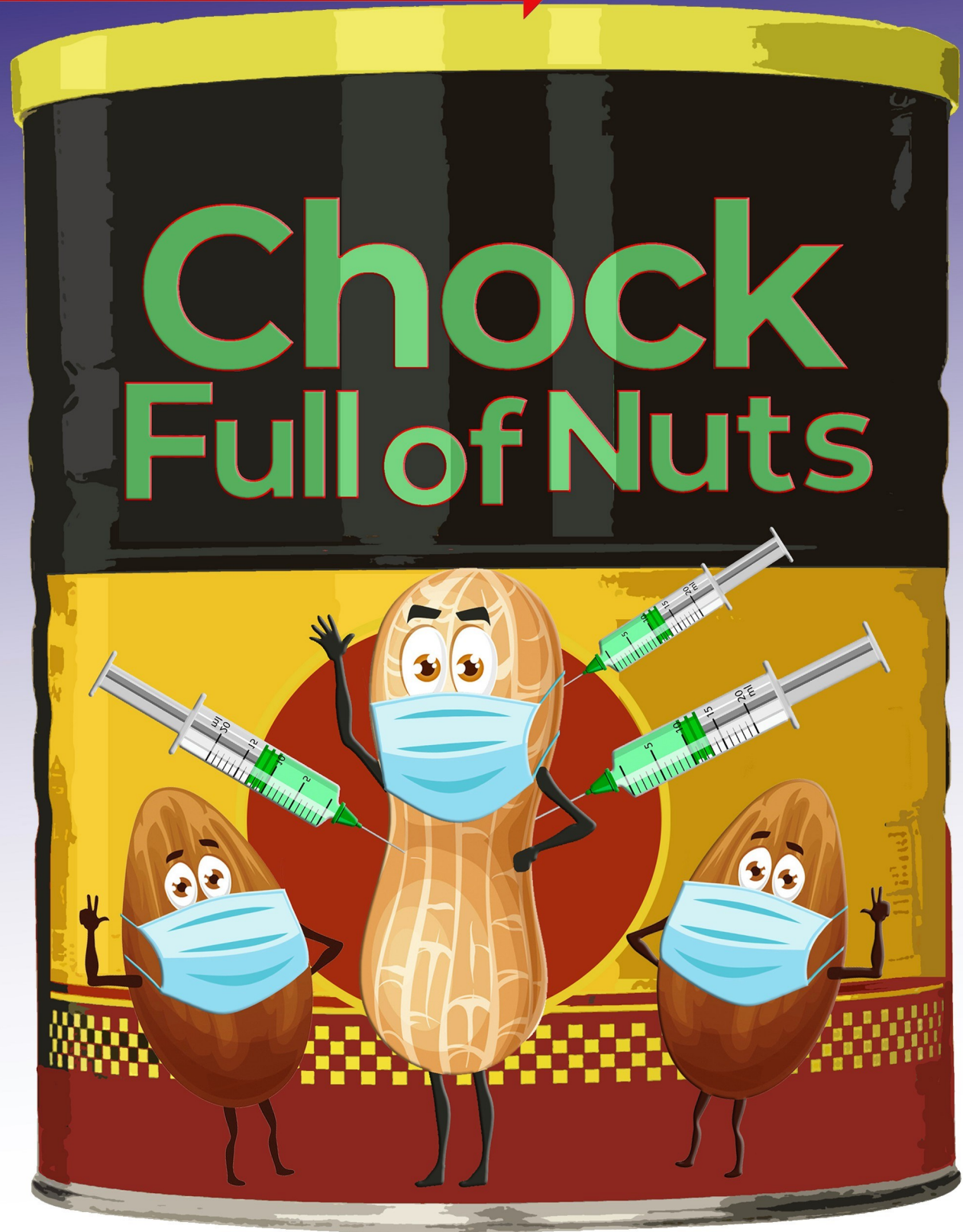


TRENDSJOURNAL

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CHOCK FULL OF NUTS

Welcome to this week's [Trends Journal](#): Chock Full of Nuts.

And what a Nut job it is. Nuts telling us what to do, and a global can of ground-up-nuts following orders and doing as they are told.

Today, the nut-job playing Premier of Quebec, François Legault, declared he would impose a tax on all "who refuse to be vaccinated for non-medical reasons."

He joins the political nut-job club who imposed vax taxes on the un-vaxxed, along with the "No Jab-No Job," "No Jab-No Travel," "No Jab-No Entry" mandates imposed on citizens across the globe.

However, the push-back from those refusing the Operation Warp Speed inoculation will continue to escalate. Over 100,000 took to the streets in Paris this weekend and tens of thousands protested in nations across Europe.

The bottom line, however, is the bottom line. Thus, as businesses sink deeper in debt and economies decline as interest rates and inflation rise, we forecast the COVID War will begin to wind-down late March, mid-April.

What will happen between now and then, what will be the geopolitical and socio-economic implications? It's all in your [Trends Journal](#).

And on another high-note, please watch my [interview](#) with the legendary "Rich Dad" Robert Kiyosaki. Mr. Kiyosaki is a man I greatly admire, and I am honored to be his guest.

And tune in to [my YouTube channel](#) tomorrow at 6 PM EST to watch my podcast with Judge Andrew Napolitano, America's top judicial authority.

Wishing you all the best in this New Year,

Gerald Celente and the Trends Journal Team

COMMENTS

CELENTE, MANNARINO & STABLECOINS

You know, GC, I watched your interview with Gregory Mannarino on New Year's Eve. A fascinating discussion on how long they can prolong the pumping of the dollar. Something that has been on my mind lately about the rise of stable coins is that could this extend the life of the dollar for a period of time? Every time someone buys a stable coin, the company issuing it has to back it with treasuries or bonds.

The blockchain has made it so that people in countries that didn't have access to the dollar, but wanted it, could buy it directly over the blockchain via a stable coin. The more they do this, the more treasuries and bonds the companies issuing it have to buy. Your thoughts, or anybody else's on this matter? This could be a game changing situation for extending the life of the dollar.

Dave from L.A.

LOW TECH ON AN OPEN ROAD

Agree 100%. I had a Harley motorcycle. It was simple, a 2018 heritage. I had to trade it for a touring bike, a 2020 Road Glide Limited so my wife could be comfortable on the back seat.

The Road Glide has so much technology that I don't use that it is ridiculous. The warranty on the bike already expired so now I'm thinking what it will cost to fix that stupid computer if it goes down so I will probably get rid of it and buy a Road King that doesn't have all that technology but I can put a nice pillion seat on it that my wife can be comfortable on.

Dalmacio Morales

JOURNALISTIC LIGHT IN DARK TIMES

Thank you for your magnificent efforts to spread the light of truth in these dark times for the human race and for all species of the magnificent Planet Earth, Gerald. We wish you and the Trends Research Institute the very best for 2022. And may the human race at long last wake the hell up.

Here's to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all beings!

In Solidarity,

DR

LIVE MUSIC ON LIFE SUPPORT IN THE UK

Hi, I live in Nottingham in the UK. Myself and my daughter haven't had any live shows and it's sad for my daughter as she likes to go to concerts and hasn't been able to because her favourite artists had to cancel since 2020. The artists we like are not trying to push the live show and are just not playing till it all blows over. Luckily some have the financial capability to cope with

not playing but it's really disgusting what the UK government and other governments are doing to the musicians.

Luckily we went to a concert on the 11 december 2021 but don't think we be able to go until this all blows over in spring as we are not vaxxed and won't be and Boris Johnson and his corrupt members are keeping everyone walking on glass we don't know what they will come up with next (who knows) people seem to have Boris now be sure of his parties during lockdown hopefully this will wake the. Up as to how corrupt this government is.

Sarah Krupinski

AMAZON SERVING XI

It is sad that our government, starting with President Nixon's visit to China and our American Companies, agreed to move all of our American industries and American know-how over to China to enhance these Companies' bottom line. The people at the top are the ones who made out. The American Dollar. Giving them all the technology (knowledge), it took from decades to a couple of centuries to develop, given away. How insane is that?

The American public has enjoyed the discounts and labor of the Chinese up until now where all the manufacturing jobs are gone – hurting the middle class in America and America.

Richard Coburn

PLASTIC WASTE, ORGANIC OPPORTUNITY

Just look at the meteoric rise of Dr. Squatch. All natural products are on the move. Fear of hospitalization and the unmasking of health professionals' lack of

ethics will, IMO, lead consumers to pay a premium for items that go in or on the body.

The cost is less than healthcare premiums and deductibles and the opportunity cost for a healthy life are enormous. In the same vein, look at the natural remedy market to continue to expand as big pharma and its intentions continue to be revealed to the average middle class American. As relates to a similar article in this edition, turmeric, specifically fermented turmeric, is gaining traction as a reversal to early stage type 2 diabetes.

Chad Wright

GET IN GOOD SHAPE AND STAY THERE

I am an out of shape Truck Driver...as many of us are. I started doing Yoga about three years ago. I finally go to the doctor and am under borderline blood pressure. Working out works you out...get out there and do something. Anything is better than nothing.

DAvid SEila

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TRENDS ON THE U.S. ECONOMIC FRONT



MARKET OVERVIEW

U.S. MARKETS STUMBLED INTO THE NEW YEAR

As we have detailed since the beginning of the COVID War, Wall Street's spiking stock market was, and still is, a total disconnect from Main Street.

Plain and simple: Equities were driven higher by the unprecedented infusions of cheap monetary methadone pumped into the system by the Bankster Bandits to keep the Wall Street money junkies on their high. As we have reported, Merger and Acquisition activity and stock buy-backs hit all-time highs last year... along with PE ratios.

The numbers could not be clearer. The billionaires got richer last year as the middle class keeps shrinking.

CNBC said billionaires Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, Larry Page, Mark Zuckerberg, Sergey Brin, Steve Ballmer, Larry Ellison, and Warren Buffett grew their combined wealth to about \$341 billion in 2021.

As for the plantation workers of Slavelandia, median income fell 3 percent while the cost of living rose nearly 7 percent over the past two years.

As noted by CNBC, the average U.S. household with debt now owes \$155,622, or more than [\\$15 trillion](#) altogether, including debt from credit cards, mortgages, home equity lines of credit, auto loans, student loans and other household obligations—up 6.2% from a year ago.

TREND FORECAST: *Until there is a stock market crash, Main Street will be unaware of the factual data of how deeper in debt the average American has sunk, how their wages are lagging behind inflation and how deep their standard of living has declined.*

When will equities crash? When the Fed rate rises to 1.5 percent.

Remember, the Fed kept lying, saying they would raise interest rates when the inflation rate passed 2 percent. Then, for nearly a year, they continued their lies claiming the spiking Consumer Price Index, which rose 6.8 percent, was “temporary.”

And to illustrate their criminality, three Fed Heads—Robert Kaplan, Eric Rosengren and Richard Clarida—suddenly left their Fed posts after being caught making trades in anticipation of central bank monetary actions.

Therefore, with Fed Chair Jerome Powell announcing today that the Fed will raise rates more over time if needed—while he confirmed our forecast that interest rates will indeed rise—the Bankster Bandits will do all they can to artificially prop up equity markets.

Indeed, as Gregory Mannarino makes perfectly clear in his article, “MARKETS: Expect Debts, Deficits, And Inflation to SURGE MUCH HIGHER.”

Another scenario to consider is that since the Fed runs the U.S. government—indeed, the U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen was the Fed Head before Powell—they will raise interest rates now, let the economy sink, and then quickly lower rates in anticipation of the 2024 Presidential Elections. Remember, the bottom line: “It’s the economy, stupid.”

Interest Rate Panic

In this year’s first week of trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.3 percent, the Standard & Poor’s 500 Index gave up 1.9 percent, and the NASDAQ shed 4.5 percent, its worst week since February 2020 and its worst entry to a new year since 2015 (see related story in this issue).

Tech stocks lost an average of 10 percent of their market value during the first week of 2022, but began to climb back out of their trough on Monday, 10 January.

The tech rout dragged down Apple and Google owner Alphabet, two stocks that had largely escaped the tech market’s ups and downs last year.

On Friday, 7 January, alone, the Dow surrendered 5 points, the NASDAQ 144, and the S&P 19.

Yields on 10-year treasury notes climbed through the year’s first five consecutive sessions, rising to 1.72 percent from its December close of 1.51, a return not seen since January 2020.

The treasuries’ pop sparked similar moves in other countries, with Germany’s 10-year rate rising to just below zero, its highest in three years.

As bond prices fell and interest rates rose, investors fled stocks of tech and growth companies, both of which do less well as interest rates climb.

As investors bailed out of businesses that fared well in the COVID War, they retreated to companies that should do well as the economy recovers.

Among favored shares: energy giants, financial institutions, airlines, even some mall owners.

Bond sales sped up after the U.S. Federal Reserve released minutes of its 5 January meeting, at which officials indicated the central bank might hike interest rates in March, much sooner than had been expected.

Investors were even more glum after the latest jobs report showed the U.S. economy creating only 199,000 jobs last month, not the 453,000 that some analysts had been expecting.

The figure indicates that the COVID virus's Omicron variant, which The Street had written off, is clearly hampering the economy more than had been hoped.

For example, due to COVID infections, U.S. airlines canceled several thousand flights over the year-end holiday season through early this year. On the cruise-ship front, Royal Caribbean International and Norwegian Cruise Line canceled some of their upcoming cruises.

And, with COVID fears rising and vax passport regulations, fewer tourists are traveling, going to trade shows, conventions, business travel etc. In the U.S. for example, according to the NPD Group, customer orders at full-service restaurants were some 18 percent lower in the year that ended in November compared to November 2019...prior to the COVID War.

OpenTable Inc., reports that by the end of December, restaurant seatings were down 32 percent from 2019 levels.

We note these examples to illustrate the disconnect between the illusions of equity market activity and the socioeconomic implications of the COVID War on the real lives and livelihoods of We the People.

Yesterday and Today

Registering its fifth consecutive day of losses, yesterday, the broad market gauge moved lower with the Dow down 162.79 points and the S&P 500 off 6.74 points.

On the upside yesterday, after slumping 2.7 percent, the tech-heavy Nasdaq snapped its four day losing streak, closing up 6.93 points... or less than 0.1 percent.

The erratic trading followed the 10-year Treasury yield rising to 1.779 percent... it's highest level since January 2020... a month before the COVID War began.

In Europe, the Stoxx Europe 600 closed down 1.5 percent, while in Asia the Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.4 percent.

Today

The big economic news today was Fed head Jerome Powell declaring before the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs that "This year, we see an economy where the labor market is recovering rapidly and inflation is well above 2 percent. This tells us that the economy no longer needs or wants the highly accommodative policies we had in place to deal with the pandemic. But it is a long way to normal."

Normal or not, after sinking in the morning following Powell's statement that "If inflation does become too persistent, that will lead to much tighter monetary policy and that could lead to a recession," because the Fed would aggressively raise interest rates, the Dow closed up 183 points and the S&P finished the day up 42.78 points.

Despite the fears of surging bond yields since the start of this year and fears of rising interest rates rattling the tech-heavy Nasdaq, it rose 1.4 percent today

Again, these “growth” sector gambles were sharply driven up by the cheap monetary methadone injected by the Bankster Bandits. The low rates made bonds less attractive to the gambler gang that pivoted into high-risk assets.

Tech-Wreck

Four in ten corporations listed on the tech-heavy NASDAQ stock exchange have seen their share prices plunge by 50 percent from 2021’s peaks, according to Sundial Capital Research, and fully half of the exchange’s firms are in a bear market.

A bear market is defined as a stock’s or market’s loss of at least 20 percent from a recent high price.

Not since the dot-com bubble burst at the beginning of this century have so many individual tech firms fared so poorly while the NASDAQ itself remains at near-record levels, Bloomberg noted.

“Whatever the fundamental and macro considerations, investors have been selling first and trying to figure out the rest later,” Jason Goepfert, Sundial’s research chief, told Bloomberg.

“Valuations are at historic highs, companies are raising billions based on fairy dust, and the Fed is signaling a tightening cycle,” he pointed out. “All these are scaring investors that we’re on the cusp of a repeat of 1999-2000.”

Tech stocks have been battered since the year began, when a bond market sell-off boosted yields on treasury securities to 1.72 percent; tech stocks typically fare badly as interest rates rise (see related story in this issue).

Tech’s troubles worsened on 5 January, when minutes of the U.S. Federal Reserve’s December meeting were released, showing the central bank was more likely to raise interest rates as soon as March.

That day's 3.3-percent tumble was the NASDAQ's worst one-day drop since February 2021.

GOLD/SILVER: Despite fears of rapidly rising interest rates, today precious metals prices rose on expectations of rising inflation. Today, gold jumped up nearly \$24 to close at \$1,822 per ounce and silver rose 1.59 percent to close at \$22.82 per ounce.

TREND FORECAST: *It should also be noted, but absent mainstream media coverage, is that as interest rates rise, it will cost more to service the \$30 trillion U.S. debt burden... which will in turn also put downward pressure on the U.S. dollar and push safe-haven assets such as gold, silver and bitcoin higher.*

And beyond government debt, the higher interest rates rise, the heavier the business and personal debt loads grow. Thus, the higher the levels of defaults, the deeper the economy falls. And the deeper it falls, the higher safe-haven assets will rise.

*Again, as we note in this and previous **Trends Journals**, the economy cannot run without cheap money. Thus, as a result of the cheap money drying up when interest rates go up, the economy and equity markets will sharply decline... which will in turn strongly drive up precious metals and cryptocurrency prices as investors seek safe haven assets.*

TREND FORECAST: *Also, minus a wild card event, such as the Fed rushing to push interest rates much higher than anticipated, we forecast that gold will stay above \$1,700 per ounce and silver's bottom will be in the \$18 per ounce range.*

OIL: Despite the mainstream media hyping the Omicron virus scare, Wall Street and the Fed Chair are now repeating what we had forecast back in our 21 December 2021 letter to subscribers... that the COVID War would begin to wind-down around the end of March, mid-April.

Indeed, today the Fed Head Powell said the economic impact of the Omicron variant will be short lived, adding that economic growth will be positive. On this,

and news of oil production outages in Libya, Brent Crude spiked 3.56 percent to close at \$83.75 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate spiked 4.3 percent to close at \$81.46 per barrel.

TREND FORECAST: *With Brent Crude only down some \$3 from its 2021 high—a year that oil prices spiked 50 percent—the higher oil prices equal higher inflation... and a heavier debt burden on businesses and consumers. And, with interest rates rising and the debt loads getting heavier, plus inflation increasing the cost of living and running business, defaults will escalate.*

Furthermore, should military conflict erupt in the Middle East and oil prices spike to above \$100 per barrel, it will crash equity markets and the global economy.

BITCOIN: As evidenced by this headline on CNBC today, the major media is selling bitcoin fear:

“Bitcoin briefly tumbles below \$40,000 to the lowest since September as investors shed risk”

Yet, despite this blaring headline, as we go to press, bitcoin was up more than 3 percent today, trading \$42,747 per coin.

TREND FORECAST: *Nothing goes straight up or straight down. It will be a rocky road ahead. Initially, as the Fed raises interest rates, safe haven assets which pay no dividends, will decline in price as investor’s park money in interest-bearing accounts... where they can keep their money safe and earn interest.*

However, we maintain our GSB—Gold, Silver, Bitcoin—forecast that all three will maintain and then pass their current and previous highs after the U.S. Fed rate hits 1.5 percent, equity markets sharply fall and the economies sink into Dragflation: Declining Gross Domestic Product and rising inflation.

We also maintain that a major factor in forecasting the future price of bitcoin and other crypto currencies is dependent upon government regulations. However, that threat in the U.S. and Europe will lessen as more banks, businesses and

investment funds are going crypto, thus, the upward crypto trends, especially bitcoin, will continue to gain momentum.

(For more on bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, please see our “TRENDS IN CRYPTOS” section.)

\$100,000 INCOME, CHUMP CHANGE? CAN'T AFFORD “AMERICAN DREAM?”



A \$100,000 annual household income, thought not long ago to be a ticket to the upper middle class, can no longer guarantee the “American Dream” of a single-family home in the suburbs, two cars in the garage, a child or two, and a college fund for the kids, according to a recent

analysis by Business Insider (BI).

The median price of a U.S. home was \$7,354 in 1950 and \$11,900 in 1960, according to census bureau data cited. When adjusted for inflation, those prices would rise to \$85,000 and \$111,000 in 2021 dollars, respectively.

However, the median selling price of an American single-family home in 2021’s third quarter was \$404,700, according to data compiled by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

During that quarter, the cost of housing rose 18.6 percent, year over year.

Millennials now buying their first homes are paying 39 percent more for a house than families buying homes in the 1980s, according to an earlier BI study.

In October 2019, 852,090 homes for sale were affordable for a household with a \$100,000 income. In October 2021, the number had dropped to 348,800, according to BI.

“That means more than half the houses affordable to a \$100,000 earner are off the market,” BI noted.

In [“Home Prices Up, Incomes Down”](#) (16 Nov 2021), we reported that, since 1971, after factoring in inflation, the price of the average home is up 118 percent, but incomes have gained a meager 15 percent, a separate report by online brokerage Clever Real Estate found after studying census bureau data.

The cost of housing should take no more than 30 percent of gross income, economists and financial advisors often say.

Using that guideline, to afford a median-priced U.S. home now, a household would need an income of \$144,192, more than double the median household income of \$69,178, Clever calculated.

While some advisors say a home’s purchase price should not exceed 2.5 times a household’s annual income, in today’s frantic market a house now sells for an average of 5.4 times more than a typical buyer’s gross income, according to Bloomberg.

As a result, “In 2019, about 19 percent of U.S. households with six-figure incomes rented their homes, up from about 12 percent in 2006,” *The Wall Street Journal* reported in an October 19, 2019, article after analyzing census bureau data adjusted for inflation.

“The increase equates to about 3.4 million new renters who would have likely been homeowners a generation ago,” the *WSJ* concluded.

As we have documented in articles such as [“Rents Soaring. What’s Next?”](#) (21 Sep 2021), the growing number of households forced to rent instead of buy has

pushed rents to record levels as more and more people locked out of the mortgage market still want to live in a detached suburban house with a yard.

Rents rose at an annual clip of 13 percent from January through June 2021, with rate increases breezing past 20 percent in hot areas such as Boise, Id. and Naples, Fla.

As rents climb along with house prices, even fewer households will be able to set aside enough cash for a down payment to buy.

Those increases pinch especially for households with children.

The cost to a middle-class family to raise a child from birth through age 18 is now \$267,233, or \$14,846 annually, about \$1,237 a month, according to a September article by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Working parents often must add in the cost of child care, which averages \$1,075 monthly across the U.S., ranging from \$453 in low-income Mississippi to \$1,743 in pricey Massachusetts.

However, even before factoring the cost of a child or two, many earners already are squeezed by their load of student debt.

Last November, about 42.9 million Americans each owed an average of \$37,105 on federal student loans, a number that does not include loans taken out by parents or from other private sources to foot the bill for tuition, books, room, and board, according to federal data gathered by the private Education Data Initiative.

That, in part, is because the cost of a four-year undergraduate degree at a public college or university has more than doubled from \$10,760 in the 1991-1992 school year to \$22,690 for the current academic year.

For a private school, the cost including room and board averaged \$28,000 30 years ago; now it has soared to \$51,690, College Board figures show.

The "advantage of a degree today is less than it was 10 years ago, because of the rising cost," Richard Vedder, an Ohio University economics professor emeritus, told BI. "The return on investment has fallen."

Even highly educated six-figure earners can struggle to make ends meet.

A tech professional cited by Business Insider was earning more than \$120,000 with a San Francisco-area company and paying more than \$2,500 a month on his student loans, which, after taxes, was more than a third of his take-home pay.

In a September 2021 *Parents* magazine article, Irina Gonzalez wrote that she and her husband gross almost \$150,000 annually, but are "broke" because of the costs of child care and repaying student loans.

"This is the current state of the American Dream for so many Millennial parents," Gonzalez said—"stuck between a rock and a hard place as we deal with our own debt and rising childcare costs while living paycheck to paycheck."

And the car that rounds out the American Dream now sells for an average price of \$46,036, up \$5,266 from a year earlier, according to October figures from Kelly Blue Book—more than double the \$21,850 that buyers paid for new rides in 2000. (J.D. Power pegged the average sales price at \$45,703 in December.)

No wonder that the typical convenience store customer drives a 12-year-old car worth about \$15,000, a study by convenience chain owner Murphy USA found, as we reported in ["Gas Station Owners Skeptical of EV Boom"](#) (17 Aug 2021).

Home prices have risen 300 percent in real terms since 1960, the cost of a car has risen more than 100 percent in the past 20 years, and college costs are at least 100 percent higher than 30 years ago; so what has happened to incomes?

According to October 2021 figures from the U.S. census bureau:

- Since 1967, the middle-earning 20 percent of the population has seen its income increase by 41.1 percent, an increase of barely 0.75 percent in each of the last 54 years.
- The bottom-earning 20 percent has gained 34.2 percent in income over the last 54 years;
- The highest-grossing 20 percent of U.S. workers has gained 109.3 percent in income, more than double its salary in 1967;
- The top 5 percent of earners have enjoyed an additional 133.5 percent in income since 1967.

Not even the 5 percent of the population earning the highest incomes have been able, as a group, to keep pace with the rising cost of housing, vehicles, or education, census bureau figures show.

TRENDPOST: *The census bureau numbers show that the old saying is true: the rich do get richer—but only the top 0.1 percent of earners make enough to keep pace with rising costs, even before the COVID War tangled supply lines and caused shortages in a time of heightened demand.*

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, real incomes in the U.S. shrank by 0.3 percent last year, while personal expenses rose 0.7 percent. While inflation added almost 8 percent to price tags last year through November, the average worker's pay increase of 3 percent was less than half of what was needed to keep pace, a Brookings Institution analysis found.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have noted several times previously, once prices inflate, they virtually never return to their previous low levels. (Petroleum fuels are an obvious exception.)*

An element of the “Off-With-Their Heads 2.0” movement will be, as rising prices continue to leave households able to afford less and less, pressures will rise—especially among younger Americans—for socialist movements... to socialize the costs of child care, health insurance, post-secondary training, and other essentials increasingly affordable only by the upper of the upper-class.

