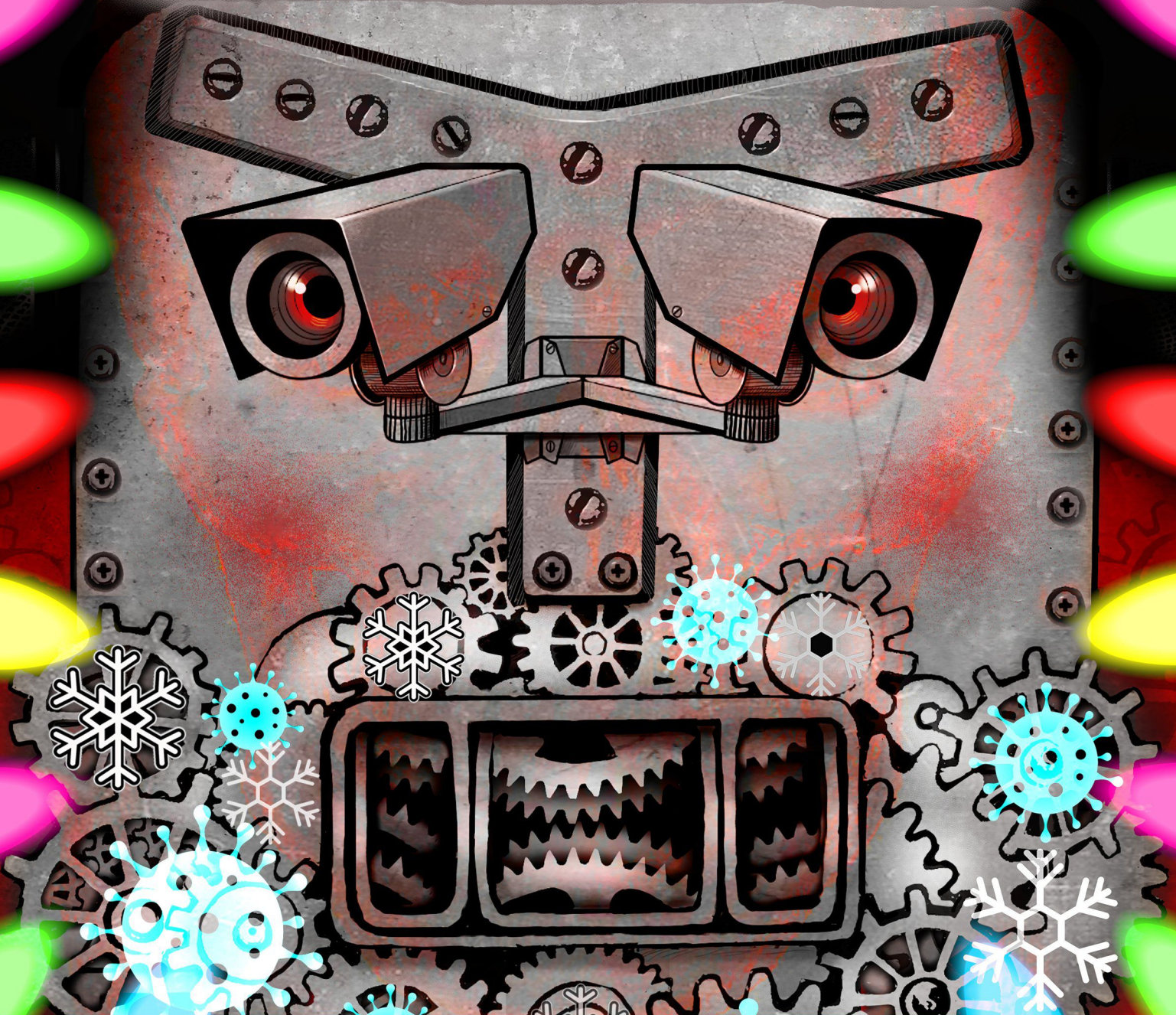


# TRENDSJOURNAL

HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®

## SATAN CLAUS *Has Come to Town*



15 DECEMBER 2020

## TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT

### U.S. MARKETS OVERVIEW



Christmas has been canceled.

As detailed in our “2020 COVID TREND REPORT” section in this and previous **Trends Journals**, the hard facts and indisputable data of the lockdowns being imposed upon society by governments across much of the world have wrought unprecedented economic devastation to millions of businesses and hundreds of millions of lives.

Never before in modern history have citizens been told by politicians where, who, when, and how to celebrate the holidays. No singing Christmas carols in church or in the streets, No Christmas parades, children are Not Permitted to sit on Santa’s lap; visiting elderly loved ones in nursing homes is Strictly Prohibited. No big Christmas dinners with family and friends.

Some 70 percent of people have canceled holiday travel plans.

From dawn to dusk, big cities are ghost towns compared to what they were before the COVID War was launched by politicians this past March.

Yet, equity markets shine bright as economic conditions darken.

Banned by governments to go out and eat, go to a bar, go dancing... brainwashed by junk news, most of the population most are living in fear. Afraid to go out and socialize, they socially distance themselves from human spirits.

Merry Satan Clause: There is no joy to the world, no angel's voicing ringing, no heaven and nature singing... no celebration that the Prince of Peace was born.

With businesses hard hit, the "Greatest Depression" worsening, and economic and mental misery rattling society, how and why can equity markets keep rising?

Pick up any newspaper, go to any mainstream corporate news website and you'll see how the world and equity markets are celebrating the Christmas holiday season with joy and enthusiasm: The COVID Vaccination!





With each passing day of the promise of mass vaccinations, despite the devastating economic damage caused by the COVID War lockdowns on Main Street, the reality and consequences of suffering has been erased from the financial markets and the mainstream mindset.

With the U.S. markets up over 300 points today, *CNBC* celebrated the rise because the “Covid-19 vaccines began to roll out across the country,” and signs that Washington agreed to pump more cheap money into the sinking economy.

**Gold & Silver.** On the news of more coronavirus relief aid, gold, up some 22 percent this year, jumped over 1 percent today, closing at \$1,854 per ounce.

Silver is up some 1.5 percent, closing at \$24.51 per ounce. Over the course of the year, silver has shot up 137 percent from its lowest to highest point this year.

Thus, our 2019 and 2020 forecasts for both precious metals have proven accurate, and we maintain our forecast for gold to trade in the \$2,100 range and above in 2021 and silver prices to move well above \$50 per ounce.

## Dollar Down

Gold and silver went higher as the dollar sank closer to its two-year low, pushed down in part by the news that Washington politicians agreed on injecting \$1.4 trillion into the economy.

**Bitcoin.** On the bets that the dollar will sink deeper along with the global economy, Bitcoin, the 21st century hi-tech (questionably) safe-haven crypto currency, continues to trade in the mid-\$19,000 range.

With our forecast for economic conditions to deteriorate and social unrest to escalate, gold, silver, Bitcoin, and other select cryptocurrency prices will continue to rise.

**Oil.** Despite much of the western world on new lockdowns, on the hopes that the COVID Vaccine will inject strong growth into the sagging global economy, oil prices rose today nearly 1 percent, with Brent Crude closing at \$50.70 per barrel.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *We maintain our forecast that given current market fundamentals, oil prices will not rise much beyond the \$50 area in the coming months.*

*The economic recovery remains weak in most of the world, air travel is not expected to resume in a meaningful way for at least a year, and the latest rounds of new lockdowns will slow economic activity. Thus, there will be much more supply than demand. Given the economic recovery's uncertainties, oil could again fall back to \$40 per barrel.*

*Similarly, as we keep noting, the Middle East's geopolitical uncertainties could spike prices overnight, for example, if more deadly missile attacks were launched by Israel killing Iranian troops in Syria, and/or more murders of other nuclear scientists and government or military officials*

## SHUTDOWN FORCES 1 IN 5 WORKERS TO POSTPONE RETIREMENT



One in every five working Americans – and one in four Gen X’ers, born between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s – expect to retire later than planned because of the economic shutdown, a survey by the Northwestern Mutual insurance company has found.

A third of survey respondents have had to adjust their future financial plans this year. Another 15 percent had no plan before the shutdown but have now created one.

Almost 60 percent of Gen X workers are highly or moderately anxious about their outlook for retirement, compared to less than half of Millennials and Gen Z’ers and just 25 percent of Baby Boomers, the survey reported.

“Gen X, by and large, is in the thick of everything, personally and financially right now,” Northwestern Mutual financial planner Chantel Bonneau told *CNBC*. They may be carrying mortgages, building careers, dealing with children being schooled remotely, saving for children’s educations, and perhaps caring for aging parents, making it hard for them to keep paying steadily into a retirement account.

In contrast, Gen Z’ers and most Millennials have at least two or more decades remaining in their working lives and Boomers already are at retirement age.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Not only will more people be working longer before retirement, as economic conditions worsen and national debt levels continue to escalate, politicians will push for raising the retirement age, thus spending less on social security benefits.*

## U.S. ECONOMIC RECOVERY STUMBLES



Workers filing new claims for unemployment benefits shot up to 853,000 during the week of 30 November, climbing by 137,000 from the week before, according to U.S. Labor Department data.

The weekly number of new claims was the highest in two months. Companies have been hiring recently but at a slower pace than in the summer and early fall.

Layoffs are rising and we forecast that the labor market will shrink again this winter, causing net job losses as politicians have imposed strict lockdown measures during what used to be the most prolific retail season of the year.

### **Remember “Black Friday?”**

Gone this year... as are all the billions spent on tourism, holiday parties, entertainment, etc., and all those who used to work in those sectors.

Thus, while there were job offerings in finance and technology, employment in sectors such as entertainment, restaurants, retail, and transportation remain weak and will continue to shrink as restaurants and public gathering spots face new restrictions.

Averaging the economists’ forecasts, the economy will expand 1.9 percent in January through March, not the 3.3 percent the same survey predicted in November before the COVID virus’s current wave gained strength.

The economy will add about 295,000 jobs monthly during the next quarter, down from the 440,000 forecast in the November survey.

Vaccines' widespread use will add at least 0.5 percent to the second quarter's growth rate, according to 62.5 percent of economists surveyed, and most said hiring will speed up through April, May, and June.

***TREND FORECAST:*** Yes, there will be a bounce back, but it will be short lived. Unemployment numbers will decrease but not because new jobs are being created... a small percentage of workers will be returning to their old jobs.

*And, yes, there will be short-term economic spikes as economies temporarily rebound from their COVID War lows, but the devastating lockdowns, which are again being imposed by governments, will sink both developed and undeveloped nations deeply into the "Greatest Depression."*

*When the reality of the "Greatest Depression" sets in and government stimulus is no longer boosting it up, high-flying equity markets will crash around the world.*

## RESTAURANTS' FUTURE GROWS DIMMER



By December, 110,000 U.S. restaurants – roughly one in six – had gone out of business this year, according to new data released by the National Restaurants Association (NRA).

Ten thousand closed permanently during September, October, and November alone, the NRA reported.

Of the eateries that have closed this year, 17 percent had been in business an average of 16 years; another 16 percent had been open for an average of 30 years.

Of the restaurateurs that closed their businesses, a majority plan to leave the industry entirely, the NRA found in a survey.

Among 6,000 current restaurant owners the NRA surveyed, 58 percent expect to furlough or fire workers in the weeks and months ahead.

In New York City alone, 54 percent of restaurant owners say they will shut down permanently within six months without government aid, according to a related survey by the New York State Restaurant Association (NYSRA).

A survey by the NYC Hospitality Alliance found nearly 87 percent of businesses couldn't pay their full rent in August and 88 percent did not pay landlords in October, despite outdoor dining at full capacity and indoor dining at 25 percent capacity.

Dining spots in the City were mandated to operate at no more than 25 percent capacity and observe a 10 PM curfew by state mandate. As of 14 December, a new mandate has banned indoor dining through 28 December.

NYC already has lost an estimated 4,500 restaurants this year, NYSRA said.

"More than 500,000 restaurants – franchise, chain, and independent – are in an unprecedented economic decline," NRA CEO Sean Kennedy wrote in a 7 December letter to the U.S. Congress. "For every month that passes without a solution from Congress, thousands more... will close their doors for good."

The NRA says the industry is "in freefall."

***TRENDPOST:*** See our two other restaurant-related articles in this issue, "[CUOMO SHUTS DOWN DINING IN NYC](#)" and "[CALIFORNIA: MORE LOCKDOWNS. NO SCIENTIFIC DATA REQUIRED.](#)"

*Today, thousands of restaurant workers and owners rallied in Manhattan's Times Square protesting Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order that closed down their restaurants.*

*Blocking traffic and screaming "Save our restaurants! Save our jobs!" the protesters then marched across town to Cuomo's Midtown East office.*

*"The situation continues to get more and more dire, and the shutting down of indoor dining during the holidays, when New York City restaurants are providing the safety measures, is the straw that broke the camel's back," Jeffrey Garcia, President of the Latino Restaurant Bar and Lounge Association of New York State, yelled to the crowd.*

*These protests will continue to escalate and we forecast a continuing number of lawsuits will be filed against the state demanding that their businesses reopen and the actions taken by governors is in violation of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.*

*And, as we have noted, these movements will prove to be foundations for new political parties and religious movements, since none of the establishment parties have taken strong positions to reverse lockdown measures and to support small businesses.*

## **NEW YORK GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES TAX HIKES**



New York State will need to raise taxes to cope with the budget chasm left by caring for COVID patients and the damage done by the economic shutdown, Governor Andrew Cuomo said on 9 December.

The speaker of the state assembly and the senate's majority leader, both Democrats, have agreed with Cuomo's assessment. Republicans in the legislature have warned that tax hikes would drive higher-income residents out of the state.

Neither the governor nor his aides specified which taxes would be raised.

The state's budget office has estimated the pandemic and shutdown has cost the state \$13.5 billion so far.

Earlier this year, the state legislature passed a \$178-billion budget predicated on federal aid legislators assumed would be forthcoming but, so far, has not.

The budget also depends on the state's personal income tax for about \$60 billion in the current and new budget years, before refunds.

The new budget gives the state authority to withhold payments to local governments, schools, and social service agencies if the state does not receive federal aid.

The new state budget will not be altered until federal relief arrives, both Cuomo and Democrats in the state legislature have pledged.

