

THE TRENDSJOURNAL®

IT HAPPENS®

GOOD THING EPSTEIN'S NAME WASN'T EPSTINO!

WEALTHY ELITE PROTECTED

- HIDDEN FILES
- ZIONIST TIES
- GOVT PROTECTION
- CORP-POLITICAL CRIME SYNDICATE

MAFIA SCANDAL EXPOSED

- TERRIBLE SEX ABUSE SCANDAL
- FULL DOCUMENTS RELEASED
- MEDIA OUTRAGE
- POLICE RAID
- PUBLIC DEMANDS NAMES



17 February 2026

PUBLISHER

GERALD CELENTE

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

EDMUND DeMARCHE

EDITOR

JANE CAMPBELL

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

GREGORY MANNARINO

BEN DAVISS

[How to read the Trends Journal on Kindle devices](#)

Suggested “Text Aloud” pdf readers:

- for android phones search “Voice Aloud Reader” or “ezPDF” on Google Play
- for Apple phones search “PDF Voice Reader Aloud” on the App store

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 45-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.

INSIDE

TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC AND MARKET FRONT

ECONOMIC UPDATE - MARKET OVERVIEW

7

LAST WEEK: MARKETS SLIP DESPITE ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC NEWS	10
YESTERDAY: STOCK MARKET CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY, AS INVESTORS PREPARE FOR BUSY WEEK	12
TODAY: STOCKS HAVE SMALL GAINS, AI WORRIES CONTINUE	15
THE AMERICAN ECONOMY CONTINUES TO SHARPEN ITS DIVIDE	18
U.S. INFLATION SLOWS MORE THAN EXPECTED IN JANUARY	20
CREDIT STRESS CLIMBS UP THE INCOME LADDER	22
TRUMP POLICIES WILL GROW U.S. DEBT BY \$1.4 TRILLION, CBO WARNS	23
U.S. ELECTRICITY PRICES RISING TWICE AS FAST AS INFLATION	26
HEALTHCARE, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE OWN THE U.S. JOBS MARKET	27
U.S. HOME SALES DROP SHARPLY, SIGNALING "NEW HOUSING CRISIS"	29
AMERICANS BEAR BRUNT OF TRUMP'S TARIFFS, DESPITE ASSURANCES FROM WHITE HOUSE	31
U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT SLASHES JOB GROWTH TOTALS AGAIN	33

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT

35

WHEN THE ECONOMY FALLS, JOBS GO WITH IT	35
GOING OUT OF BUSINESS TRENDS	37
U.K. ECONOMY MANAGES TO GROW FOR A SECOND YEAR	40
BEIJING CLAMPS DOWN ON CHINA'S AI STOCK BOOM	41
SPECIAL REPORT: AI FEARS GRIP EQUITY MARKETS	43
SECTOR VALUES DROP AS AI NEWS SPOOKS U.S. INVESTORS	45
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE STOCKS ARE AI'S LATEST VICTIM	46
INDIA'S TECH STOCKS LOSE \$50 BILLION ON AI FEARS	48

SPOTLIGHT: THE AUTO INDUSTRY'S ROUGH ROAD

49

NISSAN WILL LOSE \$4.2 BILLION THIS YEAR, IT SAYS	49
EV SALES IN CHINA FELL IN JANUARY AS EXPORTS GREW	50
MERCEDES EXPECTS ONLY A MODEST PROFIT THIS YEAR	51

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS GETTING BIGGER

55

NUVEEN BUYS SCHRODERS FOR \$13.5 BILLION	55
TWO OFFSHORE OIL DRILLERS JOIN IN \$5.8-BILLION MERGER	56
NATWEST BUYS ASSET MANAGER FOR \$3.67 BILLION	57
TWO PARTNERS BUY SOUTH AMERICAN ELECTRIC UTILITY	58
LILLY BUYS ORNA FOR \$2.4 BILLION	58

THE ISRAEL WAR

59

ISRAEL APPROVES PROPOSAL TO KEEP STEALING WEST BANK LAND

59

ISRAEL FIRST: TRUMP'S APPROVAL SINKS IN THE U.S., SURGES IN ISRAEL	64
NETANYAHU MEETS WITH TRUMP IN DC TO TALK ABOUT WAR WITH IRAN	66
FRANCE WANTS ALBANESE TO LOSE JOB OVER STATEMENT ABOUT ISRAEL BEING HUMANITY'S 'COMMON ENEMY' THAT SHE NEVER SAID	68
WHAT CEASEFIRE? ISRAEL KILLS ANOTHER FOUR IN EASTERN LEBANON	71
UK COURT OVERTURNS BAN ON PALESTINE ACTION	73
GAZA DEATH TOLL	75

FEATURED TRENDS GUEST ARTICLES

78

AN ODE TO RENEE NICOLE GOOD AND ALEX PRETTI - THE REAL FACTS *by Michael J. Talmo*

78

THIS IS A MIND-WAR NOW. *by Gregory Mannarino*

81

HAS TRUMP LOST CONTROL TO NETANYAHU? *By Paul Craig Roberts*

84

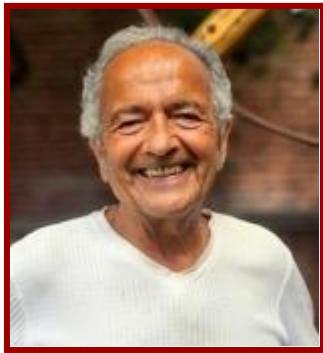
LIBERTY WITHOUT STRINGS *by Judge Andrew P. Napolitano*

87

THE POLITICS OF HATE: WEAPONIZED DISCORD IS THE DEEP STATE'S MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL *by John & Nisha Whitehead from The Rutherford Institute*

91

CHILDREN FACE HIGHER FOOD ADDITIVE BURDEN THAN ADULTS, EXPERTS SAY <i>by Dr. Joseph Mercola</i>	96	AI IS SCAMMERS' NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TOOL	141
HOW TO FIX OUR BROKEN MEDICAL SYSTEM <i>by Gary Null, PhD</i>	104	ANOTHER AI DEVELOPER PLANS TO DESIGN ITS OWN CHIP	143
TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS	109	ALIBABA UNVEILS AI "BRAIN" FOR ROBOTS	144
MORE COUNTRIES SEE THE U.S. AS A TOP SECURITY THREAT	109	AN AI READS MRI BRAIN SCANS AND FLAGS EMERGENCIES IN SECONDS	145
CANADA'S MILITARY SPENDING ILLUSION	111	AI AS A PATHWAY TO THE DIVINE	146
GERMANY ACCUSED OF SPENDING TOO MUCH OF MILITARY BUDGET ON ANTIQUATED WEAPONS	113		
GEN Z REVOLUTION: BANGLADESH ELECTS NEW GOVERNMENT AFTER 2024 OUSTER	115		
PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW®	118		
TRUMP SELLS REGIME CHANGE FOR IRAN	118		
U.S. CARRIES OUT 31 ST AIRSTRIKE ON SOMALIA OF THE YEAR, AS HORN OF AFRICA BECOMES 'CRITICAL THEATER' FOR GLOBAL POWERS	121		
ICE'D OUT: COURTS HAVE RULED 4,400 TIMES THAT FEDERAL IMMIGRATION AGENTS HAVE JAILED IMMIGRANTS UNLAWFULLY	122		
OCASIO-CORTEZ PROVES HERSELF TO BE 'IMPERIALIST STRATEGIST' AT MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE, WSWS SAYS	124		
ICE MEMO LAYS OUT PLAN TO BUILD IMMIGRANT 'CONCENTRATION CAMP NETWORK,' WSWS SAYS	126		
TRENDS EYE VIEW	129		
PRE-TEENS WHO CAN'T PUT DOWN THEIR PHONES ARE MORE AT RISK FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, STUDY SAYS	129		
STUDY: OBESITY GREATLY INCREASES THE RISK OF HOSPITALIZATION, DEATH FROM COMMON INFECTIONS	131		
DEATH OF JOURNALISM: BBC PLANS NEW CUTS, RAISING CONCERN FROM UNION ABOUT REPORTING QUALITY	133		
TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE	135		
A NEW WEIGHT-LOSS DRUG GOES RIGHT TO THE BRAIN	135		
CHINA OPENS ROBOT FIGHT CLUB	137		
RUSSIAN COMPANY SAYS IT TURNS PIGEONS INTO BIODRONES	139		
TRENDS IN AI	141		



Welcome to The Trends Journal: **"GOOD THING EPSTEIN'S NAME WASN'T EPSTINO"**

As we have long forecast, it's just One Big Crime Syndicate running the show.

The partial release of the Jeffrey Epstein documents, which have been sanitized and highly redacted to protect the "Bigs," is the latest proof of a two-tiered justice system with one set of rules for the little guy and immunity for the ruling elite.

As we note if Epstein's name was Epstino and he was an Italian, this would be "Big Mafia" news. And, not only would all the data be released, but also his partners in sexual crime would be prosecuted. But now it is a different story.

Epstein spent his life curating a personal freak show of the world's most powerful people. His orbit included Bill Clinton, Donald Trump, Prince Andrew, Ehud Barak, the late Bill Richardson, Les Wexner, Bill Gates, Sergey Brin, and Elon Musk, and many others. While many of these individuals deny wrongdoing, the opaque handling of the case continues to raise questions.

While Trump wants you to believe this scandal is over, Hillary Clinton accused his administration of carrying out a "cover-up,"

telling the BBC, "There's something about this Administration's attitude... which leads us to conclude they have something to hide."

Meanwhile, Todd Blanche, Trump's former personal lawyer now playing the role of deputy attorney general, has said it is unlikely that anyone will face charges.

Attorney General Pam Bondi drew laughter when she tried to deflect questions about Epstein during a House Judiciary Committee hearing last week when she said, "The Dow is over 50,000 right now." She said the Nasdaq was "smashing records" and retirement accounts are "booming." She concluded, "That's what we should be talking about."

Predictably, the Pressitutes in the mainstream media, beholden to the very companies tied to the Epstein files, will continue to act as media whores, protecting their "Johns" in high places. Indeed, for three and half weeks the major story in the media is still about the missing Nancy Guthrie.

On the Geopolitical and Economic Fronts

This week's *Trends Journal* examines escalating global tensions. U.S.-Iran relations are approaching a dangerous tipping point, and the Ukraine War continues to rage with no end in sight.

U.S. stocks edged higher after a long holiday weekend. Gold and bitcoin came in lower. This issue breaks down what's really happening and what you need to do to prepare, prevail and prosper.

Follow Us on Social Media: [X](#), [FACEBOOK](#), [TIKTOK](#), [INSTAGRAM](#), [YOUTUBE](#), and please

spread the word so that more people understand the importance of knowing the Truth in Trends.

And remember, to access the magazine content, go to www.trendsjournal.com and sign in with your username and password by clicking on the sign-in button near the top of the screen or the three horizontal bars. You can click on individual articles, download the PDF, peruse the Flip Book, read it in different languages or listen to it.