“THE BIG QUIT” SETS RECORD IN NOVEMBER



In November, 4.5 million U.S. workers chose to quit their jobs, almost 3 percent of the national labor force, according to the U.S. labor department.

The figure set a monthly record, topping the record 4.2 million set the month before, for the two decades the department has been tracking the quit rate.

As of 30 November, there were 10.6 million open jobs in the U.S., the labor department reported, slightly fewer than the 11 million at the end of October.

However, the number of unfilled jobs climbed to 12 million at the end of December, the department reported.

The highest turnover rate, about 6.1 percent, happened in restaurants, hotels, and other sectors of the low-paid hospitality industry. The labor shortage set off by the economic recovery has given workers more bargaining power to win better pay and working conditions and emboldened them to walk away from soul-sucking jobs.

Retail, professional and business services, health care, and social assistance industries also are seeing high quit rates.

Burn Out

On the health care workers front, as the data shows, and how states are even telling the un-vaxxed to come to work, they are leaving largely due to COVID War burnout. This in turn is also putting more stress on the hospitals and the healthcare system.

Workers who switch jobs are getting pay raises faster than those who stay planted, according to data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Speedy pay hikes are partly responsible for quickening inflation, both a result of the unexpected strength of the U.S. economic recovery, *The New York Times* noted.

In November, 6.9 million people were unemployed who wanted to work, leaving two available workers for every three open jobs, *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

However, many jobs require advanced skills that many workers lack. Other potential workers are hanging back for fear of catching the COVID virus or a variant, while others are forced to remain at home to care for children or supervise children schooling at home.

The U.S. workforce participation rate—the number of people working or actively looking for a job—was 61.8 percent in November, compared to 63.4 percent in January 2020, the month before COVID arrived.

TREND FORECAST: *As we had long noted, as the rich got richer, the Bigs got bigger, and the corporate ladder was removed for just a few to climb... the Great Resignation is about workers of Slavelandia no longer wanting to slave on the global plantation, and the desire to find better job prospects and/or working for themselves to create OnTrendpreneur® opportunities.*

We have also detailed these trends in articles such as [“Structural Changes” in Workforce as Millions Quit Their Jobs](#) (19 Oct 2021) and [The Great Resignation: Will Jobs Come Back?](#) (16 Nov 2021), which underscore one of our [Top 2022 Trends: Unionization...](#) workers taking more power, unionizing, and using their newfound leverage to improve their work lives.

TREND FORECAST: *Some workers now sitting on the sidelines will return to the labor force when the COVID virus wanes and when personal savings stockpiled from government support checks run out.*

However, others—especially workers over 50—have cashed out and retired early. These vacancies create opportunities for younger workers not only to move up, but also to use their clout to negotiate higher pay and friendlier working conditions.

The flip side: the economy will remain chronically short of key experience for years to come and a long-term shortage of skilled workers will dull economic vitality.

DECEMBER JOB FREEFALL



The U.S. economy created 199,000 non-farm jobs in December, fewer than half of the 422,000 that Dow Jones had forecast.

The most optimistic analysts had foreseen 453,000 new jobs.

Also last month, the unemployment rate shrank to 3.9 percent, close to the 50-year low of 3.5 percent set in February 2020.

Leisure and hospitality businesses added 53,000 workers, professional and business services hired 43,000, and manufacturing 26,000.

The construction industry took on 22,000 more workers, transportation and warehousing payrolls grew by 19,000, and wholesale trade 14,000.

The average hourly wage rose by 0.6 percent in December, setting an annual growth pace of 4.7 percent, besting forecasts of 0.4 and 4.2 percent, respectively.

However, inflation in December sped to 6.8 percent, negating any meaningful additional purchasing power in higher pay.

October's job count was revised upward from 546,000 to 648,000; November's count also expanded, from 210,000 to 249,000.

At the end of 2021, the U.S. workforce was 2.9 million people smaller than its February 2020 total when the COVID virus arrived.

The economy showed 12 million open jobs on 31 December and only 6.9 million people actively seeking new jobs (see related story in this issue).

Still, through 2021, the U.S. economy sprouted 6.5 million new jobs, more than at any time since 1940 as World War Two began.

TREND FORECAST: *Because the chronic shortage of workers will last at least through this year, employers will need to pay more to attract and retain bodies, not to mention top talent.*

To fill the remaining labor void, businesses will speed their adoption of automation for all possible tasks, a trend we highlighted in [“Virus Speeds Automation: Bye Bye Workers”](#) (21 Sep 2021) and [“No Workers? No Problem. We Got ‘Bots’”](#) (5 Oct 2021).

However, businesses also will need to implement on-the-job training programs and other initiatives to replace the skills that retired with older workers.

Therefore, workplaces increasingly will become training centers where younger workers can turn for career development. In exchange, employers will demand greater loyalty from employees.

Yet, in this new world disorder, so too has the work ethic changed. A “ghosting” generation of would-be-workers quit their jobs without giving notice—despite many making more than they asked for—and/or failing to show up for scheduled interviews.

Overall, this trend further illustrates the moral, physical, and spiritual decline of the new ABnormal society.

AMERICANS: HAPPY DAYS NOT HERE, AGAIN!



Cheer up, it's Gloom Time. With Omicron fear spreading and with the COVID War still raging, just 21 percent of Americans say they are better off financially than they were a year ago, according to a Momentive survey conducted for *The New York Times*.

A year ago, the same survey found 26 percent reporting improvement.

Despite the economy having added and kept hundreds of thousands of jobs in the past 12 months, consumer confidence is at its lowest point since Momentive began the survey in 2016.

About 90 percent of respondents said they were at least “somewhat concerned” about inflation; 60 percent said they were “very concerned,” although most acknowledged that inflation has not yet made a significant impact on their lives.

“Pretty much the only group of people who say they’re better off now than they were a year ago are people who’ve gotten a pay raise that matches or beats inflation,” Momentive researcher Laura Wronski said to the *NYT*.

Only 17 percent of the 5,365 adults surveyed said they have received raises that keep pace with inflation; most of the rest either received raises that lag inflation or have gotten no raise at all. About 8 percent reported taking a pay cut.

TREND FORECAST OPPORTUNITIES: *As we have noted, the U.S. Consumer Price Index shot up 6.8 percent in November, a 40-year high, while average*

hourly earnings rose 4.8 percent, thus it costs more to live ... and is difficult to advance into an up-graded lifestyle.

As Dragflation sets in, and economic conditions deteriorate, the “unhappy” levels will accelerate. We note this to also emphasize trend opportunities: There is a major media vacuum of selling upbeat sounds and styles that elevate the human mind, body and spirit. Those that identify and market them will reap great financial and emotional rewards.

U.S. MANUFACTURING BOUNCE-BACK COMING?



We had forecast this trend was coming, and here it is.

Last month, General Motors said it is considering a \$4-billion investment in new electric vehicle battery-making capacity in Michigan; and Toyota unveiled plans for a \$1.3-billion EV battery plant in North Carolina that will employ 1,750 people.

Georgia’s upstart America Knits factory, where 65 people make t-shirts from locally-grown cotton, hopes to seed a rebirth of textile-making in America.

TRENDPOST: *We highlighted the revival of the U.S. manufacturing industry in [“Supply Chain Nightmares Beget “Reshoring” and Self-Sufficiency”](#) (7 Dec 2021), as a key aspect of our [“Top 2022 Trend”](#) toward self-sufficient economies, pioneered by China and its “dual circulation” initiative to balance a strong domestic consumer economy against its thriving export sector, which we have detailed in articles such as [“China Announces “Dual Circulation” Economic Policy”](#) (9 Sep 2020) and [“China’s Consumers Boost Spending”](#) (11 May 2021).*

Happy COVID!

With COVID's arrival, the revival of U.S. manufacturing "may have reached a tipping point," Claudio Knizek, chief of consulting firm E-Y Parthenon's mobility and advanced manufacturing practice.

After years of relying on faraway foreign suppliers, the COVID War's months of clogged supply chains and materials shortages have persuaded producers and manufacturers that components and raw materials should be made closer to their destinations.

"It's absolutely about being close to customers," Tim Engle, strategy vice-president with Toyota Motor North America, told *The New York Times*.

"It's a big endeavor but it's the future," he said.

For the U.S., the trend is bringing back "near-shoring," which puts key factories in Mexico, where labor costs are still low but products are only a short haul from American factories and can bypass overloaded ports.

"Many companies now prefer the security of supply over cost," CEO Teresa Wagler of Steel Dynamics in Indiana said to the *NYT*.

However, work requiring large amounts of manual labor or tasks difficult to automate—such as making shoes or decorative holiday lighting—likely still will be relegated to foreign markets where labor remains cheap, the *NYT* noted.

For those kinds of items, "the economics are daunting," noted Harvard Business School professor Willy Shih in a comment to the *NYT*. "It's hard to beat wages of \$2.50 an hour."

In those areas, China will remain dominant, thanks to its massive, low-wage labor force, ready access to raw materials, and industrial infrastructure, Shih predicted.

“For a lot of what American consumers buy, there aren’t a lot of good alternatives,” he said.

Even so, onshoring or “reshoring” of key manufacturing could mean a boom in domestic manufacturing and technical jobs; in 1995, U.S. factories had 17 million workers on their payrolls but only 11.5 million by 2010.

Unionized factory workers often now earn as much as \$25 an hour, compared to \$15 as a high wage in hospitality jobs or non-union shops, the *NYT* said.

TREND FORECAST: *America’s manufacturing renaissance will blossom only to the extent that it can access materials and develop a skilled technical workforce, and freedom from increasing city, state and national bureaucratic control.*

Manufacturers are beginning to solve shortages of materials by forming alliances with suppliers, as we reported in [“Will Auto Alliances Protect Chip Supply?”](#) (23 Nov 2021). Also, supply lines will gradually reopen, allowing manufacturers easier access to the materials that are available.

However, key metals and other minerals will remain in short supply for the foreseeable future, limiting manufacturing’s expansion and fertilizing a domestic recycling and reclamation industry, a trend we highlighted in [“Commodities Supercycle Underway?”](#) (11 May 2021).

To develop the needed workforce, manufacturers will work much more closely with public schools to create apprenticeship and tech-ed programs.

For example, the Cheshire Career Center at Keene High School in Keene, New Hampshire, has a fully-equipped machine shop stocked by area manufacturing firms that also closely advise on curriculum and allow high-school students to apprentice in their shops on school-day afternoons.

TRADE DEFICIT USA: “WE’RE #1”



Loosening supply lines and U.S. consumers’ unrelenting demand for goods pushed November’s trade deficit in merchandise to \$99 billion as holiday shopping intensified, especially for cell phones, clothing, and toys, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

The month’s overall deficit in goods and services combined was \$80.2 billion.

Manufacturers exported less, due to kinked shipping lines and shortages of workers and materials; but spending by tourists increased as COVID restrictions loosened.

“The trade deficit likely will stay higher in December and January due to the backlog of ships waiting at U.S. ports and headwinds to tourism from Omicron,” economist Bill Adams at PNC Financial Services wrote in a research note quoted by the *WSJ*.

TRENDPOST: *In large measure, Donald Trump gained the presidency by promising to shrink the U.S. trade deficit. However, as we continued to detail—as with his building “The Wall” that was barely built and repairing the nations’ rotting infrastructure that is still rotting—his trade deals were more Trump talk and no real action. However, President Trump did keep his promise to again rig the tax laws which enriched himself and the one percent.*

Yet on the trade deficit front, it continued to grow during his administration—a trend we followed in articles such as [“U.S. Trade Deficit Widens Again in May”](#) (13 Jul 2021) and [“August Trade Deficit Sets Record”](#) (12 Oct 2021)—and remains near record levels, largely because Americans continue to buy, buy, buy.

TREND FORECAST: *Until America becomes more of a self-sustaining economy and brings more manufacturing back home, the trade deficit will continue to increase as Americans keep buying the newest smartphone, four televisions in their homes, and a new wardrobe every season.*

RENTS ON THE RISE



After asking rents shot up almost 20 percent last year, and will shot up an additional 7 percent in 2022, according to Realtor.com.

Nationally, apartment occupancy was 97.1 percent in December, continuing a relentless demand for flats that has enabled landlords to raise rents dramatically over the last year, as we reported in [“Rents Soaring: What’s Next?”](#) (21 Sep 2021) and [“Rents Soar as Investors Buy Properties and Raise Rates”](#) (14 Sep 2021).

After flirting with insolvency during the COVID War, landlords will see an average boost of 13.5 percent in operating income this year, analysis service Green Street has forecast, beating gains by lodging, office, and retail properties.

With home prices at record highs, as we have reported in articles such as [“Home Sale Rush”](#) (16 Nov 2021), fewer people—especially Millennials and younger buyers of the age at which families traditionally buy their first homes—can qualify for a mortgage, put down 20 percent or more of the purchase price that many lenders demand, or compete in bidding wars or with all-cash buyers ([“Frenzied Housing Market Becomes Even More Intense,”](#) 22 Jun 2021).

Investors, especially private equity firms, have seen rising rents as a new profit center, investing billions to buy single-family homes in the most competitive real

estate markets, as we have highlighted in articles such as [“Invitation Homes to Buy \\$1 Billion Worth of Houses This Year”](#) (1 Jun 2021) and [“Private Equity Partners Target \\$5 Billion in Rental Houses”](#) (27 Jul 2021).

The NAREIT Equity Apartments Index, which is tied to the performance of companies that own apartments, gained about 60 percent last year, more than double the Standard & Poor’s 500’s record, with some companies in the index skyrocketing by as much as 80 percent, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Nationally, wages rose an average of 3.7 percent in the 12 months ending 30 November, according to figures from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

As professional investors snap up houses, often offering cash on the spot, fewer homes are available to individuals, especially those lacking lavish incomes.

First-time home buyers made up 29 percent of the market in 2021’s third quarter, compared to 33 percent during the same period in 2019.

Some analysts think that rising rents will deflate themselves; more people unable to pay the higher prices will give up their flats to move back with parents or pool with roommates, they warn, shrinking demand.

In many major urban hotspots, “minimum wages have been rising, but not enough to keep pace with the rent growth,” Danielle Hale, chief economist at Realtor.com, told the *WSJ*.

However, “we see people staying put,” Thomas Grimes Jr., chief operating officer of Mid-America Apartment Communities, which owns more than 100,000 rental units, said to the *WSJ*.

To meet the surging demand for flats, permits for new apartment construction will set records in 2023, Green Street predicted.

TREND FORECAST: *Inflation, rising interest rates, and a shortage of buildable land will keep single-family homes out of the reach of vast numbers of younger families in the years ahead.*

Instead, they will become a generation of renters, denied entry into the American Dream of home ownership and the opportunity to build wealth through equity.

That bleak future is being assured by private equity companies, which are snapping up more and more homes to rent out at premium prices to individuals and families who have few alternatives, as we have documented in articles such as [“Invitation Homes to Buy \\$1 Billion Worth of Houses This Year”](#) (1 Jun 2021) and [“Private Equity Partners Target \\$5 Billion in Rental Houses”](#) (27 Jul 2021).

HOME PRICES WILL RISE 14 PERCENT THIS YEAR, ZILLOW SAYS



Home prices will increase by 14 percent this year through November, online real estate brokerage Zillow predicted.

Prices in Charlotte and Raleigh, N.C., San Antonio, Tex., and Jacksonville and Tampa, Fla., will rise the most; Tampa leads the surge with prices forecast to grow by 25 percent, Zillow said.

Home prices will climb in southern and less-urbanized areas as Baby Boomers seek retirement havens such as Tampa and Jacksonville, more Millennials are ready to buy their first homes, and remote workers seek warmer climates and cheaper suburban digs.

Atlanta, Austin, Nashville, Orlando, and Phoenix make up the rest of the 10 markets Zillow sees as appreciating the most. Housing markets will cool in Chicago, Milwaukee, New York City, San Francisco, and San Jose, the

brokerage forecast, although home prices in those areas still will bump up 10 percent or more this year.

TREND FORECAST: *As interest rates rise, housing sales and home prices will begin to decline. However, unlike the Panic of '08 housing bust that was artificially inflated with subprime mortgages and wild speculation, minus a major equity market-crash, we do not forecast a sharp price sell-off.*

RESTAURANTS HUNGRY FOR GOV'T DOUGH



The U.S. Congress is considering a fresh plan to channel billions of stimulus dollars to the restaurant industry, including a bipartisan \$68-billion proposal drafted last month.

Legislators are determining “how much is needed,” according to Maryland senator Ben Cardin, who co-wrote the proposal with colleague Roger Wickler from Missouri.

In May 2021, the Biden administration used \$28.6 billion from its American Rescue Plan to create the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, which received 186,000 applications in its first two days.

Leftover money from the \$1.9-trillion rescue plan could be used for the purpose, an administration official told Business Insider.

Any such plan would need 10 Republican senators to back it.

While some Senate Republicans hesitate to spend yet more stimulus money, others are open to the idea.

"I would be open to reasonable discussions in a bipartisan way," North Dakota senator Keven Cramer said to BI.

"I think there's some members who are interested in some more COVID relief for restaurants and other things, and that could certainly become part of a package," Missouri GOP Senator Roy Blunt told BI.

"There are a lot of people who tell us that they're going to be falling between the cracks—that there was a big, big problem before the new variant—and it's gotten greater in the last few weeks," Wyden said.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have noted in this **Trends Journal**, U.S. restaurant business is down sharply from pre-COVID War days and is further deteriorating as fear of the Omicron virus is spread by the mainstream media.*

However, we forecast a very sharp sit-down restaurant bounce-back by late June through the year as the COVID War deescalates and the stayed-home-and-restless want to again break free.

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT



ECB TO KEEP MONEY JUNKIES HIGH

The European Central Bank (ECB) will continue its €4.6-trillion bond-buying economic stimulus programs well into 2023, according to 75 percent of 32 economists polled by the *Financial Times*.

The remainder of those polled expected the bank to curb stimulus programs this year, in part because the ECB already has said net new purchases in its €1.85-trillion COVID response bond-purchase initiative would end in March and another program would undergo a “step by step” reduction until at least October.

However, ECB president Christine Lagarde has repeatedly pledged to continue juicing the Eurozone’s economy with negative interest rates at least through 2023, as we reported in [“Will ECB Hold to Negative Interest Rate?”](#) (2 Nov 2021).

Still, with Europe's inflation rate notching a record 4.9 percent in November, fueled by soaring energy prices and supply-line kinks, more than half of the economists surveyed expect the bank to raise its key interest rate this year from the -0.50 percent it has held since 2014.

In contrast, about a quarter of the economists said the bank will freeze the current rate until at least 2024.

The ECB has promised it will leave the rate alone until it is convinced inflation will settle at 2 percent within two years and remain at that rate for a year beyond that.

However, almost four in five of the analysts polled think the bank will raise the rate it assigns to "targeted long-term refinancing operations," which are subsidized loans the ECB makes to commercial banks.

The economists were about evenly split on whether the European Union's new €800-billion COVID recovery fund would lower the risk of a bond-market selloff.

The fund makes grants and loans to EU member nations in exchange for structural reforms to their economies.

TREND FORECAST: *Inflation will persist somewhat this year, and it will continue to erode consumers' buying power. However, more importantly to the Banksters is keeping the cheap money flowing to continue pumping up equities and economies. However, should inflation stay high, pressure will grow on the ECB to raise interest rates sooner than the end of 2023.*

The ECB will weigh inflation against the continent's economic recovery—now set back again by new COVID War lockdowns—and will find ways to lift rates in other areas, such as those subsidized loans to commercial banks.

If inflation remains above 3.5 percent past June, the bank is likely to reconsider raising its key interest rate, now -0.50 percent, sooner than planned.

MORE MEGA-BANK MONKEY BUSINESS



"Fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly." And financial institutions, evidently, gotta manipulate, to their own advantage, the markets in which they trade, apparently unencumbered by ethics and undeterred by fines (when caught!) in the millions of dollars (but actually amounting to little

more than a slap on the wrist), and probationary agreements which they frequently proceed to violate with impunity, often before the ink has dried.

The particular episode we're telling you about this week was reported in *The Wall Street Journal* on 22 December. If reading about it induces a feeling of *deja vu*, that's likely because we've reported on similar transgressions so many times before; see, for example:

- ["CRIMINALITY IN HIGH FINANCE: THE BEAT GOES ON"](#) (9 Nov 2021)
- ["BANKSTER BANDITS: CRIME SYNDICATE COVER-UP"](#) (16 Nov 2021)
- ["SEVEN YEARS OF THE RIGGING GAME"](#) (31 Jul 2015)
- ["MAJOR BANKS FINED FOR COLLUSION"](#) (25 May 2021)

The last article on that far-from-complete list told how NatWest Group PLC (formerly known as the Royal Bank of Scotland) had escaped charges because it had ratted out to regulators the other banks with whom it had colluded in trading schemes between 2007 and 2011.

One might think that, having skated on those charges, NatWest Group would have learned its lesson and been on its best behavior; indeed, that was part of the agreement under which the bank had avoided being charged.

But No. The wire and securities fraud to which the bank's NatWest Markets division pleaded guilty on 21 December—and for which the bank agreed to pay

some \$35 million in fines and penalties—was committed between 2008 and 2018, and was in clear violation of the bank's probation.

The U.S. Justice Dept. said that it found "a continuing scheme of criminal conduct, not in one subsidiary, but in multiple." The manipulative trading involved a practice called "spoofing," in which traders manipulate markets by misleading other traders about supply-and-demand, thereby influencing the direction of prices (in this case related to U.S. Treasury securities). That spoofing led other traders to lose some \$6.7 million, which NatWest will pay in restitution as part of its settlement.

About a week before this latest plea deal, another NatWest subsidiary pleaded guilty in the U.K. to having failed to notify authorities of a client's apparent money-laundering scheme; the bank agreed to pay the equivalent of \$351.3 million in fines.

The U.S. Justice Dept. has vowed to scrutinize its settlement practices, under which companies can avoid prosecution by paying hefty fines and entering probation agreements.

TRENDPOST: *Picture, if you will, the Justice Dept. wagging its finger at a wayward bank and admonishing, "Naughty, naughty! Now pay your fine (which is really just a cost of doing business—sort of like a license to steal) and pinky-promise that you won't let us catch you misbehaving again!"*

NatWest Markets' CEO claimed that the fraud was "regrettable behavior" committed by "a small number of former employees," adding that such behavior was "unacceptable and has no place in the bank we are today."

TREND FORECAST: *It's the dawn of a new year, and perhaps the New Year's resolution of mega-banks like NatWest—and other members of that elite, corrupt big ol' club—see ["DON'T CALL THEM 'CRIMINALS' - THEY'RE 'WHITE SHOE BOYS'!"](#) (29 Sep 2020)—will be to re-discover their scruples and henceforth conduct their business in an ethical and above-board manner, seeking to avoid even the hint of impropriety and scandal. That would be nice, but no more likely*

than fish ceasing to swim or birds ceasing to fly; it would go against their very nature.

DEUTSCHE BANK BANKSTER FINED AGAIN!



Germany's bank regulating agency has fined Deutsche Bank, Germany's richest bank, €8.7 million, equivalent to about \$7.7 million, for failing to implement safeguards to prevent interest rate rigging.

The bank had failed to adopt “effective preventive systems, controls, and policies” that would keep employees from colluding with counterparts at other institutions to set rates artificially, the Federal Financial Supervisory Authority alleged.

The bank ignored rules that grew out of a 2015 scandal in which several banks conspired to manipulate the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR), an interest-rate average calculated from estimates pooled by various banks of what each bank would be charged if it borrowed from other banks.

For its part in the LIBOR scandal, Deutsche Bank was fined the equivalent of \$2.5 billion by regulators in Germany and the U.K. and ordered to fire several employees.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *As in the U.S., Europe's banksters can be “too big to jail,” no matter the scale of the crime.*

SPOTLIGHT: INFLATION GALLOPS ON



INFLATION ENDANGERS EU RECOVERY, ANALYSTS WARN

Europe's economic recovery will be in danger if inflation continues to destroy consumers' buying power and the European Central Bank (ECB) is forced to

hike interest rates sooner than planned, according to 38 economists polled by the *Financial Times*.

Inflation poses a "significant risk" to the 19-member Eurozone's economic growth, according to 40 of the analysts in the survey.

"Inflation will eat into wages, reducing demand," warned Jesper Rangvid, a finance professor at the Copenhagen Business School, in an *FT* interview.

"ECB might also have to respond to inflation risks by raising rates, taming the [economic] upswing," he said.

Inflation sped to 4.9 percent in November, a record since the euro currency was created in 1999, as prices for natural gas as much as quadrupled last fall, which we detailed in ["High Natural Gas Prices Slow Europe's Recovery"](#) (21 Sep 2021).

"Our economic outlook stands and falls with the inflation outlook," senior Europe economist Katherina Utermohl at Allianz told the *FT*.

"Should we see runaway inflation that looks set to remain above [the 2-percent target] beyond 2022, the ECB will have to rein in its policy stance much more abruptly than currently envisioned, which could weigh on the real economy as well as fuel financial stability concerns," she said.

Europe's producer prices rose 21.9 percent in 2021 through October, driven by a 62.5-percent explosion in energy costs. The price of industrial goods rose 8.9 percent during the period, indicating that producers swallowed much of the cost increase—a tactic that is unsustainable in the long term.

“Runaway inflation is a more significant risk than” the COVID virus, Wells Fargo economist Nicholas Bennenbroek, commented to the *FT*.

TREND FORECAST: *The ECB estimates the Eurozone's overall inflation rate at 2.6 percent in 2021 and expects 3.2 percent this year, both above its 2-percent target.*

Yet, despite inflation rising, it will keep its decade-long negative interest policy in place for as long as possible... ignoring its proclamation to raise interest rates when inflation moved above its phony, made-up, 2 percent inflation target. Again, the banksters are doing this to keep equity markets and the economies from dramatically declining.

