

THE TRENDS JOURNAL®

HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®

China Started
COVID WAR
We've All Been
SHANGHAIED



TRENDS JOURNAL

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SHANGHAIED

Welcome to this week's [Trends Journal](#): "CHINA STARTED COVID WAR. WE'VE ALL BEEN

SHANGHAIED."

The COVID War which started in 2020 by China continues to destroy lives, livelihoods, and the human spirit throughout the world.

Despite a long list of draconian orders imposed upon We the People by politicians to "flatten the curve"... it did nothing to stop the virus but it flattened our lives.

Many businesses on Main Street have gone and many downtowns have turned into ghost towns... bars are empty, and nightlife is dead.

As I have long said, 'When people lose everything, they lose it.'

As we are going to press, a gunman opened fire in a Brooklyn subway car and threw a smoke grenade injuring some 30 people—some critically. The incident is a reminder that society's mental state is crumbling.

Getting Worse

The world is on the cusp of WWII, equity markets are being rattled and inflation is skyrocketing. The world is filled with uncertainty.

[The Trends Journal](#) is the only magazine that tells you what in the world is going on, what it means, what's next and what to do.

We've been giving you all we can to give you the best we can. In celebration of Easter week, we will not be publishing the [Trends Journal](#) next Tuesday, April 19. Pace e Amore,

Gerald Celente and The Trends Journal Team

P.S. Please also follow us on our new [Substack newsletter](#).

P.P.S. Also, please remember to [tune in](#) tomorrow at 6 PM, EST, for my "Celente & The Judge" podcast with Judge Andrew Napolitano that provides insights and solutions from a judicial authority that you won't find anywhere else.

COMMENTS

BIGS GETTING BIGGER

Less companies; more G7s, less competition; more super yachts, less shareholder influence; more CEO & board influence, less freedom; more tyranny, less hope; more greed, less value from food stamps; more trips to Davos, less trust in elections; more meetings with politicians, less for the have-nots; more for the haves.

Joshua Winkleblech

SELLING THE "GOOD WAR"

Today Czech Republic is transferring its NATO tanks to Ukraine to ensure the war progresses forward as the US desires. The US is prosecuting this war even though Russia is trying to negotiate a settlement that would be acceptable to Ukraine and

the EU. WITHOUT WAR THE US IS JUST ANOTHER Third World Country.

The Elites, Hollywood Liberals and MainStream Media are all in lockstep to promote a Third World War in the mold of a Fourth Reich designed by the US NSA, CIA, FBI, MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX AND ARMS DEALERS!!!! A war is what the present phase of the Great Reset is about for now.

I would expect the next phase of the Great Reset is going to be HEMORRHAGIC FEVER to support tyrannical action when the Ukrainian/Russia proxy war winds down!!! We are living in a world of diabolical criminals throughout all governments of the world and we need to pray to GOD for protection and deliverance!!!!!!!!!!!!

harlow53

RUSSIAN OBJECTIVE CONJECTURE

I think what Russia demands is a DMZ (demilitarized zone) in the Eastern regions of Ukraine, similar to the set up in North Korea. And the end of the unspoken genocide taking place there too.

Andy James Cornago

RANCID IDEAS, ROTTEN WARS

Just a question, what in the hell has Europe done for the US in the past 120 years? Answer is nothing other than involving us in their wars the results of which poisoned us with their fascism and communism of which both extremes are ruining this once great nation.

We own them nothing and yet we continue having to pay more and more

because of them. If we had left them to dig out and rebuild on their own we wouldn't have the Charles Schwabs and his ilk bothering us for at least another 70 years.

a1achiropractic

AUTO TICKETING

How exactly would Motion Intelligence be making profits off of monitoring our "safety" while driving? Is it because of their technology being implemented in the vehicles or will there be a cash flow of dollars sent to them for every time we break a "safety" rule and then charged for the disobedience, for example?

Gage Garber

CRY OF "DANGEROUS DISINFO" USED TO GUT FREE SPEECH

What do we do when big corps own everything and you are only allowed to pay in the new US digital currency, yet your access to the new digital currency is restricted in Trudeau-like fashion because you said the wrong thing on social media?

Drawdy

CRYPTO FREEDOM'S WILDCARD?

It appears that the battle lines are being drawn. It's Bitcoin and crypto vs. communism. I recommend that my fellow subscribers watch the videos coming out of the Miami Beach Bitcoin Conference. It's freedom vs. slavery.

Dave from L.A.

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TRENDS ON THE U.S. ECONOMIC FRONT



ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

How low can we go?

This isn't ancient history.

Go back to Chinese Lunar New Year 2020: The Year of the Rat

In January, when the coronavirus was launched in the city of Wuhan, Beijing locked the city down, and others, to beat the virus.

In lockstep, Italy picked up the sword to defeat the coronavirus and following their marching orders, arrogant political clowns backed by their bureaucratic servants, locked down much of the world to “flatten the curve.”

They flattened life on earth and did zero to beat the virus, which, as we detailed in this and many previous **Trends Journals**, was, and is, deadly for those suffering from pre-existing comorbidities... particularly taking down the obese and those with Type 2 diabetes.

And which nation has suffered the most from COVID?

“We’re #1,” America!

The nation that is the originator and junk food/fast food champion of the world where 70 percent of the people are overweight of which 42 percent are obese from stuffing their faces with garbage crap that’s neatly wrapped.

Yes, with a population of some 334 million, America registered over 1,012,461 COVID deaths. Yet, India, for example, much more impoverished, and with a population of 1.403 billion, tallied up 521,723 COVID virus victims.

What’s the point?

The COVID War has destroyed life on earth and killed hundreds of millions of more lives and livelihoods than the virus has over the past two plus years.

But the political criminals who, with their “health experts” decided which businesses were “essential” and which were not, annihilated major sectors of the economy that will not come back for decades... or at all.

Yet, there is never a mention of these and other important facts by the mainstream media. Instead, they just pump out government and corporate agenda bullshit and narrow ranges of data that are a tiny fraction of the big picture.

Real World

Office occupancy rate in the U.S. is down 60 percent from where it was before politicians launched the COVID War in 2020.

People aren't dressing up to go to work. As a result of the work-from-home and dressing down trend, some 30 percent of the dry cleaners will be out of business in the coming year according to the Dry Cleaning and Laundry Institute.

Traveling to outside nations is a COVID testing/vaccine nightmare. Thus, travel will not go back to pre-COVID War levels since a sizable segment of the population will refuse the Operation Warp Speed gene therapy jab.

Streets that were bustling at night are nearly empty a few hours after dark.

Nightlife in many nations and states is no-life.

As we detail in numerous editions of the **Trends Journal**, and as we had forecast: suicide rates, crime rates, drug addiction rates, poverty rates are skyrocketing as a result of the imbecilic/unscientific draconian social distancing, mask wearing, hand sanitizing, plexiglass and other lockdown mandates that "health experts"—arrogant bureaucrats that are too stupid to get a job in the real world and bend over and suck up to politicians to work for the state—imposed upon We the People.

Go back to 2020, despite the lockdowns and businesses going out of business, the word-on-the-street was "It'll come back."

It came back for the Bigs, who, with the ability to borrow cheap money became bigger, with merger and acquisition activity hitting record highs—along with stock buy-backs—while much of the world has declined deeper into poverty.

And now the Ukraine War. A war that would have ended and the implications of the Russian invasion would have not gone far beyond their borders has now rattled the earth thanks to America and its NATO allies ramping it up with steady flows of lethal weapons to Ukraine... and their sanctions that have rapidly accelerated the already spiking inflation rates.

Today, British charity Oxfam said that as a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns (which worsened the supply chain disruptions) and now the Ukraine War sanctions that have further pushed up already rising energy and food prices, some 860 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty by the end of this year.

Oxfam's "First Crisis, Then Catastrophe," reports that the junction of the COVID War and Ukraine War crises may increase the number of people living on less than \$1.90 per day—extreme poverty—by more than a quarter of a billion.

And besides “extreme poverty,” what about plain “poverty”?

How many people are living on less than \$10 a day?

As we reported last week, food prices worldwide have risen to their highest levels since the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization began tracking them 30 years ago.

Yet, at the top, according to Oxfam, the world's richest 10 men have collectively seen their wealth more than double from \$700 billion to \$1.5 trillion, while the world's 2,755 billionaires got richer during the first two years of the COVID War than they did in the last 14 years.

The bottom line: Mad Men and Mad Women are running governments around the world and have sent the planet into a downward, dangerous socioeconomic and geopolitical spiral unprecedented in human history.

Obediently, much of the world followed their leaders.

And, just as they marched off to the draconian COVID War mandates and masked up, social distanced, sanitized their hands, and got the COVID Jabs—and as we continue to note, the politicians and “celebrities who sold the jab keep getting the virus and brag they are happy they got the booster—the masses have marched off to Ukraine War.

As always, ignorant of the facts, they swallow the lies and propaganda sold to them by their government leaders and little boy and girl Prostitutes that sell what they are told by their government whore masters and corporate pimps.

Yet, the bottom line is not peace and prosperity, it is Wall Street.

And today, more of the reality of the “worst is yet to come,” came in with the inflation numbers.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 8.5 percent in March, rising more than expected and hitting its highest level since December 1981.

However, being that the government inflation numbers are rigged, the real CPI is more than double the BLS number.

According to ShadowStats, “Corrected” Alternate CPI estimate hit 17.15 percent, up from 16.05 percent ...and not the 7.9 BLS number in February. They report that this is the steepest inflation rate since June 1947 (in 75 years).

Real vs. Fake

For example, spiking housing price increases are not added into the “official” stats.” Plus, the BLS (BS) tracks the price of a basket of goods and services that they say represent average American spending habits.

As part of their made-up fiction, when people downgrade the products they buy in the “fixed basket of goods index”, this “substitution bias” brings down the inflation numbers because when prices go up people substitute lower-cost alternatives... i.e., going from steak to ground beef.

It is just another, among its many, long list of government deceptions. If the price of an item in the index rises, a lower-priced item is substituted, inflation is eliminated by substitution. Inflation also is eliminated by redefining a price rise as a quality improvement.

But again, the realities are not hidden in the numbers.

Gas prices spiked 18.3 percent from last month, food prices were up 8.8 percent over the year, and if you want to fly somewhere, airline fares jumped up 23.6 percent from a year ago

On the real hourly earning front, wages are not keeping up with inflation, therefore, the “substitution bias” will continue to escalate. While wages were up 5.6 percent, real average hourly earnings fell 0.8 percent from a year ago.

Earn Less, Pay More

While The Street is celebrating that their phony core CPI reading, which excludes food and energy prices, increased 0.3 percent, they cheered it as being below the consensus economist estimate from Dow Jones of 0.5 percent and was up “only” 6.5 percent on an annual basis.

This is how CNBC reported the “good” inflation news this morning:

“The big news in the March report was that core price pressures finally appear to be moderating,” wrote Andrew Hunter, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics. Hunter said he thinks the March increase will “mark the peak” for inflation as year-over-year comparisons drive the numbers lower and energy prices subside.

Federal Reserve Governor Lael Brainard said the slowing increase in core CPI is a “welcome” development in the effort to bring down inflation.

So where is the economy heading? Check out Gregory Mannarino’s article in this issue: ["Recession? Depression? Worse?"](#)

TREND FORECAST: The worst of inflation is yet to come. And, should America and its NATO allies keep putting sanctions on Russia, as we have greatly detailed

*in **Trends Journals** since the Ukraine War began 24 February, the inflation rates will continue to rise beyond “expectations.”*

*Remember, going back over a year ago, **The Street** and **The Feds** were way off in their inflation projections. First inflation was “temporary,” then it was “transitory.”*

Never, ever did they warn of it hitting 40 year highs, and now they are trying to play it down again so the gamblers keep gambling to keep the artificially propped up equity rising and people keep spending more than they will make.

We maintain our forecast for Dragflation: Declining economy and rising inflation.

MARKET OVERVIEW



LAST WEEK: U.S. stocks and bonds gave ground.

U.S. equity markets slumped last week amid continuing inflation, uncertainty over the impact of the U.S. Federal Reserve’s looming rise in interest rates, and fallout

from the war in Ukraine.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 0.3 percent, the NASDAQ sank 3.9 percent, and the Standard & Poor’s 500 index shed 1.3 percent, breaking a three-week winning streak.

Despite a gloomy week, stocks rallied from their March lows. The S&P has added 7.6 percent since then, as of 8 April, *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

Also last week, the 10-year treasury note’s yield jumped to 2.713 percent in its sixth straight day of gains, notching its highest level since March 2019 as investors dumped bonds ahead of another Fed rate hike.

Bond prices fall when investors sell out of them, so yields rise in order to make bonds a more attractive investment.

The two-year note's yield rose for the fifth consecutive week to close at 2.518 percent, its best five-week stretch since May 1987, the *WSJ* said.

Rising bond yields could cut into corporate earnings and stock performance, giving some analysts and investors concern that, at some point, market players will dump stocks for bonds, the *WSJ* noted.

"Although yield levels are still fairly low, if they rise fast enough, can equities withstand such a monetary shock?" Jim Paulsen, chief strategist for Leuthold Group, wrote in a 7 April note to clients.

Stocks still do well with treasury bond yields at 3 percent but begin to falter if yields climb to 4 percent, he said.

"Throughout the week, investors remained preoccupied with commentary from Federal Reserve officials as well as minutes from the central bank's March policy meeting," the *WSJ* reported.

"The Fed has been the number-one story and that continues," investment manager James Athey at Abridn [sic] told the *WSJ*.

"The effect of the sort of tightening that has been discussed...has a history of being very destabilizing," he said.

The Ukraine war also dragged down equity prices after Western allies alleged Russia had committed war crimes and initiated another layer of sanctions.

Abroad, markets ticked up last week.

Europe's Stoxx 600 gained 0.6 percent for the week; Britain's FTSE 100 added 1.7 percent.

The Nikkei 225 edged up 0.36 percent, Hong Kong's Hang Seng grew by 0.29 percent, and the Shanghai Composite index rose 0.47 percent despite the growing spate of severe COVID-inspired lockdowns across the country (see related story in this issue).

YESTERDAY: On Monday, stock prices continued last week's slide as investors worried that lockdowns across China, which we detail elsewhere in this issue, will seize up supply chains, continue shortages of materials, and pressurize inflation, *The Wall Street Journal* said.

Uncertainties over the Ukraine war's impacts, as well as those of the U.S. Federal Reserve's more aggressive interest-rate policy, also made investors nervous, the *WSJ* noted.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended the day down 1.2 percent, the NASDAQ slipped 2.2 percent, and the Standard & Poor's 500 index dropped 1.7 percent.

The S&P's tech index sank 2.6 percent on Monday, weighed down by the prospect of higher interest rates. Tech stocks typically are valued according to their future earning potential, which can be eroded as interest rates move up.

"China is weighing on people's minds quite a bit," Ernesto Ramos, head of integrated equity at Columbia Threadneedle Investments, told the *WSJ*.

The country's lockdowns against the COVID virus are "creating all kinds of supply side bottlenecks for the U.S. consumer and for U.S. manufacturers that rely on goods from China for their finished products," he said.

Investors continued to exit U.S. treasury bonds as tighter monetary policies loom over the Fed. The 10-year treasury note's yield moved up to 2.779 percent, its highest since January 2019, from 2.713 percent Friday.

Treasury yields, which rise as bond prices fall, have gained in four of the last five weeks.

Bitcoin gave up more than \$2,000 in the face of a stronger dollar and higher interest rates ahead, analysts said. The currency registered \$39,406 at 4 p.m. U.S. eastern time.

Benchmark Brent crude oil closed Monday at \$98.48 a barrel, off 4.18 percent as investors assessed China's reduced oil demand during its extensive lockdowns.

Overseas, the Europe-wide Stoxx 600 lost 1.6 percent on news of new sanctions against Russia and the Fed's hawkish outlook, CNBC reported.

In Asia, the CSI 300 index, listing China's largest mainland stocks, fell 3.09%. The Shanghai Composite dropped 2.61 percent and the Shenzhen Component surrendered 3.67 percent.

The Hang Seng index in Hong Kong sank 3.03 percent, led lower by EV maker Nio after the firm suspended production due to supply chain disruptions caused by widespread lockdowns around the country (see related story in this issue).

China's producer prices in March grew an unexpected 8.3 percent year over year, disappointing economists polled by Reuters who had expected 7.9 percent.

Chinese consumers paid 1.5 percent more for their purchases in March than a year earlier. The rise also was more than the 1.2 percent forecast by the Reuters' poll.

The gap between producer and consumer inflation indicates that companies' margins are being eroded and earnings will suffer, analysts told CNBC.

TODAY: As we noted above, on the bullshit of how CNBC reported the “good” inflation news this morning, the Dow spiked 361 points, while the S&P 500 and Nasdaq climbed 1.3 percent and 2 percent, respectively.

Once reality, a rare element on The Street, set in, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed down 0.26 percent, or 88.19 points, and the S&P 500 index fell 0.34 percent to finish at 4,397.42. The S&P 500 is down about 6 percent for the year. NASDAQ fell 0.30 percent to finish at 13,371.57.

For The Street, the high inflation numbers added weight to the idea that the Federal Reserve would have to take bolder action through rate hikes. The 10-year Treasury yield hit 2.78 percent on Monday, a three-year high.

TRENDPOST: *Peter Schiff, the economist who spoke to Gerald Celente last week, took to Twitter Tuesday to say the yield curve is no longer inverted, the “5s are higher than 2s, 10s are higher than 5s & 30s are higher than 10s, with 30s the only maturity higher on the day. This means investors are pricing in a recession starting sooner and inflation lasting longer.”*

OIL: Brent crude jumped 6.37 percent to \$104.75 a barrel due to concerns about demand in China, which is taking extreme measures to respond to a COVID-19 outbreak in Shanghai, will ease and their demand for oil will rise, while West Texas Intermediate closed at its lowest level since 25 February.

As we have extensively detailed, the sanctions imposed on Moscow by the United States and NATO following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is a contributing factor to the surge in oil and gas prices and energy prices which, overall, jumped 11 percent from February.

TREND FORECAST: *Before the Ukraine War began, oil prices were rising and inflation cost the average U.S. household an additional \$296 per month.*

To make a bad situation worse, the U.S./NATO sanctions against Russia will do nothing to stop the Ukraine War. Instead, as we noted since the War began, we have said repeatedly in articles such as [“West Paralyzes Russia’s Economy and](#)

[West's Economy is Paying the Price](#) (8 Mar 2022) and [War Scrambles Europe's Hopes for Economic Recovery](#) (15 Mar 2022) that sanctions will harm the West and much of the world in the near and long term more than Russia.

South Korea's Kospi fell 1 percent and Japan's Nikkei 225 lost 1.8 percent. China's benchmark Shanghai Composite Index was up 1.46 percent to 3,213.33. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index edged 0.52 percent higher, finishing the trading day at 21,319.13.

Chinese stocks lost ground as investors watched the COVID situation and subsequent lockdown on the mainland play out. Inflation is also a concern.

The Japanese yen traded at 125.58 per dollar on Tuesday, which was its highest since 2015. Reuters reported that the Bank of Japan has committed to ultra easy monetary policy.

“Given what we've seen so far, with the ... dollar yen rising from 115 to 125, it's a very sharp rise in a very short period of time,” Chang Wei Liang, foreign exchange and credit strategist at DBS Bank, told CNBC's *Street Signs Asia*. “We think that Japanese authorities are going to be at least verbally trying to intervene in the markets and try to calm sentiment, try not to let the pace of depreciation get completely out of hand.”

BITCOIN: Bitcoin was down 1.08 percent today to \$39,593.44. Last week, bitcoin was down about \$1,000 from two weeks ago and was trading at \$45,885 per coin. Where it is trading now, is in the same range it has been for several weeks.

TREND FORECAST: *Bitcoin is showing some weakness, trading in its lower ranges over the last few months. Thus, we maintain our trend forecast that when bitcoin solidly breaks above \$55,500 per coin, it will head toward new highs.*

We also forecast, the downward breakout point would be hit should prices fall below \$25,000 per coin. If they go that low, bitcoin could well fall back to the \$10,000 range.

As we have been noting for over five years, a major factor in forecasting the future price of bitcoin and other crypto currencies is dependent upon government regulations.

(For more crypto trends and forecasts, please see our TRENDS IN CRYPTOS section.)

GOLD/SILVER: On the high inflation news, and despite worries of the Fed raising interest rates which lower the opportunity cost of holding gold, gold spiked \$20, closing at \$1,968.20 per ounce. And silver, which was selling in the \$24.40 per ounce range for the past few weeks, jumped by 2.29 percent to close up at \$25.56 per ounce today.

TREND FORECAST: *It is a simple equation. The higher inflation rises, the higher safe-haven assets gold and silver rise. And, when the Banksters raise interest rates, it will bring down Wall Street and Main Street very hard... and the harder they fall, the higher precious metal prices will rise.*

We maintain our forecast, that on the downside, should gold prices fall below \$1,850 per ounce, prices can sink down to the low \$1,710 per ounce level. For gold to maintain strength prices must stay in the high \$1,900 per ounce range and when they solidify above \$2,200 per ounce, gold will spike to new highs.

The result of government and Federal Reserve policies is Dragflation: Economies will drag down as inflation spikes higher. Again, the facts are prevalent and cannot be denied... and the U.S./NATO sanctions placed on Russia, as President Biden admitted, will not deter the invasion, but will inflict economic pain around the world.

GOLD TAKES IN RECORD \$11.3 BILLION IN MARCH



Last month, gold exchange-traded products (ETPs) took in a record \$11.3 billion, according to Blackrock, as investors fled European equities while Russia's Ukraine war raged on (see related story in this issue).

Investments grew fivefold from February's amount, eclipsing July 2020's record monthly inflow of \$9.4 billion.

The surge drove gold's price to \$1,947 on 10 April, nearing the neighborhood of its all-time high of \$2,074 in August 2020.

Total assets in gold are now worth just 1.8 percent less than the record total struck in October 2020, the *Financial Times* reported.

In contrast, outflows from European stocks set a record of \$5.5 billion in March, subtracting almost the entire \$6 billion invested in January, which was the strongest wave of buying in the market since 2015.

"We have now had eight consecutive weeks of European equity selling, the longest period since October 2020," Karim Chedid, chief strategist for Blackrock's iShares operations in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, told the *FT*.

As a result, "Europe is at a bigger risk of stagflation than other developed market regions," he said. "It's more vulnerable to the energy shock" created by the Ukraine war.

Inflation and slowing growth are appearing in the price of European stocks, he noted.

“We need to see a peak in inflation so investors can know what they’re dealing with,” he said. “Before we reach that peak, it’s hard to see sentiment significantly turning around in Europe.”

In contrast, U.K. stocks took in a net \$607 million in March, the most since last April.

“The FTSE 100 [Britain’s key stock index] is the only developed market country index that is up on the year,” Chedid said. The FTSE had gained 2.5 percent as of 8 April.

“This is driven by its tilt toward cyclicals, especially energy stocks,” he said, adding that valuations are “looking even more attractive than at the beginning of the year.”

Globally, exchange-traded funds focused on the financial industry witnessed a \$7-billion net outflow of cash in March, following January’s record \$11-billion inflow.

“We see a structural upturn in the intake of gold ETPs,” Chedid said.

When inflation rises to or beyond 7 percent, there is a close correlation between equities’ outflows and increased investment in gold, he noted.

BANKSTER BULLISH ON FED RATE HIKES



The Fed is lagging in its mission to tamp down an “exceptionally high” rate of inflation and is likely to take more aggressive action at its next meeting, James Bullard, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, told a group of reporters on 7 April.

Bullard, a voting member of the U.S. Federal Reserve's policy-setting committee, was the group's only member to vote last month in favor of raising the Fed's base interest rate by a half-point.

The other committee members voted for a quarter-point bump.

Bullard is calling for the Fed to set a 3-percent interest rate by the middle of this year.

The meeting's minutes showed an urge to lift the rate by a half-point but the war in Ukraine was barely two weeks old at the time and the committee decided to move cautiously while the war's economic impacts made themselves felt.

However, "we have to move forthrightly to get the policy rate up to the right level to deal with inflation," Bullard said.

"We want to do that in a way that doesn't cause too much disruption, but we do have a serious inflation issue...to get under control," he added.

Bullard and an increasing number of analysts and economists expect the committee to lift rates by a half-point at May's meeting, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

"I was in favor of going with a bigger rate increase last time, so I would lean into that this time," he confirmed.

On 5 April, Fed governor Lail Brainard agreed that "getting inflation down is our most important task." Until late last year, Fed chair Jerome Powell said the Fed's primary goal was nursing the jobs recovery.

Market pricing levels and the rules of monetary policy both suggest the Fed's base rate should be significantly higher than it is, Bullard said.

Guidelines for monetary policy indicate the current rate should be 3.5 percent, not the 0.25 to 0.50 percent it now is, he said, though he also noted that market pricing suggests a slightly lower rate.

The economy has recovered well enough to absorb 3-percent interest without harm and monetary policy will continue to be encouraging, he noted, making the initial increases in interest rates relatively cost-free.

Bullard sees U.S. GDP gaining 2.8 percent this year and unemployment falling below 3 percent.

TREND FORECAST: *Considering the rate of inflation—government fake or shadowstats real—Bullard is more Fed BS. To stop inflation, according to the International Monetary Fund’s recent push for Argentina to hike its interest rate up to 44.5 percent, interest rates must be one percent above the inflation rate. Therefore, considering the latest CPI, the U.S. interest rate should be 9.5 percent.*

Yet, considering how highly and artificially inflated equities and the economy are as a result of the trillions in cheap money pumped into the system by the Banksters and Washington to fight the COVID War, we maintain our forecast that even with a 3.5 percent interest rate, equities and economies will deeply dive.

IS THE NEW YORK FED GAMING THE U.S. STOCK MARKET?



Stock index values on opening have bounced up and down recently, changing direction dramatically within an hour but without any news to spark the changes, according to Pam Martens, editor of Wall Street on Parade.

For example, on 30 March, the Dow Jones Industrial Average opened trading at about 35,230. Within 30 minutes, it rose to 35,360, then spent the next half hour sinking back to 35,215 for no apparent reason.

On 4 April, the Dow opened at 34,800, immediately dropped to 34,620, then bounced back up to 34,800, all within the first 30 minutes of trading, all with no obvious cause.

On 5 April, the Dow began the day just above 34,800, rose above 35,100 after about 30 minutes, then fell back below 34,850 25 minutes later. Again, there was no news-based explanation for the rocky ride.

Martens, who has been watching market patterns for more than three decades, thinks she might have the answer.

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York is the only Fed bank to have its own trading floor. Earlier this year, it opened a second trading floor, this one in Chicago.

