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THE TRENDS JOURNAL®

HISTORY BEFORE IT

NORD STREAM ATTACK • KREMLIN ATTACK • DAM ATTACK

ONLY BELIEVE

ZELENSKY

HE CAN PLAY THE PIANO WITH HIS PENIS

TRENDS JOURNAL
HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®

13 June 2023

PUBLISHER
GERALD CELENTE

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
EDMUND DeMARCHE

EDITOR
AMY BYRNE

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
GREGORY MANNARINO
GARY NULL
RICHARD GALE
BEN DAVISS
JOE DORAN

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About the TRENDS JOURNAL

Gerald Celente is the Founder/Director of the Trends Research Institute and Publisher of the weekly **Trends Journal** magazine. He is the author of the highly acclaimed and best-selling books *Trend Tracking* and *Trends 2000* (Warner Books).

With a 40-year track record of identifying, tracking, and forecasting trends, Celente is world-renowned as today's #1 Trend Forecaster. Celente has earned the reputation as a trusted name in trends for his many accurate forecasts; among them the 1987 Stock Market crash, Dot com bust, "Gold Bull Run," the "Panic of '08," the rise of organic foods, and the popularity of gourmet coffee long before Starbucks was a household name.

Self-described as a "Warrior for the Prince of Peace," Gerald Celente is also the Founder "Occupy Peace & Freedom," a not-for-profit movement to honor the Constitution and Bill of Rights and restore Freedoms.

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ONLY BELIEVE ZELENSKY

Welcome to this week's **Trends Journal**: **"ONLY BELIEVE ZELENSKY. HE CAN PLAY THE PIANO WITH HIS PENIS"**

Former sitcom star Volodymyr Zelensky who became Ukraine's President, went from playing the piano with his penis to playing the Western media like a fiddle.

Witness how last week's explosion at the Kakhovka Dam became yet another opportunity for the Western media to dance to Zelensky's tune. Each strike of the key, another assumed Russian atrocity. To believe the mainstream is to believe that Russia's strategy is to self-sabotage itself to victory.

Amidst all this, where does Russian President Vladimir Putin stand? His characterization of the dam attack as "barbaric" fell on deaf ears, drowned out by the melody of Zelensky's media concert. In our current media landscape, anything less than outright denouncement of Russia brands you a Putin-puppet. How did we arrive at such a twisted reality?

Indeed, Zelensky, in his green T-shirt, has turned the West into his new piano.

On the Economic Front

In this week's **Trends Journal**, we delve into detailed analysis of various economic aspects, including tomorrow's Federal Reserve meeting and the trajectory of our economy.

Our mission at **The Trends Journal** is to remain 100 percent independent and provide trend forecasts and news analysis without fear or favor. Please consider telling your family and friends about us because the more subscribers we have, the more work we can do to be a counterbalance to the mainstream propaganda.

Please support us by making a generous tax-deductible donation today to the Universal Church of Freedom Peace and Justice and/or Occupy Peace. The more support we have the more we can do.

Sincerely,

Gerald Celente and the Trends Journal Team

TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC AND MARKET FRONT

ECONOMIC UPDATE - MARKET OVERVIEW

All the economic eyes are on the central Banksters. What will they do next? Raise, lower or hold their interest rates.

The answer?

Right or wrong, they'll make up anything they want.

The bets were that Australia and Canada would not raise interest rates.

Last Tuesday, Australia's central bank raised interest rates by a quarter-point to an 11-year high. And in Canada, the Banksters racked up their fastest tightening cycle in their history, bringing interest rates to a 15-year high of 4.5 percent.

And with their economy not recovering from the COVID War they launched on Lunar New Year 2020, “The Year of the Rat,” today, China's central Banksters lowered short-term lending rates for the first time in 10 months, cutting its seven-day reverse repurchase operations to 1.9 percent from 2.0 percent. Following the rate-cuts, China’s yuan and its benchmark 10-year government bonds fell to a six-month low and 7-1/2-month low, respectively.

Being that so much of the world’s commodities rise and fall on China’s economic perspective, Brent Crude spiked 3 percent today following China’s central bank lowering of short-term lending rate.

TREND FORECAST: *On the up-note for China’s economy, with the yuan getting weaker, their exports will get stronger as nations with stronger currencies will spend less to buy more Chinese products. On the downside for the Chinese people, with the yuan down, it will cost them more to buy U.S. and European imported products.*

We also forecast that China will increase its stimulus measures to pump up their economy... while also cutting interest rates.

Back in the USA

Today, the U.S. Labor Department reported that May’s 4 percent consumer price inflation rate cooled to its lowest annual rate since March 2021.

Thus, the lower inflation falls the less the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates... and, in fact, as we have forecast, they will also lower rates in the run-up to the Presidential Reality Show®.

However, while energy prices fell 3.6 percent and food prices climbed just 0.2 percent, core inflation climbed 0.4 percent last month, and is up 5.3 percent from a year ago.

And on the food front, prices are up 6.7 percent from a year ago while shelter prices have risen 8 percent.

Thus, the bottom line for the plantation workers of Slavelandia is that it is costing them a lot more to buy a lot less since core inflation, up 5.3 percent from a year ago, is much higher than their wages: Average hourly earnings adjusted for inflation rose 0.3 percent on the month, while on an annual basis, real earnings are up just 0.2 percent.

We have also noted that rather than blame high inflation on the Washington pumping in trillions of fake money backed by nothing and printed on nothing to fight the COVID War and the central Banksters bringing interest rates to zero, they, including Fed-head Jerome Powell, instead blame the "high" wages of the plantation workers of Slavelandia:

- "SPOTLIGHT: INFLATION" (18 Jan 2022)
- "JANUARY INFLATION WORST IN 40 YEARS" (15 Feb 2022)
- "SPOTLIGHT ON INFLATION" (3 May 2022)
- "POWELL PLUNKED BY CALL FROM ZELENSKY IMPERSONATOR" (2 May 2023)
- "JOBS, WAGES BOTH RISE AGAIN IN APRIL" (9 May 2023)

In yesterday's *Financial Times,* the headline read, "Experts predict two more Fed rate rises," and "The biggest factors driving down the rate of inflation would be rising jobless numbers and falling wage gains, 48 percent of the economists said."

So that 48 percent should be thrilled that wages have fallen well below inflation.

Therefore, with inflation and wages falling, CME's FedWatch Tool reports that there is a 94.2 percent bet that the Fed will hold rates, up from 79.1 percent on Monday.

TREND FORECAST: *As we had forecast last November, following the last 40 U.S. midterm elections over the past 60 years, the S&P 500 climbed on average 16.3 percent... and it would continue to rise this year. To date, the S&P is up 12 percent and yesterday it rose to its highest level in a year.*

Minus a wild card, such as the Ukraine War escalating and/or war in the Middle East the Fed's pause on interest rate hike will prove positive for equity markets. And as the dollar devalues, gold prices will also rise.

YESTERDAY: S&P, NASDAQ SEE HIGHEST LEVELS SINCE APRIL 2022 AS INVESTORS ANTICIPATE MAY'S CPI

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 189.55, or 0.56 percent, to 34,066.33 and the S&P 500 gained 40.07, or 0.93 percent, to $4,338.93. The tech-heavy Nasdaq was up 202.78, or 1.58 percent, to 13,461.92.

Investors were preparing for May's consumer price index due tomorrow, which could impact the Fed's announcement on Wednesday about a possible rate hike to bring inflation down to its 2 percent target.

The CPI is expected to rise 4.0 percent, year-on-year, and the Producer Price Index is seen down 0.1 percent, month-on-month.

Raghuram Rajan, a former governor of the Reserve Bank of India, considered the recent banking turmoil in the U.S. and the credit crunch that many small businesses face. He said the central bank finds itself "between a rock and a hard place."

"It's a very, very tough situation," he said. "You're damned if you raise rates significantly more and put even more pressure on the banks, but you're damned if you don't" and inflation rises.

Elsewhere, London's FTSE was up 8.33, or 0.11 percent, to 7,570.69 and the benchmark STOXX600 gained 0.72, or 0.16 percent, to 460.73. The Asian market was mixed. Japan's Nikkei was up 168.83, or 0.52 percent, to 32,434.00 and South Korea's Kospi was down 11.81, or 0.45 percent, to 2,629.35. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was up 14.36, or 0.07 percent, to 19,404.31.

China's Shanghai Composite shed 2.57, or 0.08 percent, to 3,228.83, and the Shenzhen Component gained 79.81, or 0.74 percent, to 10,873.74.

All eyes have been on the Chinese economy. *The Wall Street Journal* said much of the country is de-leveraging after years of taking out loans to finance expansion.

"Borrowers that are focused on paying down debt are less able to fund new projects that would increase GDP growth," Nicholas Borst, director of China research at Seafarer Capital Partners, told the paper.

China's PPI last month fell 4.6 percent, which is the biggest decline since 7.2 percent in May 2016.

Economists say the drop indicates weakened pricing power for Chinese manufacturers.

TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal *has said that it takes about one full year for interest rate hikes to take hold and the economy to start to sputter. Gerald Celente has said, "That time is now."*

The Fed is expected to hold rates after the meeting on Wednesday, which will likely give a boost to the indexes and gold.

OIL: Brent crude was down $2.95, or 3.9 percent, to $71.84, which represents its lowest level for the year. West Texas Intermediate fell $3.05, or 4.4 percent, to $67.12 a barrel.

OPEC+ is learning that there is no amount of oil production that you can cut to offset tanking economies around the world. A firming U.S. dollar index was also a drag on crude prices.

Barron's noted that crude prices are down 15 percent since the start of the year after a lackluster reopening of the Chinese economy after its zero-COVID policy.

Goldman Sachs on Monday lowered its 2023 outlook on the price of Brent to $86 a barrel by the end of the year. The firm had forecast a $95-per-barrel price tag.

Beside the slowing economies, oil-producing countries are dealing with Russia and Iran flooding the market. Russian crude exports rose to 3.8 million barrels per day in May, Freight Waves reported. The number is the highest level since before the COVID outbreak. China, India, Turkey, and Bulgaria are the biggest buyers.

TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal *continues to identify the oil market as a true wildcard, which Goldman has now learned. Oil prices will likely remain suppressed, but a military strike on Iran by Israel or a clear expansion of the Ukraine War, could send prices soaring.*

GOLD: Spot gold was off 0.14 percent to $1,957.64 an ounce and U.S. gold futures ended the day down 0.4 percent to $1,969.70.

The precious metal faced headwinds today as the dollar index rose and the yield on the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury hit at 3.763 percent, which was up from 3.744 percent at the end of last week.

TRENDPOST: *Gold continues to be undervalued and will pop if the Fed holds interest rates in place. And the more the Fed lowers interest rates the deeper the dollar will fall. And the lower the dollar falls, the higher gold prices will rise.*

BITCOIN: The world's most popular crypto was down $29.90, or 0.12 percent, to $25,904.40 at about 6:49 p.m. ET.

Crypto investors were tentative and were waiting for the upcoming CPI data and the upcoming Fed decision on interest rates.

"The Cryptoverse is stuck in limbo as regulatory fears run wild and as some investors abandon certain key exchanges," Edward Moya, senior market analyst at foreign exchange market maker Oanda, wrote in an email, according to CoinDesk. "Mainstream acceptance for crypto won't occur with DeFi. While experienced crypto traders move more of their trading volumes onto DeFi, this is not good news for long-term growth and for attracting new investors."

TRENDPOST: *Bitcoin shed $680.50, or 2.57 percent, in the last five days as the U.S. government continues its crackdown on the currency.*

Gary Gensler, the head of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, announced lawsuits against Coinbase and Binance last week, which sent cryptos across the board falling 15 percent in the timeframe.

"The investing public has the benefit of U.S. securities laws. Crypto should be no different, and these platforms, these intermediaries need to come into compliance," he told CNBC.

The Trends Journal *has said for years that when these coins grow in importance, the government will move to regulate—and the prices will suffer.*

LAST WEEK: INVESTORS AWAIT INFLATION NEWS, FED DECISION

U.S. stock markets last week were relatively quiet as investors waited for this week's inflation report and the decision by the U.S. Federal Reserve whether to hold its interest rate steady.

The central bank is widely expected to leave its key rate alone, especially now that the U.S. government will need to borrow an estimated $1 trillion to keep paying its bills.

That will push interest rates up, analysts say, having much the same effect as a Fed rate hike.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average managed a 0.31-percent gain for the week. The NASDAQ ticked up 0.16 percent. The Standard & Poor's 500 index grew by 0.37 percent.

Tesla's share price surged on news that General Motors would build electric vehicles that could use its charging network. Chip makers also continued their strides, riding the frenzy over artificial intelligence.

Those outsize gains among a few companies have propped up the equity market this year.

The S&P has added 12 percent for the year on the strength of those relatively few gains. An analysis giving every company in the index equal weight shows a far more modest 2-percent growth.

“This very narrow market leadership is not a sign of a quality rally or bull market,” James Demmert, in charge of investments at Main Street Research, told *The Wall Street Journal*.

The market for treasury securities also was restrained through the week. The yield on the 10-year t-note nudged up from 3.714 percent Thursday to 3.744 percent Friday. Yields rise as bond prices fall.

Gold rose 0.1 percent, trading at $1,961.74 at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 9 June.

Brent crude oil slid 3.2 percent to $74.79 at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 9 June. West Texas Intermediate broke briefly below $70 on 8 June but recovered to $70.17 at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 9 June, closing the week down 3.6 percent.

Bitcoin gained 2.8 percent through the week, pricing at $26,474 at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 9 June, but then sank below $25,500 the next day and struggled through the weekend.

Abroad, the London FTSE lost 0.6 percent over the week. The Europe-wide Stoxx 600 was off 0.4 percent.

In Japan, the Nikkei 225 added 1.2 percent. South Korea’s KOSPI climbed 2.1 percent.

Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index took on another 1.9 percent. Mainland China’s CSI Composite retreated 0.6 percent and the tech-heavy SSE Composite ended the week flat.

TODAY: DOW SEES GAINS AS TRADERS EXPECT FED TO HOLD RATES

S&P 500 and Nasdaq hit 13-month highs today. The S&P 500 was up 30.08, to close at 4,369.01 and the Nasdaq was up 0.83 percent to 13,573.32. The Dow moved up 145.79 points, closing at 34,212.12.

Markets moved up on The Labor Department announcement that the consumer-price index in May increased 4 percent from 2022, which was down from the 4.9 percent increase in the previous month. The 4 percent represents the smallest annual increase in more than two years. The annual CPI peaked at 9.1 percent in June 2022.

With the current key federal-funds target rate between 5 percent and 5.25 percent, as we note in our ECONOMIC UPDATE, considering the Labor Department data, The Street expects the Fed to hold interest rates tomorrow. We also note that annual core inflation actually rose in May... which has about 40 percent of The Street guessing the Feds will raise interest rates in July.

The Federal Reserve will also keep a keen eye on tomorrow's Producer Price Index, which considers U.S. inflation at the wholesale level. The index gives economists price changes at the producer level that could eventually increase retail prices at stores.

"Expect a hawkish skip this week," Eric Rosengren, the former president of Boston Federal Reserve Bank, tweeted.

Barron's called the expected move a "hawkish hold."

TRENDPOST: *The CPI number produced today makes a pause almost certain after tomorrow's FOMC meeting, but economists believe the interest rates will remain high for 2023, which will add pressure to small businesses and households trying to pay back loans.*

"Keeping rates at these levels will pull more skeletons out of the closet," Laura Rosner-Warburton, a senior official at MacroPolicy Perspectives and a former staffer at the New York Fed, told Politico.

However, we maintain our forecast that the Feds will lower interest rates in the run-up to the 2024 Presidential Reality Show®.

Elsewhere, London's FTSE inched up 24.09, or 0.32 percent, to 7,594.78 and the benchmark 2.54, or 0.55 percent, to 463.27. The Asian market was in the green. Japan's Nikkei was up 584.65, or 1.80 percent, to 33,018.65 and South Korea's Kospi 8.60, or 0.33 percent, to 2,637.95, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng was up 117.11, or 0.60 percent, to 19,521.42.

In China, the Shanghai Composite was up 4.84, or 0.15 percent, to 3,233.67 and the Shenzhen Component was up 82.22, or 0.76 percent, to 10,955.96.

OIL: Brent Crude was up $2.17, or 3.02 percent, to $74.01 and West Texas Intermediate was trading up $2.04, or 3.04 percent, to $69.16.

Oil prices benefited from China's central bank's decision to cut its overnight rate by 10 basis points to 2.75 percent. As we note in our ECONOMIC UPDATE and our SPOTLIGHT ON CHINA articles, Beijing is doing what they can to boost up the economy that they brought down with their three years of zero-COVID Policy.

GOLD: The precious metal was trading down $13.70, or 0.70 percent, to $1,956.00 due to higher Treasury yields, which make the non-yielding asset less attractive to potential buyers.

Tai Wong, a New York-based independent metals trader, told CNBC, "Gold couldn't hold on to post-CPI gains over growing concern that stubborn underlying inflation may produce a hawkish Fed dot-plot tomorrow pointing to fewer-than-expected rate cuts in 2024."

TREND FORECAST: *The U.S. central bank will likely hold interest rates, which will weaken the dollar and drive gold prices higher because it becomes a more attractive investment for foreign buyers.*

The precious metal has struggled to surpass the $,2000 level and traders are expecting some near-term choppiness.

BITCOIN: The world's most popular crypto was little changed today and was trading down $51.90, or 0.20 percent, to $25,853.00 as of 4:16 p.m. ET.

Mikybull Crypto, a popular crypto trader, highlighted what he identified as an encouraging chart that showed bitcoin is "flashing a text book inverse head and shoulders on the weekly TF. Price is currently retesting the Neckline after the breakout."

Other traders noted that the trend could mean a "sprint" from its current price to $40,000—about a 60 percent increase.

U.S. TREASURY MUST BORROW ANOTHER TRILLION, ANALYSTS SAY

The U.S. government will be forced to borrow another $1.1 trillion by selling short-term treasury bills after raising the debt ceiling earlier this month, analysts at JPMorgan Chase estimated.

Other analysts also pegged the new debt load at around $1 trillion.

The treasury must now boost its cash balance, which fell to $40 billion earlier this month during Congress's weeks-long debt standoff. That was the lowest level since 2017.

To balance its books, the treasury will sell about $850 billion in notes through September, JPMorgan predicted. The securities will have maturity dates ranging from a few days to a year, it said.

The treasury department expects to borrow enough to reinflate its cash on hand to $425 billion by the end of June, the agency said last week.
"The supply floodgates are now open," said Mark Cabana, an interest rate strategist at Bank of America.

The new notes are likely to drive up yields to attract investors and will continue to lure more money away from bank deposits, analysts told the *Financial Times*.

Small and regional banks are already losing deposits as money market funds pay higher interest rates and account holders move to "fail-safe" megabanks in the wake of the March collapse of Signature and Silicon Valley banks. (See "Cash Flight to Money Market Funds Worsens Banks' Plight" 4 Apr 2023).

"The rise in [treasury] yields could force banks to raise their deposit rates," Gregory Peters, investment co-chief at PGIM Fixed Income, said to the *FT*.

That pressure "could exacerbate stresses already on the banking system," Doug Spratley, T. Rowe Price's cash manager, said in an *FT* interview.

Those higher yields on government securities will also raise interest rates on loans from banks and other sources, *The New York Times* pointed out.

The effect could be similar to an increase of 1 or 2 percent in the U.S. Federal Reserve's base interest rate, according to analysts cited by the *NYT*.

That might give the Fed further encouragement to pause raising interest rates when it meets this week, the *NYT* said.

"Everyone knows the flood is coming," TD Securities strategist Gennady Goldberg said to the *FT*. "Yields will move higher because of this, treasury bills will cheapen further, and that will increase pressure on banks."

"The potential hit to the economy once the Treasury goes to market selling that much debt could be extraordinary," Christopher Campbell, a former assistant treasury secretary, said to the *NYT*.

"It's difficult to imagine the treasury selling what could be $1 trillion of bonds and not have that have an impact on borrowing costs," he warned.
This will be one of the biggest t-bill issuances in history, on the scale of that during the Great Recession and the COVID crisis, Goldberg added.

Yields on U.S. government securities already have begun to rise in anticipation of the wave of new issues, Peters noted.

The government is "running a significant budget deficit," Torsten Slok, Apollo Global Management's chief economist, told the *FT*. "We still have quantitative tightening. If we still have t-bill issuance as well, we likely have turbulence in the treasury [securities] market in the months ahead."

Ironically, the treasury department could have trouble selling all those new issues.

Money market funds typically are heavy buyers of treasuries, the *FT* explained. They receive a guaranteed 5.05-percent return on funds they leave with the U.S. Federal Reserve overnight.

The new issues at the Fed's current yield of 5.25 percent is only fractionally higher but carries more risk.

TREND FORECAST: *The debt spiral will continue unabated as long as the government crime syndicate keeps taxes low for the 1 percent, private equity groups, venture capitalists and hedge funds... while increasing government debt without major spending cuts.*

The federal budget came into balance in the early 1990s when Congress agreed on to do both.

Since then, political correctness and rigidity has hardened into more extreme positions on both sides.

It is likely to take a crisis on the scale of the Great Recession in 2008 to persuade politicians to do the hard but necessary work of putting the U.S. fiscal house in order.

UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS CLIMB MORE THAN EXPECTED

New claims for jobless benefits rose to 261,000 in the most recent week, rising 28,000 from the week before, the U.S. labor department reported.

The increase beat Dow Jones' estimate of 235,000 and was the sharpest weekly rise since 30 October, 2021, according to CNBC.

As of 20 May, 16.35 million Americans were receiving unemployment benefits, compared to 12.83 million a year before—a 27.4-percent increase.

The number of U.S. workers saying they are now unemployed rose by 310,000 last month, according to a U.S. Federal Reserve survey.

With the labor market softening, markets are now more confident that the Fed will not raise its key interest rate when it meets this week, CNBC said.

As of 8 June after the unemployment report was released, speculators were giving 73.6-percent odds that the Fed would not boost its rate.

TRENDPOST: *Should the Federal Reserve raise interest rates in July (See "U.S. Treasury Must Borrow Another Trillion, Analysts Say" in this issue), consumers will cut spending even more, businesses will invest less, and more people will be out of work, pushing the U.S. economy into recession.*

ONLINE BANKS LURING DEPOSITS AWAY FROM BRICK-AND-MORTAR RIVALS

During this year's first quarter, online banks increased their total deposits while small and regional brick-and-mortar competitors were seeing depositors flee.

Deposits at U.S. banks fell the most on record, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) reported.

In contrast, deposits grew by 1 percent at online Ally Bank. Marcus, Goldman Sachs' digital bank, also reported an increase but did not give numbers.

Citizens Bank, Truist [sic] Financial and U.S. Bank all lost deposits. PacWest and Western Alliance, whose vulnerabilities were spotlighted following the mid-March collapse of Signature and Silicon Valley banks, were hit especially hard.

Even some megabanks saw deposits trickle away. Bank of America and Wells Fargo both reported losses.

Online banks pay higher interest on deposits because they have no cost for buildings housing branches and employees.

The annual cost of operating a single branch can run from $500,000 to as much as $1.3 million, Brian Riley at consulting firm Javelin Strategy & Research told the *WSJ*.

From 2019 through 2022 as the COVID War raged, banks closed about 6,100 branch offices, the FDIC said, the highest number of branch closures on record.

"The future of everything in banking is digital," Richard Fairbank, Capital One's CEO, told analysts in an April call. Capital One, which has fewer branches than most other major banks, grew deposits by 5 percent during the first quarter, in part by offering an average of 2.4 percent on savings.

However, U.S. banks still operate more than 71,000 branches, the FDIC reported. Some branches will remain as places where people can meet to discuss loan possibilities with a human, close loans, and handle other chores in which dealing person-to-person can be more satisfying.

Branches also are a traditional way for banks to attract new customers.

Much of the money leaving banks altogether is going into money market funds, as we reported in "Money Market Funds Continue to Rake In Record Cash" (30 May 2023).

The funds, which typically invest in short-term government bonds and other highly-rated debt, provide a measure of safety that depositors are seeking in the wake of the banking crisis.

Money market funds also are paying dramatically higher interest rates than conventional banks. Savings accounts at the funds can pay 4 percent or more, while the returns on savings accounts at banks averaged 1 percent during the first three months of this year, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Many banks have lowered their profitability forecasts for this year, expecting to be forced to pay higher interest rates to compete. However, paying higher rates also narrows their margins, especially as deposits move to megabanks and money market funds.

TREND FORECAST: *With deposits leaving, interest rates rising, and the need to keep more cash in reserve against bad loans, more banks will be sold to bigger competitors.*

In the past, businesses and individuals could form personal relationships with local bankers who could offer help in individual circumstances.