Sincerely,

Gerald Celente and The Trends Journal team

SUPPORT



At <https://occupypeace.com>



Photo by Amy Byrne

TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC AND MARKET FRONT



ECONOMIC UPDATE - MARKET OVERVIEW

As we see the future, it's not "if" the overvalued equity markets will sink, it is a matter of "when". What is proof for all to see is that the socioeconomic and geopolitical system is totally rigged.

Here is just one recent example: As evidenced by last week's job revisions (See: [U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT SLASHES JOB GROWTH TOTALS AGAIN](#)), despite the lies the government has been selling, by the numbers, the U.S. economy created more than a million fewer jobs over those two years than the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) had been reporting. And, to make a very bad situation much worse, job cut announcements hit their highest level since the Great Recession in 2009.

And America is not a "Republic" or "Democracy" like they sell you in school and the media. As this cover of *The Trends Journal* illustrates, by the facts, it is a fascist state... the merger of state and corporate powers.



Again, not only look at the job numbers, look at the lousy low-paying jobs that are being created mostly in the health, social service and hospitality sectors. In the meantime, check out what the Bankster Bandits are making while America, once the Land of Opportunity, slumps deeper into Slavelandia.

**Six Wall Street chief executives take home combined pay of \$250mn
The pay of Wall Street bank bosses soared last year as six of them took home more than \$250mn combined, potentially further widening the gap with average bank workers.**

The heads of the largest US banks by assets – JPMorgan, Bank of America, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, Wells Fargo and Morgan Stanley – all received \$40mn or more in annual pay, according to recent regulatory filings. BofA chief Brian Moynihan's \$41mn pay award for 2025 was disclosed in a regulatory filing by the bank late on Friday.

The combined average pay increases for the six chiefs represented a 22 percent increase over the prior year. With their average remuneration already standing at 298 times that of their median bank employees in 2024, according to regulatory filings, the robust raises stand to further widen the gap with the rank-and-file at a time when inflation and modest wage gains are making affordability issues a top concern across the economy. – *Financial Times* (US17 Feb 2026)

So again, there is no relationship between Wall Street and Main Street. Indeed, by the facts, the filthy rich one percent (who give shit back to society and do all they can to pay no taxes) own some 54 percent of the equity markets, the 10 percent own about 92 percent and the 90 percent of the plantation workers of Slavelandia only own 8 percent.

Crash Coming

And on the equity side of life, we maintain our trend forecast that the markets are way overvalued and a [Dot.com Bust 2.0](#) will happen this year. In fact, as equity markets are slipping down, there is even real fear on The Street as there are alarm bells sounding that this is not a time to buy on the dip.

As we have noted, a number of once strong business sectors in real estate, trucking, wealth management, advertising, etc. have taken big hits following the release of new AI tools that outmode what they are producing and providing.

Also on the downside, the U.S. dollar, after dropping 9 percent last year, is down some 1.2 percent this year and according to CME Group, the bet is that the U.S. buck will keep on slipping.

TREND FORECAST: *Despite fear of a market meltdown and a weakening dollar, gold and silver prices are not shining brightly. After gold was hanging around \$5,000 plus an ounce last week, and silver in the \$80 plus range, today, as we go to press, gold is down \$108 per ounce, selling at \$4,882 an ounce and silver slumped \$3.04 and is selling at \$73.50 an ounce.*

These prices are way down from a few weeks ago when gold was trading at nearly \$5,600 an ounce and silver was trading in the \$120 per ounce range.

As we have made very clear, nothing goes straight up or down, and we had forecast that the spiking gold and silver prices were positioned for a pull back.

Again, by the facts, the U.S. economy is being driven up by the top 10 percent... and by the housing, jobs and retail numbers, the overall economy is weak. Therefore, with the U.S. midterm elections some eight months away, the Trump administration will do all it can to prop up the economy so he maintains a Congressional majority. And as the political voting facts and polls show, the American voting public does not believe that he made America great again.

To boost up the economy so his party can get more votes in the midterm elections, we forecast that President Trump – as he did when he was president back in 2018 when the Dow had its worst December since the Great Depression – will push the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates... which they did in January 2019, and the Dow spiked some 22 percent that year.

Thus, the lower interest rates fall, the deeper the dollar will fall. And since gold and silver are dollar based, it will be cheaper for those in nations whose currencies go up to buy the precious metals... and that will drive up their prices.

In addition, unfortunately, we maintain our forecast that the wars will increase in the Middle East as the U.S. and Israel ramp up threats against Iran, and Europe will keep ramping up the Ukraine war... which will increase demand for safe-haven precious metal assets.

LAST WEEK: MARKETS SLIP DESPITE ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC NEWS

U.S. equity markets posted their worst week since last November, despite an encouraging inflation report and an economy that grew more jobs than many had expected.

For the week, the Dow Jones Industrial Average retreated 1.2 percent. The NASDAQ was down 2.1 percent to end its fifth consecutive week of decline, the longest such streak since May 2022. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 1.4 percent, its worst week since 21 November.

Inflation's pace slipped to 2.4 percent last month, down from 2.5 percent in December, slightly better than economists polled by Reuters and *The Wall Street Journal* had forecasted. Also, the U.S. economy grew 130,000 new jobs in January, more than economists had foreseen. (See ["U.S. Inflation Slows More Than Expected in January"](#) in this issue.)

However, investors are still poised with one foot out the door, ready to jump at any sign that artificial intelligence (AI) might be about to destroy the market value of entire economic sectors. Last week, investors dumped insurance stocks, financial shares, and tech stocks one after the other on news of AI's continuing encroachment on traditional work roles. (See our special report ["AI Fears Grip Equity Markets"](#) in this issue.)

"Investors show no mercy for anything seen as an AI loser," analyst Emmanuel Cau at Barclays wrote in a note. "The list is growing by day, driving divergence between new/old economy sectors and U.S./foreign equities."

The slowing pace of inflation boosted speculators' bets that the U.S. Federal Reserve will cut its key interest rate at least twice this year.

"This should be welcome news for markets and the presumptive incoming Fed chair Kevin Warsh," Phil Blancato, Osaic's chief strategist, said to CNBC. "This is only one month's worth of data, but if the trend continues it should pave a path for lower interest rates and reined-in inflation."

Also, rising prices are "not unrelated" to ongoing fears that AI will shrivel revenues in various sectors, portfolio manager Keith Buchanan at Global Investments, told CNBC.

The new inflation report "has nothing to do with what we're anticipating" in terms of revenue destruction," he said, but the market's continued confusion over AI's likely impact is creating "upward pressure on unemployment" and "downward pressure on inflation."

"How do we think that everyone was going to win and there wouldn't be a loser?" he added.

"The market is reacting in ways that suggests that entire industries are going to be worth much less money than they are today," Scott Ladner, Horizon Investments' chief investment officer, acknowledged in a *Wall Street Journal* interview. "I think that might be overblown, but investors are selling first and asking questions later."

That could be a time to buy, Robert Edwards at Edwards Investment Management, told the *WSJ*.

"You got rate cuts coming and you got prices coming off highs while everybody's freaking out over tech and software," he said. "That's the wall of worry and that's where opportunity comes in."

The dollar's value slipped further against an array of other major currencies last week, falling to \$96.90. However, the dollar strengthened against Japan's yen to \$152.75 after Japan's prime minister won an election in which she promised more economic stimulus. The euro edged down to \$1.187.

The flight from risk sent investors back to U.S. government securities. The yield on the bellwether 10-year U.S. treasury note dropped from 4.104 percent Thursday to close at 4.048 percent Friday. Yields fall as prices are bid up.

U.S. spot gold rose 0.08 percent through the week to \$5,031 at 5 p.m. U.S. EST on 13 February.

Brent crude oil for April delivery essentially flatlined through the week, rising less than 0.01 percent to \$67.63 at 5 p.m. U.S. EST on 13 February. The price briefly jumped to break \$70 on 11 February on tensions between the U.S. and Iran and a weather disruption to deliveries.

The March contract for West Texas Intermediate crude, which benchmarks U.S. domestic oil prices, declined less than 0.01 percent to \$62.89.

Bitcoin continued to struggle, shrugging off another 3.1 percent and falling to \$68,850 at 5 p.m. U.S. EST on 13 February.

Outside the U.S., markets had a mixed week.

The London FTSE 100 added 0.74 percent while Europe's Stoxx 600 ticked down 0.02 percent.

In Japan, the Nikkei 225 soared 6.56 percent after prime minister Sanae Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party won its largest parliamentary victory ever. Takaichi now sees a mandate to pursue her economic stimulus plan.

The South Korean KOSPI jumped 3.92 percent. The country is one of Japan's major trade partners.

The Hang Seng index in Hong Kong dropped 1.54 percent. On mainland China, the CSI 300 lost 0.71 percent, and the tech-centric SSE Composite was off by 0.52 percent.

YESTERDAY: STOCK MARKET CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY, AS INVESTORS PREPARE FOR BUSY WEEK

The U.S. stock market was closed yesterday but investors were considering this week's personal consumption expenditure report and the release of last month's Fed meeting on Wednesday to get a sense of where the central banksters stand on future rate cuts.

Investors embraced last week's CPI data that came in softer than expected, increasing 0.2 percent in January, which was below what economists had forecast, but the lingering concern on The Street is that AI stocks are inflated.

Andrea Gabellone, head of global equities at KBC Securities, told Yahoo Finance that there could be “more dispersion ahead as sentiment around key AI-exposed sectors is still very critical,” which ***The Trends Journal*** has been stating for months. (See [**“FOUR AI GIANTS ANNOUNCE \\$660 BILLION IN 2026 CAPITAL COSTS” 10 Feb 2026.**](#))

Elsewhere, London’s FTSE gained 27.34, or 0.26 percent, to 10,473.69 and the benchmark STOXX600 gained 0.82, or 0.13 percent, to 618.52. Japan’s Nikkei was closed and Hong Kong’s Hang Seng gained 138.82, or 0.52 percent, to 26,705.94. The Chinese market was also closed.

OIL: Brent crude increased by 0.34 percent to \$67.75 a barrel and there was no official settlement for West Texas Intermediate because of the holiday.

Reports said the U.S. could be entering a new phase in its shale-oil revolution and its production could plummet over the next few years because “maintaining output requires constant drilling and reinvestment” and barrels worth between \$60 to \$80 may not be worth the pain for these companies, according to *MarketWatch*. The report said some of these investors may start to look to Venezuela for future investments.

Oil traders were watching to see if there were any developments in negotiations between the Trump administration and Iran. The Iranian military held military drills in the Strait of Hormuz as a show of force against the U.S. military buildup in the region.

Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian foreign minister, posted on X that he was in Geneva for another round of talks with the U.S. and said he has “real ideas to achieve a fair and equitable deal.”

“What is not on the table: submission before threats,” he posted.