EUROZONE INFLATION SETS RECORD, PRESSURING ECB TO HIKE RATES



In December, inflation across the 19-country Eurozone reached 5 percent, year over year, a record since the euro currency was created in 1999, the European Union's statistics agency reported.

Economists had predicted inflation would slow to 4.7 percent last month and would peak there, gradually declining into the new year, *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

However, a 4.6-percent jump in costs for food pushed the rate past November's overall inflation rate of 4.9 percent, also a record at the time.

Food prices had risen only 1.6 percent the month before.

December's energy prices were up 26 percent year over year, a slight dip from past months.

Core inflation, which excludes food and energy prices, held steady in December at 2.6 percent.

"Headline inflation will stay elevated until at least late summer, especially as higher wholesale energy prices are passed through to retail consumers and other parts of the economy," Carsten Brzeski, ING's chief of macro research, told the *Financial Times*.

"Several corporate clients have told us they will increase prices over the course of 2022," he noted.

Inflation's relentless growth has placed even greater pressures on the European Central Bank's (ECB's) governing committee to raise interest rates urgently to stem the loss of consumers' buying power.

However, last month bank officials repeated their view that raising interest rates is not yet necessary and is unlikely any time this year, although the bank will end its' €1.85-trillion bond-purchasing program in March (["Europe's Central Banks Diverge on Stimulus Policy."](#) 21 Dec 2021).

The bank acknowledged that inflation will run higher for longer than ECB leaders had expected and will average 3.2 percent in 2022, bank president Christine Lagarde said in a press conference last month.

However, inflation will slow this year and settle to 1.8 percent in 2023, slightly below the bank's target rate of 2 percent, she predicted.

Nonetheless, money market futures are pricing in a 1-percent interest rate boost in October, the *FT* reported.

TREND FORECAST: *As the U.S. Federal Reserve did, the ECB's leaders are maintaining a too-rosy outlook, pretending that inflation will stay low so they can prop up Europe's equity markets and economies... that are sinking lower as nations ramp of COVID War restrictions that are destroying lives and livelihoods.*

The more likely outcome is that inflation will remain higher longer than the bank forecasts, ultimately forcing it—as the Fed is—to rein back bond-buying supports and raise interest rates sooner than expected, roiling markets and risking a bumpy return to economic reality that, in Europe's case, will cast the Eurozone back into recession.

LUMBER PRICES SURGE AFTER CANADIAN FLOODS



Flooding in western Canada has cut off logging and timber shipments from a key supply region, sending North American lumber futures prices up 3.8 percent, a seven-month high.

Since September, climbing lumber prices have added \$18,600 to the cost of a new home, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Lumber prices have been rising for more than a year. Last spring, acute shortages added \$36,000 to the cost of a newly built U.S. home, the NAHB said, as we reported in [“Lumber Prices Add \\$36,000 to Cost of New Home”](#) (4 May 2021).

SPOTLIGHT: TURKEY IN CRISIS



TURKEY'S INFLATION RATE ZOOMS PAST 36 PERCENT IN DECEMBER

Inflation in Turkey soared to 36.1 percent last month, the most in the 19 years that strongman president Recep Erdogan has ruled and enforced his notion that low

interest rates counter consumer price increases.

Inflation was running at 37 percent in September 2002, two months before Erdogan took office.

The year-over-year explosion surpassed analysts' expectation of a 30.6-percent annual rise through 2021 and nearly doubled the central bank's October prediction that inflation would end the year at 18.4 percent.

In December alone, the rate of increase grew an additional 13.58 percent, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute, with food, transportation, and other staples leading the increase.

December's Producer Price Index jumped 19.08 percent from November and 79.89 percent for all of 2021. Transportation prices rose 53.66 percent and the cost of food and beverages 43.8 percent.

Turkey's inflation rate will remain above 40 percent throughout this year, Goldman Sachs has predicted, and some economists say the rate will climb to 50 percent unless the country's president and central bank can be persuaded to reverse interest-rate policy, Reuters reported.

Turkey's economic tailspin slashed 44 percent from the value of the lira, the national currency, last year, its worst tumble in almost 20 years.

To prop up the lira, Turkey's central bank asked exporters to sell 25 percent of their hard-currency revenues to the bank in exchange for lira.

Exporters are a cash target for the bank because Turkey's exports rose by a third last year to \$225 billion.

Erdogan, a self-described "enemy" of high interest rates, has insisted that low rates bring down inflation, despite economic theory and his country's own experience proving him wrong.

TRENDPOST: *Since last March, he has fired a series of central bank governors and replaced them with a loyalist who has followed Erdogan's directive to cut interest rates even as inflation surged, as we reported in ["Turkey's Financial Markets Crash After Agbal Firing"](#) (30 Mar 2021) and ["Turkey: Another Day, Another Central Bankster Fired"](#) (1 Jun 2021).*

TURKEY SPENDS MORE THAN \$7.3 BILLION TO RESCUE LIRA IN DECEMBER



Last month, Turkey's central bank spent \$7.3 billion in five officially announced interventions to buy lira, the country's currency, in an attempt to save it from crashing.

However, the bank also used additional indirect interventions through individual state banks, jacking the total spent to notably more than \$7.3 billion, analysts told the *Financial Times*.

Through 2021, the lira lost about 45 percent of its value against the dollar as inflation rampaged unchecked, reaching at least 40 percent by one independent analysis, as we reported in ["Turkey: A Crime to Tell the Economic Truth?"](#) (5 Oct 2021).

Turkish president Recep Erdogan has ordered the country's central bank to progressively lower interest rates, due to his unfounded certainty that low interest rates reduce inflation.

The sale of dollars to buy lira was part of a plan, announced by Erdogan in late December, to prop up the currency and entice Turks to put money into savings accounts, which we reported in [“Turkey’s Markets Crash, Currency Crisis”](#) (21 Dec 2021).

Following the announcement, the lira lifted from its record low of 18.36 to the dollar and returned to 11 against the buck, but then slid back down to 14.

The central bank spent the foreign currency reserves although Turkey is faced with \$170 billion in foreign debts coming due this year and only about \$111 billion in foreign currency reserves, according to Goldman Sachs.

The country's net reserves are about \$66 billion in the red, Goldman noted.

TREND FORECAST: *Erdogan has framed his opposition to higher interest rates in moral and military terms, proclaiming himself an “enemy” of high interest rates and casting his policy to be part of an “economic independence war.”*

As we noted in our article [“Turkey’s Markets Crash, Currency Crisis,”](#) it is not surprising that Erdogan frames his failed policies in warlike terms. As Gerald Celente notes, “when all else fails, they take you to war”—in this case, casting his economic failures as a response to what he will term “hostile outside forces” in hopes of unifying the nation behind him.

It's not working: Erdogan's popularity keeps sliding along with stock values and the lira.

Erdogan will not acknowledge the abysmal failure of his policies. He also is unlikely to surrender power, whatever the result of the next election: his 2018

re-election was marked by widespread claims by opponents and independent observers of ballot-stuffing and other forms of corruption.

Turkey will continue to spiral down into economic and political chaos, prompting street demonstrations and, in all probability, violent response from government troops as Erdogan clings ever more desperately to power.

As the global economic recovery decelerates—and as inflation keeps rising across the globe—the lira and Turkey’s economy will continue to decline. Ongoing fears of the Omicron virus will worsen Turkey’s plight; nearly 13 percent of its GDP rests on travel and tourism.

SPOTLIGHT: THE RISE OF CHINA



CHINA'S EQUITY VALUE GREW TO \$12.7 TRILLION IN 2021

China's stock markets held \$12.7 trillion at the end of 2021, ranking it as the world's second-largest equities market.

Domestically-listed stocks added about 20 percent in value, or about \$2.1 trillion, through the year, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence, mirroring the 23-percent rise in the Standard & Poor's 500 Index in the U.S.

Companies listing their shares on China's stock exchanges seem to have been spared the turmoil that has befallen Evergrande, Alibaba, and other Chinese firms listed on U.S. and other foreign exchanges.

Chinese corporations listed on the Hong Kong or U.S. exchanges tumbled about 42 percent in 2021, *The Wall Street Journal* reported, as China cracked down on freewheeling behavior among online retailers and property developers.

China has imposed strict new rules discouraging companies from listing on foreign exchanges. Mobility company Didi Global is now seeking to de-list itself from the New York Stock Exchange.

Domestically listed companies are largely focused on tech and industrial products, while those posted on foreign exchanges deal more in real estate and on-line consumer products.

“It is a time when China wants to shift the focus to furthering its capabilities in advanced technologies and manufacturing,” Louis Lau, investment director at Brandes Investment Partners, told the *WSJ*.

The onshore stock market “has companies that are doing that,” he said.

“There has been a lot of interest in the renewables, financials, and industrial Internet sectors,” agreed Kiran Nandra-Koehrer, emerging equities manager at Pictet Asset Management, in a *WSJ* interview.

A CSI index of “new energy” shares trading domestically shot up 49 percent last year, compared to a 23-percent bump for an index of industrial Internet stocks.

CHINA FAILS TO PURCHASE PROMISED AMOUNTS OF U.S. GOODS AND SERVICES



China has failed to buy the additional \$200 billion in annual U.S. goods and services that it promised to purchase under the January 2020 “Phase One” trade deal negotiated between Beijing and the Trump administration.

The two-year agreement lapsed on 31 December.

The agreement set specific quotas for China's purchases of U.S. agricultural products, energy, services, and manufactured goods.

However, skeptics doubted China could buy so much additional U.S. output over such a short period, or that U.S. companies could meet the additional demand.

U.S. businesses and trade groups are expecting the Biden administration's response to China's failure to be moderate, analysts told *The Wall Street Journal*, as president Joe Biden seeks to ease tensions between Beijing and Washington while he focuses on his domestic legislative agenda.

American businesses also hope for improved relations between the two countries to ensure their access to China's growing markets.

TRENDPOST: In [*"Trade War? U.S. Lost It"*](#) (9 Feb 2021), we noted even then that the Trump policy and trade agreement was failing badly. Confirming what we had long noted and again detailed in this **Trends Journal**, Mary Lovely, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, told *Politico*, "The Trump administration never had a feasible plan for reducing the trade deficit. The 2017 tax cut ensured that the U.S... would continue to spend more than it produced, hence the [trade and budget] deficit."

CHINA'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR EDGES UP



China's industrial purchasing managers index crept up to 50.3 in December after registering 50.1 in November, according to the country's National Bureau of Statistics.

Rankings above 50 indicate expansion; the higher the number, the more robust the growth.

The industrial sector stopped sinking after China's government expanded supports to ensure supplies of materials and stabilize prices, the bureau said.

The subindex tracking the price of raw materials dropped from 52.9 in October to 48.1 in November. The price of goods factories shipped fell from 48.9 to 45.1 for the month.

CHINA'S DOMESTIC MEMBERSHIP STORES GAIN MARKET SHARE



A public relations crisis in China besetting Sam's Club, Walmart's membership-store chain, gives domestic membership stores such as Freshhema an opening to dethrone foreign competitors and further strengthen China's domestically-based economy, according to the *Global Times*, a

government-controlled Chinese newspaper.

Sam's Club reportedly removed products made in Xinjiang province, or made from Xinjiang cotton, in protest of China's enslavement of ethnic Uighurs, a Muslim minority, to work the fields and factories.

Thousands of angry Chinese customers canceled their Sam's Club membership in protest. They allegedly were told that if they canceled their memberships, they would be permanently banned from membership in the future, worsening public hostility toward the company.

International boycotts of Xinjiang cotton and other products have sparked an upwelling of nationalism and resentment of foreign companies among Chinese citizens, as we reported in [“Chinese Citizens Protest Western Ban on Xinjiang Cotton”](#) (30 Mar 2021).

Sam's Club pioneered China's membership-store industry, but companies such as Alibaba—China's version of Amazon—have launched their own versions.

Growing nationalistic fervor among consumers will likely transfer market share from foreign-owned companies to domestic ones, Zhang Yi, CEO of iiMedia Research Institute, told the GT.

Sam's Club operates 34 stores across China, with another 23 under construction.

TREND FORECAST: *These news items out of China underscore the growing success of its dual circulation economic policy, designed to make the country less dependent on exports by building a strong domestic consumer economy.*

Together, these developments also reflect our ["Top 2022 Trend"](#) of companies and countries boosting self-sufficiency in both production and consumption.

And as for China looking at America for fashion, style and upbeat consumer trends... it is a time gone by. Thus, "Made-in-China" will be their entertainment and pop-culture future.

U.S. ALLIES SIGN TRADE PACT WITH CHINA THAT EXCLUDES U.S.



region.

In 2017 the U.S., under then-President Donald Trump, withdrew from a trade agreement, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which the U.S. had led in order to counter the influence of China in the

China had been excluded from that agreement. It had been opposed by many lawmakers, and the current U.S. administration, under Pres. Joe Biden, says it has no plans to rejoin it.

But there is a new (actually initiated in 2012) Asia-Pacific trade agreement, this time including China but excluding the U.S. It's called the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and it will eventually (over the next 20 years) eliminate more than 90 percent of the tariffs between the signatory nations (of whom China and U.S. allies Japan and Australia have already signed).

It also aims to create common standards pertaining to intellectual property rights and e-commerce.

TREND FORECAST: *Sure, the RCEP will establish common standards pertaining to intellectual property rights—just so long as it's China that sets those standards! China is the robber baron of intellectual property; its meteoric rise from manufacturer of cheap knock-offs to technological powerhouse has been predicated on its theft of intellectual property; see ["CHINA BUSINESS ESPIONAGE NETS \\$500 BILLION A YEAR"](#) (29 Jun 2021).*

The fifteen participatory nations (five have yet to ratify the agreement but are expected to do so) represent 30 percent of the world's population and gross domestic product; the RCEP will exceed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada agreement and the European Customs Union, thus becoming the world's largest regional trade agreement.

The Wall Street Journal reported on 1 January (the day the RCEP was launched) that some analysts believe the new agreement will favor China, at the expense of the U.S., by giving China a bigger role in setting regional trade rules, promoting Chinese trade with Japan and South Korea, and making Chinese-made components more attractive to regional factories.

The U.S. was never invited to participate and would not have done so, because the agreement was considered too weak in its labor and environmental standards.

TREND FORECAST: "Environmental standards"? Even the U.S. manages to exempt China from the environmental rules it imposes on itself and expects from the rest of the world; without the U.S., who will prevail upon China to clean up its environmental act?

And when one speaks of Chinese "labor standards," one is really speaking of human rights and forced labor; who, other than the U.S., will be inclined to exert any influence on China regarding such matters? On the contrary, it is China that exerts pressure on anyone who dares criticize its "labor standards"; see ["TOP TRENDS 2021: THE RISE OF CHINA"](#) (30 Mar 2021).

An Asian trade expert is quoted as saying that the RCEP "could be a wake-up call for the U.S. to rethink its strategy" regarding Asian-Pacific trade.

TRENDPOST: This trade agreement, which U.S. allies are happy to enter into with the U.S. left on the sidelines, is just further proof of what Gerald Celente has been saying for years: that China is in ascendance while the U.S. is in decline; see ["CELENTE ON CHINA'S RISE, AMERICA'S DECLINE"](#) (29 Nov 2017), ["TOP TRENDS OF 2021: THE RISE OF CHINA"](#) (19 Jan 2021) and ["CHINA 2021: THE CHINESE CENTURY"](#) (9 Mar 2021).

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS GETTING BIGGER



TAKEOVER FIRM HOPES FOR \$877 MILLION FROM IPO

TPG Capital, a buyout specialist formerly named Texas Pacific Group, is hoping to

collect as much as \$877 million from an initial public stock offering that would value the firm as highly as \$9 billion, the *Financial Times* reported.

TPG hopes to sell 28.3 million shares at between \$28 and \$31 each, tapping investors' rising interest in caching their money with private equity firms.

Forty percent of the funds raised will be used to buy out existing outside investors; TPG will use the remaining 60 percent to expand into new markets and lines of business, the company's prospectus said.

TPG will transform from a private partnership to a corporation within five years of the offering and will have a single class of stock, the company's announcement said.

China Life Insurance, which paid \$250 million in 2014 for a stake in the company, will sell 5.6 million shares in the IPO, TPG disclosed.

TPG's move follows public stock offerings by private equity firms Apollo Capital Management, Blackstone Group, and KKR, all of which went public after the first COVID wave struck and have seen their share values skyrocket.

TPG has about \$109 billion in assets, including holdings in Airbnb, Spotify, and Uber.

NEW YORK TIMES WILL BUY THE ATHLETIC FOR \$550 MILLION



The New York Times Co. has agreed to a price of \$550 million in cash to buy The Athletic, an online sports news venue with 1.2 million subscribers, the newspaper announced.

The purchase brings the Times's current base of eight million subscribers closer to the paper's goal of having 10 million paid readers by 2025.

"We are now in pursuit of a goal meaningfully larger than 10 million subscriptions," Times CEO Meredith Levien in the announcement, adding that there is only "modest overlap" between the two news outlets' subscribers.

The Athletic took in \$65 million in revenue in its last operating year against a loss of \$55 million.

The sports website will continue to eat into the Times's profitability for the next three years while the company gradually builds ad revenues and broadens the base of subscribers, Levien said in a call with analysts.

The latest Times purchase follows its 2016 acquisition of The Wirecutter and Sweet Home product review sites and its \$25-million 2020 takeover of Serial Productions.

Also in 2020, it bought Audm which allows subscribers to listen to audio recordings of news articles.

The Times had about \$1 billion in cash in its pocket at the end of 2021's third quarter, *The New York Times* reported.

More acquisitions are likely.

ALD BUYS RIVAL LEASEPLAN FOR €4.9 BILLION



ALD, the vehicle-leasing business owned by French international bank Société Générale, is buying competitor LeasePlan Corp. for €4.9 billion in cash and stock, equivalent to about \$5.54 billion.

ALD leases to corporations; LeasePlan does as well but also deals with individuals.

The new entity will have about 3.5 million cars in the field and will be better able to take advantage of mobility trends such as car-sharing, the bank said.

The deal is part of a trend among European banks to seek profitability farther afield from their conventional businesses in an era of persistent negative interest rates.

The leasing business will grow to become an additional pillar of Société Générale's profit structure, along with its retail, corporate, and investment banking, and insurance business, CEO Frédéric Oudéa said in a statement quoted by *The Wall Street Journal*.

GAME MAKER TAKE-TWO INTERACTIVE BUYS RIVAL ZYNGA FOR \$12.7 BILLION



Take-Two Interactive, the publicly-traded maker of Grand Theft Auto and other video games, has agreed to buy competitor Zynga—which owns Farmville, CSR Racing, and a portfolio of other games, for \$12.7 billion.

Take-Two will pay for the deal with cash and debt, including a \$2.7-billion loan from JPMorgan, the company reported.

The deal values Zynga at \$9.86 a share, 64 percent more than its 7 January closing price.

Although CNBC figures Zynga's real equity value is closer to \$11 billion, Michael Pachter, equity research director at Wedbush Securities, had a \$15 share price target for Zynga.

Zynga was boosted by 2020's lockdown, at one point becoming Facebook's most successful app developer, and now has concentrated on mobile gaming apps, an area in which Take-Two has lagged but that makes up half the estimated \$180-billion global gaming market.

Take-Two now says mobile gaming will make up more than half its \$6.1 billion in sales in its next fiscal year, up from 12 percent in the most recent year. Its purchase of Zynga eventually will add at least \$500 million annually while creating cost savings of \$100 million a year in the merger's first two years.

The deal is the latest in a wave of takeovers in the gaming industry that saw Tencent buy Sumo Group and Turtle Rock Studios last year and Microsoft buy Bethesda, of Fallout and Doom fame, for \$7.5 billion in 2020.

WEWORK CO-FOUNDER'S NEW GIG: APARTMENT TYCOON



Financial entities tied to Adam Neumann, co-founder of shared-workspace company WeWork, have acquired about 4,000 apartments worth roughly \$1 billion, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Neumann's ambition is to create a well-known brand that will "shake up" the rental housing industry, a person familiar told the *WSJ*.

For example, the Neumann property Stacks on Main, in Nashville, Tenn., has a salt-water swimming pool, a dog park, and valet trash collection, the *WSJ* said.

Other Neumann properties are located in Atlanta, Ft. Lauderdale, Miami, and other “vibrant cities where a new generation of young people are choosing to live, the kind of cities that are redefining the future of living,” D.J. Mauch, a partner in Neumann’s family office, said in a *WSJ* interview.

Neumann and WeWork co-founder Miguel McKelvey raised about \$10 billion in financing for their workspace firm, founded in 2010. Neumann collected about \$500 million from selling his own stock and is estimated to now be worth about \$1.6 billion.

As an investment, rental housing has outperformed most other vehicles since the COVID War began. Footloose professionals have moved from conventional hub cities such as New York and San Francisco to locales where housing was cheaper, such as Raleigh, N.C., and Boise, Id. ([“Americans Still Fleeing Urban Centers.”](#) 30 Mar 2021).

At the same time, soaring demand for houses sent home prices skyward, freezing out hundreds of thousands of buyers unable to win bidding wars or offer to pay for a house in cash ([“Frenzied Housing Market Becomes Even More Intense.”](#) 22 Jun 2021).

Unable to buy homes, those disappointed buyers turned to apartments, where rents have rocketed up, especially in the most popular markets.

In 2019, WeWork’s board of directors asked Neumann to resign as CEO, allegedly because of his drug use and erratic behavior.

In a 2019 *WSJ* profile, Neumann said he had ambitions to be prime minister of Israel, the world’s first trillionaire, and to establish WeWork on Mars.

While Neumann was WeWork’s CEO, he limited employees to four beers a day during working hours.

CORPORATIONS POCKET \$12.1 TRILLION IN CASH IN 2021



Corporations around the world raised a record \$12.1 trillion through stock issues, bond sales, and by borrowing, 17 percent more than in 2020 and almost 25 percent above 2019's level, according to data from analysis firm Refinitiv reported by the

Financial Times.

Central banks' flood of money to lend at rock-bottom interest rates created more and easier avenues for businesses to raise cash, especially in the U.S. where corporations raised more than \$5 trillion.

Among the more sizable deals: Discovery's \$43-billion deal to buy 29 percent of WarnerMedia (["Discovery Inc. Expands Media Empire,"](#) 25 May 2021) and Canadian Pacific's \$29.3-billion takeover of the Kansas City Southern railroad (["Canadian Pacific Railway to Buy Major U.S. Freight Carrier,"](#) 23 Mar 2021).

Junk bonds also benefited from historic low borrowing rates and, in the U.S., guarantees by the U.S. Federal Reserve.

Seventeen percent more junk bonds were sold in 2021 than in the year before to nearly \$650 billion; new loans to borrowers already deep in debt more than doubled to \$614 billion, the *FT* reported.

Global stock issues broke 2020's record, rising 24 percent to \$1.44 trillion, with the number of U.S. initial public offerings almost doubling last year's volume.

Also in 2020, special-purpose acquisition companies (SPACs) raised more money than conventional IPOs, tallying \$152 billion after a new slate of the blank-check companies came to market late in the year.

“We anticipate it will continue into next year,” Chris Blum, a leveraged buyout specialist with BNP Paribas, told the *FT*.

“Every year, you think markets will go down from this frantic pace, but it will still be robust,” he said.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast that when the U.S. Federal Reserve raises interest rates and pulls its bond-buying crutch out from under the lending industry, corporations will reacquaint themselves with economic reality.*

When that happens, borrowing will drop off dramatically, especially among over-leveraged companies, businesses will enter a new era of financial restraint, and investors will turn away from “meme” stocks, SPACs, and other fads, and hew more closely to stocks that are tied to value.

BIGS GET BIGGER VIA RECORD MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS



While many suffered financially in 2021, it was a very good year for dealmaking and for the dealmakers, standing out even in a decade that's been big for wheeling-and-dealing.

So reports the *Financial Times* on 30 December. The value of 2021's various mergers and acquisitions amounted to more than \$5.8 trillion, the highest in the four decades that records of such deals have been kept, and 54 percent higher than in 2019, before the COVID War.

Among the big deals were the \$132 billion company resulting from WarnerMedia's merger with its rival Discovery, and Kansas City Southern's \$31 billion acquisition by Canadian Pacific railway.

It was a very good year for investment banks, too; they racked up some \$157 billion in fees, including \$47 billion for advice on mergers and acquisitions.

Cheap money has made it all possible, and that has been a result of interest rates kept low by central banks, government help for companies affected by the COVID War, and thriving stock markets; inflation makes it possible to incur debt and pay it back with cheaper dollars; see ["MARKET OVERVIEW"](#) (14 Dec 2021).

TRENDPOST: *It's nothing new; see ["U.S.: CHEAP MONEY PUMP, PUMPING"](#) (3 Dec 2019).*

Much of the merger and acquisition boom was in special purpose acquisition companies, known as "SPACS." They are companies created for the purpose of merging with a privately held company and bringing it to the stock market. Deals in 2021 involving SPACS accounted for \$597 billion, 10 percent of the year's merger and acquisition deals worldwide.

The one example of such deals cited by *FT* is the proposed merger of Donald Trump's startup social media company with Digital World Acquisition Corp.

It's also cited as an example of how SPAC deals attract the attention of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and its E.U. counterpart competition regulators, which are supposed to limit how much economic activity can be under the control of just a few mega-corporations.

TREND FORECAST: *All this activity could be the boom before the bust—see ["MARKET BUST COMING? CORPORATE CHIEFS CASHING OUT"](#) (14 Dec 2021)—because, as we've noted before, all this cheap money is the result of artificially low interest rates and "stimulus" programs, like the Federal Reserve's bond-buying scheme—see ["PONZI 2.0: FED BUYING CORPORATE BONDS"](#) (16 Jun 2020)—and when interest rates eventually rise, the economy and the equity markets will take a hit. That, however, will drive up the prices of precious metals and cryptocurrencies.*

TRENDPOST: For more on how the economy is manipulated, see Gregory Mannarino's article, ["U.S. STOCK MARKET: A CRIME IN PROGRESS"](#) (16 Jun 2020).