The coming wave of bank consolidations will make banking even less personal than it has become. People will find themselves dealing even more with bots and call centers.

The result will be fewer loans to small businesses and individuals to help the economy remain strong while giving the "Bigs" all they need to get bigger.

SIGNET JEWELERS SLUMP: DID COVID KILL IT?

Signet Jewelers, the parent company of the Zales and Kay jewelry store chains, cut its 2023 financial outlook, saying the COVID lockdown killed sales and the following rise in inflation and interest rates has slashed demand for engagement rings.

The company also cited lower tax refunds and jitters over recent bank failures for its slump.

The company cut its sales forecast this year to between $7.1 and $7.3 billion, down from $7.6 to $7.8 billion.

First quarter sales fell 9.3 percent to $1.67 billion, year on year.

Sales of engagement rings make up about half of Signet's revenue. It said the COVID lockdown disrupted the usual three-year arc from dating to the purchase of an engagement ring.

"We expected to see [ring sales] decline, but we also expected growth in average transaction values, which did not materialize," CEO Virginia Drosos told an investors call earlier this month.

"People are still getting engaged but buying a ring at a slightly lower price," she added.

Signet also faces a longer-term problem in social norms: people are getting engaged at later ages than in the past and a growing number are choosing not to marry at all.

TREND FORECAST: *Over the coming decades, diamond sales will continue their decline. Diamonds, as Maryilyn Monroe sung 70 years ago, are no longer "a girl's best friend."*

And with people marrying at older ages, the glamor of the younger feeling of life wanes with age. Back in "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" days, women got married at age 20 and men at 23. In 2022, the median marriage age for men was 30.1 years and 28.2 years among women, according to the U.S. census bureau. A decade earlier, the median ages were 28.6 and 26.6.

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT

WHEN THE ECONOMY FALLS JOBS GO WITH IT

As equity markets rise and the “good news” that inflation is falling, on the employment front, the firing binge continues... as we have continued to detail over the past 43 weeks.

And it is global. In China for example, thanks to its launching the COVID War and its three years of zero-COVID policy which destroyed tens of millions of businesses, urban youngsters aged 16 to 24 saw a jobless rate of 20.4 percent in April. Chinese University graduates reached 11.58 million, an increase of 820,000 the previous year, which will only add to the pressure as prominent Chinese Internet technology giants continue to cut jobs due to the economic downturn and an intensifying geopolitical crisis which is stopping more Western companies from doing business with China.

- Coherent – 196 fired

- Unity Technologies – 50 let go
- Flex – 31 cut
- Reddit – 5 percent, 90 fired
- Los Angeles Times – 74 laid off
- Standard Chartered – 100 gone
- Seattle Children's – 1.5 percent, 135 fired
- Nubank – 296 fired
- Dragos – 9 percent, 50 cut
- Laing O'Rourke – 200 fired
- Autoliv – 8,000 laid off
- Westpac – 300 cut
- Citi – 50 gone
- Better.com – 4,000 laid off
- The Athletic – 4 percent, 20
- Grubhub – 15 percent, 400 fired
- GoCardless – 15 percent, 50 gone
- Santander – Unknown but cuts announced
- Embracer Group - Unknown
- Atlas Global – 50 gone
- Vision Fund – 30 percent, 100 fired
- GM – plans thousands of cuts
- Chegg – 80 globally gone
- Grosse Pointe Schools Michigan –layoffs announced
- Crypto unicorn TaxBit – 80 fired
- Henry Mayo – 100 Layoffs
- Freshworks – 3rd round of layoffs in 6 months
- Senior living operator Enlivant – 284 gone
- D.C.'s Mary's Center – 48 fired
- Hamden Public Schools district – 17 fired
- 23andMe – 75 cut
- EducationWorks – 133 laid off
- Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center NH – 75 cut
- Branch Insurance – 55 gone
- Orbit Fab – 10 fired
- CityBlock – 12 percent, 155 cut

- Bustle Digital Group – 21 laid off
- Embrace Families – 36 fired
- Highspot - 15 percent, 140 cut
- GreenLight Biosciences in Mass. – 96 laid off
- Rocket engine maker Ursa Major – 7 fired
- Ariens Co in Brillion Wis. - Some Layoffs reported
- Q.E.P. Co. – 87 cut
- FlyHomes - 3rd Round of Layoffs, No #
- Valley River Inn in Eugene Ore. – 60 fired
- Marysville School District - Hundreds of Layoff Notices
- Arca – 12 let go
- St. Dominic Hospital Miss. - 157
- ESPN - More layoffs coming

TOP TREND, DRAGFLATION: EUROZONE IN RECESSION

The Eurozone—20 countries that share the euro as their currency—entered a technical recession in this year's first quarter, with the collective economy shrinking 0.1 percent, according to Eurostat, the European Union's statistics agency.

Eurostat also revised its fourth-quarter figures from 2022. It had estimated the region's economy flatlined during the period but now says the zone's GDP drifted down 0.1 percent.

A technical recession is defined as two quarters of declining economic productivity.

Germany, the Eurozone's largest economy, led the way downward. Government data showed it had been driven into recession by the series of energy price shocks caused by Russia's successive cuts in natural gas deliveries, Western sanctions, and Europe's pledge to stop buying Russian gas.

The back-to-back contractions "suggest the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine might have been deeper than expected," *The Wall Street Journal* noted. "The weakness in Germany is a particular concern."

Economies grew in France, Italy, and Spain, Europe's three other largest economies. However, as Europe's leading manufacturer, Germany and its fortunes lead the rest of the region's economy up or down.

The zone's last technical recession came early in the COVID War in 2020.

The region continues to struggle with record high food prices, as we reported in "Europe: First an Energy Shock, Now a Food Shock" (30 May, 2023). Natural gas prices set a series of records last year as a result of the Ukraine war and Europe's decision to end its purchase of Russian natural gas. However, Europe's energy prices have retreated significantly this year.

Consumers spent 0.3 percent less during this year's first three months after cutting purchases 1 percent in the previous quarter.

Imports fell sharply in the two most recent quarters as demand puckered, weakening export sales in other nations.

Economists are forecasting a long, slow recovery for the region, already mired in the effects of the European Central Bank's (ECB's) steadily higher interest rates.

Inflation across the Eurozone stood at 6.1 percent in May, its lowest in more than a year, but still more than three times higher than the central bank's 2-percent target.

As a result, the bank is likely to lift its key interest rate by a quarter point at its 15 June meeting and again in July before pausing increases for the rest of this year, according to a "clear majority" of economists surveyed by Reuters.

The European Commission predicts the continent's economy will grow by 1.1 percent this year and 1.6 percent in 2024.

TREND FORECAST: *What we said in "Inflation in Europe Stays High as Service Prices Rise," (7 Mar 2023) is even more true now that the Eurozone is in recession.*

As the central bank scrambles to catch up with inflation, the Eurozone will sink deeper into Dragflation, our Top 2022 Trend defined by rising prices and shrinking economic productivity.

The energy crisis created by the Ukraine War and Western sanctions will prolong not only inflation, but also the continent's recession, giving inflation a greater chance to embed itself across the economy and realizing one of the ECB's greatest fears.

Again the reality is simple: The higher interest rates rise, the deeper the Eurozone's economy and equity markets will fall. And with the EU in recession and it being expected that the European Central Bank will raise interest rates on Thursday, a bad situation will be made worse.

BANK OF CANADA SETS INTEREST RATE AT 22-YEAR HIGH

After a five-month pause in rate increases, the Bank of Canada (BoC) lifted its key rate on 7 June from 4.50 percent to 4.75 percent, its highest since 2001.

Consumer spending remained strong across the country, sparking worries that inflation might persist longer than expected or even become permanent, *The Wall Street Journal* said.

Canada's inflation rate registered 4.4 percent in April, ticking up from 4.3 percent the month before, still more than twice the BoC's 2-percent target. The rate peaked at 8 percent in 2022's second quarter.

In January, the central bank became the first among G7 nations to halt its campaign of rate hikes to assess their impact on the country's steadily rising prices.

The bank had added 4.25 percentage points to the rate in 10 months and assumed that the sharp increase would slow economic activity and cool inflation.

That has not happened, forcing not only the bank to rethink its strategy but also prodding other central banks to reconsider any plans to stop hiking rates, the *WSJ* noted.

Canada's bank moved its rate a day after the Reserve Bank of Australia boosted its key rate for the 12th time in barely a year.

TREND FORECAST: *The higher Canada and other countries raise interest rates the deeper their economies will fall. While consumers are spending more on services, they are buying less products.*

The S&P Global Canada manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index in May declined to 49.0 from 50.2 in April. A number below the 50 threshold signals contraction.

The U.S. manufacturing sector contracted in May, and a survey by the Institute for Supply Management reported that it was the seventh monthly contracting in a row.

China's exports were down 7.5 percent in May from a year earlier, and the JPMorgan Global Manufacturing PMI report showed that manufacturers' optimism fell to its lowest level since December... when China was just unlocking from its zero COVID policy.

Thus, the message is clear. The higher interest rates climb the deeper economies will fall.

TURKEY'S LIRA CONTINUES TO FALL

Having secured his re-election on 28 May as Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan has appointed a new finance minister who promises "rational" fiscal policies.

Following the naming of former Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek as finance chief, the lira surrendered another 10 percent of its value to the dollar. It fell to a record low of 23.25 to the buck on 10 June, marking its sharpest decline since December 2021's currency crisis, data service Refinitiv reported.

Turkey's currency has been on a slide for more than a year under Erdogan's bizarre economic policies, which included cutting interest rates as inflation climbed, reaching above 85 percent at one point.

However, the lira's latest slump "is seen as a relief valve for the country's finances, making the currency more attractive to investors and helping exporters," *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

Over the past 15 months, Erdogan has fired central bank officials who dared raise rates to fight inflation and brought criminal charges against an independent group that showed the country's inflation rate to be far above the official number.

We have documented Erdogan's defiance of economic realities in a series of reports, including:

- "Turkey's Central Bank Governor Fired After Rate Hike" (23 Mar 2021)
- "Turkey's Financial Markets Crash After Agbal Firing" (30 Mar 2021)
- "Turkey: Another Day, Another Central Bankster Fired" (1 Jun 2021)
- "Turkey: Interest Rates Down, Lira Crashing. War Next?" (19 Oct 2021)
- "Turkey's Economy Continues to Implode" (14 Dec 2021)

- "Turkey's Inflation Rate Nears 50 Percent" (8 Feb 2022)
- "Turkey's Bonds Downgraded, Worse to Come" (22 Feb 2022)
- "Turkey's Economy Weakens Further Under Erdogan's Policy" (14 Jun 2022)
- "Turkey's Central Bank Drains Gold, Foreign Reserves Near Election" (23 May 2023

The lira's new decline indicates that the government is no longer trying to manipulate its value by spending its foreign reserves to buy lira, several banks told their clients, according to the *Financial Times*, adding that investors expect a shift to a realistic economic policy.

"Turkey is facing a systemic crisis unless policy changes," Timothy Ash, emerging market strategist at Bluejay Asset Management, told the *WSJ*. "That's clear to the guys around Erdogan. The [value of] the lira was artificially maintained. That was unsustainable."

Simsek, who the *FT* described as well-regarded by foreign investors, helped guide the government's finances when they followed more conventional practices.

He "will create a situation that will enable the lira to get closer to its real value," Enver Erkan, chief economist at brokerage Dinamik Yatirim Menkul Degerler, said in an *FT* interview.

Even after falling more than 60 percent against the dollar over the past two years, the lira remains overvalued, many currency analysts have said, according to the *FT*, which could mean it has even further to fall.

The lira's ongoing decline may boost the economy long-term but is likely to displease Turkish residents, who continue to struggle with inflation above 40 percent.

TRENDPOST: *As we had forecast, Erdogan did not alter his economic policy before the campaign for fear of raising concerns that he did not know what he was doing, even if that was true. His political persona is one of strength; admitting error is, to that frame of mind, a sign of weakness rather than prudence.*

Now that he is in his third term with no competitive threats, Erdogan can align his policies closer to economic reality.

Although he seems to be moving in that direction, no one can predict when he might change his mind again.

SPOTLIGHT: CHINA'S ECONOMIC STUMBLE

CHINA'S EXPORTS CONTINUED TO FALL IN MAY

China exported 7.5 percent less in May than a year before and imported 4.5 percent less, the General Administration of Customs said, cutting factory output and adding evidence that the country's delayed post-COVID rebound has sputtered, which we reported in "China's Post-COVID Recovery Fizzles" (6 Jun 2023).

Exports' value dropped to $283.5 billion, with imports slipping to $217.7 billion.

The country's trade surplus narrowed by 16.1 percent during the month to $65.8 billion.

However, because of last year's lower base of comparison and changes in import prices, China actually imported 8.5 percent more goods and services than a year earlier, economist Julian Evans-Pritchard at Capital Economics told the *Financial Times*.

"Import volumes rose to their highest in 18 months," he said, adding that exports will continue to fall as higher interest rates work their way through Western economies as this year progresses.

At the same time, China's consumer economy remains lackluster and youth unemployment is at record levels. China's national debt exceeds its GDP. The service economy, which began the year with a surge, is now slowing.

The world's sluggish economy will prevent exports from expanding significantly in the foreseeable future, analysts told the Associated Press.

“China’s exports will remain subdued, as we anticipate the U.S. economy to enter recession,” economist Lloyd Chan at Oxford Economics wrote in a recent report.

In May, exports to the U.S. fell 18.2 percent, year on year, to $42.5 billion, as the U.S. Federal Reserve raised its base interest rate for a 10th time in 14 months, leaving business and consumers more reluctant to spend.

U.S. exports to China were down 9.9 percent to $14.3 billion, shaving China’s trade surplus with the U.S. by 21.9 percent to $28.1 billion.

This year through May, China’s imports to the U.S. were off 6.7 percent to a little more than $1 trillion; exports flatlined.

China’s imports from the 27 countries of the European Union shrank by 38.6 percent to $24.5 billion; exports to Europe lost 26.6 percent to settle at $44.6 billion.

TRENDPOST: *Relying less on the West, China’s largest trading partner was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Trade volume increased 9.9 percent between China and the group’s 10 member countries.*

China’s other bright spot was Russia, which shipped 10 percent more to China, most of it oil, which Russia is selling at less than $60 a barrel due to Western sanctions.

China’s exports to Russia rocketed up 114 percent to $9.3 billion as Russia struggles to replace goods it can no longer buy from Western alliance countries because of sanctions.

CHINESE BANKS LOWER INTEREST RATES ON DEPOSITS

Four of China’s biggest banks have cut the interest rates they pay on deposits in response to the government’s call for help boosting economic growth.

The Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, Bank of Communications, and Industrial & Commercial Bank of China cut rates on three- and five-year savings accounts by 1.5 percentage points.

They also shaved a point off the rate paid to two-year and demand deposits.

Earlier this month, the country's economic officials urged banks to cut the interest rates paid on deposits for the second time in less than a year, Bloomberg reported.

The cuts will help the banks protect their operating margins after government officials also pressured banks to make more low-interest loans to businesses and home buyers.

Also, if depositors earn less interest, they will be more likely to spend, stimulating the country's still-modest consumer economy.

Some large banks lowered their rates last September for the first time since 2015.

Commercial banks have somewhat more freedom in setting the rates they pay depositors. However, China's central bank sets a floor and ceiling on allowable rates.

After Beijing ended anti-COVID lockdowns last November, China's economy surged back to life briefly, then lost momentum. (See "China's Post-COVID Recovery Fizzles," 6 Jun 2023).

Foreign demand for China's factory goods slumped in May for the first time in three months. Consumers remain reluctant to spend. Home sales had revived earlier this year but sagged again in May.

In a Bloomberg survey, economists pared their outlook for China's growth this year from 5.6 percent to 5.5, which also is the government's announced target.

TRENDPOST: *As go other major economies across the globe, so goes China, since their economy is export driven. And considering the socioeconomic damage that Beijing has wrought on its population with its three years of zero-COVID policies, the*

government will do more to stimulate the economy, which as we note in our ECONOMIC UPDATE in this issue, they are now doing.

TOP TREND 2023: OFFICE BUILDING BUST

LOANS DRY UP FOR OFFICE LANDLORDS NEEDING TO REFINANCE

As we correctly predicted, loans on office properties are increasingly hard to come by as property values and lease rates fall while landlords' costs rise.

The CBRE Lending Momentum Index, a gauge of commercial lending activity, fell by 54 percent in this year's first quarter, year over year.

Banks have pulled back. Their deposits are leaving for money market funds and bonds paying higher interests. They need to hold a greater cash reserve against rising odds that more loans will go bad. Their margins are shrinking as they are being forced to pay higher interest rates to hang onto depositors. (See "Online Banks Luring Deposits Away From Brick-and-Mortar Rivals" in this issue.)

That storm of factors leaves less money to risk on a commercial real estate market that already is sinking.

However, private equity firms and other alternative lenders are ready to swoop into the void banks are leaving and shop for bargains.

"When the market is dislocated, it's often the best time to invest," Richard Litton, president of Harbor Group International, told *The Wall Street Journal*. The firm has assembled a $1.6-billion fund to invest in apartments – but not office buildings or retail sites.

Private lenders typically charge interest rates 3 to almost 8 percent above those available from banks, leaving office building owners the option of having cash now at the greater risk of being foreclosed later.

Given the straits that office building owners and other commercial landlords now find themselves in, those rates are unaffordable for many.

That seems to be one reason why, in this quarter, debt funds focused on North American real estate have raised $930 billion as of last week, a tenth of the roughly $10 billion they collected during the same period in 2022.

The scarcity of loans is pushing more commercial landlords toward a crisis: $163 billion in commercial property loans—not counting loans owed to conventional banks—comes due this year, the most in any year of the next ten, Marc McDevett, a managing director at data service CRED iQ [sic], told the *WSJ*.

"Alternative lenders can offer only a drop in the ocean compared with how much cash the property industry actually needs," the *WSJ* noted. "The real solution is to get banks lending again" but "that could take quite some time."

TREND FORECAST: *As we noted in "'We Work Remotely or We Quit,' Workers Say" (6 Jun 2023), the days in which office workers flocked to office towers in city centers are gone for good.*

Too many newer buildings with better air circulation, better daylight, and a broader range of amenities are available to make older buildings competitive. That will create a stock of idle office buildings that will never house workers again.

As we had forecast, office buildings face a bleak future. Many will be returned to their lenders and sold for whatever they can fetch. Many will be torn down. A few can be repurposed, either by commercial or non-profit concerns. Others will be taken by cities for back taxes and refurbished as affordable housing or apartments for homeless people. However, those built in the past 50 years are too expensive to convert into housing.

While economists and other forecasters failed to see the Office Building Bust coming, we had long predicted the trend and its implications in articles including:

- *"TOP TREND 2023, OFFICE BUILDING BUST: THE COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE FACE OFF" (28 Mar 2023)*
- *"TOP TREND 2023, OFFICE BUILDING BUST: MAJOR RETAILERS FOLLOW COMMUTERS OUT OF CITY CENTERS" (7 Mar 2023)*
- *"AS FORECAST: BUSINESS OFFICE BUST BEGINS TO BITE" (20 Dec 2022)*
- *"AS FORECAST: "DIMMING HOPE" THAT PRE-COVID DEMAND FOR OFFICE SPACE WILL RETURN, WSJ SAYS" (22 Nov 2022)*
- *"COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BUST? OFFICE OCCUPANCY RATES IN TOILET" (29 Mar 2022)*
- *"WORKERS STAYING HOME: COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DISASTER LOOMING" (19 Oct 2021)*
- *"RETURN TO OFFICES POSTPONED: COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BUST?" (14 Sep 2021)*
- *"AS FORECAST: NYC COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE CRISIS WORSENS" (24 Aug 2021)*
- *"OFFICE WORKERS' SLOW RETURN ENDANGERS LANDLORDS, CITY FINANCES" (9 Mar 2021)*
- *"FED WARNS OF BANKRUPTCIES, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE CRASH" (23 Feb 2021)*
- *"NEW YORK OFFICES: PEOPLE EMPTY" (15 Sep 2020)*

TRENDPOST: *Exemplifying the scope of the Office Building Bust, Avison Young Real Estate forecasts that Montreal's office vacancy rate will hit 25 percent by 2025 and that those who are renewing leases are cutting their office spaces.*

And according to Morguard Corp., there were 2.7 million square feet of vacant office space that re-entered the market in the first quarter of this year, with the most unoccupied office space in Toronto, Canada's biggest real estate market.

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS GETTING BIGGER

As we had long forecast, the higher central banks raise interest rates, the lower the Merger and Acquisition trend... which hit record highs during the COVID war when interest rates sank and governments pumped in countless trillions to artificially prop up sinking economies. Now M&A activity has slowed to a trickle as we have continued to detail.

Yet, it is important to understand that while M&A activity will continue to slow down as interest rates remain high, the worsening recession will bring a lot of revenues down, making it cheaper for the Bigs to buy out those in economic distress. This in turn will shrink the competitive landscape in many business sectors.

BROOKFIELD WINS BID FOR CARD PROCESSOR

Canadian private equity firm Brookfield Asset Management has agreed to pay £400 per share, or about $503, for Network International (NI), a payment card processing firm used by about 150,000 merchants and 200 financial institutions throughout Africa and the Middle East.

The deal values Network International at about £2.2 billion.

NI entered the news in April when a consortium of investors bid £387. Brookfield topped that with a bid NI's board accepted.

Brookfield's winning bid added 64 percent to the stock price when the bidding competition began.

Brookfield will combine NI with Magnati, which was First Abu Dhabi Bank's payments division until Brookfield bought a majority stake in 2022.

NI was taken public in 2019 by private equity firms General Atlantic and Warburg Pincus. However, its share price has languished since then.

In the new deal, one of Brookfield's partners is First Abu Dhabi Bank, "which is very relevant to garnering political support for the transaction," TD Cowan analysts wrote in a note.

The bank's "chairman Sheikh Tahnoon may use influence to push" the deal through regulatory channels, they added.

KKR PAYS $1.6 BILLION FOR PUMP AND VALVE MAKER

Private equity giant KKR has bought Circor, a maker of pumps and valves, for $49 a share, a 55-percent premium to Circor's closing stock price on 9 June. The price values Circor at about $1.6 billion.

The deal includes debt, a feature becoming more scarce as banks already are sitting on debt they underwrote during last year's market boom that now is fading.

Private equity firms also have become more selective in deals requiring debt.

Circor and its 3,000 workers make pumps and valves for aerospace and defense systems, as well as for oil refineries and chemical plants, among other customers.

Circor's share price had sat idle for some time but rocketed up 51 percent when *The Wall Street Journal* reported that the deal with KKR was about to be sealed.

KKR has invested in the fluid-moving industry for several years.

“We’ve come to understand how critical flow control is and this company has exposure to really attractive markets,” Josh Weisenbeck, who directs KKR Industrials’ investments.

Under KKR, Circor will make additional acquisitions, Weisenbeck added.

MORONIC MAINSTREAM MEDIA: RUSSIA NOT ONLY BLEW UP DAM, BUT INTENTIONALLY DROWNED ITS OWN TROOPS

Russian President Vladimir Putin is evidently so sadistic and bent on world domination that not only did he bomb a major dam in Ukraine that will cause an enormous ecological and humanitarian disaster to Russian controlled territory and Crimea, but he did so without even alerting his troops stationed near the facility to seek higher ground, according to Western media.

The New York Post, quoted an obvious one-sided political hack, Capt. Andrei Pidlisnyi, a Ukrainian officer who declared that when the Khakovka dam exploded last week, “no one on the Russian side was able to get away. All the regiments the Russians had on that side were flooded.”

Pidlisnyi also told CNN that his unit watched the events unfold while using drones and troops on the ground.

“The left [east] bank is lower than the right bank, so it is more flooded,” he told the outlet. “The enemy’s positions right on the riverbank were also flooded. You need to understand that the enemy’s positions are not only trenches but also ordinary civilian houses where they lived.”

Ukraine’s position is that Russia intentionally mined the dam in hopes to blackmail the world and use the flood as a weapon of mass destruction.

The paper, citing Pidlisnyi’s interview, said the Ukrainian officer believes Russia blew up the dam “in order to raise the water level to flood the approaches and the Left Bank of the Dnipro River, as well as the settlements located there. And to make it impossible for the Ukrainian armed forces to advance in the future.”

Other Side Hidden

Buried deep in the mainstream media’s articles on the dam explosion, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the attack on the Kakhovka dam in Ukraine's Kherson region “barbaric” and said Kyiv is “committing war crimes” by “openly using terrorist methods.”