TREND FORECAST: *Trump is a wild card, but Iran has been clear that an attack by the U.S. would result in all-out war that would inflame the region. Should the U.S. and/or Israel attack Iran, Brent crude will spike above \$100 per barrel and that will create economic havoc across the globe.*

*Larry Johnson, the former CIA analyst, told *The Trends Journal* that Trump would be crazy to attack Iran with the assets at his disposal in the region, and would not be able to fall back on nuclear weapons because Russia and China would not stand for a nuclear attack on the country.*

GOLD: The precious metal closed down \$49.30, or 0.98 percent, to \$4,991.90, as trading volumes were lower than usual due to holidays in the U.S. and in China.

Gold was pulled down because of a strengthened USD, and there was some profit-taking after last week's CPI data that showed inflation came in softer than expected, raising the expectation that the Fed will cut rates after its next meeting next month.

TREND FORECAST: *Gold continues to be the ultimate safe haven during uncertain times and will continue to be attractive to investors who know how dangerous the world has become. The Ukraine War shows no signs of stopping and Trump seems intent on attacking Iran, which would be catastrophic for the global economy.*

Being that gold has spiked some 100 percent over the past six months, there will be sharp pullbacks, however, considering the volatile geopolitical and socioeconomic realities, we remain long-term bullish on both gold and silver.

BITCOIN: The world's most popular crypto was down \$280.30, or 0.41 percent, to \$68,496.45 as of 4:39 p.m. ET.

Crypto investors have been on the losing end in recent weeks after BTC hit \$126,000 in October 2025, but investors told CNBC that long-term investors are “not abandoning the asset class,” which will likely prevent a crash like the one in 2022, when BTC went from about \$50,000 to \$15,000.

The report cited bitcoin ETFs and noted how in the past three months there have been about \$5.8 billion in outflows, but inflows remain up \$14.2 billion, which suggest that this may not be a “crypto winter.”

TRENDPOST: *Gerald Celente has long noted that there is no investment that goes straight up, but BTC continues to be a viable investment because Trump's effort to reward donors and make his family even wealthier. (See [“BITCOIN RATTLED AMID TECH-STOCK SELLOFF” 10 Feb 2026.](#))*

Jerome Powell, the Fed head, will be stepping down in May, and Trump will see to it that the head of the central bank keeps interest rates low, which means risky investments will become more appealing to the average investors, which should also benefit cryptos

TODAY: STOCKS HAVE SMALL GAINS, AI WORRIES CONTINUE

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed up 32.26, or 0.07 percent, to 49,533.19, and the benchmark S&P500 gained 7.05, or 0.10 percent, to 6,843.22. The tech-heavy Nasdaq was up 31.713, or 0.14 percent, to 22,578.384.

Barron's noted that there has been a lot of volatility in the equities market, with about 30 percent of companies listed in the S&P500 either being up (or down) at least 20 percent in the last three months.

The report also noted that there are growing concerns about overinvestment in AI, namely the billions of dollars being earmarked by giants like Oracle and Microsoft for data centers. The risk is compounded because investors are growing concerned that these legacy tech giants can lose profits to new software advancements from OpenAI and Anthropic.

TREND FORECAST: *Old news for Trends Journal subscribers. As we reported in naming the [Dot-Com Bust 2.0](#) as a Top Trend 2026, if stock traders come to share that worry and sell Big Tech, stock prices will fall and the equity markets will crash. And now with the reality of AI taking over jobs and creating data access that will put businesses out of business... that will make a very bad overvalued equity market crisis much worse.*

We noted in our Top Trend that Gerald Celente [said](#) last January that an AI bust would be a disaster for the equities market and the global economy, and there's "nothing, nothing that they can do to prop it up... Other than what they always do... make up something... like quantitative easing and propping up the repo markets as the banks go bust."

Elsewhere, London's FTSE gained 82.48, or 0.79 percent, to close at 10,556.17 and the STOXX600 gained 2.77, or 0.45 percent, to 621.29. Japan's Nikkei lost 239.92, or 0.42 percent, to 56,566.49. Hong Kong and China's exchanges were closed.

OIL: London-traded Brent crude lost \$1.23, or 1.79 percent, to close at \$67.42 and New York-traded U.S. West Texas Intermediate lost 56 cents, or 0.89 percent, to close at \$62.33.

Oil traders have been monitoring negotiations between the U.S. and Iran.

Abbas Araghchi, Iran's foreign minister, told reporters on Tuesday that the countries made "good progress" after the latest indirect talks between countries.

"The parties agreed to work on the texts of a potential agreement and exchange them before agreeing on the date of the next round of talks," he said, according to PressTV.

Araghchi's comments followed Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's threat against the U.S. carriers that have been sent to the region. He said, "Of course, an aircraft carrier is a dangerous machine, but even more dangerous than that is the weapon capable of sending it to the bottom of the sea."

TRENDPOST: Oil prices remain weak as supply outstrips demand and the oil glut continues to be a concern for the market.

However, if the U.S. and/or Israel ramp up war with Iran, oil prices will spike.

GOLD: The precious metal was down \$117.10, or 2.35 percent, to \$4,875.10 as of 3:35 p.m. in New York.

Gold lost some of its safe-haven appeal because of what was perceived as an easing of tensions in the Middle East and in Ukraine. (The Chinese market was closed, which led to lower volume – or fewer contracts and ounces being sold.)

The precious metal also struggled under the pressure of a stronger USD, which means gold becomes more expensive to foreign buyers. The Fed also seems to be unclear about future rate cuts after last month's meeting, which has also been a catalyst in it losing some of its luster. (The central Banksters voted to hold the federal funds rate at 3.50 percent to 3.75 percent.)

TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal remains bullish on gold, because of its safe-haven appeal. Despite Iran noting that negotiations are progressing, the White House has not changed its position that it must end its entire nuclear program, put caps on its missile program, and end support for allies in the region – which Tehran has said is a non-starter.

Scott Ritter, the former UN weapons inspector, told Judge Andrew Napolitano on Monday that "regime change" is the Trump administration's policy for Iran.

“Iran will never yield on the missiles,” he said. “And, because of that, I think the Trump administration is just using these negotiations as a vehicle.

Ritter has also noted that Trump’s approach to Ukraine has been largely the continuation of the Biden administration’s approach.

“There is not anybody in the Trump administration that’s actively, today, articulating the necessity to break free of the policies of the Biden administration...The Trump administration’s policies, as they currently exist” are “the Biden administration’s policies.”

For more on our gold and silver trend forecast, please read this week’s [ECONOMIC UPDATE](#).

BITCOIN: The world’s most popular crypto was down \$1,325.42, or 1.93 percent, to \$67,527.41 as of 3:25 p.m. in New York. There is still a risk-off sentiment in the market as BTC tries to hang around the \$70,000 mark.

Coindcx noted that BTC has had its worst start to the first quarter in eight years, down about 24 percent from its opening in January at about \$90,062.

TRENDPOST: *Michael Saylor’s Strategy announced in an 8-K filing that it purchased another 2,486 BTC at an average price of \$67,710 – bringing its total holdings to 717,131, with the average cost of \$76,027.*

NPR finally caught up to The Trends Journal last week when it reported: “Bitcoin and other cryptos may now be in the midst of a slump, but investors remain hopeful that the Trump administration will continue to lay the groundwork for a crypto revolution.”

Yes, BTC may be down, but it is not down and out because Trump will do all he can to make sure his family and his team’s wealth grows, and he rewards his crypto donors. (See [“BITCOIN OR BIT-CON? THE TRUMPSTERS ARE RUNNING THE SHOW”](#) 6 Jan 2026.) But of course, the crypto market is global and much bigger than the Trump team, so at this point, only time will tell.

THE AMERICAN ECONOMY CONTINUES TO SHARPEN ITS DIVIDE



The so-called “K-shaped” U.S. economy continues to widen the gap between elite, affluent spenders and the more than half of American households that struggle to pay their bills, various news outlets are reporting.

“What began as an uneven recovery from the [COVID War] has hardened,” *The Wall Street Journal* noted, with continued inflation and high interest rates amid a softening jobs

market contributing to the divide, economists say.

The highest-earning 1 percent of U.S. households held 32 percent of the private sector’s net worth in last year’s third quarter, U.S. Federal Reserve data shows. Three decades ago, the top-earning 10 percent of Americans accounted for one-third of the U.S. economy’s consumer spending; now they make up half, according to Moody’s Analytics.

“The gap in spending between the top 20 percent and lower- and middle-income households has never been wider, and it continues to increase,” Mark Zandi, Moody’s chief economist, said in a statement.

Households earning more than \$150,000 annually are spending freely, the *WSJ* reported, while those making under \$75,000 are cutting discretionary spending on things such as travel and experiences so they have enough money to pay for food, housing costs, and medical care.

New data shows that middle-income earners are now beginning to slide further down the K’s lower leg. “Middle-income households’ wage growth appears to have softened, even as higher-income [earners’] gains remain resilient,” Bank of America analysts wrote in a note.

“We are returning to a typical pattern of extremely high-income inequality and it now stands at a 60-year peak,” Beth Ann Bovino, U.S. Bank’s chief economist, wrote in a recent analysis.

“The worry is not just where we stand now, but also whether ongoing developments” – such as artificial intelligence replacing human workers – “will worsen the situation,” she added.

Companies are taking notice.

In October, Delta Air Lines said ticket sales for its premium seats outpaced those for places in the main cabin. That lopsided market helped the company beat revenue expectations in 2025’s final quarter.

“The strength in the consumer sector is at the high end of the curve,” Delta CEO Ed Bastain told analysts.

Shoppers are “worried about overall affordability,” snack food conglomerate Mondelez noted in a February statement, and are foregoing brand names in favor of value brands or are cutting down on snacks altogether.

Consumers are “fed up with the price increases,” CEO Dirk van de Put said on an earnings call this month. “They don’t feel good about their personal economic outlook.” Kraft Heinz, PayPal, and PepsiCo also have commented on strapped consumers spending less.

At 57.3 this month, the University of Michigan’s monthly survey of consumer sentiment has fallen 20 percent below its January 2025 level. Consumers with fat stock portfolios are happy-go-lucky, while households with no stock holdings feel “dismal” about their economic prospects, survey director Joanne Hsu said in a statement.

TREND FORECAST: There is no market force that will close the distance separating the wealthiest Americans from the rest.

It took Teddy Roosevelt and the U.S. Congress to break the oligarchs’ financial trusts at the turn of the 20th Century after popular sentiment rose up against them. The Wagner Act of 1935 encoded workers’ right to unionize. The G.I. Bill following World War II is largely credited with creating the middle class that thrived for decades after that.

Last year’s elections swept Democrats to power in some state elections in which they campaigned on affordability and the economic divide. But by their deeds over the past

half-century, they will do more to support the rich than the plantation workers of Slavelandia.

Because government seems to be the only force able to ensure the survival of a middle class, more politicians will emphasize the divide in this year's Congressional elections. Voters exhausted by partisan warfare will be drawn to promises of practical steps that will improve their lives, the kind of promises that Donald Trump made and has failed to act on. But again, should the Democrats take a majority in Congress, it will be just more empty words from loudmouth politicians.