The New York Fed's Chicago trading center is located quite physically close to the trading floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, where stock index futures are traded, as are other futures contracts.

It's known in the securities industry that the closer one's electronic trading terminals are to the computers that process those S&P 500 trades, the faster one's trades are booked—even by a tiny fraction of a second—boosting chances that the trade is booked before the market moves.

Martens offers a hypothetical example.

Imagine “there are some large hedge funds that correctly sense that the Fed has created a market bubble that is going to explode now that the Fed has allowed inflation to get out of control,” Martens says, “and the Fed has to slam on the brakes with a rapid series of interest rate hikes.

“Those hedge funds might be looking to pounce on the market at the open by short-selling S&P 500 futures in Chicago,” which means betting that the price will fall.

“To prevent these hedge funds from seeing this maneuver as an easy means of reaping windfall returns while driving the market lower without resistance, the New York Fed, again hypothetically, might want to launch its own counteracting purchases of the S&P 500 futures contracts” to buoy the price, Martens speculates.

“This would produce what is known as a short squeeze, where the hedge funds have to quickly buy S&P 500 futures to cover the shorts they put on, turning the market on a dime and pushing it dramatically higher.”

That could explain the Dow’s opening yo-yo on those days, she says.

“Is it really the job of the central bank of the United States—which is tasked with setting monetary policy—to have an ever-expanding trading floor in two major trading hubs in the U.S. and [Fed] traders duking it out with hedge funds?” she asked.

TREND FORECAST: *The government's Plunge Protection Team has prevented major stock-market corrections by stepping in and purchasing S&P futures, thus preventing the market's overvaluation from bursting the bubble.*

These manipulations are apparent to experienced investors. Sooner or later, attentive Americans will realize that the government's deceit is not limited to the marketplace, but extends into foreign policy.

Indeed, regardless of the country, the governments will do all they can to artificially pump up failing equities. Moreover, when the market declines intensify, The Plunge Protection Team, China's National Teams and other world "Teams," plus the central banksters, will coordinate market manipulation strategies in attempts to reverse and/or minimize the selloffs.

U.S. LOSES TRADE WAR: FEBRUARY TRADE DEFICIT NEAR RECORD



Just as America has lost every major war it started—from Korean War, to Vietnam War, from Afghan War to Iraq War—so too has the great world power, “We’re #1, “The Exceptionals” lost the Trump Trade war that he loudly launched against China when he won the 2016 Presidential Reality Show®

U.S. election.

The U.S. trade gap hit \$89.19 billion, dipping a tiny bit from January’s record monthly chasm of \$89.23 billion... but still notching the second worst imbalance on record, the U.S. commerce department reported.

Imports rose 1.3 percent to \$317.8 billion, while exports gained 1.8 percent, totaling \$228.6 billion.

Exports of industrial supplies, including fossil fuels, increased by \$1.7 billion in February. Export of COVID vaccines added \$1.3 billion.

Oil imports grew by \$1.9 billion and other chemicals by \$1.2 billion.

Vehicle imports sank slightly on global shortages of materials, especially computer chips.

TREND FORECAST: *The U.S. trade deficit will continue at or near a record clip not only while the Ukraine war remains unsettled, but long after.*

As we noted in [“Trade Deficit USA: “We’re No. 1!”](#) (11 Jan 2022), until America becomes more of a self-sustaining economy and brings more manufacturing back home, the trade deficit will continue to increase as long as Americans insist

on buying the newest smartphone, four televisions in their homes, and a new wardrobe every season.

If inflation has a silver lining, it might be that higher prices will force Americans to rediscover thrift as a virtue.

We saw consumer spending beginning to bend in this direction in March, which we reported in [“Highest Inflation in 40 Years Curbs Consumer Spending”](#) (5 Apr 2022).

INVENTORY COSTS, SUPPLY CHAIN PRESSURES STILL RISING



The monthly Logistics Managers Survey, compiled by five U.S. universities, rose from 75.2 in February to 76.2 in March. The survey samples conditions related to managing stock inventories, warehousing, and transportation.

Ratings above 50 indicate business momentum; the higher the number, the stronger the activity.

The amount of inventory in warehouses dropped from February’s rating of 80.2 to 75.7, indicating less stock on hand.

However, the cost of keeping inventory shot to a record 91, the report said.

Available warehouse space suffered a “a rather precipitous drop” last month, the survey noted, driving prices for storage space to an all-time high rating of 90.5.

“Continued inventory congestion has driven inventory costs, warehousing prices, and overall aggregate logistics costs to all-time high levels,” the report said. “This is putting even more pressure on already-constrained capacity.”

Businesses stockpiled inventory during the COVID War and afterward as consumer demand roared back.

Now the same companies are building cushions of stock against worldwide shortages and future price increases while wondering if keeping large inventories on hand will be a new necessity or “an important element of safety in uncertain times,” the survey report said.

Inventory costs “are anticipated to remain very high throughout the next 12 months,” the survey found. Some businesses “expect to hold a lot of inventory in the next year, and to pay a significant amount to do so,” it said.

The transportation industry is “at a much stronger place in terms of supply and demand relative to the last freight recession we saw in 2019,” assistant business professor Zac Rogers at Colorado State University told Bloomberg.

“With capacity as short as it has been over the last 18 months, it would take a lot to get to the point where supply is really outstripping demand,” he added.

TREND FORECAST: *The less storage space, the higher the cost for storage, the higher inflation will rise. The bottom line will be if consumers, whose wages are well below the inflation rate, will be able to buy enough goods and services to keep the economy from sinking.*

Our forecast is Dragflation: Consumer spending will decrease, economic growth will decline and inflation will increase.

U.S. SERVICE ECONOMY UP, MANUFACTURING DOWN



The Institute for Supply Management's (ISM's) purchasing managers' index (PMI) for the U.S. service sector rose to 58.3% this month from 56.5% in March, after three consecutive months of declines.

Readings above 50.1% indicate growth; higher numbers signal stronger activity.

The index's employment measure jumped from 48.5 last month to 54.0 now, indicating that service businesses are hiring for the summer season as the Omicron variant is receding.

"This is a post-Omicron rebound," Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, told Business Insider. "Inflation pressures remain intense, but they seem no longer to be intensifying."

At the same time, the institute's PMI for manufacturing slipped slightly in the latest survey, dropping from 58.6 last month to 57.1 now.

Supply chain clogs and inflation—worsened by the Ukraine war and sanctions—conspired to slow production, cut down on new orders, and add to backlogged orders, BI reported.

"The U.S. manufacturing sector remains in a demand-driven, supply chain-constrained environment," ISM chair Timothy Fiore said in a statement accompanying the survey report.

The manufacturing sector may weaken still more as commodity prices rise, especially if the Ukraine conflict remains unsettled for long, BI noted.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have noted since Russia invaded Ukraine, Western sanctions are damaging the world's manufacturing economy, not just Russia's.*

The longer the war and sanctions continue, the likelihood will increase that citizens in the Western alliance will lose patience and gravitate toward pundits and politicians who question the wisdom of continuing them.

A DIGITAL DOLLAR IS YEARS AWAY, YELLEN SAYS



Creating a digital version of the U.S. dollar will take years, treasury secretary Janet Yellen said in a 7 April speech at American University, although China and some other countries already have fielded digital versions of their currencies, as we reported

in [“China Goes Full Digital Yuan in Beijing”](#) (29 Jun 2021) and [“Canada Forging “Globally Coordinated” Digital Currency”](#) (3 Nov 2020), among other stories.

President Joe Biden has ordered federal agencies to analyze the impact of digital currencies on government operations, which we reported last month in [“Biden Will Sign Executive Order Regarding Cryptos”](#) (8 Mar 2022).

Creating a digital dollar would involve considerations of national security, monetary policy, international trade, and consumer acceptance and use, Yellen said.

Whether Congress would need to authorize a digital buck, and whether it would, also must be considered, she noted.

“I can’t tell you yet what conclusions we will reach, but we must be clear that issuing a [digital dollar] would likely present a major design and engineering challenge that would require years of development, not months,” she said.

TREND FORECAST: Again, we invite readers to go back to the 23 June 2020 **Trends Journal** when Bitcoin was trading under \$10,000 per coin. We had forecast the price would spike much higher “when it solidly breaks above the 10,000 mark.”

It did, and we have been bullish on it. However, the **Trends Journal** has continually warned that crypto coins were due for a major tumble when central banks and governments took action to rein them in.

And, with more central banks planning to go digital in the coming years, they would not tolerate competition. (See our 24 March 2020 article, [“FROM DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH.”](#))

Those warnings have become reality. However, it will be years before they are fully implemented by governments and there will still be cryptocurrencies that will attract "out of the government box" investors.

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT



TOP TREND DRAGFLATION: TROUBLES LOOM FOR CENTRAL BANKSTERS

The world has entered a “new inflationary era” in which consumers’ and businesses’ expectations about prices are becoming “unmoored” from their historical norms, the president of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) has warned.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine triggered sanctions that supercharged inflation in food, fuel, and across consumer and industrial goods well beyond the record pace set by surging post-COVID consumer demand, which we reported in [“Ukraine War and Sanctions Will Decimate Emerging Economies”](#) (5 Apr 2022) (see related story in this issue).

Low interest rates, COVID-era government subsidies, central governments' massive purchase of sovereign and corporate bonds, and other "policy settings, at least in the past year, may have served as a springboard for the rapid expansion" in prices, BIS chief Augusten Carstens said in a 5 April speech in Geneva.

"A generation of workers and business managers who have never seen meaningful inflation...in advanced countries are learning that rapid price rises are not merely the stuff of history books," he said.

Consumer prices in the world's 30 wealthiest countries jumped 7.7 percent in February, year over year, more than four times the 1.7 percent rise the previous February and the most since December 1990, according to the data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

About 60 percent of advanced economies have seen inflation above 5 percent, while more than half of low-and modest-income nations have confronted inflation running above 7 percent, Carstens said.

As inflation persists, businesses are increasingly likely to pass cost increases to customers and workers then are more likely to demand higher wages, setting off a wage-price spiral that central banks will find hard to reverse, he added.

We first warned that a wage-price spiral was a growing prospect in ["Fed's Key Inflation Gauge Hits 30-Year High"](#) (5 Oct 2021).

"Structural factors that kept inflation low in recent decades may wane as globalization retreats," Carstens added. The COVID virus "as well as changes in the geopolitical landscape, have already started to make firms rethink the risks involved in sprawling global value chains."

Central banks must adjust policies, he said, because "no one wants to repeat the 1970s," when the Vietnam War triggered inflation that lasted for years and scored double-digit price hikes three years in a row.

Although many central banks have already raised their interest rates to varying degrees, “it will be a challenge to engineer a transition to more normal levels and, in the process, set realistic expectations of what monetary policy can deliver,” Carsten cautioned, “nor will the change in central bank behavior be popular.”

TREND FORECAST: “ ‘Inflation shock’ worsening, ‘rates shock’ just beginning, ‘recession shock’ coming,” Michael Hartnett, Bank of America’s chief investment strategist, wrote last week in a note to clients.

Unfortunately, as we have documented extensively and repeatedly, the U.S. Federal Reserve has not shown an ability to deal with any of these threats successfully, raising the risk of [Dragflation](#), our Top 2022 Trend in which prices rise while the GDP shrinks.

As we have noted again and again, the U.S. Federal Reserve was focused on triaging the jobs market and failed to raise interest rates to curb inflation, letting it run wild, as we have reported in articles including [“Powell Warns of Dangers for Labor Market”](#) (16 Feb 2021), [“Fed Will Hold Policy Steady, Powell Says”](#) (9 Mar 2021) and [“Fed Holds Firm on Policy Despite 5-Percent Inflation”](#) (20 Jul 2021).

When the Fed had a chance to raise interest rates in a meaningful way at its meeting last month, instead it became timid after Russia invaded Ukraine, opting for a quarter-point hike, which has had no impact on inflation.

And as we had forecast, should the Fed decide to boost interest rates higher and faster in playing catch-up with inflation, it risks greater damage to the economy than if it had acted more boldly when we saw what the Fed could not see and/or denied so they could keep pumping in cheap money to artificially boost equities... the real threat of inflation.

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: As inflation spikes, I was just thinking about this. When I was a 10 year old kid 65 years ago, a slice of pizza was 15 cents in New York, the average cost of a slice of pizza today is \$3.26.

In 1984, when I bought 38 acres of land and an old house that needed complete repair with a Rhinebeck, NY address, it cost me \$28,000. Today, for [seven acres](#) of land, it goes for \$324,000.

The bottom line, wages are way behind inflation, the middle class keeps shrinking... and the worst is yet to come.

NEW WORLD DISORDER TOP TREND: NATIONS SINKING DEEPER, PEOPLE SCREAMING LOUDER



In response to street protests around the world, governments are adding to their already considerable debt to give tax breaks, subsidies, and other supports to outraged consumers as food and fuel prices ratchet up to new record levels.

In Peru, soaring fuel prices sent people into the streets where they clashed with riot police. At least six people were killed. President Pedro Castillo, a former labor leader, then cut fuel taxes and raised the minimum wage.

In Greece, farmers drove their tractors to the Ministry of Agriculture building to demand help. Sicilian truckers interrupted food deliveries, as did drivers in Spain, leading major food companies such as Danone SA to warn of possible production cuts.

Inflation in Spain ran at 9.8 percent last month, the fastest since 1984, as we reported in [“Eurozone Inflation Sets All-Time Record in March”](#) (5 Apr 2022).

In mid-March, France forestalled a truckers’ strike by enacting a €400-million relief package that included direct payments to drivers; Spanish truckers rejected a €500-million aid offer as too small.

Governments are adding the new support programs atop two years of rising debt related to the COVID War. The European Union has budgeted more than €2.3 trillion in new spending to help member states recover; the U.S.'s total COVID spending topped \$4.5 trillion, CNBC reported.

The new aid plans will push Eurozone's member nations to average budget deficits of 4.5 percent of GDP this year, Capital Economics calculated.

Poor nations, many of which already are approaching debt crises, are being squeezed even harder.

Kenya will spend \$500 million over the next two years to ease consumers' pain the government announced. Zambia is increasing fertilizer subsidies for corn farmers, breaking its promise to cut its debt.

Egypt, which normally brings in about 70 percent of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine but now must compete for other supplies, is seeing government spending swell by about \$1 billion this year to continue bread subsidies for 70 million people.

India has earmarked \$40 billion through next March to help farmers buy fertilizer and consumers buy food.

The program could claim as much as 1.5 percent of India's GDP this year, director Andrew Wood at S&P Global Ratings told *The Wall Street Journal*, crimping the government's plan to cut its budget deficit from 6.9 percent to 6.4 percent this year.

TREND FORECAST: *We have long warned of the dangers of the rising tide of global debt in [“Super-Meltdown: Debt Market Time Bomb”](#) (9 Sep 2020), [“ECB Warns of Dangers from Debt Load”](#) (25 May 2021), [“More Credit Cards, More Debt”](#) (7 Dec 2021), [“U.S. Public Debt Tops \\$30 Trillion. Who Cares?”](#) (8 Feb 2022) and other articles.*

Inflation, rising interest rates, and politicians' and families' inability to balance budgets will make it increasingly hard to cover interest and principal payments on debts, from households to national governments.

As the global debt bomb explodes, a growing number of households, businesses, and nations will be unable to meet their payment obligations.

Among households, that will mean more bankruptcies, more damage to credit scores, and more people with less ability to buy, crimping economic growth.

The resulting crunch will be especially hard on emerging nations, which began the COVID War already heavily in debt. Now, however, developed countries will be less able or willing to give money to rescue them, leading a growing number of developing countries to default on their debts. This in turn will spark anti-establishment and “progressive” political movements—part of our [New World Disorder](#) trend that we have been tracking for more than two years.

We repeat the point we made in [“Global Economy Faces ‘Debt Tsunami’”](#) (1 Dec 2020): as debt levels rise and more countries default, prices of precious metals and Bitcoin will rise as people seek safe-haven assets.

As economic conditions deteriorate in these failing nations, social unrest will escalate and people will take to the streets to protest low wages, high prices, and governments' inability to act effectively.

FOOD PRICES REACH RECORD HIGH IN MARCH



The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) food price index averaged 159.3 last month, a “giant leap” of 12.6-percent gain from February's level, which itself was the highest since the index was created in 1990, the FAO said.

The index stands 34 percent higher than a year ago.

The index rose at the fastest monthly rate since 2008, the FAO said.

Grain prices shot up 17.1 percent, largely because Ukraine and Russia together make up 30 percent of the world's wheat exports and 20 percent of corn shipments.

About 50 countries depend on Russia and Ukraine for at least 30 percent of the wheat they import, according to the *Financial Times*.

Shipments have now been shut down because of the Ukraine war, the FAO said. More than 24,000 Ukraine rail cars are loaded with various commodities but are idle because ports and rail lines have been destroyed by the war, according to NBC News.

Last year, 36 of the 55 countries dealing with food crises relied on Russia and Ukraine for at least 10 percent of their wheat imports, the *FT* said.

If food shortages persist, another 13 million people could face malnutrition, the FAO calculated, with most in the Asia-Pacific region, followed by sub-Saharan Africa, the near East, and north Africa.

The FAO's index for vegetable oil prices soared 23.2 percent; Ukraine and Russia are the world's first and second largest exporters of sunflower oil, commonly used for cooking in the developing world (see related article in this issue).

As much as 30 percent of Ukraine's cropland producing grains and sunflowers will remain unplanted this spring and unharvested later this year, according to forecasts by the FAO and Ukraine's government.

Cereal prices have climbed 37 percent. Prices for sugar and dairy products also have skyrocketed, the FAO noted.

Various factors contributed to the rise, including supply chain disruptions lingering from the COVID War and poor harvests in Canada, China, the U.S., and South America, according to Josef Schmidhuber, FAO's deputy director of markets and trade.

Although he was unable to say exactly what proportion of food inflation is attributable to the Ukraine war, "there are no exports through the Black Sea and exports through the Baltics are also coming to an end," he said.

The lack of grains and other foods shipping from the war zone threaten food shortages and possible famines in parts of Africa, Asia, and the Mideast where people already are going hungry, he noted.

In parts of central and west Africa, food already was in short supply because of the COVID virus, wars, and bad weather that made for poor harvests, World Food Program researcher Sib Ollo told The Associated Press.

The Ukraine war has worsened the crisis, he said, adding that six million of the region's children are malnourished and 16 million people face food insecurity.

Farmers are particularly concerned about a pending lack of fertilizer to ensure the next crop, he said. Russia is the world's chief exporter of fertilizer and global prices are up 30 percent or more in the area since the war began (see related story in this issue).

In parts of Africa, households spend as much as 40 percent of their incomes on food; in developed nations, the proportion averages 17 percent, the *FT* reported.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have noted in this and previous Trends Journals, lower wages and rising prices of food and basic commodities such as fuel, have set off protests in several countries, including Sri Lanka, where food shortages and rising prices have sparked a political and economic crisis.*

The Ukraine War and resulting sanctions, coupled with ongoing supply chain issues and bad weather in key regions, could send food prices up another 8 to 22 percent this year, the FAO warned.

And, should the Ukraine War continue and wars break out in the Middle East as tensions rise between Israel and Palestinians and possibly Iran, sharply spiking oil prices will drive inflation much higher.

TOP TREND DRAGFLATION: INVESTORS IN EMERGING MARKETS FACING MAJOR LOSSES



Ashmore Group and other asset managers heavily invested in emerging markets face worsening losses as investors withdraw to safer havens amid high inflation, rising interest rates, the Ukraine war's economic fallout, and concerns about exposure to

China's slowing economy and growing affiliation with Russia, the *Financial Times* reported.

Bank of America (BoA) analysts have reduced expectations for Ashmore's first-quarter earnings per share by as much as 9 percent and said the loss could be as high as 11 percent later this year.

“Emerging market [bonds] saw outflows, not only for Ashmore but across the [investment] industry” in the first quarter, “which shouldn't be a big surprise, given higher U.S. interest rates, higher rate expectations, a strong U.S. dollar, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict,” BoA analyst Hubert Lam said in a research note.

Ashmore, with \$87.3 billion under management, was singled out because it invested heavily in Russian assets in the week before Russia invaded Ukraine.

In addition, the firm holds \$500 million in debt from Evergrande, the over-leveraged Chinese property developer at the center of the nation's real estate crisis, which we have detailed in articles including [“China's Real Estate Market Teeters on Evergrande's Debt”](#) (21 Sep 2021), [“China's Real Estate Troubles Ripple Across Emerging Markets”](#) (26 Oct 2021) and [“China's Real Estate Crisis Grows”](#) (9 Nov 2021), among other articles.

Ashmore will see outflows of about 4 percent this quarter, BoA predicted, continuing a multiyear trend at the company.

Ashmore's share price has lost about a third in the past 12 months.

TREND FORECAST: *Emerging nations are leaking investment capital as fast as they continue to pile up debt.*

A number of the countries have extraction economies—selling minerals, timber, and other raw materials—but inflated prices for imports will match or even possibly exceed their export revenues.

As a result, emerging nations will be pushed into [Dragflation](#), our Top 2022 Trend in which economies shrink under high prices.

With Dragflation setting in, many countries will find it harder and harder to service their massive debts, pushing many of these nations into default. And again, the more dire the economic realities, the greater the escalation of people taking to the streets to protest lack of basic living standards, government corruption, crime and violence.

And the more intense the social uprising, the greater the risk for civil wars that will expand to regional wars.

ECB POLICY COMMITTEE FRACTURES



Members of the European Central Bank's (ECB's) policy-making committee are at odds over the pace and degree of ending bond purchases and raising interest rates, according to the *Financial Times*.

Some members want a “firm end date” to bond-buying so the bank can raise interest rates in this year's third quarter to avoid “falling behind the curve” on inflation, minutes of the group's March meeting revealed.

The ECB's interest rate has been -0.50 since 2014, while inflation rose to a record 7.5 percent in March.

Others in the group wanted to stand pat until the impact of the Ukraine war was more clear. They feared the war might send Europe into a “technical recession,” which is defined as two consecutive quarters of economic contraction.

Ultimately, the group agreed to end its net bond purchases in this year's third quarter but wait to raise interest rates for now.

However, the minutes showed that a growing number of members are taking a more aggressive stance toward inflation and policies that could contain it.

“The hawks have the upper hand,” strategist Frederik Ducrozet at Pictet Management told the *FT*.

Investors are pricing in an interest-rate hike of 0.6 percentage points before 2023, which would move the rate into positive territory for the first time in eight years.

TRENDPOST: As recently as late January, ECB president Christine Lagarde was downplaying the need to raise interest rates to rein back inflation, as we reported in [“Lagarde Dismisses Calls for Higher Interest Rates”](#) (25 Jan 2022).

Boosting rates would risk “putting the brakes on growth,” she warned, and that “the cycle of economic recovery in the U.S. is ahead of that in Europe,” so the ECB “has every reason not to act as quickly or as ruthlessly” as the U.S. Federal Reserve.

Now it has a reason: in March, inflation raged across Europe at a record 7.5 percent annual rate, which threatens not only to “put the brakes on growth” but to throw the continent into a full-blown recession.

TREND FORECAST: “Hawks” on the ECB’s rate-setting committee may have the upper hand, but the group still will be unable to impact inflation in a meaningful way any time soon.

The spread between interest and inflation rates is so wide that the bank would have to raise rates tenfold to dent inflation. However, the ECB knows that to raise rates that much without crashing Europe’s economy would take years.

The bank will raise rates this year, with a growing likelihood that the first rate hike will come at next month’s meeting.

This would begin the bank’s slow return to a reasonable policy framework but will have the same effect as whispering into a hurricane.

FERTILIZER SHORTAGE WORSENS FOOD CRISIS, DRIVES UP PRICES



The world's fertilizer industry is imploding.

Together, Russia and its neighbor Belarus—now coming under Western sanctions—export about 40 percent of the world's supply of potash, 95 percent of which is used to make fertilizer. Russia also

delivers 11 percent of the world's urea and 48 percent of the globe's ammonium nitrate, both also key elements in fertilizer.

Russia and Ukraine jointly make 28 percent of the world's fertilizers that include nitrogen and phosphorus, Morgan Stanley reported.

The war and its sanctions have halted those deliveries, sending fertilizer prices skyward and taking food prices with them as traders expect short harvests next year when crops are starved of soil enrichments.

Potash trading on the Vancouver, British Columbia, market fetched \$210 per metric ton early last year; last week, it was selling for \$565. Urea for Middle East delivery traded at \$268 per ton on the Chicago Board of Trade early in 2021 but brought \$887.50 on 5 April.

Natural gas is used to make ammonia and urea for fertilizer. Gas prices in Europe had reached record levels before the war, but have since rocketed to as much as \$38 per million Btu's, compared to the U.S. price of \$5 to \$6.

Some of Europe's fertilizer plants shut down late last summer because gas was too costly to allow them to operate in the black, as we reported in [“Will Surging Gas Prices Sink U.K., E.U. Economies?”](#) (21 Sep 2021).

“It's a confluence of factors—unprecedented demand coupled with a huge fall-off in supply availability, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and by what's

going on with exports out of Russia and Ukraine,” Tony Will, CEO of fertilizer maker CF Industries.

“We have geopolitical risk, higher input costs, and shortages, a triple whammy,” Bert Malek, TD Securities’ chief commodity strategist, told CNBC.

“Farmers are going to get lower yields because they’re economizing, particularly in emerging markets,” he noted.

The lack of fertilizer will result in smaller grain yields, driving prices higher for foods ranging from bread and cereal to dog food and frozen dinners.

Supermarkets’ meat prices also will rise because commercial cattle lots feed grains to livestock to fatten them before slaughter.

“We are facing a problem of catastrophic proportions,” Will said, adding that Russia and Ukraine export 30 percent of the world’s wheat and 20 percent of its corn, but the Black Sea, by which most of those exports travel, is now closed.

Partly as a result, Morgan Stanley analysts foresee global grain prices remaining at or above current levels through next year.

“Before the Ukraine war, dry weather in [Latin America] took inventories to levels that would already keep grain prices high,” they wrote in a recent note to clients.

“The war adds uncertainties related to the Ukrainian corn and wheat supply and, more important, to fertilizer use and global yields,” they added.

“Due to this, our base crop price scenario implies a 2- to 3-percent reduction in yields in higher-cost regions, with risks of larger disruptions depending on fertilizer availability and weather.”

CF Industries will export fertilizer to Latin America “on a humanitarian basis,” Will said.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *The fertilizer shortage is yet another example of the ripple effect that the Ukraine War and Western sanctions are having throughout the economy of the world and those of individual nations.*

It will take years, and possibly decades, for the world, and especially emerging economies, to recover from the ramifications of this single war—and that does not take into the account the sheer waste and destruction that will have to be dealt with, eating up even more resources that could have seen other, better uses.