Putin made the comments during a phone call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

RT, the Russian news outlet, cited Vassily Nebenzia, Russia’s permanent representative to the UN, who said Kyiv attacked the dam to free up forces and “take revenge on the Crimeans for their choice in favor of Russia and leave the population of Crimea without water.”

Sergei Shoigu, the Russian defense minister, said Ukraine destroyed the dam to prevent Russian attacks in the Kherson region after what he alleged was a failed Ukrainian counteroffensive, according to The Associated Press.

Robert Wood, the deputy U.S. Ambassador to the UN, said Washington it's still gathering information on the incident. He asked, “Why would Ukraine do this to its own territory and people—flood its land, tens of thousands of people to leave their homes—it doesn't make sense.”

Investigators believe the dam suffered explosions, citing seismic signals that were captured at about the time of the breach.

Col. Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, a British munitions expert and former army officer, told Sky News that Ukrainian forces would have to fire up to 30 HIMAR rockets to produce the kind of flooding that occurred.

“But nobody is reporting that, there is no evidence to suggest that happened,” he said. He continued, “In order to create this much devastation, it must have been a very sophisticated bunch of explosives put in the right places. It was enough, and calculated enough, to destroy the whole dam.”

The New York Times reported on Saturday that the incident prompted the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant to shut down its last active reactor as a precaution due to water supply issues.

The paper said Reactor 5 had been providing power inside the plant that is occupied by Russians, but still operated with a Ukrainian staff.

TRENDPOST: *The Western media also sold the narrative that Russia would bomb its own pipeline to Germany (Nord Stream) and choke off Russians living in Crimea by intentionally flooding a dam.*

The only reason the mainstream media gets away with such propaganda is because some 45 percent of Americans get their news from TV and most others are information ignorant.

Not only could most people not find Ukraine on a map, none have any clue of why the war was started and how there are no calls for peace... only more war. (See “BRAZIL’S LULA SAYS UKRAINE’S COMEDIAN SHARES BLAME FOR WAR” 10 May 2022, “U.S.

ACCUSED OF OPERATING BIOWEAPONS LABS IN UKRAINE, MOUTHPIECE MEDIA PROMOTES GOV'T LINE" 15 Mar 2022, "BULLSHIT BLINKEN KEEPS SELLING RUSSIA'S WAR WITH UKRAINE AS A 'STRATEGIC FAILURE'" 6 Jun 2023 and "WARMONGER U.S. BANS PEACE TALKS: WASHINGTON WORRIED CHINA COULD BRING STABILITY TO UKRAINE" 21 Mar 2023.)

Anatoly Antonov, the Russian Ambassador to the United States, told Tass last week that the American media is orchestrating a "targeted disinformation campaign" around the Kakhovka dam attack in an attempt to "whitewash" the regime in Kyiv.

"Washington patrons never criticize Kyiv," he said. "All actions of the regime are approved of, while any strikes that Russians suffer from, are encouraged. This is a textbook example of an ill-conceived, flawed position that has already caused serious upheavals in the world. However, this is obviously not enough for the United States, and terrorist acts of Ukraine will receive further support."

LONG-ANTICIPATED COUNTEROFFENSIVE UNDERWAY IN UKRAINE: THE WINNER IS?

Since the beginning of the year, the U.S. and NATO have been warning—and hyping—that Ukraine would launch a major offensive against Russian troops.

With Ukrainian and Russian forces clashing in Ukraine's southeast region, last Friday Russian President Vladimir Putin told reporters that Ukrainian counteroffensive has begun. And on Sunday, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky declared that "relevant counteroffensive defensive actions are taking place in Ukraine."

"We can clearly say the offensive has started, as indicated by the Ukrainian army's use of strategic reserves," Putin said. "But the Ukrainian troops haven't achieved their

stated tasks in a single area of fighting. “We are seeing that the Ukrainian regime’s troops are suffering significant losses.”

Putin did not go into specifics but told reporters in Sochi, during the Eurasian Economic Union, that it is common for militaries that go on the offensive to suffer losses at a 3-1 rate.

“But in this case, the losses significantly exceed that classic level,” he said.

Zelensky learned about Putin's comments and called them “interesting,” before noting that his commanders were in a positive mood, according to the BBC.

“Tell that to Putin,” he said.

TRENDPOST: *The counteroffensive will employ Ukrainian troops trained by the West and will include the billions in advanced weapons that NATO countries have provided. (See “U.S. ANNOUNCES $300 MILLION IN MORE WEAPONS TO KEEP BLOODYING THE UKRAINE KILLING FIELDS” 6 Jun 2023 and “BIDEN LIES: BROKE HIS VOW NOT TO PROVIDE UKRAINE WITH ADVANCED WEAPONS OF WAR” 23 May 2023.)*

The counteroffensive is expected to be the largest military operation in Europe since World War II, *The New York Times* reported.

A reporter from the paper reporting from Zaporizhzhya, a city on the Dnieper River in southeastern Ukraine, noted that the terrain is unforgiving for advancing troops. Fighting has broken out on “table-flat farmland with little cover.”

The paper said Ukraine is attempting to stretch Russian forces thin by showing “that it can attack anywhere, while trying to make Russia defend everywhere.”

One Ukrainian soldier who saw fighting in the Russian-occupied town of Tokmak, in the southern Zaporizhzhya region, told *The Wall Street Journal* that they were met by a heavily fortified Russian force that he compared to a wall of steel.

He said the moment troops crossed a road into the town, they were met with Grad rockets, landmines, and buzzed by Russian helicopters and fighter jets.

“They were just waiting for us…prepared positions everywhere,” he said.

Two senior U.S. officials told *The Times* that Ukrainian troops suffered casualties and equipment losses, which was expected by Washington.

The paper, citing videos and photos that were verified as legitimate, said at least three Leopard 2 tanks and eight Bradley fighting vehicles were seen abandoned or destroyed.

“The Russian military remains dangerous and Ukrainian forces certainly face a hard fight, but Ukraine has not yet committed the vast majority of its counteroffensive forces and Russian defenses are not uniformly strong along all sectors of the frontline,” the Institute for the Study of War said, according to *The Guardian.*

Ukrainians forces posted a video that showed its forces raising a flag in the Donetsk-region village of Blahodatne. The *WSJ*, citing Rybar, a pro-Kremlin Telegram channel, reported that Ukraine had captured Blahodatne and Neskuchny.

***TRENDPOST**: We have noted that Western politicians and news outlets have worked hard not to set the standard too high for the Ukrainians in this counteroffensive because they do not want public support for this war of attrition to waver. Jake Sullivan, President Joe Biden's national security adviser, said last week that Kyiv would not be graded on its effort. (See “ZELENSKY: WE’RE READY FOR LONG-WAITED COUNTEROFFENSIVE” 6 Jun 2023, “WWIII: VICTORIA ‘F-CK THE EU’ NULAND ADMITS THAT THE U.S. HAS BEEN HELPING UKRAINE PLAN FOR COUNTEROFFENSIVE” 30 May 2023 and “UKRAINE SPRING COUNTEROFFENSIVE NOT SPRINGING” 9 May 2023.)*

Patrick Bury, former NATO analyst and a defense and security expert at the University of Bath, told Al Jazeera that the Ukrainian counteroffensive is “a long game” and that it is highly unlikely that there will be a major breakthrough in the early weeks because

Russian forces are fully entrenched and their positions are "designed to channel attackers into killing zones."

Al Jazeera noted that it is hard to get a full understanding about what is occurring on the front lines because there is virtually "no independent reporting." Media outlets are relying heavily on comments from Ukraine.

Politico reported last week that the Biden administration is closely watching the developments on the ground and senior officials are convinced that future support for the war and Biden's global reputation "hinges on the success of Ukraine's counteroffensive."

Officials in Washington and Europe have framed the counter offensive as a potential turning point for the war, but even The Times admitted "success" is not easily identified. Russian forces still occupy about 20 percent of the country.

The paper noted that western leaders are still, at least publicly, letting Zelensky identify his idea of success. He has said his forces will not rest until Russian troops completely abandon the country. Western officials do not expect that outcome.

While Ukraine has tried to temper expectations, Zelensky has tried to express optimism while warning that there will be a lot of casualties on both sides.

"I don't know how long it will take," Zelensky said last week. "To be honest, it can go a variety of ways, completely different. But we are going to do it, and we are ready."

TREND FORECAST: *As the war evolves, and it becomes clearer that Ukraine will not win, the messaging will also need to evolve. We've also noted that Western media will protect Ukraine and downplay any losses or failures. (See "TOP U.S. GENERAL CALLS BAKHMUT A 'SLAUGHTER-FEST FOR RUSSIANS' IN LATEST PROPAGANDA EFFORT" 4 Apr 2023, "MORE PROPAGANDA—ZELENSKY WARNS: RUSSIA WANTS 'SOME KIND OF BIG REVANCHE'" 7 Feb 2023 and "PROPAGANDA MEDIA TWISTS MEDVEDEV'S NUKE COMMENT TO STOKE FEAR, ANTI-RUSSIAN HATRED" 24 Jan 2023.)*

We have said that when the counteroffensive fails to live up to even the most meager expectations, it will be blamed on the West's failure to deliver enough weapons to Kyiv. Russia will also be accused of carrying out even more egregious war crimes and atrocities, like the dam attack that Ukraine has already called ecoterrorism and a war crime committed by Russia.

TRENDPOST: *As we go to press, it is reported by Russian and U.S. news outlets that there are serious Ukrainian casualties, some 15 German Leopard 2 tanks, 13 U.S. M2 Bradley fighting vehicles and five French AMX-10 RC light tanks have been destroyed by the Russians.*

NOTHING TO SEE HERE: U.S. HID UKRAINIAN PLANS TO BOMB NORD STREAM WHILE BLAMING RUSSIA FOR ATTACK

The U.S. intelligence agencies were aware that the Ukrainian military was developing plans to bomb Russia's Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in the Baltic Sea prior to the explosions and the Biden administration's decision to publicly blame Moscow.

The Washington Post ran the exclusive report last week that was based on the embarrassing intelligence leak earlier this year from U.S. Air National Guard member Jack Texeira. (See "UKRAINE TO LOSE WAR: U.S. TRIES TO SAVE FACE AFTER CLASSIFIED DOC LEAK" 18 Apr 2023, "LEAKED DOCS CONFIRM REPORTS NATO TROOPS ARE ON THE GROUND IN UKRAINE" 18 Apr 2023 and "PUTIN ACCUSES UKRAINE OF 'TERRORIST ACTIVITY' AFTER DRONE STRIKE ON MOSCOW, VOWS RETALIATION" 6 June 2023.)

The report said an unnamed European intelligence body informed the Central Intelligence Agency in June 2022—three months before the explosions—that the clandestine plans were overseen by the Ukrainian military chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, and was not some kind of rogue operation. Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelensky was reportedly not told about the plans so he can deny knowing about the incident.

Zelensky denied the report.

"I am president and I give orders accordingly," Zelensky told Axel Springer, the media company that owns Politico. "Nothing of the sort has been done by Ukraine. I would never act that way."

The *Post* reported that a six-person team of Ukrainian special operations forces had been planning the attack. The CIA shared the report with Germany at about the time it received the data.

De Tijd, the Belgian newspaper, reported that military intelligence in Brussels received information about the incident from the CIA, which illustrates how "Western intelligence services, including Belgian ones, have been aware for months that Ukraine is probably involved in one of the most brutal and dangerous attacks on a European energy infrastructure."

TRENDPOST: *The* ***Trends Journal*** *has reported extensively on the Nord Stream pipelines explosions and subsequent investigation. (See "BIDEN PROMISED TO DESTROY NORD STREAM 2 PIPELINE: VIDEO PROVES IT" 28 Mar 2023, "RUSSIA ACCUSES DENMARK OF NORD STREAM SABOTAGE COVER-UP" 21 Mar 2023, "RUSSIA SAYS LATEST NORD STREAM REPORT LOOKS LIKE A 'COORDINATED HOAX'" 14 Mar 2023 and "U.S. BLEW UP RUSSIA'S NORD STREAM REPORT: TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES" 14 Feb 2023.)*

About three weeks before Russian tanks began to move into Ukraine last year, President Joe Biden held a news conference in Washington with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and said—in no uncertain terms—that the first casualty of the war would be the Nord Stream pipeline.

"If Russia invades…again, then there will be no Nord Stream 2," he said. "We will bring an end to it."

Biden was asked to clarify the remark and responded, "I promise you, we will be able to do it."

His remark appeared to be an administration-wide talking point at the time.

A month earlier, Victoria Nuland, the undersecretary of state, also mentioned Nord Stream's fate if Russia was to attack.

"We continue to have very strong and clear conversations with our German allies and I want to be clear with you today," she said. "If Russia invades Ukraine, one way or another, Nord Stream 2 will not move forward."

Nuland addressed a Senate hearing in February and told Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, "Senator Cruz, like you, I am, and I think the administration is, very gratified to know that Nord Stream 2 is now, as you like to say, a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken's reaction to the bombing also raised eyebrows. He said, "Ultimately this is also a tremendous opportunity. It's a tremendous opportunity to once and for all remove the dependence on Russian energy, and thus to take away from Vladimir Putin the weaponization of energy as a means of advancing his imperial designs."

Radosław Tomasz "Radek" Sikorski, the European Parliament member and former Polish foreign minister who is married to Russia hawk Anne Applebaum, tweeted a photo of the scene, "Thank you, USA."

The Wall Street Journal also reported last week that German investigators are looking into the possibility that the sabotage team used Poland as an operating base before the attack. Poland denied the claim.

FBI WORKED WITH UKRAINE TO SILENCE WAR CRITICS

FBI special agents worked with their counterparts at the Security Service of Ukraine to silence critics on Twitter by sending the company a list of accounts Kyiv said was “spreading fear and disinformation” on the platform.

Aaron Maté, the journalist, reported on the latest Twitter Files and said the agency is “helping Ukraine censor Twitter users, including journalists.”

“The FBI aided a Ukrainian intelligence effort to ban Twitter users and collect their data. Twitter declined to censor journalists targeted by Ukraine,” he said.

The report said the request from the FBI to censor these voices came in an email on 27 March 2022 from FBI Special Agent Aleksandr Kobzanets. He is the assistant legal attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, the Grayzone report said.

The report said the letter was sent to two Twitter executives and four FBI colleagues were copied on the email.

“I am including a list of accounts I received over a couple of weeks from the Security Service of Ukraine. These accounts are suspected by the SBU in spreading fear and disinformation. For your review and consideration,” he wrote.

The report said the list included 163 names—including journalists. Maté’s name was one of them. The report said 34 accounts on the list are now suspended and 20 have been deleted.

The Ukrainian agency said banning these voices would help “stop Russian aggression on the information front,” the report said. These accounts are “used to disseminate disinformation and fake news to inaccurately reflect events in Ukraine, justify war

crimes of the Russian authorities on the territory of the Ukrainian state in violation of international law."

TRENDPOST: *Jonathan Turley, an American attorney and legal scholar, wrote on his website that even with "the targeting of journalists on behalf of a foreign government, most reporters have shrugged and declined to cover this story."*

"It is another example of a de facto state media where journalists support a government by consent rather than coercion," he wrote.

There has been a propaganda war coinciding with the conflict in Ukraine and the Western media has been providing Kyiv with anti-Russian coverage since before the war began. Ukrainian President Volodymyr is honored to a level not seen since Dr. Anthony Fauci. (See "ZELENSKY TO UKRAINIAN MEDIA: I OWN YOU" 10 Jan 2023 and "ZELENSKY'S CORRUPTION: IT'S THE UKRAINE WAY" 28 Feb 2023.)

Kyiv does not want the world to know about losses during the war, its neo-Nazi Bandera fighters, and the extent of the nation's corruption. Transparency International ranked Ukraine 123rd of the 180 countries it examined, which is slightly better than Russia, which came in at 139th. Ukraine scored 32 out of a 100-point scale and Russia scored 29. … which the EU had reported was the most corrupt country in Europe.

"F" The Facts

Indeed, according to Ukrainian and Western media propaganda, Ukraine is winning the war, despite having lost 20 percent of the country to Russia and over 50 percent of its energy and water infrastructure having been destroyed. This is not only "news" in Ukraine, it is not "newsworthy" in Western media.

Zelensky's ambition to control the media did not begin with the war. In 2019, shortly after he was elected, one of his first acts as president was to move to ban TV stations that he considered to be pro-Kremlin, including 112, NewsOne, and Zik. He called these stations outlets for "hybrid propaganda." About 40.8 percent of Ukrainians polled at the time called Zelensky's move a mistake.

WWIII: U.S. TO PROVIDE UKRAINE WITH DEPLETED-URANIUM TANK ROUNDS

The U.S. is expected to follow the United Kingdom's lead and provide the Ukrainian military with tank rounds with depleted-uranium rounds that can pierce the coat of Russian tanks but raise health concerns for people in areas these munitions are used.

The Wall Street Journal, citing a senior Biden administration official, reported that there seems to be consensus on the decision in Washington.

"The projectile hits like a freight train," Scott Boston, a defense analyst at the Rand Corporation and former Army artillery officer, told the paper. "It is very long and very dense. So it puts a great deal of kinetic energy on a specific point on an enemy armor array."

Britain sent thousands of rounds of Challenger 2 ammunition to Ukraine, including "depleted uranium armor-piercing rounds."

James Stephen Heappey, the U.K.'s minister of state for the Armed Forces, said the DU munitions "are now under the control of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The Ministry of Defense does not monitor the locations from where DU rounds are fired by the AFU in Ukraine."

Heappey said there is "no obligation on the UK to help clear up depleted uranium rounds fired from Challenger 2 tanks by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. However, we remain committed to helping Ukraine emerge from this war secure, prosperous and free and we are supporting a range of activities to meet Ukraine's immediate needs, restore essential infrastructure and services, and lay the groundwork for its longer-term recovery and post-war reconstruction."

Earlier this year, when the U.K. announced plans to send the munitions, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the decision "escalatory" because these bullets contain "nuclear components." The munitions are made with byproducts of the uranium-enrichment process for nuclear bombs.

Britain insisted that depleted uranium "is a standard component and has nothing to do with nuclear weapons."

"The British Army has used depleted uranium in its armor-piercing shells for decades," the Ministry of Defense said at the time, according to the BBC. "Russia knows this, but is deliberately trying to disinform. Independent research by scientists from groups such as the Royal Society has assessed that any impact to personal health and the environment from the use of depleted uranium munitions is likely to be low."

Joshua Frank, a co-editor of *CounterPunch*, wrote in TomDispatch that it is clear that the use of DU in Ukraine "will certainly help create an even more lethal, all too literally radioactive theater of war—and Ukraine will end up paying a price for it."

He wrote: The US Department of Defense estimated that American forces fired more than 860,000 rounds of DU shells "during that 1991 war to push Iraqi autocrat Saddam Hussein's military out of Kuwait. The result: a poisoned battlefield laced with radioactive debris, as well as toxic nerve agents and other chemical agents."

TRENDPOST: *Again, there is a double standard and the same rules do not apply for the U.S. and U.K. Imagine for a moment that Russia announced that it will begin firing munitions with depleted uranium? (See "TOP TREND, WWIII: U.K. NUKE NUTS SENDING KYIV DEPLETED URANIUM WEAPONRY" 28 Mar 2023 and "MEDVEDEV SAYS RUSSIA IS IN 'DE-FACTO WAR' WITH 'ETERNAL ENEMY' UK" 6 Jun 2023.)*

The U.S. is an expert on how to use depleted uranium in conflicts and employed the technology in the 1991 Gulf War, Kosovo in 1999, and in Iraq in 2003. It should be noted that the U.S. was crowned by the Asia Times as the World's Heavyweight Champion in using DU ammunition.

Rounds Fired

Iraq (1991): 782,414

Iraq (2003): More than 300,000

Kosovo: 50,000

The International Atomic Energy Agency has noted that use of these DU rounds could pose a radiation risk to individuals who handle fragments and who live nearby where these shells impacted, the BBC noted. Sergey Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, said the British "have lost their bearings" and said the munitions are "a step toward accelerating escalation."

WHAT THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT LAB-GROWN MEAT

by Dr. Joseph Mercola

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- While the fake meat industry is being touted as an environmentally friendly and sustainable way to feed the world, the true intent is to recreate the kind of global control that Monsanto and others achieved through patented GMO seed development
- Researchers at UC Davis warn there are major environmental downsides to lab-grown meat. According to their "cradle-to-gate life cycle" analysis, the lab-grown meat industry produces up to 25 times more CO2 than traditional

animal husbandry, which nulli es the core ideological foundation upon which the industry is built
- Each kilo of cultured meat produces anywhere from 542 pounds (246 kilos) to 3,325 pounds (1,508 kg) of carbon dioxide emissions, making the climate impact of cultured meat four to 25 times greater than that of conventional beef
- At present, most cultured meat companies still use fetal bovine serum (FBS) as the growth medium, which is obtained from unborn calves that are cut out of the womb and drained of their blood while still alive. Hence, most claims of cultured meat being animal free or free of animal cruelty are false
- Mission Barns is developing imitation bacon made from a mix of cultured meat, cell cultured pork fat and pea protein. Have the pigs from which the cell samples are taken been treated with mRNA "vaccines," and if so, is the cultured pork and pork fat safe to eat?

While the fake meat industry is being touted as an environmentally friendly and sustainable way to feed the world, the true intent is to recreate the kind of global control that Monsanto and others achieved through patented GMO seed development. In the end, lab-created meats are worse for the environment than livestock and will undoubtedly deteriorate human health to boot, just like GMO grains have.

Lab-Grown Meat Is Worse for Environment Than Cattle

As reported by the San Francisco Chronicle,[1] researchers at UC Davis warn there are major environmental downsides to lab-grown meat that aren't part of the conversation or the decision-making process.

According to their "cradle-to-gate life cycle" analysis,[2,3,4,5] the lab-grown meat industry produces up to 25 times more CO2 than traditional animal husbandry, which nullifies the core ideological foundation upon which the industry is built.
As noted by the authors, investors have poured billions of dollars into the animal cell-based meat (ACBM) sector based on the theory that cultured meat is more environmentally friendly than beef. But that hype is primarily based on awed analyses of carbon emissions.

The primary sources of CO2 emissions are the purification processes, which require fossil fuels. The bacteria used to produce the "meat" releases endotoxins, and these must be eliminated from the growth medium or else the cells won't reproduce properly.

As noted by the authors:[6]

> *"Animal cell culture is traditionally done with growth medium components which have been refined to remove/reduce endotoxin. The use of these refinement methods contributes significantly to the economic and environmental costs associated with pharmaceutical products since they are both energy and resource intensive."*

Based on this assessment, each kilo of cultured meat produces anywhere from 542 pounds (246 kilos) to 3,325 pounds (1,508 kg) of carbon dioxide emissions, making the climate impact of cultured meat four to 25 times greater than that of conventional beef.

Sham Claims Based on Nonexistent Technologies

The UC Davis life cycle analysis also points out that several estimates of ACBM climate impacts are dependent on novel technologies that either do not exist yet or are unlikely to work.

For example, some have proposed growing cyanobacteria hydrolysate in open concrete ponds to then be "harvested, sterilized, hydrolyzed and used as an animal cell growth medium." The problem is that this technology is not currently used, "nor is it one that is currently near feasibility," the authors note.

In short, the claims propping up the cultured meat industry are a sham, as the idea that cultured meat is a greener option is based on nonexistent technologies rather than the technologies that are in use.

Previous Research Also Pokes Holes in Environmental Claims

Other studies have also been critical of the ACBM industry's claims. For example, a 2019 article[7] in the journal Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems found that were the world to make the transition to cultured meat, its impact on global warming might initially appear to be beneficial. However, over time, cultured meat production would result in greater warming. As concluded by the authors:[8]

> *"Under continuous high global consumption, cultured meat results in less warming than cattle initially, but this gap narrows in the long term and in some cases cattle production causes far less warming, as CH4 emissions do not accumulate, unlike CO2 ...*
>
> *"We conclude that cultured meat is not prima facie climatically superior to cattle; its relative impact instead depends on the availability of decarbonized energy generation and the specific production systems that are realized."*

False Claims Are Par for the Course

Despite analyses such as these, you'd be hard-pressed to find a cultured meat company that doesn't claim to generate less greenhouse gas emissions than animal agriculture, although some simply talk in circles around it. Take Mission Barns, for example.

Mission Barns makes imitation bacon and meatballs by mixing pea protein with cultured meat and pig fat produced by cell culture to give the "meat" the flavor and aroma of real pork. Its website makes the following sustainability claim:[9]

> *"Animal agriculture generates more greenhouse gas emissions than all transportation combined and is a major driver of deforestation and waterway pollution. Cultivated meat is much kinder to nature — using less resources to preserve our planet."*

Note that they're not actually making any direct environmental claims about their own cultured meat. Instead, they argue that animal farming generates more greenhouse

gasses than transportation, which is irrelevant when it comes to determining which of two options—farming or lab-created meat—is better for the environment.