U.S. INFLATION SLOWS MORE THAN EXPECTED IN JANUARY



Inflation's pace in the U.S. moderated to 2.4 percent last month, led by a decline in gasoline prices amid a global oil glut and a slowdown in the rate of rent increases. However, service prices continued to climb unchecked.

The core inflation rate, which excludes energy and food costs, ran at 2.5 percent in January, down from 2.6 percent in December and

marking the slowest rise since March 2021. The rate defied economists' forecasts of a repeat of December's figure.

In a statement, the White House crowed that the numbers show that "America's economy is set to turbocharge even further through long-overdue interest rate cuts from the Fed."

However, the news makes it less likely the U.S. Federal Reserve will cut interest rates at its next meeting, analysts said. The central bank has held firm to its 2-percent inflation target.

"Overall, the data suggest that price pressures remain a little too hot for comfort, but the direction of travel for inflation continues to look to be lower, even if this has proved to be a bumpy and slow process," James McCann, an economist and strategist at Edward Jones, told Reuters. "For the Fed, this probably doesn't change much in the near term."

The price of rent and lodging went up 0.2 percent, only half as much as in December. Food costs gained 0.2 percent, compared to 0.7 percent the month before. Beef and veal prices declined by 0.4 percent. The cost of coffee, eggs, and fresh fruits and vegetables also went down.

The average gasoline price fell 3.2 percent from December and electricity prices gained just 0.1 percent.

However, food prices were up 2.9 percent on the year and electricity prices 6.9 percent.

“The tamer inflation numbers were unlikely to resonate with consumers,” Reuters noted.

“Households focus on the price level while inflation measures the price change,” Eric Winograd, AllianceBernstein’s chief economist, explained to Reuters. “A secondary [focus] is the behavior of household essentials.

“Food, medicine, and rent prices are rising faster than [prices] as a whole and those prices are more important to households than the overall basket,” he added.

TREND FORECAST: Service prices remain untamed. Recreational experiences cost 0.5 percent more in January and the cost of personal care gained 1.2 percent. Healthcare was up 0.3 percent, with hospital charges spurring up 0.9 percent. Service costs in the aggregate climbed 0.4 percent last month, faster than December’s 0.3-percent pace.

We maintain our forecast that inflation will continue to stick above the Fed’s 2-percent goal – a percentage they officially invented in 2012 – thanks to the added cost of tariffs and the weaker dollar, which is at a four-year low, having declined 7.4 percent in value last year.

CREDIT STRESS CLIMBS UP THE INCOME LADDER



Until recently, low-earning households were the almost exclusive clientele credit counselors served. Now an increasing number of higher income earners are beginning to seek help to restructure their debt and avoid bankruptcy, according to a new report from the nonprofit National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC).

Currently, credit counselors' average client makes about \$70,000 a year and has unsecured debt equal to about half that income, the report said. Pre-COVID, the typical client made around \$40,000 and had debts amounting to around \$10,000.

More clients show a rising debt-to-income ratio and are paying late on their accounts. These two factors have pushed the NFCC's index of financial stress to its highest since the group began tracking the factors in 2018.

"We are seeing a disturbing shift from discretionary debt to survival debt," Mike Croxson, NFCC CEO, said in a statement accompanying the report.

Particularly worrying: people already on structured repayment plans are missing more of those payments, even though their plans were designed to make the payments manageable.

U.S. consumer debt that has fallen into some level of delinquency is now 4.8 percent, the highest proportion since 2017, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

TREND FORECAST: *Credit card accounts and auto loans are in serious delinquency, especially among low-income households, which is the greatest since the depth of the Great Recession in 2008 and 2009, The Wall Street Journal reported. Of people holding mortgages from the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), 13 percent are now late in paying, an increase from last year.*

There also has been a sizeable increase in FHA loans, which are designed for first-time buyers, entering foreclosure.

The figures, though alarming, may understate the precarious economic situation many Americans find themselves in, the WSJ noted.

“When the financial buffer runs out, the climb in stress isn’t gradual,” Coxson said. “It’s vertical.”

Indeed, as we have detailed, the top 10 percent of Americans are responsible for some 50 percent of consumer spending. Thus, as per the data, the rich keep getting richer and the middle class keeps shrinking.

Think about it! Back in the 1980s, the median price of existing homes was \$47,200. But as of the start of this year, the median existing-home sales price in the U.S. is approximately \$396,800 to \$415,000. Indeed, the age of first-time home buyers used to be 28 years of age... now it is 40 years old!

Why has this happened? Because politicians running America keep sinking the nation deeper into debt by printing fake money backed by nothing and printed on nothing to artificially prop up the economy.

And because of this fake money printing fraud, gold and silver prices keep spiking... and this is why the death of the dollar is on the near horizon.

TRUMP POLICIES WILL GROW U.S. DEBT BY \$1.4 TRILLION, CBO WARNS



Donald Trump’s massive tax cuts and other economic policies will add \$1.4 trillion to the federal government’s debt through 2035, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) said in an update last week.

The government’s annual budget deficit will jump from \$1.9 trillion this year – virtually a quarter of the entire budget – to \$3.1 trillion by 2036. As a percentage of GDP, the budget deficit will break its World War Two-era record in 2030, the CBO has calculated.

The projection is a 6-percent increase from the agency's previous estimate.

"Our budget projections continue to indicate that the fiscal trajectory is not sustainable," the CBO warned.

The tax cuts passed by Congress in last summer's "big, beautiful bill" will add \$4.7 trillion to the budget gap over the next 10 years and Donald Trump's draconian limits on immigration will cost another \$500 billion, CBO calculations show.

Trump's tariff charges – if sustained at current levels over the next 10 years – would add enough back into the treasury that the net additional budget deficits (not the federal debt) come out to \$3.1 trillion.

The ballooning debt will grow from 101 percent of GDP this year to 108 percent by 2031, passing the record of 106 percent set in 1946 as the U.S. helped to rebuild Europe after World War II. The debt will swell to 120 percent of GDP by 2036 if current trends are not altered, the CBO said.

The current debt is five times larger than it was 18 years ago, just before the Great Recession struck. Investors and government officials are increasingly worried that the treasury will have to issue so many new bonds to pay bills that the market will be flooded and demand for each new issue will shrink.

Already, the scale of federal debt has cut securities prices and boosted yields on the bellwether 10-year treasury note. Securities prices fall as demand weakens and yields rise to entice investors to buy the bonds and notes anyway.

"A healthy balance sheet is critical for a growing economy, national security, and the ability to respond to unforeseen emergencies," Maya MacGuineas, president of the nonprofit, nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, said in a statement.

"The CBO's estimate will add to the narrative that the U.S. fiscal picture is unsustainable," Gennadiy Goldberg, chief interest rate analyst at TD Securities, confirmed in comments quoted by the *Financial Times*.

TREND FORECAST: *Like U.S. consumers, the federal government also has an affordability crisis.*

Politicians are promising to build millions of housing units. Trump has pledged that the additional revenue from tariffs will be returned to American citizens as a gift of \$2,000 to everyone. With debt galloping at record levels, these promises seem less realistic.

Meanwhile, the country is \$38.5 in debt, falling to a level that makes it increasingly difficult to see how it will ever be paid off. If a sudden need for massive spending occurs – a new shooting war, for example – the U.S. would face an immediate financial eclipse.

*The crisis could be much simpler but no less dramatic: investors will lose confidence in the U.S.'s fiscal soundness and stop buying its bonds, effectively cutting off the money supply. And as we have forecast, the **Death of the Dollar** is on the near horizon. See:*

- “**DEATH OF THE DOLLAR**” (30 April 2014)
- “**COULD STABLECOINS SAVE THE DOLLAR?**” (9 Aug 2022)
- “**BRICS COUNTRIES MOVING FASTER TO CBDC'S**” (7 Feb 2023)
- “**WHEN AND IF WILL THE DOLLAR DIE?**” (28 Feb 2023)
- “**SPOTLIGHT: BYE, BYE BUCKS—THE DEATH OF THE DOLLAR**” (4 Apr 2023)
- “**SPOTLIGHT: BYE, BYE BUCKS—THE DEATH OF THE DOLLAR**” (18 Apr 2023)
- “**SPOTLIGHT: BYE, BYE BUCKS—DEATH OF THE DOLLAR**” (2 May 2023)
- “**SAUDIS IN TALKS TO JOIN 'BRICS' BANK**” (6 Jun 2023)
- “**LULA WANTS SOUTH AMERICAN CURRENCY**” (6 Jun 2023)
- “**DE-DOLLARIZATION 'IRREVERSIBLE'**” (12 Sep 2023)
- “**BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES**” (10 Oct 2023)
- “**BRICS TRADE BLOC ADDS FIVE MEMBER COUNTRIES**” (9 Jan 2024)
- “**DEATH OF THE DOLLAR: BRICS NATIONS WANT THEIR OWN COMMON CURRENCY**” (21 May 2024)
- “**U.S. DOLLAR DEATH AND THE DEATH OF AMERICA**” (15 Apr 2025)
- “**SPOTLIGHT: DEATH OF THE DOLLAR**” (13 May 2025)
- “**SPOTLIGHT: DEATH OF THE DOLLAR**” (24 Jun 2025)
- “**SWISS FRANC SURGES ON DOLLAR'S WEAKNESS**” (3 Feb 2026)
- “**DECLINING DOLLAR ROILS WORLD MARKETS**” (3 Feb 2026)

Also, we have noted in articles such as “Interest on National Debt Costs More Than Defense, Medicare” (21 May 2024), politicians will ignore their disastrous fiscal mismanagement until an overwhelming crisis forces them to focus on it.

U.S. ELECTRICITY PRICES RISING TWICE AS FAST AS INFLATION



In 2025, U.S. electricity prices rose 6.9 percent, compared to inflation's pace of 2.9 percent, Goldman Sachs analysts have calculated.

The price of power will continue escalating as artificial intelligence (AI) data centers make up 40 percent of growth in U.S. electricity demand through the rest of this decade, they said. Electricity production is growing too

slowly to keep up, and utilities are scrambling to add capacity, a key factor in current U.S. economic growth.

AI's voracious appetite for electricity will crimp households' disposable income and slow economic growth, the analysts warned. Utilities will spend more on generating capacity and pass most, if not all, of the cost through to consumers.

Household electricity bills will rise another 6 percent through next year, Goldman's report said. In 2028, the rate of increase will fall to 3 percent as natural gas prices decline. The high cost of power will snip 0.2 of a percentage point off the rate of GDP increase through 2027 and the U.S. economy will grow 0.1 of a percentage point less.

"The income and spending drags will likely be larger for lower-income households because electricity accounts for a greater share of their spending," the report noted.

Wholesale power prices will shoot up fastest in California, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Midwest where the supply-demand imbalance is particularly acute.

Soaring power bills have become political headlines. Democrats Mikie Sherrill in New Jersey and Abigail Spanberger in Virginia won last November's governors' elections after they campaigned on pledges to rein in surging electricity bills.