IMF: SANCTIONS THREATEN DOLLAR'S SUPREMACY



Western sanctions against Russia could reduce the dollar's dominance by allowing countries to become used to paying for imports using other currencies, Gita Gopinath, the International Monetary Fund's first deputy managing director, said in a

Financial Times interview.

"The dollar would remain the major global currency even in that landscape," she said, "but fragmentation at a smaller level is certainly quite possible."

"We already are seeing that, with some countries renegotiating the currency in which they get paid for trade," she noted.

Russia has demanded European nations pay for gas imports in rubles, not the euros or dollars stipulated in the sales contracts. Russia and India are working out an agreement that will allow them to pay each other in their own currencies, as we reported in ["Russia, India Forming New Trade Ties"](#) (22 Mar 2022).

The trend will diversify the currencies central banks keep on hand, Gopinath added.

“Countries tend to accumulate reserves of the currencies in which they trade with the rest of the world, and in which they borrow from the rest of the world, so you might see some slow-moving trends toward other currencies playing a bigger role” as reserve currencies, she said.

Although Russia’s ruble cratered immediately after Russia invaded Ukraine, the currency has since recovered all of its value, due to trade with China, India, and others as well as Russia’s internal financial manipulations.

The dollar’s supremacy will remain unchallenged for the “medium term,” Gopinath said, but its value will lessen as more countries become accustomed to making trade transactions in other currencies.

TREND FORECAST: *As we said in [“China’s Digital Yuan Could Challenge Dollar’s Leadership”](#) (27 Jul 2021) history shows that the currency of the world’s leading economy also becomes the world’s reserve currency for international trade.*

In 1890, when Britannia ruled the waves, the pound sterling was the standard; after World War Two, when the U.S. had the only large, functioning economy, the dollar rose to prominence.

All signs indicate that China will overtake the U.S. sometime in the next 10 to 15 years as the world’s largest economy. When that happens, the dollar will be dethroned and the yuan or renminbi will be crowned the world’s new reserve currency.

The new trade deals that Russia is making with India, China, and other nations will speed the dollar’s weakening position and strengthen China’s case that its yuan should rule the world’s economy.

BANNING RUSSIAN GAS IN EUROPE COULD LEAD TO INDUSTRIAL RATIONING



Europe imports about 40 percent of its gas, and Germany 55 percent, from Russia. If those deliveries were to stop—either by Western sanction or by Russia’s decision—there is not enough extra gas to be found elsewhere in the world to replace

it.

Finding replacements for Russia’s gas is “impossible,” chief gas researcher Giles Farrer at consulting firm Wood Mackenzie told the *Financial Times*.

Gas production around the world already is running flat out and “there’s nothing else out there,” he said.

Gazprom, Russia’s largest gas company, produced 540 billion cubic meters last year, more than BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Saudi Aramco combined, according to Wood Mackenzie.

Of that, 168 billion were piped to Europe.

Oil producers tend to hold some production capacity in reserve to adjust to market ups and downs, but gas producers tend to run at full capacity, the *FT* noted.

Iran is the world’s largest gas producer after Gazprom. Iran yielded 291 billion cubic meters of gas last year, Wood Mackenzie data shows, but 280 billion were burned inside the country.

A renewed nuclear treaty with Iran could open the country’s gas supplies to the world, but moving them would require building either pipelines or liquefaction terminals, either of which would take years to complete.

Algeria supplies some gas to Europe through pipelines under the Mediterranean Sea and could send more. However, the pipeline flows through Morocco, which has shut down the line as part of a political conflict with Algeria.

Even if that conflict is resolved, any increase in Algeria's production would first be used to fill a growing domestic demand, consultant James Waddell at Energy Aspects told the *FT*.

Norway could add up to five billion cubic meters each year to its European deliveries and Azerbaijan three billion, the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies has calculated, but those increments would be trivial compared to the 168 billion that Europe would need to replace.

"The hope" for Europe to replace Russian gas "is U.S. LNG"—liquefied natural gas, Waddell said.

The U.S. is the world's third largest exporter of LNG, after Australia and Qatar, shipping 71 million tons last year.

However, replacing all of Russia's gas in Europe would require 112 tons, according to Bernstein Research, which is about a third of the world's current market.

The U.S. has pledged to send Europe an additional 15 billion cubic meters of LNG this year and unspecified additional amounts in the future, but the sources of that additional gas are unknown.

Responding to the world's growing demand, U.S. producers are likely to add enough new LNG projects to raise production to 200 million tons annually by 2030, making the U.S. the world's LNG chief exporter.

However, U.S. oil and gas producers have so far refused to raise output; their investors have insisted that the companies rebuild cash stockpiles and reward shareholders with higher dividends instead of investing in expanding their

output, as we reported in [“U.S. Oil Industry Will Not Raise Output, Executives Say”](#) (29 Mar 2022).

A new Qatar LNG project is scheduled to begin production in 2025, raising the country’s possible exports from the current 86 million tons to 100 million in 2026.

Unable to replace Russian gas, Europe would have to cut gas use.

“The [cut] that is technically feasible and most palatable is to remove it from industry,” Waddell said.

“That means huge GDP cuts, job losses, rather than allowing people to freeze in winter,” he added.

TREND FORECAST: *In the short term, shortages and soaring prices will continue to define Europe’s natural gas market. Coal use will increase; nuclear plants scheduled to be decommissioned will be drafted to continue.*

The European Union will throw every source of energy it can muster into its power grid to defend against Russia’s whimsical dominance over its gas supply.

Meanwhile, Europe has drafted, and begun enacting, a 10-point plan to wean the continent from Russia gas by the end of this decade. Their plan is to leave Russia as the long-term loser in this contest.

But “plans” do not manifest themselves as planned, and by the end of the decade there are unforeseen actions with consequences that cannot be predicted... which means Europe will need what Russia has.

On the downside, for Russia, it cannot easily redirect the gas it sends to Europe because Russia lacks enough pipelines to sell the same amount of gas into China or other surrounding nations.

Markets will exist for Russian gas, but the country will have to heavily invest, and years of construction, to build the necessary pipelines, LNG terminals, and other infrastructure to move it.

WAR, SANCTIONS SPARK GLOBAL SHORTAGE OF COOKING OILS



Ukraine accounts for 47 percent of the world's exports of sunflower oil, a common cooking oil in developing nations and a staple ingredient in processed foods from bread to mayonnaise because of its mild flavor.

Russia's invasion has halted those exports, pushing consumers to grab alternatives and sending all kinds of cooking oils to record prices after crop failures in Canada and South America have curtailed supplies even more.

Russia is the second largest exporter of sunflower oil and seeds but has now banned exports of sunflower and rapeseed oils to protect domestic supplies.

The result: sunflower oil's price is up 44 percent on 31 March year over year, rapeseed oil 72 percent, palm oil 61 percent, soybean oil 41 percent, and olive oil 15 percent.

When sunflower oil began to disappear, food processors quickly switched to rapeseed oil, the easiest substitute, shooting prices up as much as 50 percent within weeks, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Olive oil is not widely used in non-Western countries, which has kept its price gain relatively low. However, bottler Filippo Berrio will raise its olive oil price by as much as 20 percent as supplies begin to run out next month, the company said in a statement.

Olive crushers “are demanding the new market price to deliver” their contracted amounts, Walter Zanre, the company’s U.K. chief, told the *WSJ*.

The sunflower is Ukraine’s national flower.

TREND FORECAST: *Russia’s attack on Ukraine and resulting sanctions from the West could lead to malnutrition in the Mideast, famine in Africa, or food riots in Egypt.*

This is a dramatic demonstration that the world is inextricably interconnected. Our Top 2022 Trend toward [Self-Sufficient Economies](#) will help ease problems created by that interconnection but will not turn every country into a silo.

IEA WILL RELEASE 60 MILLION MORE BARRELS OF OIL



The 31 member countries of the International Energy Agency (IEA) have agreed to release 60 million barrels of oil in addition to the 180 million the U.S. plans to release from its strategic reserve over the next six months, IEA director Fatih Birol

announced.

"More details of specific contributions [by individual countries] will be made public soon," he said.

IEA members agreed on the coordinated release on 8 April from their collective reserve of 1.5 billion barrels to ease oil prices that have spiked since Russia invaded Ukraine, OPEC refused to raise production, and U.S. producers have so far declined to boost their output (see [“U.S. Oil Industry Will Not Raise Output, Executives Say”](#) 29 Mar 2022).

Russia is one of the world's three leading oil exporters and has provided about 12 percent of the global supply.

The IEA's new release will be the group's second within a month and its fifth ever.

Commercial oil stocks are at their lowest levels since 2014, the IEA said, and producers have little ability to pump more in the short term.

As a result of this collection of factors, the global oil market could be losing as much as two billion barrels a day of production, the IEA said.

"While it's welcome that we're seeing the IEA add another 60 million barrels to last week's 180-million barrel release by the U.S., the picture for oil prices will continue to be driven by geopolitical events," CMC strategist Michael Hewson said in a statement cited by Business Insider.

The U.S. plans to release one million barrels of crude oil every day from its Strategic Petroleum Reserve for the next six months and also released 30 million barrels on 1 March to tamp down fuel prices.

TREND FORECAST: *Europe is scrambling to replace its Russian oil imports by the end of this year and trying to nail down additional sources of supply. The U.K. and U.S. are among other nations that are no longer buying Russia's oil.*

As a result, the new release will boost supply but will do little to reduce pump prices because the need to replace banned Russian oil is likely to soak up any excess supply, keeping prices aloft.

SANCTIONS WIDEN BUT GAPS REMAIN



On 8 April, the European Union (EU) blacklisted four Russian banks already barred from using the SWIFT international payments system, including VTB, Russia's second largest bank, which had already been sanctioned by the U.K. and U.S.

Russian vodka, coal, and caviar have been banned, along with an array of other products.

The sanctions also have been expanded to include the adult daughters of Russia president Vladimir Putin, frozen their assets, and banned them from entering Western-allied countries.

The new sanctions were the fifth round imposed on Russia's economic infrastructure and elites since Russia attacked Ukraine.

The bans already have encompassed Sberbank, Russia's largest bank with about a third of the country's banking assets; and Alpha-Bank, the country's largest private lender.

About a dozen Russian banks have been targeted so far.

However, many Russian banks still use SWIFT, giving Russian money a channel to banks in Asia and the Mideast that are not participating in the sanctions.

Among the several dozen Russian banks not yet sanctioned is Gazprombank, the bank most closely associated with Putin and Russia's elites and that has been linked to money laundering in Europe.

"It's both groundbreaking and extraordinary, the amount of sanctions imposed, but, in many aspects, it's the tip of the iceberg," Washington attorney John

Smith told *The Wall Street Journal*. Smith formerly headed the U.S. treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development expects Russia's economy to pucker by 10 percent this year and "suffer prolonged stagnation," the *WSJ* said.

JAPAN BANS RUSSIAN COAL



Japan has joined G7 and the European Union in barring imports of Russian coal, prime minister Fumio Kishida announced on 8 April.

Japan will focus on expanding its use of renewable and nuclear power to offset the loss, he said.

Last year, Japan imported more coal than any country other than China and India. Russia was its second largest supplier, accounting for 10 percent of imports.

The Japanese city of Hiroshima imports half its natural gas supplies from Russia, Tokyo 10 percent. Japan and Russia also have joint ventures in oil and liquefied natural gas.

"Japan will be challenged to make up for the supplies from Russia," energy consultant Tom O'Sullivan with energy analysis firm Mathyos told the *Financial Times*.

Importing more coal from Australia or Indonesia is a logical alternative "but it's not an immediate solution," he noted, adding that Japan was able to curb its domestic energy use after 2011's Fukushima nuclear disaster and so could possibly do that again.

Japan also is barring Russian vodka and several other products, barring Japanese entities from making new investments in Russia, and freezing the assets of Sberbank and Alpha-Bank, two of Russia’s largest financial houses.

The price of benchmark Australian coal, a key supply in the Asia-Pacific region, reached almost \$400 a ton immediately after Russia invaded Ukraine. It has since settled, closing at about \$265 a ton last week, though still up a third in price since this year began.

South Korean utilities are importing Russian coal under existing contracts but not signing new ones, the *FT* said.

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: *Foregoing Russian coal is low-hanging fruit for Japan in terms of joining in Western sanctions. Indonesia and Australia, Japan’s near neighbors, are the world’s leading coal exporters.*

Japan has been a good customer of both and will be close to the front of the line for additional shipments, should any become available.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY TOP TREND: CHINA CREATING A “UNIFIED DOMESTIC MARKET”



The Chinese government has published a set of general guidelines intended to outline the shape and structure of what it calls a “unified domestic market that is highly efficient, rules-based, fair for competition, and open” the state-controlled Xinhua news service reported.

The goals include “the efficient circulation and expansion of the domestic market, a stable, fair, transparent, and predictable business environment, a reduction of market transaction costs.”

A unified domestic market also will “boost sci-tech innovation and industrial upgrades and cultivate new advantages for participating in international competition and cooperation,” the guidelines said.

Under the guidelines, the government will make “efforts..to improve a unified property rights protection system, implement a unified market access system, and optimize a unified social credit system.”

The guideline emphasized promoting the interconnectivity of market facilities, including creating a modernized circulation network, improving the exchange of market information, and upgrading transaction platforms.

“China will work to develop a unified domestic market of productivity factors and resources, including land, labor, capital, technology, data, energy, and the environment,” Xinhua said.

The guidelines stressed the establishment of unified market regulatory rules, upgrading regulatory “capabilities,” strengthening controls on monopolies, and crackdowns on unfair competition.

The guidelines were issued jointly by the Communist Party’s Central Committee and the State Council.

TRENDPOST: *The guidelines are purposefully vague, allowing the government to define the general guidelines according to the details that officials and regulators want to put under them.*

More broadly, the guidelines point to strengthening China’s strategy of a dual circulation economic strategy that will develop its domestic consumer economy alongside its export-driven manufacturing sector.

We have documented China's strategy in [“China Announces Dual Circulation Economic Policy”](#) (9 Sep 2020), [“Foreign Investors Rush Into China”](#) (1 Dec 2020) and [“In China, Domestic Brands Outpace Western Icons”](#) (29 Jun 2021), among other articles.

CHINA'S SERVICE ECONOMY GROWS BY A THIRD IN YEAR'S FIRST TWO MONTHS



China's service sector grew by 33.5 percent in January and February this year, the country's commerce ministry reported, turning in a value equivalent to \$146.6 billion.

Service exports were up 39.4 percent, year on year, with service imports rising 28.3 percent, yielding a 57.6-percent drop in China's trade deficit in services compared to 2021, the ministry said.

Exports of knowledge-intensive services gained 17.9 percent over the year. Travel services expanded by 16.9 percent.

China has taken a variety of steps to strengthen its service industry and has pledged to continue to expand that sector of its economy.

TREND FORECAST: China is cultivating its service economy as part of its dual circulation strategy that will develop its domestic consumer economy alongside its export-driven manufacturing sector, as we have detailed in [“China Announces Dual Circulation Economic Policy”](#) (9 Sep 2020), [“Foreign Investors Rush Into China”](#) (1 Dec 2020), and [“In China, Domestic Brands Outpace Western Icons”](#) (29 Jun 2021), among other articles.

China's government will continue to guide the country to a much more [Self-Sufficient Economy](#) and continue to lead our Top 2022 Trend in that area.

LOCKDOWNS CRIPPLE CHINA'S LOGISTICS CHAIN



Lockdowns in major Chinese cities including Shanghai, its most populous and home to the world's busiest port, has crippled transportation and logistics across the country and Beijing's "zero-tolerance" COVID policy continues to wreak havoc on

the nation's economy.

At least 200 million people in 23 cities are under full or partial quarantine, according to Japanese bank Nomura.

"These figures could significantly underestimate the full impact, as many other cities have been mass testing district by district and mobility has been significantly restricted in most parts of China," Ting Lu, Nomura's chief economist for China, told the *Financial Times*.

"Many of the entry and exit points between provinces are blocked and there has not been a coordinated effort between provincial governments to ease the supply chain crunch," Loomis Sayles analyst Bo Zhuang said to the *FT*.

Shanghai's Pudong airport is operating at 3 percent of capacity, allowing flights only for medicine and other essential goods.

Booking trucking services is virtually impossible, Mads Ravn [sic] vice-president of freight broker DSV, told the *FT*.

"It's affecting every commodity you can think of," he said. "It will have a global effect on almost every trade."

In late March, ocean shipper Maersk warned that the lockdown would cut trucking trips in and out of Shanghai by 30 percent. However, that forecast was

based on a previous plan to cleave the city in two and stagger a nine-day lockdown between the two halves.

Since then, the entire city has been shut down indefinitely.

Freight traffic through Shanghai's port has fallen by a third, data service FourKites said.

“Once Shanghai reopens, it's déjà vu of the story we've seen,” CEO Lars Jensen of consulting firm Vespucci Maritime, said in an *FT* interview. “There will be a surge of volume and upward pressure on spot [freight] rates.”

On 6 April, the China Caixin service managers purchasing index reflected its worst month-over-month slide in March since early 2020 at the height of China's first COVID bout.

TRENDPOST: *China has not learned a key lesson of the COVID War: isolate the vulnerable, make masks and vaccines available to those who want them, and keep schools, businesses, and the economy open.*

As we have greatly detailed, the vast majority of people who suffered the worst, or died, of COVID infections either were dramatically overweight or had underlying health conditions.

Those people can be identified, sequestered in their homes, and served by community agencies until the danger has passed.

TREND FORECAST: *Yes, it will be déjà vu all over again: when China's logistics chain starts moving again and Shanghai's port reopens, freight rates will skyrocket, ships laden with late-arriving goods will clog ports in Europe, the U.S., and elsewhere, and shortages will drive inflation harder.*

CHINA'S PROPERTY INDUSTRY FACES DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT FUTURE



After suffering through a crisis that nearly toppled the industry, China's property developers see a starkly different future than their freewheeling past, *The Wall Street Journal* said on 8 April.

Chinese developers have realized that a two-decade boom in housing, commercial, and industrial building has ended, analysts told the *WSJ*, and the market will worsen before it improves.

At least 10 property companies have defaulted on dollar bonds this year and more will do so, the analysts said.

TRENDPOST: *We tracked the near-collapse of China's high-flying developers in ["China's Real Estate Market Teeters on Evergrande's Debt"](#) (21 Sep 2021), ["China's Real Estate Troubles Ripple Across Emerging Markets"](#) (26 Oct 2021) and ["China's Real Estate Crisis Grows"](#) (9 Nov 2021), among other articles.*

At least 24 property companies listed on the Hong Kong exchange had failed to file audited financial results for 2021 by the 31 March deadline, the *WSJ* found.

Those that did file reported falling home prices and sales and shrinking sources of capital since the government tightened borrowing requirements for the industry.

China's leading 100 developers watched sales fall 53 percent last month, year over year, according to China Real Estate Information Corp., the ninth consecutive month of declines and the worst month-on-month slide since last summer.

China Vanke, an industry giant, saw its share price crumble by 46 percent, falling for only the third time since the company went public in 1991.

Vanke chair Yu Liang apologized to stockholders for the company's poor showing and said the pursuit of unbridled growth lured the firm to make "aggressive investments with over-optimistic judgment of the market."

Vanke will steer clear of "ungrounded and aggressive sentiments," he added.

"It is not an exaggeration to say that it is the most difficult time since before the dawn of the industry," the state-owned China Real Estate Newspaper said in an editorial last week.

TREND FORECAST: *China's property development industry has accounted for as much as a third of its GDP. With several developers having defaulted on dollar debt (["Evergrande in Default, Fitch Says,"](#) 14 Dec 2021) and regulators dropping the hammer on developers, the industry will recover as a more modest version of its former self.*

Meanwhile, China will struggle to replace the industry as a key growth engine, but again, the nation's three decade spike in real estate is unprecedented in history!

As a result, China's GDP will grow more slowly than expected this year. Lockdowns will cut export revenues (see related story in this issue) and high-flying real estate deals will not be there to pull up the rest of the economy.

On the lockdown note, today it was announced they were easing restrictions in Shanghai, and we forecast there will be less lockdown mandates in the near future as Beijing does what it can to spur economic growth.

GM, HONDA PARTNER TO PRODUCE AFFORDABLE EVs



General Motors and Honda Motor Co. will collaborate on technology that will underlie a variety of less-expensive electric vehicles (EVs), the companies announced on 5 April.

Products will include compact, all-electric sport utility vehicles for China, North, and South America that will be priced under \$30,000 and come to market in 2027, they predicted.

In the U.S., the average price paid for an EV is about \$60,000, compared to around \$47,000 for a comparable gas or diesel car, according to Edmunds.com, a vehicle-industry data service.

Eventually, the resulting technologies will power millions of cars sold by both companies, they said.

Partnering on technology will reduce development costs, especially for batteries, which can make up a third to as much as 40 percent of an EV's price.

To date, low-priced EVs are available only in China as tiny, stripped-down runabouts with limited range. The Wuling brand's Huanggong Mini sells there for the equivalent of about \$5,000.

The new collaboration extends the companies' development partnerships in other areas, including autonomous vehicles.

TREND FORECAST: *Ford and Volkswagen also have joined forces to produce EVs with shared technologies and have been working together since 2019.*

Sharing a single technology across brands and models is a key strategy for not only reducing costs and sticker prices, but also making it easier for EV owners to find knowledgeable technicians able to work on their cars and trucks.

China, through its command economy and state-owned enterprises, has led in this strategy, which has allowed Chinese automakers to field more than 300 models of EVs so far.

Especially as costs rise for raw materials, more automakers will seek ways to cut their costs. Sharing EV development among companies will become even more common.

TO CURB RISING PRICES, CANADA BARS FOREIGNERS FROM BUYING HOMES



Canada's government is banning foreigners from buying homes there for the next two years in an attempt to control runaway housing prices.

The government also will provide billions of dollars in construction funds to add more affordable housing stock and introduce legislation to allow Canadians under age 40 to save up to C\$40,000 tax-free toward a down payment on a house.

The measures were included in the finance ministry's proposed budget released last week.

Students, foreign workers, and foreigners who are permanent Canadian residents are exempt from the ban.

"I don't think prices are going to fall as a result [of the ban], though I do think it takes away at least some of the competition in what is the most competitive

market in Canadian housing history,” Simeon Papailias, founder of real estate investment firm REC Canada, said to Bloomberg.

“I don’t think a two-year band-aid is going to have an impact on what’s a fundamental lack of supply,” he added.

The moves are seen to reflect the Trudeau administration’s concern about political unrest sparked by inflation, particularly in home prices.

Canada’s housing market is among the world’s most costly, according to Bloomberg.

The cost of houses in Canada has rocketed up more than 50 percent since 2019 and set a record monthly rise in February; buyers grabbing homes ahead of the Bank of Canada’s pending interest rate increase drove the median home price to C\$869,300, about \$693,000 in U.S. dollars.

In contrast, the median U.S. listed home price in March was \$405,000, according to Realtor.com.

Also, prices have risen as a result of “blind bidding,” which keeps bids secret when a seller is entertaining offers for a house.

The Trudeau administration has taken a stand against the practice and the Canadian Real Estate Association has stopped defending it.

The association is beginning a pilot project that will list offers in real time for properties listed on its website.

TREND FORECAST: *As with most of the housing markets around the world, when interest rates rise to levels where it becomes too costly to borrow, housing markets will sink into correction territory...down some ten percent.*

And should the Ukraine War continue and others follow, inflation will keep spiking higher as commodity prices rise and product shortages continue.

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS GETTING BIGGER

Each week, we report instances where the money junky hedge funds, private equity groups and the already big companies swallow another piece of the global economy. Here are some more of what the BIGS have been gobbling up and how the Bigs keep getting bigger and the rich keep getting richer.

TWO MAJOR INDIAN LENDERS MERGE



India's largest private-sector bank and the country's largest mortgage lender are merging to take advantage of surging demand in India for home loans.

When the HDFC Bank and its affiliate, the Housing Development Finance Corp., combine, the new entity will have a loan portfolio valued at about \$235 billion.

The two companies now will be able to more easily sell products to each other's roster of customers, promoting credit cards to mortgage borrowers and mortgages to customers with auto loans, for example.

The bank will issue enough new stock to pay for the purchase of the mortgage company, shareholders of which will own 41 percent of the combined entity.

The deal values the mortgage company at about \$60 billion.

HDFC Bank is India's third most valuable public company, with 68 million customers and a market capitalization of about \$121 billion, at the close of trading on 5 April.

India's nonbank financial institutions are now being regulated more strictly, more similar to banks, but have more difficulty funding themselves. The merger eliminates both difficulties for the Housing Development Finance Corp. by making it part of the bank.

The new entity will use its larger resources to expand its range of loans, including to projects addressing government priorities such as farming and affordable housing, bank chair Deepak Parekh said in a statement.

MERGER WILL CREATE WORLD'S LARGEST OIL TANKER COMPANY



Frontline Ltd. and Euronav NV will merge in an all-stock deal that will value the combined entity at \$4.2 billion and create the world's largest oil tanker fleet, encompassing 69 supertankers and 77 smaller tankers.

Norway-based Frontline will exchange 1.45 shares for each share of Euronav, which is headquartered in Belgium.

Euronav shareholders will own 59 percent of the new company, Frontline stockholders the balance.

Frontline's share price slipped 7.6 percent on the news; Euronav gained 6.8 percent.

After regulatory approval, the new entity will be named Frontline and be led by Hugo de Stoop, Euronav's current CEO.

The merger is among the largest in the tanker industry, which slumped along with global oil demand during the COVID War. The new entity will control about 10 percent of the world's crude oil supertankers.

After booking a profit of \$473.2 million in 2020, Euronav lost \$338.8 million in 2021. Frontline reported \$413 million in profit in 2020 and held its loss to \$11 million last year.

BLACKROCK MULLS BID FOR ATLANTIA



U.S. private equity firm Blackrock is considering making a takeover offer for Atlantia, an Italian company that manages airports, toll highways, and other infrastructure across Europe and the Americas.

Atlantia owns majority shares of airports in Cannes, Nice, St. Tropez, and Rome, highways in 11 countries including the U.S., and operates toll roads in 24 countries.

Blackrock is crafting a bid in collaboration with Edizione, a holding company guiding the Benneton family's fashion fortune and that already owns a third of Atlantia, people familiar told the *Financial Times*.

The family has been seeking a buyer for its Atlantia stake since a bridge collapsed in Genoa in 2018. An Atlantia subsidiary was responsible for maintaining the bridge.