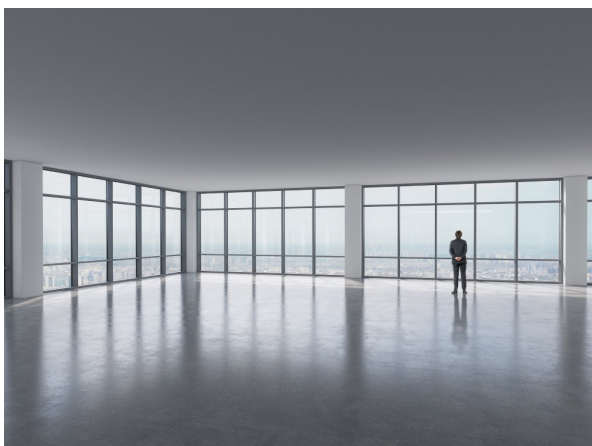
New York is projecting an \$8.7-billion deficit in its fiscal year beginning next 1 April. However, that figure could double; next year's budget assumes the state will find \$8 billion in permanent annual savings this year, which has not yet happened, according to David Friedfel, Director of State Studies for the nonpartisan Citizens Budget Committee.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As we have forecast, a key platform of newly-forming political parties will be Anti-tax. For example, with schools closed and learning online, taxpayers will demand sharp decreases in school taxes. Far fewer teachers will be needed, and all costs related to brick-and-mortar school buildings will be substantially lower, thus, taxes should be cut.*

*Overall, with businesses going bust and tax revenues decreasing, governments will attempt to raise taxes to make up for the shortfall. With people earning less and economically distressed, they will rise up against governments raising taxes.*

*The political line will be that they are "taxing the rich" while in reality they will be raising sales taxes, gasoline, liquor, cannabis, cigarettes... and any other taxes they can squeeze from the plantation workers of Slavelandia.*

## **NYC COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SUFFERS DURING OUTBREAK**



Real estate companies in New York City are dealing with the harsh realities that office work in the City could take on a new look after the virus outbreak and subsequent lockdowns and social-distancing requirements.

Some are considering turning more than one million square feet of work space in the City into housing units, *The New York Times* reported last week.

The paper laid out the sobering details when it comes to commercial real estate. About 14 percent of the office space in Midtown is empty, which marks the highest amount in over a decade. The paper also pointed out that one-third of the stores on Madison Avenue, the historic retail stretch, are also empty. The problem impacts the entire City, which draws much of its tax revenue from the industry.

James Whelan, President of the Real Estate Board in New York, told the paper there is more trouble on the horizon, saying, "It would probably be fair to say we haven't hit bottom yet." The paper reported that commercial property sales are down by 50 percent in 2020. There are a plethora of reasons why the trend is continuing.

Working remotely, for many companies, has proven to be effective, and the old-school office setting seems to be becoming outdated, according to some in the industry.

"Anyone that thinks the way that people used the workplace in the past isn't going to change post-pandemic is fooling themselves," Scott Rechler, Chairman of the Regional Plan Association and the chief executive of RXR Realty, told the paper.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *We had forecast this trend back in March when politicians launched to COVID War.*

*With people leaving densely populated cities, turning commercial real estate into residential will in turn push down rents.*

*On a broader scale, as we noted, politicians launch wars without exit strategies. Why? Because they do not risk their lives in the fight, nor do the Senator's son... or daughter.*

*Same with the COVID War. While businesses go bust and hundreds of millions of people around the world sink into poverty and misery, politicians get their paychecks, health care, benefits retirement plans, etc., regardless of how low the economy goes.*

*They don't have to work or be in business to collect income. They steal the money in the name of taxes: school taxes, property taxes, sales taxes, and taxes on anything else they can invent to steal money from the plantation workers of Slavelandia.*

## **COVID WAR: WINNERS & LOSERS**



The stock market was once considered by many Americans of all income levels as an accurate gauge of how well the overall economy is performing.

Those days are over. The widening gap between the top 10 percent and the rest of society has changed that view.

Some 57 percent of respondents told a *CNBC* All-America Economic survey that a surging Dow, S&P 500, and Nasdaq means the rich are just reaping bigger rewards. That number is an 11 percent jump from those polled in 2018. About 60 percent of adults from 18-34 surveyed said that a booming stock market only benefits the wealthy and big corporations.

The Dow closed at all-time highs last week, at the same time it was revealed that rehiring workers in the U.S. has slowed to a crawl.

Ron Insana, who used to interview Gerald Celente when he was a host on *CNBC*, wrote on their site that in New Jersey alone, "it is estimated that between 28 percent to 31 percent of small business have shuttered during the coronavirus pandemic."

## STARBUCKS GETS BIGGER MARKET AS SMALLS GO BUST



Starbucks is remodeling stores, expanding into suburbs, and deploying artificial intelligence to extend its reach deeper into consumers' coffee habits, CEO Kevin Johnson told the *Financial Times* in a 9 December interview.

The disruptions wrought by the economic shutdown and public fears of the COVID pandemic have only paused, not halted, the company's growth, he said.

The current year's lockdowns imposed by politicians showed the company relied too heavily on dine-in locations in city centers, Johnson noted. As a result, Starbucks will focus more on suburban drive-through spots and urban walk-ups. The shuffle will close 1,050 U.S. stores while opening 2,150 new ones, he said.

### **Screw the Little People**

This year, the U.S. will lose about 2,000 smaller and independent coffee shops, the market research firm Euromonitor reported.

"Smaller chains, the mom-and-pop coffee shops... don't have the balance sheet that Starbucks has," Morningstar investment strategist R.J. Hottovy said to the *Times*. "There are going to be a lot fewer coffee shops. Starbucks stands to benefit."

Investors have noticed, pushing Starbucks' market capitalization up 80 percent since March to a near-record \$119 billion.

Starbucks could see double-digit earnings growth in 2002, RBC analysts wrote in a recent research note.

Starbucks is using its proprietary “Deep Brew” artificial intelligence software to adapt stores to varying market conditions and to further personalize relations with its loyalty customers.

However, the company is not forsaking its founding vision of being “the third place” – neither work nor home – where people can gather, Johnson said. “That ‘third place’ experience will be more in demand than ever coming out of this pandemic,” he predicted.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *That a CEO of a major international firm would make such a bold statement that the company relied too heavily on dine-in locations in city centers illustrates the dystopian new ABnormal where, once upon a time, when people congregated socially, is now no longer acceptable.*

*We forecast that in a few years, when the COVID War ends, the old coffee shop, retail, restaurant, and entertainment models will return, and new models rushed into place will prove both costly and outdated.*

## GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS



**U.N. BOOSTS 2020 WORLD TRADE FORECAST.** The volume of global trade this year will fall 5.6 percent from 2019’s level, according to the U.N. Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), not the 9 percent plunge the group had predicted previously.

The drop is the second largest on record, behind 2009’s 22-percent crash when the Great Recession held the world in its grip.

However, the economic output of the world's service sector will dive a record 15.4 percent in 2020 to a level not seen in more than 20 years, UNCTAD said, due in large part to the loss of tourism, travel, and restaurant dining.

During the worst of the Great Recession, the trade sector's value fell less than 10 percent.

The effects of the global economic shutdown and healthcare crisis have been so extreme that UNCTAD had to revise its methods of gathering and analyzing data, the agency said in a statement accompanying the revised forecasts.

China will be the only major economy to expand this year, already sustaining strong growth in manufacturing and exports, with strong global demand for electronics and medical equipment.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As per one of our Top Trends for 2020, the 21st century will be the Chinese century. As the most of the rest of the world sinks into the Greatest Depression, China's industrial production spiked 7 percent year on year in November.*

And despite the so-called "trade war" with China that the mainstream media and politicians keep hyping, their exports rose 21.1 percent in in November, pushing its trade surplus up to its highest level on record.

And while unemployment rates have spiked across the globe since the COVID War broke out in China on Luna New Year this past January, China's unemployment rate edged down to 5.2 percent in November... the same level it was in last December.

**CHINA'S CAR SALES CRUISING.** Passenger car sales in the world's largest auto market grew 8 percent in November year on year to 2.1 million, according to a news release from the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA).

The gain followed an 8-percent rise in October.

Honda's sales in China jumped 22 percent last month, it reported; Nissan noted a 5.2-percent gain. Dealer orders for so-called "new energy vehicles" soared 128 percent to 180,000 units.

A \$4,300 EV built by Wufing, a General Motors joint venture, led the list with 36,070 sold. Tesla's electric Model 3 ranked second with 21,604 sales, a 78-percent gain from October.

Sales are rising not only because other sectors of the country's economy are doing well, but also because the Chinese government has eased limits on the number of units sold and is giving subsidies to buyers.

Also in November, the Chinese government gave permission to Tesla to sell its Shanghai-made Model Y on the mainland, beginning in 2021.

For the year, 2020 auto sales will lag 2019's by 7 percent, the CPCA has predicted, but it also expects sales to grow by that amount next year.

**GLOBAL RECOVERY: THREE YEARS AND COUNTING.** The world's economy will need at least two, and possibly three, years to recover to pre-pandemic performance levels as emerging nations climb slowly out of the wreckage of the financial crash imposed by the global economic shutdown, David Malpass, World Bank president, commented on 8 December at the *Wall Street Journal's* CEO Council.

Developing nations will recover more slowly because both tourism and remittances sent home from citizens working abroad were cut to a trickle during the shutdown and will return at a modest pace, he said.

"China is in recovery and that helps its neighbors, so in Southeast Asia there has been more of a recovery under way that extends to Japan," he noted. "For other developing countries, advanced economies are the most important variable because that's often where their markets are."

The chaos of the past 10 months has cast 100 million people around the world into poverty, Malpass noted.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *In recorded history, never have billions been locked down and hundreds of millions of businesses been forced to stop doing business as they have to fight the COVID War.*

*It should be noted that when the War began, the mainstream media kept pumping the mirage of a "V"-shaped recovery, then, as conditions worsened, they began selling the "U" and "K" shape recovery patterns.*

*We disagree with the World Bank. We maintain our Top Trends for 2020 forecast, the “Great Depression.” There will be short-term economic spikes as economies temporarily rebound from their COVID War lows, but the devastating lockdowns, which are again being imposed by governments, will sink both developed and undeveloped nations deeply into the “Greatest Depression.”*

*When the reality of the “Greatest Depression” sets in and government stimulus is no longer boosting it up, high-flying equity markets will crash around the world.*

**EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK EXPANDS STIMULUS PROGRAM.** Europe’s central bank added €500 billion to its budget for buying government bonds, raising its total bankroll to €1.45 trillion and extending the emergency program by nine months until 1 April 2022.

The bank also unveiled new loan programs for businesses, eased terms for existing loans, and left its benchmark interest rate at -0.25 percent.

The additional measures boost the bank’s stimulus investment above €3 trillion, which is equivalent to about \$4.63 trillion.

With the additional stimulus, the European Central Bank (ECB) will underwrite 75 percent of the debt Eurozone countries take on in 2021 to fund jobs programs and make cheap loans to their businesses, according to an estimate by Pictet Asset Management.

“This is carte blanche for finance ministers,” Commerzbank chief economist Joerg Kraemer said to the *Wall Street Journal*. “The ECB is likely to de facto finance the entire 2021 budget deficits of the euro countries.”

France, Germany, and other European countries announced plans to tighten social and economic restrictions as the COVID virus remains out of control across much of the continent.

Britain’s new restrictions were blamed for slowing economic growth to 0.4 percent in October after September’s 1.1-percent expansion.

The new restrictions will push Europe’s economy back into recession in the current quarter and restrict 2021’s growth below previous expectations, warned ECB president Christine Lagarde.

Vaccines' distribution is cause for hope but "it will take time until widespread immunity is achieved, while further resurgences in infections, with challenges to public health and economic prospects, cannot be ruled out," she said.

Also, the euro's strength against the dollar is making Europe's goods more expensive around the world, hobbling the economic recovery in manufacturing and trade.

The ECB's additional stimulus was widely expected. Some critics were disappointed that the program's expansion was not larger, fearing the recovery would continue to lag.

While the ECB was unveiling its additional measures, Eurozone nations agreed to a separate €750-billion rescue fund last week.

**EUROPEAN UNION FINALIZES MAJOR ECONOMIC RESCUE PLAN.** At a two-day summit ending 10 December, member nations of the European Union (EU) inked a €1.8-trillion budget agreement that includes €750 billion in loans and grants for EU countries struggling in the aftermath of Europe's economic shutdown.

The €750 billion will, in effect, transfer money from richer nations to poorer ones to even out the economic recovery across the union. A recovery that left behind southern nations, whose economies depend more heavily on services and tourism than those of northern countries, would strain the EU, perhaps to the point of breaking it apart, analysts have said.

Of the €750 billion, €390 billion will be given as outright gifts to the hardest-hit countries. Under the plan, Bulgaria and Croatia will receive grants equivalent to 10 percent of their pre-pandemic GDP, Greece 9 percent, Portugal 5.4 percent, and Spain 3.4 percent.

The agreement does not give the EU power to control how countries spend the loans and grants.

Even though the €750-billion rescue fund is temporary, "it will permanently alter the way we think about the instruments that Europe has at its disposal in a crisis," Lucas Guttenberg, senior research fellow at Germany's Jacques Delors Institute, said to the *Financial Times*.

The summit also laid groundwork for a future agreement among member countries around climate-related goals and created the EU's new seven-year budget.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Central banks will continue pump digital money backed by noting and printed on nothing into their economies. While it will artificially boost growth temporarily, it will in effect devalue currencies which will in turn push gold, silver and Bitcoin prices higher as investors seek safe-haven assets.*

**CENTRAL BANKS KEEP BUYING BONDS AS DOUBTS GROW.** The U.S. Federal Reserve, Bank of England, Bank of Japan and the European Central Bank (ECB) have bought \$5.6 trillion in government and corporate bonds in 2020, Bloomberg Economics reported, and the European bank is likely to add another €500 billion euros to its bond-buying budget when it meets on 17 December.

With interest rates already cut as low as central banks believe practical, bond-buying is one of the few tactics the banks can employ to spark their national economies.

The massive bond purchases drive down interest rates, artificially lubricate markets with cheap money, and make loans affordable for many businesses that otherwise might not survive.

This program of “quantitative easing” (QE) has been under way since the Great Recession and shows no signs of slowing, despite critics’ claims that the strategy is losing its usefulness.

“QE works particularly well during periods of market disturbances, but it won’t be able to do much at this point for growth and inflation in the absence of fiscal policy,” meaning more government stimulus spending or tax cuts, Peter Praet, former ECB chief economist who fashioned the European Union’s QE program that began in 2015, told *Bloomberg*.

“Further asset purchases by themselves may be less effective in providing additional stimulus,” absent an interest-rate cut, Bank of England Michael Saunders said in the public statement quoted by *Bloomberg*.

The U.K.’s central bank has set interest rates at 0.1 percent but is considering pushing it down into negative numbers.

Also, the nonstop bond-buying spree could have unintended consequences, according to Lawrence Summers, former U.S. Treasury secretary, and former Council of Economic Advisers chair Jason Furman.

“How much investment would be done at a 0-percent 10-year Treasury rate that would not be done at a 1-percent 10-year Treasury rate?” they mused in an essay for the Brookings Institution. “The consequence [of ongoing QE], if not compensated for by more active fiscal policy, would be longer and more severe recessions.”

As we have noted, rock-bottom interest rates that extend far into the future break the link between risk and reward, encouraging speculators to use central banks’ cheap money to make risky bets with only a casual consideration of possible losses.

ECB figures from 2019 argue that the bank’s QE program added 0.3 percent to Europe’s economic growth rate in 2016, 2017, and 2018.