Donald Trump and his administration's officials have championed AI's expansion but now see the industry's "power devour" as a GOP vulnerability in this fall's Congressional elections. Trump recently exacted a promise from Microsoft that it will

prevent its data centers from hiking power bills, although neither revealed details of how that would be ensured.

The administration also signed an agreement with several states that they would press tech companies to pay for any new power stations necessitated by data centers' growth in the 13 states and District of Columbia served by PJM Interconnection, the largest single chunk of the U.S. electric grid.

Data centers' explosive growth in PJM's service area has forced the utility to spend an additional \$23 billion to secure enough power to meet the demand, amounting to a "massive wealth transfer," watchdog group Monitoring Analytics said in a statement.

TREND FORECAST: Electricity demand is rising not only among AI-related companies but in every area of the economy and society.

Energy companies' desperate attempts to meet that surging need is a boon for a range of alternative energy technologies, from solar and wind to small, modular nuclear reactors and even novel approaches to fusion reactors.

At the same time, utilities and businesses will place greater emphasis on using electricity more wisely and cutting its use, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs as well as for established purveyors of energy conservation devices and technologies.

HEALTHCARE, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE OWN THE U.S. JOBS MARKET



Through the past three years, the number of jobs in healthcare and social assistance has grown by 12.5 percent while net job growth in all other economic sectors has totaled less than 2 percent, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

A key reason: Americans are aging. A record number of them reached the age of 65 last year, a time at which health and self-sufficiency can begin to decline.

As a result, most “of America’s jobs growth now comes from a category responsible for less than 15 percent of total employment,” the *WSJ* noted.

About 25,000 fewer people are getting paychecks in finance and insurance after those sectors trimmed their payrolls across the past year. Professional and business service companies made even sharper cuts, largely because businesses have slashed their calls for temporary workers.

The manufacturing sector added 5,000 jobs last month; it was the first month in more than a year when the sector did not shrink its workforce. Construction companies also expanded their payrolls, but that was due solely to frantic expansion of artificial intelligence data centers. Home and commercial construction stagnated.

Healthcare companies added a net 437,000 jobs in 2025, with social assistance bringing on 321,000 additional workers.

Healthcare companies are the second-largest employer in many states, outranked only by Walmart, the *WSJ* said.

If the sector cuts back its pace of hiring, the U.S. economy could face what the *WSJ* called “jobless growth” – rising spending and investment in AI chips, data centers, and other infrastructure could continue to expand U.S. GDP but would do so with fewer human workers and more automation.

“Fewer people getting paychecks squeezes consumer spending and also federal and state tax revenue,” *WSJ* analyst Spencer Jakab reminded in his 11 February analysis.

TREND FORECAST: As America ages and obesity rates keep rising, the health sector is more likely to increase its hiring than to cut it back.

Major health events costing \$100,000 or more to treat, such as cancers and strokes, have jumped 40 percent since 2020, according to insurance giant UnitedHealthcare.

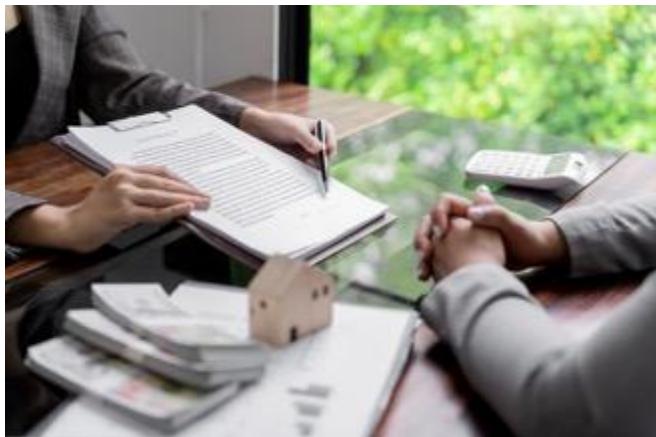
That increase, coupled with the usual ailments associated with old age, will increase demand for health services and workers and will soak up more of our household and government spending.

Meanwhile, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) will take greater roles in factories, trimming the number of roles for humans and requiring sophisticated training for those who remain. AI will eliminate 40 percent of white-collar jobs, Goldman Sachs has warned.

Companies will find ways for humans and AI to work together to cut business costs and boost bottom-line results. That will take time. In the interim, hundreds of thousands of workers will lose their jobs and tens of thousands of new graduates will be unable to find a berth in their chosen fields.

Societies are still not confronting the looming need to manage, retrain, and support a new wave of jobless workers.

U.S. HOME SALES DROP SHARPLY, SIGNALING “NEW HOUSING CRISIS”



In January, the sale of pre-owned U.S. homes dove 8.4 percent from December's volume and 4.4 percent below the number in January 2025 to set the slowest pace since December 2023 and the sharpest month-on-month decline since February 2022, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) reported.

Home prices remain high, the number of newly built homes is still scant, consumers

have not recovered confidence in their economic future, and interest rates remain above 6 percent.

These factors have created “a new housing crisis,” according to NAR chief economist Lawrence Yun.

“Affordability conditions are improving,” he acknowledged in a statement reporting the January figure. “Housing is the most affordable it’s been since March 2022. This is due to wage gains outpricing home price growth and mortgage rates being lower than a year ago. However, supply has not kept pace and remains quite low.”

Potential buyers are “still struggling,” Yun told reporters. “Renters are not participating in housing wealth.” The current market is in a “crisis,” he explained, because “movement is not happening. Americans are stuck.”

There were 1.22 million homes for sale in January, 3.4 percent more than a year previous, but only 3.7-month supply, according to NAR. A six-month supply is needed to balance negotiating power equally between buyer and seller, realtors say.

The thin inventory kept home prices near record highs. January's median selling price was \$396,800, up 0.9 percent from January 2025 and reaching the highest price for any January in NAR's records.

Since January 2020, people owning homes from then until now would have seen their home equity grow by \$130,000 just because home prices have risen so much over the period, NAR noted.

Listed homes remained on the market for an average of 46 days last month, compared to 41 in January 2025. About 31 percent of sales were for first-time buyers; the proportion was 28 percent a year earlier. The pre-COVID norm was about 40 percent.

While affordability overall may be improving, sales fell most dramatically among homes priced at \$250,000 or less. The loss indicates the increasingly dire financial situation for low- and modest-income earners, which we detail ["The American Economy Continues to Sharpen Its Divide"](#) in this issue.

TREND FORECAST: The sustained high home prices and mortgage interest rates around 6 percent are institutionalizing home ownership as a privilege of the well-off or for those who inherit property.

Again, what is hardly reported is that the record low interest rates and trillions of dollars of fake money printed on nothing and backed by nothing to fight the COVID War dramatically raised the prices of homes. Indeed, as a result of this political stupidity, home prices have risen over 50 percent since the COVID War was launched in January 2020.

State-level politicians have been the center of gravity in discussions about solving the crisis. States may be exploring the possibility of issuing bonds and using the proceeds to subsidize home purchases for buyers otherwise unable to buy a home or qualify for a mortgage. As we see it, these steps will do little or nothing to solve the home buying crisis. Home sales will increase when mortgage rates drop to the 3-percent interest rate range.

AMERICANS BEAR BRUNT OF TRUMP'S TARIFFS, DESPITE ASSURANCES FROM WHITE HOUSE



The New York Federal Reserve released a study last week that found the American consumer and companies paid about 90 percent of the tariffs that were implemented under President Donald Trump, despite promises from the White House that trading partners would bear the brunt of the costs.

The authors of the study, which included economists from Columbia, investigated the

first 11 months of 2025 and wrote that while exporters began to absorb more of the costs towards the end of the year, “the bulk of a tariff incidence continues to fall on U.S. firms and consumers,” according to the *Financial Times*. They wrote that these firms and consumers “continue to bear the bulk of the economic burden of the high tariffs imposed in 2025.”

The study found that in the first months of 2025, the U.S. paid 94 percent of the tariff incidence, but that number inched lower in September and October to 92 percent. The number continued to decline to 86 percent in November.

Trump posted on Truth Social in August that the U.S. will make billions of dollars from countries that have taken advantage of the U.S. for years.

CNN noted that the New York Fed’s report did not itemize between consumers and businesses, but a CBO report released on Wednesday, said approximately 70 percent would be passed on to consumers. (The report noted that foreign exporters paid just about 5 percent of the costs.)

The CNN report, citing the Tax Foundation, said, on average, these tariffs were equivalent to adding a tax increase of about \$1,000 a household in 2025 and \$1,300 in 2026.

Kush Desai, a spokesman from the White House, told CNN in a statement that inflation continues to cool and “America’s average tariff rate has increased nearly sevenfold.”

“The reality is that President Trump’s economic agenda of tax cuts, deregulation, tariffs, and energy abundance are reducing costs and accelerating economic growth,” Desai said.

The *FT* noted that Scott Bessent, the Treasury secretary, admitted that some major stores in the U.S. have been impacted by these tariffs.

The paper said economists had been watching tariffs and their role in potentially driving up inflation in the U.S., but that has not materialized. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) came in at 3 percent in January 2025 and came in at 2.7 percent at the end of the year. (The CPI for January 2026 came in at 2.4 percent.)

Olu Sonola, an economist at Fitch Ratings, told Axios, “The caveat is that much of the disinflation is coming from sharply lower energy prices.”

TRENDPOST: *The New York Fed study said the average tariff rate on imports into the U.S. increased in 2025 from 2.6 percent at the start of the year to 13 percent, resulting in \$124 billion for the U.S. in the “fiscal year to date,” which represented a 300 percent increase from the same time last year, the *FT* reported.* (See [“U.S. PRODUCER PRICES JUMP AS COMPANIES PASS TARIFF COSTS TO CUSTOMERS”](#) 3 Feb 2026, [“TRUMP’S TARIFFS HOBBLING GLOBAL GROWTH”](#) 25 Nov 2025, and [“SPECIAL REPORT: TARIFF WAR UPDATE”](#) 18 Nov 2025.)

Gerald Celente has [spoken extensively](#) on how he supports tariffs if it means the federal government will heavily tax the billionaires, reduce the federal income tax for the working class... and bring manufacturing back to the U.S. He long noted that Bill Clinton sold out the nation with NAFTA that sent manufacturing jobs to Mexico and he also brought China into the World Trade Organization 25 years ago. And because of what he and other presidents did by killing anti-trust laws, the Mom-and-Pop businesses that once-built America’s middle-class... have evaporated. Now, by the data, Americans are being forced to work menial jobs at Target, Walmart, Home Depot, Staples, etc., and low paying health and social service sector jobs.

U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT SLASHES JOB GROWTH TOTALS AGAIN



In 2025, U.S. businesses added just 181,000 nonfarm jobs, an average of barely 15,000 a month and 69 percent fewer than the 584,000 previously estimated, the U.S. labor department said last week.

It was the largest percentage reduction since 2009.