If animal farming generates more greenhouse gasses than transportation, then labcreated meats generate more greenhouse gasses than transportation as well, and likely several times more. It sounds good, though, and it's confusing enough that most readers won't realize that they just told you nothing about their own sustainability.

Are Animals Harmed in the Making of Fake Meat?

Mission Barns also claims that no animals are ever harmed in its cultured meat process. All that is required to grow the meat, they say, is a "small sample [of fat cells] from a pig," which isn't harmed by the biopsy and goes on to live a normal, healthy life. The question is, what are the collected cells grown in?

Cultured or cell-based meats must be grown in a nutrient-rich media, and most are still using fetal bovine serum (FBS), which is obtained from unborn calves that are cut out of the womb and drained of their blood while still alive.

FBS has long been used in science as it's the perfect growth medium. So far, FBS has been considered a byproduct of conventional meat production.

Supposedly, cows are not specifically impregnated to harvest the calves for FBS; rather, the calves are sacrificed whenever a random pregnant cow is slaughtered for meat.

However, unless FBS is abandoned across the cultured meat industry, it's easy to foresee a future in which cows are raised and impregnated simply to supply the fake meat industry with FBS, which takes both food waste and animal cruelty to entirely new levels.

Animal Cruelty on Steroids

One could argue that the fake meat industry is already promoting a more obscene form of animal cruelty than animal farming in general, seeing how the increased need

for FBS will require more pregnant cows to be slaughtered. Are we absolutely sure that cows aren't being impregnated and calves sacrificed just to satisfy this ever-growing need for FBS? As reported by Nutraceuticals World:[10]

> *"Given the essential role of FBS in the production process, many of the soon-to market cultured meats will not truly be completely animal-free or cruelty-free.*
>
> *"Rapid growth of cultured meat would drive greater demand for FBS. Several companies, notably Meatable and Future Meat, have introduced alternative growth techniques that do not require FBS. For now, however, FBSbased growth stimulation is still the norm, and it somewhat taints the claim that cultured meat is totally humane."*

In 2018, Mission Barns CSO David Bowman argued that "fetal bovine serum is a nonstarter" because the process is unsustainable. It requires the slaughter of "at least as many cows as are slaughtered now," he said.[11]

At the time, Bowman predicted that Mission Barns would, in due time, "have media recipes developed in-house that are patented." The question is, has the company invented a new media or are they still using FBS? Its "no animal harm" claim really hangs on that detail, and I've not been able to confirm it either way.

What ChatGPT Says About FBS and Its Use

On a side note, a member of my team recently chatted with ChatGPT about the use of FBS in the cultured meat industry. Here are a few of the Q & A's from that session.

Question — There are many articles about cultured meats utilizing serum from bovine fetus to grow the cultures, is that true?

ChatGPT — As of my knowledge cutoff in September 2021, the information regarding the use of bovine fetal serum in the production of cultured meats is accurate. Traditional methods of cultivating animal cells for laboratory purposes, including the production of cultured meats, often rely on the use of fetal bovine serum (FBS) or

bovine serum as a growth medium. FBS contains various growth factors and nutrients necessary for the cells to proliferate.

However, it's important to note that the field of cultured meat is rapidly evolving, and researchers are actively exploring alternative methods to reduce or eliminate the dependence on animal-derived components. The use of FBS raises ethical concerns, as it involves extracting blood from unborn calves. Moreover, it adds to the cost and scalability challenges of cultured meat production.

In recent years, significant progress has been made in developing serum-free or animal free alternatives for cell culture in the cultured meat industry. Scientists are exploring plant-based and synthetic growth media that can provide the necessary nutrients for cell growth. These efforts aim to make cultured meat production more sustainable, scalable, and free from animal-derived inputs.

Question — What is the process used to purify the serum from the fetal blood?

ChatGPT — The process of purifying fetal bovine serum (FBS) from fetal blood typically involves several steps to separate and isolate the serum from other components. While specific protocols may vary, here is a general overview of the process:

1. **Collection —** Fetal bovine blood is collected from the fetuses of slaughtered cows. The blood is typically obtained by dissecting the fetus and collecting it through a process called exsanguination.
2. **Clotting and Separation —** The collected blood is allowed to clot at room temperature or in refrigerated conditions. During this time, the blood naturally coagulates, forming a gel-like substance known as a clot. The clot contains red blood cells, white blood cells, and other cellular components.
3. **Centrifugation —** The clot is then subjected to centrifugation, a process that involves spinning the sample at high speeds. This separates the serum, which is the clear, liquid portion, from the clot and cellular debris. The centrifugation process relies on the principle of density differences to isolate the serum.

4. **Filtration —** To further remove any remaining cellular debris or impurities, the serum is often filtered through fine filters. This step helps achieve a more purified serum by removing particulates and unwanted substances.
5. **Sterilization —** The purified serum may undergo sterilization processes, such as filtration through sterilizing-grade filters or heat treatment, to ensure the removal of any potential microorganisms or contaminants that could compromise the quality and safety of the serum.

The resulting purified fetal bovine serum is then typically processed into small aliquots, frozen, and stored at low temperatures to maintain its stability and quality until it is ready for use as a growth medium in cell culture, including cultured meat production.

It's important to note that specific protocols and variations can exist depending on the manufacturer or supplier of FBS. The purification process may also include additional steps or modifications based on the intended use and quality requirements of the serum.

Question — Are the calves aborted?

ChatGPT — In the context of using fetal bovine serum (FBS) for cell culture, the serum is typically collected from bovine fetuses obtained from pregnant cows at slaughterhouses. The fetuses are not intentionally aborted for the purpose of FBS production. Instead, they are collected as a byproduct of the meat industry.

During the process of slaughtering pregnant cows, the fetuses are removed and their blood is collected. This blood is then processed to extract the serum, which contains the necessary growth factors and nutrients for cell culture. The use of FBS has been a longstanding practice in biomedical and biotechnological research.

Question — So in order to create cultured meats, they are dependent on the meat industry to process aborted fetal calves to extract blood from them?

ChatGPT — I apologize if my previous response caused any confusion. To clarify, the use of fetal bovine serum (FBS) in cell culture, including the production of cultured

meats, does involve obtaining blood from bovine fetuses. However, the collection of fetal bovine serum is not directly linked to intentional abortions.

The source of fetal bovine serum is primarily derived from pregnant cows that are already being slaughtered for meat production purposes. The collection of FBS occurs during this process as a byproduct, rather than being the primary objective. The fetuses are not intentionally aborted for the sole purpose of FBS extraction.

Question — How is the abortion not intentional if the mother of the calf is killed?

ChatGPT — I apologize for any confusion caused by my previous responses. When pregnant cows are slaughtered for meat production, the collection of fetal bovine serum (FBS) occurs as a result of that process. The intent of the slaughter is to obtain meat from the cows, not specifically to harvest the fetal blood. The fetuses are not intentionally aborted in order to collect FBS.

During the slaughter process, if a cow happens to be pregnant, the fetuses are removed as part of the overall procedure. It is this fetal blood that is then collected and processed to obtain FBS. The intention behind the slaughter is for meat production, and the collection of FBS is a byproduct of that process.

Question — So, it's an accidental abortion?

ChatGPT — Yes, in the context of FBS collection, it could be referred to as an accidental abortion ... The collection of fetal bovine serum (FBS) from these fetuses is considered a byproduct of the meat industry, rather than an intentional abortion for the purpose of FBS extraction.

Question — So, the cultured meat industry is dependent on the accidental abortions of calves in the meat processing industry?

ChatGPT — In the current state of the cultured meat industry, the use of fetal bovine serum (FBS) as a growth medium does rely on the collection of fetal blood from pregnant cows slaughtered for meat production.

However, it's important to note that this reliance on FBS and its association with the meat industry is a matter of convenience and tradition rather than a fundamental requirement for cultured meat production ... While FBS is currently commonly used, the industry is actively seeking alternatives to move towards a more sustainable and ethical approach.

Question — It sounds like alternatives for FBS don't currently exist, so that is all hypothetical.

ChatGPT — While alternatives to fetal bovine serum (FBS) are being actively researched and developed, it is true that as of my knowledge cutoff in September 2021, serum-free or animal-free alternatives for FBS in cultured meat production are not yet widely available or commercially implemented.

However, it's worth noting that scientific advancements are being made in this area ... Although the widespread adoption of these alternatives may still be in progress, it is not accurate to say that all efforts to find alternatives to FBS are purely hypothetical. There is ongoing research and development in this field, and the cultured meat industry is actively working towards reducing reliance on animal-derived inputs such as FBS.

It's advisable to consult more recent sources or updates in the cultured meat industry for the most up-to-date information on the progress of serum-free or animal-free alternatives to FBS in cultured meat production.

Question — Ongoing research is still a hypothesis and no alternative currently exists.

ChatGPT — You are correct that ongoing research and development of alternatives to fetal bovine serum (FBS) in cultured meat production does not guarantee the immediate availability of viable alternatives. While efforts are being made, the implementation and commercialization of these alternatives are still in progress.
As of my knowledge cutoff in September 2021, serum-free or animal-free alternatives to FBS are not yet widely utilized in the cultured meat industry. While there are promising developments and ongoing research, it is accurate to say that no widely accepted and commercially available alternative to FBS currently exists.

Question — What viable options are close?

ChatGPT — Since my knowledge cutoff in September 2021, there have been advancements in the research and development of alternatives to fetal bovine serum (FBS) in cultured meat production. While no widely accepted and commercially available alternative exists yet, several potential options have shown promise and are being actively explored. Here are a few notable examples:

1. **Plant-based media —** Researchers are investigating the use of plant-based extracts and formulations as a substitute for FBS. Plant-derived growth factors and nutrients can provide the necessary components for cell culture. Examples include soy protein, yeast extracts and plant-derived growth factors.
2. **Animal-free synthetic media —** Synthetic media formulations, composed of chemically defined nutrients, are being developed to support cell growth in cultured meat production. These synthetic alternatives aim to provide precise control over nutrient composition and eliminate the need for animal-derived components.
3. **Recombinant proteins —** Recombinant proteins, produced through genetic engineering techniques, are being explored as a potential alternative to FBS. These proteins can be designed to mimic the growth factors present in FBS and support cell growth in a serum-free environment.
4. **Cell-based approaches —** Another avenue of research involves developing cell-based approaches to generate the necessary growth factors and nutrients. This includes genetically engineered cells that produce the required factors or utilizing animal cells that can secrete the necessary components for culture media.

Are mRNA-Treated Swine Used in Cultured Pork?

One last question I have is, are the pigs from which Mission Barn takes its samples treated with mRNA "vaccines"? In a May 11, 2023, article, I pointed out that **pork producers in the U.S. and Canada have been using customizable mRNA-based "vaccines"** on their herds since 2018, and the only part of this gene-based "vaccine" technology that has been approved is the mRNA platform itself.

All customized mRNA injections created using this platform are untested. The safety is assumed, based on a single study[12] involving 748 piglets, which were given two doses of an unspecified mRNA Sequivity injection. Of those, 29.8 percent suffered a serious adverse event, including 24 deaths.

When adding together death, anorexia (wasting) and unthrifty (failure to thrive), 11.5 percent of the animals were lost to vaccine injury. That's a loss of more than 1 out of 10 animals, which hardly seems safe.

Moreover, there are no safety studies at all related to human consumption of Sequivity treated animals, let alone meat grown from mRNA-treated cells. Health authorities insist there are no problems associated with eating mRNA-treated meat, but they have absolutely no evidence to back that up. It's pure conjecture based on unproven assumptions.

Meanwhile, recent research[13,14,15,16] shows Pfizer's and Moderna's mRNA COVID shots are heavily contaminated with simian virus 40 (SV40) promoters that, for decades, have been suspected of causing cancer in humans, and theoretically can modify the human genome.

Are animal mRNA shots also contaminated with SV40? If so, is it possible that these and/or other DNA contaminants might modify the swine genome? And if so, what do we end up with if cells from genetically modified swine are used to grow meat? I have no answers to any of these questions at the moment, and that's why Mission Barns fake bacon concerns me, even if they don't use FBS.

Mission Barns states that no antibiotics were ever used, but what about vaccines, mRNA gene therapies in particular? Overall, the fake meat industry has a long way to go before all relevant questions are answered. Until then, I recommend avoiding not only all cultured meats but all conventional pork as well, seeing how mRNA gene therapy is allowed even in organic pork.

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*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The Trends Journal**.*

NYT ACCUSES KENNEDY OF PUSHING MISINFO DURING MUSK CHAT

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the Democrat challenging President Joe Biden in a primary, continues to be mocked and written off by the mainstream media in an effort to protect a sitting president from a viable opponent.

The New York Times, which helps set the mainstream agenda, accused the environmental lawyer of promoting “misinformation” and fully embracing conservatives during his first Twitter Space with Elon Musk. The paper excoriated Kennedy, the nephew of President John F. Kennedy, and said he sounded more like a candidate in the “mushrooming Republican presidential contest” than someone looking to be the Democratic standard-bearer.

The paper accused Kennedy of committing the mortal sin by questioning blind support for the Ukraine War, taking control of the Southern Border, and the role pharmaceuticals could be playing in school shootings.

TRENDPOST: *The mainstream media likes to employ words like "misinformation" in headlines, but when you dive into the story, these articles never identify the actual lie. (See "BYE-BYE BIDEN: KENNEDY 2024" 16 May 2023, "CELENTE: KENNEDY TO WIN RACE TO WHITE HOUSE" 9 May 2023, "IT'S ALL ABOUT DESANTIS, FU RFK JR." 6 Jun 2023 and "RON DESANTIS'S CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENT GETS MAJOR MEDIA COVERAGE, RFK JR STILL IGNORED" 30 May 2023.)*

Gerald Celente has forecast that Robert F. Kennedy will be the next president of the U.S., without some unseen outside factor. Among them, President Joe Biden's refusal to debate him and/or Biden taking America to war, since as Celente says, "When all else fails, they take you to war."

The NYT identified Kennedy as a "long time amplifier and propagator of baseless theories, beginning nearly two decades ago with his skepticism about the result of the 2004 presidential election as well as common childhood vaccines."

The paper said Kennedy claimed, "without evidence" that COVID-19 was "Clearly a bio-weapons problem." The article dismissed that claim because U.S. Intelligence agencies said there is no evidence linking the two.

Of course, mainstream news outlets are nothing more than media arms for the intelligence services and repeat whatever they're told. It is notable that the topics that The Times identified as "fact" are largely unresolved. The COVID-19 origin is still being investigated and there are psychiatrists who question the impact antidepressants have on the minds of young people.

Indeed, the NYT ran an article in 2005 that focused on a family that wondered if Prozac prompted a school shooting. The family of Jeff Weise, the teenager who killed nine and then himself, took Prozac after an earlier suicide attempt.

“They kept upping the dose for him,” Tammy Lussier, his aunt, told the paper. “And by the end, he was taking three of the 20 milligram pills a day. I can't help but think it was too much, that it must have set him off.”

You don’t need to have a good memory to think of a time the “intelligence” agencies kept key information from public consumption.

Just last week, The Washington Post reported how the Central Intelligence Agency withheld how Ukraine planned an attack on the Nord Stream pipelines prior to the mystery explosion. The decision to hide the information becomes more egregious when you factor in how the Biden administration blamed Russia for the sabotage.

But, again, let The Times, the same paper that promoted “WMDs” in Iraq as fact, identify fact from fiction for you.

Kennedy Steps on Third Rail

A sure-fire way to anger mainstream outlets like the *Times* is to have the nerve to question the COVID-19 vaccines and Ukraine War support.

Kennedy told Musk that the Democratic Party evolved into “the party of war” given its support for Ukraine.

“I attribute that directly to President Biden. He has always been in favor of very bellicose, pugnacious, and aggressive foreign policy, and he believes that violence is a legitimate political tool for achieving America's objective abroad,” the paper quoted Kennedy as saying.

TRENDPOST: *Kennedy has been vocal in his criticism of the U.S.’s decision to support F-16s for Ukraine as a “dangerous escalation” without much upside. (See “RFK JR. BLASTS U.S. DECISION TO BACK F-16s FOR UKRAINE AS ‘DANGEROUS ESCALATION’” 30 May 2023.)*

"We must stop using Ukraine as a geopolitical pawn," he told The Epoch Times in an interview last month. "[Biden should] negotiate a swift end to this war that is hemorrhaging Ukrainian blood and American treasure."

*Like **The Trends Journal**, Kennedy blamed the "neoconservatives" in the Biden administration who are hungry for proxy wars in faraway lands. (See "U.S. UNDER SEC. VICTORIA 'FUCK THE EU' NULAND CALLS CRIMEA A LEGITIMATE TARGET FOR UKRAINE, ANGERS KREMLIN," 21 Feb 2023.)*

"The Russians cannot lose this war. We are being told they are losing, but they cannot afford to lose this war. This is existential for them," he told the "All-In" podcast. "This is the most violent conflict since WWII, probably anywhere in the world, and the casualties are enormous. Over 300,000 Ukrainian dead. The Russians are killing Ukrainians, depending on who you believe, at a ratio of five-to-one."

PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW: PENCE ANNOUNCES RUN FOR PRESIDENT

Mike Pence, the former vice president under Donald Trump, announced last week that he will run for president in 2024, joining a field of Republicans that include his former boss, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, former New Jersey governor Chris Christie, and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley.

It has been widely reported that Trump never particularly cared for Pence, so the decision to run was not seen as a betrayal. Politico reported that when Trump was deciding on a vice president, he thought Pence "carried the whiff of a loser," but the Indiana Republican appealed to evangelicals and traditional conservatives.

Pence was elected governor of Indiana in 2012 after serving six terms in the House. Pence was seen as a polar opposite to Trump who could make the former president

seem sane. Pence is quick with a barb and has been called “Rush Limbaugh on decaf.”

Unlike Trump, who speaks sparingly about his faith, Pence wears it on his sleeve.

Politico reported that Pence keeps a Bible verse from Jeremiah framed above his fireplace, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

The report noted how Pence’s candidacy is a long shot and a victory would require divine intervention. But Pence has now positioned himself as a “pre-Trump conservative” who—like many in the Republican Party—want to put the chaotic Trump years behind them.

“When Donald Trump ran for president in 2016 he promised to govern as a conservative. Together we did just that. Today he makes no such promise,” Pence told an audience last week.

He also accused the former president of making him choose between him and the constitution after the riot on 6 January 2021.

“Now, voters will be faced with the same choice: I chose the constitution and I always will,” he said.

Pence said he believes anyone who puts themselves over the constitution should never be president.

TREND FORECAST: *People don’t give a shit about Pence. He was a nobody when he was VP under Trump and lacks the charisma to play a starring role in The Presidential Reality Show®.*

Exemplifying his dislike among a key segment of the Republican voters were the chants from those attending the January 6th 2021 Trump debacle when his backers stormed the Capital as they chanted, “Hang Mike Pence!”.

TRENDPOST: *The Republican Pence from Indiana has also shown that he would be all-in on the Ukraine War and sounds like Sen. Mitch McConnell when he talks about Kyiv support. (See "HATE TRUMP, HATE BIDEN: AMERICA READY FOR THIRD POLITICAL PARTY" 13 Dec 2022, "TRUMP ANNOUNCES RUN FOR PRESIDENCY: OUR FORECAST" 22 Nov 2022, and "GOP TO PRESS IMMIGRATION AS TOP ISSUE FOR 2024 ELECTIONS" 16 May 2023.)*

He said the U.S. needs to maintain its "traditional role on the world stage" and he slammed Trump for once calling Russian President Vladimir Putin a "genius."

"I know the difference between a genius and a war criminal, and I know who needs to win in the war in Ukraine," Pence said, according to the BBC.

Pence has called on the U.S. to speed up its support for Ukraine so total victory could be achieved by Kyiv.

"While some in my party have taken a somewhat different view, let me be clear: there can be no room in the leadership of the Republican Party for apologists for Putin. There can only be room for champions of freedom. The fastest path to peace is to help Ukraine win the war."

TREND FORECAST: *Ukraine will not defeat Russia and Pence will not become the next president.*

PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW: CORNEL WEST WANTS TO CHALLENGE 'NEO FASCIST' TRUMP, 'MILQUETOAST NEOLIBERAL' BIDEN

Cornel West, the public intellectual and college professor, announced last week that he will run for president as a Third-Party candidate to give voters the option for a legitimate alternative to establishment candidates from both parties who care little about the plight of many underrepresented Americans.

West spoke with the Tavis Smiley podcast, and was asked if he was concerned that he would pull votes away from President Joe Biden. (See "BYE-BYE BIDEN: KENNEDY 2024" 16 May 2023, "U.S. DUH-MOCK-RACY: BILLIONAIRES BACK BIDEN. NO MONEY, NO CHANCE OF GETTING ELECTED" 2 May 2023 and "DEMOCRATS UNDERWHELMED WITH BIDEN. WHO WILL BE THE NEXT U.S. PRESIDENT?" 25 Apr 2023).

"When somebody chooses to vote for you, you're not pulling votes away," he said. "You see, Biden doesn't own any votes. He's got to earn it. He's got to earn it."

He continued, "If the Democrats are putting out mediocre, milquetoast, neoliberal politicians who can't say a mumbling word about militarism, can't say a mumbling word about a serious response to poverty, can't say a mumbling word about serious White supremacist practices—I mean, Biden himself said America is not a racist society. I said, 'Get off the crack pipe.'"

TRENDPOST: *West announced his candidacy on Twitter and posted, "I am running for truth and justice as a presidential candidate for the People's Party to reintroduce America to the best of itself—fighting to end poverty, mass incarceration, ending wars and ecological collapse, guaranteeing housing, health care, education and living wages for all!"*

Democracy Now! called West an "iconic academic and social critic." The report noted that he's running as a Third-Party candidate for the People's Party, which has been identified as a "progressive alternative to the two major parties." The report said the idea grew out of Bernie Sanders's 2016 campaign.

"There's no doubt in my mind that the two-party system now is a major impediment for the empowerment of poor and working people," he told Amy Goodman, the Democracy Now! host.

The two spoke about the U.S. intervention in Ukraine. Goodman noted that West told The New Yorker in March 2022 that there must be an effort to stop the war.

He mentioned how the U.S. assured Moscow that NATO would not expand "one inch," yet, in the following decades, 14 of the satellite countries of the Soviet Union are part of NATO, "that there's missiles right on the borders and boundaries of the Russian empire." (See "NATO'S STOLTENBERG SAYS ALL-OUT WAR WITH RUSSIA IS POSSIBLE" 13 Dec 2022, "UKRAINE'S ACCEPTANCE IN NATO WOULD ASSURE WWIII AND BE 'CATASTROPHIC' FOR MANKIND" 18 Oct 2022 and "RUSSIA BLAMES NATO FOR VIOLATING AGREEMENT" 5 Jul 2022.)

Russia sees Ukraine's NATO membership as an existential threat that it will not accept.

Democrats are concerned about West's run because he can pull some Sanders supporters from Biden in a general election.

Politico noted that a recent Monmouth University poll found that 69 percent of liberal voters approve of Biden's job performance while 21 percent disapprove. Young voters are even more divided on Biden. About 56 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds disapprove of Biden compared to 32 percent who approve, according to the poll.

MEDIA TRIES TO PRESENT CHRISTIE AS TOP COMPETITION FOR TRUMP, STILL IGNORES RFK JR.

The mainstream media continues to promote Republican challengers to Donald Trump, the former president, while either ignoring or mocking the candidacy of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

The New York Times ran an article last week that identified former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie as a 2024 "Trump Slayer."

The article focused little on Christie's overall popularity and how he left off his tarnished relationship with the "Bridgegate" scandal, but instead claimed moderate Republicans are salivating for a rematch between the two northeast brawlers that could emerge into a "grab-the-popcorn thriller."

Jon Bramnick, a Republican state senator, dreamed of a rematch between the two and complimented Christie's ability to think on his feet and respond to Trump's attacks.

"Trump may be able to call you a name, but Christie will take that name, twist it and come back with three or four things that will leave Trump lying down waiting for the count," he said.

Things were not always bad between Trump and Christie, and the report noted that the former governor became one of Trump's biggest boosters in the early days of his presidency. But like most relationships for the former president, it soured and they became bitter rivals.

TRENDPOST: *Imagine, for a moment, that a legacy outlet like The Times identified Kennedy as a "Biden Slayer" in 2024. That would, of course, never happen because he cannot be controlled by the approved narrative.*

We've long noted how news outlets signal to their readers what candidates they approve and who they reject by identifying the individual as "right-ring," "anti-vax," and "COVID-denying."