But the gap is growing between central banks’ perception of QE’s effectiveness and its growing number of skeptics.

“To me, QE has become a cop-out,” Daniela Gabor, economics professor at the University of the West of England, said to *Bloomberg*. “It’s a way of introducing incremental changes in the monetary toolbox without really transforming how central banks and treasuries [respond] to economic challenges.”

***TRENDPOST:*** *Central banks’ reliance on bond-buying is likely to continue unabated, despite the growing number of voices citing the practice’s risk.*

*In the recent past, U.S. stock markets stumbled briefly when uncertainty flared over whether the U.S. Federal Reserve would curtail its bond-buying plan. With markets blissfully floating on the Fed’s open-ended promise of cheap money, any change to policy would risk a market plunge, a prospect U.S. economic managers are loathe to confront, at least until an economic recovery can stand strong without QE as a crutch.*

**AUSTRALIA AUCTIONS NEGATIVE-INTEREST T-BILLS.** For the first time, Australia’s government has issued debt that carries a negative interest rate.

On 10 December, the nation's treasury auctioned A\$1.5 billion worth of t-bills averaging yields of 0.01 percent, although some bidders secured a -0.1-percent rate.

The Royal Bank of Australia cut its base interest rate to 0.01 percent on 3 November. However, the negative yield is largely a result of demand for the bonds as Australia's dollar rises against the U.S. currency, not of policy decisions by the bank or the government, analysts said.

The auction drew five times more bidders than could be accommodated, according to Australia's Office of Financial Management.

With Europe, Japan, and other nations maintaining negative interest rates, investors possibly saw Australia's bonds carrying positive rates as especially attractive, economist Shane Oliver at the AMP financial company, told the *Financial Times*.

Investors also see the short-term government securities as a "super safe defensive asset" for weathering uncertainties about COVID vaccines' deployment and effectiveness, Britain's Brexit mess, and worries about the global economic recovery, Andrew Ticehurst, an economist at Nomura bank, said to the Times.

The Australian dollar reached a two-year high of \$0.75 to the U.S. dollar on 10 December as the country sees its economy rebounding from the summer's shutdown.

The rebound relies, in part, on China's surging manufacturing sector. Prices for iron ore, for which Australia is China's chief supplier, have reached levels not seen since 2013.

Globally, more than \$17.8 trillion of government debt yields negative interest, *Bloomberg* reported.

**CANADA'S CENTRAL BANK MULLS INTEREST RATE CUT.** Canada's central bank may cut interest rates below the current 0.25 percent, which it has previously said is the "effective lower bound" for rates.

The bank gave the hint in a 10 December speech by Paul Beaudry, one of the Bank of Canada's deputy governors.

The bank has bought about C\$1.80 billion worth of bonds since March, proportionately about a third less than the U.S. Federal Reserve or Bank of England, and the purchases “have had their intended effect,” he said.

The country’s 9-percent growth in this year’s third quarter was only slightly below the bank’s expected 10-percent mark, driven in part by rising global demand for commodities.

However, the COVID virus’s enduring strength may “scar” Canada’s economy by putting an end to thousands of businesses already struggling, Beaudry warned, adding that the country might “need an extra push to help the economy get back.”

The virus will continue to hamper economic expansion through the first part of 2021, with Canada’s economy returning to pre-pandemic strength some time in 2023, he predicted.

“We have another six months or more to get through before” the economy can right itself, he said.

If the nation’s economy worsens, “we have a range of options at our disposal to provide additional monetary stimulus,” he said. Those include printing more money so the bank could buy more government bonds, buying other debt, and “reassessing the effective lower bound, which would allow for the possibility of a lower, but still positive, interest rate.”

The bank previously has held that any interest rate lower than 0.25 percent, especially a negative rate, would cause disruptions in financial markets that would outweigh the benefits of any resulting stimulus.

However, the Royal Bank of Australia and other central banks recently have broken down through their previously-set interest rate floors with little obvious harm resulting, apparently giving the Bank of Canada more confidence to lower its own rate.

Still, Beaudry held firm on the bank’s dark view of negative rates.

“In theory, negative interest rates remain in the bank’s tool kit,” he said. “But, barring a dramatically different set of circumstances, we don’t think negative rates would be productive in a Canadian context.”

The bank expects to hold interest rates at current levels until at least 2023, he said.

At their 9 December policy meeting, the bank's governors admitted the COVID virus's persistence has damaged the nation's economy more than policymakers had expected, but the arrival of vaccines promise a turn for the better.

The governors left the bank's interest rates and economic aid programs unchanged.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As with most other central banks and politicians, i.e., policy makers, when the COVID war broke out, the word on the Street was the lockdowns and economic damage would be temporary and, "It will come back."*

*Now, as a sub note, they brush off a line that the damage to the economy is more than they expected. Therefore, considering the inaccuracy of their initial forecasts, it is evident that they are blinded by the future.*

*Yes, the vaccines will boost economic growth, but only temporarily. Yes, employment numbers will rise as people go back to work, but new jobs won't be created and the hundreds of thousands of business across the globe that have shut down will not come back.*

**SWEDEN GOING DIGITAL CASH.** With the country's businesses expected to no longer accept paper cash and coins by 2023, the Swedish government has launched a formal study of the process by which the traditional krona can be replaced by a digital version.

The study, chaired by a former head of Sweden's central bank's finance committee, will be completed by December 2022, financial markets minister Per Bolund told *Bloomberg*.

The digital krona will be issued as soon as the study is completed, he said.

The study follows a test of the country's "Central Bank Digital Currency" earlier this year. This version of an electronic krona was built on the same blockchain technology used by Bitcoin and many other cryptocurrencies.

Sweden already is among the world's most cashless countries, having introduced a national mobile payment system in 2012. Fewer than 20 percent of the country's retailers still accept paper money and metal coins, officials estimate.

***TREND FORECAST:*** As we had forecast, world governments will go from dirty cash to digital trash and, of the major nations, China will lead the charge.

*Just as easily as the masses obediently obeyed their masters and marched off to the COVID War, so, too, as more nations introduce digital currencies, they will readily accept them.*

*Of course, in a digital world, governments will know who spent what where, thus enabling them to steal every penny they can from the workers of Slavelandia in the name of taxes.*

*Moreover, the trend toward digital trash is also a factor driving up gold and silver prices, as investors seek hard currency safe-haven assets.*

*The going-digital trend will also prove bullish for cryptocurrencies, particularly for younger generations who live in a digital world and are fearful of an economic future of worthless money.*

## **GOING DOWN, GOING BUST, GOING OUT**



**LIGHTS OUT IN COAL COUNTRY.** The U.S. coal industry lost 8,000 jobs, about 15 percent of its dwindling workforce, in the last 12 months, U.S. Labor Department figures show.

Earlier this month, the coal companies Lighthouse Resources and White Stallion Energy declared bankruptcy, bringing to at least five the number of coal producers who have sought court protection this year.

The bankrupt producers have been small so far, but Peabody Energy, one of the nation's oldest and largest coal companies, warned investors this fall that there is

“substantial doubt” whether it can survive after losing \$1.7 billion in the first nine months of this year.

"Within the U.S., coal generation [among electric utilities] is down 24% through September as COVID has accelerated what was previously projected to be a multiyear decline in coal demand," Peabody CEO Glenn Kellow said in a statement announcing the company's troubles.

That multi-year decline was evident in 2019, when U.S. mines produced 35 percent less coal than in 2009 at the depths of the Great Recession and fell to a level last seen in 1978.

Natural gas burns cleaner than coal and the fracking boom has made gas also cheaper than coal, persuading utilities and manufacturers to accede to public demands for cleaner fuels and shift plants from coal to gas.

**LIVE EVENTS INDUSTRY HAS LOST \$30 BILLION THIS YEAR.** The figure represents tickets not sold, concert trade publication Pollstar said, with sales lost to ancillary vendors such as ticket companies, hotels, restaurants, souvenir suppliers, and transportation companies adding another \$8 billion.

**BY CHLOE, VEGAN RESTAURANT CHAIN, GOES BUST.** The chain, which owns 14 U.S. sites and has licensed its name to operators in Toronto and London, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy after seeing its sales fall by two-thirds since February and laying off more than half its employees.

The company has put itself up for sale.

Three restaurants remained closed; the others are operating at limited capacities.

The chain was shifting from vegan fare to a more mainstream menu.

**CHRISTOPHER & BANKS PONDERES BANKRUPTCY.** The Minnesota-based clothier known for dressing older women is considering either selling the company or filing for bankruptcy as the economic shutdown has kept customers away from its 450 stores across 44 states.

The pandemic and economic shutdown has had an “outsize impact on our customer demographic as her shopping behavior is more pragmatic with limited demand for new outfits in the absence of social engagements,” CEO Keri Jones

said in a statement announcing that the company lost \$10.8 million in its quarter ending 31 October.

During the period, sales fell 23 percent to \$72.8 million year over year. The result improved on the 50-percent sales slide earlier in 2020 but still fell short of the company's expectations.

The company took a \$10-million loan from the federal Paycheck Protection Program, which it expects will be entirely forgiven.

Christopher & Banks reported having just \$1.2 million cash on hand.

After being delisted from the New York Stock Exchange in April 2019, the company's shares now trade on the OTC Pink Market, where the price fell more than 50 percent on 10 December to close at 14 cents.

**DESIGNER BRANDS REPORTS THIRD-QUARTER REVENUE SLIDE.** The parent company of DSW Designer Shoe Warehouse lost \$40.6 million in the third quarter, compared to a profit of \$43.5 million a year earlier.

Revenue plunged 30 percent to \$652.9 million, against \$933.8 million during the same period in 2019. Analysts had forecast \$661 million for the most recent quarter.

A bright spot: the company's sales of athletic and children's footwear rose 26 percent.

**GAPPED OUT.** The GAP announced that it is permanently closing its flagship Toronto store at 60 Bloor Street West where they have been for over 30 years.

With all non-essential stores have been forced to remain closed throughout the holiday season, and may be allowed to reopen January 20, there will be many permanent closings and bankruptcies of other businesses in the city over the coming year.

It should be noted that since March when the COVID War was launched, out of a population of nearly 3 million people there have been 1,171 virus deaths, or 0.0572 percent of the population or 0.00636 percent per month for 9 months.

Moreover, the average death rate in Canada is estimated at 80 years.

Yet, despite these facts, the city is locked down and businesses, lives and livelihoods are being destroyed.

## **TRENDS IN THE MARKETS** *by Gregory Mannarino*

### **STOCK MARKET: A SUPER BUBBLE BY DESIGN**



Today's stock market is in a super bubble, built on the back of the largest bubble the world has ever seen: the debt market MEGA-BUBBLE.

*What does this mean? Should we be expecting a stock market crash sometime in the immediate future?*

No.

That's because the Federal Reserve, as well as central banks around the world, are in the middle (the middle, not the *end*, mind you) of a debt expansion cycle of epic proportions.

Last week, Bank of America published a report stating that world central banks are buying \$1.6 billion dollars' worth of assets *every single hour*, 24 hours a day, and they have been since March of this year. Now, this is what they are allowing us to know; the real numbers are multiples higher!

What the Bank of America report does not explain are the layers of dollar derivatives associated with the \$1.6 billion in asset purchases at face value. Every dollar of debt at face value is followed up with layers of associated derivative bets, sometimes as many as nine layers. Derivatives are side bets, and each

subsequent derivative has yet another layer underneath. Bottom line is that these numbers are staggering and, frankly, unknowable, as many of these derivative “bets” are done “over the counter,” meaning there is no way to track them.

The literal ballooning of central banks’ balance sheets, none more so than the Federal Reserve’s, is putting pressure on fiat currencies around the globe, and it is causing massive distortions regarding the price action of assets across the spectrum. Distortions that will get monumentally worse.

Everything you are seeing today is BY DESIGN. From the shutting down of the global economy to the devaluation of currencies and the current stock market super bubble.

Globally, we are witnessing the deliberate creation of a two-tier society of extreme haves and extreme have nots – in essence, a slave society ruled and governed by the 1 percent.

***MARKET FORECAST:*** *The stock market super bubble will continue to inflate along with the Fed’s balance sheet. And, again by design, it will be the Federal Reserve which will rapidly deflate the stock market super bubble, at a time of their choosing.*

*A deflating of the stock market super bubble is the final stage in the creation of this new two-tier society. A massive and unprecedented legal theft will occur, moving cash from the multitudes invested in the stock market, 401K plans, and the like to the 1 percent.*

*by Gregory Mannarino, TradersChoice.net*

# **TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM *by Bradley J. Steiner***



***In Memoriam:***

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

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

## **THE BATTLE CRY**

Johnnie (one of my Black Belts and a former U.S. marine and combat veteran of Vietnam) backed up to the wall behind him as three of other of my students, playing the part of attackers, closed in on him. It was a practice session during one of our group classes. Johnnie’s face looked a little scared and doubtful, like he wasn’t sure how the hell he was going to deal with this.

Very confidently, the three attackers (all half of Johnnie’s age; two of them larger) assumed they would be able to grab hold of him, deliver some blows, knock him to the ground, and prevent the 60-something-year-old man from executing anything resembling an effective defense.

At the fraction of a second before two of the attacker’s seized hold of him, Johnnie let out a blood-curdling yell. His face took on the appearance of an animal gone mad in the throes of a killing frenzy. All three of the attackers – very literally – froze in their tracks!

Each one of the three, momentarily shocked, mouthed an involuntary obscenity, and before that moment shifted into the next, Johnnie's hands and feet became a blur, slamming, kicking, chopping, hacking, stomping (very carefully so as not to actually connect) into his three assailants.

Drill over, Johnnie laughed in a friendly way and patted one of his attackers on the shoulder. "You guys almost had me," he joked.

"Uh, yeah, right, sure Johnnie," the student – a little shaky – muttered.

"Excellent! Absolutely perfect!" I shouted, as I stepped forward to discuss the drill that had taken place.

To the three who had played his assailants, I said, "Johnnie just showed you, in a very vivid way, the core elements of defending against multiple assailants, in particular, and any assailants, in general. Convey the opposite of your true intentions; attack by surprise; keep on attacking; don't stop moving; turn yourself into an approximation of a wild, murderous animal; and... never forget... **YELL AND GROWL LIKE AN INSANE SONOFABITCH!**"

The lesson is one of solid gold:

If you are ever cornered or confronted by what is clearly the onset of a violent attack from which you cannot escape, and for which no avoidance by mere words will do, launch your own offensive like a wild beast, **YELLING AT THE TOP OF YOUR LUNGS** as you go.

Why yell?

In the Asian martial arts, it is referred to as the "spirit shout." You may have heard of it referred to in karate or ju-jutsu as "kiai" (pronounced key'eye). In the Korean art of taekwon-do, we called it ki-yup, and, depending on the culture, it may bear yet another formal designation.

Practitioners of the Japanese sport of kendo seem almost to overdo the damn thing, as their yelling is all but constant and continual as they smash and batter their shinai (wooden bamboo swords) into each other's armored bodies.