The agency also cut its 2024 total of new jobs by 28 percent, whacking about 600,000 from the total.

Altogether, the U.S. economy created more than one million fewer jobs over those two years than the government had reported earlier.

Companies involved in healthcare added 391,000 new jobs over 2024 and 2025, while all other economic sectors combined cut 210,000 positions, CNBC reported.

“That really puts into sharp relief how poorly other industries are doing,” Daniel Zhao, chief economist for jobs website Glassdoor told CNBC.

While some politicians question the motivation behind the reduction in numbers, most economists believe the adjustments were not made to embarrass the current administration.

Federal job cuts have left fewer people to gather and process data. Also, “revisions tend to be bigger when the economy is changing rapidly,” Jed Kolko, in charge of the commerce department’s economic statistics during the Biden administration, said in a CNBC interview.

“Job growth has been unusually volatile for several years, first from the [COVID War] and then from the immigration surge, so revisions in recent years have been bigger,” he pointed out.

Also, the way government agencies have collected job numbers has often failed to keep up with the number of businesses being created or closing. The Bureau of Labor

Statistics changed its method last year to more closely track those figures, but that change has added to its estimates' volatility, it acknowledged.

The variability in government estimates have led economists to pay more attention to private-sector job estimates, such as those published monthly by payroll service ADP. However, ADP also has been adjusting its numbers, reducing its 2025 tally by more than 33 percent and tweaking numbers as far back as 2020.

TREND FORECAST: *It's a sick joke right in front of everyone's eyes to see, yet the government gets away with their bullshit... just as they sell the public other socioeconomic and geopolitical lies and misinformation.*

By rigging these numbers when the equity markets are open, by showing higher job growth, it helps jack up stock prices. If they gave the real weak job numbers when the markets were open, it would drive equities down.

These rotten numbers also prove that the middle class of America is disappearing, and it is nothing more than a nation of Slavelandia.

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT



WHEN THE ECONOMY FALLS, JOBS GO WITH IT

The U.S. added 130,000 jobs in January according to data released Wednesday by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Most of the new jobs added in January were in low-paying sectors of health care and social services. The unemployment rate dropped slightly to 4.3 percent, but there were 108,435 job cuts in January, the most in January since 2009, according to outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

As AI continues to take over human jobs, Microsoft CEO Mustafa Suleyman predicted that most white-collar jobs will be automated in the next 12 to 18 months as AI reaches “human-level” performance. AI-related job losses continue in the tech sector, with at least 30,700 jobs eliminated since the start of the year.

In California, new rules on card game gambling may force the layoff of 13,000 card dealers.

As the death of journalism continues, The BBC is planning millions of dollars in cuts in the next three years, resulting in program and staff cuts.

The job cut trend will increase this year as we have detailed in this and previous Trends Journals. This is week 167 that we have been reporting on the latest round of job cuts.

Bank and Financial Layoffs:

- Block – up to 10 percent of staff
- Comerica Bank – 54 layoffs
- LPL Financial independent brokerage firm – 303 layoffs

Government Layoffs:

- Library and Archives Canada – 94 layoffs

Layoffs:

- 10 Chambers – Number of layoffs not provided
- AUMOVIO, a Germany-based automotive technology company, 1,000 layoffs in India
- Baker McKenzie law firm – 1,000 layoffs
- BART – Layoffs and reduced service
- Cigna – 2,000 layoffs
- College of Wooster (Ohio) – 22 layoffs
- Congdon Packing Company – 102 layoffs in Washington
- Corpus Christi Army Depot – Possible layoffs
- E.W. Scripps Co – Layoffs possible
- Glossier – 50 layoffs
- Harley-Davidson – Layoffs possible
- Heineken – up to 6,000 layoffs
- HGS call center – 92 remote workers in El Paso, Texas
- Idaho State University – 45 layoffs
- Integra Life Sciences – 65 layoffs
- Janus International Group Inc (Houston, Texas) – 113 layoffs
- Jefferson County Board of Education (Kentucky) – Voted to eliminate 648 positions
- Lafayette Parish Schools (Louisiana) – Layoffs possible
- Los Angeles Unified Schools (California) – 3,200 layoffs possible
- Lowes – 600 layoffs of corporate staff
- Mercer County school district (New Jersey) – 30 layoffs possible
- Netflix's product division – 40 layoffs

- Omaha Steaks – 2 percent of staff
- Palo Alto Networks – Hundreds of CyberArk employees
- PeaceHealth – 94 layoffs
- Riverside Unified School District (California) – 32 layoffs
- SalesForce – Additional layoffs
- Seres Therapeutics – Number of layoffs not provided
- Target – 500 layoffs
- Telstra telecommunications company – 650 layoffs
- UBISoft – 200 voluntary layoffs in France
- Wildlight Entertainment – Number of layoffs not provided

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS TRENDS



Closures continue to hit the retail and restaurant industry due to rising costs and declining demand.

Wendy's fast food burger chain plans to close about 300 restaurants. According to the Wall Street Journal, Wendy's has been losing market share as customers have complained about rising prices and the elimination of everyday value options.

Family Dollar discount retailer closed 82 locations in January.

School districts across the U.S., facing declining enrollment and budget cuts, have voted to close several schools and lay off staff.

Bankruptcies:

- Armaan Trucking
- Avenger Flight Group
- Crypto Startup Archblock
- Emory Proton Therapy Center cancer treatment facility, Chapter 11
- Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park

- Indy Wholesale Direct
- Max Brenner chocolate restaurant and store, Chapter 11
- North Star Health Alliance – Chapter 11
- Off-Load Moving
- Protrade Logistics
- STG Logistics
- Taylor Chips – Closing Philadelphia locations
- TMT Group

Bank Closures:

- Archblock crypto startup
- Lloyd's Banking Group – Closing 168 locations this year and next

Closures:

- Antelope Valley Health Center – Closed by the Los Angeles County Public Health Department
- Barroco (Lakewood, Ohio)
- Biker's Edge (Bristol, Conn.)
- Bravo Trailers, 118 layoffs
- Brixx Wood Fired Pizza (Greensboro, N.C.)
- Bub's Bar-B-Q (Sunderland, Mass.)
- CareSTL Health – Closing three locations in St Louis, Mo.
- Cargill – Closing Wisconsin plant, 221 layoffs
- CNH farm and construction equipment maker – Closing plant in Burlington, Iowa, 209 layoffs
- Court TV – Plans shutdown in March
- Crabby's Dockside (Fort Pierce, Fla.)
- DeKalb County Schools (Georgia) – Proposes closing 27 schools
- Diocese of Brooklyn (New York) – Closing seven schools in June
- Eddie Bauer – Closing Seattle headquarters, 60 layoffs
- Enterprise Women's Center (Alabama)
- Faith Friendship Villa (Mountville, Pa.)
- Family Dollar – Closed 82 locations in January
- Family Fare grocery store (Chippewa Falls, Wis.)

- FedEx – Planning to close 475 stations by the end of 2027
- Floral Rhino (Casper, Wyo.)
- FoodsCo (Fresno, Calif.)
- Footworks (Attleboro, Mass.)
- Glen-Worden Elementary School (New York)
- Global Washington nonprofit
- Grand Prairie School District (Texas) – Considers closing three schools
- Grandpa Mac (Rehoboth Beach, Del.)
- Greenbrier Minerals – Idling seven mines, 530 layoffs
- Gross Confection Bar (Portland, Maine)
- Harbinger Production – Closing close its Vallejo, Calif. factory
- Hartfield Book Co (Monticello, Ill.)
- Heartland Nursery and Garden Center (Kansas City, Mo.)
- Houston School District (Texas) – Considers closing 12 schools
- IBUN Bakery (Houston, Texas)
- IKEA – Closing Memphis, Tenn. location
- Illumus – Closing Titusville facility, 84 layoffs
- Jack's Donuts (Greenwood, Ind.)
- Judson Independent School District (Texas) – Closing four schools
- Kurtis Technologies Co.
- Labouré College of Healthcare (Milton, Mass.)
- Los Angeles County Public Health – Closing seven clinics
- Lourdes University (Sylvania, Ohio)
- Luke's Donut & Grill (Canton, Conn.)
- Lulu's Pizza (Duluth, Minn.)
- Mug Shots Coffee (Midland, Mich.)
- Neiman Marcus – Closing at Copley Place in Boston as the mall undergoes development, 73 layoffs
- Penne For Your Thoughts restaurant (Knoxville, Tenn.)
- Pilgrim Child Development Center (Wauwatosa, Wis.)
- Pit Stop Tavern (Black Eagle, Mont.)
- Point Blank Distributing – Closing two facilities in Oregon, 150 layoffs
- Red Lobster – Closing additional restaurants
- Reptile Zoo (Monroe, Wash.)
- Richmond Free Press (Richmond, Va.)
- Saks Global – Closing Eight Saks Fifth Avenue stores

- San Jose Unified School District – Possible closure of nine elementary schools
- Sheridan Fruit Company (Portland, Ore.)
- Silver Moon Flea Market (Pennsylvania)
- South Tampa restaurant (Haven, Fla.)
- St. James Episcopal Church (Boardman, Ohio)
- Super Mega Bien (Denver, Colo.)
- Torchy's Tacos – Closing four restaurants
- Unclaimed Freight (Bethlehem, Pa.)
- UPickDaffodils farm (Bluffton, S.C.)
- Wendy's – Closing 300 restaurants
- Wildhorse Harley-Davidson and Kawasaki (Bend, Ore.)

U.K. ECONOMY MANAGES TO GROW FOR A SECOND YEAR



The British economy grew 1.3 percent last year, building on 2025's 1.1-percent expansion, the U.K.'s Office for National Statistics reported. The GDP advanced 0.1 percent in each of last year's third and fourth quarters.

Economists in a *Wall Street Journal* survey had expected the final quarter's growth to be 0.2 percent, twice the actual result.

The economy managed to increase even though consumers remained wary of spending, interest rates remained high, U.S. tariffs limited income from a key trade partner, and the ranks of jobless workers grew.

In last year's final quarter, the service sector stagnated and construction declined by 4.1 percent, but those weaknesses were offset by a 1.2-percent bump in industrial output.

Britain's economy began 2025 strongly, giving hope to businesses, consumers, and the young government of prime minister Keir Starmer. However, those hopes were

thwarted by rising taxes to tackle a runaway budget deficit, poor productivity, and continued economic nervousness.

Consumers backed off as taxes rose, food prices spiked, and the Bank of England (BoE) held its interest rate steady, making it among the highest in Europe.

With businesses seeing this year begin with a “lackluster” economy, according to a BOE survey, most economists expect the U.K.’s economic activity to continue in the same vein for the rest of this year.

The BoE seems to agree. On 5 February, it cut its 2026 U.K. growth outlook from 1.2 percent to 0.9 percent.

TREND FORECAST: Assuming the U.S. tariff of 10 percent on most U.K. goods remains in place this year, Britain’s economy will be especially dependent on that of Europe. The European Union adds no tariffs to British exports.