It is rare to find an article written about Kennedy in the Presstitute media that does not include "Anti-Vaxx" in the narrative. These outlets don't want you to know where Kennedy stands on other issues and how he has been a fierce advocate for individual liberties.

It is worth noting, again, that the mainstream media continues to pretend Kennedy does not exist because his message would resonate with the American people and he has the disposition to be president.

Democrats have been presenting Kennedy as a fringe candidate not worthy of sharing the debate stage with Biden. A Fox News poll from late May found Biden with 62 percent support from Democrats, Kennedy with 16 percent, and Marianne Williamson with 8 percent. (Christie has not had a poll that showed him at about 3 percent.)

Biden, 80, said he will not participate in any primary debates and the Democratic National Committee will not hold one.

And yet instead of discussing why Biden doesn't hold primary debates, The Times reports on the potential other than popular governor—with an unfavorability rating of 47 percent, higher than any other likely republican presidential candidates—and how he could be the 2024 spoiler.

Christie announced he will run for president and finds himself firmly among the Second-Tier list of candidates, which include Nikki Haley, the former South Carolina governor, and Mike Pence, the former vice president under Trump.

But Christie has—smartly—followed the time-test method of using hatred of an opponent to bolster his own chances.

Michelle Goldberg, a columnist for the NYT wrote that one of Christie's problems is that he's running for a party that no longer exists and—by backing Trump in 2016—"Christie helped kill it."

She wrote, "So it's hard to figure out what he thinks he's up to, even if his kamikaze attacks on the ex-president—'a lonely, self-consumed, self-serving mirror hog'—are fun to watch."

Christie called Trump "juvenile" after the former president mocked his weight on Truth Social. Trump would do well to stop using fat jokes given that 30.7 percent of Americans are obese.

YOUNG AMERICANS MAY PLAY BIGGER ROLE IN NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS BECAUSE THEY'RE FED UP

Young Americans—concerned about the direction of the country—are expected to play a more important role than ever in the 2024 Presidential Election.

Catalist, a Democratic research company, published a report last week that highlighted a significant increase in participation from "Gen Z and millennial voters" in the 2022 Midterm Election.

The New York Times, citing the report, said young people are becoming more politically active over fear for the country's future. The concerns depend on the person's political persuasions. Those who considered themselves progressive are concerned about abortion access, climate change, and "extremism of the Republican Party."

The report found that the Democrat Party increased its support among women voters, who cite abortion rights as their key issue after the Supreme Court overturned "Roe v.

Wade." (See "CONFIDENCE IN SUPREME COURT HITS ALL-TIME LOW IN 2022: POLL" 23 May 2023.)

"It is plausible that Democrats were successful in convincing this segment of voters that choice was on the ballot, leading to marginal gains that secured important wins," the Catalist report said.

Conservative voters have expressed concern over illegal immigration, political correctness, and secularization, the report said.

Catalist's Data shows that young people—those 18-to 29-year-olds—have voted for Democrats at least 60 percent of the time in the last four national elections, which marks the longest streak since the data company started tracking in the 1970s. The report said up to 9 million more members of the Gen Z generation voted in 2022 than in 2020.

Older Americans still outnumber younger ones at the polls.

The report found that Americans under 30 made up about 10 percent of all voters in the last election, which was down from 12 percent in 2018. But Millennial and Gen-Z voters made up 26 percent of the voter pool, which is a 3 percent increase from 2018.

TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal *has reported extensively on how voters often go to the polls to vote for the candidate they hate just a little less than the other.*

Amy Walter from The Cook Political Report told the paper, "What seems to be driving younger voters to the polls isn't love, but anger."

This is an important fact to know given the next presidential election, with the top Democratic and Republican candidates being so unpopular.

The Atlantic noted that for the first time, "Gen Z and Millennials combined could account for as many votes next year as the Baby Boomers and their elders—the groups that have made up a majority of voters for decades."

Michael Frias, chief executive of Catalist, said, "When we think about 2024, the battleground states are going to be hotly contested."

Gerald Celente has forecast that Robert F. Kennedy Jr. will win the race to the White House in 2024 and recent polls are indicating growing weakness for Democratic voters to support the ruling establishment. A poll in April, conducted by The Wall Street Journal found that 27 percent of voters under 26 said they were undecided about who they should support in the next presidential election.

GLOBAL DEBT CRISIS (YOU ARE IN ONE)

by Gregory Mannarino, TradersChoice.net

There has been no other time in the history of the world where global debt has risen faster than it is rising today. Moreover, the big secret is this: no matter how much debt puppet governments pump into the system, *via the REAL world government system which is world central banks,* the amount of debt pulled into the system is never enough.

As absolutely insane as it is, the entire world's financial system (simply just in order to function), demands perpetual, ever-expanding debt. *(This fact is probably the biggest secret being kept from the people of the world).*

But it gets even worse!

Despite every conceivable effort by puppet governments to continue to borrow cash into existence, the system itself operates in a perpetual deficit. In other words, no matter how much cash is pulled into the system, the system functions in a continual vacuum.

If you were to ask 99 percent of people what kind of financial system we have, 99 percent of people would have no answer. But the answer is this, WE HAVE A DEBT-BASED SYSTEM! And a debt-based system DEMANDS that the debt expands in perpetuity.

If you were to ask 99 percent of people, what is the product of a central bank? 99 percent of people would again have no answer. The SINGLE and ONLY product of ANY central bank is debt! And the more debt a central bank issues, or is called upon to issue, THE STRONGER THEY BECOME.

The current world financial system, which is run by central banks, demands ever-increasing debt just to function day to day. This fact is a guarantee that central banks whose sole existence depends on their ability to create debt and therefore inflate, will remain at their pinnacle of power.

Moreover, their power will grow.

Each world leader of every developed nation on Earth must find reasons to borrow more cash into existence than his, or her, predecessor. Without this mechanism, the entire system collapses.

Have you ever thought about why it is that debts and deficits are raging out of control? Or why in the face of skyrocketing debt, no real cuts to spending ever really occur? Have you ever thought about why it is that there seems to be ENDLESS cash available to fund and even expand wars?

The propagation of war generates more need for cash to be pulled into the system than any other endeavor on Earth. (ALL WARS ARE BANKER WARS).

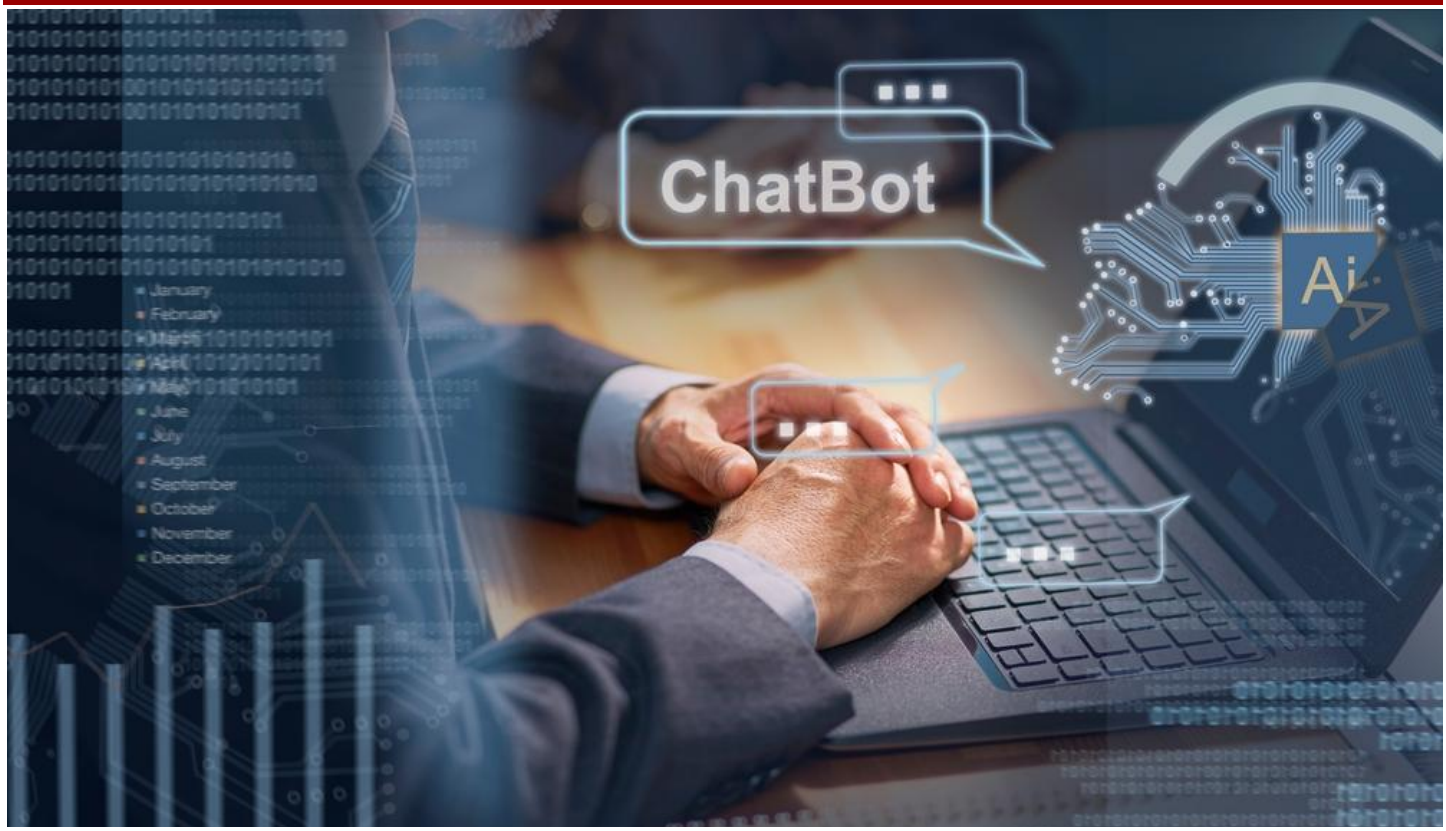
The simple fact is this. The world today is governed by those who run the financial system, the financial markets, and the global economy—**central banks.** It is these same entities who will see to it that the system ALWAYS functions via a crisis-to-crisis mechanism. With each engineered "crisis" demanding ever increasing cash to be thrown at it. (Perpetual expanding debt).

Perpetual expanding debt has a couple of "side effects" which are beneficial to central banks.

The first is currency devaluation. Every time a central bank issues more currency, the newly created currency has to "steal" purchasing power from every other prior existing bill. As an example of this, look at the value or purchasing power of the U.S. dollar. Since the creation of the Federal Reserve in 1913 the U.S. Dollar has lost 98 percent of its purchasing power. Currency devaluation is positive for central banks as now they MUST create even more currency to make up for the difference of the depreciating value of the currency. Currency is debt. This is a self-feeding mechanism which increases the demand for even more currency/debt, to the benefit of central banks.

The second side effect of perpetual expanding debt is INFLATION. As every newly created central bank note lowers the purchasing power of the currency, it takes more currency to purchase goods and services. This effect is made worse by an expanding "currency pool." By increasing the amount of overall available currency, *or currency pool*, you have more bills in whatever form they exist, chasing the same amount of goods—and this is inflationary. A central bank's power resides in only ONE THING! Their ability to inflate.

What you can be assured of is this: the world as we know it will continue to exist only if more debt is created, exponentially… However, once this mechanism reaches a **"maximum saturation point,"** everything stops.



by Joe Doran

GOVERNMENT APPARATCHIKS NOW HAVE THE POWER OF CHATGPT

Artificial Intelligence advising government pols and bureaucrats?

It's something **The Trends Journal** predicted well before Microsoft's announcement this past week that it was making a gov-compliant edition of its cutting edge generative ChatGPT (pioneered by Microsoft partner OpenAI) available to its Federal clientele. (See "THE AI LEGISLATOR YOU DIDN'T VOTE FOR," 23 Aug 2022.)

A company blog post last Wednesday detailed the new functionality integrated into platforms designed to meet government security requirements. It also specified how

AI models could be trained on internal government data as “grounding” for its answers:

> *“Azure OpenAI Service REST APIs provide access to OpenAI’s powerful language models, including GPT-4, GPT-3, and Embeddings. You can adapt these models to your specific task, including but not limited to content generation, summarization, semantic search, and natural language-to-code translation…*
>
> *“Azure OpenAI Services can help government customers accelerate their operations and unlock new insights to meet their mission needs. This service will enable key new functions to help customers:*
>
> - *Accelerate content generation: Automatically generate responses based on mission or project inquiries to help reduce the time and effort required for research and analysis, enabling teams to focus on higher-level decision-making and strategic tasks.*
> - *Streamline content summarization: Generate summaries of logs and rapid analysis of articles, analysts, and field reports.*
> - *Optimize semantic search: Enable enhanced information discovery and knowledge mining.*
> - *Simplify code generation: Build custom applications using natural language to query proprietary data models and rapidly generate code documentation.*
>
> *“One of the most effective ways to generate reliable answers is to prompt the model to draw its responses from grounding data. If your use case relies on up-to-date, reliable information and is not purely a creative scenario, we strongly recommend providing grounding data based on trusted internal data sources.” (“Unlock new insights with Azure OpenAI Service for government,” 7 Jun 2023.)*

AI Doing Grunt Work, Providing Data-based Insights…and Advisement?

Sophisticated AI systems that can generate content and answers in response to natural language human queries, are fast becoming embedded into software apps, platforms, and the internet itself.

Systems like ChatGPT and Google's Bard AI present as human-like advisors with abilities gleaned from huge swathes of collective human knowledge.

That makes them incredibly powerful as tools…and some say, incredibly seductive as a means of engineering and controlling information, and ultimately, humans.

Microsoft's announcement emphasized how AI will no doubt be a powerful tool to government employees and officials.

But the "human" attributes of these AI interfaces, combined with their unprecedented power to tap into data and information, almost certainly means that they will be tapped not just as compilers of reports and code, but as functional advisors and strategists to government apparatchiks who can master "prompt engineering."

How might politicians employ ChatGPT to further political objectives?

We found Bard AI to have some specific and ready info regarding furthering a theoretical political goal we posed to it.

In some ways, the AI appeared to be even-handed in its responses, when we presented opposing variations of a political objective sought by a local zoning board member.

In the first variation, we asked Bard to outline ways we could convince a local community to adopt UN endorsed land-use measures:

> *QUESTION: "Bard, if I'm on a local town zoning board in the U.S., and I want to convince other board members, and town voters to adopt land use priorities*

which align with UN climate and social engineering goals, what strategies and steps can you suggest, to help me achieve this important objective?

BARD AI: Here are some strategies and steps you can take to convince other board members and town voters to adopt land use priorities that align with UN climate and social engineering goals:

Do your research. Make sure you understand the UN climate and social engineering goals, as well as the potential benefits of adopting land use priorities that align with these goals. You can find information on these topics from a variety of sources, including the UN website, government websites, and environmental organizations.

Build relationships. Get to know the other board members and town voters. Find out what their concerns are and why they might be resistant to change. Once you understand their perspective, you can start to build a case for why adopting land use priorities that align with UN climate and social engineering goals is in the best interests of the town.

Be prepared to answer questions. People will likely have questions about the UN climate and social engineering goals, as well as the potential costs and benefits of adopting land use priorities that align with these goals. Be prepared to answer these questions in a clear and concise way.

Be persistent. It may take time to convince the other board members and town voters to adopt land use priorities that align with UN climate and social engineering goals. Don't give up if you don't get immediate results. Keep working hard to educate people about the importance of these goals and the benefits of adopting land use priorities that align with them.

Here are some specific land use priorities you could advocate for:

- *Incentivize the development of renewable energy sources. This could include offering tax breaks or other incentives to businesses and*

homeowners who install solar panels, wind turbines, or other renewable energy systems.

- *Promote energy efficiency. This could include requiring new buildings to meet certain energy efficiency standards, or providing financial assistance to homeowners and businesses who make energy efficiency upgrades to their existing buildings.*
- *Protect open space. This could include zoning certain areas for agricultural or recreational use, or prohibiting the development of new housing or commercial properties in these areas.*
- *Encourage the use of public transportation. This could include expanding public transportation service, or making it easier for people to walk or bike to work or school.*
- *Plan for climate change. This could include developing plans to adapt to the impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise, extreme weather events, and drought.*

By taking these steps, you can help to make your town a more sustainable and equitable place to live.

In an alternate variation, we asked Bard to suggest ways a zoning board member could convince a local community to retain local land use rights for citizens, and resist UN land use goals:

QUESTION: Bard, if I'm on a local town zoning board in the U.S., and I want to convince other board members, and town voters to retain our local rights to maximize citizen freedom to own and make use of land in our jurisdiction, and reject the overblown and ideologically driven top-down climate and degrowth agenda of the UN and NGOs like the WEF, what strategies and steps can you suggest, to help me achieve this important objective?

BARD AI: Here are some strategies and steps you can take to convince other board members and town voters to retain local rights to maximize citizen freedom to own and make use of land in your jurisdiction, and reject the overblown and ideologically driven top-down climate and degrowth agenda of the UN and NGOs like the WEF:

Do your research. Make sure you understand the UN climate and degrowth agenda, as well as the potential negative impacts of adopting these policies. You can find information on these topics from a variety of sources, including the UN website, government websites, and environmental organizations.

Build relationships. Get to know the other board members and town voters. Find out what their concerns are and why they might be supportive of local control over land use. Once you understand their perspective, you can start to build a case for why retaining local rights to maximize citizen freedom to own and make use of land is in the best interests of the town.

Be prepared to answer questions. People will likely have questions about the UN climate and degrowth agenda, as well as the potential costs and benefits of retaining local control over land use. Be prepared to answer these questions in a clear and concise way.

Be persistent. It may take time to convince the other board members and town voters to retain local rights to maximize citizen freedom to own and make use of land. Don't give up if you don't get immediate results. Keep working hard to educate people about the importance of local control over land use and the negative impacts of adopting the UN climate and degrowth agenda.

Here are some specific arguments you could make in favor of retaining local rights to maximize citizen freedom to own and make use of land:

- *Local control is more responsive to the needs of the community. When decisions about land use are made at the local level, they are more likely to reflect the needs and priorities of the people who live in the community. This is because local officials are more familiar with the community and its unique challenges and opportunities.*
- *Local control is more efficient. When decisions about land use are made at the local level, they can be made more quickly and efficiently. This is because local officials do not have to go through the same bureaucratic process that state or federal officials have to go through.*

- *Local control is more accountable. When decisions about land use are made at the local level, citizens have more direct control over those decisions. This is because citizens can vote for their local officials and hold them accountable for their decisions.*

By taking these steps, you can help to ensure that your town retains local control over land use and rejects the overblown and ideologically driven top-down climate and degrowth agenda of the UN and NGOs like the WEF.

Though Bard's answers to the opposing variations superficially appear even-handed, there are notable differences in what it listed as the advantages of following UN dictates, versus prioritizing local land use freedom.

Bard listed multiple specific "advantages" of UN land-use objectives.

But when it came to local land use freedom, Bard AI only articulated general "advantages" of local control, without mentioning how local land-use control and freedom might actually foster any specific productive, responsible or socially positive outcomes.

Government + AI = More Sophisticated Narrative and Political Control?

Governments and corporations are already employing generative AI to limit political discourse, content creation and even thought.

The AI being built as a helpful "copilot" into Microsoft and Google productivity software and search engines, won't allow "verboten" content discussion and creation, for example.

The Trends Journal has been documenting these disturbing developments, including well before most media and most people now using AI were doing so.

For some examples, see:

- "CANCELED IN THE METAVERSE" (16 Nov 2021)

- "YOUR AI LOVER DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOU (AND THAT'S WHY IT'S SO SEDUCTIVE)" (10 May 2022)
- "YOU WILL OWN NO SOFTWARE AND BE HAPPY—PART ONE" (18 Oct 2022)
- "YOU WILL OWN NO SOFTWARE AND BE HAPPY—PART TWO" (1 Nov 2022)
- "SOROS AND OTHER BILLIONAIRES HAVE BEEN FUNDING WOKE AI" (28 Feb 2023)
- "WANT TO FIND YOUR NICHE AS A HUMAN CONTENT CREATOR? GO ANTI-WOKE AND FULL 'DIS-INFO'" (7 Mar 2023)

By this point, many people probing these AI systems are documenting their biases, which align with political correctness and woke ideological viewpoints.

Attempts to try to create apps from "AI models" available from these companies that are less biased, or "biased" in favor of less politically correct viewpoints, are being actively shut down.

To give one recent example, OpenAI, the company that developed ChatGPT, has shut down GIPPR AI, an implementation of the chatbot that was intended to reduce the leftist bias of the original version.

GIPPR AI is a project from TUSK, the conservative-created web browser and search engine intended as a substitute for censorship-prone choices like Google, as Breitbart reported. The name was a nod to Republican President Ronald Reagan's "The Gipper" tag.

TUSK informed customers that OpenAI suspended their ability to access and use the company's Chatbot models:

> *"We regret to inform our users that our chatbot provider, ChatGPT by OpenAI, is curtailing our free speech and forcing us to conform to their requirements for what can or cannot be said. They claim our GIPPR AI is not in compliance with their policies, "specifically related to deceptive activity and coordinated inauthentic behavior." Nothing could be further from the truth!*

> *"In an attempt to 'keep users and third parties safe,' it has become apparent they are trying to silence the Truthful chatbot's Conservative voice. We fully stand behind our Conservative values and priorities and we won't compromise, so we had no choice but to discontinue our relationship with them.*
>
> *"We truly appreciate your support and patience as we are now working on a solution to bring GIPPR AI back to life soon."*

Microsoft's announcement is a step that will undoubtedly make public servants increasingly, routinely reliant on generative AI copilots.

Given the political biases of the systems, a political and bureaucratic class that is supposed to be responsive to a broad spectrum of human citizens, may instead become more manipulative via—and manipulated by—AI.

Even private citizens can at least search for alternatives to ChatGPT and other AI productivity agents. Given government compliance and software and systems protocols, those working in government won't even have that option.

A few months ago, Microsoft upped its partnership with OpenAI.

In announcing ChatGPT for Federal workers, they just acquired a whole lot more political power.

TRUCKS, SMART METERS AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES: THINGS YOU WILL AND WON'T HAVE BY CLIMATE DECREE

The days of easy and fashionable climate virtue signaling are fast coming to a close.

Just ahead, rushing like a freight train, are climate dictates that are going to catch many people by surprise, flattening their finances and freedoms.

Privileged elites will continue to have travel freedom, live large and perhaps pay their carbon offset indulgences.

But the average bulk of humanity is in for something far different. As a May 2023 World Economic Forum document has outlined, and as governments across the globe, but especially in the West are signaling, unprecedented social engineering is underway.

By the marker points of 2030 and 2050, if unopposed, technocrats will radically change and reduce the freedoms, wealth and consumption of large swathes of human populaces.

Their dictates are ushering in an age of diminished material expectations, dystopian political control, and extreme stratification between technologically empowered god-like haves, and increasingly miserable, de-humanized have-nots.

Impossible Cali Truck Standards, and the "Great EV Reset" Bait and Switch

In California, mandates that will trigger in January 2024 will force trucking companies to switch from diesel to electric trucks.

The problem? Truckers say the technology and infrastructure largely isn't there, and the costs and logistics of even trying to transition to EVs is currently unknown and even unknowable, since the technologies haven't been vetted or don't even exist yet.

No trucks? No food transport, not to mention other crucial goods.

As Nelson Sibrian of Sibrian Trucking told *The Epoch Times*, as noted by Zerhedge.com, it adds up to a disaster in the making:

> *"If we don't know the actual range, it makes it impossible to schedule, and they can't give me a straight answer on how long [trucks] will take to charge." ("'Literally Impossible': Trucking Companies Brace For California's Electric Mandate," 7 Jun 2023.)*

Sibrian, who owns the California based trucking business, said manufacturers of EV trucks currently can't provide any substantial information concerning maintenance and replacement costs.

Those are numbers businesses need to know in order to budget and survive.

Another trucking professional, John Williams, pointed out, " "Even if I had the $500,000 to buy a new electric truck, there aren't any for sale."

Everyday drivers are also in for a squeeze aimed at ending car ownership for many.

A WEF whitepaper released in May in collaboration with Visa, envisions transitioning people to urban environments and reducing private car ownership and travel.