It's not merely an Asian combative phenomenon. Not by a long shot. The U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army traditionally taught recruits to growl, grimace, and yell when attacking with their bayoneted rifles in hand-to-hand combat.

Special Forces soldiers were taught to shout wildly when on the attack in close combat (as were the American Indian warriors, who were among the finest on earth). And remember the “old rebel yell” made famous by the Confederate soldiers of our Civil War? An obvious form of kiai.

I have always taught my students to YELL suddenly whenever feasible when defending themselves. In fact, not merely “to yell” but to actually growl and contort their faces menacingly, so as to appear insane and possessed of an unstoppable killing fury.

When this occurs without warning and is accompanied by ferocious and destructive physical actions that knock out or maim (or worse), which are undertaken by complete surprise after appearing passive and scared, the result is so completely effective that – in a life-threatening crisis – you can stake your life on it – and should – rather than submit meekly to being victimized.

As you master the art of yelling, think of it as a “battle cry” of sorts. I have nothing but respect for all of the Asian martial arts, but what we’re dealing with here, and what we are taking advantage of, is not unique to the Asian arts. It is as common in Western combat forms as it is in Eastern combat forms. And we emphasize it in our modern art of [American Combato](#). It is, very plainly, undramatically, and non-mysteriously, a battle cry. And it works!

Following are some tips for making the most of the battle cry when and if you ever find yourself in a dangerous situation... and realize that your only hope is to employ force in order to survive a violent onslaught and escape a horrible fate.

- When you practice any techniques of self-defense, remember to include the use of loud battle cry shouting with your counteroffensive against whoever may be attacking you. Think of it as part of every physical action. When you preempt, YELL!
- It is the use of extreme yelling and growling by surprise that optimizes its effect. So, don’t train by sparring (as they do, for one example, in karate) and square off with an opponent – betraying your intention to do battle with him and reducing any “shock value” not only of anything you may do, but of any yells or shouts you might emit.
- Use yelling – i.e. the battle cry – when employing any hand-held, close quarters weapon: firearm, knife, stick, tomahawk, or object-at-hand. It enhances the effectiveness of your attack.

- Sudden, surprise yelling combined with throwing gravel, dirt, sand, small change, a handkerchief, a cup of coffee, etc., into the attacker's face is a marvelous combination tactic. USE IT when, where, and if you can in any emergency.
- Always, always, always try to set up any obvious troublemaker who is clearly intent on harming you. If you cannot get away, then pave the way for your surprise attack and victory. Speak softly and almost timidly. Be polite and give the impression of being a pacifistic choir boy, never of a combatant. Maybe comply with one or two initial demands, just to set him up. Feign great pain and submission at any minor force he may initiate.

For example, I once caused some POS to start laughing contemptuously at me when I winced and bent forward as he squeezed my hand. He couldn't have turned himself into a better target! As I winced in mock pain, I bent forward and grabbed his wrist with my free hand, pleading with him not to hurt me. But, then, instantly, I sent a respectably powerful front kick into his testicles. Never so quickly have I heard laughter turn into an agonized scream of pain. He doubled over and went down like a felled oak!

- Never forget that yelling and growling infuses you with courage and increases your actual strength. When you yell, you exhale. Exhalation is what accompanies extreme muscular exertion and physical performance. The act of courageously emitting a battle cry shifts your physiological "fight or flight" response capacity to one of FIGHT; and when you must defend yourself, that is exactly what you need to do it well!

Ladies, no less than gentlemen, can and should avail themselves of the advantage that loud, sharp, sudden yelling can provide. Perhaps a number of gentlemen reading this can attest, as I can, that my physically diminutive wife of 45 years can, when she wishes, deliver the most awful, blood-chilling explosions of verbal rage imaginable!

So, don't think you don't have it in you – you do.

*by Bradley J. Steiner*

# 2020 COVID-19 TREND REPORT

## COVID VACCINE: “SIGNIFICANT SAFETY CONCERNS”



Last Tuesday, the first COVID-19 vaccination was administered in the U.K. with huge fanfare from the mainstream media.

Barely reported by Presstitutes was the day before the first vaccine shots were administered, two prominent doctors filed a legal “petition for a stay of action” requesting the European Medicine Agency to immediately stop all inoculations due to inadequate testing, which will cause “irreparable harm.”

The two medical experts calling for the “stay of action” were Dr. Michael Yeadon, former Chief Scientific Officer at Pfizer, and Dr. Wolfgang Wodarg, Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Health Committee and expert in allergy and respiratory research.

Included in the official petition were the doctors’ concerns that *the “medical and economic consequences to EU member states and their residents/citizens could hardly be higher.”*

*Among their main concerns is that it be “absolutely ruled out” that the vaccine would not cause damage to a pregnant woman’s placenta. (Note: pregnant women were excluded from participating in the trial study.)*

*Other key parts of the legal petition include:*

- “Petitioner deems the current study designs for the Phase II/III trials of BNT162b (‘the Pfizer/BioNTech trial’) to be inadequate to accurately assess efficacy.”

- “If the vaccines are approved without an appropriate and accurate review of efficacy, then any potential acceptance or mandate of these vaccines is likely to be based on inaccurate evidence regarding the vaccine, namely that it will stop transmission of the virus from the vaccine recipient to others and/or that it will reduce COVID-19 disease and deaths. The Pfizer/BioNTech trial protocol and other trial protocols are currently not designed to determine whether either of those objectives can be met.”
- “There are some concerning issues with the trial designs, spelled out by Dr. Peter Doshi in the *British Medical Journal*. Dr. Doshi focuses on the two biggest issues. First, none of the leading vaccine candidate trials is designed to test if the vaccine can reduce severe COVID-19 symptoms, defined as: hospital admissions, ICU or death. And, second, the trials are not designed to test if the vaccine can interrupt transmission.”

The day after the first vaccines were administered, it was reported two U.K. health officials suffered “serious allergic reactions” from the shot. Both had previous histories of allergic reactions, and the adrenaline auto injectors they carry helped them recover.

The severe reactions prompted an immediate warning from U.K. regulators that anyone who has experienced significant allergic reactions in the past should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Specifically, the warning is addressed to anyone “with a significant history of allergic reaction to a vaccine, medicine, or food.”

## **French: No Vax**

The French are considered to be the most skeptical nation when it comes to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. A recent Ipsos poll showed half the population said they would not get vaccinated.

There has been speculation by some that the COVID vaccine may have been rushed. Alain Fischer, Paris’ top vaccine adviser, told the *Financial Times* there are still questions about the vaccines – like the Pfizer/BioNTech one – that have been introduced in places like the U.K., where just 21 percent said they would not be vaccinated. He said the data has not been completed on whether or not the vaccine prevents virus infection.

The paper reported there was a recent French documentary called “Hold Up,” which claimed to show a conspiracy behind the coronavirus pandemic and how pharmaceutical giants were cutting corners to get a vaccine to the market.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *In America, those presenting scientific evidence of the dangers and ineffectiveness of the rapidly rushed out COVID vaccine will continue to be banned by corporate media which make trillions running the drug mobs’ ads.*

*Listening to TV drug ads is listening to a sick joke.*

*Actors happily play in lovely settings making believe they are chronically ill, but now they are cheerfully smiling, feeling great after taking a shot of a Big Pharma drug.*

*Then, the manufacturers nonchalantly announce the “side effects,” i.e., the numerous ways the drug destroys body organs, which sound disastrously deadly, but a brainwashed and/or drug addicted public majority religiously swallow.*

*As we have said, there will be very strong Anti-Vax movements springing up across much of the Western world that will be a key platform of new political/religious coalitions. (See our Top Trend for 2021, “ANTI-VAX/ANTI-TAX POLITICAL PARTIES.”)*

## **FDA APPROVES U.S. VACCINE**



Last Friday, the FDA officially authorized “emergency use” of the COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Pfizer. Of the 21 members of the FDA advisory committee, there were four who did not vote in favor.

One of those was Dr. A. Oveta Fuller, an associate professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Michigan Medical School. In interviews, she

clarified that “My vote wasn’t ‘No, never,’ my vote was ‘No, not yet.’” Her concerns are the potential long-term health issues not given time to be monitored, including issues of autoimmunity and hyper-immunity.

She also confirmed, as asserted by the two medical professionals quoted in the article in this issue, “[COVID VACCINE: “SIGNIFICANT SAFETY CONCERNS”](#)” who petitioned the European Medical Association, that a number of crucial questions about the effectiveness of the vaccine to stop infection haven’t been answered.

Specifically, Dr. Fuller asked, “Do we know that they (those getting the vaccine) are not getting infected? Do we know that if they are infected, are they shedding the virus? Can it be transmitted from them to other people?”

A second FDA advisory member voting “No” was the Dean of the Chicago Medical School, Dr. Archana Chatterjee. Dr. Archana stated, “The issue I had was with regard to younger patients, excusing those younger participants, where I felt like the data were limited... And since they are not a high-risk category, at this point in time they’re not high priority for vaccination.”

The other two members of the FDA Advisory Committee who wanted more time to study the efficacy and potential negative health effects of the vaccine were Dr. David Kim, who heads the Division of Vaccines at the U.S. Office of Infectious Disease and HIV/AIDS Policy, and Dr. Michael Kurilla, Clinical Innovations Director at the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences.

***TRENDPOST:*** According to Science Magazine, the FDA stressed that an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) is not an approval but a temporary stopgap during an emergency. Pfizer said it expected to have enough efficacy and safety data to seek a full approval by April 2021. That’s right: full safety data on the safety and efficacy of this vaccine won’t be known until April of next year.

## BREAK COVID RULES, PAY THE PRICE



As reported previously in the **Trends Journal**, the province of Victoria, Australia has imposed some of the longest and strictest quarantines in the world despite the minute amount of deaths from the virus (820 deaths in a population of nearly 6.4 million or 0.013 percent).

In addition to destroying businesses and causing suffering from isolation, for one man, his love of chicken curry cost him a chunk of his bank account.

In Melbourne, Noel Atkinson, a 48-year old construction worker who had emigrated from India, drove about 18 miles from his home to a Melbourne restaurant that cooked his favorite curry dish. As it turned out, he never got the curry. Police, seeing a driver breaking a quarantine curfew restriction, pulled him over and imposed a fine of U.S. \$1,230.

Mr. Atkinson was both perplexed and outraged, telling an interviewer, “I just had a craving for the curry. It reminded me of home.”

As an essential worker in construction, Mr. Atkinson was allowed to travel more during the day than most. He didn’t realize driving to the restaurant in the evening was against the quarantine. He told the interviewer, “I have to risk my life to go to work, but I can’t risk my own life to get food. That’s a bit unfair.”

### **“Breathtakingly Arrogant”?**

On 31 August, another Australian suffered the indignity and expense of a minor quarantine infraction. In Perth, police caught a man using a ladder to sneak out of his hotel room to visit his girlfriend.

The man, Yusuf Karakaya, had flown to Perth from Sydney after being given an exemption to travel to see his uncle. Visiting quarantine rules required he restrict all movements to his hotel room for 14 days. But he was seen sneaking out a window of his room where a friend waited for him with a car.

According to the *ABC News* affiliate in Australia, the man was arrested. When it came out that he had been sneaking out to see girlfriend a number of times before being caught, the judge ordered him to jail where he had to serve one month of a six-month suspended sentence. During sentencing, the judge told the man, “Your actions were reckless... you chose to roll the dice with other people’s lives and that is breathtakingly arrogant.”

Around that same time, another Perth resident was fined \$3,000 after a citizen reported to the police that the man was seen walking to a nearby beach. Turned out he had not yet spent the imposed 14-day quarantine after returning from overseas.

A professor of economics at RMIT University in Melbourne, Robert Hoffman, commented, “Everyone is operating in a crazy world where our normal rational decision-making goes out the window.”

## **Global Insanity**

More recently, on 7 December, police in Taiwan issued a \$3,500 fine after a man broke quarantine rule for less than 10 seconds. *CNN* reported that the man fined was a Philippine migrant worker required to maintain a 14-day quarantine. Surveillance cameras installed in the hotel where he was staying caught him leaving his room, and a staff member immediately called in the Department of Health.

According to *Business Insider*, “Health officials said the man had left his room for eight seconds to leave something at the door of his friend, who was staying on the same floor of the hotel.”

Throughout most of western Europe, as new restrictions were imposed in the autumn to deal with the so-called “second wave,” more people began breaking curfews and quarantines, demanding more freedom. In response, governments are getting tougher:

- Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo made it clear in a TV interview last October that, “We won’t be issuing any warnings any more. Those who don’t follow the rules get a €250 fine [\$294], to be collected immediately.”
- In Italy, new rules include mandatory face masks outdoors with fines in the €400 to €1,000 range. Breaking quarantine can lead to 18 months in jail and a €5,000 (\$6,000) fine.
- In Canada, police have issued over 70 fines for violation of the country’s Quarantine Act. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, more than one million people entering the country since the spring were forced into a 14-day quarantine with close to 250,000 travelers cited by police as potential violators. Fines ranged up to \$1,275.

***TRENDPOST:*** *In fighting the COVID War, the “authorities” are making up rules and regulations as they march forward and move backwards.*

*The CDC continues to make it up as they go along. At first, they said wearing masks were ineffective to stop the virus, but, then, after getting political pressure, they said we should wear them. (See our 3 November article, “[FACING THE TRUTH, PART II: MORE EVIDENCE MASKS ARE INEFFECTIVE.](#)”)*

*Now, after telling people they must quarantine for 14 days if they came from another nation/state/city or were exposed to someone with the virus or had caught it, on 2 December, the CDC changed their minds, stating “a 14-day quarantine can impose personal burdens that may affect physical and mental health as well as cause economic hardship that may reduce compliance.”*

*Then, just eight day later, the CDC endorsed the longer, more taxing restriction: “CDC continues to endorse quarantine for 14 days and recognizes that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reduced burden against a small possibility of spreading the virus.”*

*Yet, despite the “small possibility of spreading the virus,” people’s lives and livelihoods continue to be regulated and tampered with by outside forces which have been ordained by the media and governments as the sole authorities to regulate much of humanity.*

## ITALIANS: BREAK COVID RULES, GO TO JAIL



Go out, have fun, visit friends and relatives. Eat, drink, and be merry. And if you do, you'll go to jail and pay for it.

The Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* reported that anyone who is convicted of lying to public officials about their coronavirus status or nabbed outside during quarantine while inside a “red zone” could face up to six years in prison and fines up to €5,000.

Italy was the first major nation to lock down last March after the virus reportedly broke out in Wuhan, China, last January during the Chinese Lunar New Year.