FEATURED ARTICLES BY GUEST WRITERS



WASHINGTON GIVES COLD SHOULDER TO RUSSIA'S SECURITY CONCERNS

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

As Stephen Lendman reports, [“Biden Regime Rejects Russia’s Security Demands.”](#)

The bad news is there cannot be normal, friendly relations between the U.S. and Russia for two reasons.

One reason is that the annual budget of the U.S. military/security complex is \$1,000 billion. A budget this large and the power that goes with it requires a large enemy. Russia has been designated that enemy. It works with the American public and academics because of the long Cold War with the Soviet Union. Americans are accustomed to seeing Russia as the enemy.

The other reason is Washington's commitment to American hegemony. The neoconservatives characterize the United States as the exceptional and indispensable country which has a right to hegemony. Russia, and also China, but especially Russia because Russia borders the American European empire, is considered to be a constraint on Washington's hegemony.

As Russia is a constraint on Washington's hegemony, Washington is committed to the destabilization of Russia with sanctions, demonization, color revolutions, indeed, by any means. U.S. nuclear missile bases on Russia's borders are a way of achieving hegemony over Russia via intimidation. Because of these facts, it is not possible for Russia to negotiate a solution to the security problem.

Washington does not want Russia to be secure.

That is the crux of the matter.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has long fooled itself, mistakenly thinking that once the Americans understood Russia's good intentions, normal relations could be established. This was uninformed, wistful and unrealistic thinking.

Washington has left Russia with two choices. She can accept American hegemony, or she can roll back NATO from her borders with force and intimidation.

I think the Kremlin has concluded that the chance of nuclear war is higher from allowing U.S. nuclear missiles on Russia's borders than from action to roll back NATO to the pre-1997 borders.

For more, visit www.paulcraigroberts.org

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS



MARKETS: EXPECT DEBTS, DEFICITS AND INFLATION TO SURGE MUCH HIGHER

By *Gregory Mannarino* TradersChoice.net

Before I even begin this article, I want you to be crystal clear on this...
Ready?

EVERYTHING YOU ARE SEEING NOW WITH REGARD TO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND THE MARKETS IS DELIBERATE.

Public Enemy Number One—The Federal Reserve, has allowed inflation to surge WAY beyond their 2 percent target, and today the current rate of inflation—**their numbers**, sits at 6.8 percent. But now the Fed is saying that NOW they are ready to do something about surging inflation.

How about no, the Fed is lying.

Food and energy prices will continue to balloon with no sign of relief in sight, in fact, we can all expect inflation, or should I say the absolute strength of the dollar to crater FASTER.

Uncertainty is taking hold on the world equity markets and over the past week we have seen stock markets fall under pressure. Here in the US, the debt market is pricing in a Fed rate hike sometime soon—*which in my opinion will happen*.

The big secret that you are not supposed to know is this. Whatever the Fed does regarding hiking rates, expect it to be minimal to an extreme.

Understand, the Federal Reserve IS NOT DONE fulfilling its goal which is to become not just the lender and buyer of last resort, but to own it all. In order for the Fed to finish its end game, along with other world central banks, MUCH more debt will need to be issued, globally.

Speculation on what the Fed will actually do moving forward is causing world stock markets to fall under pressure, and as a ripple effect the crypto markets have also taken a hit.

I see no guesswork here. I fully expect that the Fed will continue to inflate.

There is also talk of a Fed balance sheet runoff, that is, the Fed will sell some of the debt it is currently holding, but let me ask this... there is NO WAY that is going to happen. Why? Who, or what entity would buy debt which the Fed is currently holding which is yielding LESS than the current rate! Can't happen.

Looking over at the yield curve, there is some “normalization” as the market is pricing in a rate hike, and with that, risk in the market is climbing—**(See the MMRI, Mannarino Market Risk Indicator, which can be found on my website TradersChoice.net).**

The bottom line here is expect the unexpected, but also understand that price action distortion across the spectrum of asset classes will continue to get worse.

Expect EXTREME volatility in the crypto space, and to a lesser degree in the equity space as well.

The Fed will in fact keep rates suppressed for as far as the eye can see and beyond, therefore nothing really has changed. With that, global debt issuance by central banks will skyrocket with no end in sight which will drive global central bank issued currencies lower in terms of purchasing power. Debts, deficits, and inflation will continue to spiral out of control for the foreseeable future.

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM



THE NEED FOR OVERWHELMING FORCE

By *Bradley J. Steiner*, [American Combato](#)

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the word “overwhelm” as meaning: “To be too much to deal with”. Think about that. There are low-level scumbags who amount to little more than petty pains-in-the-ass. Many, if told firmly to do so, will simply leave the person whom they are bothering alone.

Others might require the application of some physical persuasion . . . but the low-level nature and intention of their bothersome activity is more annoying than it is dangerous, and at the first touch of resisting force they are sent running. We are not concerned with or about these types of worthless nuisance.

Our sole concern in American Combato is the preparation of decent people—to include law enforcement officers, military persons, security and protection professionals, and private citizens of any and every persuasion—for dangerous encounters with violent, predatory enemies, be they enemy soldiers, criminals,

terrorists, street punks, gang members, home invaders, abductors, rapists, thrill-killers, or what-have you.

And despite the rhetoric advanced by many who purport to be teaching self-defense and combative skills, very, very few so-called “teachers” of the combat disciplines actually understand this serious level of violence, let alone prepare their charges to cope with it.

Violent offenders of the kind about which we are speaking are extremely tenacious, resilient, dangerous, destructive, determined, often experienced, and never easy to stop. They do not discourage easily, and they often are capable of assimilating considerable punishment before succumbing, and ceasing to be a threat.

A considerable disservice was done many years ago (unwittingly, we must say) by a journalist to many who purchased and read a book that he wrote on ju-jutsu. The terrific judo experts known as The Judo Twins (i.e. Bernie and Bob Lepkofker) assisted in some of the book’s illustrations. One photo showed one of the twins being held helpless in a wrist hold that was being applied by a diminutive young lady.

In reality even if the twin had allowed her to put that hold on him and crank on all of the force of which she was capable it is doubtful whether he would even have felt a mild annoyance! Either of the twins was so huge, so powerful, and so well-conditioned, that it more than likely would have required a powerhouse of comparable size and strength and skill to even stand a chance of applying the damn hold!

But doubtless readers of that book (which we will not name) felt that what they were being shown was nothing short of miraculous. This is (again we must say, unintentional) bullshit. Many people actually believe that a small, relatively weak person can clamp a wrist or other type hold on a huge, powerful man and hold that man helpless. Perhaps if the big man allows it; no way in hell if he’s determined to beat your head in and if he exerts his strength and aggression to thwart your efforts!

We've seen so-called self-defense demonstrations in which a defender deftly snatches a knife assailant's weapon away from him with little more than the effort it might take to open a package of twinkies. Come on, please!

This kind of crap is not properly educating anyone about what actually can be done in self-defense emergencies, and what must be done, if in fact self-defense is to be effected! And on it goes. Students are taught pain compliance tricks, control holds, methods of blocking and countering, etc. that seem to be doable fairly easily and by anyone—against anyone.

This is misleading nonsense, and students of self-defense who really want to be able to defend themselves had better wake up to the reality of what hand-to-hand combat requires for victory. “And just what does hand-to-hand combat require for victory?” Very simply, overwhelming an adversary physically and mentally, and rendering him unable and unwilling to be a further threat.

Dangerous, aroused and determined human aggressors are not turned off easily! And forget the nonsense, bullshit, and crap you may be told or you may have read regarding the incredible possibilities of martial arts. You would probably be surprised if you knew the degree of punishment some violent types are capable of assimilating. In severe pain, injured, even significantly incapacitated, a truly determined aggressor can still be a threat.

Our purpose here is not to discourage visitors but to orient them to reality. It is not by pretending and by playing that one can achieve truly viable capabilities. Understand the enemy. Realize that he is formidable. Strive mightily thereafter to make yourself MORE formidable!

Determine to train so that in a crisis you do not merely “fight back”; instead be prepared to carry the war right into the enemy's camp! Be determined to devastate any aggressor. When you undertake to defend yourself do so with an attitude that conveys rage, hatred, and the most vicious desire to DESTROY. Every instance of self-defense will not demand this . . . but some will.

And there is no way to predict which specific one you are now confronting when, unfortunately, it comes to you. No namby-pamby techniques. Let your assailant have it! Kick him in the testicles or break his knee. Inflict injury; and do so with all of your strength and with not the slightest hesitation. You want that extralegal scumbag who presumes to attack you as though it was some kind of “prerogative” of his to be flooded with shock, terror, and the agony and disability of serious injuries. You want that sewer rat overwhelmed.

Some tips to assist you:

- Practice serious, disabling blows that inflict real injury
- Learn to apply your blows the second you are attacked
- Do not stop attacking until the scumbag flees, is so badly injured that he loses the will and the capability of endangering you further, or you can escape safely
- Commit 100% once you realize that you need to stop an attacker
- Work in combinations, followup, and follow-through. No “one shot stops”. Attack like a wild animal
- Use anything at hand to assist your defense and use it with all of your ability. No rules. No holding back. No fair play. No decency. Just win
- Use the element of surprise when possible, and yell, growl, grimace like an insane person, as you attack relentlessly
- Expect to assimilate some punishment. Let that drive you into a frenzy of rage and hatred and determination to destroy.
- A violent offender delights in the torment, humiliation, fear, and confusion that his criminal acts impose upon the innocent. Learn to delight in overwhelming such a lump of sh—t should doing so ever become necessary for self-defense. Don’t worry about sinking to a level “like the violent offender”. Sink several levels below the violent offender, and convince him that he has made the most horrific error of his worthless damn life! Now you’ve got it.

TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY



By *Joe Doran*

THE TECHNOCRACY'S WARPED REALITY FILTER

In current orthodoxy enforced by technocratic elites, the lines between what is celebrated and condemned reaches fresh heights of absurdity virtually every day.

Some latest examples came courtesy of a recent year-end article on MIT's technologyreview.com website, highlighting some of the “worst technology of 2021.”

The article panned apps popular with children and teens that allow them to “refashion” their appearance in videos and pics.

It railed against “space tourism” excursions by billionaires.

And it exorciated a newly approved Alzheimer's pharmaceutical treatment for being exorbitantly expensive and having dangerous side effects.

The trouble with the MIT examples of bad technology, is that the same elites have championed technologies and policies that are analogous to all those mentioned, but far more devastating to society.

In short, the MIT year end review is a textbook example of a warped reality filter that elites routinely employ to push preferred narratives while inducing average people to ignore gaping hypocrisies.

Tilting at Tech Windmills

In a section about “Beauty Apps,” the MIT article lays out the problem of apps that young people use to visually alter their appearance in videos and photos.

The article expresses concern that the apps provide the ability to do things like smooth the skin, thin noses, and enlarge eyes in digital images:

“These apps are not just gimmicks, like those that give you bunny ears. For some young women, they enforce false images they can’t live up to. The message kids are getting is not ‘Be yourself.’”

The same MIT elites pointing out the dangers of apps that make no real physical changes to the human body, have no problem advocating “gender reassignment” surgery and hormone drug “therapy” for children.

In other words, utilizing drugs that dissolve the testicles of boys, performing radical mastectomies of teenage girls, and administering hormones that put the natural and healthy hormone balance of young men and women disastrously out of whack, are perfectly fine with the scientific conceits of MIT.

None of the pharmaceuticals, medical procedures and psychiatric and psychological opinions that have allowed radical physical disfigurement is considered a manifestation of “bad technology.”

In fact, MIT has a whole section on their website explaining why they cover “Gender Confirmation Surgery.” A [page](#) explains:

“MIT employees and their dependents who participate in an MIT medical plan are eligible for Coverage of Gender Confirmation Surgery (GCS), also known as Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS), for the treatment of gender dysphoria.

“What is GCS and Why is MIT Covering It? Gender Confirmation Surgery (GCS), also known as Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS), is for the treatment of gender dysphoria. The prevailing position of the medical establishment is that GCS is a medically necessary procedure. The American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association and their Canadian counterparts support GCS as a medically necessary part of treatment for gender dysphoria and advocate the necessity of surgery and its coverage.”

It’s hard to fathom how the same voices attempting to gin up woke social outrage over “beauty apps” can defend far more destructive GCS without blinking an eye. But there it is.

Faux Space Jaunt Outcry

The excesses of billionaire’s spending their money on “space tourism” was cited by the MIT year in review as another example of poor use of technology.

No doubt, hearing about Jeff Bezos playing Han Solo (if Han Solo were played by Yoda) is enough to make sensible average people shake their heads.

But the abuses of Amazon’s platform, using its privileged algorithms and data gathering to illegally undermine businesses it purports to help, is far more consequential.

The **Trends Journal** detailed some of those abuses in articles including [“AMAZON CAUGHT ILLEGALLY UNDERCUTTING COMPETITION”](#) (19 Oct

2021) and ["AMAZON USING DIGITAL BOOK DOMINANCE TO CENSOR"](#) (16 Mar 2021).

Jeff Zuckerberg at Facebook (now META) funneled over 500 million into subverting the democratic prerogatives of average American citizen voters in 2020.

Apple, meanwhile, aided and conspired with the Communist Chinese government in order to gain a privileged business partnership.

None of those abuses by technocratic elites were cited as abhorrent examples of technology gone bad in 2021.

But "space tourism" made mention in the MIT article as a laser pinpoint meant to distract from the truly egregious abuses of Big Tech.

Cheap Therapeutics Helping Africa and India, Verboten in US

The MIT article spares no verbiage in lashing a big pharma Alzheimer's drug manufactured by Biogen as an example of bad technology.

The drug, Aduhelm, is cited for its yearly price tag of 56,400 dollars, and "substantial risk of serious brain swelling."

But while castigating the relatively obscure drug, MIT has proselytized for experimental COVID gene-level therapies, which have minted new pharma billionaires at Moderna and Pfizer.

The technology, deceptively likened to traditional vaccines in order to sell them to the public, have proved to be ephemeral as far as medical benefits.

They have also been associated with significant serious side effects including heart inflammation, especially affecting younger people otherwise at little risk of serious COVID complications.

In the roundup, MIT states:

“The best kind of medicine is inexpensive, safe, and effective. Think of setting a bone in a cast, filling a cavity, or administering a \$2 polio vaccine. The worst medicine of 2021 is exactly the opposite.”

Whole regions of the world, including Africa and India proved in 2021 that anti-COVID protocols that employed early and prophylactic use of cheap, safe medicines including hydroxychloroquine and Ivermectin, showed benefit.

Frontline doctors in the U.S. and elsewhere repeatedly reported success in treating COVID by using antibiotics and other medicines and supplements.

But big pharma tied medical authorities, politicians, media and institutions like MIT all pushed COVID vaccines as the only solution.

That’s not just an example of “worst technology.” It’s an indictment of the integrity of a thoroughly co-opted, propaganda focused technocracy.

And as a world-leading technological institution, MIT has more than done its part in the COVID propaganda war.

THIS WEEK IN SURVEILLANCE



INSURRECTIONISTS FAKE, COLLABORATIONISTS REAL. This past week Wonton Washington and the MSM tried to make the most of the anniversary of the January 6th protest.

But as it has been from the beginning, the real story is not “insurrectionists,” but collaborationists.

Washington DC, and the rest of America, including the media, education and business, is full of willing dupes and active supporters of Chinese communists, and rancid Maoist ideology.

It's the key to understanding everything about "J6," the COVID War, the rabid animus against "America First," average Americans who value our traditions, Constitution and history...and yes, Donald Trump.

The view may sound conspiratorial. But it's actually so in the open, not to see it is the real Jedi mind trick.

Ties between the Communist Chinese regime and levers of power in the U.S. are so extensive they bubble up almost every day. Much like "Vichy France" served Nazi interests in the 1940's, America has become a vassal state of China.

Need a brief list of Chinese dupes and collaborationists? Start here:

- President Joe Biden and his son Hunter (compromised via numerous shady Chinese business and other dealings)
- Sen. Diane Feinstein (her "driver" a 20+ year spy working for the Communist Chinese)
- Rep. Eric Swalwell (literally sleeping with the enemy)
- Sen. Mitch McConnell, married to the Chinese
- Neil Bush (head of a Chinese entity that has seen millions funneled between Chinese government interests and American business and political players)
- Anthony Fauci (reliable defender of Communist Chinese counterparts, and Congressional liar covering for the Wuhan lab origin of COVID)
- American Universities and Schools (dependant not only on Chinese foreign students, but on money funneled from the Chinese government to promote friendly views and "scholarship")
- Major American Media, bought off to disseminate Chinese friendly stories and propaganda

- Sports and Entertainment, led by the NBA and major Hollywood movie studios, working in a symbiotic business and propaganda relationship with the Chinese
- American corporations, led by the likes of Apple and Amazon, actively working with the Chinese not only to surveil and suppress their domestic population, but to bring Chinese communist style political repression to the U.S.

The U.S. Uniparty in Wonton Washington answers to China, period. Little wonder that in the aftermath of massive election irregularities in 2020, American intelligence agencies worked overtime to co-opt and direct a useful propaganda incident on January 6th.

Americans should never forget they have every right to rise up in popular protest for redress of grievances.

The minor law-breaking by average citizens on January 6th (much of it egged on by intelligence operatives) is literally nothing compared to the treasonous actions of the dupes and Collaborationists that continue to work overtime to bring down America.

The **Trends Journal** has detailed issues mentioned here in many other articles, including:

- ["AMAZON HELPED XI SOLIDIFY GRIP ON CHINA"](#) (21 Dec 2021)
- ["UNIVERSITIES HIDING CCP CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES"](#) (12 Oct 2021)
- ["AMERICA DRIFTS TOWARD CHINA'S 'TECHNO-AUTOCRACY'"](#) (9 Feb 2021)
- ["CHINA WANTS A BULLET TRAIN INTO THE U.S."](#) (1 Jun 2021)
- ["CHINA BUSINESS ESPIONAGE NETS \\$500 BILLION A YEAR"](#) (29 Jun 2021)
- ["HOW THE CCP WENT VIRAL ON THE WINGS OF COVID"](#) (5 Oct 2021)
- ["U.S. MEDIA PUSHED NARRATIVE OF CHINA LOCKDOWN "SUCCESS" IN EARLY 2020"](#) (27 Jul 2021)
- ["APPLE BETRAYS CHINESE USERS FOR PROFIT"](#) (1 Jun 2021)

- [“AMERICA DRIFTS TOWARD CHINA’S ‘TECHNO-AUTOCRACY’”](#) (9 Feb 2021)
- [“CHINA ‘TALENT PROGRAM’ GIFTED AT STEALING AMERICAN IP”](#) (26 Oct 2021)
- [“1984 TO 2021: HOW APPLE LEARNED TO LOVE BIG BROTHER”](#) (17 Aug 2021)

CHINESE BILLIONAIRE FUNNELING MONEY TO U.S. HIGHER ED. A Chinese tycoon whose government connected business censors the internet in China has contributed millions of dollars to MIT and Princeton University.

That’s according to previously unreported Department of Education documents.

Ma Huateng, the founder of Tencent, has contributed at least \$5 million to Princeton, and MIT since 2018.

The news was recently reported by The Washington Free Beacon.

According to Department of Education records, Ma’s foundation also gave \$900,000 to Columbia University in 2017.

The Chinese government recruited Tencent and other internet businesses as part of an ambitious strategy to dominate the area of artificial intelligence by 2030, while Ma built links with the colleges.

According to a study released last year by the Defense Department, China intends to employ technology generated by the companies for both commercial and military objectives.

Ma also serves on the Yale Center Beijing and the Cornell China Center advisory boards, where he and other Chinese business executives advise the institutions on how to expand Chinese collaborations.

Examples of Tencent censorship are plentiful. For example, the company monitored overseas WeChat users in order to improve its filtering powers in China.

Following an official from the Houston Rockets team expressing sympathy for pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong, Tencent restricted NBA games in 2019.

And more recently, Tencent canceled Boston Celtics games after one of the team's players, Enes Kanter, criticized China's Communist Party and President Xi Jinping's human rights violations.

The Washington Free Beacon story can be read [here](#).

TRENDS IN CRYPTOS



ROLLING OVER TO CRYPTO VIA ALTOIRA

For those who aren't dismayed by the swings of the cryptocurrency sector, and who have 401K accounts with old employers, there are options to roll those accounts over to IRA crypto investing.

Altoira (altoira.com) offers the ability to rollover retirement accounts invested in stock market funds, to invest in cryptos instead.

The firm offers access to crypto "basket" funds by well known crypto firms like Grayscale. Minimum investment amounts for such funds can be required. 25-thousand is a common price point for investing in such managed funds.

But Altoira also offers the ability for investors to simply pick and choose cryptos to invest in, via its relationship with Coinbase, currently the only crypto exchange listed with NASDAQ.

Any cryptocurrency available on Coinbase can be acquired in a retirement portfolio using the Altoira service.

The company even makes rolling over old retirement accounts a simple matter, by working with Capitalize, an account rollover service.

Capitalize can handle all the details of a rollover, including setting up and conducting a call with the account holder and the firm where an old 401K account resides, to establish and authorize a transfer.

The use of Capitalize to initiate and oversee a transfer is free. And Altoira has a usage fee of 25 dollars a month.

Investing a Rollercoaster in 2021

Cryptos have been in a Holiday funk. But then, so has everything else.

2021 didn't turn out to be a miracle recovery year, as Gerald Celente and the **Trends Journal** correctly predicted.

The lurches and policy lunacies surrounding the COVID War were worse in 2021 than 2020. That was especially true given that much more was known in the past year about everything COVID, than when it debuted via a Wuhan Virology lab in late 2019.

Nothing, including cryptocurrencies and Distributed Ledger Technologies (DLTs) proved immune from the COVID War, though some innovations like DeFi and NFTs demonstrated their utility and garnered breakout attention.

There's no telling how soon the crypto sector might recover and go on a new bull run in 2022. Even the most accurate prognosticators took a hit to their predictions about how the sector would perform to close out 2021.

But for those who believe the innovations and disruptive efficiencies of cryptos have good longer term prospects, having the option to invest in tax advantaged retirement type vehicles may be seen as an attractive opportunity.

MEXICO'S CENTRAL BANK GOING DIGITAL



The Bank of Mexico will launch its own digital currency within two years in an attempt to bring more people out of the country's dominant all-cash economy and into the nation's financial system, the administration of Mexican president Manuel

Lopez Obrador announced on 5 January.

The informal economy accounts for about 22 percent of Mexico's GDP, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

The bank will expand the nation's current electronic payments system to include a digital currency "under a rapid, safe, and efficient framework," the bank said in its own announcement.

The central bank's initiative follows a June comment by Mexican billionaire Ricardo Pliego that his Banco Aztecabecome would be the first bank in the country to accept Bitcoin as currency.

In response, the Bank of Mexico, the finance ministry, and regulators emphasized that Bitcoin and cryptocurrencies are not legal tender in the country and that banks are banned from dealing in them.

"Although they can be exchanged, [cryptos] do not fulfill the function of money, as their acceptance as a form of payment is limited and they aren't a good reserve or value reference," the officials said in a statement.

The following month, Bank of Mexico governor Alejandro Diaz de Leon said that central banks must speed development of national digital currencies to counter the spread of private cryptos and the risks they carry.

The Switzerland-based Bank for International Settlements, now led by former Bank of Mexico governor Agustin Carstens, found in a survey last year that 86 percent of central banks were studying the prospects of a national digital currency, 60 percent were testing relevant technologies, and 14 percent were running pilot tests.

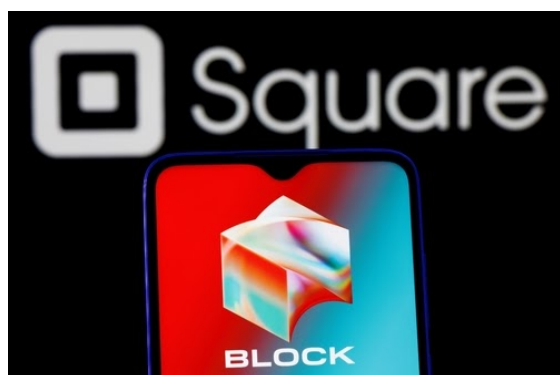
Last June , El Salvador became the first nation to recognize Bitcoin as legal tender ([“El Salvador Recognizes Bitcoin as Cash.”](#) 15 Jun 2021).

TREND FORECAST: As we forecast 18 months ago in [“It’s Official: Dirty Cash to Digital Trash”](#) (28 Jul 2020), so they can track every penny spent, where you spent it and what you spent it on—and they can get their tax revenue—governments will replace hard cash with digital currencies.

Many of the world’s central banks are developing, testing, or launching national digital currencies. In February 2021, the Bank for International Settlements surveyed 65 central banks and found that 85 percent were actively working to issue a digital currency, as we noted in [“Look Who’s Minting Digital Currency Now or in the Near Future.”](#) (16 Feb 2021).

China has led with its digital yuan, now available throughout its capital city ([“China Goes Full Digital Yuan In Beijing.”](#) 29 Jun 2021), and New York City will rise to prominence as a new center of digital finance, one of our [“Top 2022 Trends.”](#)

BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES



DORSEY’S BLOCK SIGNALS 2022

BITCOIN PLANS. Facebook wasn’t the only company that underwent a blockchain inspired name change in 2021.

Square, the small business geared payments company headed by Jack Dorsey changed its name to “Block.”

The company has signaled its ambitions to produce "the next generation of mining ASIC" and create a hardware wallet for the next 100 million Bitcoin (BTC) users.

The news, encapsulated in two recent job advertisements on LinkedIn, was reported by Cointelegraph.com.

The two positions are situated in Block's San Francisco headquarters and were published to the job posting site on Monday.

The applicant for the position of custom digital design lead will assist with "silicon validation of the ASIC and its prototype." The greatest choice for Bitcoin network security is an ASIC, which is a tiny processor specialized to Bitcoin mining. Block intends to create purpose-built ASICs for BTC mining, according to the latest job offering.

The second job is as the worldwide fulfillment and logistics head for the hardware wallet. "Bringing easy-to-use, trustworthy self-custody to a worldwide audience" is at the heart of the task. Block hopes to deliver its hardware wallets to over 100 nations in the end.