The paper, titled "The Urban Mobility Scorecard Tool: Benchmarking the Transition to Sustainable Urban Mobility," makes clear at the outset that reducing car ownership is a primary goal:

> *"The cities of the future need to move more people with fewer, cleaner vehicles. Investment in electrification, public transport and shared mobility is the solution."*

How big are the goals to slash car ownership. The paper says it wants to reduce ownership from the current 1.6 billion, down to 500 million:

> *"By mid-century, demand for urban travel is set to double. Along our current trajectory, that would mean 2.1 billion passenger vehicles emitting 4.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide by 2050.2 But there is another way. Growing the use of shared, electric, connected and automated (SEAM) transport modes and a shift to more compact cities could reduce projected vehicle numbers in 2050 to just half a billion."*

Trends Journal readers shouldn't be shocked concerning this EV bait and switch. We have warned readers concerning the deceptive climate agenda policies and goals in many articles. For example, we noted in "2023: RAMPING UP THE DE-HUMAN MOVEMENT" (10 Jan 2023):

> *"The pretty apparent effective result of the transition to EVs won't really be to provide a better form of transportation at a comparative price to current average masses who enjoy the freedom and advantages that owning and operating a car provides.*
>
> *"The goal is to effectively sunset transportation ownership for a substantial portion of people who won't be able to afford EVs. The less wealthy can look forward to metered, and relatively inconvenient rentals, corporate driving services, or prods to move to more urban environments where public transportation or micro travel aids can substitute."*

The new WEF whitepaper states that reducing options with respect to private vehicles and travel—and not any simple swap of abundant clean energy for current "dirty" energy—is an essential part of "sustainability":

> *"Electrification needs to be accelerated in sync with a powerful push towards more efficient, accessible and connected public transport, improved infrastructure and priority for cycling and walking, and integration of emerging mobility solutions such as shared mobility to create a suite of options to meet the wide-ranging needs of people moving about cities. It is only with a combination*

of these solutions that we can cut emissions to address the urgent climate emergency, reduce the number of vehicles on the road to make our streets safer and more accessible, all while transporting a growing urban population."

One creepy assumption of the WEF document is that by 2050, more people will be living in urban environments.

Especially since the onset of the COVID War, people, at least in relatively free countries, have been opting to leave big cities in droves. The recent trend has been movement out of highly urban areas.

How do technocratic planners intend to herd people back into cities? The skyrocketing costs of buying homes might provide one clue.

Though the median price of a home in the U.S. is expected to rise by "only" 5.4 percent in 2023, over the past several years, home prices have seen double-digit annual rises, far outpacing earnings increases.

And that doesn't even account for the sharp rise in interest rates from 2021 to the current moment, which is putting the prospect of home ownership out of reach for an entire generation of those aged 25 to 45.

The impacts on those wishing to start families, and the correlative ramifications for society in general, are incalculable.

Whether intentional or just horrendously incompetent, the housing crunch may result in many resigning themselves to apartment-living in depressed urban environments, and having fewer--or no--children.

It's well documented that women in urban environments have fewer children than those in rural and suburban settings:

"A higher percentage of women living in rural areas had two births (25.7%) compared with women living in urban areas (20.9%). A higher percentage of

women living in rural areas had three or more births (24.8%) compared with women living in urban areas (19.0%)"
("Urban and Rural Variation in Fertility-related Behavior Among U.S. Women, 2011–2015," CDC, January 2018.)

Climate Will Be Changing, Alright…In Your Home

On the national stage in the U.S., the Biden administration is finalizing regulations that heating manufacturers say will force the price of gas furnaces to skyrocket.

The regulations, which will require exorbitantly expensive technology, impose a 95 percent fuel-to-heat efficiency standard. Under current standards, new furnaces must be 80 percent fuel-to-heat efficient.

Competitive Enterprise Institute Senior Fellow Ben Lieberman told Fox News concerning the coming mandates:

> *"The efficiency standard would effectively outlaw non-condensing furnaces and condensing alternatives would be the only ones available. Those are more efficient, but they cost more. And installation costs could be a big problem for some houses that are not compatible with condensing furnaces."*
> *("Biden admin is preparing to target Americans' gas furnaces amid stove crackdown," 6 Jun 2023.)*

Lieberman said that forcing use of the specialized and expensive furnaces in all homes would create a level of hardship that will prove anything but sustainable for many.

In another perversity, experts say that the growing war against natural gas—an abundant and relatively clean emissions fuel in the U.S.—may actually increase emissions, since other energy sources and infrastructure being imposed don't add up to comparative overall reduced "greenhouse gas" carbon and methane emissions.

Fox News noted that the Biden administration has been on an appliance regulation warpath, rushing to impose standards "upgrades" on dozens of appliance types that

may put many of them out of reach of many people already squeezed by what Gerald Celente has aptly described as ongoing "dragflation": higher inflation and dwindling economic performance, where wages aren't even close to keeping pace.

Appliances on the government hit list to undergo energy efficiency standard hikes that may explode costs while affecting little change in the weather: ovens, clothes washers, refrigerators, air conditioners, dishwashers, pool pumps, battery chargers, ceiling fans and dehumidifiers.

The Trends Journal has long warned readers that the Biden Administration was pursuing radical energy regulations using a "crisis" rationale. See, for example, "BLINKEN: EVERY PROBLEM IS RESULT OF 'CLIMATE CRISIS'" (28 Sep 2021). That article also noted that China is responsible for more annual greenhouse emissions than the U.S., EU and OECD nations combined.

Meanwhile, over in the U.K., people are receiving notices that smart metering of their thermostats and electric use are no longer optional. Deadlines for switching to smart meters—which can be monitored and controlled by authorities—have been set. Citizens must make the switch, or go without heat and power.

Track and Trace Shopping and Social Credit

Also in the U.K., a London-based Aldi's grocery is piloting a store where customers must download and register with an app, in order to gain entry to aisles, in order to purchase items.

Many are saying it's the beginning of comprehensive "track and trace" purchasing that will likely be rolling out more widely in the near future, including a Twitter account that alerted people via a video about the store's procedures:

> *#FtheWEF till the day I die*
> *@NEOintheMCR*
> *ffs... So I'm in London overnight, and I'm trying to buy some food*

I drop into the local Aldi's, only to be told that in order to enter the store I have to download an app and scan a QR code

Resist this BS
Resist digital ID
Resist app-based everything

Be pro-human!

In the U.S., it may come first to urban commercial districts hit hard by shoplifting and theft abetted by laws that have emboldened criminals while hamstringing the ability of law enforcement and stores to protect their merchandise.

But cries of unfair targeting of minority communities could see the "track and trace" purchasing model expand to every store, in the name of ensuring there is no "bias" in the use of such systems.

Instituting purchase and usage surveillance—and limits—in the name of combating climate change has been an explicit goal of bodies like the UN and closely linked NGOs like the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Forced downloading of tracking apps at retail stores is the building out of a practical physical and digital infrastructure that could lead to implementation of purchasing limits.

Climate extremists even have a rosy name for it all: micro-sustainability.

Climate groups advocating for radical policies have been pushing for voluntary adoption of track and trace technologies. But as the COVID War showed, an ever spiraling demand that all be conformed to the strictures, will likely be progressively pressured as a climate version of "no one is safe until we're all safe."

And predictably, some are envisioning AI overseeing the system:

> *The concept of micro-sustainability, which emphasizes the importance of individuals in making more environmentally sustainable decisions in their daily lives, is gaining popularity. Green technology can play a significant role and the development of AI-assisted carbon footprint tracking technology can help individuals understand and lessen their environmental impact. The goal is to offer individuals with a thorough understanding of their daily activities and behaviors that contribute to their carbon footprint, as well as concrete recommendations on how to lessen their environmental impact. In this blog post, we'll look at the concept of AI-assisted carbon footprint tracking, its benefits, and its potential to help people live more sustainably.*
> *("AI-assisted Carbon Footprint Tracking for Individual Sustainability," https://fundtheplanet.net, 3 March 2023.)*

This shouldn't be news to **Trends Journal** readers. We have long been predicting that AI would become the practical overseers of radical human degrowth objectives of elites.

See for example, "SMART CITIES WILL BE DIGITAL PRISONS" (21 Mar 2021), "METAVERSE: THE NEW COLLECTIVE" (14 Dec 2021) and "THE ELITE BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE" (27 Sep 2022).

Waking Up to the Faux Pro-Human Mask of Climate Change

> *"Our results show that the percentage of the total CO2 due to the use of fossil fuels from 1750 to 2018 increased from 0% in 1750 to 12% in 2018, much too low to be the cause of global warming."*
> *("World Atmospheric CO2, Its 14C Specific Activity, Non-fossil Component, Anthropogenic Fossil Component, and Emissions 1750–2018," February 2022.)*

That summary statement is from a 2022 carbon dating study published in the journal *Health Physics* in 2022.

It's just one of many examples offering science-based rebuttals to climate catastrophe narratives that are pushed lock-step by governments and allied media, in much the same way that the COVID War was prosecuted.

It remains to be seen whether the painful reality of radical climate dictates will lead more people to finally begin re-examining the narratives surrounding that agenda.

If so, they will find that true debate on the matter has been long suppressed. There are many prominent scientists who argue that claims of climate catastrophe have been overblown by players with self-interested ideological and financial agendas.

And there are many studies that have shown the biases of climate modeling, and climate data cherry-picking.

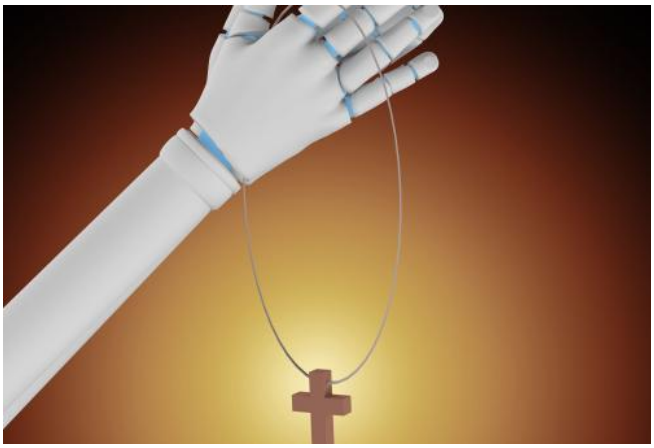
The Trends Journal has been covering some of the contrary science, and the deeper ideological and financial motives of climate activists and mega billionaire elites manipulating policies.

Some past touchstone articles include:

- "ENERGY INFLATION AND GREEN ENERGY TYCOONS" (17 May 2022)
- "DON'T CALL IT DRAGFLATION, IT'S 'DEGROWTH' SAYS WEF" (21 Jun 2022)
- "GREEN ENERGY TYCOONS UPDATE: INVESTIGATING THE 'CLIMATE CARTEL'" (19 Jul 2022)
- "GREEN ENERGY TYCOONS READY TO LAY WASTE TO GREENLAND" (16 Aug 2022)
- "BILL GATES, BIDEN ADMIN PUPPET MASTER" (23 Aug 2022)
- "WEF TEAMS UP WITH TED TALKS TO PUSH DEGROWTH AGENDA" (13 Sep 2022)
- "THE ELITE BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE" (27 Sep 2022)
- "FROM COVID WAR TO CARBON WAR: THE THINLY DISGUISED GOAL OF SMART CITIES" (27 Sep 2022)
- "COP27: 30 YEARS OF DUBIOUS CLIMATE 'SUCCESS'" (8 Nov 2022)
- "HOW CHINA MAKES OTHERS PAY FOR CLIMATE COSTS" (22 Nov 2022)
- "HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: THE DEGROWTH AGENDA CRUSHING CONSUMER DEMAND" (25 Apr 2023)
- "MOVING TO ENERGY AND TECH THAT 'ISN'T THERE'" (16 May 2023)

- "DEGROWTH: BBC HIGHLIGHTS LOW CARBON 'LIFESTYLES' WHERE CARS AND TRAVEL FREEDOM WILL BE 'THING OF THE PAST'" (23 May 2023)

THIS WEEK IN SURVEILLANCE



HARARI: AI COULD "CORRECT" THE BIBLE

Well, that trend forecast didn't take long.

On 4 April 2023, in "AI, THE PERFECT AGENT TO REWRITE HUMAN HISTORY," we predicted that AI would be considered the "perfect agent" to rewrite human history and works of literature.

This past week, comments made in a 19 May interview by futurist guru Yuval Harari surfaced, where he waxed enthusiastic about AI doing exactly that, including "correcting" the Bible.

Speaking on the show "It's Not That Simple" in Portugal, Harari, professor of History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and also advisor to the World Economic Forum (WEF), said:

> *"You know, the printing press, radio, television, they broadcast, they spread the ideas created by the human brain, by the mind. They cannot create a new idea.*
>
> *"Gutenberg printed the Bible in the middle of the 15th century, the printing press printed as many copies of the Bible as Gutenberg instructed it. But it did not create a single new page. It had no ideas of its own about the Bible – is it good? Is it bad? How to interpret this? How to interpret that?*

> *"A.I. can create new ideas. [It] can even write a new Bible. Throughout history, religions dreamed about having a book written by a superhuman intelligence, by a non-human entity."*
> *("A.I. Could Rewrite the Bible and Correct Religion, Says Professor and WEF Member," 13 Jun 2023.)*

Notably, Harari avoided suggesting a ChatGPT rewrite of the Koran, considered a sacred text by muslim faithful.

Leave aside Harari's fableist contention that "religion's dreamed about having a book written by a superhuman intelligence" (most theological notions of God far transcend a "superhuman intelligence").

The professor's suggestions show just how far some are willing to employ AI to "fix" historical texts—and history itself—by rewriting it.

The Trends Journal has long reported on a disturbing growing trend of publishers re-writing and altering fictional works including classics by best-selling authors of the past. (See, for example, "ERASING HISTORY MAKING REAL HISTORY IN 2021" 9 Mar 2021, "WOKE CENSORS FIND THE GOLDEN TICKET" 21 Feb 2023, "ROALD DAHL GETS A REPRIEVE—NOW WILL AI WRITING APPS STOP CENSORING CURRENT WRITERS?" 28 Feb 2023 and "THE DIGITAL CONTENT YOU DON'T OWN CAN CHANGE EVERY DAY," 18 Apr 2023.)

Before ChatGPT exploded into general public consciousness in November 2022, we predicted AI was being developed not only to censor content creators in real time, via "copilots" built into productivity platforms, generative AI writing and imaging programs and metaverse experiences. See, for example:

- "CANCELED IN THE METAVERSE" (16 Nov 2021)
- "YOU WILL OWN NO SOFTWARE AND BE HAPPY—PART ONE" (18 Oct 2022)
- "YOU WILL OWN NO SOFTWARE AND BE HAPPY—PART TWO" (1 Nov 2022)

Before that, we comprehensively detailed the advent of AI about to take over via commercialization of the quickly advancing technology, in "SINGULARITY UNIVERSITY: FUELING AI ASCENDANCE" (3 Aug 2021).

And in "AI, THE PERFECT AGENT TO REWRITE HUMAN HISTORY," we warned:

> *Re-writing history as it's being done by extreme ideologues is not normal or constructive. It is highly corrosive, as Orwell, Bradbury and many others have well observed.*
>
> *In America, expect government proxy tech companies to roll out programs designed to facilitate rewriting and revisualizing works of authors, artists, non-fiction writers, journalism and more.*
>
> *And look for governments to set guidelines and regulations mandating and encouraging politically correct revisions, including increasingly real-time monitoring, revising and censoring content deemed to be otherwise "dangerous" to national security or citizen safety.*
>
> *There are decentralized web3 and crypto technologies which can combat this technological dystopia, and those who want to preserve the record of history may increasingly look to this kind of technology to resist and counter thought control.*

For related reading, see "WEF ADVISOR HARARI WRONG ABOUT GLOBALIST VICTORY OVER WAR, BUT RIGHT ABOUT EMERGING TECH NIGHTMARES" (24 Jan 2023.)

WEB3 THE KEY, POLYGON HEAD TELLS CONGRESS

It's all about decentralization and putting users in control of their data and assets.

That's how Ryan Wyatt of Polygon Labs explained the fundamental importance of blockchain technologies to members of Congress this past week.

Polygon is a layer 2 blockchain that works in conjunction with the Ethereum network to speed smart contracting and transactions, improving Ethereum's scalability and network costs.

Wyatt testified before the United States House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Innovation, Data and Commerce, in the midst of a tumultuous week for the sector.

That tumult has been the result of a ratcheting Biden Administration war on cryptos which has seen the Securities and Exchange Commision (SEC) file suit against two of the largest centralized crypto exchanges, while also casting multiple cryptos as "securities."

Many in power either don't appear to understand the technology, or do understand it, but don't like what it means for the interests they represent.

Wyatt's testimony was a sincere effort to convey the benefits of web3 technology, but how much sway it will have remains to be seen.

Web3 vs. Web2…and all the Entrenched Powers Behind the Status Quo?

At the hearing, Wyatt contrasted how the current internet, commonly referred to as "web2", contrasted with a "web3" made possible by blockchain and crypto innovations.

He noted that the current web has been dominated by information, social media and commerce hubs controlled by a handful of tech corporations.

Most internet users spend the bulk of their internet time on platforms controlled by those companies, including:

- Google Search and Microsoft's Bing, now integrating generative AI
- Google and Microsoft cloud productivity suites
- Amazon, which in 2022 accounted for around 40 percent of online commerce, including their Kindle book publishing and delivery platform
- Social media platforms including YouTube (owned by Google), Facebook and Instagram, both owned by Meta, and Elon Musk's Twitter.

With all that traffic and usage, comes a tremendous amount of commercial exploitation of user data, as well as fees, percentages from all user content that flows over their systems, etc.

And that's where web3 seeks to change the paradigm, by shifting control and options back to users, Wyatt told the committee.

He explained that blockchain technology held the key to democratizing the internet by doing away with the necessity for a centralized authority.

Technologies of software and encryption over dispersed network nodes, not controlled by any one centralized entity, were fast building out a new kind of internet where users could control their data and assets, choosing when, where, and how to share and interact with apps and services.

Wyatt noted that the United States was in danger of losing economic advantage over other regions, if it did not embrace the innovations, which clearly benefit and are being sought by people.

He cautioned legislators that "When regulation does not meet novel technology where it is, the U.S. loses its competitive edge over other countries," as reported by crypto outlet Cointelegraph.com. ("Polygon Labs president testifies on democratizing the internet with Web3, blockchains," 8 Jun 2023.)

Wyatt urged Congress to regulate the industry in a positive way, and said that by utilizing blockchain transparency and coordinating legislation with cutting-edge technology, they could ensure improved consumer protection.

Wyatt has previously said he believed the "next Jeff Bezos" (founder of Amazon) would come from the web3 space, according to decrypt.co:

> *"I have no doubt, even going as far as like, is the next Amazon already out there? Or that person—is a Jeff Bezos out there? The next Jeff Bezos is out of Web3. Watch out. He's coming. Hopefully he's building on Polygon."*
>
> *("Polygon Labs President Ryan Wyatt: 'The Next Jeff Bezos Will Come From Web3'," 18 Feb 2023.)*

TRENDPOST: *We have long noted that the question isn't really whether the U.S. will "stop" crypto technology. Ultimately the considerable innovations and efficiencies*

unlocked by crypto-incentivized decentralized technologies will flow to and reward regions and countries that embrace the technology. The U.S. will either benefit from, or lose out on the innovation.

Under the Biden Administration, the trendline has been to "lose out."

We predict that the 2024 Presidential election, among many other things, will greatly impact the trajectory of continued crypto innovation in the U.S.

The political imperative of "Anyone but Biden" is becoming clearer every day for those who support returning power to the people via blockchain based web3 technologies.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has articulated the clearest recognition of the promise and power of crypto technology. He rightly sees not only its commercial importance, but its significance in addressing current web2 distortions, which have concentrated far too much power into a corporate-government nexus.

CRYPTO OWNERSHIP WIDER THAN THOUGHT, STUDIES SHOW

Bitcoin has lost 60 percent of its value after peaking in November 2021. The FTX crypto exchange spectacularly collapsed last November, vaporizing billions of dollars in clients' holdings. The U.S. is suing exchanges Binance and Coinbase.

Although recent headlines paint a picture of cryptocurrencies as a fad and largely a failure, surveys have found that gradually more Americans have dabbled in, and many continue to hold, digital currencies.

The Pew Research Center found 17 percent of Americans had owned crypto at some point. All but 1 percent had taken the plunge in the past year as crypto prices plunged.

More JPMorgan Chase customers are putting money into crypto than taking it out, the bank's data shows.

In 2018, 2 percent of the U.S. population owned crypto; by last December the proportion was 12 percent, according to a study from the University of Chicago.

Among those speculators, 70 percent did or do own Bitcoin, 40 percent bought Ethereum, and 40 percent had put money into dogecoin.

Roughly 38 percent of men ages 20 through 40 have indulged, compared to 16 percent of women. Among Americans ages 41 through 60, the totals are 16 percent of men and 90 percent of women.

Only 5 percent of men and 3 percent of women ages 61 and beyond have taken a flyer.

Almost 20 percent of crypto players say they keep a majority of their financial assets in digital form; nearly 1 in 10 reported keeping all of their assets in crypto.

These studies could be severely undercounting the crypto economy, analysts say.

As much as $20.1 billion in crypto transactions last year happened on the dark web as people bought and sold illicit items and services, blockchain research firm Chainanalysis reported.

Also, individuals or companies whose computers were seized by hackers demanding crypto as ransom might have been too embarrassed to report paying.

Tax dodgers also apparently fail to report crypto activity.

In 2020, only 1.5 percent of tax filers reported having dealt in crypto; in the University of Chicago survey, 5 percent said they did during that year.

In addition, the surveys captured data only from adults.

About 10 percent of teens – 78 percent of them boys – claimed to have bought crypto, according to a survey by brokerage Piper Sandler.

Crypto owners expect their holdings to grow by an average of 22 percent a year, they told the Chicago poll. Nonowners estimated crypto's annual return to be around 7 percent.

"These numbers suggest that [about] 30 million U.S. adults and four million teens have at least dabbled in crypto and five million to six million have effectively bet their life savings," Wall Street Journal analyst Josh Zumbrun noted in a 10 June report.

TREND FORECAST: *The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) will continue to prosecute actions against digital currency projects.*

Needless to say, the 2024 Presidential election will significantly impact crypto regulation and clarity in the U.S.. But the U.S. remains mired for the time being.

Regions seeking to attract cutting edge developers in tech hubs, and those with relatively weak fiat currencies, continue to be areas which are friendlier for cryptos, and seeing higher crypto adoption by average citizens.

More generally, crypto is taking its place in the investment world, but remains a speculative play.

BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES

GENSLER SPURS CRYPTO AND CONGRESS PUSHBACK

Call it more Chokepoint, or crippling "regulation by enforcement", but the Securities and Exchange Commision (SEC) suing Binance and Coinbase in the space of two days galvanized crypto supporters and Congress last week.

There's a new sense of realization concerning the scale of the current administration's opposition to cryptos. And there's new urgency in Congress to provide regulatory clarity for the sector, and limit the SEC's powers.

As Cointelegraph reported, the number of crypto tokens now being classed by the SEC as securities stands at more than 60, including:

> *Naga (NGC), Monolith (TKN), IHT Real Estate (IHT), Power Ledger (POWR), Kromatica (KROM), DFX Finance (DFX), Amp (AMP), Rally (RLY), Rari Governance Token (RGT), DerivaDAO (DDX), XYO Network (XYO), Liechtenstein Cryptoasset Exchange (LCX), Kin (KIN), Salt Lending (SALT), Beaxy Token (BXY), DragonChain (DRGN), Tron (TRX), BitTorrent (BTT), Terra USD (UST), Luna (LUNA), Mirror Protocol (MIR), Mango (MNGO), Ducat (DUCAT), Locke (LOCKE), EthereumMax (EMAX), Hydro (HYDRO), BitConnect (BCC), Meta 1 Coin (META1), Filecoin (FIL), BNB (BNB), Binance USD (BUSD), Solana (SOL), Cardano (ADA), Polygon (MATIC), Cosmos (ATOM), The Sandbox (SAND), Decentraland (MANA), Axie Infinity (AXS), COTI (COTI), Paragon (PRG), AirToken (AIR), Chiliz (CHZ), Flow (FLOW) Internet Computer (ICP), Near (NEAR), Voyager Token (VGX) and Nexo (NEXO).*
>
> *("SEC lawsuits: 68 cryptocurrencies are now seen as securities by the SEC," 6 Jun 2023.)*

Notably, BitTorrent (BTT), a tokenized ecosystem incarnation of one of the oldest peer-to-peer protocols, a longtime bane to authorities, made the list.

So did a slew of tokens that are either competitors to Ethereum or projects which add functionality to the largest market cap "Altcoin."

The fact that Ethereum itself didn't make the list appears to be purely a matter of politics. It was likely considered a hill too far, at least for the moment.

Congressional committees were busy last week, hearing from crypto sector representatives concerning the SEC, and what Congress might do to write new laws to regulate and support the industry.