***TRENDPOST:*** *To date, some 65,000 people died of the virus in Italy since March, an average of 7,222 deaths per month or 0.0119 of the population.*

*As we have been reporting, the average age of Italian victims is 80 years old, and 65 percent of all who died had three or more preexisting chronic health conditions.*

*Yet, as with most other nations, rather than take measures to better protect those most susceptible to the virus, the leaders impose draconian lockdown mandates that have destroyed millions of businesses, lives, and livelihoods.*

## COVID LOCKDOWN: MENTAL ILLNESS BLUES



On 5 May, the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* published an opinion piece authored by four U.K. experts in public mental health that proved very prescient:

“As many countries around the world are facing the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in their populations, discussions focus on flattening the curve to mitigate the impact on physically vulnerable populations and fragile health systems, in anticipation of an effective vaccine. However, the mental health impact of the pandemic is likely to last much longer than the physical health impact.

And now, after close to a year of forced lockdowns by political leaders in countries around the world, they are warning that ‘excessive and protracted feelings of stress and powerlessness may have significant impact on individuals’ mental health.’”

On 28 October, the *BBC* published an article quoting Dr. Steven Taylor, professor of psychiatry at the University of British Columbia: “For an unfortunate number of people, perhaps 10 to 15 percent, life will not return to normal as a result not of getting infected from the coronavirus, but from the emotional stress around fear over it.”

Dr. Taylor had previously published on 5 July results of a study he co-authored, in which he wrote:

“Our findings suggest that the psychological footprint of COVID-19 is likely to be more substantial than the medical footprint. That is, at the time of conducting this study the number of people emotionally affected by COVID-19 far exceeded the number of people who had been infected.

Only 2% reported that they had been diagnosed with COVID-19, and only 6% were personally acquainted with someone who had COVID-19. And yet... 16% were highly distressed and likely in need of mental health services.”

## **Germaphobia: The New Normal**

While reported previously in the **Trends Journal** that the isolation and pervasive job loss from extended lockdowns have led to major issues of poverty, depression, food bingeing, and even suicide, Dr. Taylor points out another major increased health concern: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD):

“For people with a genetic predisposition toward some forms of OCD (i.e. contamination obsessions and cleaning compulsions) the stress of Covid-19 is likely to trigger or worsen OCD. Some of these people will become chronic germaphobes unless they receive appropriate mental health treatment.”

This is confirmed by a 2 September report in *The New York Times* quoting clinical psychologist Eric Storch, who specializes in OCD at the Baylor College of Medicine. He says calls to the University’s OCD program have increased by 25 percent since March.

Some doctors have been warning of excessive OCD/germophobic behavior caused by mask wearing mandates and constant reminders to wash hands frequently. On 15 June, Dr. David Rosenberg, Professor of Psychiatry at Wayne State University in Detroit, published the article, “Are we all OCD now? Coronavirus fears blur the line between obsessive-compulsive and safety amid a dangerous pandemic.”

Dr. Rosenberg wrote that obsessive fears of germs and viruses, typically seen as a mental disorder, are now considered normal and even promoted as important health practice. Dr. Rosenberg said,

“This new normal in the face of a deadly pandemic has permeated our culture and will continue to influence it. Many stores now prominently post rules mandating face masks and hand sanitizer use and limit the number of customers allowed inside at one time. Walkers and joggers politely cross the street to avoid proximity to each other.

Years ago, a patient with severe OCD came to my office wearing gloves and a mask and refused to sit on any of the ‘contaminated’ chairs. Now, these same behaviors are accepted and even encouraged to keep everyone healthy.”

## **Stress Levels Bubbling Over**

On 20 October, the American Psychological Association (APA) published the results of its extensive survey on the emotional cost of COVID restrictions. The conclusion: “Stress from COVID-19... is seriously threatening the mental health of our country, particularly our youngest generation.” The age group most affected is Generation Z (born between the mid-1990s and 2010).

It should be noted that among this age group, the COVID death rate is miniscule, since, according to the CDC, 99.997 percent of 1- to-20-year-olds recover from the virus.

The APA’s chief executive, Dr. Arthur C. Evans, commented,

“This compounding stress will have serious health and social consequences if we don’t act now to reduce it. We’re already seeing this with some of the youngest members of our nation, who just seven months into this crisis are beginning to show signs of serious mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety.”

Dr. Emma Adam, Professor of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University, said,

“Loneliness and uncertainty about the future are major stressors for adolescents and young adults, who are striving to find their places in the world, both socially, and in terms of education and work. The pandemic and its economic consequences are upending youths’ social lives and their visions for their futures.”

The survey also indicates most Americans are not getting the mental health support they need. “The majority of adults (61%) say they could have used more emotional support than they received over the prior 12 months, with more than eight in ten Gen Z adults (82%) saying the same.”

**TRENDPOST:** *Despite growing evidence of the emotional fear and anxiety caused by continued lockdowns and isolation, the mainstream media continues to pump out overly dramatic headlines to stoke those fears. Some examples:*

**Cuomo Fears “Nightmare of Overwhelmed Hospitals” as Virus Cases Spike** — *New York Times*, 30 November

**Fears of coronavirus jump intensify in Thanksgiving’s aftermath**  
— *Washington Post*, 28 November

**“The U.S. COVID-19 Outbreak Is Worse Than It’s Ever Been. Why Aren’t We Acting Like it?”** — *Time*, 19 November

*The Time magazine article went on to state, “The U.S. is now locked in a deadly cycle of setting, then shattering, records for new cases and hospitalizations.”*

*It leaves out the clear data from studies, such as one published by the Journal of Hospital Medicine in August, showing COVID fatality rates in hospitals have dropped about 20 percent in all age groups.*

*A data scientist at the Alan Turing Institute in the U.K., Bilal Mateen, studied 21,000 hospitalized cases in England, which confirmed the drop in fatality rates: “I would classify this as a silver lining to what has been quite a hard time for many people.”*

## **LOCKDOWN EFFECT: “KIDS HAVE HIT A WALL”**



Last month, an ABC News affiliate in San Francisco interviewed Dr. Christine Garcia, Director of the city’s Edgewood Center for Children and Families. Dr.

Garcia is in charge of 28 mental health programs for young people, and she is highly concerned about severe teenage mental health issues from loneliness and isolation caused by the extended lockdown.

On Halloween night, eight teenagers needed hospital emergency room care after attempted suicides. Dr. Garcia said the mental health programs she supervises have been overrun with increased needs for teens with severe symptoms.

She pointed out that teens need to be around friends and socialize as they are “biologically wired to be self-individuating... You’re stuck with your family all the time. All those family issues that come up during the teenage years become heightened. There’s a higher number of reports of child abuse.”

She summed up the situation by saying, “The kids have hit a wall.”

Her colleague, Liz Siliato, Director of the Edgewood Crisis Stabilization Unit in San Francisco, which handles some of the most severe mental health emergencies, pointed out that students forced to learn remotely do not have access to much needed school counselors.

She told the *ABC* San Francisco affiliate that in addition to dealing with increased teenage self-harm and suicide attempts, “Now with kids at home and experiencing school through Zoom, they’re less likely to be able to reach out and those opportunities are kind of missed opportunities. And so, I think kids are going more into crisis.”

Pediatrician Dr. Jason Nagata, who is affiliated with the University of California San Francisco, is concerned with the nearly 100 percent rise in eating disorders among adolescents and young adults due to the extended lockdown and school closings. And lack of organized sports and outdoor play activity has led to substantial weight gain among teenagers.

## **National “Collective Trauma”**

The rise in severe mental health issues due to extensive lockdowns is not just a San Francisco issue, but one ranging from coast to coast. In June, America’s Promise Alliance, the USA’s largest nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of young people, published a study with this overview:

- “While nearly all of the high school youth surveyed (92%) say they are participating in online learning opportunities, more than three-quarters (78%)

are spending four or fewer hours each day in class or working on assignments.”

- “Since their school buildings closed, young people’s levels of concern about the present and future have increased, and indicators of overall health and wellbeing have suffered. For example, 30% of young people say they have more often been feeling unhappy or depressed.”
- “More than one-quarter of students (29%) say they do not feel connected at all to school adults. A similar percentage do not feel connected to classmates or to their school community. Taken together, these findings suggest that students are experiencing a collective trauma, and that they and their families would benefit from immediate and ongoing support for basic needs, physical and mental health, and learning opportunities. Without that support, this moment in time is likely to have lasting negative effects.”

Since this study was published in June, the situation for teenagers has worsened. On 12 November, *The New York Times* published the article, “Teens in COVID Isolation.” Mirroring the crisis in San Francisco, the article points out:

“The proportion of children’s emergency room visits related to mental health has increased significantly during the pandemic, highlighting concerns about the psychological effects that lockdowns and social distancing have had on youth, according to a new analysis released on Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

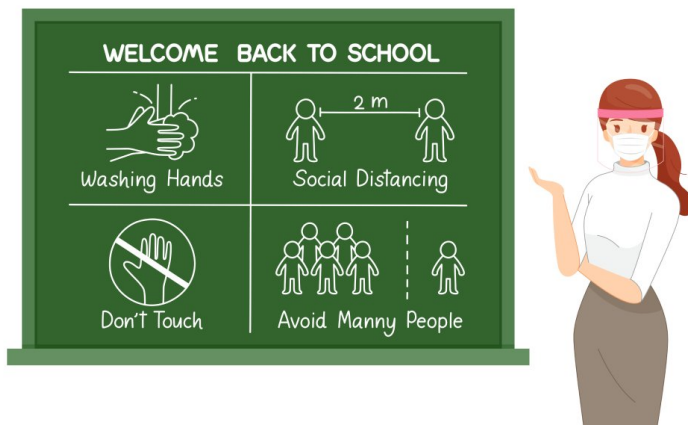
That CDC analysis, published on 13 November, reveals some draconian data on the effects of the extended lockdowns and school closings:

“Beginning in April 2020, the proportion of children’s mental health-related ED (Emergency Department) visits among all pediatric ED visits increased and remained elevated through October. Compared with 2019, the proportion of mental health-related visits for children aged 5-11 and 12-17 years increased approximately 24 percent and 31 percent respectively.”

*TREND FORECAST: The long-term mental effects on society – from toddlers raised in fear and separation, youngsters banned from growing up naturally, people afraid to socialize, wedding celebrations canceled... to being prohibited to hug, kiss and cry dying parents and loved one – is incomprehensible.*

*On the other side of fear is joy; Joy to the World. As two of our Top 10 Trends for 2021 illustrate, there will be a “YOUTH REVOLUTION” that will ignite a “ROARING 2021” and beyond.*

## MEDICAL STUDIES: SCHOOLS & DAY CARE NOT SPREADERS



Two recent studies, one from the U.K. in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* and the other an Icelandic study whose excerpts have recently appeared in *National Geographic*, confirm that schools, particularly elementary schools along with day care centers, have much lower levels of virus infection than the general public.

*The Lancet* study, published on 8 December, was authored by four leading experts from the Immunization and Countermeasures Division of the U.K. government's Public Health England. It looked at data from school re-openings throughout the country among all school-aged children. In the U.K., unlike the U.S., students up to grade 12 as well as those in day care facilities were permitted to attend classes.

According to the data analyzed in the study, out of some 920,000 students and close to 40,000 in child care, less than 350 infections were recorded during the break between June and July. This comes out to around 0.04 percent. Importantly, none of the children who did get infected needed hospital care.

Additionally, of the approximately 600,000 teachers and adult school staff, only three were infected, with one death. The study concluded the single fatality lived with a family member who was infected, which likely was the cause.

In the U.S., many teachers worry about schools not being safe environments, demanding more effective ventilation systems and other protective measures. *The Lancet* infectious disease doctors cite the most probable cause of infections in schools come from teachers and adult staff members, not the students.

The study concludes, “Children mainly acquired SARS-CoV-2 infection at home and most were asymptomatic, meaning they never displayed any symptoms at all. Reassuringly, we found very little transmission between students, which is consistent with emerging literature for young children.”

As for a common fear among teachers that while young students may not suffer themselves from the virus, they can spread it to the adults, the medical authors write, “There were very few transmission events between staff and children, especially given the difficulties in maintaining physical distancing with younger children.”

### **Children Suffer More from Politicians than COVID**

On the heels of the 8 December study from *The Lancet*, last Thursday, *National Geographic* became the first media to publish the results of an extensive Icelandic study of 40,000 students, teachers, and staff that concluded, “Almost all the coronavirus transmissions to children came from adults.”

The study was conducted by researchers with the nation’s Directorate of Health. The article in *National Geographic* excerpting the study opens with this paragraph:

“In the midst of the worst surge of COVID-19 cases in the United States, many state and local officials are again wrestling with the hot-button issue of whether to shut schools down. Now, emerging research confirms that schools aren’t the primary drivers of outbreaks, but cases will seep in and contribute to the disease’s spread whenever a country loses control of containing the pandemic.”

The article concluded:

“This analysis is one in a recent flurry of large-scale studies that support the conclusion that infected adults pose a greater danger to children than kids do to adults. These studies could help inform officials who are struggling to decide when, or if, to close schools, knowing that such shutdowns are harming children. In addition to vital academic lessons, schools provide many critical services to communities, so last week, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that schools should be both ‘the last settings to close; and ‘the first to reopen.’”

***TRENDPOST:*** *The reality is that in countries such as the U.S., this solid scientific data about reopening elementary schools and day care centers is ignored, while political leaders continue to impose their authoritarian, made-up rules.*

*The consequences are tragic. As we have reported in the **Trends Journal** on a number of occasions, including this article, school closures and other restrictions are causing immense suffering to children.*

*As stated in a new report from UNICEF:*

*“What we have learned about schooling during the time of COVID is clear: the benefits of keeping schools open far outweigh the costs of closing them, and nationwide closures of schools should be avoided at all costs.*

*Evidence shows that schools are not the main drivers of this pandemic. Yet, we are seeing an alarming trend whereby governments are once again closing down schools as a first recourse rather than a last resort. In some cases, this is being done nationwide, rather than community by community, and children are continuing to suffer the devastating impacts on their learning, mental and physical well-being and safety.”*

*It is obvious that children are suffering more from political authorities than from COVID.*

***TRENDPOST:*** *Further detailing the ineffectiveness of politically mandated, unscientific lockdown mandates, on 24 November, Science magazine reported research concluded that in the Hunan province of China, where the virus allegedly first broke out, “The lockdown period increases transmission risk in the family and households,” not in schools with students 12 years and under.*

*As we have reported, America's COVID War hero, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, where more people died in his state of 19.5 million – 35,705 – compared to Germany, for example, with a population of 84 million and 22,884 COVID deaths, had said after his lockdown in May it was “shocking” that most new virus hospitalizations were people who had been staying home.*

*Back in May, Governor Cuomo said,*

*“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.”*

*Prior to that, on 24 April, UNC Research, a group of scientists at the University of North Carolina, published a report titled, “Household Deemed Most Common Place for COVID-19 Transmission.” They wrote,*

*“As seven states now require masks and face coverings for visiting essential businesses or using public transportation, it seems like those spaces are where we are most at risk for COVID-19 infection. But, in truth, the riskiest place could be our homes.”*

*Also, as we covered in our 28 July article, [“STAY AT HOME, GET SICK,”](#) Reuters reported that studies prove lockdown measures were deadly, yet they keep being imposed around the world:*

*“South Korean epidemiologists have found that people were more likely to contract the new coronavirus from members of their own households than from contacts outside the home.*

*A study published in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on July 16 looked in detail at 5,706 ‘index patients’ who had tested positive for the coronavirus and more than 59,000 people who came into contact with them.*

*The findings showed that less than 2% of patients’ non-household contacts had caught the virus, while nearly 12% of patients’ household contacts had contracted the disease.”*

*Yet, the reality of these hard facts and scientific data are ignored as politicians continue to lock down society and destroy small businesses.*

***TRENDPOST:*** *Since the beginning of the COVID War, health officials have warned about the long-term risks that come with lockdowns and strict social-distancing measures and have focused particularly on young children.*

*The issue stems from otherwise common social interactions: running around in playgrounds, meeting friends on the street, and attending nursery school.*

*One parent, who has a 2-year-old daughter, told The New York Times that she was walking in Lake Tahoe with the girl when they saw another family approach. The little girl, who by now is used to social distancing, said, “Uh oh... people.”*

*Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek, Director of the Infant Language Laboratory at Temple University, told the paper that basic interactions like these build “structure and connectivity in the brain.”*

*“We’re not meant to be stopped from seeing the other kids who are walking down the streets,” she said.*

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The Times reported child-development experts said it would be interesting to start researching the long-term effects that the coronavirus had on this generation of children. Indeed, forbidding children to naturally evolve and enjoy the human emotions of hugging, kissing, playing etc., will have long term social and mental implications.*

## **MERKEL: DON'T KILL YOUR GRANDPARENTS**



Merry Christmas!