Square said in July that it was working on a 'assisted custody' BTC hardware wallet. The plans look to be coming together presently.

Companies under the Block corporate group, including Square, CashApp, Spiral and Tidal (a music streaming service) appear committed to increasing Bitcoin use.

TRENDS IN THE COVID WAR



PLANTATION OWNERS OF SLAVELANDIA GET RICHER, SLAVES GET POORER

According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, the combined net worth of 0.001 percent of the world's population increased by \$1 trillion over the past year, and now exceeds \$8.4 trillion, which is more than the gross domestic product of any country other than the U.S. or China.

And since the COVID War was launched some two years ago, while the billionaires got richer and “Bigs” gobbled up more businesses, up to 150 million the number of persons sunk into extreme poverty... a number that will increase as inflation eats away at the little that they have. But again, we had long forecast this trend (See ["COVID LOCKDOWNS SPIKE EXTREME POVERTY"](#) (13 Oct 2020)).

Greedster Gang

The rich getting richer as the middle class shrinks escalated in the mid-1990s as America's politicians destroyed trade barriers that once-upon-a-time had

workers earning living wages in factories instead of low-paying service sector jobs.

With manufacturing going to cheap labor markets, since then, the share of the world's wealth held by the richest .01 percent has gone from about 7 percent to 11 percent—and the COVID War helped; see ["GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS"](#) (13 Oct 2020) and ["\\$4 TRILLION FOR BILLIONAIRES AS MIDDLE CLASS SHRINKS"](#) (23 Mar 2021).

America's top billionaires sold off over \$43 billion in stock by 1 December, over twice what they'd sold in all of 2020.

Among the most high-profile in that heady realm, Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk saw his personal fortune reach levels heretofore achieved only by John D. Rockefeller; that increase even catapulted Leo Koguan, Tesla's third-largest shareholder, to a \$10.8 billion fortune and a spot on the index.

Microsoft's Bill Gates, once the world's richest man, lost that distinction in a divorce settlement that elevated his now-ex-wife, Melinda French Gates, to number 194 among the world's 500 wealthiest.

Politicians keep playing the game that they will raise taxes on the ultra-rich. In America, such rhetoric again faded quickly under the scorn of Elon Musk, and Pres. Biden's proposal for inheritance taxes and higher taxes on capital gains floundered along with Biden's Build Back Better scheme.

Things haven't been quite so rosy for everybody in the billionaires' club, however. In China, the government promoted "common prosperity"—see ["AMERICA PUMPS UP THE RICH. CHINA PUSHING THEM DOWN"](#) (14 Sep 2021)—and China's super-rich lost \$61 billion.

Among them, real estate moguls lost some \$35 billion, and China's second-richest person, Hui Ka Yan, lost \$17 billion with the collapse of the Evergrande Group's real estate empire; see ["SPOTLIGHT: CHINA"](#) (14 Dec 2021).

TREND FORECAST: None of this should be at all surprising to readers of *Trends Journal*; see, for example, "[SPOTLIGHT: BIGS KEEP GROWING BIGGER](#)" (26 Oct 2021). And remember one of Gerald Celente's favorite lines (quoting George Carlin): "It's one big club, and you ain't in it!"

As Celente has also noted, "History shows that income inequality is a factor in social unrest and political revolution...Wealth inequality will become an even more central issue in upcoming elections and will draw more people and energy to anti-establishment political movements."

Indeed, as the middle class keeps shrinking and the billionaires keep getting richer, get ready for "Off With Their Heads 2.0" movements to rage across the globe.

EPIDEMIOLOGIST: LOCKDOWNS "MORALLY WRONG" & "A LAZY SOLUTION"



Somebody again has said what the **Trends Journal** has long been reporting (see links below). But, despite those efforts, it has been blacklisted by "mainstream," until this one article that made the "news" because it was reported by the establishment Presstitutes.

As reported on 2 January by *The Guardian*, a soon-to-be-released book—*The Year the World Went Mad: A Scientific Memoir*—by a leading epidemiologist, Edinburgh University's Professor Mark Woolhouse, posits that the U.K.'s reaction to COVID-19 was predicated on a patently flawed premise.

That premise, stated in a briefing at No. 10 Downing Street in March 2020 by cabinet minister Michael Gove, was that the COVID virus "did not discriminate," and that, therefore, "Everyone is at risk."

"I am afraid Gove's statement was simply not true," the professor says, adding that "In fact, this is a very discriminatory virus. Some people are much more at risk from it than others. People over 75 are an astonishing 10,000 times more at risk than those who are under 15."

That flawed premise is what led the U.K., and much of the world, to deal with COVID-19 by imposing draconian lockdowns and edicts on entire populations; policies that have already done, and will continue to beget, far reaching socio-economic and psychological harm.

Prof. Woolhouse echoes what has been said for some time by **Trends Journal**, by Ron Paul, and by The Great Barrington Declaration, among others; see, for example:

- ["FAT CHANCE COVID WON'T KILL YOU"](#) (6 Oct 2020)
- ["CRUCIAL COVID DATA IGNORED BY PRESSTITUTES"](#) (3 Nov 2020)
- ["LOCKDOWN MADNESS: CURE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE"](#) (10 Nov 2020)
- ["VAX KIDS? THE COVID RISK IS 'TINY'"](#) (13 Jul 2021)
- ["COVID COMPARED TO SEASONAL FLU"](#) (10 Nov 2020)
- ["COVID FEAR & HYPE MORE DEADLY THAN VIRUS"](#) (2 Jun 2020)

Woolhouse elaborates, describing his government's COVID strategy as "morally wrong," and adding, "It was a lazy solution to a novel coronavirus epidemic, as well as a hugely damaging one."

"We did serious harm to our children and young adults who were robbed of their education, jobs and normal existence, as well as suffering damage to their future prospects, while they were left to inherit a record-breaking mountain of public debt," he says, "All this to protect...from a disease that

is a far, far greater threat to the elderly, frail and infirm than to the young and healthy."

Woolhouse takes his government to task for not doing more to protect the vulnerable; he points out that some 30,000 residents of Britain's "care homes" (largely the elderly and infirm, making them at the greatest risk) succumbed to the virus; much more could have been done, not only for them, but for their "shielders" (healthcare workers and informal caregivers), whom, he laments, received minimal recognition and no help.

TRENDPOST: *In one area, Prof. Woolhouse differs from the policies advocated by The Great Barrington Declaration, in that he does not endorse letting the virus circulate freely until herd immunity is achieved. Rather, he advocates for the way Sweden handled the virus.*

But, while Sweden concentrated on protecting the most vulnerable, the concept of herd immunity, along with strictly voluntary restrictions, was a factor in Sweden's approach; see ["CORONAVIRUS: THE SWEDISH SUCCESS STORY CONTINUES"](#) (5 May 2020).

The bottom line from Prof. Woolhouse is that lockdowns, then, now, or in the future, are not the way to deal with COVID-19: "Lockdowns aren't a public health policy. They signify a failure of public health policy."

Also not mentioned by any of the media, is what had reported back in 28 July 2020 when then Governor of New York Andrew Cuomo admitted that most of the people in the hospitals with COVID were locked down:

"If you notice... 66 percent of the people were at home, which is shocking to us. This is a surprise: Overwhelmingly, the people were at home... We thought maybe they were taking public transportation, and we've taken special precautions on public transportation, but actually no, because these people were literally at home."

COVID KILLERS: WINDY CITY & SUBURBS BOFFO ON HOMICIDE



No surprise to **Trends Journal** subscribers, we had long forecast a crime wave would be one of the deadly implications of the COVID War. But now it is “shocking news” to the mindless masses who swallow the bullshit poured out by politicians and Presstitutes: “Homicides are spiking across

America.”

As reported by *The Wall Street Journal* on 4 January, 2021 has been a banner year for homicides in both the city of Chicago and surrounding Cook County, and most involved people being shot to death.

The county recorded 1,087 homicides for the year, including those in Chicago proper. All but 85 were gun-related.

Those 1,002 people shot to death in all of Cook County represent an increase of 121 over 2020 and almost double the number for 2019. It's the highest number of gun-related homicides ever recorded in Cook County.

Strictly within the confines of Chicago, 2021 saw 797 homicides. That's the highest number in any year since 1996.

TRENDPOST: *Chicago has never been among America's safest or most crime-free cities. But recently crime, from shoplifting to homicide, has markedly increased.*

*As **Trends Journal** has noted—see ["CRIME ON THE RISE DURING THE GREAT LOCKDOWN"](#) (21 Apr 2020) and ["COVID WAR = MAJOR U.S. CITIES WAR ZONES"](#) (14 Dec 2021)—part of the blame lies with how the COVID War has played havoc with people's lives and livelihoods; as Gerald Celente often says, "When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it."*

But another reason is the "fundamental transformation" of America's criminal justice system being carried out by anti-police, pro-criminal prosecutors like Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx, who, by often declining to prosecute and by "bail reform" (both of which put repeat offenders back on the street), have effectively removed much of the legal deterrence to criminal activity; see ["CHICAGO'S COVID CRIME WAVE FOLLOWS SAN FRAN'S MODEL"](#) (26 Oct 2021).

TRENDPOST [File under "Gallows Humor"]: *A friend writes: "As our plane descended, I looked out the window and it appeared that the streets of Chicago were lined with gold! But, once on the ground, I realized it was just the sun glinting off all the spent shell casings!"*

ITS DAMAGE DONE, FLAWED PRC TEST IS WITHDRAWN



An article published online on 31 December by GlobalResearch reveals that, after two years, the U.S. CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has accepted a conclusion that **Trends Journal** has been reporting on for over two years.

That conclusion is that the PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test, considered the "gold standard" of tests for COVID-19, is intrinsically flawed, yielding an inordinate number of false positive results, and therefore the numbers of COVID cases in America have been grossly overinflated; see, for example:

- ["'GOLD STANDARD' COVID TEST INTRINSICALLY FLAWED"](#) (10 Nov 2020)
- ["CASES UP, PCR TEST FAILS"](#) (27 Oct 2020)
- ["PRIMARY COVID-19 TEST: 'ERRORS AND FLAWS'"](#) (8 Dec 2020)
- ["COVID GOLD TEST PROVES TO BE 'WORTHLESS'"](#) (29 Sep 2020)

- ["PCR TESTS ACCURATE? THINK FOR YOURSELF"](#) (3 Aug 2021)

Even the World Health Organization caught on, about a year ago; see ["WHO ADMITS: COVID TESTS FLAWED"](#) (26 Jan 2021)

So, having finally concluded—and admitted!—that the PCR test is not to be relied on, the CDC's official policy is now that, as of 31 December 2021, it is withdrawing the PCR test and is recommending that laboratories should select another testing method and begin transitioning to it.

In so doing, the article points out, the CDC is tacitly admitting that the PCR test does not differentiate between COVID-19 and influenza viruses; nor does the PCR test detect nor differentiate the different variants of COVID-19.

The article also posits that the CDC has waited until now to scuttle the PCR test because those false positives were useful in driving up the number of "confirmed COVID-19 cases," and in characterizing as "confirmed Omicron variant cases" what were actually cases of the common cold, which is of course more common in winter, and which is triggered by a Coronavirus, and which the PCR test fails to distinguish.

So, "this upward movement of PCR positive cases is now being used by corrupt politicians to sustain the Omicron fear campaign as well as impose the 'The Covid-19 Christmas and New Year Lockdown'."

TRENDPOST: *The GlobalResearch article was written by Prof. Michel Chossudovsky, who has, since the beginning of what he calls "the alleged pandemic," claimed that the COVID War has provided "a pretext and a justification to powerful financial interests and corrupt politicians to precipitate the entire World into a spiral of mass unemployment, bankruptcy, extreme poverty and despair"; see ["PANDEMIC 'CASES' SHMANDEMIC; IT'S ALL CRAPOLA"](#) (15 Jun 2021).*

TREND UPDATE: *An article appearing in the New York Times on 6 January reports on a preliminary study of the two "rapid" COVID tests that are being*

distributed and administered as alternatives to the PCR test—the Abbott BinaxNOW and the Quidel QuickVue, both of them antigen tests that use a sample from a nasal swab instead of the saliva sample used for the PCR test. Both tests can be administered at home and yield results within minutes.

And the findings of that study appear to indicate that those two tests are less reliable in detecting Omicron infections. Persons known to be infected with Omicron—and with a significant viral load—still tested negative with the new tests for several days, during which time they were presumably capable of spreading the virus.

So, essentially, both at-home tests may be prone to delivering false negative results. It's not clear why this is so. There are elements in the structure of the Omicron variant's surface proteins—which antigen-based tests focus on—that may require a more sensitive test to detect. Or it may be because the Omicron variant's viral load peaks more rapidly in the mouth and throat than it does in the nose. That latter suggestion is said to be supported by findings in South Africa, where the Omicron variant first appeared and was identified.

So, while the tests are still being distributed, and evaluation continues, users are warned that a negative result "is not a ticket that allows you to go back to normal."

TRENDPOST: *As the late Gilda Radner's "Roseanne Roseannadanna" would say, "It's always somethin' "*

COVID WAR KILLING RESTAURANTS



The government of Canada's Ontario province set in place, on 5 January, new measures set to run through at least 26 January in response to what it calls a "tsunami" of new COVID-19 cases (no

deaths). Among the restrictions are a ban on indoor dining and an order for many indoor businesses, including gyms, concert venues and theaters, to shut down.

TRENDPOST: *With the "more virulent" Omicron variant now at the forefront, there may indeed be a "tsunami" of cases; there is no corresponding tsunami of deaths attributed to Omicron. As of 23 December, the Toronto Sun reported that, across Canada, Omicron had not been responsible for a single fatality.*

As reported by Bloomberg on 4 January, there is pushback from business owners who feel the hardships imposed upon them will result in permanent closures. A study by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business states that small businesses have incurred an average of \$190,000 in additional debt in order to stay open in the midst of various lockdowns.

An operator of a worldwide chain of Middle Eastern restaurants (many of them in Ontario) quoted by Bloomberg said the new rules could lead to "a bloodbath" among small businesses which are already struggling, citing restaurants that had already shut their doors forever. He called on the provincial and federal governments to provide assistance, particularly to the restaurant sector.

Another issue challenging small businesses faced with lockdowns cited by the restaurateur is the difficulty of maintaining a workforce; people tire of the cycle of being let go and then re-hired, and eventually choose to not work in that sector; the restaurant business has been especially hard-hit by such "labor uncertainty"; see ["LOCKDOWN ORDERS DESTROYED RESTAURANTS"](#) (25 May 2021) and ["WORKER SHORTAGES, VIRUS HOBBLE RESTAURANTS' RECOVERY"](#) (14 Sep 2021).

TREND FORECAST: *According to a letter signed by 3,300 U.S. restaurant owners, their debt loads are growing heavier, costs are increasing and the scare of "rising" COVID Cases are scaring away customers. Indeed, full-service restaurant business is down 18 percent since the COVID War was launched two years ago and seating at the end of last month fell 32 percent.*

With winter now set in, and more people catching colds, the flu, and getting tested positive for the virus—combined with the media continuing to sell COVID Fear and more establishments demanding vax passports to enter—the restaurant, entertainment and hospitality sectors will continue their decline.

When the COVID War begins to wind-down and vax passports are no longer required for entry—which we anticipate will be late March to mid-April—these business sectors will strongly rebound.

TRENDPOST: *While such a situation is not peculiar to Canada, it does echo what **Trends Journal** reported in ["HALF OF CANADIAN RESTAURANTS MAY FAIL BEFORE JANUARY"](#) (27 Oct 2020); then, as now, a ban on indoor dining is especially tough on restaurants during winter, and especially in a climate like Canada's.*

TREND FORECAST: *The restaurant business has always had a high failure rate, even in good times. But it has traditionally provided employment opportunities for the unskilled, the inexperienced, and for immigrants. In the COVID War, it was the first to suffer and may prove the last to recover.*

And any "recovery" will likely change the face of the industry; it will be more difficult, if not impossible, for locally-owned "Mom & Pop" restaurants to start up, let alone survive; who wants to start a business that can be shuttered overnight by a government whim?

The future of the restaurant business will be dominated by large chains with deep pockets, but there will still be far fewer restaurants overall and far fewer employment opportunities for the industry's traditional workforce.

Once again, the "cure" will prove worse than the disease.

AMERICANS: MORE COVID WAR, MORE EATING CRAP



What a surprise! Of the 12-17 year olds hospitalized for COVID, 61 percent were [obese](#).

And, 78 percent of all COVID patients were obese and suffering from underlying [conditions](#).

Keeping the eating unhealthy trend moving forward, Americans are still filling up their bodies with crap-level food.

We're #1

America is a world leader in many categories, but one of those categories is unhealthy eating which gives rise to obesity; the developed nations of the world lead the field in accounting for the more than 2 billion people worldwide (nearly one-third of the world's population) who are obese or overweight, and America is the world's heavyweight champion; see ["READY TO EXPLODE"](#) (11 Dec 2018) and ["READY TO EXPLODE, READY TO IMplode"](#) (15 Oct 2019).

What the COVID War did, at least at first, was to confine many people to their homes. And people stuck at home turned more attention to cooking. As reported on 4 January by CNN Business, baking sales boomed as people pursued "dreams of being a celebrity chef" and even posted photos on social media of the elaborate dishes they'd prepared.

But now, the same report tells us, the pendulum has swung back; people are "fatigued from cooking at home and prepping for complicated meals," and, as they also return to work and school, are bringing quick lunches and breakfasts on-the-go (often eaten in the car or on the train), snacks, food from convenience stores, and microwavable foods back to their former levels.

Convenience stores, for example, suffered a big slowdown in traffic during 2020 and early 2021, but that traffic is now coming back. And the CNN report notes that beef jerky and popcorn are among those foods enjoying a sales increase.

Even people who cook dinner at home (who still outnumber those from before the COVID War) seem to no longer enjoy cutting up and measuring ingredients, opting instead for pre-packaged ingredients that permit them to feel like they're cooking but without the extra time and extra trips to the store.

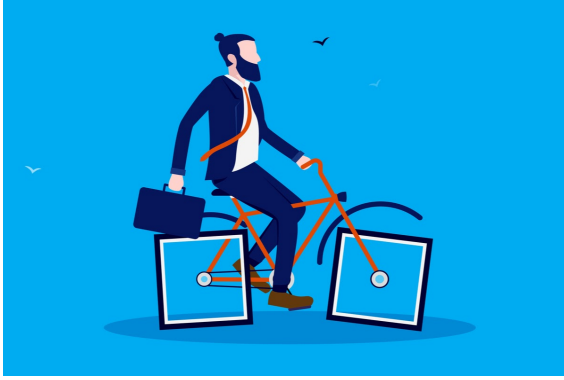
They no longer enjoy the abundance of free time they had in 2020, and no longer find cooking an escape; they now want meals they can prepare easily at home in 18 minutes or less.

TRENDPOST: "Quick food," "fast food," "snacks" and "frozen dinners" all translate to "unhealthy foods."

*The two **Trends Journal** articles cited above point out the impact of Americans' eating habits on the health of the nation, not just in the epidemic of obesity but in other social costs: lowered life expectancy, the cost of treating diseases and conditions (such as diabetes and heart disease) brought on or exacerbated by poor diets, and the cost of lowered productivity; see ["FAT CHANCE FOR GOOD HEALTH"](#) (11 Aug 2020).*

And now, in the age of COVID, we see that being overweight/obese is one of the primary "pre-existing conditions" that make people particularly vulnerable to COVID-19; see ["COVID-19 & OBESITY: THE MORE YOU WEIGH, THE WORSE OFF YOU ARE"](#) (9 Mar 2021) and ["JUNK FOOD VS. COVID-19: THE WINNER IS?"](#) (26 Jan 2021).

COVID CASES SOAR, UNIMPEDED BY MASK/VAX MANDATES



As of 3 January, New York City's average daily number of COVID-19 cases had increased by 517 percent over the average from two weeks prior according to yahoo.com. This high “case” rate keeps spiking regardless of 92 percent of Manhattanites getting one COVID shot and

80 percent of being double vaxxed.

Spreading the COVID Fear, not a word from the Yahoo Presstitutes of this fact or the herd immunity bullshit they were selling to get the people inoculated with the Operation Warp Speed gene therapy jab.

And this was despite the mandates put in place by former mayor Bill de Blasio, who decreed that as of 14 December children as young as 5 had to show proof of vaccination for admittance to entertainment, dining and fitness venues, and that as of 27 December everyone 12 and older had to prove they'd had two COVID jabs (except for those who'd had the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine).

Similarly, New York State has seen an increase in its average daily cases over those from the preceding year, from 251,000 to about 400,000.

And Washington, D.C., also despite mask—and vax mandates, has experienced a record-breaking surge in COVID cases. Other major cities including Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles face similar situations. Los Angeles has logged a 644 percent increase over two weeks prior, despite its mask mandate having been reimposed in July.

TRENDPOST: *On the basis of these figures, who could be blamed for concluding that such mandates accomplish precisely nothing in protecting people from COVID-19 infection? In ["AMERICANS POLL ROUGHLY 50-50 ON](#)*

[VAX MANDATES](#) (14 Dec 2021), we pointed out how the nation is divided over such edicts; what's puzzling is how roughly half the nation still manages to believe, accept, and help implement the government's narrative that such mandates are necessary and beneficial.

And who, among the non-brainwashed portion of the nation, could be blamed for also concluding that such mandates may never have been about protecting people's health and well-being, but have always been about the government implementing, increasing and consolidating its control over people's lives?

For more of how the government has imposed their tyranny on the masses, watch Gerald Celente's 5 January podcast with Judge Andrew Napolitano: [Loss of Constitutional Rights Underway. Fight for Freedom or Lose it Forever.](#)

"FULLY VAXXED" BECOMES A CATCH-22



[Note: One of the premises of the "Catch-22" novel was that the pilots had to fly a certain number of missions before they could be rotated out and go home; but just as their mission count approached the required number, that number was raised.]

Does "fully vaccinated" translate to a number? How many jabs does it take to achieve it? Is it a set number, or a mutable one?

Before we go forward, let's go back to the past. Remember back in November 2020 when the drug dealers (that morons and imbeciles call "Big Pharma") sold the bullshit that two shots of the Operation Warp Speed gene therapy inoculation had a 95-96 percent efficacy rate... and one shot was all you would need if you took the Johnson & Johnson jab to get a 72 percent efficacy rate?

And now, some countries are requiring those over 50 or 60 years of age to get boosters or four shots.

In other words, as with the “flatten-the-curve,” social distancing, scrubbing surfaces, Plexiglas partitions, crappy masks, seating capacities, etc., they are making this shit up on how many jabs to take... and the masses, just as they march off to all the other wars, obey the dictates of the COVID War.

Game Changer

The New York Times, on 30 December, featured an article that asked "What does 'fully vaccinated' mean?"

And within the first several paragraphs was a quote from Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky, Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, from an interview on 28 December, in which she said that she and other health officials were "working through that question."

"There really isn't any debate here in what people should do," Dr. Walensky continued. "CDC is crystal clear on what people should do: if they're eligible for a boost, they should get boosted."

TRENDPOST: *We have longed detailed the incompetency and dillusions expressed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Could this be the same CDC and the same director that have been the subject of these articles? (only a partial list):*

- ["THE WALENSKY WAFFLE: DOING THE BACKTRACK SHUFFLE"](#) (3 Apr 2021)
- ["LIAR WALENSKY? CDC FRAUDSTER?"](#) (10 Aug 2021)
- ["CDC MANIPULATES DATA TO SUPPORT NARRATIVE \(AGAIN\)"](#) (14 Sep 2021)
- ["A TALE OF TWO STUDIES: CDC LYING?"](#) (9 Nov 2021)
- ["CDC'S VAX STATS ARE FUBAR"](#) (21 Dec 2021)

The *NYT* article then proceeds to address the question of whether, given "Omicron's sharp rise," and more and more private companies, institutions and governments mandating boosters, it might be time to redefine the term "fully vaccinated."

The article acknowledges that such a redefining could present "enormous logistical challenges," as those who considered themselves fully vaccinated would find themselves barred from venues and activities where proof of booster shots were now required.

Changing the definition could leave some 140 million Americans uncertain of their status and of where and what they were permitted to go and do.

It also posits that there might be the "risk of undermining trust in public health officials." "Some Americans," the article tells us, "may feel that the goalposts have been moved again, and too suddenly."

TRENDPOST: *As we have noted, so called "public officials" are bureaucrats that are often too stupid to get a job in the competitive world, so they suck their way into the political system. Thus, it makes perfect sense for people to lose their trust in public health officials.*

Again, as we have noted since the onset of the COVID War, politicians and their bureaucratic flunkies have been making this stuff up without supporting their mandates with a scintilla of hard facts or scientific evidence. See ["FORGET THE FACTS: MAKE UP RULES"](#) (23 Jun 2020), ["COVID RULES & REGULATIONS: POLITICIANS MAKING THEM UP AS THEY GO"](#) (26 May 2020) and ["THE NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP"](#) (14 Apr 2020).

The article points out that the CDC currently defines "fully vaccinated" against COVID-19 as having had two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. 62 percent of Americans are fully vaccinated under that definition. But only about a third of those, and only slightly more than half of those 65 and older, have had a booster shot.

The revelations that the vaccines' protection diminishes over time—see, for example, ["ISRAEL: COVID DRUG MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE THAN WHAT WE'VE BEEN SOLD"](#) (27 Jul 2021)—the phenomenon of "breakthrough infections," and the discovery that the Omicron variant has "learned" to evade vaccine-induced protection have led the experts to conclude that "the guidance has to change when the science changes."

The Biden administration is said to be mulling the scuttling of the term "fully vaccinated" altogether, to be replaced by "up-to-date vaccinations," which would offer more "flexibility" as vaccination and booster protocols continue to change.

There are some in the medical community who dare to suggest that promoting universal vaccination and boosters is misguided and a misallocation of resources; that the emphasis should be on protecting those who are clearly at the greatest risk: the elderly, the infirm, the immuno-compromised, the obese; those with the risk factors that have been responsible for most of the severe cases and fatalities.