The collapse killed 43 people and prompted Italy's government to threaten to ban Atlantia from doing business in the country.

Blackrock may face a rival offer for Atlantia from Florentino Perez, chair of Grupo ACS, an international construction conglomerate, who is working with Brookfield Asset Management and Global Infrastructure Partners on a takeover bid.

News of a possible bidding war sent Atlantia's share price up 10 percent to a market value of about \$17 billion.

SPECIAL: UKRAINE WAR REPORT



RUSSIA VS. U.S.: AND THE WINNER IS?

Russia's top diplomat, Sergey Lavrov, said Monday that a primary reason Moscow invaded Ukraine was its attempt to end the U.S. drive for world domination. A trend that the United States has been on since the beginning of the 20th century. (See [“War Is A Racket”](#) by Major General Smedley Butler.)

“Our special military operation is meant to put an end to the unabashed expansion [of NATO] and the unabashed drive towards full domination by the US and its Western subjects on the world stage,” Lavrov said. “This domination is built on gross violations of international law and under some rules, which they are now hyping so much and which they make up on a case-by-case basis.”

The **Trends Journal** has long reported that Russia submitted security demands prior to the war that it sees as existential, but the U.S. and Western allies refused to make any concessions.

TRENDPOST: *In 2013, we published a report titled, [“NO NEED FOR NATO.”](#) that said the alliance had gone on for too long. We wrote, “The only dangerous ideology in the world today is Washington’s ideology of neoconservatism.*

This ideology proclaims the U.S. to be the “indispensable nation,” with the right and responsibility to impose its economic and political system on the world.”

Lavrov’s comments echo what Wang Yi, the Chinese foreign minister, has been saying about the U.S. role in the Ukraine War. Wang said he stands on the right side of history over the Ukraine crisis and “will never accept any external coercion or pressure, and opposes any unfounded accusations and suspicions against China,” a clear swipe at the U.S. (See [“U.S. LAUNCHES COLD WAR 2.0: CHINA LAMBASTS ‘COLD-WAR MENTALITY.’”](#))

Jake Sullivan, the national security adviser, has been on a pressure campaign to get China to condemn Russia’s military operation in Ukraine, but Beijing, too, said it will not bow to the U.S. demands.

This comes after Ned Price, a spokesman for the state department, told reporters last month the U.S. will “not allow any country to compensate Russia for its losses” from Western sanctions.

Russian news outlet RT first reported on Lavrov’s comment. He also went on to criticize Josep Borrell, the EU foreign policy chief, for his war rhetoric after saying that the battle will be “won on the battlefield.”

Lavrov called the comment “outrageous,” RT reported.

“When a diplomatic chief ... says a certain conflict can only be resolved through military action... Well, it must be something personal,” Lavrov said. “He either misspoke or spoke without thinking, making a statement that nobody asked him to make. But it’s an outrageous remark.”

Lavrov said Russia hopes to negotiate for peace. U.S. officials claim that the Kremlin has not picked up the phone to discuss the military action. President

Joe Biden has already called Russian President Vladimir Putin a “war criminal” and called for him to stand trial.

TRENDPOST: *The RT report said Russia’s key demands are that Kyiv declares itself neutral and vows to never join NATO. But the U.S. and its Western allies see a chance that the Ukrainian forces could put up a long fight against Russia, and so they will continue to donate as many weapons as fast as possible to Ukraine in order to continue the proxy war against Moscow.*

We watched how the U.S. and NATO have no interest in negotiating with Russia over its security concerns and imagined Washington’s response if Toronto agreed to house a Chinese missile system and Mexico had Russian missiles aimed at America.

Anton Siluanov, the Russian finance minister, said the BRICS group of emerging economies should begin using national currencies for export-import operations and other payments, Reuters reported.

"The current crisis is man-made, and the BRICS countries have all necessary tools to mitigate its consequences for their economies and the global economy as a whole," Siluanov said.

TRENDPOST: *As we have reported, long forgotten, and not mentioned by the Western media or its politicians, was the U.S. and NATO’S pledge not to expand into Eastern Europe following the deal made during the 1990 negotiations between the West and the Soviet Union over German unification.*

Therefore, in the view of Russia, it is taking self-defense actions to protect itself from NATO’s eastward march.

As detailed in the Los Angeles Times back in May of 2016, while the U.S. and NATO deny that no such agreement was struck, “...hundreds of memos, meeting minutes and transcripts from U.S. archives indicate otherwise.”

The article states:

“According to transcripts of meetings in Moscow on Feb. 9, then-Secretary of State James Baker suggested that in exchange for cooperation on Germany, U.S. could make ‘iron-clad guarantees’ that NATO would not expand ‘one inch eastward.’ Less than a week later, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to begin reunification talks. No formal deal was struck, but from all the evidence, the quid pro quo was clear: Gorbachev acceded to Germany’s western alignment and the U.S. would limit NATO’s expansion.”

Also, as noted in the National Security Archives, “Not once, but three times, Baker tried out the “not one inch eastward” formula with Gorbachev in the February 9, 1990, meeting. He agreed with Gorbachev’s statement in response to the assurances that “NATO expansion is unacceptable.”

Baker assured Gorbachev that “neither the President nor I intend to extract any unilateral advantages from the processes that are taking place,” and that the Americans understood that “not only for the Soviet Union but for other European countries as well it is important to have guarantees that if the United States keeps its presence in Germany within the framework of NATO, not an inch of NATO’s present military jurisdiction will spread in an eastern direction.”

Yet, these and other facts regarding the agreement of NATO not to expand are being totally ignored by the mainstream media and the U.S. and EU governments.

WEAPONS POURING INTO UKRAINE, NO TALK OF PEACE, JUST MORE AMMUNITION



At the beginning of the Ukraine War, President Volodymyr Zelensky reportedly said he needed more ammunition, not a ride, and ever since then, the U.S. has been flooding Ukraine with a historic amount of weapons.

Antony Blinken, the U.S. secretary of state, said last week that Washington will send an additional \$100 million in weapons to Kyiv in the Ukrainian effort to resist the Russian invasion.

Jake Sullivan, President Joe Biden's national security adviser, told NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday that the U.S. is doing everything it can, "working around the clock," to get Ukrainians the weapons that they requested.

"Given the nature of the battle, how things have shifted and adjusted and what the Russians have done, frankly—killing civilians, atrocities, war crimes—we have gotten to a place in the United States and across many members of the NATO alliance where the key question is, what does Ukraine need, and how can we provide it to them? That's work we're doing every day," he said.

Blinken made the announcement after citing allegations of war crimes leveled against Russian fighters in Bucha, WSWS.org reported.

The website pointed out that the latest injection brings the total U.S. assistance to more than \$2.4 billion since President Joe Biden took office and \$1.7 billion since the start of the war. (See ["WHITE HOUSE ASKS CONGRESS FOR \\$2.5 BILLION TO FIGHT UKRAINE WAR AND COVID WAR"](#) and ["VICTORIA 'FUCK THE EU' NULAND, WHO SPEARHEADED OVERTHROW OF DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE IN 2014, STILL IN POWER."](#))

WSWS.org reported that Blinken credited more than 30 countries for joining the U.S. in donating weapons to Ukraine.

Blinken noted that more than 30 countries, including the majority of NATO's members and the European Union, have been funneling arms to Ukraine.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is being investigated by the Metropolitan Police over parties he held during COVID War lockdowns, diverted attention from his dirty dealings when he made a surprise visit to Ukraine on Saturday and met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv.

TRENDPOST: *The Trends Journal is completely opposed to Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to invade Ukraine, but—as we have long pointed out—it does not come as a surprise since Moscow views Kyiv's partnership with the U.S. and NATO as an existential threat.*

But we have been calling for Kyiv to sit down and negotiate for peace. Russia has already identified its demands.

Its top demand is that Ukraine agrees to take a neutral stance and will not apply for NATO membership. Zelensky has already agreed to this requirement.

The BBC reported that Kyiv would also have to disarm, would have to deNazify, and must protect the Russian language in the eastern region of the country.

Russia has pulled its troops from Kyiv to focus on its offensive in the east. Mykhailo Podolyak, a Ukrainian negotiator, told Reuters that there will be no meeting with Putin until “after the country defeated Russia in the east, which would bolster its negotiating position.”

Zelensky recently told Fox News that his country would not accept “any outcome” short of the defeat of the Russian invaders.

Johnson, who has been one of the most outspoken supporters of Ukraine, vowed more military assistance to Kyiv. Axios, citing his office, reported that the

United Kingdom will send 120 armored vehicles and new anti-ship missile systems. He also promised an additional \$500 million in lending from the World Bank.

Johnson said he hopes that the additional aid will ensure that Kyiv is never bullied or blackmailed again.

Zelensky praised Johnson in his nightly address on Saturday, saying "The leadership of the United Kingdom in providing our country with the necessary assistance, especially in terms of defense, as well as the leadership in sanctions policy will remain forever in history. Ukraine will always be grateful to Boris and Britain for this."

The U.K. believes that the momentum is with the Ukrainian fighters and the flood of new weapons could give them the edge they need. The EU had pledged €1bn in military aid for Ukraine.

"The next three weeks will be critical," one U.K. government official told the Times of London. "[The Ukrainians] have already partly won. They have exhausted the Russian army, won the battle of occupation and condemned Putin to eternal isolation. Can they push back the Russian army? Can they break the Russian army? Possibly. Depends on what help we can all give."

Blinken said he was appalled by photographs that emerged from Bucha, that claimed to show dozens of civilians killed in the streets by retreating Russian forces that once occupied the city, which is located on the outskirts of Kyiv.

The WSWS.org report said the U.S. also admitted last week that it trained Ukrainian troops on how to use drones in war.

Zelensky also appealed to other countries to ban all Russian energy exports that he said is leading to Russia's "self-confidence, their sense of impunity."

TRENDPOST: *The WSWS.org report pointed out that the U.S. plans to spend about \$813 billion on its military this year and Republicans don't even think that*

figure is enough. (China, for example, will spend \$230.16 billion on its military in 2022, which is a 6.8 percent jump from 2021, but still far behind U.S. spending.)

Mike Rogers (R-AL), Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee claimed: “Our nation faces unprecedented threats from China and Russia, and it’s unconscionable that President Biden has chosen to, once again, shortchange our warfighters.”

He said Chinese President Xi Jinping is watching as Biden “continues to falter...In fact, while China has the largest navy in the world and is rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal...Luckily, Congress calls the shots when it comes to funding our military.”

Weapon Merchants

GERMANY: Berlin has been tight-lipped about its military transfers to Ukraine. German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht told DW.com that she would not reveal the equipment because it is classified.

“One must always bear in mind: The moment the deliveries are published in detail, Russia would also have this information. And that alone would have military strategic implications,” she said.

Der Spiegel reported on Thursday that Germany sent Ukraine “500 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, 2,700 Strela surface-to-air missiles, 3,000 anti-tank guns, 100 MG 3 machine guns, 16 million rounds of ammunition for various types of hand-held weapons and hundreds of anti-tank mines.”

Berlin also reportedly sent 80 armored all-terrain vehicles, 50 medical Unimog trucks, 14 pallets of medical supplies, half a million one-man packs of rations, four drone defense systems, and night vision equipment.

BELGIUM: Days after the 24 February invasion, Brussels announced it would send Ukrainian forces 3,000 machine guns and 200 anti-tank grenade launchers.

CANADA: Ottawa announced Saturday that it will send \$100 million in aid to alleviate the ongoing refugee crisis in Ukraine, bringing the total amount in humanitarian aid up to \$12.4 billion.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government pledged another \$500 million in military aid.

CTV News reported that the latest injection is on top of the \$90 million in "anti-tank guns, sniper rifles, night-vision goggles, armored vests and other military equipment already provided" to Kyiv.

SLOVAKIA: Bratislava will give Ukrainian fighters its air defense system as other countries vow more military aid after allegations of Russian war crimes on the battlefield.

"I can confirm that Slovakia donated the S-300 air defense system to Ukraine based on its request to help in self-defense due to armed aggression from the Russian Federation," Heger said in a statement obtained by Reuters.

The report pointed out that the donation was the first instance of an air defense system being donated by another country.

The report also stated the U.S. announced it will place a Patriot missile system in Slovakia that will be operated by U.S. troops.

AUSTRALIA: Scott Morrison, the prime minister, announced last week that Canberra will donate armored Bushmaster vehicles to Kyiv after an appeal from President Volodymyr Zelensky, The Associated Press reported.

Morrison did not say how many would be sent, but he told reporters that Australians are "not just sending our prayers."

"We are sending our guns, we're sending our munitions, we're sending our humanitarian aid, we're sending all of this, our body armor, all of these things

and we're going to be sending our armored vehicles, our Bushmasters, as well," he said.

Australia has already promised or provided Ukraine with \$68 million in military assistance, which the report said included tactical decoys, unmanned aerial and unmanned ground systems, rations, and medical supplies.

FRANCE: French President Emmanuel Macron announced last month that Paris will provide Ukraine with €300m worth of military aid.

PORTUGAL: Lisbon announced Monday that it will provide Ukraine military equipment that includes vests, helmets, night vision goggles, grenades, and various ammunition for different caliber weapons.

SWEDEN: Stockholm donated 10,000 anti-tank weapons, 5,000 helmets, and 5,000 body shields to Ukraine since the start of the war, Politico reported.

NORWAY: Oslo provided Ukraine with helmets and bulletproof vests in February. The government also imposed sanctions on Russia over its invasion.

ITALY: Rome agreed to send Ukrainians an unknown number of Stinger surface-to-air missiles, mortars, and anti-tank weapons.

CZECH REPUBLIC BECOMES THE FIRST COUNTRY TO SEND TANKS INTO UKRAINE AFTER RUSSIA INVASION



The Czech Republic announced last week that it has provided Ukrainian fighters with about a dozen modernized, Soviet-designed tanks—becoming the first known country to provide Kyiv with that caliber of heavy weaponry.

The Wall Street Journal reported that 35 countries met last week to discuss weapon transfers to Ukraine, and even countries that have been vocal in their support of Ukraine have been hesitant to supply tanks.

"For several weeks, we have been supplying heavy ground equipment—I am saying it generally but by definition, it is clear that this includes tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, howitzers, and multiple rocket launchers," a senior defense official told Reuters. "What has gone from the Czech Republic is in the hundreds of millions of dollars."

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the historic amount of weapon transfers Kyiv has received since the 24 February invasion.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has been appealing to European countries and the U.S. to provide more deadly weapons to counter the much-larger invading force. (See [“WHITE HOUSE ASKS CONGRESS FOR \\$32.5 BILLION TO FIGHT UKRAINE WAR AND COVID WAR.”](#) [“PRESIDENT ZELENSKY SAVES HIS BEST ACT FOR U.S. CONGRESS DURING VIDEO”](#) and [“WARMONGERS ON PARADE: WEST SENDS MORE WEAPONS TO UKRAINE TO KEEP THE KILLINGS GOING.”](#))

TRENDPOST: *We've seen what seems like a coordinated propaganda effort by Big Tech, the government, and corporate media and have been only receiving one side of the story out of Ukraine.*

One needs to look no further than Google. For the past three weeks, search results for “Ukrainian troop deaths” and “Ukrainian troop casualties” have resulted in stories about the Russian war dead.

Are we supposed to believe that Ukrainian troops are somehow not dying?

Judge Andrew Napolitano joined Gerald Celente on “Celente and the Judge” last week and warned that the media is getting Americans to accept that we will be going to war with Russia. [WATCH.](#)

RUSSIA USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN UKRAINE WAS A U.S. LIE



“Remember the Maine,” lie the mentally deranged U.S. politicians sold the public so they could invade Cuba?

Remember the Gulf of Tonkin lie the U.S. mentally deranged U.S. politicians sold the public so they could invade Vietnam?

Remember the “Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass-destruction lie the U.S. mentally deranged U.S. politicians sold the public so they could invade Iraq?

Before the Maine an in between the WMDs, the murderous, thieving political gangs running Washington D.C., have launched wars, overthrown governments, and slaughtered tens of millions across the planet in the name of bringing “Freedom and Democracy” to countries they wanted to invade and control.

And the lies to build hatred and to take power from those they target continue.

Last week, NBC News published a report that challenged Washington's claim that Russia is planning a chemical attack against Ukrainian forces, with one unnamed official going as far as to say that the claim was an effort by the U.S. to get into Russian President Vladimir Putin's head.

The report cited three U.S. officials who said there is no evidence that Russia is planning a chemical attack against Ukraine.

Last month, President Joe Biden told reporters that the U.S. and NATO would respond if Moscow used these weapons.

“We will respond if he (Russian President Vladimir Putin) uses it,” Biden said. “The nature of the response depends on the nature of the use.” (See [“U.S.](#)

[ACCUSED OF OPERATING BIOWEAPONS LABS IN UKRAINE, MOUTHPIECE MEDIA PROMOTES GOV'T LINE.](#))

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also said, "Any Russian use of chemical or biological weapons "would be a breach of all rules, all agreements and all existing conventions."

"We can only say: Don't do it," he said.

While the mainstream media has generally ignored the latest D.C. lies, Antiwar.org was the first to point out the contradiction in the NBC News report that included a U.S. official who said the intelligence tied to chemical weapons was not "rock solid."

The **Trends Journal** has reported on the information war between Washington and Moscow in an attempt to swing public opinion.

Russia has essentially denied all wrongdoings and blamed Ukrainian forces and their Western allies for perpetuating the misinformation on a large scale.

One U.S. official told NBC that the U.S. is willing to deploy information against Russia "even when confidence in the accuracy of the information wasn't high." (See ["BUCHA MASSACRE: RUSSIA DENIES RESPONSIBILITY, BUT ALREADY CONVICTED BY MEDIA"](#) and ["TRENDS ANALYSIS: U.S. NEWS OUTLETS PERFORM PROPAGANDA ACROBATICS IN UKRAINE WAR."](#))

Russia said Kyiv could very well use chemical weapons against its own people in an effort to further isolate Russia from Europe and the U.S.

TRENDPOST: Assuming that these three U.S. officials are legitimate and correct, they just proved the U.S. is currently in the middle of a propaganda campaign against Russia.

Since the end of World War II, despite Russia being the U.S. ally and the first nation to defeat Nazi Germany, America's politicians launched the Russian fear and hatred Cold War campaign immediately after the war ended.

And for the most part it continued with politicians like Hillary Clinton and former President Barack Obama who have spent their entire careers fomenting hatred toward Russians to advance their brand based on the theory that hatred unites.

TRENDPOST: *As we have noted, we are entirely opposed to Russia's invasion of Ukraine despite Moscow's reasons for doing so.*

However, considering that we have covered Washington's decades of intrusion and manipulation of the Ukraine government and their 2014 coup of its democratically elected president, Viktor Yanukovich, we understand why Russia invaded. According to the Russian news source RT:

"Moscow attacked its neighbor in late February, following Ukraine's failure to implement the terms of the Minsk agreements signed in 2014, and Russia's eventual recognition of the Donbass republics in Donetsk and Lugansk. The German and French brokered protocols had been designed to regularize the status of those regions within the Ukrainian state.

"Russia has now demanded that Ukraine officially declare itself a neutral country that will never join the US-led NATO military bloc. Kiev insists the Russian offensive was completely unprovoked and has denied claims it was planning to retake the two republics by force."

TRENDPOST: *We also pointed out that while the Western media saturates the news with the death and destruction Russia has inflicted on Ukraine, there was never such coverage of the United States and its allies mass destruction and murders in their illegal wars waged against Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yugoslavia or the ongoing mass murders in Yemen or Israel's killing of thousands of Palestinians.*

Indeed, the breaking news is about two Israelis shot in occupied Nablus by Palestinians, while the “why” and “what” has caused this have been whitewashed by the Western governments and media. (See [“SHOOTING BREAKS OUT IN ISRAEL: REVENGE OR TERRORISM?”](#))

And, never a mention in American media or Washington of the U.S. track record of killing millions and stealing tens trillions from its taxpayers to wage wars based on lies against countries that were no threat to the American homeland.

And over all, Russia is a minor war-mongering nation compared to Washington's track record. Brown University’s Watson Institute said over 929,000 people were killed “directly in the violence of the wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere.”

Several times as many civilians have died due to the reverberating effects of these wars.

RUSSIA BLAMES UKRAINE, UKRAINE BLAMES RUSSIA FOR CIVILIAN MURDERS



Russia and Ukraine traded blame last week after a train station in eastern Donbas was struck by a missile, killing at least 50, which mainly consisted of women and children looking to flee the region due to the looming Russian offensive.

The missile hit the station located in Kramatorsk, which is located in Donetsk. The report said at least 50 people were killed.

About 100 people—many listed in critical condition—are being treated at hospitals, including 19 children.

NPR reported that some of the children lost limbs in the 10:30 a.m. local time attack.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called the attack a war crime and promised that everyone who is responsible will “be brought to justice.”

Ukrainian authorities said “for our children” was written in Russian on the remnants of one of the missiles.

Moscow denied any responsibility and said the attack could have been carried out by Ukrainians in a false-flag operation.

A spokesman from the Russian Defense Ministry claimed that the missile was fired from where Ukrainian troops had been positioned. Russia claimed that its military no longer used the Soviet-made Tochka-U ballistic missile.

The BBC, citing Amnesty International weapons experts, reported that these missiles are notoriously inaccurate and have been known to miss their targets by half a kilometer.

Zelensky took to Instagram and accused the Russian military of “lacking the strength and courage to stand up to us on the battlefield, they are cynically destroying the civilian population.

"This is an evil that has no limits. And if it is not punished, it will never stop."

Bucha Killings

The train station strike last week was not the first time Russians have been accused of committing war crimes during the weeks-long conflict in Ukraine.

The mass killings in Bucha have also attracted a large amount of Western media coverage due to the gruesome nature of the deaths.

More than 360 civilians were killed in the city and up to 280 were buried in a mass grave by other residents, Reuters reported. Some of these civilians were discovered with their wrists tied and evidence that some were tortured.

Ukraine blamed Russia for the atrocities and Russia denied the allegations.

TRENDPOST: *Gerald Celente and Judge Andrew Napolitano discussed the killings on [“Celente & the Judge”](#) last week. Napolitano said the Western media is attempting to gin up Americans for a future war with Russia.*

The Judge, who served as Fox News' senior judicial analyst for 24 years, said “I’m not blaming the networks because they are in the business of getting ratings. And they see dead bodies with their hands tied behind their back... this is ginning up the public to accept the concept that we might enter that war. This is ginning up the public. The government, the military-industrial complex, the media getting the public ready for war.”

Biden: Bring Putin to Trial

U.S. President Joe Biden, [who has called](#) Russian President Vladimir Putin a war criminal, killer, and brute over the course of the past several weeks, said last week that it is imperative that his counterpart be tried as a war criminal after the Bucha incident for which scores of dead bodies were found in a mass grave.

"This guy is brutal," Biden said.

Biden treated the Bucha killings as validation for his earlier claim that Putin is a war criminal.

“Well, the truth of the matter, you saw what happened in Bucha. This warrants him—he is a war criminal,” he said.

Zelensky called the killings in Bucha an act of genocide, but Biden did not go that far.

TRENDPOST: *The Global Times, the daily newspaper arm of the Chinese Communist Party, ran an editorial last week—once again—taking the U.S. to task for trying to coerce smaller countries into doing its bidding under the threat of military or economic force.*

The paper pointed to a comment from Wendy Sherman, the U.S. deputy secretary of state, who warned China that Washington could impose Russia-like sanctions on Beijing if it provides material support to Moscow.

“It seems that the Ukraine crisis is also a mirror reflecting the US’ nature of seeking hegemony for itself by coercion,” the paper wrote. “Washington first kidnapped small countries with the lure of security, turning them into pawns to check and contain major countries. Then, it has continued to instigate and incite disputes, and pushed these pawns into the fiery pit, held allies hostage by virtue of so-called values and made them pay for its hegemony.” (See [“WAR IN UKRAINE ECONOMIC OVERVIEW,”](#) [“BEIJING: STOP WESTERN SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA”](#) and [“CHINA STANDS WITH RUSSIA. TELLS E.U. AND U.S. FU!”](#))

*The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively about the pressure campaign by the U.S. and allies against China.*

Jake Sullivan, President Biden’s national security adviser, even pressured China not to step in and alleviate the pain U.S. sanctions are inflicting on Moscow. (See [“BEIJING: STOP WESTERN SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA”](#) and [“BIDEN’S ‘HATE RUSSIA’ SANCTIONS CAMPAIGN INTENSIFIES.”](#))

The Global Times called it “ironic” that the U.S. has been trying to portray China as the country employing “coercion diplomacy,” and said Washington’s response to the Ukraine War has “precisely shown that it is the US who is sparing no efforts to coerce other countries. It is trying to drag other parties to the crisis while it passes the bucks and reaps the profits.”

The U.S. has also been working to pressure India to turn its back on Russia. Brian Deese, the National Economic Council director, said last week that the

U.S.'s message to New Delhi is "that the costs and consequences for them of moving into a more explicit strategic alignment with Russia will be significant and long term."

EU PARLIAMENT HEAD GOES HEAD OVER HEALS AFTER MEETING ZELENSKY



Roberta Metsola, the president of the European Parliament, said in an interview published last week that she met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and got a chance to look into his eyes, which she essentially said revealed a true leader in all his glory.

Metsola visited Kyiv on 1 April and told DW.com that she was impressed with Zelensky, who had courage and resilience forged in his eyes.

"I also saw the face of a leader that would like more from the European Union, from leaders," she said. "That is why I went there, in order to talk face to face with him, to see how myself as a leader of the European Parliament, but also all of us as a European Union, can continue to help."

Metsola, who has been president of the European Parliament since January, came back from Ukraine with a sense of urgency, which is not a political risk for a politician in the West.

"We need to make a choice. We are either going to save Ukraine or turn our backs and if we turn our back to Ukraine, that means we turned our backs to a country that looked up to us as the democratic leader, as a global political power stands for freedom around the world," Metsola said.

Radio Free Europe reported that Metsola wants the EU to follow the Czech Republic's lead after Prague announced it would send tanks into Kyiv.

The EU has pledged \$1.4 billion in financial assistance to Ukraine, which she acknowledged was unprecedented.

"Ukraine needs to survive. We need to help make sure that Ukraine wins this war because otherwise all of Europe would fail," she said.

TRENDPOST: *What a difference a set of eyes makes. In 2014, the New Yorker published an article about a meeting between then-Vice President Joe Biden and then-Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin back in 2011.*

"I said, 'Mr. Prime Minister, I'm looking into your eyes, and I don't think you have a soul,'" Biden told the magazine. "He looked back at me, and he smiled, and he said, 'We understand one another.'"