Last week, ordering harsh new lockdown laws, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel lashed out at Christmas shoppers, declaring, "The number of contacts is too high and reduction in contacts is insufficient."

The Chancellor declared there will be no singing Christmas carols in Church. As of Wednesday, schools will be closed down, as will all businesses deemed "non-essential," until at least 10 January.

People should work from home and employers are encouraged to allow employees to work from home; no drinking alcohol in public; only four immediate family adults from other households may be permitted to celebrate Christmas together; no New Year's Eve fireworks.

Ms. Merkel said if her orders were not obeyed, this could be the last Christmas citizens would spend with "our grandparents."

***TRENDPOST:*** Since March, there have been 22,884 COVID deaths in Germany, a nation of nearly 84 million people or 0.027 percent of the population or 0.00302 percent per month.

*As with much of the world, those dying from the virus are "grandparents" and those suffering from 2.6 pre-existing chronic conditions. Actually, the average age of a COVID victim in Germany, depending on the available data, ranges between 77 to 82 years old.*

*Therefore, rather than lock down the entire nation, destroying businesses, lives, and livelihoods, Germany, as with the rest of the world, should be advising those most at risk to take strict precautions.*

***TRENDPOST:*** This past November, several thousand Germans took to the streets of Berlin in protest of the new "Infection Protection Law" approved by the parliament, which gives the Chancellor the authority to issue coronavirus rules upon demand. The protestors compared the new law to the "Enabling Act of 1933," which gave Adolf Hitler the right of dictatorship over the country.

***TREND FORECAST:*** As a result of the latest announcement of the lockdowns, we forecast, as do other analysts, that Germany faces the risk of a double-dip recession.

*"Germany must brace itself for a second recession," said Jörg Kramer, Chief Economist at Commerzbank.*

*The German Bundesbank forecasts the economy will shrink 5.5 percent this year and grow 3 percent next year.*

## HONG KONG: MORE LOCKDOWN LAWS



Hong Kong announced last week that gyms, swimming pools, and hair salons were to be closed until 23 December to slow the rising cases.

Since January, when the COVID War broke out in Wuhan, Hong Kong, a city of 7.5 million people, has registered the grand total of 118 deaths or 0.0015 percent of the population.

Despite the insignificantly low numbers, Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam declared that the current wave of infections is "more complicated and more severe than the last wave." She called for limiting outdoor activities and limited restaurants to operating at 50 percent capacity.

Lam's guidelines call for take-out orders only at restaurants from the hours of 6 PM to 5 AM.

"If we don't control it strictly, there'll be bigger risks," she said. "This time we'll roll out suppressing measures aimed at limiting foot traffic flow on the streets."

### People Suppressed

Jimmy Lai, the 73-year-old media tycoon who has been charged with violating Beijing's new national security law, was denied bail on Saturday by a judge who was handpicked by Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam.

Lai was seen being led into court shackled in metal chains. He has been accused of colluding with foreign forces. Lai, a billionaire, who was first arrested in August, is the highest-profile arrest under China's new security law, which sparked violent protests in Hong Kong.

***TREND FORECAST:*** Yes, Ms. Lam, via Beijing, has succeeded in “limiting foot traffic flow to the streets.”

*We continually reported in the **Trends Journal** that Beijing could not quell the extensive Hong Kong protests that began in March 2019, which had well over a million citizens taking to the streets. The demonstrations were in reaction to the Fugitive Offenders legislation bill, which would have allowed China to extradite Hong Kong criminal suspects to the mainland.*

*As Gerald Celente forecast when the virus first broke out in China this past January, Beijing would use COVID-19 to achieve what they were unable to accomplish before the virus stuck Wuhan: lock down Hong Kong to stop the protests.*

*That has now been accomplished... and along with Beijing's new national security law, the city is under the full dictate of the Chinese government.*

## **BODEGAS IN NYC SEE CRIME ESCALATING**



New York City bodegas have reported a sharp increase in violent crimes as the virus outbreak continues to drag on in the city with forced lockdowns that have put many residents in dire financial straits.

*The New York Times* reported last week there has been a 63 percent increase in shootings outside bodegas, a 222 percent increase in burglaries, and a 10 percent increase in robberies in the first eight months of the year.

Fernando Mateo, a founder of the United Bodegas of America, told the paper the coronavirus has created a suitable environment for those looking to commit crimes. He said some people are “taking advantage that everyone is wearing masks.” He said when someone shoplifts a beer or hand soap, the inventory is “real dollars” because there is such a razor-thin profit margin for these products.

The paper spoke to a bodega owner in Queens where a deadly shooting occurred after one of his employees confronted a man who was shoplifting. Police tell these store owners not to engage with shoplifters, but the store where the shooting occurred had been hit hard by shoplifting in recent months and could not sustain its losses, the paper said.

The shoplifting trend is not limited to small, independently owned bodegas. Last week, the *Washington Post* reported that stores across the U.S. have experienced an increase in shoplifting, mainly with products like shampoo, diapers, and packages of meat.

“People will say, ‘I was hungry,’” Joo Park, the manager of Capitol Supermarket in Washington, D.C., told the *Washington Post*. “And then what do you do?”

The *Post* reported many Americans are dealing with a challenging financial situation. Last week, more than 947,000 workers filed for state unemployment, according to the Labor Department. More than 20 million Americans are on some kind of assistance. The *NYT* pointed out that an increase in unemployment was recorded in three of the last four weeks.

The *Times* said it spoke to more than a dozen retailers that gave the same consensus: shoplifting is surging throughout the country. Stores like Dollar Tree and Family Dollar have recorded an increase in shoplifting. There tends to be an increase in “low-impact” crimes after national tragedies. The report also said 54 million Americans will struggle with hunger in 2021, which is a 45 percent increase from 2019.

“We’re supposed to be the greatest, richest country in the world, and we don’t have safety nets for when something like this happens?” said Danielle Nierenberg, the President of Food Tank. “People are being forced to steal when they shouldn’t have to, and that’s a great American tragedy.”

**TREND FORECAST:** Sadly, none of this comes as a surprise to **Trends Journal** subscribers. We had forecast there would be large spike in crime when the COVID War was launched.

As Gerald Celente has said, “When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it.” And losing it they are: financially, mentally and spiritually.

PBS’ “News Hour” spoke with a 37-year-old Navy veteran who had a wife that needed surgery and – with no savings and mounting bills – needed to find some way out.

“I felt like I was a failure,” he said. “It’s the whole stigma... this mindset that you’re this guy who can’t provide for his family, that you’re a deadbeat.” The report said, “Those fighting hunger say they’ve never seen anything like this in America, even during the Great Recession of 2007-2009.”

As lockdowns continue and the “Greatest Depression” worsens, millions of Americans who worked their entire lives and never asked for government handouts will continue to join long lines at food banks.

## JOE BIDEN HEALTH ADVISER: NO MERRY CHRISTMAS



Ring in the holiday season with jingle bells of fear and hysteria, Dr. Michael Osterholm, one of Joe Biden’s top coronavirus advisers, said in an interview on CNN last week that Americans should not have any Christmas parties because “there is not a safe Christmas party in this country right now.”

“The next three to six weeks, at minimum, are our COVID weeks,” he said. “It won’t end after that, but that is the period right now where we could have a surge upon a surge upon a surge.”

## **Drug Mob**

The Christmas cheer being sold by Presstitutes and politicians is that that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and Pfizer made a deal with the U.S. government to provide 100 million doses for free to the public.

Dr. Mark Mulligan, the Director of the NYU Langone Health Vaccine Center and a lead investigator for the Pfizer trials, told *The New York Times*, “It’s not going to be like a light switch on and off. It’s going to be more like a dimmer switch.”

President Trump seemed to strike an optimistic tone at a “vaccine summit” at the White House last week. He called Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna’s vaccines a “monumental national achievement.”

***TRENDPOST:*** *The global mainstream media has been widely pitching the public that the only way to defeat COVID is with a vaccine.*

*In yesterday’s Wall Street Journal, the paper featured a lovely female doctor holding her happy infant, both smiling for the camera with the caption: “Dr. Vineet Arora said she is looking forward to taking the vaccine.”*

*The paper reported that Dr. Arora was “looking forward to taking the vaccine” and quoted her saying, “I’ll do it for the safety of my family and colleagues and patients. I was elated to hear the news that the vaccine was on the horizon so much quicker than any of us expected.”*

*The Journal also noted a recent Gallup poll that showed 63 percent of Americans would be willing get injected with the COVID-19 vaccine... up from 50 percent in September.*

*While mainstream media and politicians continue sell the line that the vaccine is free, U.S. taxpayers, via the government, will pay Pfizer nearly \$2 billion to inject the nation.*

***TRENDPOST:*** *While Dr. Arora says she taking the vaccine “for the safety of my family and colleagues and patients,” always omitted by the media is the question:*

*If those who are vaccinated cannot catch or spread the virus, why should those who are opposed to getting injected be forced to take it... since all those who got the vaccine are protected?*

*The same issue with face masks. If those wearing masks believe they are safe from the virus, why should those who do not want to wear them for personal and health reasons be forced to do so... since those who fear the virus are protected?*

## **CUOMO SHUTS DOWN DINING IN NYC**



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo unilaterally declared a ban on indoor dining in New York City that went into effect yesterday, claiming a spike in hospitalizations has forced his hand on the issue.

Cuomo's move to ban indoor dining comes just over ten weeks after restaurants and pubs were given the green light to operate indoor service at 25 percent capacity. The latest ban will span for at least two weeks.

Cuomo said the lockdown would cause "economic hardship... but we have compensated in other ways," as he explained how outdoor dining in the City has been "aggressively expanded."

"The restaurants have adapted and New Yorkers have really adapted," he said.

### **Bullshit!**

The move was criticized by restaurant and pub owners who say the scientific data does not support such a move.

Melissa Fleischut, the CEO of the New York State Restaurant Association, said in a statement, “Shutting down indoor dining in New York City makes little sense based on the state’s own numbers.”

“We’re pissed off,” Marco Chirico, the owner of Brooklyn’s Marco Polo Ristorante and Enoteca, told the *New York Post*.

“We’ve been following everything that they gave us – the guidelines, we changed our air filter systems, we do the protocols of taking temperatures, getting people to sign the [contact tracing] papers, everything from A to Z,” he said.

“It’s just not right – you have small businesses that are day to day surviving, and day to day they’re trying to pay the bills and day to day trying to feed their staff who are trying to feed their kids,” said Chirico.

He added, “No one understands how it’s going to feel to look inside your employees’ eyes and say, ‘I have to let you go because there’s not enough business’ – that’s the most heartbreaking thing for a restaurant owner to do.”

The *Post* also quoted Hakan Swahn, the owner of Manhattan’s Aquavit, who said, “This is going to be hurting all our employees in a terrible, terrible way... The government is shutting us down without actually justifying it with hardcore facts... We didn’t do anything to deserve a complete destruction of our business.”

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The Director of the New York City Hospitality Alliance said Cuomo’s new rules were “at odds with the State’s own data that been presented as driving these decisions.”*

*Indeed, according to the State’s data, of the 46,000 cases between September and November, only 1.43 percent were linked to restaurants and bars.*

*Yet, whether New York or Berlin, Paris or Montreal, despite the hard data and scientific facts of who is dying where and why, those least affected by the virus are suffering most from the draconian actions decreed by politicians and enforced by COVID Cops, which are destroying businesses, lives, and livelihoods.*

*Thus, we forecast a sizable segment of society who have been financially and emotionally devastated by lockdown rules will unite to form major political/religious movements in opposition to ruling establishment political parties.*

## CALIFORNIA: MORE LOCKDOWNS. NO SCIENTIFIC DATA REQUIRED



California announced last week another sweeping lockdown due to the coronavirus threat that focused – once again – on restaurants and salons. As with other nations, states, and cities which impose lockdown rules, government and health officials were unable to back up their decision with scientific data.

*KTTV*'s Elex Michaelson asked California Governor Gavin Newsom to explain how he came up with the new lockdown orders. Dodging the questions, Newsom replied,

“I’m wondering what you say to these people who say, ‘Look, I’ve done everything you’ve asked. I’ve followed the rules, I spent a lot of money on PPP, my staff is on the brink of losing their jobs, we’re on the brink of losing our business, it’s the holiday season.’ What do you say to these people who are really desperate and confused and angry right now?”

As reported by the *Los Angeles Blade*, the California Restaurant Association sued the Los Angeles Department of Public Health, asking its Director, Dr. Barbara Ferrer, to cite exactly what scientific data or studies show there were increased risks associated with people dining outdoors.

Last Tuesday, L.A. Superior Court Judge James C. Chalfant took issue with Ferrer’s order labeling it an abuse of emergency powers:

“The Restaurant Closure Order is an abuse of the Department’s emergency powers, is not grounded in science, evidence, or logic, and should be adjudicated to be unenforceable as a matter of law,” Chalfant wrote in a 73-page assessment in which he also wrote that the county’s logic behind the closure “ignores the outdoor nature of the activity, which the CDC says carries only a moderate risk.”

“Outbreak data provided to the court,” Chalfant wrote, “showed that cases traced back to bars and restaurants accounted for just 3.1 percent of the non-residential outbreak locations and that the vast majority of those were chain/fast food type restaurants and almost exclusively involved employees rather than customers.”