However, the push toward mandating booster shots seems relentless. The governors of New York and Connecticut have embraced redefinition, as have a number of large employers.

TRENDPOST: *The NYT article acknowledges another unintended consequence of redefining "fully vaccinated" and mandating boosters, and it goes back to the issue of trust in the "experts": such changes threaten to put together in common cause those who choose to remain unvaccinated and those who willingly got their first jabs but have had quite enough of the ever-increasing number of jabs required.*

That would not only make it more difficult to track who's been vaxxed, it would inhibit implementation of the agenda to vaccinate everyone, as much as possible, in perpetuity; see ["VAX DRUG GANG ON PARADE: FOLLOW THE MONEY"](#) (14 Dec 2021).

GERMANY: VAX MANDATES KILLING BUSINESS. PROTESTS ERUPT



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz sparked outrage among restaurant owners and Freedom-centric citizens when he announced new COVID-19 rules for fighting the Omicron virus.

Germans will have to produce a negative virus test or present evidence of a booster shot to access dining establishments across the country.

Ingrid Harges, the chief executive of the German Hotels and Restaurants Association, told DW.com that the new rules are a “disaster for many businesses.” (See [“GERMANY SLIDING TOWARD RECESSION.”](#) [“GERMANY: NO JAB, NO FREEDOM”](#) and [“GERMANY'S 2021 GROWTH FORECAST SLASHED.”](#))

Protests broke out on Saturday in Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, and Magdeburg to voice opposition to the new restrictions. About 16,000 people joined a protest in Hamburg and some held signs critical of the vaccination campaign for young people. The signs read, “Enough! Hands off our children!”

One of the protesters wore a Star of David that read “unvaccinated.” The protesters in Magdeburg brought trams to a halt and blocked some roads, The Daily Sabah reported.

Customers had previously been forced to show proof of vaccination or recovery to enter these establishments, but the new mandate focuses on booster compliance.

Karl Lauterbach, the country's health minister, condemned the protests and said the relatively small groups were "willing to wipe all scientific knowledge off the table and voluntarily enter a bubble of bogus truths."

TREND FORECAST: *These re-imposed COVID War measures will further drag down economic growth while escalating populist anti-vax, anti-establishment movements. Ignoring the facts of broad based citizen outrage against draconian measures being imposed upon them by politicians and bureaucrats, the media will continue to moronically label those fighting for freedom as right-wing conspiracy theorists.*

GET FAT: GET COVID



The majority of teenagers in the U.S. who were hospitalized with COVID-19 have been severely obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A study by the CDC found that of the patients who were hospitalized from 12-17 years old, 61.4 percent were obese, and 60.5 percent were severely obese. Of the 915 cases studied in southern hospitals from July to August, 11 of the patients died from the disease.

The CDC found that children with an underlying condition—34.7%—were also more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit than children without an underlying condition (23.9%).

TRENDPOST: *The Trends Journal has been reporting on the risks of having co-morbidities when coming down with the virus. (See [“THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM.”](#) [“OBESITY GROWS IN STATES WHERE AT LEAST 35 PERCENT ARE CONSIDERED OBESE.”](#) [“LOCKDOWNS ARE CREATING CHILDHOOD](#)*

OBESITY” and “COVID-19 & OBESITY: THE MORE YOU WEIGH, THE WORSE OFF YOU ARE.”

TRENDPOST: *Re-established? Junk food culture is as American as apple pie (not Mom’s home-baked, rather store-bought brands made with hydrogenated oils and saturated with chemicals).*

*The **Trends Journal** has written numerous articles detailing how the U.S. government, giant agri-business corporations, and incessant media advertising have tens of millions of Americans hooked on junk food. (See our 26 January article, [“JUNK FOOD VS. COVID-19: THE WINNER IS?”](#))*

TRENDPOST: *Among the ignorant moves made by political leaders at the beginning of the coronavirus spread was the shutting down of playgrounds and parks. The 19 February Wall Street Journal article with the headline, "Remote Learning During COVID-19 Is Causing Children to Gain Weight, Doctors Warn," features a large photograph from last April of a Michigan town’s closed playground, surrounded by large, yellow “Caution” tape.*

Since 11 December, nine deaths have been recorded among those under 15, yet governments are locking down youngsters again—amid the Omicron surge—and depriving them of their natural rights of growing up and living life.

NEW YORK DICTATOR: NO BOOSTER SHOT, NO JOB



Picking up where the former Governor Andrew Cuomo (who was thrown out of office for feeling up women) left off, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul declared last Friday that she will now dictate what the taxpayers of New York must do.

Having recently ordered all citizens of Slavelandia to wear masks when indoors at public establishments, she has now forced health care workers in the state to take a COVID-19 booster shot because the state needs them “to have the best fortification they possibly can” against COVID-19.

Hype Not Reality

COVID-19 cases have more than tripled in the past few weeks, but hospitalizations are not climbing as fast. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that only three percent of new cases are being admitted into hospitals.

Hochul, who took over for Gov. Andrew Cuomo, said she insisted on booster shots because she was troubled by the number of breakthrough cases, and the belief is a booster protects against severe infection.

New York health care workers will have to take a booster within two weeks of becoming eligible.

“We’ve already seen what’s been happening in our health care environments,” Hochul said. “Staff is getting sick, they’re leaving. We need them to get well.”

Hide the Facts

Alex Berenson, the former *New York Times* reporter who questions vaccine efficacy, has noted that countries with 90 percent of their adult populations fully vaccinated are dealing with a surge in cases they have not experienced up until this point.

“The vaccines sure seem to have failed,” he posted on his Substack account on 6 January. “That’s wrong, though. The reality is worse. The data from several countries now show clearly that infection rates are higher in vaccinated people.”

He said the Omicron variant seems to be a game-changer when it comes to vaccine efficacy and two doses of mRNA vaccines—at their best—offer only 60

percent protection against the variant, and within four months “protection has fallen almost to zero.” He said a third dose gets protection to 70 percent but after two months, protection falls back to 50 percent.

The Omicron variant is said to be a less severe iteration of the virus, but seems to have the ability to evade vaccine protections.

“What then?” he asked. “A fourth dose? A fifth a few weeks after that? How much mRNA do the public health authorities intend to cram in us?”

Stephane Bancel, the CEO of Moderna, told a Goldman Sachs-organized conference last week that individuals who have received a booster shot may need a fourth jab by the fall and “forward.”

He told the conference that he believes the current booster should offer a satisfactory level of protection through the winter surge, he expects, over time, it’s “not going to hold great.”

“We have been saying that we believe first this virus is not going away,” he said. “We’re going to have to live with it.”

TRENDPOST: *The Trends Journal has reported on the relentless push by state governments to reach 100 percent vaccination, and when vaccines seem to be falling short of their promises, the reaction is not to reassess, it’s to push for another jab. (See [“IS THE WOLD ADOPTING THE WORLD ADOPTING THE WAYS OF NAZI GERMANY?”](#) [“U.K. TO REVIEW VACCINE EFFICACY AFTER ISRAEL REPORTS”](#) and [“ASTRAZENECA VACCINE DATA UNDER FIRE.”](#))*

LITTLE TYRANT MACRON: THE PISS OFF BOY



French President Emmanuel Macron was roundly criticized last week after he admitted that his objective is to make life miserable for the unvaccinated in his country amid a new surge in COVID-19 cases.

“The unvaccinated, I really want to piss them off,” he told *Le Parisien* newspaper. “And so we will continue to do so, to the bitter end. That’s the strategy. When My freedom comes to threaten that of our people, I become irresponsible. An irresponsible person is no longer a citizen.”

He was promptly criticized by political contenders. Marine Le Pen tweeted, “A president shouldn’t say that...Emmanuel Macron is unworthy of his office.”

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leftist politician, also took umbrage with his comment and said it is clear “the vaccination pass is a collective punishment against individual freedom.”

Mélenchon was referring to France’s parliament’s decision to approve Macron’s push for vaccine passes and no-freedom punishment for those who refuse.

To date, more than 90 percent of those in France over 12 years old have received at least two jabs, which makes the country one of the most vaccinated in Europe.

But despite the “herd” being what was once declared as “herd immunity,” still, the country recorded an average of 300,000 new cases per day last week.

There were 246 deaths recorded on Friday and 3,695 were being treated in ICUs. Hospitals were caring for 20,000 patients, which is the highest number since May.

Macron's comments seemed to get more people to roll up their sleeves. Olivier Veran, the country's health minister, told reporters that there was a record number of people who signed up for the jab the day after *Le Parisien* published Macron's comments.

The French have been allowed to present a negative COVID test to enter venues across the country, but the new bill, which passed the lower house in a 214 to 93 vote, will remove the option of being tested. The bill still has to pass the Senate.

Some political observers say Macron was intentional with his statement since his next election is in April 2022. France 24 reported that some analysts say the comments were "a calculated ploy to boost his image as a champion of to silence centrist majority standing against political extremes."

The report said the image of a "responsible, centrist leader" is a key part of his electoral strategy.

Macron did not back down from his comment and told The Associated Press that his objective is to "vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate" and it is left to the citizen to do their "civic duty."

"When some make from their freedom...a motto, not only do they put others lives at risk, but they are also curtailing others' freedom," he said. "That I cannot accept."

Protesters took to the streets across France on Saturday to rail against the legislation and Macron's comments. The protesters chanted, "We'll piss you off."

"(Macron's comments) were the last straw," Virginie Houget, a hospital administrator, told Reuters.

Bruno Auquier, a 53-year-old town councilor, told The AP, "I will never get vaccinated."

French officials told the BBC that more than 105,000 people took part in protests across the country and at least 34 were arrested. Ten police officers were injured in violent clashes, the report said. The protests were four times larger than the ones on 18 December, officials said.

TREND FORECAST: *It should be noted that these massive demonstrations that are barely reported by the mainstream media, are just the beginning of a major march to Freedom. These new draconian COVID War measures will further drag down economic growth while escalating populist anti-vax, anti-establishment movements.*

Ignoring the facts of broad based citizen outrage against draconian measures being imposed upon them by politicians and bureaucrats, the media will continue to moronically label those fighting for freedom as right-wing conspiracy theorists... just as they label those opposed to the COVID mandates in America as Trump supporters.

GET VAXXED, GET THE VIRUS, GET SICK



Remember the bullshit spewed by politicians, Presstitutes and “health officials” nearly two years ago that if everybody obeyed their orders, shut down their businesses, stopped going to work, stayed home, kept kids from going to playgrounds,

stayed off the beaches, socially distanced, wore masks, stopped having sex... they would win the COVID WAR?

And how about the crap sold in November 2020 by drug dealers (that morons and imbeciles call Big Pharma) that the Operation Warp Speed COVID Jab would have a 96 percent efficacy rate?

The COVID-19 outbreak, which has now gone on for over two years, continues to spread at a rapid pace, and individuals who've said they've taken every possible precaution, from face coverings, social distancing, and fully vaxxed are continuing to come down with infections.

TRENDPOST: Why are companies forcing vaccinations when the efficacy rate of the COVID Jab stopping the Omicron variant is only one third effective?

*This calculation is not what the mainstream media would call a “conspiracy theory” since we quote CNBC’s “Health and Science” article in our 21 December **Trends Journal** that original two-dose vaccination series... offers only 33% protection against infection...,” according to real-world data from South Africa.*

Who Cares

With the mainstream media dumbed to comic levels, the big news over the past few weeks is all about “celebrities” (actors who pretend to be someone else), mainstream media Pressitutes and comedians who tell stupid jokes who either died or got the virus despite being fully jabbed.

There have been recent high-profile cases among clowns like Jimmy Fallon, James Corden, and Bob Saget. Saget was found dead in his hotel room on Sunday. His friends said he had recovered from the virus.

Back on 13 December Saget said he got the COVID booster shot: “I went to the pharmacy the other day and got a booster shot. I should have gotten it in my arm, but I got it in my butt.”

More “Breaking News” was that fully vaccinated CNN Presstitute and The View co-host Ana Navarro Today Show hosts Savannah Guthrie and Hoda Kotb and Late Night host Seth Meyers got the virus.

Lloyd Austin, the fully vaccinated U.S. Defense Secretary who pushed for all troops to be vaccinated or resign, contracted the coronavirus.

Also making the news is the Democrat media star, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who is also fully jabbed and boosted who got the virus as did Rep. Michael McCaul who also received the booster shot and came down with the infection.

Why Get the Shot?

Fareha Ahmed, a mom who lives in Washington, D.C., said in an interview that she had been careful to avoid the virus and ate out only a few times since the outbreak began.

She was fully vaccinated and boosted and met with a work colleague at an outdoor venue prior to the Christmas holiday, *The Washington Post* reported.

She had plans to meet with her family but learned that her colleague came down with the virus. She took several COVID-19 tests—including a PCR test—and they all came back negative. She met with her family and days later felt sick and learned that she had the virus.

She told the paper that she felt like her stomach was in her throat after she learned about the diagnosis and the fact that she exposed her family to the virus right before the holiday.

“I just ruined everybody’s Christmas, including my own family’s,” she told the paper.

Lies and Damn Lies

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the head of the CDC, was criticized on Sunday during an interview on Fox News for appearing to hold back information on the actual number of COVID-19-related deaths in the U.S. that were directly tied to the virus.

She was asked how many of the 836,000 deaths in the U.S. were directly tied to the virus. In particular, those without comorbidities.

"Yes of course with Omicron we're following that very carefully," Walensky responded. "Our death registry of course takes a few weeks...to collect. And of course, omicron has just been with us for a few weeks. But those data will be forthcoming."

Walensky told ABC News on Sunday that over 75 percent of COVID-19-related deaths occurred in people who had four comorbidities.

"So really, these are people who were unwell to begin with. And yes, really encouraging news in the context of omicron. This means not only just to get your primary series but to get your booster series, and yes, we're really encouraged by these results," she said.

TRENDPOST: *The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the COVID-19 outbreak and the inability of governments to understand how to stop the virus' spread. Instead, countries have failed at slowing the spread, and only destroyed economies. (See ["VAX WAR: THE SHOT HEARD AROUND THE WORLD."](#) ["NEW STUDY: LOCKDOWN LUNACY"](#) and ["AUSTRALIA: FOLKS FIGHTING AGAINST COVID WAR."](#))*

TRENDPOST: *The number of COVID-19 infections among those who are fully vaccinated raised legal questions about the Biden administration's effort to mandate these jabs. Luc Montagnier, the winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discovering the human immunodeficiency virus, and Jed Rubenfeld, a constitutional scholar, wrote an op-ed in The Wall Street Journal questioning the merits of a mandate for a vaccine that does not seem to be effective.*

"It would be irrational, legally indefensible and contrary to the public interest for the government to mandate vaccines absent any evidence that the vaccines are effective in stopping the spread of the pathogen they target. Yet that's exactly what's happening here," they wrote.

TREND FORECAST: *These massive demonstrations that are barely reported by the mainstream media, are just the beginning of a major march to Freedom... a shot that will be heard around the world. And, as we had forecast, new anti-vax, anti-establishment movements are now rapidly accelerating.*

One of the main issues plaguing the government response throughout the outbreak has been inconsistent and inaccurate messaging. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was forced to admit last month that it overestimated the percentage of new COVID-19 cases caused by the omicron variant.

The CDC claimed that the highly transmissible variant accounted for 73 percent of new cases during the week ending 18 December. That number was revised to just 22.5 percent of all cases, which also raises questions about claims that vaccines are less effective against Omicron.

TRENDPOST: *Again, while We the People are banned from the mainstream and social media to question the safety and efficacy of the “Operation Warp Speed” vaccine that has not been officially approved by the FDA, only the establishment “experts” are permitted to be heard... and followed.*

*The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on so-called “breakthrough cases.” See [“BREAKTHROUGHS BEGET RISK REASSESSMENT.”](#) [“BREAKTHROUGH’: NEW TERM FOR VACCINE FAILURE”](#) and [“CDC CHANGES TESTING TO ERASE ‘BREAKTHROUGH’ CASES.”](#)*

COVID KILLING TOURISM



Yesterday the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. State Department advised Americans not to cross the border into Canada because of a rising number of COVID-19 cases.

Last week, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention added Aruba to its list of countries with the highest risk of COVID-19 infection for travelers.

CNN reported that the island is now considered a Category 4 risk level and Americans have been warned against traveling there due to the risk. Other countries on the list include Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Germany, and Greece. The CDC lists any country with more than 500 cases out of 100,000 residents as the high-risk category.

“Because of the current situation in Aruba, even fully vaccinated travelers may be at risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 variants,” the CDC said in its notice.

These notices and warnings despite the fact that Dr. Angelique Coetzee, the chairwoman of the South African Medical Association, who first sounded the variant alarm, said those who got it had “unusual but mild symptoms.”

She said the new variant “... presents mild disease with symptoms being sore muscles and tiredness for a day or two not feeling well. So far, we have detected that those infected do not suffer the loss of taste or smell. They might have a slight cough. There are no prominent symptoms. Of those infected some are currently being treated at home.”

Yet, these imposed mandates are destroying hundreds of millions of lives and livelihoods (See [“TOP U.S. HOTELS ARE IN DEPRESSION OR RECESSION,”](#) [“GLOBAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY REELING”](#) and [“LOCKDOWNS COST U.S. \\$1.1 TRILLION IN LOST TRAVEL INCOME.”](#))

Don't Take Me On A Sea Cruise

Cruise lines have taken every precaution to prove to passengers that they can travel safely as long as everyone aboard is vaccinated and has tested negative prior to the voyage. But there is not a ship operating in U.S. waters that is COVID-free. The CDC has now recommended that Americans avoid cruises.

The report said that as of last week, 91 ships had a “yellow” status, which means there is COVID infection on board. Royal Caribbean announced that it will cancel four of its ships “in an abundance of caution,” due to the increase of Omicron infections. The company made the announcement despite its testing mandate and its pro-vaccine policy for passengers and crew.

"We regret having to cancel our guests' long-awaited vacations and appreciate their loyalty and understanding," the statement said. "Our top priority is always the well-being of our guests, our crew and the communities we visit."

The CDC echoed the company's concern and said even “fully vaccinated travelers may be at risk for getting and spreading COVID-19 variants.”

“The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads easily between people in close quarters on board ships, and the chance of getting COVID-19 on cruise ships is very high, even if you are fully vaccinated and have received a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose,” the CDC said.

Government health officials have been forced to acknowledge that breakthrough COVID-19 cases are a fact of life, and have been working to move the goalposts.

Getting vaccinated once held the promise of returning to normal life, without fear of infection. But that narrative has now evolved to mean the vaccines only prevent serious illness. This despite the facts, as we have detailed, that the Omicron virus symptoms are mild.

The issue of infection on cruises, of course, is not isolated to U.S. ports. A German-operated cruise ship that had been stuck at a port in Lisbon prior to New Year's Eve was forced to cancel its itinerary due to a breakout of cases among passengers and crew. Reuters reported that there were 52 confirmed cases among its fully vaccinated crew.

TREND FORECAST: *The travel industry likely will be among the last to fully recover from the COVID Wars.*

Many hotels have permanently re-structured operations to permanently cut jobs and reduce guest services, making hotel stays less alluring. (See [“2020 SHUTDOWN PERMANENTLY ERASED JOBS.”](#) 20 Jul 2021.)

Several companies have permanently cut budgets for business travel. (See [“TRAVEL AND TOURISM: CRASHING.”](#) 21 Jul 2021.)

As we have forecast previously, the travel industry will recover, but only as a shrunken version of what it was before 2020.

Should politicians continue to fight the COVID War and Presstitutes continue to sell COVID Fear and Hysteria, the travel sector across the business and consumer spectrum will deeply decline. However, with economies sinking into deep recession as a result of the COVID mandates, we maintain our trend forecast that the COVID War will begin to wind-down late March, mid-April.

ITALY: NO BOOSTER, NO FREEDOM FOR HALF THE POPULATION



Of Italy's population of some 60 million people, some 28 million are 50 years of age or older.

Roberto Speranza, the Italian health minister—a 43 year old little jerk-off that's been sucking off the public tit since he was a 25 year old kid—announced that all citizens over 50 will be required to get a booster shot so they can produce a “super green pass” at their places of work or face a fine after 1 February.

“We are choosing to restrict as much as possible the group of the unvaccinated because they are the ones who weigh on our health system,” Speanza said.

The latest decree in Italy calls for a €1,500 fine for unvaccinated workers over 50, and—to compound the pain—these workers will also be suspended without pay, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Like other European countries, unvaccinated Italians cannot enter various places of business and—in Italy's case—these people cannot enter government buildings.

Italy's move follows the November prediction from Germany's new chancellor, Olaf Scholz, that Berlin will embrace a “general vaccine mandate” that will take effect in 2022. Politicians in the country say debate could hold up any general vaccine mandate in the country until May.

TREND FORECAST: *The Trends Journal has reported extensively on how governments across the world are cracking down on freedoms in order to get people to take the COVID-19 vaccine. (See [“AUSTRIA: ‘NO VAX, NO FREEDOM.’”](#) [“THE CHINESE WAY: MANDATORY VAXXING”](#) and [“COVID WAR CRACKDOWNS AND PROTESTS.”](#))*

As winter sets in, economic conditions will sharply deteriorate, and anti-lockdown protests will escalate. As we have forecast, new anti-tax, anti-vax, anti-lockdown, anti-establishment political parties and social movements will accelerate.

TRENDPOST: *There are a number of reasons why so many are hesitant to get the COVID Jab. One is that they were rushed along under a project called “Operation Warp Speed.”*

Another is the fact that the disease with a 99.7 percent recovery rate is entirely survivable by most of the people it infects. And, those who die from the virus, as detailed, some 94 percent are suffering from pre-existing comorbidities and/or the elderly, who are suffering from illnesses.

SCHOOLS TURN TO ONLINE LEARNING: AN ONTRENDPRENEUR® GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY



School systems and colleges across the U.S. have turned, once again, to remote learning amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, which has sparked new safety concerns and created staffing issues.

Chicago announced Monday that it landed on an agreement with the city's teachers union to get children back into the classroom for in-person learning on Wednesday after several days of no classes. The teachers union voted last week for a return to remote learning, which sparked a backlash from city leaders, including Mayor Lori Lightfoot who want to see children inside classrooms.

The Cincinnati Public Schools Board of Education voted to go completely remote until 24 January due to staffing concerns, WLWT.com reported. Hundreds of staffers called out last week, the report said. Milwaukee schools are also going remote until 18 January.

Students within the New York City public school system have planned a walkout on Tuesday to demand a remote learning option due to safety concerns inside classrooms. The city has nearly one million children in school and more than a quarter called out at least once last week, according to NY.Chalkbeat.org.

The fight has turned political, with teachers' unions, in most cases, fighting for remote learning and cities fighting for in-person learning.

"I think that [President] Joe Biden and [Secretary of Education] Miguel Cardona and the newly elected mayor of New York City [Eric Adams] and Lori Lightfoot—they can all declare that schools will be open," Amy Mizialko, the head of the teachers union in Milwaukee, told *The New York Times*. "But unless

they have hundreds of thousands of people to step in for educators who are sick in this uncontrolled surge, they won't be."

On The College Front

According to INSIDE HIGHER ED, data collected by the College Crisis Initiative, or C2i, at Davidson College, show that more than 88 percent of the 502 schools in the research center's sample are returning to physical classrooms, with almost 12 percent opting for a remote spring semester.

TREND FORECAST: *The Trends Journal has reported extensively on lockdowns and the impact they have on school-aged children.*

(See: ["LOCKDOWN MADNESS: CURE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE."](#) ["SCHOOL LOCKDOWNS KILLING STUDENTS."](#) and ["DETROIT SCHOOLS: MAJORITY OF KIDS ABSENT. CLASSES GOING ONLINE."](#))

We have pointed out that the lockdowns in 2020 helped speed up the transition to online learning, which is here to stay. (See: ["MEGA-TREND OF THE FUTURE: RICE UNIVERSITY TURNS TO ONLINE LEARNING."](#) ["INDIA'S ONLINE-LEARNING AN INVESTMENT WINDFALL, SOLIDIFYING 'INTERACTIVE U' FORECAST IN TRENDS JOURNAL."](#))

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

Trends are born, they grow, mature, reach old age, and die. The Industrial Age education model is dying, and the "Interactive U" model Gerald Celente had forecast in his bestselling book, "Trends 2000" (Warner Books, 1997), is still in its infancy.

Thus, the Ontrendpreneur® opportunities that seize upon its growth will provide great rewards.

PHILIPPINES' DUTERTE WILL ARREST UNVAXXED. INDIA TIGHTENS RESTRICTIONS



In a televised address last week Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte deputized community leaders to alert authorities if they spot someone who is unvaccinated outside and breaking stay-at-home orders.

“If he refuses, if he goes out his house and goes around the community, he can be restrained,” the president said, according to Reuters. “If he refuses, the captain is empowered now to arrest recalcitrant persons.” (SEE: [“COVID-19 PASSES: EUROZONE’S NEW WORLD ORDER,”](#) and [“IS THE WORLD ADOPTING THE WAYS OF NAZI GERMANY.”](#))

Nearly half of the country’s population has been fully vaccinated. Those who are unvaccinated in the country cannot leave their homes except for essential trips. The new surge in cases has prompted airlines to cancel more than 100 flights.

“Because it’s a national emergency, it is my position that we can restrain” individuals who have not taken the jab, Duterte declared.

India’s capital of New Delhi has imposed new restrictions due to a surge in COVID-19 infections. The country of 1.38 billion recorded 1.6 million new cases on Monday and 277 deaths.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to remain vigilant and Arvind Kejriwal, the chief minister of Delhi, also ordered a curfew due to the number of new cases.

In Maharashtra, India’s richest state, the government ordered swimming pools and gyms to close. And as of yesterday, schools and colleges will be closed until 15 February. In the state of Gujarat, night curfew hours have been extended and all healthcare personnel are prohibited to go on leave.

Only fully vaccinated people will be allowed into private offices and workforce capacity will be limited to 50 percent.

Despite the surge, many Indians are beginning to ditch masks because they question their effectiveness, according to *The New York Times*.

“When we gave them masks, people just threw them away,” Siddesh Valvaikar, a volunteer, told the paper.