President George W. Bush also looked into Putin's eyes and said "I found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy. We had a very good dialogue. I was able to get a sense of his soul, a man deeply committed to his country and the best interests of his country,"

The Atlantic said Bush added a few sentences later, "I wouldn't have invited him to my ranch if I didn't trust him."

We're seeing a massive propaganda campaign against Russia and Putin.

Megyn Kelly, the former Fox News anchor, said she felt that she was being manipulated by Putin when the Russian leader started talking about his relationship with his mother during an interview in 2018.

Kelly said Putin highlighted the "close relationship he had with her."

"It was an obvious manipulation," she said.

TREND FORECAST: *At least 10 million people are believed to have fled their homes in Ukraine, and there were about 3,455 civilian casualties, with about 1,417 killed and 2,038 injured, according to the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights.*

EU Parliament head Metsola said she wants to make sure that our “children don’t come to us in a few years and say ‘you could have saved more Ukrainians. You could have made sure that in this moment of political reckoning that we have, we do not fail Europe.’”

However, with the West sending billions of dollars of lethal weapons to Ukraine to fight the Russians, forget what “children” who don’t know shit about what happened and why are going to think... intelligent people today should be coming out now and saying: “Stop the war, negotiate for peace.”

Stop sending weapons of death for a losing battle, since we maintain our forecast that Russia will defeat Ukraine.

CHINA: UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SUSPENDING RUSSIA IS “DANGEROUS”



China's top diplomat to the UN last week excoriated the General Assembly for voting in favor of suspending Russia from the Human Rights Council over allegations its troops committed war crimes in Ukraine.

Chinese ambassador Zhang Jun—without naming the U.S.—accused “individual countries” of “talking loudly of peace” but being “obsessed with creating bloc confrontations” such as “provoking tensions in the Asia Pacific region.”

The **Trends Journal** has reported on China's refusal to condemn Russia, despite Western pressure. Beijing has been a top critic of the U.S.'s global influence, including Beijing's tension with Taipei. (See [“CHINA CALLS FOR RESTRAINT IN UKRAINE, BLAMES WEST FOR CALAMITY,”](#) [“BEIJING: STOP WESTERN SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA”](#) and [“WILL CHINA SOON INVADE TAIWAN?”](#))

The vote, which was led by the U.S., was passed on Thursday, just days after a massacre in Bucha was discovered.

“We believe that the members of the Russian forces committed war crimes in Ukraine, and we believe that Russia needs to be held accountable,” Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, said.

The UN vote required a two-thirds majority. Twenty-four countries voted against the resolution, including China, Cuba, North Korea, and Russia. Those abstaining included India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia.

"China firmly opposes the politicization... of human rights issues and using human rights issues to put pressure on other countries," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said. "The decision [to suspend Russia] from the UN Human Rights Council will only exacerbate the division among member states ... and set a dangerous new precedent."

TRENDPOST: *The Western media has already convicted Russian troops of committing the atrocities in Bucha—despite Moscow denying the allegation and calling for a UN-led investigation into the killings, which was blocked by the UK.*

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov disputed the Ukrainian claims, saying it was contrary to Moscow’s findings: “We would demand that many international leaders do not rush to sweeping accusations and at least listen to our arguments.”

*In fact, in last week's **Trends Journal** we published an article by Consortium News Editor-in-Chief, ["QUESTIONS ABOUT BUCHA MASSACRE."](#) that questioned the mainstream media and Western political narrative.*

However, news outlets have been citing Ukrainian President Volodyrmyr Zelensky's comments as evidence, "witnesses" from Bucha, and satellite images "analyzed" by The New York Times that claimed to show bodies in the streets during the Russian occupation of the town.

We've seen during this war that any allegation that damages Russia is quickly embraced by the Western media to sway public opinion to favor a conflict with Russia.

UNITED IN RUSSIAN HATE: SENATE VOTES UNANIMOUSLY TO REVIVE LEND-LEASE PROGRAM FOR UKRAINE



The U.S. Senate may be divided, but apparently not when it comes to keeping military contractors happy.

Late Wednesday, the Senate passed a bill called the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022 that will essentially make it easier for President Joe Biden to send weapons to Ukraine.

Ukrainian forces are expecting a major offensive by Moscow focused on the eastern flank of the country.

The revived WWII-era bill will allow Biden to send weapons to Kyiv without all the "regulations that can slow the process down," Radio Free Europe reported.

The March 1941 Lend-Lease Act, which was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, has been credited as one of the major turning points in the war against Hitler.

The current bill still needs to pass the House, which is on a two-week vacation. The Atlantic Council, a think tank, mentioned that Stalin credited the Lend-Lease Act with winning the war.

Newsweek pointed out that the U.S. Congress already approved \$14 billion in military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. This bill could mean a significant increase in aid.

The bill aims "to provide enhanced authority for the President to enter into agreements with the Government of Ukraine to lend or lease defense articles to that Government to protect civilian populations in Ukraine from Russian military invasion."

"How we address a threat against one democracy's sovereignty sends a message about how we'll act on others, and adversaries like China are watching," Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said in a statement Thursday. "If we believe America supports freedom and democracy, we must provide Ukraine with the weapons necessary to protect its citizens."

TREND FORECAST: *The world is in a very dangerous place because there is nobody talking about peace in Ukraine and the rhetoric is only getting more militarily aggressive. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who failed to negotiate for peace in the lead up to the war after rejecting all of Russia's key demands vis-à-vis its security concerns which we have greatly detailed in this and previous **Trends Journals**, said "We're not going to let anything stand in the way of getting Ukrainians what they need. We are looking across the board right now, not only at what we have provided...[but] whether there are additional systems that would make a difference."*

The push to provide Ukrainians with more weapons is reportedly due to the growing belief in the West that Ukraine could eventually turn the tables on Russia... a belief that we find ludicrous.

Indeed, among the loudest mouthpieces that the Russian military is filled with loser troops and their Generals are too dumb to lead their troops to victory are American intelligence “experts” and military “officials”... with track records of spending tens of trillions to kill millions and a not winning one major war that they have started.

YELLEN: UKRAINE WAR A DANGER TO GLOBAL ECONOMY



U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, said on Wednesday what the **Trends Journal** has been writing about all along: Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will have a devastating impact on the global economy still trying to emerge from the socioeconomic devastation caused by the

COVID War.

Yellen appeared in front of the House Financial Services Committee last Wednesday to discuss the international financial system. Ignoring America’s numerous illegal wars that cost trillions and killed millions, she chastised Russian actions in Ukraine as “reprehensible” and an “affront to the rules-based global order.”

She pointed to some of the challenges that stand in the way of cutting Russia off financial institutions around the world—especially since Europe is still reliant on Russian natural gas.

"President Biden's made it clear... that it cannot be business as usual for Russia in any of the financial institutions," Yellen said. "He's asked that Russia be removed from the G20, and I've made clear to my colleagues in (presidency holder) Indonesia that we will not be participating in a number of meetings if the Russians are there."

She expects people in every country to see rising prices for basic items like food and other commodities. ([WATCH GERALD CELENTE'S INTERVIEW WITH JUDGE ANDREW NAPOLITANO ON SANCTIONS AND HOW THEY ARE A WASTE OF TIME.](#))

Yellen's comments came a day after Deutsche Bank revised down its forecast for global growth and said it now sees a recession in the U.S. and "a growth recession in the euro area within the next two years," CBS News reported.

The **Trends Journal** has reported on the fragile state of the world economy and how the middle class and poorest stand to be most impacted. (See "[BIDEN'S 'HATE RUSSIA' SANCTIONS CAMPAIGN INTENSIFIES](#)" and "[BIDEN BACKTRACK: SAYS SANCTIONS WERE NEVER MEANT TO DETER RUSSIA FROM INVADING UKRAINE.](#)")

TREND FORECAST: *While President Biden bragged that the sanctions mean "Russian oil will no longer be acceptable at U.S. ports and the American people will deal another powerful blow to Putin's war machine," he did not mention that it is also dealing a powerful blow to the American people.*

Again, as we continue to note, the general public is only getting a one-sided view of the sanctions and mandates imposed against Russia, which we forecast will do nothing to alter Moscow's military posture, but will cause great hardship for the people of the world.

Besides the Ukraine War, the world is experiencing the highest inflation in four decades and China's massive COVID lockdown due to a recent outbreak.

Larry Summers, the Harvard University economist, told the Associated Press that the U.S has gone into recession within two years every time inflation passed 4 percent and unemployment was below 5 percent as they are now.

*Peter Schiff, the economist, told the **Trends Journal** last week that he believes actual inflation is around 16 percent, the eight percent that the government "admits."*

Warning to China

Yellen told lawmakers last week that the White House would also be willing to sanction China if there were any hostile acts taken against Taiwan.

(See [“WILL CHINA SOON INVADE TAIWAN?”](#) and [“TAIWAN VS. CHINA: UKRAINE WAR SETS THE STAGE.”](#))

The **Trends Journal** has pointed out that Taiwan would be no match against China, which spends 25 times the amount Taipei does on its military. China also has a hundred times as many ground-force troops as the island.

"I believe we've shown we can" inflict financial pain on countries in the way Washington is hurting Russia, she said. "I think you should not doubt our ability and resolve to do the same in other situations."

Wang Webin, a Chinese spokesman, blamed the U.S. for increased tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

"The root cause is that the authorities in Taiwan keep pushing the independence agenda by soliciting your support and that some in the U.S. attempt to use Taiwan to contain China. They have been colluding with each other," he said.

TREND FORECAST: *Beijing has long declared that Taiwan is part of its territory under its “One China Principle,” and it is the mainland’s territory under its Constitution.*

We forecast that just as Beijing has clamped down on Hong Kong protests and taken full control, so, too, will they take control of Taiwan when they are ready.

Despite condemnations when they do so, there will be no military forces from other nations that will challenge Communist China’s military might.

Indeed, America, with the largest military in the world, has not won a war since World War II and cannot even win against third-world nations, such as Afghanistan, after invading that nation some 20 years ago.

FEATURED ARTICLES BY GUEST WRITERS



UKRAINE UPDATE #10

By *Paul Craig Roberts*, [Institute for Political Economy](#)

No useful information about Ukraine can be obtained from Western media. The Russian military operates without the need of news releases, so little information is provided.

Last week Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said, “Of course they [Ukraine] can win this. The proof is literally in the outcomes that you’re seeing everyday.”

Kirby must get his information from CNN. I don’t know of any battles the Ukrainians have won. I don’t know of any Ukrainian forces that are not surrounded and trapped, cut off from supplies.

There are no offensive actions being conducted by Ukrainian military or Azov militia. Ukrainian military infrastructure and command and control systems have been destroyed. When the West delivers weapons, the weapons are destroyed on arrival as was the S-300 air defense system from Slovakia.

The Kremlin appointed a new commander of the operation, and the change in command has been presented by the Western media as an attempt to free Russian forces from a stalemate.

As there is no stalemate, the commander might have been replaced because of objection to the restricted use of Russian heavy weapons, which have mainly been restricted to the destruction of the Ukrainian military infrastructure.

The Kremlin's strategy means casualties among Russian troops who have to clear the surrounded areas in street fighting. Most generals don't like this use of troops when heavy weapons can eliminate the opposing force.

It is necessary to understand that there has been no Russian invasion of Ukraine. Russian troops are operating only in eastern and southern Ukraine. The troops served the purpose of preventing a large Ukrainian army, now encircled and trapped, from conquering the two Donbass Russian republics recently recognized by Russia after an eight-year delay.

The other task assigned to the Russian troops is to exterminate the neo-Nazi Azov militia that has committed atrocities against the Donbass Russians. The process has gone slowly, because the fighting is mainly in Donbass, which is populated by Russians, and the Kremlin wants to rescue the people, not kill them.

The mistakes the Kremlin made were eight years ago and in the eight years since. The Kremlin, focused on the Sochi Olympics, did not intervene and prevent Washington's overthrow of the Ukrainian government.

The Kremlin failed to pre-empt the crisis in Donbass when the Kremlin refused the Donbass appeal to be reincorporated in Russia like Crimea. The Kremlin,

stupidly relying on negotiation with the West to enforce the Minsk Agreement to stop Ukraine's attacks on Donbass, permitted eight years of Azov attacks on Donbass and erosion of Donbass territory, while Washington equipped and trained a Ukrainian army.

In other words, the Kremlin had learned nothing from the Washington-organized attack on South Ossetia by Georgia in 2008.

Russia would rather the conflict end without having to destroy the trapped Ukrainian army and for this reason keeps negotiating with Washington's puppet Zelensky who has no authority to agree to anything. As it is not usual for the victor to pursue negotiations, the Kremlin's proclivity for negotiation makes Russian arms look weak, and this encourages the West to keep the conflict going.

I think the limited nature of the Russian intervention was a mistake. Nevertheless, if Russia can't achieve its goal in the limited way chosen, the option remains for a wider attack.

I believe the main problem for Russia is that the government tries to be Goody Two Shoes in its dealings with Satan. I see the Kremlin has now backed off its plan to nationalize Western businesses, because it wants to show that Russia, unlike the West, respects private property.

And despite Germany's hostile actions against Russia, the Kremlin is still supplying Germany with energy in order to demonstrate, again, that Russia, unlike the West, adheres to contractual obligations. It is this kind of stupidity that can defeat Russia.

The West doesn't respond by saying, "Look how reliable the Russians are." Instead it says, "Look how stupid the Russians are. We are doing everything possible to frustrate them in Ukraine, and in Slovakia, Finland, and Sweden, and are putting more troops and bases on their border, and they sell us the energy with which to do it."

Perhaps the Kremlin is betting that the EU's attempt to ban Russian energy from Europe, which has met strong opposition from European countries, will end with NATO's breakup, but Russia itself could break up NATO and the EU by turning off the energy.

Apparently, this sensible step is blocked by the Russian central bank chief, who advises the Kremlin that Russia has to have export earnings from the West, thus effectively blocking Russian counter-sanctions and contributing to the success of the sanctions against Russia.

A government that cannot get its act together can lose the benefit of its military superiority.

Meanwhile Stoltenberg continues to issue meaningless NATO threats. The British press [reports](#) that:

“NATO is drawing up plans to deploy a permanent full-scale military force on its border in an effort to combat future Russian aggression following the invasion of Ukraine, the alliance's secretary general has revealed.”

According to the [report](#), “a full scale military force” consists of “eight multinational NATO battle groups all along the eastern flank, from the Baltic to the Black Sea.”

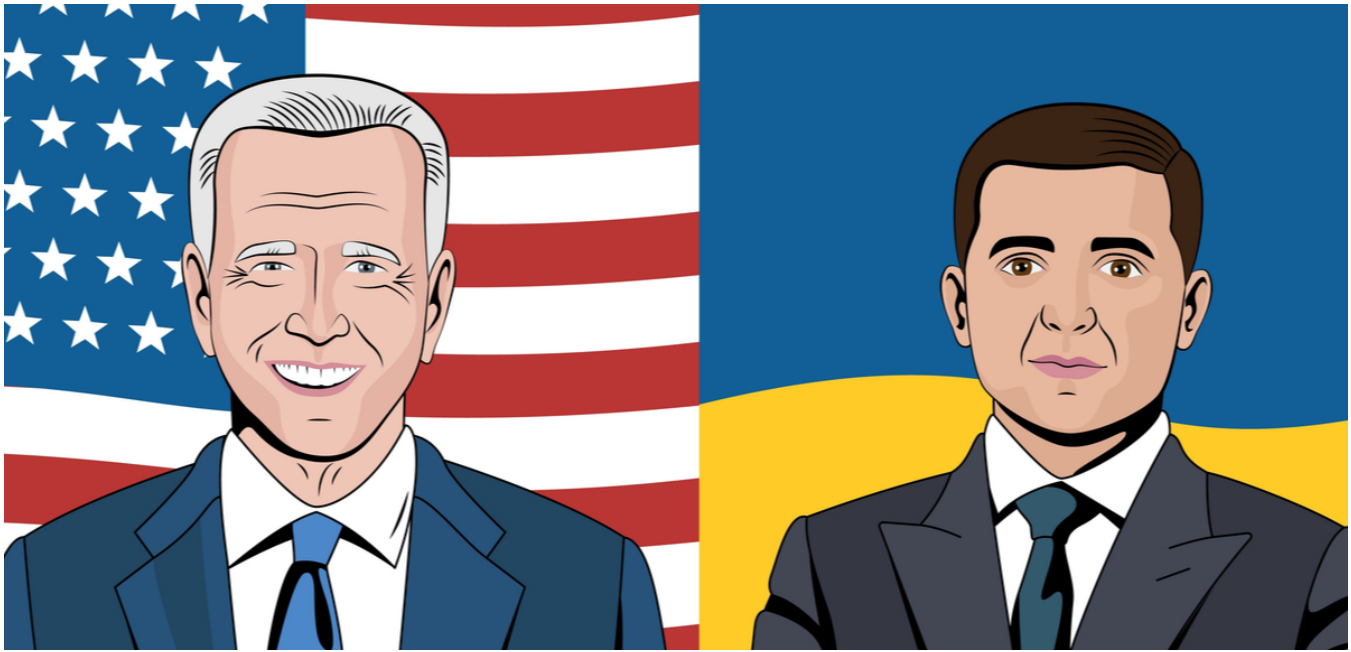
A battlegroup consists of 1,000-1,500 soldiers, so Stoltenberg thinks a NATO tower of babel force of 10,000 to 12,000 soldiers scattered over thousands of miles from the Baltic to the Black Sea suffices to stop a Russian invasion! What kind of world does Stoltenberg live in?

Russia has no need or intent to invade Poland, Romania, the Baltics, Finland, Sweden. Missile bases in these countries can be eliminated with precision weapons from a great distance.

Russia sent troops into Ukraine in order to liberate Donbass from Azov attack and occupation and to prevent the invasion of Donbass by a 100,000 Ukrainian army.

If Russia had acted sensibly eight years ago, the current intervention would not have been necessary. One wonders what new mistakes the Kremlin will make that will necessitate further interventions in the future.

Paul Craig Roberts has had careers in scholarship and academia, journalism, public service, and business. Currently chairman of The Institute for Political Economy, President Reagan appointed Dr. Roberts Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy.



BIDEN, ZELENSKY AND THE NEOCONS

By *Philip Giraldi*

There are many backstories surfacing from what is going on in Ukraine and Washington that have been largely ignored amid the drumbeat of casualty counts combined with claims and counter-claims from the two sides.

Two stories that I believe have received insufficient attention are the U.S. government's three decades long obsession with weakening and de facto destroying the Russian state and the dominant neocon plus associate liberal democracy promoter role in what has become American foreign policy.

To be sure, anyone who doubts that the U.S. is currently on a course to not only replace President Vladimir Putin but also to crash the Russian economy is delusional.

Washington has been trying to deconstruct the former Soviet Union ever since 1991, beginning with President Bill Clinton's expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe in spite of a pledge not to do so and his unleashing the oligarchs who looted the country's natural resources under President Boris Yeltsin.

The pressure continued under the beatified President Barack Obama, who appointed as Ambassador Michael McFaul, who saw his mission as connecting with dissidents and opposition forces inside Russia, a role incompatible with his promotion of U.S. interests and protecting U.S. persons.

And then we had the redoubtable President Donald Trump undoing confidence building agreements with Russia followed by the current disaster that is unfolding before our very eyes.

One should not ignore the fact that the fighting in Ukraine came about largely because the Biden Administration refused to negotiate seriously regarding the mostly reasonable demands that the Kremlin was making to enhance its own security.

Former U.S. arms inspector Scott Ritter [cites a reported comment](#) by a senior Biden Administration official which sums up the current policy, such as it is: “The only end game now is the end of Putin’s regime. Until then, all the time Putin stays, [Russia] will be a pariah state that will never be welcomed back into the community of nations.”

Indeed, President Joe Biden’s recent disastrous trip to Europe can likely be characterized as one wishes to see it and the media has certainly done considerable spinning, but Biden left behind a legacy of various gaffes and lapsus linguae that made clear that the U.S. is in the game to defeat Russia however long it will take to play out.

And Biden has considerable support from brain dead congressmen like Republican Senator Lindsey Graham who has called for someone to murder Putin, lamenting “Is there a Brutus in Russia?”

On his trip, Biden revealed that he expects U.S. combat troops to go to Ukraine’s assistance and he has also taken delight in denouncing Putin as a “killer,” a “thug,” a “murderous dictator” and a “man who cannot remain in power.”

In so doing, he has openly called for Putin's removal from office, i.e. regime change, while also opening the door to an obvious false flag operation in his unwillingness to reveal when questioned by a reporter how the U.S. might respond if Russia were to use chemical weapons in Ukraine.

That he has taken those positions means that it will be impossible to restore manageable relations with Moscow post Ukraine. It is a heavy price to pay for something that is little more than posturing.

The chemical weapon issue is particularly important as President Donald Trump bombed Syria with cruise missiles in the wake of a fabricated report that Bashar al-Assad had used such weapons in an attack on Khan Shaykhun in 2017.

It turned out that the anti-regime terrorists who were occupying the city at the time had themselves staged the attack and deliberately blamed it on the Syrian government to produce an expected U.S. response.

Based on what I am seeing and hearing, I would conclude that the neoconservatives and their liberal democracy promoting friends are working hard from the inside to make something like a war with Russia happen. Note in particular that we are talking about war with shooting and deaths, not just a reincarnation or extension of the Cold War of yore.

News on April 1st, admittedly April Fools' Day, suggests that Ukraine has staged helicopter-launched [missile attacks](#) on a fuel storage depot inside Russia, which, if true, could produce a massive escalation from the Kremlin. It would be a typical neocon maneuver to dramatically increase the level of the fighting and draw the United States into the conflict.

In addition to that, I know I am not the only one who has noticed the pace and focus of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskys' widely promoted appeals to groups and world governments to come to his country's aid, to include establishment of a no-fly zone.

The appeals are slick, convincing and carefully focused, with Zelensky being framed as a “hero” fighting valiantly against savage invaders. To put it mildly they are way beyond the capabilities and experience level of a former comedian, whose performances featured erotic dancing and [playing a piano with his penis](#), corruptly placed on the presidential hotseat by a billionaire oligarch Israeli citizen.

The U.S. media is, of course, [lavishly praising Zelensky](#), but I would bet that he has a cadre of American and possibly Israeli neoconservatives working diligently behind him to get it right, coaching him on what to say and do.

There might be U.S. government players also in on the act, to include NED (National Endowment for Democracy), CIA information specialists, State Department media consultants and observers from the National Security Council.

Indeed, there is as much a war going on over the airwaves and internet to influence thinking internationally as there is fighting taking place on the ground. One should conclude that the CIA is playing the central role in the “Russia Project” because of its ability to shield what it is doing from scrutiny.

Based on previous operations to overthrow governments in various places, one might assume that the so-called covert action approach is multi-level. It consists of media placements that are intended to sway opinion both inside and outside Russia and produce unrest, the identification and recruitment of Russian government officials when they travel overseas, and the support of dissidents both internally and externally who share a negative view of Moscow and its policies.

A major component in the approach is to obtain Western liberal support for harsh sanctions and other repressive measures against the Kremlin based on the fraudulent proposition that Putin and his associates are out to destroy “democracy” and “freedom.” Ironically, Americans are less “free” and also poorer because of the actions of their own government since 2001, not because of Vladimir Putin.

As was the case with Iraq, Afghanistan and the long list of American interventions, it is the neocons who are in front demanding a powerful military response, both to Russia and, inevitably, to Iran.

What is particularly noticeable is how the neocons and their liberal democracy promoting counterparts have in several areas dominated the foreign policies of both parties.

Leading neocon Bill Kristol, [who called the Biden speech](#) “a historic call to action on par with Ronald Reagan[‘s] ‘Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall speech,’” recently [also contributed](#):

“There would be no real prospect of an awakening in the United States and Europe were it not for the stand the Ukrainians have made. We would still be denying the threats we face. We would still be turning away from the urgency of the task we face. We would even, I daresay, still fail to appreciate the preciousness of the freedom and decency we have the obligation—and the honor—to defend. It is the Ukrainians who have shown us what free men and women can do, and what they are sometimes required to do, in defense of that freedom. It is the Ukrainians who have shown the world that we are in a new period of consequences. It is the Ukrainians who have given us the example of what it means today to fight back against brutality, and to fight for freedom.”

Kristol is, as so often, full of flag waving, chest puffing nonsense, peddling the notion that the United States has an obligation to police the world.

Another leading neocon and regular *Washington Post* and *The Atlantic* contributor Anne Applebaum [puts it this way](#) and in so doing expands the playing field to include much of the world:

“Unless democracies defend themselves together, the forces of autocracy will destroy them. I am using the word forces, in the plural, deliberately. Many American politicians would understandably prefer to focus on the

long-term competition with China. But as long as Russia is ruled by Putin, then Russia is at war with us too. So are Belarus, North Korea, Venezuela, Iran, Nicaragua, Hungary, and potentially many others.”

It would be nice, for a change, to end an article on a high note, but high notes are hard to find these days. If there is anything beyond Ukraine to demonstrate the insanity of U.S. foreign policy it would have to be, inevitably, [recent news out of Israel](#).

U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken was recently in Israel trying in part to sell the possibility that the Biden Administration might actually come to a non-proliferation agreement with Iran over its nuclear program. Israel strongly opposes any such move and its lobby in the U.S. led by various neocon think tanks has been working hard to kill any deal.

So, what did Blinken do? He asked Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett for suggestions of what might be done in lieu of an actual agreement. Naftali reportedly suggested harsher sanctions on Iran.

Cut it any way you want, but the renewal of 2015’s Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is beneficial for both the United States and all of Iran’s neighbors, and here the U.S. senior-most representative involved in the negotiations is asking the head of a foreign government to tell him what to do. Something is very wrong in Washington.

Philip M. Giraldi, Ph.D., is Executive Director of the Council for the National Interest, a 501(c)3 tax deductible educational foundation (Federal ID Number #52-1739023) that seeks a more interests-based U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Website is councilforthenationalinterest.org, address is P.O. Box 2157, Purcellville VA 20134 and its email is inform@cnionline.org



SEARCHING FOR WAR CRIMINALS

They are nearer than you think

By *Philip Giraldi*

The United States is now insisting that Russian President Vladimir Putin should be put on trial for “war crimes” committed in Ukraine. As Putin is still insisting that he will attend the upcoming G20 summit in November on the island of Bali, Indonesia, it will be a great opportunity to have U.S. Marshals snatch him from the stage and whisk him off to a federal courthouse in Virginia for justice to be served. Or a form of justice anyway, since the United States has no actual jurisdiction over where Putin’s alleged crimes might have taken place and it will be impossible to prove that he actually ordered anyone to carry out so-called “crimes against humanity.” We’ll see how it all works out.