Analysts largely agree that the European Central Bank’s forecast of 1.2-percent growth for the continent’s overall economy this year is realistic, although some believe it to be too rosy.

U.K. consumers are still struggling with a cost-of-living crisis. If Britain is to achieve 0.9-percent economic growth this year, it will need Europe to expand by at least 1.2 percent.

BEIJING CLAMPS DOWN ON CHINA’S AI STOCK BOOM



While U.S.-listed stocks related to artificial intelligence (AI) swell their valuations unchecked, Chinese officials are taking steps to quell what might be seen as irrational exuberance.

Last week, a group of investors with connections to the government sold off a

significant volume of AI-related shares to throw a net over runaway stock prices.

The investors, known as the “national team,” is a market-leveling tool that has been a fixture in China’s equity markets for more than a decade and usually deals in exchange-traded funds (ETFs), *The Wall Street Journal* explained.

The team was key in a 2015 market crash when it stepped in to buy shares and bring stock prices back up. In April 2025, when Donald Trump trumpeted his “liberation day” tariff blitz, markets slumped and the team once again came to the rescue, buying index fund shares.

China’s CSI 300 mainstay index climbed 20 percent last year, largely due to tech shares and AI in particular. (The Standard & Poor’s 500 index in the U.S. rose 14 percent.) In January, stock trading volumes set a record.

The market capitalization of some AI-related companies has rocketed into the tens of billions of dollars, even though some of the companies have scant, or even no, profits.

That has disquieted officials, who prefer a “slow bull” market, the *WSJ* noted.

As investors have been sharply reminded recently, the team sells as well as buys. China-focused ETFs saw outflows of \$110 billion during the last two weeks of January, a signal that the national team was on task.

“Substantial yet well-paced selling by the national team is curbing, but not killing, the positive market momentum,” Morgan Stanley analysts wrote in a note.

“We must resolutely prevent drastic market fluctuations and actively guide long-term and rational investment,” Wu Qing, who chairs the China Securities Regulatory Commission, said in a January speech.

A slow bull market will enable companies to attract serious investors for the long term so businesses can rely more on private capital and less on bank loans, particularly from state-owned lenders, the *WSJ* said. The “slow and steady” approach also can reassure individuals that the market is a safe place for retirement savings.

TREND FORECAST: *Building confidence in the market is a key to major country’s financial future. Only 11 percent of Chinese households have stock investments. In the U.S. (i.e., Slavelandia) the top 1 percent own some 54 percent of the equity markets*

while the top 10 percent own about 92 percent... which means that the other 90 percent of Americans own only 8 percent of the equity markets.

Thus, there is no relationship between Wall Street and Main Street.

And back on the Chinese side, regardless of where the equity markets are heading, most Chinese hold their savings as equity in their homes. As a result of Beijing's three years of draconian zero-COVID policy that destroyed the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of its population, there are some 90 million vacant apartments and homes that have lost some 20 to 40 percent of their value.

And on the equity side of life, we maintain our forecast that China will lead the world's AI boom, thus their tech-stock sector will rise in value.

SPECIAL REPORT: AI FEARS GRIP EQUITY MARKETS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: As we had forecast last year at this time, prepare for a Dot-com Bust 2.0. See:

- “DOT.COM BUST 2.0? CHINA’S DEEPSEEK MAKES CLAIMS THAT COULD REVOLUTIONIZE AI MARKET...AND CRASH U.S. STOCK MARKET.” (28 Jan 2025)
- “MICROSOFT CEO PRAISES DEEPSEEK, WILL OFFER THE R1 TO ITS CUSTOMERS” (4 Feb 2025)
- “SPECIAL REPORT: CHINA’S TECH SURGE” (18 Feb 2025)
- “U.S. DOMINANCE OF EQUITY MARKETS IS ENDING” (18 Feb 2025)
- “SPECIAL REPORT: CHINA’S AI SURGE” (4 Mar 2025)
- “ECONOMIC UPDATE—MARKET OVERVIEW” (4 Mar 2025)
- “CHINA TECH GIANT IS BUILDING END-TO-END SUPPLY CHAIN FOR ADVANCED CHIPS” (13 May 2025)
- U.S. BANS SALE OF CHIP DESIGN TECHNOLOGY TO CHINA. GET READY FOR DOT-COM BUST 2.0 (3 Jun 2025)
- “TOP TREND 2023, SELF-SUFFICIENT ECONOMIES: CHINESE TECH FIRMS PREPARE TO DO WITHOUT NVIDIA’S AI CHIPS” (3 JUN 2025)
- “INVESTORS FLOOD MONEY INTO U.S. TECH STOCKS” (22 Jul 2025)

- “ROBUST EARNINGS BUOY STOCK INVESTORS’ CONFIDENCE” (19 Aug 2025)
- “SPECIAL REPORT: IS THE AI BUBBLE READY TO BURST?” (26 Aug 2025)
- “TECH STOCKS TUMBLE ON FEARS THAT AI HAS BEEN OVERPLAYED” (26 Aug 2025)
- “SPOTLIGHT: STOCK MARKETS RIDE HIGH ON AI” (7 Oct 2025)
- “IS THE U.S. STOCK MARKET RALLY LIVING ON BORROWED TIME?” (7 Oct 2025)
- “WARNINGS MOUNT REGARDING A STOCK MARKET BUBBLE” (14 Oct 2025)
- “BILLIONAIRE NVIDIA INVESTOR: THIS FEELS LIKE THE DOT-COM BUST” (14 Oct 2025)
- “AI STOCK SURGE SPARKS FEARS OF A BUBBLE IN ASIAN MARKETS” (11 Nov 2025)
- “SPOTLIGHT, TREND FORECAST: DOT-COM BUST 2.0” (25 Nov 2025)
- “SPOTLIGHT: DOT-COM BUST 2.0” (16 Dec 2025)
- “DOT-COM BUST 2.0” (6 Jan 2026)
- “TOP TREND 2026, DOT-COM BUST 2.0: AI CROWDS U.S. BOND MARKET” (3 Feb 2026)

But as they do, the main street media Presstitutes who put out for their corporate pimps and government whore masters ignored our forecast. Why? Because they are only interested in making money and selling the bullshit they are paid to sell.

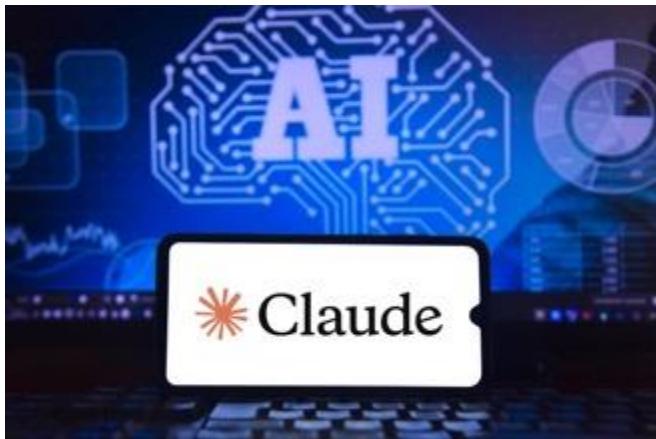
Now that reality has hit The Street. And not only is the Dot-com Bust 2.0 busting because of what we had forecast, the latest worry is that AI will put a bust on a lot of big businesses that will be going out of business.

Indeed, in a Financial Times article today, the headline warns: “Shareholders resist the urge to ‘buy the dip’ as the final outcome of AI disruption remains unclear.”

The “un-clarity” they are worried about is just how powerful AI will become and how many companies it will take down.

Here are some of the latest warnings:

SECTOR VALUES DROP AS AI NEWS SPOOKS U.S. INVESTORS



On 9 February, insurance company stock prices fell after OpenAI debuted an artificial intelligence (AI) app that could provide homeowners insurance quotes. The next day, news of an AI capable of advising on tax strategies sank shares of asset managers and brokerage firms.

Also last week, Anthropic released an update of its Claude AI that it says is capable of doing

legal research and conducting some specialized financial and management tasks. That sank software stocks in general, with PayPal, Salesforce, and Thomson Reuters all sliding downhill.

Tech stocks also continue to take a drubbing at the hands of AI. Last week, Amazon posted its eighth consecutive losing day in the market after announcing a massive increase in its capital budget for its AI data center buildout. Apple's market value slipped 5 percent.

"It's shoot first, ask questions later," David Wagner, in charge of equity trading at Aptus Capital Advisors, told *The Wall Street Journal*. "One part of the market is a funding mechanism for another, then the next day it switches," he said of investors' panic and confusion over AI's possible impacts across the economy.

Market players are taking refuge – perhaps temporary, perhaps longer term – in stocks of companies that will endure regardless of AI's ups and downs, including consumer staples and energy.

"I'm trying to figure out what story to make of [the volatility]," chief strategist Patrick Ryan at Madison Investments told the *WSJ*. "There are a lot of days like that."

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE STOCKS ARE AI'S LATEST VICTIM



Investors ditched commercial real estate stocks last week as they fled “high-fee, labor-intensive business models viewed as potentially vulnerable to AI-driven disruption,” analyst Jade Rahmani at Keefe, Bruyette & Woods wrote in a note last week.

Fears that artificial intelligence (AI) would sink current business models of financial firms already have roiled the value of those shares.

Software stocks took a beating recently after AI developer Anthropic released an AI that enables businesses to do legal work and create programs for which, until now, they had to pay license fees to software companies.

Real estate is now taking its turn in the barrel.

CBRE, a major real estate services firm, saw its stock price tumble 12.8 percent on 12 February. The only times the price has fallen more in a day were during the COVID War and the depths of the Great Recession, data firm Oppenheimer noted.

Cushman & Wakefield, another iconic firm in the industry, watched its market capitalization shrink 14 percent.

Jones Lang LaSalle, one of the largest brokers, fell 11.1 percent. Hudson Pacific Properties and SL Green Realty each went down 8 percent and Newmark was off more than 5 percent. BXP, the largest U.S. developer of office properties, retreated 5.4 percent.

Markets were closed on Monday, 16 February, for the Presidents Day holiday.

“Investors are weighing whether advances in AI could ultimately pressure parts of the business by automating tasks and streamlining deal processes,” Bloomberg noted.

Commercial real estate values have been on the skids since the COVID War and the advent of remote and hybrid work models quashed demand for office space. “Investors worry that AI could sound a death knell for the sector,” CNBC said.

On the Dwarkesh Podcast earlier this month, Elon Musk opined that office towers will one day be obsolete because of AI.

“Corporations that are purely AI and robotics will vastly outperform any corporations that have people in the loop,” he said. “‘Computer’ used to be a job that humans had. You would get a job as a computer where you would do calculations. They would have skyscrapers full of humans just doing calculations.

“Now that entire skyscraper can be replaced by a laptop with a spreadsheet,” he noted. Some analysts agreed with Rahmani that the selloff was an “AI scare trade” as investors stampeded away from financial service businesses, insurance companies, private credit funds, and software firms in the course of a few days.