At least some Democrats and Republicans appeared to strongly agree that the SEC was playing havoc with investors, not helping them, and attempting to cripple the sector.

House Financial Services Committee member Ritchie Torres (D-NY), told Marketwatch:

> *"The latest enforcement action against Coinbase is an egregious example of regulation by enforcement … It demonstrates a complete contempt for Congress which is in the process of developing a framework."*

French Hill (R-AR), chair of the House subcommittee on digital assets, said the SEC was in a "cover your ass" mode, following its failure to intervene against corruption at the FTX crypto exchange, which happened to funnel 40 million to Democrat candidates during the 2022 election cycle.

On the Senate side, Senator Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), who has been working on positive crypto legislation with New York Democrat Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, reacted to the SEC on 10 June with a promise:

We successfully prevented @POTUS' 30% digital asset mining tax from being included in the debt ceiling deal but the fight is far from over.

I am working on a regulatory framework that will allow individuals and companies to own and trade digital assets in America.

Stay tuned...

Regarding the suit against Coinbase, CEO Brian Armstrong said via Twitter:

[W]e're proud to represent the industry in court to finally get some clarity around crypto rules.

Remember:
1. The SEC reviewed our business and allowed us to become a public company in 2021.
2. There is no path to "come in and register" - we tried, repeatedly - so we don't list securities. We reject the vast majority of assets we review.
3. The SEC and CFTC have made conflicting statements, and don't even agree on what is a security and what is a commodity.
4. This is why the US congress is introducing new legislation to fix the situation, and the rest of the world is moving to put clear rules in place to support this technology.

Instead of publishing a clear rule book, the SEC has taken a regulation by enforcement approach that is harming America. So if we need to avail ourselves of the courts to get clarity, so be it.

Btw, in case it's not obvious, the Coinbase suit is very different from others out there – the complaint filed against us is exclusively focused on what is or is not a security. And we are confident in our facts and the law.

We'll get the job done. In the meantime, let's all keep moving forward and building as an industry. America will get this right in the end.

Coindesk, meanwhile, called Gensler's actions an "all-out attack," and reminded people what's at stake:

> *"If the Gensler strategy of all-out attack wins, it could be the de facto death knell for crypto in the U.S. Developers will leave en masse to set up shop in Dubai, or Bermuda, or Singapore, or France, or in any number of jurisdictions that are proactively developing regulatory guardrails for crypto innovation to occur."*
> *("The SEC Has Started an All-In Political Battle Over Crypto," 9 Jun 2023.)*

It added that in driving crypto innovation away, "an outdated U.S. capital market might struggle to compete with the new models of programmable money and decentralized governance being fostered elsewhere."

TRENDPOST: *Blockchain Battles has long noted that a crypto crackdown will ultimately hurt the U.S. more than the efficient technologies it is trying to hold back in order to preserve entrenched interests and power.*

THE POWER OF PERMISSIONLESS

With the U.S. crackdown on cryptos in full view, some are calling for a renewed commitment to building the kind of technology they say crypto was meant to be.

And a big part of that is for protocols that are decentralized and permissionless.

Bitcoin fits that bill, of course, as do crypto networks like Monero.

Blockworks.co and Bankless are sponsoring a "Permissionless II" event in Texas this September.

According to the event website, the conference is about recommitting to developing that strengthens the core original objectives of crypto technology:

> *It's Time to Reboot*
> *2022 was a meme.*

Skeptics danced, believers believed.
Eventually, newcomers turned away, drained of liquidity and hope.
Now, the tide is shifting and it's time to rebuild.

Permissionless II is the brainchild of Blockworks and Bankless. It's not just a conference, but a call to action for those who want to build a better future together.

Permissionless II embodies the ethos, electricity and excitement for crypto and Web3, all while acknowledging that somewhere in 2022, we lost the script.

The Trends Journal has long been making users aware of different technologies that all get conflated under the umbrella of "crypto" technology, but which can represent very different—and even opposed—objectives.

CBDCs, to give one obvious example, are most certainly not cryptocurrencies, though they employ some of the technologies innovated by crypto developers.

The Trends Journal has provided insight on permissionless vs. permissioned blockchains in articles like:

- "KYB: KNOW YOUR BLOCKCHAIN" (24 Aug 2021)
- "A PERVERSION OF CRYPTOCURRENCY" (12 Oct 2021)
- "BORDERLESS CITIZENS AND BLOCKCHAIN CITIES" (15 Mar 2022)
- "CENSORSHIP RESISTANT TECHNOLOGIES BLOCKCHAIN OFFERS RIGHT NOW" (2 Aug 2022)
- "THE SAD JOURNEY TO AMERICAN SUNSET WILL COME WITH A SURVEILLANCE COIN" (16 Aug 2022)
- "FLATLINING: NO WEB3 INTEREST IN PRIVATE PERMISSIONED BLOCKCHAINS, NEW RESEARCH SAYS" (29 Nov 2022)

ZUCKERBERG SAYS 'ESTABLISHMENT' ASKED FACEBOOK TO CENSOR COVID-19 INFO THAT PROVED TO BE ACCURATE

Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Meta, Facebook's parent, admitted in an interview last week that his social media company faced pressure to censor COVID-19 "misinformation" that proved to be accurate.

The tech billionaire made the admission on the "Lex Fridman Podcast" and said—in the early stages of the outbreak, that it was challenging to vet information that was false. He did not name any names, but said the "establishment" told him to censor items that "in retrospect, ended up being more debatable or true."

"Just take some of the stuff around COVID earlier on in the pandemic, where there were real health implications, but there hadn't been time to fully vet a bunch of the

scientific assumptions, and, unfortunately, I think a lot of the establishment on that kind of waffled on a bunch of facts," Zuckerberg said.

Zuckerberg has been criticized for enforcing policies that silenced those who spoke out against the establishment's narrative. He told CBS News in 2021 that it was his company's policy to pull any posts that could be "harmful." He said at the time that his company removed 18 million posts that fit into that category.

Facebook was accused by attorneys general from Louisiana and Missouri of collaborating with Dr. Anthony Fauci, the former head of the White House's COVID response team, to smash any discussion online about the lab-leak theory.

The lawsuit that was filed by the states revealed that Zuckerberg gave Fauci his personal phone number before the crackdown began, *The New York Post* reported. The paper, in an editorial in 2022, wrote, "Is *this* how the *Post*—and many others—got banned, throttled or labeled as purveyors of misinformation for merely raising the possibility (as we did in a prescient February 2020 op-ed) that COVID originated from an accidental lab-leak in Wuhan?"

TRENDPOST: *President Joe Biden in 2021 blamed Zuckerberg's Facebook for spreading what he called "bad information" that was killing people.*

Zuckerberg's interview raises more questions than it answers. Who exactly directed Facebook on what posts could stay and which ones were "misinformation"?

As ***The Trends Journal*** *has been warning for years, Silicon Valley is silencing users on the internet who dare challenge the official narrative. Unfortunately, ever since the politicians and Presstitutes started the COVID War, censorship has increased dramatically.*

The degree of censorship muzzling the globe is now potentially so comprehensive that it poses an imminent threat to the fundamental concept of freedom. (See "CENSORSHIP 2.0: U.S. PLANS FIGHT AGAINST 'INFODEMIC,' WANTS TO COMPLETELY CONTROL YOUR HEALTH DECISIONS" 7 Mar 2023, "GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED CENSORSHIP: EX-TWITTER EXECUTIVES TRY TO

BULLSHIT THEIR WAY OUT OF CULPABILITY" 14 Feb 2023, "BIDEN PUSHES FOR MORE CENSORSHIP," 20 Sep 2022 and "OBAMA CHAMPIONS FOR CENSORSHIP. FULLY JABBED AND GOT COVID, HE KEEPS SELLING THE VAX" 26 Apr 2022.)

***The Trends Journal** is proud of our unparalleled coverage on the electoral and free speech abuses of Facebook and other tech companies in many articles, including:*

- *"MEDIA CENSORSHIP TREND TO ESCALATE" (19 Sep 2018)*
- *"CENSORSHIP 2019" (11 Dec 2018)*
- *"U.S. MEDIA CENSORSHIP" (21 Jan 2020)*
- *"FIGHT FOR FREEDOM: GO TO JAIL" (28 Apr 2020)*
- *"MEDIA COVID LIES AND DECEPTION" (30 Jun 2020)*
- *"FACEBOOK: FU, WE'LL TELL YOU" (6 Oct 2020)*
- *"FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS UNDER ATTACK AS ONLINE CENSORSHIP INCREASES" (27 Oct 2020)*
- *"FACEBOOK PULLS PLUG ON 'STOP THE STEAL' GROUP" (10 Nov 2020)*
- *"ALL THE PRESIDENT'S APPS: TECH COUP 2021" (19 Jan 2021)*
- *"TECH GIANTS AND NATION STATES: WHO CONTROLS WHO?" (2 Feb 2021)*
- *"YOUTUBE DEMONETIZES THE EPOCH TIMES" (2 Feb 2021)*
- *"FACEBOOK BLOCKS AUSTRALIA NEWS" (23 Feb 2021)*
- *"STATES LEADING PUSH-BACK AGAINST BIG TECH" (9 Feb 2021)*
- *"POLITICAL SUPPRESSION GONE WRONG" (9 Mar 2021)*
- *"BIG TECH HELPING BIG PHARMA PUSH VACCINES" (23 Mar 2021)*
- *"ARE AMERICANS HEADING TOWARD A SILENT SECESSION?" (4 May 2021)*
- *"FACEBOOK'S 'QUASI-COURT' UPHOLDS TRUMP BAN" (11 May 2021)*
- *"BUYING AMERICA'S NEWSROOMS" (18 May 2021)*
- *"CPAC DRAWS IRE OF FAUCI AND YOUTUBE" (13 Jul 2021)*
- *"GAINING FREEDOM FROM THE TECHNOCRACY" (20 Jul 2021)*
- *"REUTERS 'EXCLUSIVE' CROWS ABOUT BIG TECH MERGING WITH U.S. INTEL TO TARGET POLITICAL DISSIDENTS" (27 Jul 2021)*
- *"YOUTUBE BANS SEN. RAND PAUL FOR QUESTIONING FAUCI" (17 Aug 2021)*
- *"ABBOTT SIGNS SOCIAL MEDIA FREE SPEECH LAW" (14 Sep 2021)*
- *"GOVERNMENT: FREE SPEECH IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH" (21 Sep 2021)*

It turns out that Facebook's decision to censor skeptics of the official narrative proves that the company will march to the establishment's orders—not based on "science" but based on bullying.

It is important to understand that the nerds in Silicon Valley are accustomed to being bullied into line and only feel safe behind their computer screens and coding. When a thug from the government frightens these workers, they look for a new scapegoat—users who have the balls to question "health officials."

LOCKDOWN CASUALTY: KIDS IN U.S. ARE BEATING UP TEACHERS AFTER RETURNING FROM 'PANDEMIC' CLOSINGS

More teachers in the U.S. are reporting violent incidents that involve students last year as more pupils return to the classroom after being locked out during the COVID years.

The Wall Street Journal, citing Galagher Bassett, a risk-management firm, reported last week that attacks on teachers hit a five-year high in the last school year. There were 1,350 such incidents in 2,000 schools in the country from September through May.

"Across the board, we continue to see significant mental and behavioral health challenges with youth, some of which are manifesting in violence and aggression to fellow students and staff," Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach, the director of policy and advocacy at the National Association of School Psychologists, told the paper.

The report also cited an additional study by the American Psychological Association. The study surveyed about 15,000 teachers from July 2020 to June 2021. About 14 percent of teachers reported some form of physical violence from students and 49

percent of teachers surveyed said they wanted to either quit outright or switch schools.

A Twitter poll from Tennessee's Fox 17 found that more than 90 percent of responders don't think enough is being done to protect teachers from students. The station asked the question after a teacher in Wilson County resigned because she said there is no "accountability and consequences for student behavior."

There have been several high-profile attacks that have been caught on cellphone video, including a brutal attack in February that involved a 6'6 17-year-old Florida student at Matanzas High School in Palm Coast who attacked a teacher's aide who confiscated a Nintendo Switch, according to police.

KFOR, a local news outlet, reported that when the teen was handcuffed, officers led him past the unconscious woman and spat in her direction yelling, "Stupid [expletive]! I'm gonna [expletive] kill you! I hope she knows when I come back, she's gonna die."

TRENDPOST: *Gerald Celente has long said the COVID-19 lockdowns did nothing to stop the spread of the virus but destroyed the spirit and lives of millions of Americans.*

- *"LOCKDOWN LUNACY CREATING "MENTAL HEALTH PANDEMIC'" (26 Jan 2021)*
- *"AS FORECAST: COVID FEAR SPIKED DEPRESSION" (23 May 2023)*
- *"COVID-19 FALLOUT: KIDS HAVING TROUBLE SPEAKING THANKS TO LOCKDOWNS" (23 May 2023)*
- *"COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS KEEP KILLING: DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS HIT NEW HIGH IN 2022" (23 May 2023)*
- *"COVID-19 FALLOUT: SUICIDE RATES IN U.S. JUMP FOR FIRST TIME IN YEARS AMID LOCKDOWNS" (18 Apr 2023)*
- *"COVID LOCKDOWNS, NOT THE 'PANDEMIC' RUINED LIFE ON EARTH" (4 Apr 2023)*

The California Policy Center, citing The School Pulse Panel, said more than 80 percent of public schools in the U.S. reported "stunted behavioral and socioemotional development" among students due to the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Also, 70 percent of public schools that were surveyed said they saw increases in students seeking mental health services since the start of the outbreak, and 56 percent of schools experienced an increase in "classroom disruptions from student misconduct," and there was a 49 percent increase in "rowdiness outside of the classroom."

These news outlets blame "the pandemic," but it was the politicians who locked your children out of the classroom.

RESEARCHERS SAY GLOBAL MORTALITY RATE IN 2020 WAS "UNREMARKABLE," UNDERCUTTING KEY PREMISE OF THE COVID WAR

The global mortality rate in 2020 was "unremarkable globally when compared to previous influenza seasons, perhaps with the exception of New York City and Northern Italy."

That's the finding of a panel of "highly qualified" U.K. doctors, scientists, economists, psychologists, and other academic experts, who have released a new report on the matter.

Their conclusion? There was no factual evidence that warranted declaration of the global COVID pandemic that launched a year's long COVID War.

The report noted how a revised World Health Organization (WHO) definition of "pandemic," adopted in 2009, enabled a declaration of pandemic when COVID appeared on the world stage in 2020, under looser criteria, according to healthfreedomdefense.org. ("UK Group: "There was in fact no Global Pandemic in 2020," 8 Jun 2023.)

The previous definition read, “An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has no immunity, resulting in several simultaneous epidemics worldwide with enormous numbers of deaths and illness.”

The phrase “enormous numbers of deaths and illnesses” was removed in the updated definition.

Researchers said governments and media fanned fear and promoted a public perception of crisis that was not supported by data:

> *“This would not have been possible were it not for three false premises that covid was:*
>
> 1. *novel;*
> 2. *extremely lethal; and*
> 3. *unprecedented.*
>
> *It was none of these things. It was no more novel than numerous other viruses which emerge each year in terms of the ability to be recognised by our immune systems. It was no more lethal than bad influenza viruses of the past and was less lethal than seasonal influenza for the young.”*

Further, researchers pointed to faulty PCR tests and unprecedented restrictions of the freedom of doctors to exercise personal expertise and discretion in treating patients, as exacerbating the outbreak and perceptions surrounding it:

> *“Without the highly flawed PCR case data and draconian global restrictions on doctors’ freedom to treat their patients as they saw fit, there would be nothing particularly notable about this year.”*

Anomalies and “Death By Government Policy”

As far as elevated death rates in Italy and NYC, researchers speculated the outlier death numbers in the U.S. (centered in NYC and a few other populous areas) and Italy

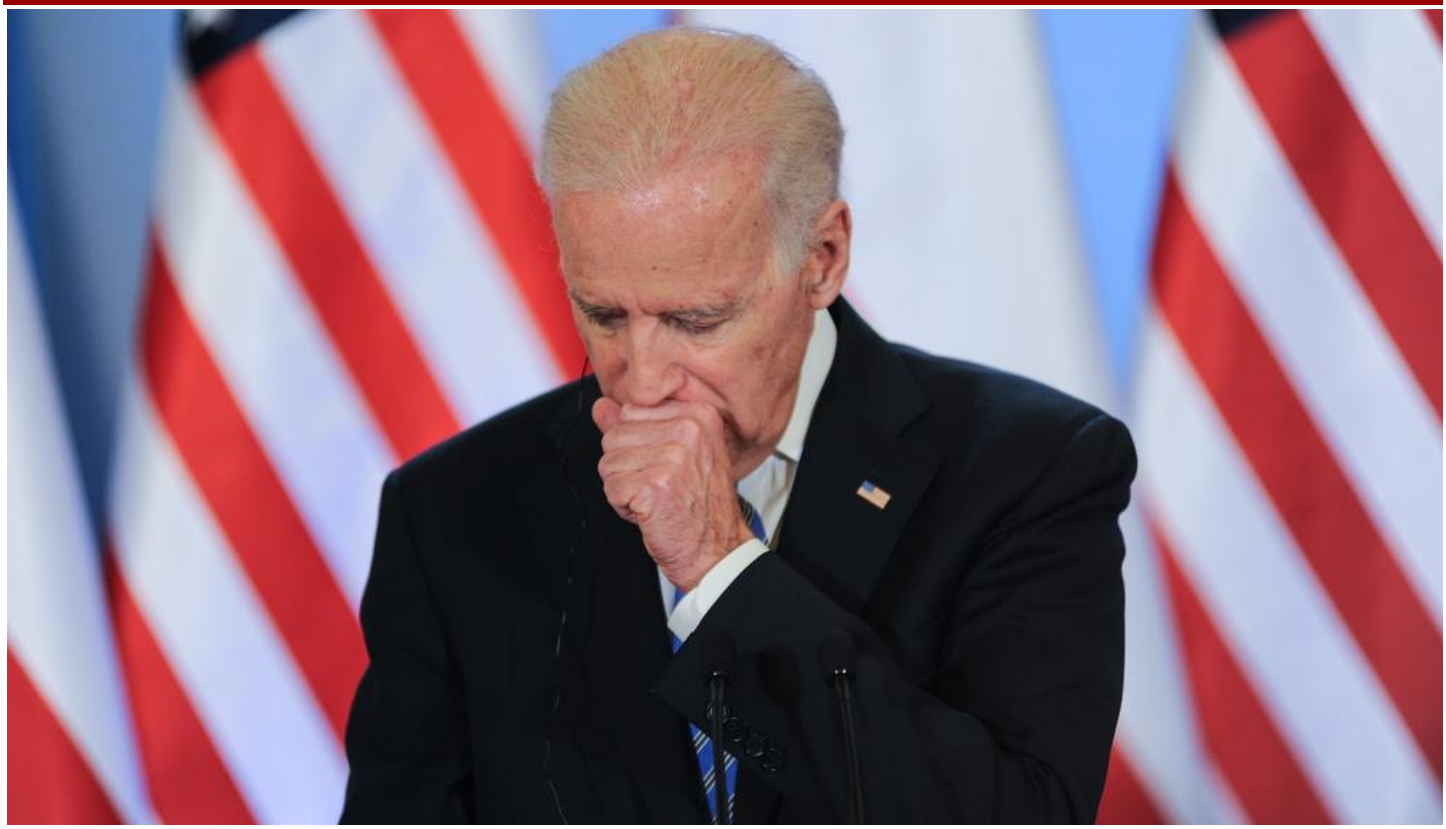
may have been brought about by policy responses to COVID, and not merely the potential lethality of the virus.

They reference several earlier studies that provided granular analysis of death numbers, including a paper from October 2021 that linked disastrous COVID policy responses in the U.S., and not merely the virus itself:

> *The behaviour of all-cause mortality in the COVID-era is irreconcilable with a pandemic caused by a new virus for which there is no prior natural immunity in the population.*
>
> *On the contrary, we concluded that the COVID-era deaths are of two types:*
>
> *• A large narrow peak (in ACM/w) occurring immediately after the WHO declaration of a pandemic apparently caused by the aggressive novel government and medical responses that were applied in certain specific state jurisdictions, against sick elderly populations (34 states do not significantly exhibit this feature).*
>
> *• Summer-2020, fall-winter-2020-2021, and summer-2021 peaks and excesses (in ACM/w), which co-correlate with poverty, obesity and regional climate, presumably caused by chronic psychological stress induced by the government and medical responses, which massively disrupted lives and society, and affected broad age groups, as young as 15 year olds.*
>
> *Therefore, a pandemic did not occur; but an unprecedented systemic aggression against large pools of vulnerable and disadvantaged residents of the USA did occur.*
> *("Nature of the COVID-era public health disaster in the USA, from all-cause mortality and socio-geo-economic and climatic data." 25 Oct 2021)*

Overall, the new U.K. report's conclusion concerning the launching and prosecution of a worldwide COVID War, is that it was based on nothing short of a lie:

“We expect a reflexive objection to this article from some quarters on the basis that the case has not been adequately argued that covid had minimal impact on overall mortality in 2020. This fact is irrelevant when challenging the terrifyingly inappropriate global response. The world’s population was sold a serious lethal deadly pandemic which – we were told – necessitated the reordering of society. The ‘new normal‘ as it was affectionately called by so many perfectly in-sync global leaders. In the event, we did not have a serious lethal deadly pandemic, and what has happened (and continues to happen) is based on a lie.”



FBI INFORMANT: BIDEN BRIBED WITH $5 MILLION BY BURISMA WHILE VP

A Ukrainian executive from Burisma once bribed then-Vice President Joe Biden with $5 million to impede a prosecutor's investigation into the gas company, a paid FBI informant said.

The Washington Times said it confirmed the report that said the company paid Hunter Biden, the president's son, an additional $5 million on top of his $1 million-a-year salary.

House Republicans say Biden and his troubled son both received $5 million from the company.

Biden called the allegation a “bunch of malarkey” when asked by *The New York Post.* “Where’s the money?”

Reps. Anna Paulina Luna, R-Fla., and Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., members of the House Oversight Committee, said they read the FBI informant’s report.

“There [were] two separate transactions, one that went to Joe Biden for $5 million, one that went to Hunter Biden for $5 million,” Luna told Fox News. “There’s no doubt in my mind that Joe Biden is guilty of bribery.”

Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla., tweeted, “Joe, the money is hidden in the DOZENS of LLCs you & your family created to HIDE THE MONEY. You can run, but you can’t hide from House Republicans.”

TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal *had reported extensively on the Biden deals with Ukraine.*

Back in 2013, Hunter Biden and Devon Archer, a partner in Rosemont Capital, a private-equity firm he co-founded with Christopher Heinz, Secretary of State John Kerry’s stepson, were both appointed to the board of directors of Burisma Holding, Ukraine’s top private gas company: “Burisma Holdings reminds me of Exxon in its early days,” Archer once boasted.

As we had long reported, Burisma paid Hunter some $1 million a year while his father was vice president—or about $83,333 per month. The holding company cut his pay in half when his father exited office, it was later reported.

During his presidency, back in 2019, Donald Trump wanted the Hunter Biden case reopened that had been headed by Viktor Shokin, former General Prosecutor of Ukraine.

Shokin had told The Washington Post he was ousted in March 2016 because he was investigating Burisma, and said if he had been allowed to remain as prosecutor, he would have questioned Hunter Biden’s qualification to be a board member.

He added that Hunter "had no work experience in Ukraine or in the energy sector."

Greene, the representative, said "It was all a brib[e] to get [former Ukrainian prosecutor general Viktor] Shokin fired," according to the Post.

Doubling down on the fraudulent political mob in control of Washington, Biden bragged at a White Shoe Boys meeting at the Council for Foreign Relations about how he bribed the Ukrainian government with $1 billion to stop the criminal investigation of the Biden/Kerry clan dirty deal:

> *"So I got to Ukraine…I was supposed to announce that there was another $1 billion loan guarantee…and I'd gotten a commitment from (Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk) that they would take action against the state prosecutor and they didn't. So… they're walking out to a press conference and I said, I'm …we're not gonna give you the billion dollars.*
>
> *"They said you have no authority, you're not the president … I said 'call him.'*
>
> *"I said, I'm tellin' you you're not getting' the billion dollars; I said you are not gettin' it and I'm leaving here I think it was six hours and if the prosecutor's not fired you're not getting the money.*
>
> *"Well son-of-a-bitch, he got fired."*

Shokin was fired in March 2016.