Indeed, there is no other phrase that has been more misunderstood and generally abused of late than “war crimes” or “war criminals.” It belongs with several other labels, including “weapons of mass destruction” and “crimes against humanity” that are used to indicate an adversary has crossed a red line and is so deplorable that anything that is done to him either during actual fighting or in the aftermath is completely acceptable.

Going back to Greek and Roman times it has always been understood that even in wartime there are certain activities that are unacceptable, but the attempted definition and codification of “war crimes” as a concept is largely a twentieth century creation used to inflict additional punishment on the losers after the fighting is over.

The Treaty of Versailles that ended the First World War punished Germany far beyond what most would consider reasonable, largely because the victorious powers were able to do so without any consequences until the next war began. Likewise, the linked concepts of war crimes and crimes against humanity came largely out of the post-Second World War Nuremberg Trials, which shaped the legal arguments around alleged German behavior, not that of the allies.

The Second World War certainly included atrocities of various kinds on both sides, but the Anglo-American deliberate bombing of German cities has to stand out as particularly disproportionate. Forty-two thousand mostly civilians died in Hamburg in the 1943 firebombing and the bombing of Dresden in 1945, at a point when Germany was on the verge of defeat, was remarkable in that the city was not a military target and was full of refugees from the east. At least 200,000 civilians died.

Judge Andrew Napolitano has suggested that the greatest war crime in history, if one makes a case based on unnecessary human suffering, was President Harry Truman’s nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which almost certainly killed more than 200,000 mostly civilians, when Japan was preparing to surrender. As Truman was on the side that won the war and controlled the prosecution process, there were no legal consequences or punishment relating to his decision, though critics since 1945 have sometimes decried the first use of nuclear weapons.

If killing civilians unnecessarily is the standard definition of a war crime, then America’s most recent five presidents have been war criminals. In other words, historically speaking, accusations of war crimes, which have no real meaning in law and are both infinitely elastic and subject to interpretation, have often depended on which side of the fence one is standing on when the war ends.

And it gets more complicated than that, given the politics of what is sometimes referred to as the rules based international order, which in theory arose from the ashes of World War Two. The new world order was US-centric from the start, with the United Nations (UN) situated in New York City, the World Bank in Washington, and the dollar as the world's reserve currency.

At the UN, American primacy was reinforced through the creation of a Security Council, which alone has the power to authorize military action against a rogue state. The Security Council had five permanent members, each of whom was armed with a veto, meaning that no effective action against them could ever take place no matter what they had done. And so it has played out, with the U.S. plus China, Russia, Britain and France being effectively immune from censure authorizing military action by the United Nations.

It is of particular interest to observe that the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague was set up to deal with "war crimes and crimes against humanity" that were otherwise ignored. Neither the U.S., nor the Russians nor the Israelis recognize the authority of the court and the U.S. has stated that no ICC investigator will be allowed entry into the United States. Given that, it becomes possible to witness how the whole farce of war crimes and other violations of the new world order have played out in practice.

Currently the U.S. and its allies are waging economic warfare on Russia without an actual declaration of war, to include an avalanche of sanctions plus completely illegal confiscations of the property of Russian citizens. It is also blocking Moscow from the use of the international monetary conventions and systems that it has had access to.

The clearly stated intention is to destroy the Russian economy due to Russia having been charged by the U.S. government with the commission of what it is calling war crimes in its invasion of Ukraine. Vladimir Putin argues in turn that Ukraine's apparent intention to join NATO, which is a hostile military alliance directed against Russia, is a direct threat to his country and is already

manifesting itself in military action undertaken against breakaway parts of Ukraine which are largely inhabited by Russian speakers and ethnics.

There are other issues, but those are the most important. It should also be noted that the issues themselves were at least somewhat negotiable prior to the outbreak of fighting, which Putin sought to do but Joe Biden and NATO were not interested in. So ultimately the war, from a third-party point of view, is pitting a Russian vital interest against what really amounts to no genuine interest at all for NATO and the U.S., apart from goading the Russian bear and removing its government as a way to prevent against any change in the international order.

Since objective reality has no place in United States foreign policy, it is interesting to look at how the U.S. sees itself and how it regards other countries that are doing what Russia is doing or worse. When it comes to its own self-perception, America's so-called leaders believe that their global leadership role is one by right and they can do no wrong by virtue of a quality referred to as "American exceptionalism." That is of course a mythical attribute created to permit the United States to get away with mass murder and regime change without any consequences.

A principal beneficiary of American financial and political largesse is, of course, Israel, which consists not only of people "chosen" by Yahweh but also by the media, the United States Senate, House of Representatives and the White House. A comparison of what Russia is doing that is being condemned by Washington versus what both what the U.S. and Israel have been able to get away with might be considered to be in order.

Russia has invaded Ukraine after months of warnings that the status quo was untenable in national security terms, largely due to intentionally fruitless negotiations with stonewalling United States representatives and NATO. Israel, widely acknowledged to be an apartheid state, is currently bombing Syria on an almost daily basis, unnoticed by the U.S. media and the Biden Administration.

It in the past has attacked all its neighbors, including the renowned Seven Days War in June 1967 which was a surprise attack staged against Egypt, Syria and

Jordan. Subsequent to that war, Israel occupied nearly all of what had been Palestine. It also seized the Golan Heights belonging to Syria and has recently received consent from Washington to illegally annex Arab East Jerusalem as a part of Israel, making the whole of the city Israel's capital. The Golan Heights have also recently been annexed with Washington's approval and there are 700,000 heavily armed and violent Jewish settlers now sitting in 261 settlements on stolen Palestinian land on the West Bank.

And what has the United States and its allies done to dissuade Israel? Well, nothing. One rule for Israel and the U.S. and another quite different Washington dictated "rules based" system for everyone else, most particularly if one is Russian.

In fact, the more belligerently Israel behaves, the more it gets in terms of U.S. taxpayer money and made-in-USA weapons. Israel has also been the favored destination for traveling congress-critters of late because it is an election year and Jewish donors are being hotly pursued. Recently, a large group of Democrats was departing just before former Vice President Mike Pence arrived in Tel Aviv on Miriam Adelson's private jet so he could kiss Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's ring and also spend some quality time with Benjamin Netanyahu.

Ironically, while Joe Biden was turning the screws on Russia, the Congress was showering gifts on Israel above and beyond the billions of dollars in "aid" that the wealthy Jewish state already receives. Alison Weir of *If Americans Knew* [has examined](#) the recently signed pork laden 2022 federal government spending bill and has identified numerous line-item instances of money going directly to Israel or in support of causes that benefit Israel in some fashion. She estimates that Israel's economy, which is able to support both free medical care and higher education, now benefits to the tune of \$22 million per day from the United States taxpayer, for a total of \$8 billion per year, and the number might actually be much higher.

And there are other sources of income indirectly funded by the U.S. Treasury, most notably the ability of Israel-focused charities to contribute tax exempt money to Israeli foundations and groups. Many of the "charities" are essentially

fraudulent, funding the illegal settlements, domestic terrorism and other anti-Palestinian activities. Every artifice is used by some Jewish groups and billionaire donors to keep the U.S. dollars flowing to Israel while no one of any significance in the federal government complains about the double standard when one compares Israel to Russia. And the Zionist controlled media are completely silent.

The hypocrisy that pervades United States foreign policy is difficult to ignore, but Washington has successfully manipulated its financial instruments to keep its remaining friends and allies in line. Whether that will survive the inevitable pushback coming from Russia, China and a number of non-aligned nations remains to be seen. At a minimum, the Cold War alignment that was broken in 1991 and which seems to again be taking shape around the Ukraine issue appears to have exceeded its expiry date. Ukraine might indeed wind up doing severe damage to the Russian economy, but it seems plausible that it will also bring with it the long overdue demise of American hegemonistic fantasies and NATO.

Philip M. Giraldi, Ph.D., is Executive Director of the Council for the National Interest, a 501(c)3 tax deductible educational foundation (Federal ID Number #52-1739023) that seeks a more interests-based U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Website is [council for the national interest.org](http://councilforthenationalinterest.org), address is P.O. Box 2157, Purcellville VA 20134 and its email is inform@cnionline.org.

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS



RECESSION? DEPRESSION? WORSE?

By *Gregory Mannarino*, TradersChoice.net

Let's start off with this...

“IF the US would go into a recession, that would be a step UP from where we are now.” – GM

Today the global economy is “functioning”, or should I say being driven, into a deliberate crisis-to-crisis mechanism which assures only one thing— **CENTRAL BANKS WILL CONTINUE TO INFLATE.**

Not only are central banks determined to inflate, but they will also keep the crisis-to-crisis machine propelling the world and its citizenry much deeper into debt slavery.

Look around, there is a phenomenon unfolding that VERY few people are really paying any attention to, and that is this... *an entirely new demographic is quickly emerging*. Wealth is being transferred, FASTER, right up to the 1 and 2 percenters.

This new demographic has already pushed most Americans well below a “middle-class” lifestyle. Moreover, former members of the middle class are burning through their savings rapidly, while at the same time they are continuing to borrow at a feverish pace. All of this is made monumentally worse by skyrocketing inflation with no end in sight.

The world is now living under the specter of not only rapidly rising inflation, but also the threat of shortages of food and energy—which will further exacerbate inflationary pressures.

The expanding Russia/Ukraine war has sparked nations around the world to VASTLY increase their military budgets, and hundreds of billions of dollars—soon to be in the trillions, in cash and weaponry—is being thrown at Ukraine in what has now become a proxy war with the United States.

Funding/supporting the war is also massively inflationary—**even without sanctions OR supply chain disruptions**. Moreover, the people of the world should count on this war “crisis,” and every other “crisis,” to be prolonged for as long as possible to allow for more cash to be magically created to fund it.

As I said at the opening of this article, a recession would be a step up from where we are now, and I believe that people are being “conditioned” for something much worse.

Understanding that there is no relief in sight from increasing inflationary pressures, and what will certainly amount to more and more crises, which will include food and energy shortages, people need to start to seriously ponder how these events are going to impact them moving forward.

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM



MAKING THAT FIRST MOVE

By *Bradley J. Steiner*, [American Combato](#)

Failing to avoid trouble, the next best action is to preempt it. That is, **ATTACK THE ATTACKER!** which we first formulated as our basic strategy in *American Combato* in the early 1970's, for anyone seeking self-defense instruction and training for the real world.

OK . . . attack the attacker. Simply and plainly put, and easy to understand. The problem lies in the doing. That is, confronted by an obvious threat that will not go away and that you realize must be defended against—the sooner the better—the big question is: **WILL YOU?**

For the typically decent individual it can be a tremendously difficult thing to “trip the wire” and take offensive action in self-defense. Nevertheless, it must be done, and if you aspire to be able to handle real world dangerous violence you must learn to do it.

Merely learning reliable attacks and attack combinations will not guarantee that you will employ them without hesitation if they are needed.

This concept applies to weapons and unarmed combat.

There have been people whose skills and in some instances whose armament was quite adequate to deal with a dangerous threat; but because these people were not sufficiently attack minded their potential for effective management of their crisis proved to be of no use.

So how can you be assured that, should the worst happen, you will go into aggressive, ferocious, preemptive action?

There is only one way: You require a made-up mind, and a decision that is settled within you regarding what you will do if it ever happens “for real.”

“If I am placed in a dangerous situation where violence against me or those I love presents itself, then I am going to render that threat harmless. I will attack and keep on attacking until my enemy has lost the will and the capacity to cause me or any harm.”

Read that above statement a few times. “Feel” its meaning. Get with it.

That is what must become your inviolate decision, made well ahead of time—right now, in fact!—so that there is no need to argue with yourself, equivocate, hesitate, consider, or otherwise delay a millisecond in a real situation.

This is not a trivial point. No instructors that we ever had (save three) ever addressed this point—and they did so indirectly. We believe that it should be brought out clearly and deliberately, stated firmly, and PUSHED to the Nth degree in mentally conditioning our students. It is too vital to be left to chance.

We are confident that our teachings—in person, and via such mediums as DVDs and CD publications, etc.—go to good people who have no evil desire to harm anyone, but who merely wish to have an elevated level of competency in self-defense.

Our understanding of such people (whom we have been teaching for well over 50 years) is that their essential decency and reasonable lifestyle makes for a possible mental block against violently harming another human being.

That has simply got to go. When a crisis strikes you cannot see “another human being”, but instead must realize that this scum before you will happily beat you, stab you, shoot you, stomp you, or do whatever its deplorable excuse for a “mind” enjoins it to do.

It is not fully human, it is not at all civilized, and when it decided to be a predator it gave up any rights to being treated with anything but ruthless disregard and brutality. **NOW GIVE IT WHAT IT DESERVES AND DO NOT LET YOURSELF OR ANYONE YOU LOVE BE VICTIMIZED BY THIS CRAWLING EXCREMENT!**

These are the things that should be pounded repeatedly and again into your head by a qualified teacher, or—if you either train in a less-than-fully-adequate combat system, or on your own with DVD and book instruction—by you, yourself!

Your goal is simple, legal, honorable, moral, and by any rational standard, reasonable: It is to be 100 percent prepared to dish out the most fiercely merciless brutality when one or more extralegal pieces of s—t decide that you or someone you love will be their next victim.

You want to be prepared always, during your normal daily activities of work, school, recreation, family time, whatever, to turn into a vicious warrior—a merciless savage who can meet the worst and most dangerous violent garbage that may come at him from amongst the dregs of the society in which he lives.

We hope that you get this message. In those cases where intended victims of violence exploded with fierce action and the will to destroy their victimizers, they did simply fine!

The sewage does not expect that its intended prey will be able to offer much if any resistance. Otherwise, the sewage would look for another person to attack.

So, thank God you will have the advantage of surprise, which as any military tactician knows is more than half the battle won, if the appropriate use is made of that advantage.

Please . . . for your sake and for the sake of anyone dear to you, take this to heart.

Decide. Decide now and decide with all your heart, soul, and mind, that if you ever find yourself (if you ever again find yourself—because we know that former victims of violence are among those who come to us for training) in a situation where scum has intruded upon your existence and threatens to maim or to kill you, it will be you who makes that vital first, preemptive move—and you will crush that evil bastard like a used paper cup!

You can do it. Just make up your mind that you WILL do it.

TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY



By *Joe Doran*

SELLING THE SYNTHETIC UNREAL

Should people care whether conversations they have with others are real, as long as they're "authentic"?

Should people worry about pervasive surveillance at their jobs, in their vehicles, and even their homes, if the surveillance is providing more efficiency?

Should people strive to have real experiences, when illusory ones can engage and satisfy, and even offer greater sensory options at much lower cost and environmental impact?

Those are all questions that might reasonably be asked about the most important tech trends of 2022, as outlined by a new Accenture Report, "Meet Me In The Metaverse," featured on the World Economic Forum (WEF) website.

The report argues that the increasingly “synthetic reality” around the corner is nothing to be alarmed about. The efficiencies and customized services and products it offers will render questions about its illusions, intrusions on privacy, and behavioral modifications...well, just not worth asking.

The report does point to legitimate innovations and empowering aspects of blockchain technology. The problem is that it also encourages what might be called the commercialization of “illusory value,” or actively conditioning people to see value in objectively dubious digital phenomena and creations.

Perhaps the most insidious aspect of the report is that it gives specific advice to the businessworld to plan for and counterprogram against objections to some of the more ersatz projected commercializations of the metaverse.

Four Trends That Will Shape Reality and Ourselves

Accenture is one of the world’s leading providers of business intelligence. The mult-national, multi-billion dollar corporation provides consulting to 91 of the the current Fortune 100 top companies, and more than three-quarters of the Global 500.

Their recent report identified four top trends that they advise companies to pay attention to 2022:

1. “Webme”
2. Programmable World
3. The Unreal (Making Synthetic Authentic)
4. Computing The Impossible

Webme Envisions “Persistent 3D” Living

From always connected to always virtually immersed—that’s the vision of what the metaverse may likely become in a “WebMe” future, according to Accenture.

Their report forecasts that the metaverse and web3 technologies including tokenized assets, digital ownership and interactions enabled by NFTs, DAOs and cryptocurrency incentivised blockchain networks, amount to nothing less than the evolution of the Internet:

“So, our current systems are designed for constraints that the next generation of the internet won’t have. Metaverse and Web3 innovations are transforming the fundamental underpinnings and operation of the virtual world. Instead of viewing the internet as a disparate collection of sites and apps, metaverse efforts envision a persistent 3D environment, with its own sense of place, where moving from work to a social platform is as simple as walking across the street.

“Building new platforms, products and services; securing partnerships and technology; and identifying the use cases and business models will take a lot of work.

“But behind the uncertainty, there is tremendous opportunity. The last time the internet went through a shift of this magnitude, Amazon, Netflix and Google went from narrow businesses to internet titans. The table is set for the next dominant players in every industry.

“...Early efforts show a new vision of the future of the internet, with the creation of immersive digital-only worlds as well as a deeper blurring between digital and physical.”

BMW is highlighted as an example of a company engaging in a real world use case of virtualization.

Nvidia's Omniverse technology is being used by BMW to create digital twins of 31 distinct plants. The models employ real-time data to generate a 3D world that reflects everything from the machinery on the floor to the individuals working at the stations.

The environment is utilized for a variety of purposes, including teaching robots how to traverse the factory, bringing together designers from across the world to try out new line layouts, and training simulations for specific roles.

Accenture predicts that the metaverse will depend on web3 technologies to allow data to flow through different virtual landscapes and “worlds,” while retaining the ability to verify things like integrity, identity and asset ownership, etc.

“Web3 changes the way we treat data by establishing provenance, veracity and value. For all Web3 efforts, the goal is to create a layer of trust across the web by giving people control of their own data, letting them “own” a pair of digital shoes or securely authenticate their identities.”

The report advises companies to seek out expertise in the technologies required to build and participate in metaverse and web3:

“Enterprises will need 3D artists, game designers and experts on the platforms on which they plan to build. Companies will need expertise in multiple blockchains and relationships with different consortiums. Because of the distributed nature of Web3, they must also find partners to go to market with.”

Programmable World

Digital technology will increasingly allow “control, personalization, and automation” to be more seamlessly woven into our daily lives, according to Accenture.

The report identifies three facets of a “programmable world”: the Connected, the Experiential and the Material.

“Connected” involves more pervasive use of physical IoT equipped objects assets to feed constant data to “digital twin” models of the physical world:

“These digital models of the physical world give businesses real-time insight into their environments and operations. The global digital twin market, valued at \$3.21 billion in 2020, is expected to reach \$184.5 billion by 2030.”

A recent Canadian government-tied SCALE AI project grant illustrates how AI-powered real-time monitoring and modeling is growing in industry, and might soon be pervasive in society.

The grant provided 25 million to several projects. One involved a “Smart platform” for optimizing agricultural yield via AI monitoring, to be implemented in a year round indoor “vertical farming” environment.

Another grant involved using AI to use data from healthcare workers' geographic area, schedules, and skills, to manage healthcare response for in-home care, and even worker compensation.

The point isn't whether an increasingly “Connected,” AI mediated world can improve efficiencies of commercial or noncommercial processes. It obviously is already doing so.

But the level of privacy, automation and consequent impacts on human behaviors and freedoms may well amount to a fundamental dehumanization.

Do we really want to be tracked every moment of our lives by AI “efficiency optimizing” intelligences?

Augmented Reality, made possible by eyewear and other sensory devices, constitutes the “Experiential” part of a programmable world. The idea is that people will be able to use such technologies to engage in and create experiences that otherwise would not be possible.

The “Material” aspect of programmable reality is already happening via the ability of things like 3D printing and other tech advances to be leveraged to deliver highly customized products that cater to individual desires.

The Accenture report says that trend will grow, and advises that companies that gear themselves to provide “programmable world” functionality will reap rewards.

“The arrival of the programmable world will be the sharpest turning point for people and businesses in decades. We’re about to live in environments that can physically transform on command, that can be customized and controlled, and that can change faster and more often than we have ever seen before.”

Computing The Impossible

The least detailed section of the Accenture report nonetheless identified Quantum and other advanced supercomputing capabilities as something businesses needed to examine.

The vast quantity of data being supplied via digital acquisition is only being exploited to a fractional extent, because of current computing power limitations.

But new super computing technologies will be changing that, and very soon, the report predicts.

It advises companies to assess what sorts of business processes and problems might be addressed via super computing capabilities, and to build strategic partnerships to tap into the innovations on the horizon.

The **Trends Journal** has covered details and ramifications of quantum and supercomputing in articles such as [“MICROSOFT ANNOUNCES GLOBAL AI ‘SINGULARITY’”](#) (1 Mar 2022)

Turning Synthetic To Authentic: The Coming Tech Synthetic Sell

Perhaps the most controversial content in the “Meet Me In The Metaverse” report is contained in the section on “The Unreal.”

The section pushes for consumer deception in several troubling ways.

For example, it presents the idea that interactions with “synthetic” products and even intelligences will soon not be distinguishable from the natural and human ones—and that in many cases, people won’t and shouldn’t care.

The report provides examples such as consulting with medical expertise about personal matters, or seeing something in a commercial or entertainment context:

“When we see the news, we want to know if the video of the president is real—but when we watch the latest Doritos commercial, maybe it doesn’t really matter. Sometimes, we may prefer the unreal, like when we speak to a synthetic nurse about a skin rash or train an AI model with synthetic data adjusted to counter historical discrimination.”

The report argues that at some point, people won’t make judgements based on whether some digital or lab created phenomenon or product is “real,” but instead whether it qualifies as “authentic.”

The **Trends Journal** has previously covered some of the innovations and controversies surrounding Synthetic Biology or “Synbio” in [“SYNBIO AND BIO PHARMA: YES, THERE’S HUGE UPSIDE”](#) (15 Mar 2022).

It’s true that synthetically made cotton, or wood, meat or insulin may be genetically indistinguishable from naturally produced alternatives.

But the Accenture report appears to make the case that people will be more accepting of the synthetic “unreal,” if the origin and nature of synthetic products is de-emphasized.

The report focuses more on AI in its discussion of the “unreal,” and says that people are already interacting more with AI systems without really thinking about it, whether it's reading AI created news stories, AI operators that route company calls and queries, etc.

At one point the report admits that AI algorithms are exerting influence in online communications and debate in a way that many who value free speech rights object to:

“Some believe the very use of AI algorithms in social media has created filter bubbles, echo chambers and algorithmic confounding.”

The **Trends Journal** has pointed out how AI technology is also being deployed on Commerce platforms like Amazon to create “individual” — and many believe—unfair price gouging (See [“AI IS DETERMINING HOW MUCH YOU PAY FOR THAT.”](#) 9 Nov 2021.)

In a subsection advising businesses on actions to take regarding the synthetic “unreal,” the report actually advises engaging in propaganda conditioning, to turn people away from asking whether what’s being provided is real:

“Since we know that being real has no direct bearing on being good, being real should not be the guiding star for business or society. Rather, we propose authenticity as the new compass. Authenticity means being true to oneself and genuine in a way that others can attest to.”

The statement does more than play twisting linguistic games with words like “real,” “authentic” and “genuine.”

It amounts to a clarion call to commercialize and embrace deception as a business model.

Fooling customers into accepting illusory experiences and conditioning them to perceive value in products, while offering little that is objectively valuable, is promoted as part of the profit model of the synthetic unreal.

“Being true to oneself” has been a modern siren call to reject cold hard objective reality that might stand in the way of one’s fanciful desires.

Synthetic Unreal “innovations” may promote and capitalize that relativism on a radical new level.

“Meet Me In The Metaverse” calls for using tech driven social engineering to condition people to actively reject expectations of acquiring products or services of objective value from commercial interactions.

Little wonder that people are already spending seemingly absurd amounts of money to purchase crude NFT digital art, virtual fashion wear, virtual land and other “property” in metaverse worlds.

While advocating generally for ways to profit from the synthetic unreal, the Accenture report does offer some caution about staying within the bounds of applicable laws.

It notes for example a 2019 California BOT Disclosure Law, which requires the disclosure of the use of AI bots to sell goods or services, or influence votes in elections.

Technology of Freedom Or Deception?

One of the shames of Accenture’s endorsement of commercial deception made possible by metaverse related technologies, is that blockchain and related web3 software tech can offer things that are objectively useful and valuable.

The real question is the motivations and purposes to which the technology might be employed.

Those who see humans as a scourge that must be more and more tightly monitored and controlled, will build web3 and metaverse technologies that seduce or imprison people into highly illusory experiences that limit their impacts in the “real world.”

To the extent excess humans still exist, corporate empowered elites will try to extract value from those masses, while minimizing environmental costs.

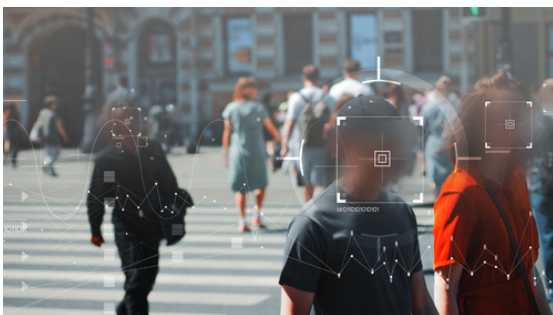
On the other hand, those who are true humanists might leverage web3 to create decentralized user and community centric projects and technologies that free people from the grip of traditional tech and elitist powers.

The Accenture [report](#) illustrates that people will need to become as educated as possible about the battle lines and issues at stake, in order to fight effectively for the future of humankind.

For related articles and info, see:

- [“ZUCKERBERG: AI WILL PLAY GOD IN YOUR METAWORLD”](#) (1 Mar 2022)
- [“METAVERSE: THE NEW COLLECTIVE”](#) (14 Dec 2021)
- [“CANCELED IN THE METAVERSE”](#) (16 Nov 2021)
- [“METAWORLD”](#) (Top Trend 2022, 30 Nov 2021)
- [“AMAZON CAUGHT ILLEGALLY UNDERCUTTING COMPETITION”](#) (19 Oct 2021)
- [“TRUST OUR TWITTER ALGORITHM, NOT YOUR LYING EYES”](#) (3 Aug 2021)

THIS WEEK IN SURVEILLANCE



RETROACTIVE FACIAL RECOGNITION SURVEILLANCE THROUGHOUT EU.

Europe is intent on building the world’s largest integrated facial recognition surveillance system, as part of it’s “Prüm II”

anti-terrorism initiative.

That’s according to Ella Jakubowska of the European Digital Rights watchdog organization.

Speaking to *Wired* magazine, Jakubowska said the EU is determined to create “the most extensive biometric surveillance infrastructure that I think we will ever have seen in the world.”

Considering China’s infamous surveillance fueled social credit system, that’s saying something.