While Chalfant is letting the order stand for now, he has ordered Ferrer to provide the court with greater detailed information. The Judge went on to say, “I am shocked that in nine months, [government officials] have not looked seriously at outdoor dining. I am not laying this at the county’s feet but that is a failure of government.”

He wrote that the county’s Restaurant Closure Order “is an abuse of the Department’s emergency powers” and is “not grounded in science, evidence, or logic, and should be adjudicated to be unenforceable as a matter of law.”

LAist reported the lawyer for the county admitted that trying to prove a link between outdoor eating and virus transmission is “borderline impossible.”

**TRENDPOST:** *Last week, California Health and Human Service Secretary Mark Ghaly admitted during a press conference that these restaurant closures are not “a comment on the relative safety of outdoor dining,” but “really has to do with the goal of trying to keep people home.”*

*Again, despite the evidence that keeping people at home is proving deadlier than being outdoors, as articulated in numerous **Trends Journal** articles since the COVID War was launched in March, arbitrary rules are being made up and enforced. And, if the citizens disobey them, they are prosecuted to the full extent of the law.*

## N.J. POLITICIAN: SHOOT UP THE KIDS



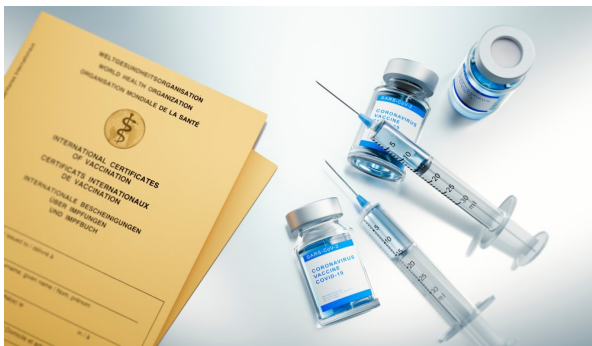
Despite the fact that children are not contracting or dying from the coronavirus, New Jersey State Senator Joseph Vitale believes the COVID vaccine should “be included in that list of vaccines that are required for children” and he would “like to incorporate it into the other vaccination bill that would require children to get vaccinated as a condition to entering school.”

Vitale said there is also an effort to make vaccines mandatory for all college students who attend school in the Garden State.

New Jersey currently requires several vaccines in order to attend school in the state. Governor Phil Murphy recently signed an order that will essentially list all those in the state who take the vaccine be added in its “New Jersey Immunization System,” which was criticized by detractors in the state for “putting the cart before the horse.”

Sue Collins, the co-Founder of the New Jersey Coalition for Vaccine Choice, told reporters, “No medical procedure should ever be mandated for anyone – especially something so new, with so many unknowns and no long-term knowledge at all.”

## **VACCINE COULD BE MANDATORY IN NEW YORK STATE**



Linda Rosenthal, a New York State assemblywoman from the City’s West Side, introduced legislation earlier this month that would “mandate vaccination” for anyone health officials determine can “safely receive the vaccine,” according to a Fox 5 news report.

Rosenthal’s bill points to the importance of herd immunity. Health officials have hoped the virus would naturally burn itself out, but with the spiking cases, the next best chance they see is an effective vaccine that could lead to sufficient public immunity.

Medical journal *The Lancet* reported vaccines that protect against infection above 80 percent are desirable. But the journal pointed out the lifespan of the vaccines that are being administered are unknown.

“Data on immunity to other coronaviruses suggest that immunity to SARS-CoV-2 might be short-lived, perhaps 12-18 months in duration,” the report said.

The *Fox 5* report stated Rosenthal’s bill does not specify what “sufficient immunity” would include, and public health officials would “presumably” have to set the benchmark. The report pointed out that individuals could be exempt from the vaccine if they produce a note from a medical professional.

If passed, Rosenthal’s bill, referred to as “A11179,” would require that a COVID-19 vaccine be “administered in accordance with the Department of Health’s COVID-19 vaccination administration program and mandates vaccinations in certain situations.”

She defended the bill and reportedly tried to calm those who accused it of violating their constitutional rights. She said the state is “not frivolously doing this.”

“The State has a task force to review the vaccines. It’s only at the point where there’s a lack of herd immunity which protects every single resident in New York State that the Department of Health would step in,” she said.

The *Daily Mail* reported that David DiPietro, one of Rosenthal’s colleagues in the assembly, called the bill “very dangerous.”

He said, “I find it ironic that so many of these people who are pro-choice say, ‘My body, my choice.’ But when it comes to a vaccine... now it’s my body, but it’s not my choice. The hypocrisy just drips off the wall with some of these people.”

***TREND FORECAST: As we have forecast, there will be strong “Anti-Vax” movements in the United States and western nations as vaccination mandates are imposed on the general population.***

*It should be noted they were gaining strength before the COVID War in Italy and the U.S. began. Again, anti-vax, anti-establishment, “Off With Their Heads 2.0” will be among the major political platforms. (See our Top Trend for 2021, “ANTI-VAX, ANTI-TAX POLITICAL PARTIES.”)*

**TRENDPOST:** *The Wall Street Journal reported last week both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines come with possible short-term side effects that can range from mild to moderate in their severity.*

*The report said one regulatory agency in the U.K. informed medical practitioners that the Pfizer vaccine should not be administered to individuals who are prone to adverse allergic reactions. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency said a deeper investigation is needed to understand a few severe cases.*

*The Journal pointed to Kristen Choi, a nursing professor at UCLA, who was part of a trial study. She told the paper she can't be sure she received the Pfizer vaccine, but she reported a serious health issue after her second shot during the trial. She came down with a 104.9-degree fever and intense arm pain and chills.*

*She said she recovered after about 36 hours, but one of the trial's research staffers told her the reaction was not uncommon. The FDA also said the second shot seems to lead to more side effects.*

*The Journal reported scientists admit it is too soon to know if the "vaccines being raced into production will confer true and lasting immunity to infection. Nor is it clear if they will be as effective at preventing transmission as they were at reducing the severity of illness in trials."*

## **TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS**

### **BUSINESS OF AMERICA: WAR**



As much of the nation goes into lockdown and millions of businesses and tens of millions of lives are being destroyed, the people's so-called representative in Washington passed a \$740 billion defense budget... the largest in American history.

Despite President Trump's call for withdrawing half of the 4,500 troops currently in Afghanistan – by far the longest war in U.S. history and with no end in sight – the bill included an amendment that would block funding to pull the troops out.

The U.S. currently has 34,500 troops stationed in Germany. Trump had wanted 12,000 of them to be pulled, but the bill would block him from withdrawing those troops as well. The new defense bill would, once again, make it a requirement for the commander-in-chief to get approval from Congress to withdraw forces.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to declare war, but the president has the ability to direct the military once war is declared, according to *Cornell's Legal Information Institute*. The website said presidents have engaged in military operations without the approval of Congress. These conflicts included the war in Afghanistan in 2001, the 2002 war in Iraq, and dates back to the Korean War.

The *LawFareBlog* stated Congress has recently “begun to feel its oats” when it comes to foreign troop deployment. 2019's “Responsible Withdrawal From Syria Act” would ban the use of military funding without Congress' approval.

Senator Rand Paul said the newly passed (and veto-proof) National Defense Authorization Act sets a “very dangerous precedent” over an amendment that will require additional hurdles for a president to draw down troops stationed overseas and will limit a president's power to end war.

“This bill creates 535 commanders in chief,” Paul said. He called the bill misguided and pointed out it is the height of hypocrisy that – under the bill – presidents have the ability to start a conflict and not end one.

***TRENDPOST:*** *This story was in and out of the news. It should be noted that during this year's Presidential Reality Show®, U.S. foreign policy, the burgeoning defense/intelligence budgets, and the immorality of America's illegal and murderous foreign entanglements, i.e., Libya, Syria, etc., were barely mentioned by the candidates.*

*As for the nation as a whole, there is little mainstream media coverage of U.S. involvement overseas, and it is of little concern among the general public.*

## PROTESTERS ARRESTED IN PARIS



Thousands of protesters organized in Paris on Saturday to condemn President Emmanuel Macron's new security law that many say is an affront to their individual liberties, which essentially makes photographing or filming police officers a crime. The bill includes a provision that would make it illegal to broadcast "the face or any other identifying element" of a police officer if the government believes it would cause harm to the officer who had been filmed.

*To disperse protesters*, police shot powerful blasts from water cannons into the crowd of the men, women, and children who were rallying. According to photos taken at the rally, other protesters were seen with bloodied faces after being beaten by police.

### **You Must Obey**

Gerald Darmanin, the French interior minister, announced on Twitter that the arrests occurred after "several hundred thugs had come to commit violence."

Critics of the bill say it is too vague and prevents the public and news media from holding police in the country accountable.

According to *France 24*, several rights groups and journalists' unions denounced "arbitrary arrests" by Paris police. The journalists' union condemned "mass arrests, unjustified charges breaking up the procession" and the detention of people beyond the legal limit "for no legitimate reason."

**TREND FORECAST:** *As the “Greatest Depression” worsens, social unrest will escalate, and the fight between the people and politicians will intensify as governments impose wide ranges of anti-freedom mandates to quell uprisings and protests.*

*There will be major endeavors throughout much of the world to form new, anti-establishment, pro-democracy political parties and social/religious movements.*

## ETHIOPIA’S TIGRAY WAR HORRORS



As we have been reporting in the **Trends Journal**, last month, in an effort to consolidate his power, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched an offensive against the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, which threatens stability across the broader Horn of Africa.

The conflict has sent over 50,000 Ethiopians fleeing across the border into Sudan, and it has killed thousands of civilians.

It is reported that ethnic militias have formed and have taken part in campaigns of looting, rape, and killings across the Tigray region. *The New York Times* interviewed refugees from Tigray who described the incident as a “devastating conflict that has become a grisly wellspring of looting, ethnic antagonism, and killings.”

Some of the refugees identified one of the groups that committed the atrocities as Fano, an Amhara ethnic group loyal to government. The group was accused of ransacking the town Mai-Kadra and slaughtering ethnic Tigrayans with “knives and machetes.”

As we have reported, Tigray has traditionally held a lot of sway in the country of 110 million. However, there have been simmering tensions between Amhara and Tigray since 1991, when Tigrayan forces took over land the Amhara's had claimed.

Prime Minister Ahmed's offensive came shortly after a vote was held in the region despite a countrywide ban due to the virus outbreak. Ahmed received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for ending the country's conflict with Eritrea, and he has spoken about bringing the country and its ethnic enclaves together.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As we have forecast, the heavily armed Tigray forces will not surrender to Ethiopian forces, thus military tensions will persist.*

*With its economy sinking deeper into the "Greatest Depression," social unrest, violence, and poverty will escalate, which in turn will ramp up a refugee crisis, many of whom will want to escape to safer-haven European nations.*

*This will in turn boost populist political party movements throughout the Eurozone. These movements will also gain strength as economic conditions and calls for self-sustainability increase.*

## UNREST BREAKS OUT IN KURDISTAN



Fierce clashes broke out last week in the semiautonomous Kurdistan region, which attracted Iraqi authorities and resulted in at least eight fatalities, according to a report.

The *Financial Times* reported last Thursday there is growing public anger over government corruption on top of owed salaries. The *Washington Post* reported the government worked quickly to shut down the internet and arrest reporters who covered the clashes.

The report said the funds the demonstrators were fighting over – many of whom were in their teens – are controlled by officials in Baghdad. A 13-year-old was one of the eight fatalities after security forces opened fire in the town of Said Sadiq.

“Salaries mean money, of course, but they also mean power,” Hossein Othman, a former public servant, told the *Post*. “When they don’t pay us, when they withhold our rights, it depletes our sense of self. It just hits you so hard. It’s about dignity.”

The *Post* reported that poverty levels in the region have doubled since 2018, and more than one-third of families there live on less than \$400 a month. The coronavirus “only deepened that deprivation,” the report said.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Ahmed Amin, an activist, told the Post, “As a people, we have nothing to live for. They have destroyed our future, they have taken our hope. That’s why we’re here.”*

*Indeed, as Gerald Celente has long said, “When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it.”*

*What has gone unreported by the media covering this event is that Iraq was criminally destroyed by U.S. and the U.K. in the 2003 war they launched based on the overt lie that Iraq’s leader Saddam Hussain had weapons of mass destruction and ties to al-Qaeda.*

*The war, which cost trillions and killed millions, has destroyed much of the nation and devastated its people.*

*While Brent Crude oil prices have boosted a bit over \$50 per barrel, the price is well below the \$70 dollar range it was trading at in the beginning of the year, and it is too low a price to boost the nation’s GDP.*

*Beyond Iraq, oil-rich nations, be they rich or poor ones, will suffer social unrest as oil prices remain weak; revenue and incomes decline; and people take to the streets to protest the lack of basic living standards, unemployment, government corruption, crime, and violence.*

*In turn, it will also escalate the refugee trend as more people do what they can to escape to safe-haven nations.*

## HONDURAS MIGRANT CARAVAN TURNED BACK



The Honduran government worked quickly to disperse a caravan with hundreds of migrants who were headed to the U.S. after the country was hit by two enormous hurricanes.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported the caravan was broken up last Thursday after officers from Honduras spotted the migrants, many of whom were lacking basic identification cards and no proof of coronavirus tests.

*Al Jazeera* reported the caravan was comprised of younger migrants who were carrying children on foot. The report said that hurricanes Iota and Eta left the country decimated and killed about 100 people. One migrant told the news outlet, “We lost everything. We have no choice but to go to the United States.”

*Reuters* reported the hurricanes impacted 4.5 million in the country, and 95,000 in the city of San Pedro Sula took refuge in shelters. Juan Orlando Hernandez, the country’s President, called the hurricanes “the worst disaster we have experienced in the history of the Republic of Honduras.”

The report said migrants were required to have a passport and negative coronavirus tests. The tough stance from the country was seen as a way to show cooperation with the U.S. while the country will need additional aid after the storms.

Nelson Garcia, the Director of the Mennonite Social Action Commission, told *Reuters*, “After losing their homes, assets, and even their jobs, people who were already poor are now even worse off.”

***TREND FORECAST:*** Again, and sadly, we had long forecast this trend, and, unfortunately, it will greatly escalate as the “Greatest Depression” intensifies.

## CIVIL WAR IN MOROCCO?



Last month, we reported that gunfire erupted between Moroccan forces and a pro-independence group in Western Sahara, ending nearly 30 years of peace in the area.

The Moroccan military clashed with fighters from the Polisario Front in several locations.

Brahim Ghali, the Secretary-General of the Polisario Front, announced in a decree the beginning of the “armed struggle in defense of the legitimate rights of our people,” according to *CNN*. Another official called the military action an “open war” and appealed to supporters to mobilize against the Moroccans.

Fighting erupted on 13 November when Moroccan troops entered a buffer zone. The Moroccans said the protesters had been blocking access on a major road since October. Protesters demanded Morocco release prisoners and accused the Moroccan government of an illegal breach in a 1,700-mile sand wall.