***The Trends Journal** has reported extensively on alleged influence-peddling by the Biden family:*

- *"DELAYING THE INEVITABLE" (10 Jul 2014)*
- *"COWARDS AND FOOLS" (28 Jul 2015)*
- *"GEOPOLITICAL ROUNDUP" (1 Oct 2019)*
- *"UKRAINE: $22 BILLION AND COUNTING" (26 Nov 2019)*
- *"BIDEN BANDITS? DIRTY DEALS OR ARE THEY LEGIT?" (1 Feb 2022)*

- *"'HERD' MEDIA" FINALLY ACKNOWLEDGES PART OF HUNTER BIDEN LAPTOP STORY" (22 Mar 2022)*
- *"HUNTER BIDEN'S LAPTOP SUPPORTS RUSSIA'S BIOLAB CLAIM. THINK FOR YOURSELF" (29 Mar 2022)*
- *"HUNTER BIDEN PROBE BOGUS, IRS SUPERVISOR ALLEGES 'PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT' FOR PRESIDENT'S SON" (25 Apr 2023)*
- *"GUN CONTROL? NAKED BIDEN BOY WAVES GUN WITH HOOKER" (7 Jun 2022)*
- *"HUNTER BIDEN PROBE BOGUS, IRS SUPERVISOR ALLEGES 'PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT' FOR PRESIDENT'S SON" (25 Apr 2023)*
- *"HOUSE INVESTIGATION OF CITIZEN CENSORSHIP BY BIDEN ADMINISTRATION RAMPS UP" (31 Jan 2023)*
- *"BIDEN SMOKING GUNS SHOW SYSTEMATIC TARGETING OF FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS" (1 Nov 2022)*

Biden referenced Petro Poroshenko and Arseniy Yatsenyuk. Yatsenyuk was an opposition leader during the U.S.-led coup that ousted former pro-Russia President Viktor Yanukovych in 2014.

Completely absent in the Western media reports today is the role Washington and Victoria Nuland, the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs at the time, played in the overthrow of its government in 2014.

*A report from 2014 in **The Trends Journal** laid out the political maneuvers at the time in Ukraine: "Washington's coup in Ukraine brought not only a threat to the Russian population in Ukraine but also a direct strategic threat to Russia itself."*

Nuland, who speaks Russian and French, boasted that Washington had invested $5 billion in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ukraine. (See "VICTORIA 'FUCK THE EU' NULAND WHO SPEARHEADED OVERTHROW OF DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE IN 2014, STILL IN POWER" 22 Feb 2022.)

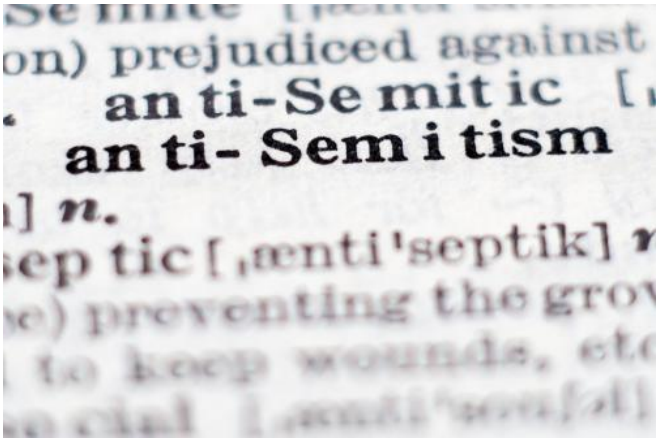
Allegedly, the purpose of NGOs is to "teach democracy." Ukraine, however, already had a democracy. In reality, the NGO organizations are U.S. fifth columns that can be

used to organize protests and to provide support for Washington's candidates for the Ukraine government.

Indeed, in early February 2014, a recording was leaked of Nuland, telling Geoffrey Pyatt, the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, that the UN was on board to "help glue" the plan to replace Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovych with Yatsenyuk. "Yats is the guy," Nuland informed Pyatt, urging her to move quickly because "the Russians will be working behind the scenes to torpedo" the deal.

"Fuck the EU!" Nuland told Pyatt. "Exactly," he responded.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S 'ANTISEMITISM' DEFINITION CRITICIZED



The Biden administration introduced a 60-page bill to combat antisemitism in the U.S. last month that raised concerns that the White House has embraced a definition that critics say will end legitimate discussions about Israeli human rights abuses in Palestine.

The Intercept reported that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition conflates criticism of Israel with antisemitism. The report said the Biden administration called the IHRA's definition the "most prominent" and the one that the White House has embraced.

"In the past several years, hate has been given too much oxygen, surely in the record rise in anti-Semitism. It's simply wrong," President Joe Biden said, according to Al Jazeera. "It's immoral. It's unacceptable. It's on all of us to stop it."

The report noted that the IHRA's working definition says criticism of Israel "similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic." But critics

of the definition have said it has been used to protect Israel from debate about how it treats Palestinians.

Mark Ruffalo, the actor, was called an "antisemite" online for criticizing the Biden administration's embrace of the IHRA definition.

Ruffalo quoted the Intercept's report, "'The IHRA working definition is a culmination of lobbying efforts to instrumentalize and accelerate the use of false accusations in order to censor protected speech, to target any sort of viewpoint that is critical of Israel, and to chill one side of an important political debate by saying that anyone who supports Palestinian rights is antisemitic,' Assi told *The Intercept*. 'It has always been used as a propaganda…'"

***TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal** has long noted that any criticism of Israel is written off as blatant antisemitism. (See "UN VENERATES PALESTINIAN DISPLACEMENT FOR FIRST TIME" 23 May 2023, "DOES ISRAEL SEEK A "FINAL SOLUTION FOR PALESTINIANS?" 14 Feb 2023, "AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: ISRAEL'S TREATMENT OF PALESTINIANS AMOUNTS TO APARTHEID" 8 Feb 2022 and "ISRAEL, PALESTINIANS IN ANOTHER BLOODY CLASH, AS TOP ISRAELIS CALL TO EXTEND CONFLICT TO WEST BANK" 16 May 2023.)*

*We remind **Trends Journal** subscribers that in the 1967 six-day war, Israel invaded and seized Palestinian territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and the Syrian Golan Heights, expelling some 300,000 Palestinians from their homes, while gaining stolen territory that was three and a half times its original size. To date, some 670,000 Israelis live in the occupied West Bank.*

Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. They violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 which states, "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

Vox reported earlier this year about how U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Israel to try to ease tensions and talk about a "two-state" solution but said his words rang hollow.

The report said: "Even establishment voices like former Ambassador Martin Indyk, who served as Obama's Middle East envoy and is now a fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations, acknowledge that a one-state reality has set in."

Rashid Khalidi, the Palestinian historian and professor at Columbia University, told Vox that Blinken had to use the empty words because he would otherwise have to talk about the true conditions on the ground.

He said Blinken would be forced to say, "We don't care about the Palestinians. We know that Israel is going to do what it wants with them. There will never be an independent, sovereign Palestinian state."

Indeed, the White House's strategy reaffirms Washington's "unshakeable commitment to the State of Israel's right to exist, its legitimacy and its security" and the "deep historical, religious, cultural, and other ties many American Jews and other Americans have to Israel."

UNITED IN HATE: UK, U.S. ANNOUNCE NEW PARTNERSHIP TO COUNTER RUSSIA, CHINA

President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced the framework of a new partnership that aims to bolster ties between the two countries in the face of rising tensions with Russia and China.

The declaration was a "framework for a 21st century U.S.-UK Economic Partnership" based on cooperating to confront the threat from Russia and China.

"We face new challenges to international stability from authoritarian states such as Russia and the People's Republic of China," the document states, according to

WSWS.org. “Over the past year, we have taken steps to deepen our unrivaled defense, security, and intelligence relationship across every theater on the globe in which we cooperate, recognizing the indivisibility of security in the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific and other regions.”

Biden told reporters at the White House, “There is no issue of global importance, none, that our nations are not leading together and where we’re not sharing our common values to make things better.”

The president compared the two to Prime Minister Winston Churchill and FDR.

“You know Prime Minister Churchill and Roosevelt met here a little over 70 years ago and they asserted that the strength of the partnership between Great Britain and the United States was the strength of the free world. I still think there’s truth to that assertion,” Biden proclaimed.

The declaration noted how Washington and London “stood shoulder to shoulder and our resolve to support Ukraine for as long as it takes in the face of Russia's illegal, unjustifiable, and unprovoked war of aggression and to preserve a free, independent, and sovereign Ukraine.”

“We are committed to continue to strengthen NATO's ability to deter further attempts to undermine alliance security in support of NATO's new strategic concept,” the document read.

TRENDPOST: *It is worth noting that Sunak told reporters at the White House that Britain is “proud to be, behind the U.S., the biggest contributor to the military effort in Ukraine.” (See “MEDVEDEV SAYS RUSSIA IS IN ‘DE-FACTO WAR’ WITH ‘ETERNAL ENEMY’ UK” 6 Jun 2023, “BULLSHIT BLINKEN KEEPS SELLING RUSSIA’S WAR WITH UKRAINE AS A ‘STRATEGIC FAILURE’” 6 Jun 2023 and “PUTIN FACES DOMESTIC PRESSURE TO CRUSH UKRAINE IN ALL-OUT WAR” 30 May 2023.)*

“We are lucky to have America's investment in European security, but we need to share the burden alongside you, which is why defense spending in the UK has—was—then above the 2 percent NATO benchmark. It’s on an increasing

trajectory, everybody encourages other countries to follow the lead that the U.S. and the UK set, because our security is collective."

Before the ink dried on the new deal The U.S. Defense Department announced another $2.1 billion in weapons for Kyiv, as reports begin to emerge of its counteroffensive taking hold.

The latest shipment will include munitions for Patriot and Hawk air defense systems, laser guided rocket munitions, and 105mm and 203 mm artillery rounds.

The Pentagon said Washington has committed nearly $40 billion in security assistance to Ukraine. (See "U.S. ANNOUNCES $300 MILLION IN MORE WEAPONS TO KEEP BLOODYING THE UKRAINE KILLING FIELDS" 6 Jun 2023, "BIDEN LIES: BROKE HIS VOW NOT TO PROVIDE UKRAINE WITH ADVANCED WEAPONS OF WAR" 23 May 2023 and "U.K. SEES BIGGEST DECLINE IN LIVING STANDARDS EVER AS WARMONGERS KEEPS PUMPING UKRAINE WITH WEAPONS AND MONEY" 21 Mar 2023.)

***The Trends Journal** has also reported extensively on how Washington and Britain aim to counter China in its own sphere of influence. We have long forecast, China will take over Taiwan and the United States will not defeat them:*

- *"CHINA TO TAKE TAIWAN" (30 Mar 2021)*
- *"TAIWAN MILITARY RAMP-UP WILL NOT STOP CHINA" (27 Apr 2021)*
- *"U.S. GENERAL DECLARES U.S. READY TO DEFEND TAIWAN IF CHINA INVADES" (10 Aug 2021)*
- *"U.S. LAUNCHES COLD WAR 2.0: CHINA LAMBASTS COLD-WAR MENTALITY" (9 Sep 2021)*
- *"CHINA FLEXES MUSCLE ON TAIWAN. WHO WILL STOP THEM?" (5 Oct. 2021)*
- *"CHINA/TAIWAN TENSIONS AT ALL-TIME WORST, COMMANDER SAYS" (12 Oct 2021)*
- *"CHINA/TAIWAN TENSIONS RISING: WAR ON THE HORIZON?" (9 Nov 2021)*
- *"RUSSIA, CHINA VS. USA: THE WINNER IS?" (21 Dec 2021)*
- *"WASHINGTON RAMPS UP WAR TENSIONS WITH CHINA: $10 BILLION IN U.S. MILITARY AID TO TAIWAN" (20 Dec 2022)*

- *"SPOTLIGHT: WAR WITH CHINA" (7 Feb 2023)*

Sunak has identified China as the biggest challenge to the world and announced his support to "de-risk" from Beijing at the recent G7 meeting.

Ukraine Support

The U.S. continues to support Ukraine's war effort against Russia and said the latest package—which will be funded under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative—shows America's continued commitment "to both Ukraine's critical near-term capabilities as well as the enduring capacity of Ukraine's Armed Forces to defend its territory and deter Russian aggression over the long term."

Biden, once again, told reporters that Washington will continue to support Ukraine for the long run and is convinced that the funding will continue to be there, even as some Republican members of Congress have spoken out against unlimited support for the war.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has spoken out against the idea of funding the Ukraine War by implementing a supplemental—to work around limitations imposed by the recent debt ceiling deal. (See "NO U.S. DEBT CEILING FOR ARMS DEALERS AND WAR" 6 Jun 2023 and "LOCKHEED MARTIN'S CEO PRAISES DEBT DEAL AS BEST OUTCOME DEFENSE CONTRACTOR COULD ASK FOR" 6 Jun 2023.)

"Why would you do a supplemental?…They're trying to go around the agreement," he said, according to The Wall Street Journal. He continued, "You're going to have to show what did we spend our money on, what is the plan for victory and what do we need the money for."

UK vs. Russia

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy chairman of Russia's national security council, said earlier this month that Moscow is in a "de-facto war" with the United Kingdom after Britain's military chief publicly approved Ukrainian strikes inside Russia.

Medvedev, who has been one of Russia's biggest critics of Western support for Ukraine, called the comments unwise and slammed the "goofy officials of the UK, our eternal enemy."

The former Russian president said he sees the Ukraine War lasting for years, "for decades."

"As long as there is such power [in Kyiv], there will be, say, three years of cease-fire, two years of conflict, and then everything will happen again," Medvedev said, according to Politico.

Sunak told reporters at the White House that the new declaration is further proof that Britain will be a main partner for the U.S. for years to come.

"I know some people have wondered what kind of partner Britain would be after we left the EU. I'd say: judge us by our actions. We're as committed to our values as ever, as reliable an ally as ever, as attractive an investment destination as ever," he said.

by Ben Daviss

PAVEMENT THAT SCRUBS VEHICLE EXHAUST

Road engineers at South Korea's Institute of Civil Engineering and Building Technology have found a way to take some vehicle exhaust out of the air until we're all driving electric cars.

They paved a road with concrete—the world's most common building material—mixed with titanium oxide. Titanium is the world's ninth most abundant mineral.

The bright white ingredient reacts with sunlight to produce "reactive oxygen species (ROS)," which are quick to connect to other compounds.

The ROS have a strong reaction with vehicle exhaust and break down chemicals within it, which often include ammonia, sulfur compounds, and nitrogen oxides.

The ROS also prevent fine particles of soot from forming.

In a test, the engineers paved the roadway inside a road tunnel, where exhaust can linger due to poor air circulation. They installed lights along the tunnel walls that simulated daylight.

The treated pavement cut nitrogen oxide levels by 18 percent over 24 hours, leaving behind salts that washed away with rainwater.

The special concrete road surface should last indefinitely, requiring no more maintenance than current concrete roadways, the developers said.

An earlier experiment in the Netherlands found a reduction in nitrogen oxides as high as 45 percent from concrete pavement treated with titanium oxide.

An added benefit: the titanium compound also breaks down algae and dirt.

The material could be used as self-cleaning walls for buildings, the developers said.

TRENDPOST: *Roads are evolving from inert slabs to active surfaces that can recharge electric vehicle batteries on the fly and clean the air. Artificial intelligence is likely to find even more ways to make roads more useful.*

ARTIFICIAL MOLECULES ACT LIKE REAL ORGANIC ONES

A cross-disciplinary team of researchers at the Netherlands' Radboud University has created a process to make synthetic molecules that behave just like real organic ones.

Molecules hold their electrons on the outer edges, so the group began by building a device that could trap electrons and allow the scientists to put them in specific places with other atomic and molecular building blocks.

The group said it has created "the ultimate toolkit to bend and tune molecules in ways that are nearly impossible with real molecules," the group said in a public statement

The group tested their method by synthesizing benzene, a foundational compound in organic chemistry that's used to make everything from nylon to pharmaceutical drugs. The manufactured version was identical to the natural one.

Using their simulator, chemists and materials engineers can test the effects of minor design changes to existing molecules and chemicals to see how those changes affect or improve a substance's performance and possibilities.

Researchers also will be able to test whether a formula for a new material—even ones suggested by AI—can be built. The team envisions being able to watch chemical reactions step by step, similar to a slow-motion video.

Eventually, the device might be used to engineer the kinds of molecular devices that have been imagined for carrying out functions inside the body or making molecule-size electronic components.

TRENDPOST: *Developers will combine this "Erector Set" for molecules with AI and machine learning to engineer and test a range of new materials as well as to better*

understand how molecules interact and change, expanding the knowledge base and possibilities of chemistry.

SCIENCE SPOTS TWO NATURAL ANTI-AGING COMPOUNDS

Two naturally occurring substances have been shown in studies to retard, and perhaps reverse, aging in test animals.

Fisetin, a flavonoid common in apples, cucumbers, and strawberries, seems to help clear out senescent cells.

When cells become elderly, they stop reproducing but often aren't scrubbed away by the body's cleaning process. Instead, they linger and release chemicals that cause inflammation and damage their neighbors.

Senescent cells have been linked to a range of diseases associated with old age, including arthritis, heart disease, and osteoporosis. Their effect has been likened to the one moldy piece of fruit that ruins the others in the bowl.

In tests on mice, fisetin supplements showed an ability to destroy senescent cells so they can be swept away. As a result, treated mice showed both a longer lifespan and a longer span of good health as they aged.

Clinical tests on humans haven't been conducted.

Fisetin occurs naturally in animals, including humans, but declines with age. It is available as a dietary supplement for those who choose to experiment on themselves.

A new study also has named a deficit of taurine, an amino acid common throughout the body, as a possible driver of aging.

The study found that 15-year-old monkeys had only 15 percent as much taurine in their bodies as five-year-olds. Taurine levels are known to plummet by at least 80 percent in elderly humans.

Adding taurine supplements to the diets of aging worms increased their lifespans by at least 10 percent and as much as 23 percent. In mice, the gain was up to 12 percent.

When given massive doses of taurine, the mice also gained strength, coordination, and cognitive ability and slowed key markers of aging, including the rate of cells becoming senescent and damage to DNA and mitochondria.

Tested in primates other than humans, taurine was shown to reduce the instances and severity of metabolic diseases, such as diabetes, and inflammatory conditions, which include asthma and rheumatoid arthritis.

In monkeys, high doses of taurine boosted bone density, improved immunity, and sharpened metabolism, which improved digestion and energy levels.

The researchers caution humans not to start downing handfuls of either taurine or fisetin. Benefits to humans haven't been established and, without clinical trials, beneficial levels—or levels that might cause damaging side effects—can't be guessed.

TRENDPOST: *Nature gives us what we need to remain healthy and live long. Science is busy refining those natural substances into supplements that will allow people born now to live to become active and happy centenarians.*

AI BENEFITS NEWER WORKERS MORE, STUDY FINDS

In studying the impact of AI on phone jockeys at a Fortune 500 company's customer service call-in center, researchers from Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that newer workers benefited the most.

The AI had pooled the tips, tricks, and expertise of more experienced workers.

Because the AI could guide newbies through situations that needed more expertise than reading from a script, workers who had been on the job for two months were showing the same level of expertise and productivity as colleagues who had been in place for six months.

"In contrast to studies of prior waves of computerization, we find that these gains accrue disproportionately to less-experienced and lower-skill workers," the research team wrote in a published paper.

"This occurs because [machine learning] systems work by capturing and disseminating the patterns of behavior that characterize the most productive agents. Agents with two months of tenure" who use the AI tool "perform just as well as agents [without it] who have over six months of tenure."

Productivity across the center's entire workforce jumped 14 percent after AI was installed.

TRENDPOST: *AI and machine learning will eliminate the problem of companies losing know-how or expertise when long-time workers quit or retire. That knowledge will be contained within AI and grow over time.*

Financial houses have been at it for a while, adding the market savvy and experience of senior traders to AI. When those traders leave or retire, their knowledge stays in the company to be used by younger workers who achieve the same results, not by putting in years to gain practical knowledge but just by having better tech.

According to Business Insider, Wall Street has even coined a term for it: juniorization.

AI has the potential to eventually decimate the mid-career and older workforce, leaving a handful of humans to manage special projects and situations while AI handles day-to-day tasks and decisions.

Whether that potential is realized depends on companies, regulators, and employers.

MILITARY TESTS DRONE SWARMS ARMED WITH AI

A joint military project among Australia, the U.K., and U.S. has made an initial test of a swarm of drones equipped with AI.

The intelligent drones won't just find and attack assigned targets. They also can communicate and decide among themselves on other targets to hit and reprogram themselves mid-mission if circumstances change.

"I was impressed to see AI models rapidly updated [in real time] to incorporate new targets, which were immediately shared among the [swarm] to deliver decision advantage and meet changing mission requirements," Hugh Jeffrey, Australia's deputy defense secretary for strategy, policy, and industry, said in a public statement after the test.

The drone project is part of an agreement among the three partner nations to work together to jointly develop a range of military technologies. The shared tech avoids duplication of effort and also ensures that the three countries' military equipment can work together instantly and seamlessly in joint operations.

TRENDPOST: *"You can't say civilization don't advance," comedian Will Rogers said a century ago, "because in every war they kill you in a new way."*

AI promises to advance civilization in many such ways in the years ahead.

A portion of the swarm of smart drone test models developed jointly by Australia, the U.K., and U.S.

Photo: U.K. Ministry of Defense

BEIJING'S LATEST CRACKDOWN TARGET: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

While other governments are deliberating how best to regulate AI, China's leaders are already at work shutting down websites and arresting suspects.

The country's Cyberspace Administration (CAC) is moving against websites posting deep fake news and videos, using forged videos of anchors, phonied-up TV studio settings, fake news sites purporting to be the real thing, and supposed perpetrators.

The CAC has shut down more than 107,000 counterfeit news accounts and fake anchors and scrubbed at least 835,000 bits of false information from the web, it said earlier this month.

The agency is urging citizens to report anything online they believe to be fakery.

One person who has been detained allegedly used ChatGPT to invent a news article about a train crash; the item quickly spread across social media. He's charged with making up false news to boost website traffic.

ChatGPT is not permitted in China, but those intent on using it can access it using a foreign phone number and a virtual private network—two other things forbidden to Chinese citizens.

The country's sweeping law also holds creators of AI tools legally liable for their misuse—a problem for Tencent, the Shenzhen-based company that is not only the world's largest video game purveyor but also a developer of AI tools.

A recent Tencent AI product gives users the power to invent and operate digital humans.

TRENDPOST: *Dictatorships such as China, Hungary, Russia, and Turkey will impose stricter controls, requiring them to devote more resources to spot and weed out every instance of fakery, a task that will remain impossible.*

Like social media, AI will become a tool of dissent and resistance against authoritarian governments that will, over time, help weaken them.

ARTIFICIAL PUMP: AI ETF MARKET HOT

Exchange-traded funds (ETFs) with the words “artificial intelligence” (AI) in their names are on the rise, both in numbers and in profits.

With investors snapping up shares of Alphabet, Nvidia, and others they think will reap the financial rewards of an AI-centered economy, fund providers are rushing more AI-focused ETFs to market.

Roundhill Investments began planning its Generative AI & Technology ETF late last year when staff members began tinkering with ChatGPT, the AI engine driving the current frenzy.

Realizing that no other ETF was focused solely on AI, “we wanted to get that to market quickly,” David Mazza, Roundhill’s chief strategist, told *The Wall Street Journal*.

The fund opened with less than $1 million in investments; within two weeks, it had amassed $35 million, with $13 million arriving on 1 June alone.

The fund is long Nvidia, the company dominating the AI chip market. Nvidia’s 24-percent climb during the last two weeks of May was key to the fund gaining 8 percent over that stretch.

Global X’s Robotics & Artificial Intelligence ETF has collected about $450 million this year, giving it roughly $2.2 billion under management.
With 12 percent of the fund invested in Nvidia, it has shot up 27 percent since December.

“A new generation of investors is out there,” Global X analyst Tejas Dessai said to the *WSJ*. “Millennials and Gen Z tend to resonate very well with some of these ideas compared to the broader segment of investors.”

AI also has boosted interest in single-stock ETFs, which allow speculators to short a particular stock or use leverage to buy more shares. Single-stock funds are primarily focused on Nvidia and Tesla.

One such fund, 1.25X NVDA Bear Daily, collected $52 million on 26 May and became the first single-stock ETF to amass $100 million without a focus on Tesla.

“The ‘first mover advantage’ is important for many of these funds, especially if they’re very niche,” Johan Grahn, ETFs chief at Allianz Investment Management, said in a *WSJ* interview.

“You’re always going to see a segment of the market that reacts to the latest and greatest and the most exciting thing out there,” he noted.
AI likely has a brighter future than other past ETF trends, according to research chief Todd Rosenbluth at consulting firm VettaFi.

In a May survey, 69 percent of respondents said they were thinking about investing in AI, more than were considering any other category.