The original Prüm treaty, which dates from 2005, contained protocols to increase cross border exchange of data sharing, involving things like fingerprints and DNA, asset ownership, etc.

But the latest proposals embodied by “Prüm II” legislation involves much more. Human rights and privacy advocates have said it essentially seeks to implement an AI powered biometric surveillance network database throughout the Eurozone.

One of the most significant proposed “upgrades” in Prüm II is the incorporation of face photographs and the ability to run facial recognition algorithms against them.

Facial recognition use has been controversial in Western democracies including the United States, where some jurisdictions have prohibited law enforcement use of the technology.

The **Trends Journal** covered some of those battles in [“DRONE ATTACKS AND SURVEILLANCE ARE ON THE RISE”](#) (16 Nov 2021).

Though the EU is considering some restrictions on biometric data tracking as part of its AI Act, including on police use of face recognition in public spaces, the trendline is toward expanding biometric use.

For example, Prüm II, allows use of “retroactive” facial recognition.

That means data collected by surveillance cameras and other equipment can essentially be accessed at any time for authorized purposes.

It makes for distinctions without a real difference, in the erection of a biometric surveillance network, watchdog advocates contend.

Jakubowska even argued that so-called retrospective use of biometric data could prove even more problematic than real-time security surveillance:

“When you are applying facial recognition to footage or images retrospectively, sometimes the harms can be even greater, because of the capacity to look back at, say, a protest from three years ago, or to see who I met five years ago, because I’m now a political opponent.”

For recent related **Trends Journal** articles, see:

- [“COVERING YOUR FACE NOT ENOUGH: GOV’T DEVELOPING WHOLE-BODY BIOMETRICS TO IDENTIFY YOU”](#) (22 Mar 2022)
- [“INDIA’S VAST DATA NETWORK ENDS PRIVACY FOR 1.3 BILLION PEOPLE”](#) (7 Dec 2021)

TRENDS IN CRYPTOS



LIGHTNING STRIKES U.S. COMPANIES

Bitcoin's price may have seen some downturn over the last week, but several major announcements might just prove to be lightning in a bottle for the king of cryptos.

Strike CEO Jack Mallers disclosed a number of high-powered agreements, including one with ecommerce giant Shopify, that will see Strike's Bitcoin Lightning Network be utilized to integrate bitcoin transactions.

The news came at the 2022 Bitcoin Conference held in Miami. Maller took the stage Thursday to announce the major news:

"You're gonna be able to walk into a grocery store, to Whole Foods, to a Chipotle, if you want to use a Lightning node over Tor, you do that," Mallers said on stage at Bitcoin 2022. "Any online merchant that uses Shopify can

accept payments without the 1949 boomer [credit card] network, receive it instantly, cash final, no intermediary, no 3% fee.”

Maller’s said Strike is working with companies including NCR, a major Point-of-Sale provider, Blackhawk, and Shopify to enable its Lightning Network bitcoin payment technology.

Maller’s presentation revealed that McDonald’s, Walmart, Walgreens and many more U.S. retailers will have Bitcoin payment functionality as a result.

A press release noted:

“Strike’s integration enables Shopify merchants to diversify their existing payment options and reach untapped global markets and purchasing power. Strike’s integration also allows Shopify merchants to generate savings through low-cost payment processing. By instantly converting bitcoin (BTC) payments to dollars, Strike removes certain complexities merchants face in holding bitcoin.”

Mallers also said at the conference, “I’ve been working with Senator Cynthia Lummis [R-WY] to make sure that in the United States of America we support this open payment standard and it isn't threatened by anybody else.”

Major Payment Processors and Investment Platforms Also Seeing The Light

Just a day before Maller’s announcement, Paypal, Square, BitPay and investment app provider Robinhood all announced Lightning Network integrations to speed Bitcoin transactions while reducing fees.

Add it up, and it basically opens up a currency use case for Bitcoin, as YahooNews [coverage](#) of the conference noted.

Bitcoin, which is legally considered a commodity in the U.S., nonetheless has features that have led some to describe it as more of a “money commodity.”

It can be transacted directly between parties with requisite wallet software. It can also be held in custody by third party centralized exchanges and trading platforms.

But Strike’s Bitcoin Lightning Network, has offered a solution that allows Bitcoin to be transacted much more efficiently than just relying on the bitcoin blockchain network alone.

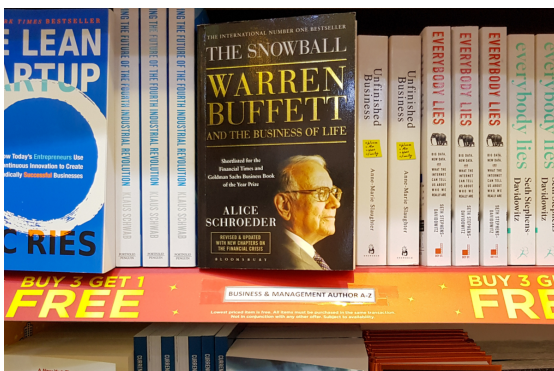
Lightning Network is like a “superhighway” that uses smart contracts to keep track of crypto transactions that two parties participate in, allowing many “off-chain” transactions, with only certain final outcome states written to the Bitcoin blockchain.

Robinhood also made news for announcing its intentions to expand its investment platform to international markets, with crypto trading being at the forefront of its strategy.

But the crackle and pop surrounding Strike and the Lightning Network was probably the biggest news to emerge from the 2022 Bitcoin Conference.

Mallers previously shook the world—or perhaps more specifically, central banks and the IMF—with last year’s Conference announcement that El Salvador would implement the Lightning Network for bitcoin legal tender adoption.

THIEL CALLS OUT “FINANCIAL GERONTOCRACY” THAT OPPOSES CRYPTO



Peter Thiel, co-founder of Paypal and the Founders Fund venture capital firm, attacked Warren Buffet, James Dimon, and Larry Fink as a “financial gerontocracy”

conspiring to hobble the price of cryptocurrencies.

Buffet is founder and chair of Berkshire Hathaway, Dimon is chair and CEO of JPMorgan Chase, and Fink is chair and CEO of the Blackrock private equity firm.

All have expressed skepticism regarding cryptocurrencies. Buffet once called Bitcoin “rat poison squared” and said it “has no unique value at all.”

The three have chosen not to allocate assets to crypto, which Thiel called “a deeply political choice” and told the crowd at the Bitcoin 2022 conference on 7 April that “we have to push back on that.”

Thiel claimed that the value of Bitcoin alone could equal that of the world’s gold holdings or even that of the U.S. equity market but that these “enemies” of crypto have held its value down by not embracing it.

The world’s gold is estimated to be worth \$1.3 trillion; the value of U.S. stocks is calculated to be about \$115 trillion, according to the *Financial Times*.

Bitcoin in total is currently worth about \$830 billion.

Thiel bought hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of Bitcoin before it began its meteoric price rise during the COVID era, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

“Why has Bitcoin not yet gone up to \$100,000, to a million dollars?” Thiel said. “Why has it not yet converged with gold or even with the equity markets more broadly?”

Thiel told the cheering throng that Bitcoin is part of a “revolutionary youth movement.”

“It’s a movement as a political question, whether this movement is going to succeed, or whether the enemies of the movement are going to succeed in stopping us.”

Thiel is a noted libertarian and conservative political activist who once described Donald Trump as someone who would rebuild America.

Neither Buffet, Dimon, nor Fink commented on Thiel's critique.

BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES



MARCH MADNESS IN CRYPTOS DISGUISED BY UNCERTAIN PRICE

ACTION. Crypto price action over the past six weeks has been down, up, and mainly sideways.

But the seeming “volatile malaise” in token prices may not be a true indicator of where cryptos are as a sector in a very uncertain world economy.

Data shows March 2022 was actually the third highest all-time month on record for crypto venture investment inflows.

It underscores that blockchain technologies and projects are continuing to attract significant interest, despite spotty price performance.

3.5 billion in venture capital funding was spread among more than 225 crypto companies, according to theblockcrypto.com.

This increased the first quarter investment total to roughly \$12.5 billion.

Crypto Investment Funds Benefitting

In addition to venture capital inflows, mainline crypto investment funds attracted more money.

The Eurozone has seen some of the greatest benefit, according to YahooFinance. The majority of the inflows from late March to early April went to European based funds, with the remainder going to funds situated in the Americas.

ETC Group has been a recent winner, \$87 million in recent investment. The company, which oversees close to a billion dollars in assets under management, had the world's first centrally cleared Bitcoin exchange traded product on Deutsche Börse XETRA, the largest ETF trading venue in Europe.

Unsurprisingly, the largest cryptos, including Bitcoin, Ethereum, Solana and Cardano, have been targets of investors.

Still, the crypto sector continues to be affected by a downbeat current economic picture, regulation uncertainties, and crypto focused sanctions involving the Russia - Ukraine conflict.

For many, dwindling relative income in an inflationary environment is clearly going to core items like food, rent and fuel.

QUANT ADDS POLYGON TO ITS INTEROPERABILITY SOLUTION. Quant (QNT), a project focused on enabling distributed ledgers to “talk” to each other, announced the inclusion of the Polygon blockchain in its Overledger technology.

The addition means Polygon assets and data can now flow to and from other blockchains (and non-blockchain DLTs) supported by Quant's Overledger.

A 4 April press release by Quant noted:

“Overledger 2.2.3 provides new access to Polygon mainnet and increases API support for Polygon Mumbai testnet. It also introduces new APIs for tier-two QRC-20 smart contract functions to issue payments and easily retrieve a list of supported tokens from Overledger.”

The update means the Quant Overledger now includes extended ERC-20 token support for the top five tokens on Polygon mainnet, including, Wrapped Ether (WETH), USD Coin (USDC), Tether USD (USDT), Wrapped Matic (WMATIC) and Dai Stablecoin (DAI).

Quant has use cases for central banks (including CBDC creation and functionality), enterprises, crypto exchanges, and businesses that want to create apps that transact with different crypto and fiat currencies.

According to the company, via “patented cross-DLT technology, available via REST API, Overledger provides a range of powerful cross-DLT transaction types. This allows applications to easily access, update and move data and assets held on all the DLTs and blockchains our customers use to operate their businesses.”

The **Trends Journal** has covered the emerging importance of blockchain interoperability in other articles such as [“WEB3 WILL FORCE CHANGE IN THE ENTERPRISE”](#) (8 Mar 2022) and [“FED MOVES A STEP CLOSER TO CBDC FUNCTIONALITY”](#) (5 Oct 2021).

BITCOIN TO THE MAX. It’s unsurprising that Bitcoin maximalists had a lot to say at the Bitcoin 2022 Conference in Miami this past week.

Bitcoin maximalists see much virtue in the original crypto, and very little value in other projects. The **Trends Journal** has talked about the subject in articles including [“WHY BITCOIN MAXIMALISM GETS IT WRONG”](#) (18 Jan 2022).

But downtalking “shitcoins” aside, several celebrity and industry speakers did reaffirm what many who are drawn to the king of cryptos see in the project.

Ark Invest CEO, Cathie Wood commented during the conference:

“I think the most interesting thing that’s happened... I’m seeing the politics around Bitcoin changing radically. Because it has become THE single issue that some people are voting on, and this is bipartisan.”

Strike CEO Jack Mallers had some choice words for legacy financial system powers in his talk, according to stockhead.com.au:

“[Bitcoin] is not issued by a government, it's not a company, BofA [Bank of America] didn't found it and rebrand it.”

“In reality, payment networks have not innovated in over 50 years. That's insane...”

“Bitcoin can change the world, but the world cannot change Bitcoin...”

“If the boomers want to come on, they can come on. It's for everybody.”

Ricardo Salinas, one of Mexico's richest businessmen, said he holds more than half of his wealth in bitcoin, and added: “We've been victims of the fiat fraud for the whole century... I have orange-pilled a lot of our friends.”

TRENDS IN THE COVID WAR



ALBERTA RESIDENTS CHALLENGE COVID WAR RESTRICTIONS IN COURT, CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS WERE 'TRAMPLED'

A group of Canadians filed a constitutional challenge in December 2020, claiming that Alberta's government acted illegally when it forced COVID-19 mandates and lockdowns in response to the outbreak, and its chief medical officer was grilled last week.

The group claims that COVID-19 is not dangerous to the vast majority of individuals, and the government's reaction did more to hurt the community than good, the *Financial Times* reported.

Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's chief medical officer of health, was questioned by Leighton Grey, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, about several topics, including why her office did not stress to Canadians to get healthier and lose weight to reduce bad outcomes from infection.

"You never said, 'You know, it would really help you, it would really help your health, if you would get your weight under control,'" he said.

Hinshaw responded that obesity is a “chronic condition, it’s not a condition that can be “changed in a short period of time.” Hinshaw said obesity is not simply “a willpower problem.”

“I would just like to reiterate the ethical principle that all of these deaths mattered,” she said.

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on COVID-19 and how obesity and other comorbidities dramatically increase the risk of severe infection and death. (See [“OBESITY GROWS IN STATES WHERE AT LEAST 35 PERCENT ARE CONSIDERED OBESE.”](#) [“COVID-19 & OBESITY: THE ELEPHANT IS STILL IN THE ROOM”](#) and [“COVID VICTIMS: THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY FALL.”](#))

The lawyers from the Justice Center for Constitutional Freedoms, who are representing the plaintiffs, called out Hinshaw’s language during the outbreak.

She called vaccine skeptics “non-believers” and “conspiracy theorists.”

TNC News also mentioned that lawyers brought up an incident in October where Hinshaw blamed a 14-year-old’s death on the virus, when the teen actually died of brain cancer.

Hinshaw has been dodging her court appearance for a year and was accused of taking a vacation when she was due in court.

“Albertans are currently experiencing the greatest collective violation of civil liberties this province has ever known,” Grey said. “Yet, there is no war, no calamitous natural disaster, no catastrophic loss of critical infrastructure, and no dramatic, overwhelming, sweeping loss of life.”

TRENDPOST: *Rebel News had a reporter inside the courtroom who said Grey made Hinshaw “admit she has no training in mental health policy, religious and cultural practices, economics and business, sports and recreation policy,*

university or educational policy or governance, travel and tourism policy, yet her orders impacted all of those areas.

Hinshaw said the province did everything it could to “balance the benefits of containing the illness with the unintended harm of the measures.”

The Global News reported that Alberta's tourism industry normally generates about \$8.2 billion before the COVID-19 outbreak, but it is expected to only pull in \$5.2 billion this year due to lingering challenges in the industry.

Sue You

The lawsuit was brought by two churches and other individuals who claim the province’s nearly four dozen health edicts violated their charter rights. (See [“CANADA: LOCKDOWN LUNACY, GESTAPO 2.0”](#) and [“CANADIAN HOTELS: BUSINESS DOWN, INSURANCE COSTS SKYROCKET.”](#))

About 4.3 million people live in Alberta and the average age of death from the virus is 78. There have been a total of 4,104 total deaths.

Grey also brought up the time Hinshaw mentioned the realities of a "new normal" in March 2020 when there were seven cases of COVID-19.

"What did you mean at the time by a new normal?" he asked.

Hinshaw said she was referring to the unknowns of the virus and how she thinks we can all "remember a time where going to work with a mild cold was considered not just normal, but proof of the dedication to work."

HALF OF THE AMERICANS POLLED SAY THEY ARE NOT TAKING CARE OF THEIR HEALTH



About half of the Americans polled in a recent survey said they are not taking care of their health and many said they don't know where to start.

OnePoll conducted the survey that was commissioned by Fullscript for World Health Day and found that of the 2,000 polled, 53 percent did not consider their lifestyle “healthy,” and 39 percent said they do not know the first steps in getting a grip on their health.

“We believe that a person's well being is best guided by a practitioner who can understand their goals and offer the most such evil starting point for their health journey—therefore, we weren't surprised to say that half of the respondents would like their doctor to play a larger role in their health,” Jeff Gladd, M.D., chief medical officer at Fullscript, said. “Through regular care, this relationship will help guide sustainable progress, as well as support any disruptions to momentum.”

TRENDPOST: *Though consulting a medical professional seems like a smart decision, there seems to be a lack of motivation among these individuals who are unable to begin their “health journeys” on their own.*

There has never been an easier time in human history to have access to valuable information to put you on the right track to get healthier. There are countless free apps, YouTube videos, and other online content.

But, of course, no doctor can make someone opt for a salad instead of a Big Mac. That is up to the individual. It is also worth noting that many schools don't teach the subject to children.

The survey found that most said they will begin taking a healthier approach to life at 36. About 78 percent of those asked said they wanted to focus on their physical health followed by 73 percent who wanted to improve their diets.

Plus-Sized People Not Feeling the Love

There is a push from plus-sized shoppers who feel clothing companies that produce activewear are not doing enough to meet their needs.

“We’ve talked for years about how painfully ironic it is that it is somehow more profitable in capitalism to exclude fat bodies than it is to take our money,” Marianne Kirby, an author, who wants “bigger-bodied” people to reclaim the term “fat.” She told *The Wall Street Journal* that overweight individuals tend to avoid new activities due to the lack of properly fitting attire and gear.

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the obesity epidemic in the country. (See [“THE BOTTOM LINE: DAIRY QUEEN FINDS NEW WAYS TO MAKE AMERICANS FATTER, DUMBER, AND SICKER.”](#))

The World Health Organization said the number of those around the world considered obese in 2030 will be more than double the amount in 2010.

The problem attracted new attention during to COVID-19 outbreak because those who are obese are far more likely to suffer complications compared to the healthier population.

The *WSJ* reported that some brands once avoided overweight individuals because they wanted to protect the bad publicity of being worn by someone overweight. The paper pointed to Mike Jeffries, the former CEO of Abercrombie & Fitch, who said in 2006, “A lot of people don’t belong [in our clothes].”

The report said companies like Adidas, Nike, and Under Armour have added larger sizes for its customers to meet the demand, but the paper pointed out that even in these cases, most times the sizes top out at 3X.

There are new brands that will meet the demand of the country's extending waistline. The Yitty shapewear line from Fabletics will come in sizes up to 6X.

TRENDDPOST: *The fallout from the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdowns has still not been realized. We reported in our 3 August 2021 issue that fast-food sales across the U.S. surged in 2020. (See [“FATTENING UP: FAST FOOD SALES SURGE.”](#))*

In 2018, 73 percent of U.S. adults were overweight and almost 43 percent were obese, as measured by body mass index, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 31 percent of children age 6 and older are overweight and about 20 percent are obese, the Kaiser Family Foundation has estimated.

Politicians crashed the economy to ostensibly protect us from the coronavirus ... which largely attacks the obese and Type 2 diabetics that, as the data proves, became less healthy with the lockdowns.

And, as we have noted, while the media and politicians sell the COVID vax as the only way to avoid getting the virus, absent is how to get healthy and build ones' immune system to defeat it.

They have done nothing to defend against a true pandemic of declining health rooted in what is now called the “Standard American Diet” of refined flour, refined sugar, and processed foods that are more noxious than nutritious.

*As we have reported in the **Trends Journal**, not only is the obesity and overweight trend deadly, it's costly.*

The report, “America's Obesity Crisis: The Health and Economic Impact of Excess Weight,” produced by the Milken Institute, includes data showing that the impact of obesity and being overweight on the U.S. economy is more than \$1.7 trillion, which equals 9.3 percent of Gross Domestic Product.

GET OBESE, DIED OF COVID



The public has been aware that COVID-19 is far deadlier for individuals who become infected with co-morbidities or are older. But new studies have shown that the people who seem to be among the highest risk categories are diabetics.

The New York Times reported that researchers believe up to 40 percent of those who died from the virus had diabetes.

Dr. Giuseppina Imperatore, who oversees diabetes prevention and treatment at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention told *The Times* that it is hard to “overstate just how devastating the pandemic has been for Americans with diabetes.”

The paper pointed to a married couple that lives in Alabama. Both in their 60s, the woman—who does not have diabetes—managed a relatively quick recovery. Her husband, who is clearly obese and has diabetes—nearly died.

“The virus barely slowed her down, but I ended up surrounded by nurses in hazmat suits,” the man said. “I walk 20 feet and I’m huffing and puffing like I ran 20 miles.”

TRENDPOST: *The Trends Journal has been critical of healthcare in the U.S. that seems to care little for disease prevention and would rather inject drugs to medicate the sick.*

Building up immune systems and getting strong physically, mentally and spiritually is not part of the government “system.”

Indeed, when politicians imposed draconian COVID War mandates, they allowed liquor stores to stay open, gyms were not.

In fact, as **Trends Journal** subscribers well know, we have long detailed who is dying of COVID and why. Here are just a few of the articles:

- [“FAT CHANCE FOR GOOD HEALTH” \(11 Aug 2020\)](#),
- [“COVID-19 & OBESITY: THE MORE YOU WEIGH, THE WORSE OFF YOU ARE” \(9 Mar 2021\)](#)
- [“COVID-19 & OBESITY: THE ELEPHANT IS STILL IN THE ROOM” \(4 May 2021\)](#).

Ready to Sink

The Times pointed out that people with diabetes often have other underlying conditions like high blood pressure and obesity.

The paper’s report, which cited several studies, was sobering. It found that 20 percent of diabetics who were hospitalized with COVID-19 ended up dying within a month.

New York City Eric Adams, who just recently announced his COVID-19 diagnosis, was diagnosed in 2016 with type 2 diabetes and lost 30 pounds and said he reversed his diabetes, the paper said. He now has a mostly vegan diet, according to the report.

The *Times* reported that the number of adults diagnosed with diabetes more than doubled in the past two decades and 96 million Americans have prediabetes.

TRENDPOST: *We have also reported since the start of the outbreak that lockdowns were not based on science and did more harm than good.*

See:

- [“EUROPE: MORE LOCKDOWNS, PROTEST, ECONOMIC HARDSHIP”](#)
- [“LOCKDOWN PROTEST RAGING. NEW LOCKDOWN ORDERS”](#)
- [“COVID-19: THE VIRUS OF GOVERNMENT SUPPRESSION”](#)
- [“QUEENSLAND: 13 NEW COVID CASES, LOCKDOWN 5.1 MILLION”](#)

- [“NEW STUDY: LOCKDOWN LUNACY”](#)

Indeed, The Times report pointed out that there has been a dramatic spike in childhood obesity during the COVID-19 outbreak. The paper said about 1.5 million Americans are diagnosed with diabetes a year and about one in three are considered to be at high risk.

Dr. Trudy Seivwright, an obstetrician-gynecologist in Snellville, Ga., took to Twitter to ask: Since COVID will be with us forever, when will we discuss vitamin D deficiency, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, other comorbid conditions. The average hospitalized COVID patient falls into one or several of these categories.

One person responded to her post: The day it can be patented, bottled and sold for \$700 a course, sadly.

DRUG LORDS MAKE A KILLING WITH ‘FREE’ COVID VACCINE... AND MORE BOOSTERS ON THE WAY



The drug lords who oversee top pharmaceutical companies like Moderna and Pfizer made enormous financial gains after the release of their COVID-19 vaccines and made a combined \$100 million in salaries—despite politicians trying to sell the public the idea that the vaccines are free.

Pfizer reported a 92 percent operational growth in revenue to \$81.3 billion for 2021, compared to \$41.7 billion in 2020. Moderna reported its total revenue for 2021 was \$18.5 billion, which is a dramatic increase from \$803 million in 2020. Both companies have led the way when it comes to mRNA vaccines to prevent COVID-19 infection.

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the windfall profits and the effort that these CEOs are making to continue pushing additional booster shots. (See [“PFIZER DRUG LORD PUSHING YEARLY COVID JABS. CALLS THOSE WHO WON’T SWALLOW BULLSHIT, ‘CRIMINALS.’”](#), [“PFIZER CEO SELLING ‘GET YOUR FOURTH SHOT’](#) and [“MODERNA EXPECTS TO REAP \\$18.4 BILLION FROM VACCINE SALES.”](#))

Pfizer was the first company to receive full approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. CNBC reported that Pfizer’s Paxlovid is also expected to be a hit for the company, and is projecting about \$22 billion in sales. Pfizer expects about \$100 billion in revenues in 2022.

The *Financial Times* reported last week that Pfizer’s Albert Bourla, BioNTech’s Ugur Sahin, and Moderna’s Stéphane Bancel watched their income soar last year after governments forced citizens to take the jabs or be shunned from society and unable to make a living.

Bancel and Sahin became billionaires. Bancel’s shares in Moderna are worth about \$5.4 billion and Sahin’s in BioNTech is worth about \$7.8 billion.

(See [“PFIZER: DRUG DEALERS ON PARADE,”](#) and [“DRUG LORDS VAX MONEY GRAB GETTING BIGGER.”](#))

The *FT* reported that Bourla pulled in \$45.3 million in pay from 2020-2021. He made \$27.7 million in 2018-2019. Sahin, who made \$8.5 million in 2018-2019, earned \$30.8 million from 2020-2021. The paper said that the big three earned \$107.2 million in 2020-2021.

The financial success that these companies have had have been a source of contention between them and activist groups who say they should share their intellectual property with poorer countries.

Steve Knievel, the access to medicines advocate at Public Citizen, a progressive think tank, told the paper, “Bancel, Bourla, and the other vaccine kings built a

royal fortune predicated on a monopoly business model that has driven vaccine apartheid.”

TRENDPOST: *The Food and Drug Administration last month approved a fourth booster shot for individuals over 50 or who have a compromised immune system, and there’s already talk about another booster just in time for Christmas bonuses.*

These health agencies are no longer even thinking twice about approving another jab. The FDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention made the approval without even calling for a meeting of the vaccine advisory committees, which CNBC reported was a “rare move” for the agencies.

This is not the first time these advisory agencies were looked over. In September 2021, CDC head, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, also took a rare step and overruled agency advisers who did not recommend COVID-19 booster shots for younger, at-risk workers like teachers and nurses.

*The **Trends Journal** has long reported that the more jabs Pfizer can get into your arms, the more money the company will make. And as we have noted, these COVID vaccines are set to become the most lucrative pharmaceutical product ever created. Why would these companies like Moderna—that never distributed a product before—want to stop?*

GERMANY’S SCHOLZ’S LOSING VAX WAR



Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor, watched his dreams of forcing a segment of the German population to take a COVID-19 jab go up in smoke in the Bundestag last week.

The draft bill that would have mandated the vaccine for those over the age of 60, was killed easily, with only 296 members out of 683 voting in favor.

The vote was highly contentious and Scholz was apparently under the wrong impression that it would be close. He went as far as to recall Annalena Baerbock, the foreign minister who was taking part in a NATO meeting in Brussels about Ukraine, to participate in the vote.

As the votes trickled in, members of the AfD party, which is considered “far right,” cheered on the results. Scholz looked visibly dejected, reports said.

Scholz told reporters after the vote that he will not make a similar push again.

