders, Belgium, to test its technology. One goal is to develop a single sign-on for any service and have personal data stored in “PODS,” or “personal online data stores” controlled by the individual user, instead of corporate entities.

Berners-Lee was dubbed a Knight Commander in the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth in 2004 for his technological accomplishments.

THE ART OF TRENDS

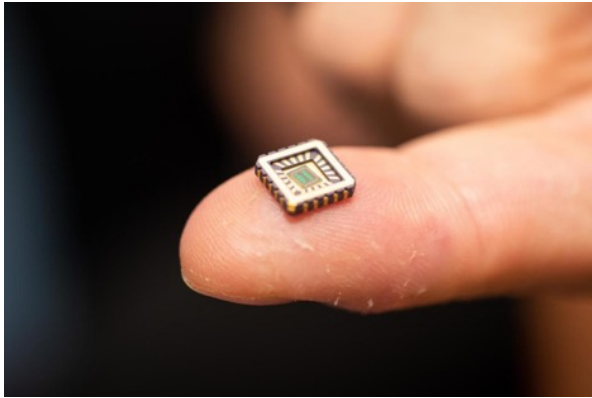
“Political AtmosFear” by Stephen Green



www.MuseumofAwesomeArt.com

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE *by Bennett Davis*

ARTIFICIAL NEURONS FUNCTION LIKE LIVING COUNTERPARTS



For years, scientists have been attempting to replicate in silicon the functions of neurons – the nerve cells that are the fundamental units of the human brain.

Now researchers at the University of Bath claim to have done it.

The achievement rests on three breakthroughs, the developers say:

- they developed a mathematical method to model the parameters that control a neuron's actions;
- they engineered hardware to embody the model;
- they made their silicon neurons flexible to be able to mimic the workings of a variety of brain functions.

The team used a series of electrical measurements to show their new neurons could mimic the full range of basic operations of living neurons in the hippocampus, the brain's seat of memory and learning, and also the neurons controlling respiration.

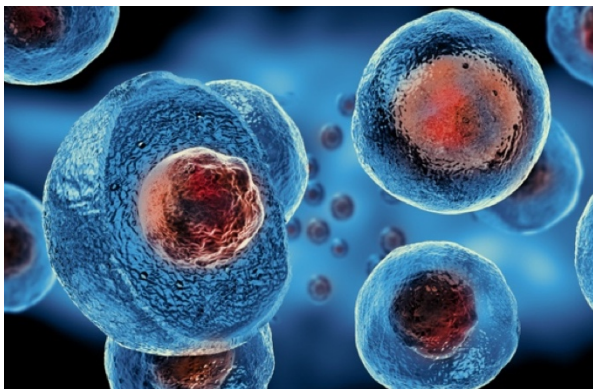
TRENDPOST: *The chips are years away, at least, from being implanted in humans. When they are, they could restore brain function lost to Alzheimer's or Parkinson's diseases or serve as pacemakers to regulate damaged hearts or other organs, among other brain boosts.*

Meanwhile, they can serve as research platforms for bioscientists studying neurons' functions and interactions.

Ultimately, the silicon neurons could be adopted by those like Elon Musk who are attempting to create interfaces between computers and human brains.

Photo credit: University of Bath

SCIENTISTS BUILD WORKING HUMAN THYMUS



Using human stem cells, researchers at the Francis Crick Institute and University College London have, for the first time, grown a working human thymus.

The thymus, sitting between the heart and the sternum, is essential in establishing the body's immune system. Once that task is done, the thymus gradually wastes away until it virtually disappears in elderly persons.

A child with a damaged thymus or born without one faces a death sentence from infection.

Now the Crick-London research team has opened a means of escape from that fate.

To build the thymus, the scientists collected thymuses from patients undergoing heart surgery, then cultured hordes of cells from the harvested glands. To give the cells a place to multiply, the team developed a surgical technique that enabled them to remove cells from a rat thymus, leaving only the structural framework.

The researchers then populated the framework with about six million cells from the cultured crop, which began to organize themselves.

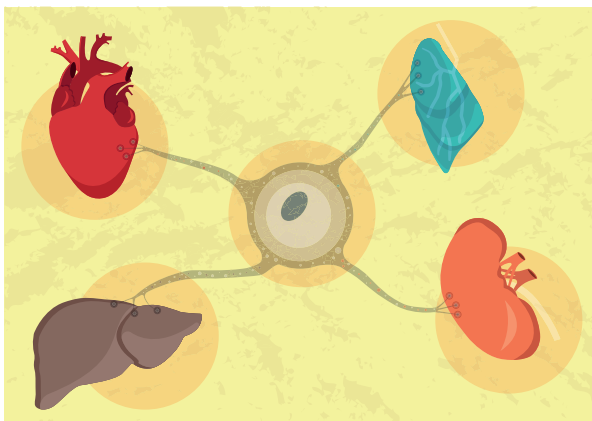
After five days, the rat-size thymus resembled the thymus in a nine-week-old human fetus; when it finished growing, the thymus glands that grew in rats were producing key biochemical components of the immune system.

The Crick-London group is now working to scale up the technique to create a full-size human thymus.

TRENDPOST: *A lab-grown thymus could do more than save the lives of children and young adults with missing or damaged thymus glands, the researchers say.*

The cultured glands also could be used in transplants: by growing and implanting a new thymus in an adult transplant patient, the person's body might accept the replacement organ, eliminating the need for a long regimen of immune-suppressing drugs.

LAB-GROWN HEART CELLS IMPLANTED INTO HUMAN PATIENT



In the first such process on record, scientists at Kyoto University have surgically implanted lab-grown heart cells into a patient.

First, the research team harvested cells from the patient and regressed them to become “induced pluripotent stem cells” (IPSCs) by exposing them to a virus that transferred 24 selected genes into the cells.

The new genes reversed the cells’ age clocks, sending them back in time before they became differentiated into cells of a heart, eye, or another organ. At that stage, IPSCs can be chemically induced to develop into any specific kind of cell desired.

Kyoto's novel process uses the iPSCs to create sheets holding about 100 million heart muscle cells. The sheets are grafted onto a damaged heart, where the new cells improve the heart's ability to function normally. The cells also release biochemical growth factors to encourage the growth of healthy new heart cells.

After successful tests on pigs, the process was approved by the Japanese government for tests on humans, the first of which was conducted in November. The patient is said to be recovering with no major negative side effects.

The research team will monitor the patient's progress through this year. Through 2023, the group plans to test a total of ten patients with hearts severely weakened by heart attacks or cardiovascular disease.

TRENDPOST: *Kyoto's breakthrough is the latest example of the power that stem cells bring to medical therapies.*

Through this decade, researchers will perfect the techniques of harvesting a person's cells and manipulating them to create new organs to replace damaged or diseased original equipment. The exception: the brain, which will yield its secrets slowly over at least the next two decades and possibly longer.

By 2040, the human healthspan could theoretically double as exhausted thoracic organs could be replaced, perhaps more than once, restoring youthful functions.