TREND FORECAST: *In the Philippines, considering the extent of government rule, there will be little resistance against Duterte’s dictates.*

As for India, as with other nations, states and cities, they make up COVID restriction mandates such as times for going back to school, curfew hours, office space capacity, social distancing, mask wearing, etc., without a scintilla of hard facts or scientific data.

With India’s economy bouncing back from a COVID War freefall, we forecast restrictions will be limited and lightly enforced.

MAJOR U.S. CITIES: IT’S MURDER IN THE FIRST-DEGREE



The number of murders in some of the largest cities in the U.S. continued to rise in 2021 while the COVID-19 outbreak continues to rage throughout the country.

The cities that reached a record high in killings included Philadelphia, Portland, Ore., Louisville, Ky., and Albuquerque, N.M., according to *The Wall Street Journal*. The paper, citing a study by the Council on Criminal Justice, reported that homicide rates in 22 of the largest cities through the third quarter of 2021 jumped 4 percent.

The deadly year followed 2020, which was also considered one of the most violent years in decades, according to the *Journal*.

Chicago recorded 836 murders in 2021, which is one of its deadliest years in “at least the last quarter-century,” police told *The Chicago Tribune*. The city’s medical examiner told the paper that blacks were the victims of 80 percent of the homicides the office handled.

“Males accounted for 88 percent of homicide deaths,” the office said in a statement obtained by the paper. “Eighty-six homicide deaths were under 18; 12 were under the age of 10.”

New York City recorded 485 killings in the year, which was a 4 percent jump from 2020, *The New York Post* reported.

Police in Portland, Ore., responded to 90 homicides across the city in 2021, which eclipsed its previous record of 66 in 1987, according to KOIN.

There has been a debate within these cities about what is playing the biggest factor in the increase. Many point to the COVID-19 outbreak and the psychological stress the pandemic has on many Americans, while others blame new policing tactics. Portland, for example, disbanded its Gun Violence Reduction Team in 2020.

“Crime has risen everywhere, but here, it’s been at historic levels,” Lt. Nathan Sheppard with the Portland Police Bureau told the station. “I’d be remiss if I didn’t say there were some clear consequences to getting rid of our team that addressed gun violence.”

TREND FORECAST: As Gerald Celente has long noted, “When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it.”

Again, when politicians launched the COVID War some two years ago, we warned the worst is not only yet to come, it will become a way of life. Gangs will

grow in power as well. Expect thefts, robberies, and violent crimes all to increase now and when the shut-ins end.

*The extent of the damage caused by the coronavirus is not yet known, but the **Trends Journal** has warned that the subsequent lockdowns would lead to an epidemic of despair among the young and old. Knowing at the onset of the COVID War last February that crime would dramatically escalate, we added our “Survivalism” column as an essential element of the **Trends Journal**.*

TRENDPOST: *The **Trends Journal** has reported on the increase of killings and other violent crime while states implemented economy-killing lockdown orders. (SEE: [“MORE LOCKDOWNS= MORE MURDERS.”](#) [“NYC: SURGE IN SHOOTINGS & SUBWAY ATTACKS.”](#) and [“LOS ANGELES: HAIL, HAIL, THE GANGS ALL HERE.”](#))*

This magazine said in March that when politicians lock down economies to fight the COVID WAR, an increase in crime is nearly certain. (SEE: [“CRIME ON THE RISE DURING THE GREAT LOCKDOWN.”](#))

"FROM COVID" VS. "WITH COVID": THE NARRATIVE BEGINS TO CRUMBLE



The tide of the COVID-19 narrative may be changing. Easily swayed by what politicians and the media tell them, despite the facts, are people starting to wise up to the way news is managed and selectively reported?

A mind-wakening example may be how many news stories now turn on the semantic distinction between "from COVID" and "with COVID."

Even New York's Governor Kathy Hochul is catching on, and speaking out publicly about the discrepancy. As reported on 9 January by *Epoch Times*, she

made the following statement: "I just want to always be honest with New Yorkers about how bad this is. Yes, the sheer numbers of people infected are high, but I want to see whether or not the hospitalizations correlate with that. And I'm anticipating to see that at least a certain percentage overall are not related to being treated for COVID. But we're still going to watch hospital capacity."

She continued, saying that some of the patients test positive for COVID-19 "but they're in there for other reasons. Think of all the other reasons people end up at a hospital; it's an overdose, it's a car accident, a heart attack."

New York City, it turns out, has a much-higher-than-average incidence of hospital patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 but were admitted for reasons other than COVID-19.

That describes roughly 50 percent of the "COVID cases" in NYC hospitals; outside of NYC, the percentage is much lower. Even Dr. Rochelle Walensky of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention admitted on 7 January that the recent spike in pediatric COVID-19 hospitalizations was, at least in part, a product of non-COVID-19-related reasons.

TRENDPOST: *As we have detailed since the COVID-War began, the numbers were being inflated, particularly with regard to hospitalizations and fatalities; see ["FAUCI THE FEARMONGER"](#) (7 Jul 2020) and ["THIS WEEK IN FEAR & ANXIETY"](#) (14 Jul 2020).*

The statistics now being publicized, and the distinctions being drawn, tend to cast some doubt on the official narrative that COVID-19 is running rampant and that hospitals are filled to overflowing with people admitted because of COVID-19; see ["RIGGING THE COVID NUMBERS"](#) (10 Aug 2021). Also see ["PLAY SCRAMBLE: DOES OMICRON = MORONIC?"](#) (14 Dec 2021).

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS



KAZAKHSTAN: SHOOT TO KILL

Last week peaceful protests broke out in Kazakhstan when masses took to the streets to protest the removal of price controls on liquified petroleum gas that people use to fuel their cars.

The protests turned violent when, according to government officials, the demonstrations were hijacked by terrorists and organized crime groups that attacked the police and government security forces.

As reported by RT, Russia's ambassador in Washington Anatoly Antonov believes that as a result of the U.S. exiting Afghanistan, the country has been overrun by "radicals manifesting dehumanizing ideologies." He said, "Thousands of jihadists and marauders tried to 'undermine'" the constitutional order. "They keep on inflicting damage to public and private property. I'd like to note that all this is happening after the American escape from Afghanistan and the rapid development of extremist ideas in the region."

Antonov said the protests were “color revolution,” assisted by “terrorists,” as well as “thugs and robbers.”

In response to the violence, the country’s president, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, gave his security forces shoot-to-kill orders. Following the resignation of Nursultan Nazarbayev, who resigned on 19 March 2019 after ruling the nation for 29 years, Tokayev became acting president.

“Those who do not surrender will be eliminated,” he said. “Law enforcement and the army have been given the order by me to shoot to kill without warning.”

These protesters have also lashed out against corruption in the government and unemployment in the oil-rich country that is the world’s ninth-largest by landmass. CNN reported that the country is rich in foreign investment due to its natural resources but “many ordinary Kazakhs feel left behind.” It was notable that the protests continued to rage even after Tokayev ordered new price controls.

“For years, the government has relentlessly persecuted peaceful dissent, leaving the Kazakhstani people in a state of agitation and despair,” Marie Struthers, Amnesty International’s director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, told CNN.

The protests were chaotic and resulted in attacks on government buildings in Almaty, the country’s most populous city. Tokayev described the protests as an organized attack by an army of 20,000 but said they have been largely snuffed out by a “counter-terrorism operation” that was backed by Russian troops, the *Financial Times* reported. He thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin for his assistance and China also offered to help him regain control.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Tokayev has been trying to strike a balancing act with Moscow, where he tries to distance himself domestically, but makes a point of showing the close bonds when it comes to foreign policy. Kazakhstan gained independence from the former Soviet Union 30 years ago.

Who knows What?

There were rumors that those fighting in the street were proxies for feuding factions of the country's political elite, *The New York Times* reported. Danil Kislov, a Russian expert on Central Asia who runs a news outlet focused on the region, told the paper that there is speculation that the clashes are the result of a "desperate struggle for power" between those loyal to Tokayev and those behind his 81-year-old predecessor, Nursultan Nazarbayev."

The Times pointed out that Tokayev fired Nazarbayev's nephew from his post as deputy head of the security service. Kislov said the nephew seemed to have played a major role in the unrest in the world's largest uranium producer.

Nazarbayev, the former president, was credited for never relying on Moscow for domestic security assistance. One analyst told *The Journal* that Tokayev has "undermined this, and he has insulted the increasingly nationalistic swaths of the Kazakh population."

"This means that the security situation could escalate really quickly if Russian troops were seen to turn on the Kazakh population," the analyst said.

Tokayev called on the CSTO, or the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which is seen as Russia's response to NATO, to help restore order, *The Journal* reported.

Tokayev said the protesters who do not surrender "will be eliminated."

"Law enforcement and the army have been given the order by me to shoot to kill without warning," he said.

There have been internet blackouts from within the country and information about developments were not immediately clear.

Reports on Sunday said 164 people were killed in the clashes, including a 4-year-old girl. Eighteen police officers were killed and 3,700 people were arrested.

"Tokayev had to end this schizophrenic dual power in the country," Arkady Dubnov, a Central Asia expert at the Varnege Moscow Center, told *The Washington Post*. "He never became a fully empowered president because his hands were tied...[and] it was clear that two centers of power are in place."

Tokayev made it clear that it was his belief that these "bandits" were organized and there could be no negotiations with them. *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial board wrote that identifying legitimate protesters as terrorists and bandits is "the classic response of post-Soviet dictators facing genuine, widespread discontent."

Nazarbayev urged those in the country to rally around his successor.

Beijing may also take note of Moscow's quick decision to provide security, the paper reported. Kazakhstan plays an important role in China's Belt and Road initiative. Niva Yau, a senior fellow at OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, told the paper that the danger for China is to have "Russia control such an important transit and trade route." The fear for Beijing is a world where Moscow can impose tariffs on oil and gas that flows through Kazakhstan to China.

Yesterday, Vladimir Putin claimed victory in his sending troops to defend Kazakhstan from what he called foreign-backed terrorists. In a virtual summit of the CSTO military alliance of ex-Soviet states, Mr. Putin said his forces were successful in preventing "the undermining of the foundations of the state, the complete degradation of the internal situation in Kazakhstan, and block terrorists, criminals, looters and other criminal elements."

"Of course, we understand the events in Kazakhstan are not the first and far from the last attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of our states from the outside," he said. "The measures taken by the CSTO have clearly shown we will not allow the situation to be rocked at home."

TREND FORECAST: *As we detail in this article, different sides have different stories as to who are the forces behind the Kyrgyzstan protests and why. However, the bottom line will be the U.S. and its European allies vs. Russia, with the NATO alliance supporting the opposition forces and Russia backing up the ruling government.*

Furthermore, beyond Kyrgyzstan, protests against rising prices—be they fuel or food—will escalate across the globe as inflation keeps rising. And, as protests escalate and civil unrest intensifies, the migrant wave, which is one of our Top Trends for 2022, will intensify as people do what they can to escape the violence, government corruption, poverty, crime and violence.

NATO: WE ARE THE WORLD



The U.S. vowed to further reinforce NATO partners “on the eastern flank” if Russia continued to further invade Ukraine as NATO rejected Moscow’s demand to halt the alliance from taking on any new members.

Ned Price, the State Department spokesman, tweeted out the comments after reports emerged in the U.S. that Washington may be willing to scale back its forces in Eastern Europe to appease Moscow and reduce tensions in the region.

One of Russia’s main issues has been the expansion of NATO members in its own backyard. The **Trends Journal** published an article on 7 December titled, [“KREMLIN BLAMES UKRAINE FOR STOKING TENSIONS AT BORDER.”](#) that pointed to Russia's insistence that it has no interest in war with Ukraine. But Moscow warned Western countries about what it sees as aggressive actions.

TRENDPOST: Long forgotten 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 with Germany, the 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."

Fast Forward

Russian President Vladimir Putin has raised concerns about weapons systems being placed near Russia's borders. He claimed Tomahawk missiles could hit Moscow in minutes.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Friday that Moscow would have no input in what state may or may not be able to join the security alliance. The Associated Press reported that the two went further and vowed a "forceful" response if there was an invasion of Kyiv. Blinken went further and said the U.S. has a "sacred obligation" to defend its allies.

“We’re prepared to respond forcefully to further Russian aggression, but a diplomatic solution is still possible and preferable if Russia chooses,” Blinken said. He continued, “Certainly part of (Putin’s) playbook is to put out a list of absolutely non-starter demands and then claim the other side is not engaging and then use that as somehow justification for aggressive action.”

The AP reported that under Article 10 of the 1949 Washington Treaty, NATO has the right to invite any willing European country into the fold.

Stoltenberg has made the distinction between a NATO partner and ally. Kyiv is a partner. NATO is compelled to only defend allies.

NATO countries are reportedly concerned about embracing Ukraine as an ally due to the possible confrontation with Russia.

Forget the Facts

The western media no longer reports on the U.S.-backed overthrow of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014. Elected in 2010 to succeed Viktor Yushchenko, who was championed by the U.S. when it ostensibly launched the Orange Revolution in 2004 that put him in power, Ukraine’s Central Election Commission and international observers declared that the 2010 presidential election was legitimate and fairly conducted.

Enriching its military-industrial complex, the U.S. provided nearly \$2 billion of taxpayer money to the country in the name of foreign aid and military assistance.

The *WSJ* reported that Russia wants Kyiv to implement a French and German-backed peace deal that calls for local elections in Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region, where there are 640,000 residents with Russian passports.

TRENDPOST: The ***Trends Journal*** has covered the tension in the region extensively. (See [“U.S. VOWS UKRAINE SUPPORT,”](#) [“PUTIN PUTS PRESSURE](#)

[ON UKRAINE.” and “BIDEN PLEDGES ‘UNWAVERING SUPPORT’ FOR UKRAINE.”](#))

TREND FORECAST: *The U.S. will not go to war with Russia over Ukraine. The military in Ukraine is no match against the Russians, and its only hope for security in the future is to become a member of NATO, which Blinken did not indicate is any closer today than it was before Russians amassed at the border.*

TRENDPOST: *Completely absent in the American media reports of the current U.S. stand with Ukraine is the role Washington and Victoria Nuland played in the overthrow of its government in 2014.*

*A report from 2014 in the **Trends Journal** laid out the political maneuvers at the time in Ukraine: “Washington’s coup in Ukraine brought not only a threat to the Russian population in Ukraine but also a direct strategic threat to Russia itself.”*

Nuland, who speaks Russian and French, boasted that Washington had invested \$5 billion in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ukraine. Allegedly, the purpose of NGOs is to “teach democracy.” Ukraine, however, already had a democracy. In reality, the NGO organizations are U.S. fifth columns that can be used to organize protests and to provide support for Washington’s candidates for the Ukraine government.

Indeed, in early February 2014, a recording was leaked of Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Victoria Nuland, telling Geoffrey Pyatt, the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, that the UN was on board to “help glue” the plan to replace Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovych with Arseniy Yatsenyuk. “Yats is the guy,” Nuland informed Pyatt, urging her to move quickly because “the Russians will be working behind the scenes to torpedo” the deal.

“F#& the EU!” Nuland told Pyatt. “Exactly,” he responded. Shortly thereafter, Yanukovych was overthrown and “Yats” became president.*

ISRAEL TO BUILD MORE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENTS ON PALESTINIAN LAND



A local committee in Israel last Wednesday approved the development of over 3,500 new settler homes in occupied East Jerusalem, which is expected to create new tensions in the region and further frustrate Washington.

AntiWar.com, citing NGO Peace Now, reported that the homes would be positioned in a way that cuts off East Jerusalem from the southern part of the West Bank. As it stands, the development would create further complications for a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital city, the report said.

A senior diplomatic source in Jerusalem told *The Jerusalem Post* that the Biden administration has put the concerns of settlements on the “same level as the Iranian nuclear threat.” The source said Americans talk about this issue of settler violence “obsessively.”

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz in Washington last week and reportedly told him that they should devote as much time as they spend on the Iranian nuclear deal as they do on settlements, which Israeli officials reportedly found “baffling.”

Morton A. Klein, the president of the Zionist Organization of America, wrote a column in *The Jerusalem Post* in November calling the Biden administration’s attacks “discriminatory and antisemitic.”

TRENDPOST: While Israel calls them “settlements,” they are illegal land grabs under international law. They violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 that states, “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

The UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Court of Justice, and the High Contracting Parties to the Convention have all affirmed the Fourth Geneva Convention applies, that this is occupied territory, and Israeli settlements there are illegal. (See: [“ISRAEL’S NEW ‘SETTLEMENT’ PLAN CONDEMNED BY U.S., EUROPE.”](#) [“ISRAEL TO BUILD MORE ‘SETTLEMENTS.’”](#) and [“ISRAEL ACCUSED OF APARTHEID BY HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH.”](#))

TREND FORECAST: *Since Neftali Bennett was named prime minister, the **Trends Journal** predicted that he would bring "more of the same" to the region. (See [“ISRAEL’S GOVERNMENT: BOMBS VS. BALLOONS.”](#))*

We reported that Bennett, who will only serve two years as prime minister under the coalition's arrangement, has indicated that he will take a bellicose approach to Gaza. He said in an interview back in 2018 that if he were the county's defense minister, he would enact a “shoot-to-kill” policy with Gaza for those who breach the barrier wall.

He was asked what he would do if those breaching the wall were children and he responded that he would kill them, too. “They are not children—they are terrorists,” he said.

Still, Bennett’s coalition has been trying to win over some European friends that his predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, a hard-liner, seemed to alienate. The juggling act is hard to do when approving thousands of new settlement units that President Biden said “erode” the hopes of a two-state solution.

The Middle East Eye reported that since Israel took control of East Jerusalem in 1967, its government has not approved the construction of one new neighborhood for Palestinians.

The Biden administration has taken a tougher approach toward Israel and the settlements than the Trump administration. The president has been under increased pressure by the progressive wing of his own party about the U.S.'s relationship with Tel Aviv, which they say comes at the expense of Palestine.

But even with the Biden administration, it seems like more of the same. A source close to Bennett told The Times of Israel that the Biden administration doesn't care about the new building expansion, and will not prevent future similar moves.

“Contrary to the impression they’re trying to make, the Americans don’t care that much about the Ministry of Construction and Housing’s decision, and they have no problem tolerating it,” the source said, the paper reported.

ISRAEL KEEPS BOMBING SYRIA



At the end of December, Israel launched an airstrike on Syria's main port of Latakia. It was the second such attack this month. The Syrian Defense Ministry said a missile caused extensive damage in the key commercial Mediterranean port.

A video on social media showed massive flames at the site of the attack.

One Israeli army spokesperson told a British news outlet that Israel does not comment on “reports in foreign media.” SANA, the state news agency, said the strike caused “significant material damage.”

Israel sees proxy forces in Syria as an existential threat because it is widely seen that Israel cannot fight a war on multiple fronts. Sources told Reuters that Israel believed that Iran was storing munitions at the port of Latakia. The report pointed out that there were no casualties at the port.

“These blasts and huge fires were caused by the explosions from the munitions stored in a warehouse close to commercial cargo,” the source told Reuters. SANA said fire officials claimed that the containers that were targeted contained oil and parts for machines and cars.

Israel has admitted to launching hundreds of airstrikes into Syria that target Iranian troops, military targets and allied groups such as Hezbollah who, along with Russia, are supporting the government of Bashar al-Assad.

TREND FORECAST: *The Trends Journal has reported on the relationship between Israel and Syria. (See ["ISRAEL CONDUCTS SERIES OF DEADLY AIRSTRIKES IN SYRIA."](#) ["TERROR STRIKES SYRIA: ALL OUT WAR COMING?"](#) and ["ISRAEL KEEPS BOMBING SYRIA."](#))*

As we have forecast, with Prime Minister Naftali Bennett taking over from former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, considering who he is and what he stands for, we forecast it will be a continued escalation against Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Iran.

We watched the tension play out between Israel and Iran earlier this month—on the anniversary of Gen. Qasem Soleimani's assassination. Hackers took control of The Jerusalem Post's website and posted an image of Israel's Dimona nuclear facility with the text, "We are close to you where you do not think about it."

The image has a ballistic missile over the facility held by what seems to be Soleimani's hand.

Robin Wright wrote a recent long-form article in The New Yorker about Iran's ability to fire ballistic missiles. U.S. Central Command Gen. Kenneth McKenzie told the magazine that Tehran's missiles have become a more immediate threat than its nuclear program.

SUDANESE SECURITY FORCES KEEP KILLING PROTESTERS



Thousands of protesters in Sudan took to the streets on Sunday to voice their opposition to the military coup that occurred in October and resulted in Abdel Fattah al-Burhan sitting at the head of the government.

The protests have resulted in 62 civilian deaths, including one protester who died Sunday after getting hit in the neck by a gas canister that was fired by security forces. The death followed the killing of a teenager who was struck by a “live bullet” to the neck at a rally on Thursday.

The 25 October coup was seen as the end of any hope the country had of an easy transition to democracy. Hamdok warned that the country is in a precarious position and at a “dangerous crossroads threatening its very survival.”

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok resigned last week, saying that he was unable to reach an agreement between generals and the pro-democracy movement, Africa News reported. The October coup came more than two years after Omar al-Bashir was done in by an uprising. The next election is scheduled for July 2023.

The United Nations said it will hold a press conference to open dialogue among “all key civilians and military stakeholders.” The U.N.’s move was rejected by the Sudanese Professionals Association that said the only way to resolve the crisis is the “complete overthrow of the putschist military council and the handover of its members to face justice over the killings committed against the defenseless (and) peaceful Sudanese people.”

France 24 reported that the protests on Sunday included demonstrators marching towards the presidential palace in the capital. Some chanted, “No, no to military rule.”

“We will not accept less than a full civilian government,” Ammar Hamed, a 27-year-old protester, told the outlet.

TREND FORECAST: *In Sudan, racked by poverty and corruption, for years, masses have taken to the streets for decades... and will continue to do so.*

Sudan consists of two countries, Sudan in the north and South Sudan. President Barack Obama granted U.S. recognition of South Sudan as an independent state after it formally seceded from the north in 2011.

Barely reported in the western media, since 2003, conflict in the Darfur in the north has included large-scale genocide, forcing millions from their homes and resulting in the death of around 200,000 people.

In 2013, nearly five million people were in need of humanitarian assistance. The conflict occurred after the government was accused of oppressing the non-Arab population of the region.

The government responded by conducting an ethnic cleansing campaign in the Darfur region.

Former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir had previously turned to China, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, and Russia for assistance after the United States imposed sanctions related to human rights abuses in the Darfur region.

On 19 June 2019, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court demanded al-Bashir stand trial for mass killings perpetrated in Darfur.

North Sudan has experienced serious political conflict and social uprisings over the past several months.

On 14 June 2019, North Sudan’s ruling military council had ordered an attack on pro-democracy protesters which killed 120 people.

Subsequently, the military and a pro-democracy coalition agreed in early July on a joint sovereign council that will rule for three years while elections are organized.

South Sudan. *In 2018, it was estimated more than six million people in South Sudan didn't have enough food to sustain themselves. In 2017, the United Nations declared a famine in parts of the country. In addition, between 2014 and 2015, more than a million and a half people were displaced due to conflict, 800,000 ultimately seeking refuge in neighboring Uganda.*

In 2009, then President Obama and NATO established a military presence in South Sudan. Obama signed an executive order lifting sanctions against the country.

South Sudan produces 85 percent of Sudanese oil output. This production constitutes more than 98 percent of the government of South Sudan's budget.

YEMEN CRISIS WORSENS. IT'S NO NEWS



While the moronic mainstream media blasts headlines about dying comics, a lost skier... or BBC's headline story yesterday that "Millionaire murderer Robert Durst dies in prison," not a peep about the U.S. backed Saudi Yemen War, which, according to the United Nations, is the worst humanitarian

crisis on earth.

Now, fighting has intensified in cities across Yemen as the Saudi-led coalition against Houthis managed to take back key provinces after a fresh order of reinforcements in the region.

The coalition announced that more than 390 Houthi fighters have been killed across the country in recent operations. Marib and Shabwa provinces have been the focus of these clashes. Ahmad al-Hamza, one a Houthi leader, was among those killed. Motley Fool reported that his convoy may have been hit by a Saudi airstrike.

And, it should be noted, the U.S. had been supplying air-refueling so the Saudi's could reach their Yemen targets.

Mohammed al-Naqib, a Yemeni military spokesman, told reporters that the advance in Shabwa aimed to choke Houthi fighters who have been continuing an offensive in Marib, which The Associated Press identified as the last remaining government stronghold in the northern reaches of the country.

Yemen's civil war started in 2014, when the Houthis, who were ruling large sections of Yemen for over 1,000 years, overthrew the unelected president put in control by the Saudi's, took control of Sana'a, and then seized the presidential palace.

Biden was vice president under President Obama when the U.S. became involved in the conflict.

(See ["MURDEROUS YEMEN WAR: MILLIONS IN PERIL. WHO CARES?," "PROTESTS IN YEMEN AGAINST U.S., SAUDI-LED COALITION"](#) and ["YEMEN WAR INTENSIFYING...OR ENDING?"](#).)

The Biden administration has essentially kept the same policies as did America's Noble Peace of Crap Prize winner, Barack Obama, who supported the war... despite Biden vowing to end the war.

His administration has also continued weapons sales to the Saudis so they can keep the slaughter going. The Biden gang announced the sale of \$650 million in air-to-air missiles for defensive purposes... which will in turn enrich America's military industrial complex.

The Houthis have been making gains, so there is no rush on their end to meet at a bargaining table.

Jehan Hakim, the head of the San Francisco-based Yemeni Alliance Committee, told NPR in November that the weapons sale is an example of the Biden administration wavering from its vow to wind down the war.

“I can't understand a strategy that can justify the killing of hundreds of thousands of civilians because without the support of the U.S.—when it comes to arms sales, logistical support, Saudi Arabia cannot continue its aggression on Yemen,” she said.

Death Knell

UNICEF, the United Nations agency tasked with providing humanitarian aid to children worldwide, continues to identify Yemen as one of the world’s “largest humanitarian crises.” The agency said about 21 million people in the country of nearly 30 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

That number includes more than 11 million children.