"I find the Bundestag's decision very clear," Scholz said. "We will do everything we can to convince more citizens of this country to get vaccinated."

The **Trends Journal** reported on Austria’s attempt earlier this year to force its citizens to take a jab or face fines. But Vienna’s effort was met by severe protests and was never implemented due to the decline in cases and deaths. (See [“AUSTRIA ENDING LOCKDOWN MANDATES, RESTRICTION AND FINES FOR UNVAXXED.”](#))

TRENDPOST: *There are several reasons why so many are hesitant to get the COVID Jab. One is that this is the first mRNA jab ever injected into the human body that was rushed along under the “Operation Warp Speed” mandate.*

Another is the fact that the disease is entirely survivable by most of the people it infects, and those who die from it are suffering from pre-existing comorbidities and/or the elderly, who are suffering from illnesses.

Very few countries have implemented such a general mandate, and those include Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Indonesia, and Ecuador.

German Health Minister Karl Lauterbach didn’t waste any time threatening the German population after the mandate’s defeat. He warned that Berlin may need

to reintroduce requirements, such as mask-wearing, in the fall when infections are expected to rise, DW.com reported.

Germany's vaccination campaign is considered to be underperforming when compared to the rest of Europe, with only 76.6 percent of its population receiving a jab. Reuters reported that countries like Italy and Spain have populations with over 80 percent vaccinated.

The number of daily cases is also on a downward trend, with 201,729 new cases last Thursday. The country of 83.24 million had a total of 132,311 deaths since the start of the outbreak.

Sahra Wagenknecht of the far-left Die Linke party, told reporters that it was short-sighted of the government to force these jabs since it is unclear how effective these vaccines will be against future mutations, according to *The Guardian*.

“Stop trying to patronize people,” she said. “The coronavirus vaccine must remain a personal decision.”

TREND FORECAST: *As we had forecast at the beginning of the year, for most of the world, the COVID War would wind down by late March/mid-April. It has.*

Will it return? To some extent yes, but a large segment of the population and the business community is tired of fighting the COVID War and will resist draconian mandates to fight another round.

GET VAXXED, GET COVID: THE ONES THAT GOT IT BRAGGED THEY GOT THE JAB



We're almost at the point where it is no longer even news when so-called "fully vaxxed" politicians and "celebrities" (arrogant actors) announce they came down with COVID-19—and then pitch the vaccine's effectiveness to the public.

Last week, some household names in Washington announced a COVID diagnosis, led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday and Attorney General Merrick Garland a day earlier.

Just like the good mouthpieces they are, both announced their infection by claiming they were grateful to be vaccinated and boosted.

Pelosi's office said in a statement, "The Speaker is fully vaccinated and boosted, and is thankful for the robust protection the vaccine has provided. The Speaker will quarantine consistent with CDC guidance, and encourages everyone to get vaccinated, boosted and test regularly."

On Wednesday, Garland and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo both announced that they came down with infections.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tested positive and is experiencing mild symptoms, his office announced Saturday.

Garland, who is fully vaccinated and boosted, was not symptomatic, his office said. He has been isolating at home. Raimondo tested positive on Wednesday and was "experiencing mild symptoms."

All three attended the Gridiron Dinner in Washington. Tom DeFrank, the Gridiron Club president, announced Saturday that there were 67 cases out of the

hundreds who attended. Eric Adams, the mayor of New York City, also tested positive.

NBC News reported that Reps. Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, and Adam Schiff, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, also tested positive after attending the event.

As for arrogance and stupidity about getting the jab and getting sick, Schiff (or is it Shit) tweeted “I’m feeling fine, and grateful to be vaccinated and boosted... And remember, please get vaccinated!”

A week earlier, William Burns, the CIA director, and Jen Psaki, the White House spokeswoman, announced their own infections. It was the second time that Psaki came down with the virus. (See [“AMERICAN MEDIA: HOW LOW CAN YOU GO? WHITE HOUSE PRESS PSAKI JOINS THE PRESSTITUTE CLUB?”](#))

TRENDPOST: *It has been widely reported that vaccines are becoming less effective and for a shorter period of time when preventing infection from variants like Omicron, and the now-dominant Omicron sub variant called BA.2.*

"By this fall, we may be on to a new variant. It could be sigma. It may be tau. There may be something new that may be circulating that we'll have to deal with," Peter Marks, director of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, told NPR in an interview. "We're going to have to make a good guess at what may be most effective."

Nature magazine pointed out that researchers have been aware that the BA.1 subvariant “evades much of the protection that mRNA vaccines offer against mild-to-moderate disease.”

One researcher said BA.2 could be even more challenging for scientists with its ability to evade the vaccines.

Get Sick, Try and Sell Vaccine

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the number of fully vaxxed celebrities and politicians who still come down with the virus, and then use their announcement to push the vaccine.

Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Jen Psaki, Elizabeth Warren, Cory Booker, Lindsey Graham, have all announced a COVID diagnosis despite being fully vaccinated.

Some celebrities included Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles and Duchess Camilla, Elton John, Robin Roberts, Hillary Duff, Gloria Estefan, Alyssa Milano, and others.

It has been the constant appeal from celebrities, politicians, Big Tech, and corporate media to get people to willingly roll up their sleeves for the jab. (See [“CELEBRITY SELLOUTS SELL COVID VAX.”](#))

When that didn't work, President Joe Biden announced a mandate for some federal workers and employees at larger companies, which has faced legal challenges.

Sean ‘Pencil Head’ Penn

There might not be a better example of the vitriol that vaccine extremists have toward those who hesitate to take the jab than actor Sean Penn.

Penn has emerged in the news lately due to his warmongering in Ukraine and his effort to obtain bigger and deadlier weapons for Kyiv—including fighter jets.

On more than one occasion, the “Mystic River” actor singled out those without the vaccine and told them they should stay home from movie theaters until they comply.

“And I do believe it should be mandatory, like turning your headlights on in the car at night,” he told CNN in an interview back in 2021.

It seems that Americans have already peaked in their willingness to take a vaccine, which is likely due in large part to less-severe variants and possible side effects.

About 66 percent of the U.S. is considered vaccinated, but only 30 percent have received a booster shot.

The Food and Drug Administration last month approved a second booster for those considered to be at higher risk for complications due to COVID-19, including adults over the age of 50 and individuals with compromised immune systems over the age of 12.

The Colorado School of Public Health said age is the top risk factor since “immune response” to vaccines for people 65 and older are “less robust and the older group accounting for 81% of U.S. COVID deaths in 2020.

For the younger, healthy group on the spectrum, the booster decision is less clear-cut and reverts to weighing individual risks.”

The **Trends Journal** has reported on the never-ending cycle of vaccinations and how they have become cash cows for the Big Pharma. (See [“SELLING BOOSTER SHOTS. CDC’S WALENSKY SAYS ‘FU’ TO AGENCY ADVISERS.”](#) [“PFIZER: DRUG DEALERS ON PARADE”](#) and [“PFIZER DRUG LORD PUSHING YEARLY COVID JABS. CALLS THOSE WHO WON’T SWALLOW BULLSHIT, ‘CRIMINALS.’”](#))

TRENDPOST: *We reported in our 9 November issue that the global COVID-19 war is entering its next phase and drug makers are adapting. Both Pfizer and Merck have announced antiviral drugs to improve survivability for patients. Pfizer—already the lead seller of the COVID Jab—has contracts to supply other countries and expects Paxlovid to add \$5 billion to its yearly sales; its stock rose 11 percent on news of the new pill, whereas Merck's stock price fell. (See*

[“DRUG COMPANIES CASHING IN ON COVID” \(11 May 2021\); “MORE COVID JABS, MORE BIG BUCKS FOR DRUG LORDS.” \(21 Sep 2021\).](#)

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS



HAMAS CALLS OUT BAHRAIN, TURKEY FOR SPEAKING OUT AGAINST TEL AVIV ATTACK

Bahrain and Turkey spoke out against the recent attacks in Tel Aviv, prompting Hamas to “denounce and reject” the condemnations.

Last week, the **Trends Journal** reported on the spate of attacks throughout Israel. (See [“SHOOTING BREAKS OUT IN ISRAEL: REVENGE OR TERRORISM.”](#))

One of the attacks included a Palestinian who opened fire in a Tel Aviv suburb, killing five. Israel has increased its military activity in the West Bank after accusing Palestinians of killing 14 in four attacks in previous weeks.

The attacks have been a political flashpoint. Bahrain and Turkey both came out to condemn what they called terror attacks.

“We reiterate the Kingdom of Bahrain’s position that opposed all forms of terrorism and violence no matter the motives and justifications,” Bahrain said, according to *The Jerusalem Post*.

The paper also pointed out that the United Arab Emirates Embassy in Israel condemned the attack, but was not included in the condemnation by Hamas.

“The resistance of our people and holy sites is an act of self-defense,” Hazem Qassem, a Hamas spokesman, said. “This right is guaranteed by all international laws.”

Another group, described in the paper as a committee representing several Palestinian terror groups in the Gaza Strip, said, “It would have been more useful for these regimes to be in harmony with the positions of their peoples, who support Palestine and its people and their resistance. We demand that these countries retract the condemnations and apologize to our people.”

TRENDPOST: *Under international law, Israeli settlements are illegal. They violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 which states, “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”*

The committee representing the Palestinian “terror groups” said in the statement that “resisting occupation is a legitimate right guaranteed by international law, and our people and their heroes will continue to resist the occupation and settlers until they leave our land and our holy sites.

Ukrainians fighting the Russian onslaught for very much the same reasons are depicted as heroes in the Western media, whereas Palestinians are called terrorists.

TRENDPOST: *While essentially unreported in the United States, and chastised when it was, this past February, the human rights group Amnesty International said “Israel’s apartheid against Palestinians: a cruel system of domination and a crime against humanity.”*

This is not the first time Israel has been criticized for its treatment of Palestinians. (See: [“ISRAEL ACCUSED OF APARTHEID BY HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH.”](#))

Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth told The New York Times in May 2021 that the “oppression of Palestinians there has reached a threshold and a performance that meets the definitions of the crimes of apartheid and persecution.”

SRI LANKA ROCKED BY PROTESTS, FURTHER CEMENTING ‘NEW WORLD DISORDER’ FORECAST



Thousands of protesters took to the streets last weekend in Sri Lanka due to the country’s worsening financial crisis and demanded that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resign.

“People should stand up for their rights. People should dictate terms for these dictators,” Nayana Rozario, a protester told Economy Next.

Another protester said, “For the first time in my lifetime, Sinhalese, Muslims, and Tamils -all joined together to fight against Rajapaksa because we have had enough of corruptions and incompetencies in this country.”

Last week, The **Trends Journal** reported on the upheaval in the country. (See [“NEW WORLD DISORDER: SRI LANKANS TAKE TO THE STREETS.”](#))

And as we had forecast when the COVID War broke out over two years ago and hundreds of millions of lives and livelihoods were killed... the deeper people fell into poverty and hopelessness, the higher the spike in street demonstrations to protest the lack of basic living standards, government corruption, crime, and violence.

TOP TREND FOR 2021: “[YOUTH REVOLUTION](#)”: *As we had forecast in December 2020, in 2021, the uprisings and revolutions that were sweeping the world before the COVID War will accelerate dramatically, as billions of people sink deeper into economic despair.*

In response, governments will again attempt to use the COVID War as a “legal” justification to prohibit protests.

Thus, we maintain our forecast that protests will escalate into civil wars, and civil wars will spread to regional wars." The world is not prepared for the [“2020 New World Disorder.”](#)

Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Sri Lankan prime minister, urged calm on Monday and said every second that they protest the country is “losing dollars.”

Rajapaksa—like the Canadians during the trucker convoy—accused protesters of insulting the country’s war heroes during their rallies.

"My family and I have received more insults than anyone, but we are seasoned with such insults. But my dear sons and daughters, please do not harass the war heroes who saved our country from terrorism," he said, referring to the war against the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam (LTTE) insurgents, NDTV.com reported.

The protesters want the president to resign and transfer control of the country away from his family. The family ruled for several decades in the country, and these protesters believe there are more qualified individuals to lead the country out of the mess.

The country had £5.8bn in foreign currency reserves by the end of 2019 and by March 2020 had £1.75bn. The BBC reported that Sri Lanka's government has to raise \$7bn in foreign currency this year to pay down its debt.

Global Movement

WSWS.org reported that the war in Ukraine has increased global volatility and pointed to the wave of violent protests due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the war.

The report pointed out that the UN Food and Agriculture Organization said food prices are expected to increase 12.6 percent from February, which was already the highest since 1990.

One UN official said these price increases for basic staples—like wheat and maize—are similar to the prices seen during the 2008 crisis.

“Ukraine’s grain and wheat harvests as well as Russia’s fertilizer export ban will further constrain food production and throw hundreds of millions into starvation” if the war continues, Arif Husain, the UN World Food Program’s chief economist, said, according to WSWS.org.

The report pointed to a U.S. official who told Politico that the U.S. will continue to struggle to “contain” the deepening global food crisis.

“We see the storm coming and we feel unprepared to deal with it. U.S. diplomatic posts are in close contact with countries where people are at risk of increased food insecurity.”

Latin America Protests

Massive protests broke out in Peru last week over inflation hitting its highest level in 25 years, Reuters reported.

Many in the country have not recovered from the COVID-19 outbreak and yet food, housing, and energy inflation jumped over 11 percent in the past year, according to the report. The report said sugar and food oil also rose 50 percent and 35 percent, respectively.

At least six people have died in protests, authorities told the news outlet.

“The cost of a family’s basic daily needs has brutally gone up,” Marcelo Gonzales, a resident in the country told Reuters.

The WSWS.org report also pointed out that Mexico’s inflation hit its highest in 21 years.

TRENDPOST: *As Gerald Celente has often noted, “When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it.”*

U.S. SOLDIERS INJURED AFTER BASE SHELLED IN SYRIA, WHY ARE THESE TROOPS STILL THERE?



Four U.S. soldiers were injured in a rocket attack early Thursday at the Green Village base, which is near Syria’s largest oilfield called Al-Omar, the U.S.-led anti-ISIS coalition said in a statement.

Military.com reported that U.S. troops have been in Syria since 2015 with the mandate to assist local forces in the fight against ISIS. The report said there are about 900 troops still in the country. The incident occurred after another high-profile attack on U.S. forces in the vicinity.

The New York Times reported that four U.S. soldiers were evaluated after the strikes for traumatic brain injury.

The rockets hit the base at about 1:09 a.m. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, told The Associated Press that there were five rockets fired from the vicinity of where Iran-backed fighters have been based. (See [“SYRIA: U.S. BACKTRACKS ON PULLOUT.”](#))

[“ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES KILL 3 SOLDIERS IN SYRIA”](#) and [“ISRAEL KEEPS LAUNCHING MISSILES INTO SYRIA. WILL WAR ESCALATE?”](#))

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: *As Gerald Celente has been stating since America’s illegal invasion of Iraq, based on lies that Saddam Hussain had weapons of mass destruction, “Do you think America would invade if Iraq’s major export was broccoli?” The same with Syria and Libya... it’s all about oil and U.S. domination.*

The United States has no right to be in Syria, a foreign nation that is no threat, and has made no threats to America.

It also should be noted the initial reason given for U.S. military presence in Syria was not fighting ISIS, but rather President Barack Obama, The Noble Peace Prize winner, demanded that its president, Bashar al-Assad, had to go.

Yet, the American media and the public join against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, while they champion Washington’s foreign entanglements.

ISRAEL LAUNCHES AIR ATTACK AGAINST SYRIA



The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights announced Saturday that Israel launched new air raids near Masyaf city in Hama province—at a location where Iran’s Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah have established a presence.

“There are warehouses, research centers for upgrading missiles and drones. However, no casualties have been reported yet,” the monitoring group said in a statement, according to Al Jazeera.

The report said the latest strike was the eighth attack by Tel Aviv on Syrian targets since the start of the year. (See [“ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES KILL 3 SOLDIERS](#)

[IN SYRIA” and “ISRAEL KEEPS LAUNCHING MISSILES INTO SYRIA. WILL WAR ESCALATE?”](#))

Israel sees proxy forces in Syria as an existential threat because it is supported by Iran, its major military threat.

Despite the illegality of attacking the nation, Israel has admitted to launching hundreds of airstrikes into Syria that target Iranian troops, military targets and allied groups such as Hezbollah.

TRENDPOST: Sarah Abdallah, a geopolitical commentator, tweeted, "Israel just dropped bombs on Syria again, in yet another unprovoked aggression. Where are the calls for sanctions?"

We also note Israel's continued military strikes against Syria that are supported by Washington and never condemned by the media... while it attacks those who are not considered America's "allies."

Indeed, if Syria attacked Israel, it would be a call for all-out war against the nation.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW



ABOUT 99 PERCENT OF PEOPLE BREATHE IN POLLUTED AIR THAT CAN IMPACT THEIR HEALTH

About 99 percent of the world's population lives in an area where air quality could reach levels of pollution that may be harmful to their health, the World Health Organization said.

Maria Neira, the director of environment at the WHO, called it “unacceptable” that there are seven million “preventable deaths and countless preventable lost years of good health due to air pollution.”

The BBC, citing the 2021 World Air Quality Report, said 21 of the world's 30 cities with the worst levels of pollution are in India. The number includes six Indian cities that are in the top 10.

The WHO made its guidelines tougher and pointed out that people in low and middle-income countries suffer more exposure to PM10 and PM2.5 pollutants.

The Financial Times reported that even wealthier countries are impacted by air pollution. About 400,000 deaths in Europe are caused by air pollution.

“High fossil fuel prices, energy security and the urgency of addressing the twin health challenges of air pollution and climate change underscores the pressing need to move faster towards a world that is much less dependent on fossil fuels,” Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO director-general, said, according to the *FT*.

Air pollution is a bigger killer than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined, EuroNews reported, citing a recent study in the Air Quality Life Index. The report said particulate pollution is more devastating on life expectancy than smoking or war. (See [“AIR POLLUTION KILLING 3.5 TIMES MORE THAN COVID.”](#) [“40 PERCENT OF AMERICANS BREATHE UNHEALTHY AIR”](#) and [“AIR POLLUTION KILLING CHILDREN BEFORE THEY ARE BORN.”](#))

TRENDPOST: *A 2021 study from the WHO found that more than 10 million people die each year from air pollution, compared to the 6.2 million who died from COVID since the outbreak in 2020.*

We have pointed out that the COVID War still increases newspaper sales and boosts TV, but killer pollution emissions do not.

Micheal Greenstone, one of the scientists who created the AQLI, agreed. He called air pollution the “greatest external threat to human health on the planet.” He also pointed out that it is not “widely recognized, or not recognized with the force and vigor that one might expect.”

Eloise Marais, an associate professor of geography at University College London and a co-author of a study air pollution in the tropics that was published Friday in the journal Science Advances, said air quality is “degrading so rapidly and population is increasing so rapidly, we estimated really, really steep trends in urban population exposure to air pollution, with implications for urban public health.”

NEW YORK, NEW YORK. IT'S CRIME TIME



New York City Mayor Eric Adams said last week that his administration will need more time to get a handle on crime in the city after major crime increased 36.5 percent in March compared to 2021.

The NYPD said Wednesday that homicides in the city fell, but robberies and burglaries both increased by 48.4 percent and 40 percent, respectively.

“Individuals that continue to get arrested multiple times continue to commit these crimes,” Michael Lipetri, chief of crime control strategies, said.

The NYPD said the overall crime index increased by 36.5 percent in March 2022, compared to the same period a year ago (9,873 v. 7,232). The number was “driven by a 59.4 percent increase in grand larceny auto (1,044 v. 655), a 48.4 percent increase in robbery (1,267 v. 854), and a 40.5 percent increase in grand larceny (4,078 v. 2,902).

Citywide burglaries also increased by 40 percent (1,326 v. 947) in March 2022 compared to last year.”

Keechant Sewell, the police commissioner, told reporters that the city is “facing a perception among criminals that there are no consequences even among serious crime.”

(See [“COVID WAVE OF ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT CONTINUES.”](#) [“COVID WAR: ORGANIZED THIEVES GROW BOLDER”](#) and [“COVID CRIME WAVE SPIKES. DRUG STORES CLOSE.”](#))

Adams said he promised to put into place a specialized unit focused on gun crimes and that it will take more time before any decrease will be seen in crime statistics.

“A couple of things we need to do: we must analyze the manpower of the police department. Too many police officers are doing civilian jobs,” Adams said about police on desk duty. “I need them back in the street, we need them to do the jobs New Yorkers hired them for. Let civilians do civilian jobs.”

This is old news to **Trends Journal** subscribers who read History Before it Happens®. When the COVID War broke out we had forecast a sharp spike in crime.

TREND FORECAST: *When the COVID War began we warned there would be sharp spikes in crime, since, as Gerald Celente says, "When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it," and especially in areas where prosecutors encourage the problem by being deliberately soft on crime.*

As inflation and the various stresses brought on by the COVID War continue (and increase), so, too, will crime (and drug use, and mental illness, homelessness, and public nuisance behaviors).

And the problem is worldwide. As we had forecast, thanks to the draconian COVID War measures imposed on populations by politicians, a bad situation has become much worse.

According to the charity group Oxfam International, some 860 million people will be living below the \$1.90 a day line by the end of 2022. This is 263 million more people that are suffering poverty than the projection they made before the COVID War was launched in 2020.

TREND FORECAST: *Yes, the COVID War has killed hundreds of millions of more lives and livelihoods than the virus.*

Get ready for the New World Disorder, as people across the globe take to the streets in protest of lack of basic living standards, government corruption, crime and violence.

As nations decline and social unrest intensifies, so too will immigration as people do all they can to escape for their lives.

In response, there will be strong populist, anti-immigration and anti-establishment political movements in richer nations where refugees seek safe-haven.

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE



By *Ben Daviss*

RESEARCHERS OPEN THE DOOR TO THE BRAIN

Your brain lives in a bubble—specifically, a protective web of about 400 miles of special blood vessels that bar toxins, bacteria, and other alien invaders from passing from your blood to your crucial headspace. Without the barrier, we wouldn't live long.

But when your brain is sick, that's a problem: the so-called blood-brain barrier also denies entry to potentially brain-saving or life-saving therapeutic drugs.

Now an international team of scientists has figured out a way to drop that barrier for a couple of hours, long enough to let beneficial treatments into that sequestered region.

Members of the group looked at a protein called Claudin5, which keeps the barrier's blood vessel cells locked tightly together.

They discovered that when a binder molecule known as Netrin-1 was genetically engineered out of adult mice with normal blood-brain barriers, the mice made less Claudin5 and the barrier weakened.

Knowing that, the researchers designed a new molecule that kept Netrin-1 from binding where it needed to among blood vessels protecting the brain. By injecting a small amount of their designer molecule into a mouse's brain, Netrin-1 was blocked for a couple of hours, the blood-brain barrier opened, and drugs or other therapeutic compounds could reach their targets.

The scientists are testing their new molecule on other areas of the central nervous system.

TRENDPOST: *Unlocking the blood-brain barrier will eventually make it possible to treat brain tumors more directly and effectively, and also could literally open the door to new treatments for a range of brain conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.*

STUDY PROVES IT: YOU GO WITH YOUR GUT



You may attribute your lingering fatigue to late nights, stress at work, or parenting a two-year-old.

But a new study from Texas A&M University has linked people's degree of energy or fatigue to the good or bad bacteria that

inhabit your digestive tract.

Researchers quizzed subjects about their diets and found that mental and physical energy or fatigue were significantly dependent on what the people ate.

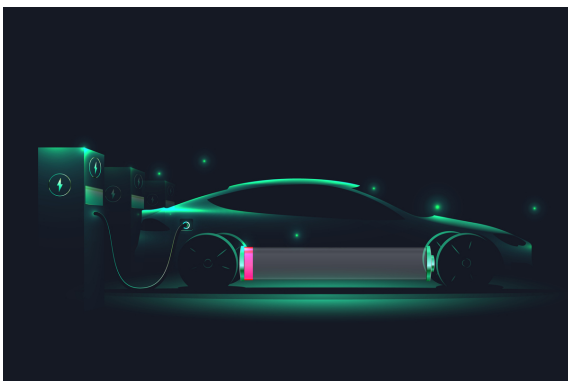
“Healthy” diets feed beneficial bugs in the gut; fried, sugared, processed, and additive-laden food—what has come to be called the Standard American Diet—nourish unfriendly bacteria that cause sluggish digestion and inflammation, which has been shown to be the underlying cause of many common maladies, including depression.

Less-healthy diets in study subjects were associated with inflammation, physical, and mental fatigue. People who regularly consumed healthier fare showed a more efficient metabolism of nutrients and correlated with greater physical and mental energies.

The study indicates that inflammation underlies a sense of fatigue, while a gut populated by beneficial bacteria quells inflammation and can give a person the fuel to maintain energy in the face of challenges that otherwise would wear you down.

TREND FORECAST: *The research shows that the cure for fatigue or mild depression isn't extra coffee or a prescription for Prozac. As the trends toward personalized and precision medicine grow, medical practitioners will be able to “tune” a person's diet to their individual gut profile to maximize their energy and positive mood.*

SULFUR: THE NEXT BIG THING IN EV BATTERIES?



The formula for typical EV battery cathodes—the terminal where the electric current flows out to spin a motor—is known as NMC811, because the cathode is 80 percent nickel, 10 percent manganese, and 10 percent cobalt.

German start-up Theion's new EV battery cathode could be called S100 because it's all sulfur—the fifth most common element on Earth.

Theion's tests indicate that swapping sulfur for the more rare and costly metals could give an EV sedan a range of 900 miles using cathodes that cost less than a tenth of what today's terminals do, in part because sulfur uses far less energy to process than metals.

In addition, Theion has replaced the aluminum and copper in its battery with graphene, the one-atom-thick sheet of carbon that has been shown to be the most efficient electrical conductor known.

As a result, the only ingredients in the company's battery are graphene, sulfur, and lithium-ion foil, which will make them easier to recycle.

Theion plans to test its technology with unnamed aerospace firms later this year, then create tiny versions for cell phones and portable computers before going full EV in 2024.

Theion's development builds on engineering out of Drexel University that found a way to add sulfur to a battery's electrolyte. Calculations confirmed the change could extend today's EV range by three times.

Just as important, the performance of Drexel's sulfur battery didn't degrade through 4,000 charge-and-discharge cycles, roughly equivalent to ten year's use in an EV.

TREND FORECAST: EVs' production costs and sticker prices will rise in the next few years as materials shortages and cost inflation continue.

Later this decade, batteries—which can make up as much as 40 percent of an EV's retail price—will adopt new commercial technologies able to moderate those costs and make EVs affordable for more people as demand increases.