Morocco also became the latest country to announcing last week that it would normalize ties with Israel, making it the fourth Arab-Israeli agreement in four months.

The *Associated Press* said Joe Biden, whom the electoral college affirmed to be the next President, has expressed a desire to “return to a more traditional U.S. position.” The *AP* reported the U.S. move to recognize the Western Sahara claim is not something that is recognized by the United Nations.

Riccardo Fabiani, the North Africa Director at the International Crisis Group, said the move by the Trump administration, which has pushed for the Moroccan-Israeli agreement, made the “violence much harder.”

“This will also make Sahrawi youths more angry, mobilized, and committed to resolving the conflict through force,” Fabiani told the *Financial Times*. The paper reported fighting in the region had resumed last month, after the three-decade-long ceasefire.

Sidi Omar, Polisario’s representative at the U.N., told the *FT*, “We are now in a state of open war.”

“Our main objective is still the liberation of Western Sahara. We did not want this war but Morocco has been emboldened by the inaction of the international community,” Omar said.

The *FT* reported the conflict risks the stability of the region and can drag in Algeria, which has been sponsoring Polisario forces. The report said the conflict has been considered “low-intensity” but there is a risk it can escalate.

The *Washington Post* reported that the U.S. is the first major power to recognize Rabat’s claim over the region. Samia Errazzouki, a former journalist from the region who follows developments there, said the U.S. support could be a watershed moment and will likely be something Morocco will use in “future diplomatic engagements with other countries.”

*Bloomberg* reported that a day after the U.S. announced the deal with Israel, the State Department sent an informal notification of a proposed \$1 billion sale in weaponry to Morocco, which includes Reaper drones. Trump said Morocco was the first nation to recognize the U.S. as an independent nation after the Revolutionary War and said it is “thus fitting we recognize their sovereignty over Western Sahara.”

In 1975, Spain, which had colonized the area, withdrew from the region. Morocco has been claiming since then that the region belonged to them.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As we continue to note, as civil wars erupt in sections of Africa and as the “Greatest Depression” worsens, protests, demonstrations, and riots will escalate. Civil wars will spread into regional wars.*

## PROTESTS CONTINUE IN INDIA OVER AGRICULTURE BILL



As we have been reporting, for nearly three weeks, hundreds of thousands of farmers began protesting on the outskirts of Delhi in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push for deregulations they fear will sink them deeper into poverty.

Yesterday, leaders of Indian farmers' unions held a hunger strike in hopes of pressure on the Prime Minister to repeal the new farm laws recently passed.

Farmers have blocked major roads and burned their crops, contending that deregulation will lead to small farms becoming insolvent and eventually taken over by larger rivals.

More than half of India's 1.4 billion people are employed in agriculture, which accounts for 15 percent of India's \$2.9-trillion economy.

Modi's move is seen by supporters as a way to modernize the country's agriculture and position New Delhi to be in better position to compete with Beijing.

"They never expected farmers to come out in such large numbers to protest," Vikram Singh, the joint secretary of the All India Agricultural Workers Union, told the *Wall Street Journal*. "We will not back off until our demands are met."

Opposition leaders reportedly have been arrested for supporting the protests. There was one incident where officers barricaded the house of the chief minister of Delhi, who has been sympathetic to the farmers and was reportedly put under house arrest.

“The chief minister refused to allow farmers to be put in jails,” Manish Sisodia, Delhi’s deputy chief minister, told the paper. “They have turned the chief minister’s residence into a jail.”

***TREND FORECAST:*** *With their economy sinking for several consecutive quarters before the COVID War broke out, India’s GDP is estimated to have fallen 15.7 percent over the last six months through September.*

*To reiterate our forecast, as we reported in early January, with the Indian economy in its seventh consecutive quarter of contraction, protests against the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi were escalating.*

*Also, in January, we reported on the demonstrations spreading throughout India as millions of citizens continued the two months-long protests against the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act, spearheaded by Mr. Modi’s ruling Hindu nationalist party, which grants citizenship to religious minorities – except Muslims – from neighboring countries.*

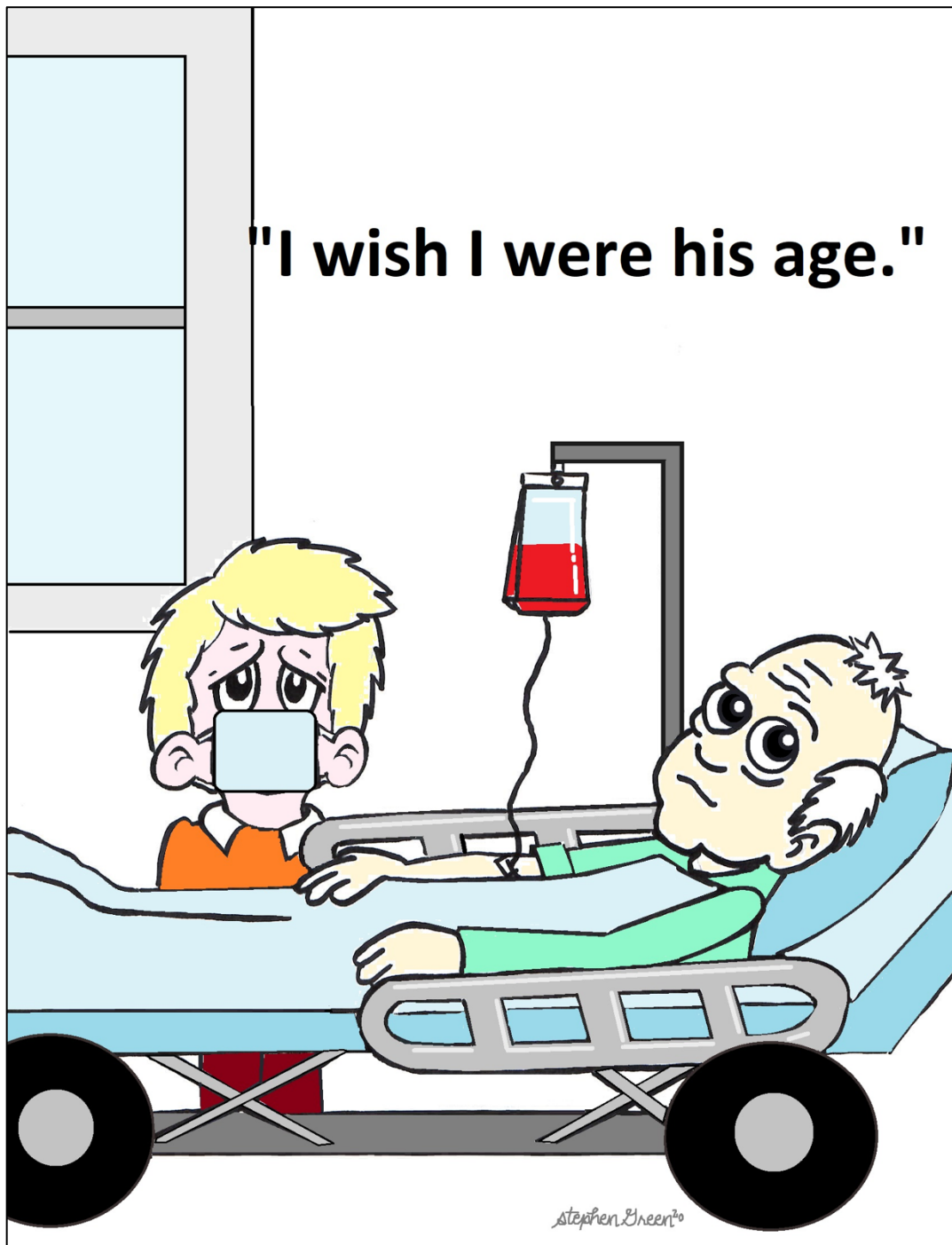
*In response, these demonstrations were halted when the Prime Minister suddenly locked down the entire nation in March in his fight to win the COVID War.*

*As economic conditions continue to decline, demonstrations will escalate and India’s military/police forces will violently clamp down on protesters.*

*The military will try to stop the protests, but with hundreds of millions of Indians losing everything and with nothing left to lose, they will not back down until the government meets some of their demands.*

# THE ART OF TRENDS

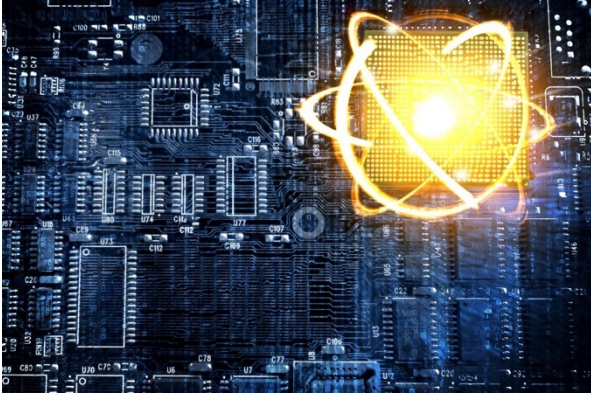
**"THE NEW ABNORMAL" by Stephen Green**



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# TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE *by Bennett Davis*

## COMPUTER COMPLETES BILLION-YEAR TASK IN 3 MIN



If you've ever wondered how fast a quantum computer really is, scientists at the University of Science and Technology of China can tell you: fast enough to complete in three minutes a calculation that would take today's fourth best supercomputer an estimated 200 billion years to solve.

Conventional computers process information, moving as an electrical current, sequentially as a one or a zero through a silicon chip. In contrast, quantum computers use qubits – usually a piece of a phosphorus atom – to take advantage of a quirk of quantum physics: a qubit can be a one and a zero at the same time, enabling a quantum computer to sort, compare, and process data orders of magnitude faster than regular computers.

Quantum computers usually rely on electrical superconductors, which have to be cooled to near absolute zero. The Chinese team eliminated superconductors and instead adopted a technique called “boson sampling” in their device that uses photons – particles of light – instead of an electric current to transmit data.

Photons were sent into the new computer one by one, then beam splitters divided each one and bounced it through a series of mirrors. Boson sampling calculates the possible output of that series of bounces, a chore conventional computers couldn't keep pace with.

The Chinese machine, with its 300 beam splitters, 75 mirrors, and 25 custom-tailored crystals, calculated the distribution sample in about five minutes. In contrast, the researchers calculated that Sunway TaihuLight, now the world's

fourth most powerful supercomputer, would have needed more than two billion years to arrive at the answer.

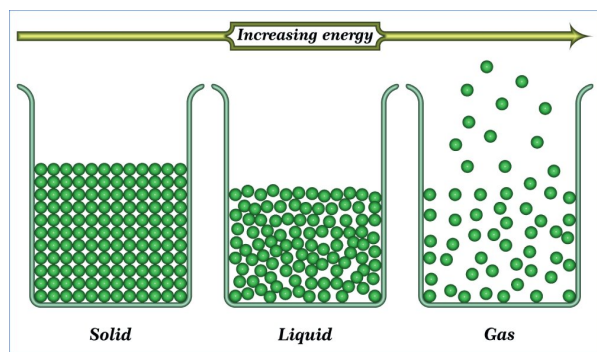
If any other computer would take two billion years to make the calculation, how did the Chinese engineers know that their machine got the right answer?

They say they tested minor portions of the larger calculation on Sunway TaihuLight and found the answers consistent with those from their quantum machine. Also, they determined if the new machine made any mistakes, it would have malfunctioned in minor but detectable ways, which it didn't.

***TRENDPOST:*** *No one knows when quantum computers will be of practical use; so far, the machines have been testing various architectures and demonstrating possibilities. When they become practical, likely, they will first be used to make calculations involving vast uncertainties, such as predicting next Monday's Dow Jones' close.*

*The world is not yet capable of imagining what will result if, or when, artificial intelligence and quantum computing are joined together.*

## CHEAP, EASY WAY TO SOLIDIFY NATURAL GAS



Gas-rich countries, such as the U.S., see a growing world market for their resource. But exporting natural gas means investing in multi-billion-dollar ports where the stuff can be cooled and stored at around  $-260^{\circ}\text{F}$ , then pumped aboard refrigerator tankers to sail off to foreign lands.

Even storing natural gas in your home's tank for cooking or heating involves storing the explosive vapors under pressure.

But all that may be over. Researchers at the National University of Singapore have now devised a way to store natural gas as a solid at more reasonable temperatures.

The scientists found that blending a proprietary mix of ingredients, mainly the amino acid L-tryptophan, with the gas vapors sped up a naturally occurring process of capturing gas molecules inside “cages” made of water molecules.

While nature’s process takes millions of years, Shanghai’s version takes 15 minutes.

**TRENDPOST:** *In addition to being fast, the new process shrinks gas volumes 90-fold and reduces stable storage temperature to around 23°F, which can be achieved in a conventional freezer.*

*The group is designing a pilot plant to test its process at commercial scale.*

**TRENDPOST:** *The new technique could make transporting and exporting natural gas far cheaper and safer, not only allowing more of the world’s remaining gas to be captured instead of flared, but also eliminating the need for tens of thousands of miles of pipeline and the risk of periodic explosions.*

## NEW BATTERY COULD DOUBLE EV RANGE, SLASH CHARGING TIMES



Volkswagen has invested \$300 million in QuantumScape, a quiet California company that has invented a new lithium-metal battery which could provide the convenience missing from today’s electric vehicles.

According to QuantumScape’s test results, the flat battery can charge to 80 percent of capacity in 15 minutes (Tesla’s charged to 90 percent in 37 minutes in

a 2019 MotorTrend test) and retain 80 percent of its capacity over 800 charging cycles, which would be about 240,000 miles' worth of driving.

Based on those numbers, the company calculates its power cell could travel 400 miles on a charge, compared to today's standard of about 240.

Lithium reacts easily with other materials, so standard lithium batteries keep the lithium isolated from the batteries' liquid electrolyte. But, over time, the lithium in batteries forms finger-like tendrils that grow out into the battery, break the separation layer between the lithium and electrolyte, and short-circuit the battery or, rarely, cause a fire.

QuantumScape invested five years in developing a solid ceramic electrolyte a few tens of microns thick that is also the separation layer. It blocks the tendrils from invading the electrolyte but doesn't interfere with the flow of electrons inside the battery.

The company also has built its battery without an anode.

Since batteries were invented, they've had two poles: a positive cathode, which sends electrons out through the electrolyte, and the negative anode, which gathers the electrons from the electrolyte and delivers them to an external electrical circuit.

In QuantumScape's cell, lithium ions flow from the cathode through the ceramic separator directly to the electrical contact at the end of the battery.

Removing the anode cuts the battery's weight, size, and cost.

QuantumScape says its batteries will be powering electric cars in 2025, although critics doubt the technology's manufacturing process can evolve to commercial scale so quickly.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Lithium-metal battery technology has long been known to be superior to lithium-ion batteries but have posed major technical and chemical barriers to development. QuantumScape's advance, if nothing else, shows that lithium-metal batteries ultimately will replace their lithium-ion ancestors.*