“Since the conflict escalated in March 2015, the country has become a living hell for the children” and many health workers have not been paid a regular salary in several years.

The country is in the throes of one of the world’s worst food crises and nearly 2.3 million children under the age of five are suffering from acute malnutrition. The agency said 400,000 could die if they do not receive urgent treatment.”

TREND FORECAST: The Trends Journal has reported extensively on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen that is playing out due to Saudi Arabia’s attack on the nation.

Thus, we maintain our forecast that the Saudi/U.S. alliance will not defeat the Houthis, and the war will rage on, killing tens of thousands of innocent people while inflicting devastating and deadly hardship across the nation.

The war will continue to be ignored by the mainstream media and the vast majority of the world will be ignorant to the human suffering the United States and Saudi Arabia have inflicted upon the nation.

As the war continues to rage, there will be continued attacks against Saudi targets by the Houthis. Houthis in Yemen have been targeting civilian communication infrastructure in southern Saudi Arabia, according to local reports.

Their weapons of choice are explosive-laden drones, Al Arabiya reported. The Saudis have also accused Houthis of deploying nearly 250 naval mines and 100 explosive boats to disrupt maritime traffic in the Red Sea.

Houthis were accused of attacking an oil tanker on 5 January near the port of Hodeidah and The Jerusalem Post also reported that a UAE vessel was hijacked days earlier. The coalition claimed that Houthis said the hijacking was a warning to Israel that “movements of the Zionist enemy” at sea will end.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW



NEW YORK LAWSUIT RULES AGAINST BIG OPIOID MANUFACTURER

On 31 December *The Wall Street Journal* reported on the results of a civil trial which had ended the previous day.

Teva Pharmaceuticals Industries Ltd. was found liable, in a case that had gone on for five years, for creating a public nuisance.

The drugmaker was sued by New York State and two Long Island counties over its role in the nationwide opioid epidemic. The case was one of thousands of opioid-related lawsuits brought against the pharmaceutical industry by state and local governments.

Other manufacturers, distributors and pharmacies had been named in the suit, and all had been consolidated for trial. But most of those others reached settlements—totaling some \$1.5 billion—leaving Teva and some of its subsidiaries as defendants. Another trial is yet to be held, to determine how much Teva will have to pay.

The jury found that New York State bore ten percent of the responsibility for creating a public nuisance.

Prosecutors for New York State and for Nassau and Suffolk Counties alleged that Teva had contributed to the epidemic of opioid abuse and addiction via deceptive marketing, and that the drugmaker had been remiss in its tracking and reporting of suspicious orders, and had caused an oversupply of the pain pills.

Defense attorneys claimed that the state had failed to prove its case, and also that the state had failed to prevent doctors from overprescribing the drugs. They said they would be preparing to appeal the verdicts.

The opioid epidemic continues unabated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated last month that U.S. drug overdose deaths had exceeded 100,000, the highest number ever logged in a 12-month period.

TRENDPOST: *For background on the opioid epidemic (which actually goes back to 1998), see ["THE OPIOID WARS"](#) (22 Oct 2019) and ["FENTANYL: A KILLER OPIOID"](#) (20 Apr 2021).*

*Also, in ["COVID LOCKDOWNS INCREASE DRUG ABUSE"](#) (15 Sep 2020), ["COVID WAR = FATAL DRUG OVERDOSES"](#) (20 Jul 2021), and ["SADLY, AS FORECAST: FIGHTING THE COVID WAR = RECORD-BREAKING OPIOID DEATHS"](#) (23 Nov 2021), **Trends Journal** asserted that the isolation, anxiety and depression imposed by COVID War lockdowns, and the resultant impact on lives and livelihoods, were driving up the numbers of opioid-induced fatalities.*

POLL SHOWS MOST AMERICANS BULLISH ON 2022



According to a poll of 1,000 Americans conducted on 13 December by OnePoll and reported by StudyFinds.org on 22 December, half the respondents, asked for an "end of year reflection" on 2021, characterized it as "the worst year of their lives so far."

Across the age groups surveyed (Baby Boomers, aged 57 or older; Generation X, aged 41 to 56; Millennials, aged 25 to 40; and Generation Z, aged 18 to 24), almost 8 in 10 described themselves as "optimists," or as "idealists" who "envision things as they could be."

About 2 in 10, however, saw themselves as "realists" who "see things as they are." 53 percent felt that 2021 had been a "very unpleasant" year for them, although about 7 in 10 are still bullish on 2022.

66 percent of Millennials and only slightly fewer Gen Zers reported that 2021 had been a "tough year"; 43 percent of Gen Xers felt it hadn't been their best year. But 56 percent of Boomers disputed that assessment.

The 861 respondents who are parents were also questioned about how 2021 had affected their parenting. 66 percent of them felt that parenting was more difficult in 2021 than in 2020, when the COVID War began.

About 73 percent, however, feel that 2022 will be an improvement. Areas of concern included homeschooling, in-person vs. remote schooling, COVID-related cost-of-living increases and generally "keeping the kids safe."

The most difficulties were reported by Millennial parents, followed by Gen Z and Gen X, with Boomers reporting relatively few parenting issues.

Slightly more men than women are looking forward to 2022, although (as noted) most people tend to be optimistic. However, more men than women reported that the COVID War made them re-evaluate their parenting style.

The survey also queried subjects about their work lives; of employed workers, 9 out of 10 reported being eager to return to full-time, in-person work. 48 percent expected to actually do so, while 21 percent didn't picture themselves returning to a physical workspace; so far, only 14 percent have actually done so.

The eagerness to return to work extends to looking forward to wearing work attire or uniforms and even to commuting and eating cafeteria food, although 66 percent reported unease over anticipated social interactions and wished they could permanently work from home.

A large percentage of the respondents looked forward to getting a better job in 2022, or to getting a raise or promotion from their current employer.

TRENDPOST: *Whether the anticipated return of workers to office environments actually takes place on a scale approaching a return to normalcy has yet to be determined; see ["WILL OMICRON KILL MORE BUSINESSES THAN PEOPLE?"](#) (21 Dec 2021).*

TREND FORECAST: *This recent poll notwithstanding, **Trends Journal** sees no reason to revise its forecast—see ["WORKERS STAYING HOME: COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DISASTER LOOMING"](#) (19 Oct 2021), ["NEW YORK OFFICE VACANCIES SET RECORD"](#) (13 Jul 2021) and earlier—that, after experiencing the luxury of working at home and not commuting, most employees will be in no hurry to return.*

And so, while there will be a steady flow back to central offices, it will be many years before occupancy rates ever return to pre-COVID War levels; see also ["WORK-FROM-HOME: 21st CENTURY MEGA-TREND"](#) (22 Jun 2021).

FDA? TRY FU! DRUG LORDS IN CONTROL



As **Trends Journal's** Gerald Celente never tires of pointing out (quoting George Carlin): "It's one big club, and you ain't in it!"

It's also an incestuous club. And for an example of that one need look no further than Pres. Biden's nomination of Dr. Robert Califf to take the reins of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

If confirmed, Califf would reprise his role during the last 11 months of the Obama administration, when he first assumed the office of FDA Commissioner.

And then, as now, objections to his filling that role were based on his having been paid millions as a consultant to more than a dozen big pharmaceutical corporations.

If that's not reason enough to oppose his nomination, he's also heavily invested in major drug companies, to the tune of up to \$8 million. And yet that is the very industry he would be expected to lead the FDA in regulating.

As reported on 22 December by The Defender (published by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Children's Health Defense), even Bernie Sanders thinks the nomination of Califf to head the FDA is a bad idea.

The avowed Socialist senator from Vermont and failed presidential aspirant objected to Califf's nomination in 2015 and continues to object this time around, saying that the relationship between Big Pharma and the FDA and other regulators is already too close.

Sanders pointed out that such incestuous connections are the rule rather than the exception:

"Not only have the drug companies spent over \$4.5 billion on lobbying and hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign contributions over the past 20 years, they also have created a revolving door between the FDA and the industry. Shockingly, nine out of the last 10 FDA commissioners went on to work for the pharmaceutical industry or to serve on a prescription drug company's board of directors."

TRENDPOST: *If reading this evokes a feeling of déjà vu, it's likely because we wrote about all this not that long ago; see ["NEW FDA HEAD STUCK IN REVOLVING DOOR"](#) (23 Nov 2021).*

That article pointed out that Biden's previous nominees attracted similar criticism for their ties to Big Pharma. In fact, the New York Times had even speculated that "In the end, White House officials might have concluded that they could not find a suitable candidate with no industry ties."

And that "revolving door" analogy is particularly apt when the name of Scott Gottlieb is mentioned. That former FDA Commissioner now sits on Pfizer's board of directors; see ["'HEALTH EXPERT' = DRUG DEALER"](#) (25 May 2021) and ["FDA & BIG PHARMA, ONE BIG CLUB"](#) (29 Jun 2021).

BIG SODA DECREES: "DIET" IS DEAD. SAY HELLO TO "ZERO SUGAR"



Are you old enough to remember when diet pop (or diet soda) first hit the shelves in American food stores? It was 1958 when Diet Rite, produced by Royal Crown Cola, first appeared. Its success inspired Coca-Cola to introduce Tab in 1963, and a year later Diet Pepsi made its debut. In

1982 Coca-Cola brought out Diet Coke.

As reported by CNN Business on 14 December, at the time Diet Coke came along, cola-flavored drinks dominated the market, but the diet segment was growing three times as fast as the rest.

New Name, Same Game

Coca-Cola considered naming its new product "Sugar-Free," but "many felt that was a slur on Coca-Cola's main ingredient." Now, however, that thinking has changed.

With 72 percent of Americans overweight and 40 percent obese, the word "diet" has fallen out of fashion for describing low- or no-calorie drinks.

Marketers feel that the word carries a stigma; that it's identified with women, thereby canceling its appeal to men. And, because of changing attitudes toward health, the public now tends to see the absence of sugar as a positive attribute.

In contrast to "diet," which smacks of austerity and deprivation, "sugar-free" tends to imply a purer, "cleaner profile."

TRENDPOST: *We feel compelled to point out that sugar is a fairly straightforward (and natural) ingredient that has been around for centuries, and its long-term effects on the human body, while far from beneficial—see ["DRINK LOTS OF SODA AND DIE"](#) (11 Aug 2020) and ["COKE'S PROFITS SPARKLE: GOOD AND BAD"](#) (27 Jul 2021)—are at least known.*

And as for the artificial sweeteners, like aspartame or acesulfame potassium, the mold inhibitors and preservatives (notably sodium benzoate and potassium benzoate) that are used in diet—er, Zero Sugar—sodas they are only rarely in the sugared versions. So "sugar-free" may imply a "purer, cleaner profile" only if one doesn't read the label and ignores the facts:

Dozens of studies have linked aspartame—the world's most widely used artificial sweetener—to serious health problems, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, seizures, stroke and

dementia, as well as negative effects such as [intestinal dysbiosis, mood disorders, headaches and migraines](#).

Crap Cola

As for “diet-soda” being positive for weight loss, the opposite is true: According to [articles posted on The Defender](#) website, “Evidence also links aspartame to weight gain, increased appetite and [obesity-related diseases](#). See our fact sheet: [Diet Soda Chemical Tied to Weight Gain](#).

So, along comes a rebranding, across the industry, of the products formerly designated "diet"; now they are identified as "Zero Sugar." And that's seen as a good move for the "diet" segment of the soft drink business, which, while its sales are still less than half that of the sugared versions, is growing faster; diet soda sales have increased by almost 20 percent over 2018 levels, compared to a mere 8.4 percent for regular sodas.

There are a few notable exceptions. Diet Dr. Pepper, for example, is seen by its manufacturer as such a strong brand that it will continue to occupy shelf space alongside the new Zero Sugar version, even though their formulas differ only slightly.

Zero Sugar sodas are already proving far more popular than "diet" versions with men and with young people; the article notes that Millennials and Gen Z-ers are uninterested in anything labeled "diet." And those demographics are especially important to the growth of the soda industry.

The industry's big players, and a few newer, smaller ones, are also offering different alternatives to traditional sodas, including sparkling water (which offers a more healthful image because it often has no sweeteners and no calories, although some varieties contain caffeine) and a whole new category of sodas, made with ingredients like Jerusalem artichoke and cassava root, that are touted as promoting digestive health.

TRENDPOST: *Those newfangled sodas might be on to something; digestive health might be more important than anyone thought; see ["GUT BACTERIA MAY CAUSE, AND CURE, SOCIAL MISBEHAVIORS"](#) (23 Mar 2021).*

THE FEDERAL RESERVE MOB: GANGSTERS, INC.



A recurring theme in **Trends Journal** has been the insider trading shenanigans of the Federal Reserve's top officers. While "shenanigans" may seem too mild a term for the ethical breaches allegedly committed, so far about the worst price any of these Bankster Bandits has had to

pay for their corruption has been being compelled to resign, tantamount to a slap on the wrist.

We wrote about two of the Fed's regional presidents, Robert Kaplan of the Dallas district and Eric Rosengren of the Boston district, both of whom "decided to take an early retirement" last September amid revelations that they had personally profited from trading in the same kind of instruments the Fed had been purchasing to shore up the economy; see ["CRIMINALITY IN HIGH FINANCE: THE BEAT GOES ON"](#) (9 Nov 2021).

The Fed's role in stimulating the economy gave its officers advance and inside information; Kaplan allegedly used that information to make 24 stock deals, each worth \$1 million or more.

And we wrote about how even the Fed's chairman, Jerome "Jay" Powell, had come "under scrutiny" for activities which, while approved by government ethics officers, had the potential to undermine confidence in the Fed; see ["FEDERAL RESERVE'S CHAIRMAN COMES UNDER SCRUTINY"](#) (26 Oct 2021).

TRENDPOST: Another recurring theme is the way the Fed, as an institution, seems to circle its wagons and protect its officers when allegations of malfeasance surface, as in the case of Powell having the blessing of the Fed's supposed internal watchdogs.

It reflects the corporate mindset at the Fed; because they've taken such a significant pay cut to work for the government, its officers are granted "leeway" to keep active portfolios and maintain their income from trading, above and beyond their meager public servants' salaries, so long as their personal interests don't impact, or take advantage of, public policy.

The Fed claims to have ethical standards, but those standards place very few restrictions on the investments its senior officers can make. Even so, apparently sometimes the lure of taking advantage of inside information is too hard to resist.

Now comes word that another top-Fed mob member, Vice-Chair Richard Clarida, has made additional disclosures about certain trades he made, which involved selling between \$1 million and \$5 million worth of stocks, and then buying back those same stocks 3 days later, allegedly taking advantage of Fed policies that had caused the stocks' price to fall over that period. And, shortly after he bought them back, the stocks' price rose again.

The new disclosures call into question his original explanations about the trades, which he had characterized as a routine "rebalancing" of his holdings.

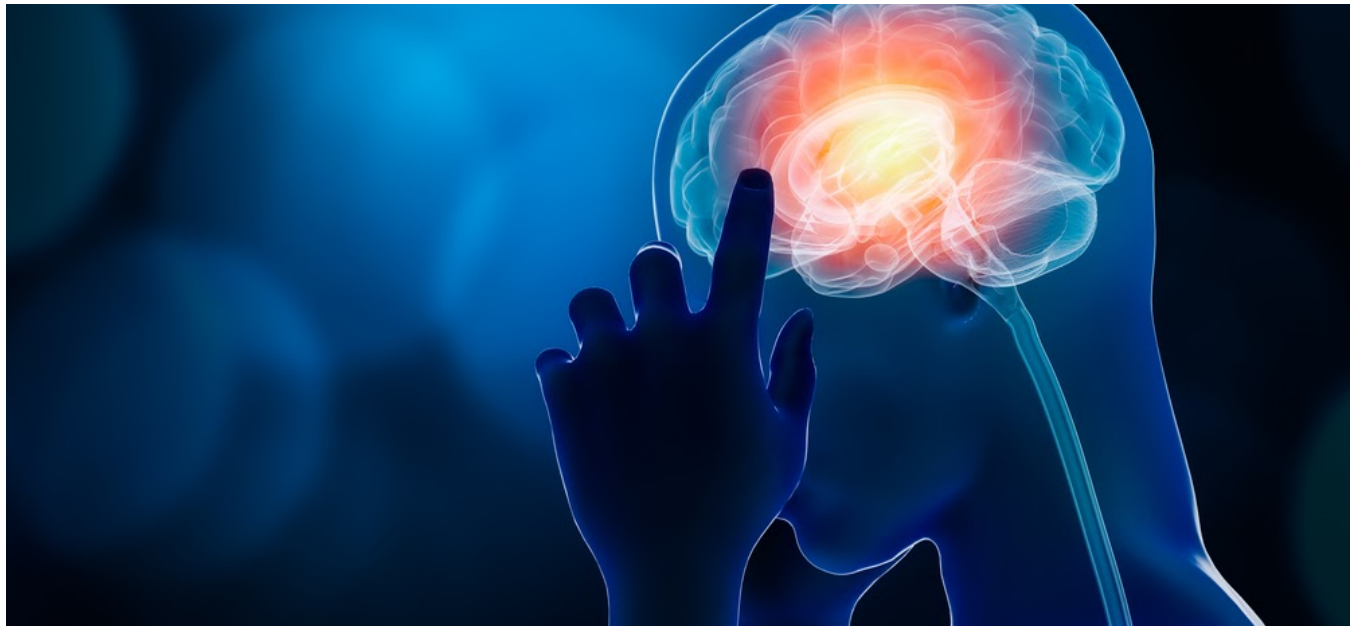
A Fed spokesman claimed that "inadvertent errors" necessitated "amending" Clarida's initial disclosures, and that the trades conformed to the Fed's ethics rules. And a Fed ethics officer said "I continue to believe that Mr. Clarida is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest."

But Norman Eisen, who had been the chief ethics lawyer for the Obama White House, remarked, "Frankly, I don't understand how selling out of a fund, failing to disclose that, then buying the same fund again, all while making a profit and having sensitive Fed information, constitutes a 'rebalancing'."

TRENDPOST: *Although lawmakers have called for an investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission, which would have the power to bring criminal charges, it doesn't seem likely that the any of the Fed's inside trading Bankster Gang will suffer anything but embarrassment (if they're capable of that); see ["FED ETHICS? FU!"](#) (21 Sep 2021).*

UPDATE: Yesterday, Richard Clarida, whose term as Vice-Chair of the Federal Reserve was set to expire later this month, said he will resign on Friday.

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE



By *Ben Daviss*

HEALING THE BRAIN WITH LIGHT

Brain-based disorders from epilepsy and Parkinson's Disease to depression and chronic pain could be eased, or perhaps even reversed, by lighting up parts of the brain with infrared light.

Treating brain conditions with light dates back to the early years of this century, when neuroscientists created a technology called "optogenetics."

The conventional technique modifies genes in specific neurons in the brain. The engineered neurons lay down communication pathways in the brain that ferry neurotransmitters to affected areas of the brain when a laser shines on a related area on the outside of the head.

However, the process still requires surgery to implant fine fiber-optic wires in the targeted part of the brain. Also, laser light doesn't penetrate tissue very well.

The new approach injects special nanoparticles into specific spots in the brain, a far less invasive step than surgery, then focuses a small beam of x-rays onto the particles. Unlike laser light, x-rays easily penetrate living tissue.

When x-rays strike the nanoparticles, the particles convert the energy to red light, which penetrates deeper into brain tissue than other colors.

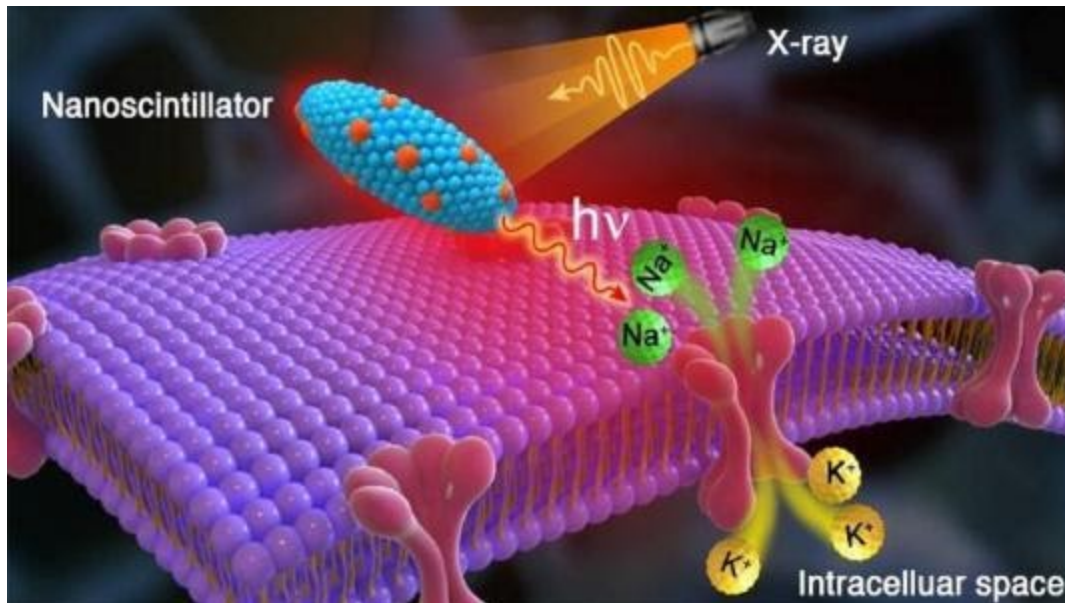
The light stimulates relevant neurons to release brain chemicals. Those chemicals then tell other neurons to make the compounds needed to correct a chemical surplus, deficit, or imbalance causing disorders.

The research team, which involved four universities led by the Argonne National Laboratory, believes the same method could be used to treat heart problems.

TRENDPOST: *A new study from the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology has found that stimulating certain brain cells can spark the body's immune system to attack and destroy cancer tumors.*

Theoretically, that also could be done with light.

The therapeutic use of light inside the body, and particularly in the brain, is a relatively new frontier in medicine that will grow to become a standard tool as medicine evolves from its current dependence on surgery and synthetic drugs to a field that uses the body's own substances and processes to treat illness.



An artist's rendering shows x-rays striking nanoparticles that convert the beams to red light that triggers a spurt of sodium and potassium ions that activates targeted brain neurons.

Credit: Argonne National Laboratory

POWERWELLS: CHEAP ELECTRICITY FOR THE REMOTE WORLD



In 2018, two workers at an Australian landfill were dismayed to see how many still useful lithium-ion batteries were being thrown away in old computers and other devices.

They recently had seen a study finding that only 2 percent of the batteries in Australia are recycled; most of the rest, with life left in them, are consigned to be buried in garbage.

A colleague at the landfill told the pair that when he lived in rural Indonesia, he would travel about 250 km, roughly 150 miles, to charge his cell phone.

Within a few days, the pair had piled used lithium-ion batteries into a paint bucket, wired them together, attached three USB ports, and a solar panel to charge the cells. They dubbed their creation the PowerWell.

They tested their PowerWell in their colleague's home country, where 27 million people lack access to electricity and instead burn kerosene at night for light, a practice that can damage lungs over time, especially among children.

Globally, about 800 million people are too far away from electric grids to connect and too poor to afford standard solar electricity systems.

Now, after winning a funding competition to pay for additional engineering, the newest PowerWells have four light sockets, four USB ports, and a 12-volt connection that can power a notebook computer or similar device.

They're still made with reclaimed lithium-ion batteries attached to a small solar panel for recharging but the paint buckets have been replaced with sleeker cylinders.

In Indonesia, the PowerWells are being distributed through village agents, usually women well-known in their communities. The women act as sales and customer service reps and collect a modest commission on each sale.

Because the enterprise's markets are cash-poor, the PowerWells can be bought on installments as low as \$5 a month. For households unable to afford even that, the makers are willing to barter PowerWells for what currencies the families have, usually bamboo or coconut oil.

The light at night enables children to study, people to socialize, and adults to carry on money-earning activities at home, such as making clothing for sale or weaving mats.

The PowerWells founders envision their model being replicated around the world, salvaging used lithium-ion batteries, employing poor or unskilled workers to make the devices, and bringing light and power to those still too poor to afford them in conventional ways.

TRENDPOST: PowerWells are yet another example of ways in which rural, unmodernized areas can leapfrog conventional development involving fossil fuels and centralized power grids and move immediately to clean, renewable, decentralized energy systems.

INSULATING WITH POPCORN



Building insulation is a persistent problem.

For years, building walls were packed with fiberglass batting that shed microfibers that lodged in the lungs and promoted cancer.

Fiberglass was abandoned in favor of panels of polystyrene, a denser version of Styrofoam. That minimized health problems for people who install it and live with it, but it can crumble over time, is almost impossible to recycle, and eventually will degenerate into the microplastics that litter the ocean floor and invade the bodies of living creatures ([“Drinking the Bottle Along With the Water,”](#) 10 Jul 2019).

Researchers at Germany’s Georg August University are ready to replace polystyrene with popcorn.

The idea was born a decade ago when a materials scientist at the university bought a bag of popcorn at a movie theater.

Now the group has turned the snack into a packing and insulating alternative to chemical plastics.

The team shreds popcorn kernels into tiny granules, then pops them with pressurized steam. An adhesive made from plant proteins is blended in and the mixture is cured in a mold.

The material, which looks like a Rice Krispie square, absorbs heat better than polystyrene, is less flammable, and can be composted, shredded and re-used as insulation, or even used as animal feed when it's ready to be discarded, the developers say.

Corn industry waste, such as cobs, in addition to popcorn kernels, can be used to make the material.

The university has licensed the material to a business that makes building insulation.

However, the popcorn packing also could be molded into cushioning for shipping, lightweight auto parts, and other uses, according to the creators.

TRENDPOST: *Wheatboard instead of plywood, recycled glass instead of plastics for kitchen countertops, popcorn for insulation—the building industry is not only going green but finding more and more ways to use renewable resources other than just lumber and keep its waste out of landfills.*



Georg August University's popcorn insulation molded as a packing cushion for a wine bottle.

Credit: Georg August University