The rush to sell was “excessive, given limited news,” analyst Bredan Lynch at Barclays told clients. Fears that AI will destroy office real estate and erase jobs “are pertinent risks but that hasn’t changed” in the few days before the selloff began, he added.

That may be true in the short term but the long-range view is darker, some analysts believe.

In a likely future, outcome-driven AI agents will conduct end-to-end workflows, replacing human-led processes, Thierry Wizman, a strategist at Macquarie bank, wrote in a note.

“For companies that are slow to adopt, or have built customer models based on costly human-level discretion and interaction, that transition [by the industry to AI] could be fatal,” he warned.

INDIA'S TECH STOCKS LOSE \$50 BILLION ON AI FEARS



India's technology stock suffered their worst weekly performance since April 2025 last week, extending a selloff that was erased about \$50 billion from the sector's value so far this month.

The country's Nifty IT index dove 8.2 percent during the week of 9 February. The index dropped by as much as 5.2 percent Friday before recovering to post a day-end loss of

1.44 percent.

Anthropic's release of its updated Claude AI in January has sparked a global selloff not only in tech shares, but in the various industries that Claude could now disrupt traditional jobs and work processes. Those areas include finance, insurance, and software as well as the overall tech sphere.

If Claude speeds AI's adoption across the country, it could severely disrupt India's \$283-billion information technology services industry, Reuters said. IT companies could fall short of their growth targets if AI causes the industry's customers to invest in AI as a replacement for their current services, JPMorgan's analysts warned.

The country's tech industry has failed to adequately explain why and how the sector can turn AI into an opportunity rather than a threat, portfolio manager Sat Duhra at Henderson Far East Income, wrote in a note.

As in other countries, investors have panicked and sold off before giving AI's impact a realistic assessment.

"Investors have largely over-reacted to the threat posed by these AI tools," Duhra added. "It is important to note that IT companies remain relevant even in the age of AI, albeit with a leaner headcount."

It is "overly simplistic" to think AI can suddenly generate software that will replace applications that have been refined over years and render IT service companies obsolete, JPMorgan analysts contended.

"IT services companies remain the plumbers in the tech world, and if enterprise software/SaaS is rewritten on a [customized] basis by [AI] agents, it will need significant services plumbing to work in enterprise context and minimize AI slop," they pointed out.

SPOTLIGHT: THE AUTO INDUSTRY'S ROUGH ROAD

NISSAN WILL LOSE \$4.2 BILLION THIS YEAR, IT SAYS



Nissan Motor will post losses totaling \$4.2 billion this fiscal year as it continues its restructuring plan to survive in a global market defined by weak auto sales, U.S. tariffs, and a slower-than-expected shift among consumers to electric cars.

Sales volumes will drop 4.4 percent to 3.2 million vehicles, the company warned. Revenue will fall by 5.8 percent to about \$7.8 billion and the operating loss will be \$393 million.

However, Nissan recorded an operating profit in its third quarter, despite taking a \$500-million hit from tariffs, CEO Ivan Espinosa said to *The Wall Street Journal*.

As part of its restructuring plan, the company sold its South African assembly plants to Chinese electric vehicle company Chery. Nissan also sold its headquarters building in Yokohama, Japan.

"Is it good enough? No," Espinosa told the *WSJ*. "We need to do more and we need to do it faster."

"More" includes cutting its manufacturing plants from 17 to 10, laying off 20,000 workers worldwide by 2028, and cutting its production capacity by 30 percent outside of China. Those steps will help the company cope with a projected \$1.8-billion hit to its financials this year from U.S. tariffs.

Nissan has formed a partnership with Wayve, a U.K. startup, to install AI-powered driver assistance in its own cars as well as selling the system to other automakers.

EV SALES IN CHINA FELL IN JANUARY AS EXPORTS GREW



In January, sales of all-electric (EV) and hybrid passenger vehicles in China dropped 20 percent year over year, the first decline since February 2024, the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA) reported.

The slump followed a year in which manufacturers and dealers fought an extended, vicious price war to unload an oversupply of vehicles. The bloody

competition slashed prices, brought buyers in droves, and ended last year when Beijing pressured companies to stop it.

Also, retail passenger vehicle sales overall were off by 14 percent last month, compared to January 2025, and plunged 32 percent from December.

The broad decline was caused largely by the end of tax subsidies for the purchase of so-called “new energy” vehicles. However, sales in general were down following a long period of aggressive expansion by the industry.

“The new energy vehicle market has entered a phase of normal adjustment,” the CPCA said in a statement, adding that January’s weakness did not indicate a longer-term slide.

While the market has cooled at home, Chinese EV makers are pushing out across the world, building factories in Europe and South America and selling cars abroad despite tariffs intended to discourage them.

China’s passenger vehicle exports soared 52 percent in January, compared to a year earlier, the CPCA noted, with shipments of new energy vehicles more than doubling. For all of 2025, Chinese vehicle makers exported 30 percent more units, with new energy exports rocketing up 70 percent.

February is traditionally the year's slowest month for vehicle sales as the lunar new year celebration diverts consumers' attention. The pause "could help ease inventory pressures at the retail level," the CPCA suggested.

MERCEDES EXPECTS ONLY A MODEST PROFIT THIS YEAR



Mercedes-Benz foresees a net profit in its car business of 3 to 5 percent this year, falling below last year's 5 percent and contradicting the 5.6 percent analysts were forecasting. It also said its volume of car sales this year will remain about the same as last.

In 2025, the profit margin would have been 6.1 percent, the company noted, but tariffs cost it about \$1.2 billion or roughly €1 billion.

"We saw caution on China and caution on tariffs for 2026 and it appears those concerns were well-founded," analyst Tom Narayan at RBC Capital Markets wrote in a note.

The company's overall revenue fell 9.2 percent in 2025, compared to 2024, and earnings were halved.

Mercedes sees last year as the bottom of a trough. It will introduce 40 new models in 2026 and focus on being more competitive in all its markets, in part by laying off workers and shifting some production from expensive Germany to lower-cost Hungary. It aims to cut costs 10 percent from 2024 levels within two years.

Also, the carmaker will no longer assemble vehicles in the Mexico plant it operates as a joint venture with Nissan. The change is part of its effort to reduce its production capacity to align with a more muted auto market.

The shifts made so far added €3.5 billion to last year's profits, Mercedes said, and reported that its' order books are filled well into the second half of this year.

While other Western automakers are scaling back operations in China, it remains a key market for Mercedes, although sales fell 20 percent there last year. The company is building a local supply chain in China and refining its production system, both of which will trim costs further.

It also will tailor some models specifically for Chinese consumers, it said.

TREND FORECAST: *The auto industry will continue to morph into one that customizes products as well as operations much more than in the past.*

In China, Western companies will strengthen partnerships with Chinese car companies to tailor models to that market. U.S. and European makers will bring what they learn home to streamline operations and adapt new technologies.

Unfamiliar Chinese brands will continue to become known in the West. At the same time, the technologies and platforms of hybrid and all-electric cars will become more and more standardized so the same ones can be used for models made in different countries.

Through the transition, China will continue to dominate the world's auto market and lead in its technological advance, especially as the world's transition to electric mobility continues, however bumpy that might be in the U.S.

We have documented the twists and turns of the EV industry in articles including:

- ["ELECTRIC VEHICLES TO KILL GAS POWERED CARS? DON'T BET ON IT"](#) (19 Jul 2017)
- ["NEW ENERGY VEHICLES"](#) (11 Dec 2018)
- ["ELECTRIC CARS STALLING"](#) (5 Nov 2019)
- ["ELECTRIC VEHICLES"](#) (11 Dec 2019)
- ["SPECIAL UPDATE: HOW AND WHEN ELECTRIC VEHICLES WILL GO MAINSTREAM"](#) (21 Sep 2021)
- ["ELECTRIC CARS CAN POLLUTE MORE THAN GAS GUZZLERS, STUDY FINDS"](#) (16 Nov 2021)
- ["EV BUMPS IN THE ROAD GETTING BIGGER"](#) (15 Nov 2022)
- ["ELECTRIC VEHICLES AMONG THE LEAST RELIABLE, CONSUMER REPORTS SAYS"](#) (22 Nov 2022)
- ["EV'S GROWTH IN MARKET SHARE WILL SLOW"](#) (17 Jan 2023)
- ["MORE EVIDENCE EV'S ARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL WRECK"](#) (17 Mar 2023)
- ["ELECTRIC VEHICLES' DIRTY DILEMMA"](#) (20 Jun 2023)

- “EV FABULISM WON’T HEAL THE EARTH, BUT WILL ENRICH ELITES” (18 Jul 2023)
- “PRICES FOR EV METALS CRASH” (24 Oct 2023)
- “U.S. ELECTRIC VEHICLE SALES HIT THE BRAKES” (31 Oct 2023)
- “MSM CRACKS IN EV NARRATIVES BEGIN TO SHOW” (31 Oct 2023)
- “EV SALES SLUMP IN U.S., EUROPE” (14 Nov 2023)
- “THE EV NARRATIVE IS BREAKING DOWN ON A HIGHWAY NEAR YOU” (19 Dec 2023)
- “EV GO FU” (Top Trend, 2 Jan 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024 EV GO FU: 2023 EV SALES WERE A DEBACLE” (9 Jan 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU: EV SALES TANK IN EUROPE” (23 Jan 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU: LITHIUM PRICE CRASHES AS GLOBAL EV DEMAND SLOWS” (30 Jan 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024 EV GO FU: SPINOFFS” (6 Feb 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (13 Feb 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (5 Mar 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU: BYD CUTS EV PRICES IN CHINA” (12 Mar 2024)
- “THE LATEST IN EV GO FU: CAN A SUB 30 THOUSAND TESLA TURN AROUND THE EV SKID?” (12 Mar 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU” (26 Mar 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU: CENTURY-OLD BATTERY DESIGN STALLS EVs” (26 Mar 2024)
- “BIDEN EV MANDATES AND THE DREAM OF ‘CARLESS CITIES’” (26 Mar 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2023: EV GO FU” (23 Apr 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (28 May 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (18 Jun 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU: TOYOTA GOES FULL RETRO, RE-ENGINEERS PISTON ENGINE” (2 Jul 2024)
- “EV BREAKDOWNS AND DIRTY PFAS TECH: THE LATEST IN ‘EV GO FU’” (16 Jul 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (16 Jul 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (23 Jul 2024)
- “SPOTLIGHT: TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU” (30 Jul 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (13 Aug 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (27 Aug 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU: VOLVO DELAYS TRANSITION TO ALL-EV LINEUP” (10 Sep 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU: VOLVO DELAYS CONSTRUCTION OF EV BATTERY PLANT” (17 Sep 2024)

- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU: EUROPEAN COMMISSION VOTES TO SET TARIFFS ON CHINESE EVS” (8 Oct 2024)
- “TECHNOCRACY BRIEFS: AMERICAN TAXPAYERS FUELING CHINA MILITARY INNOVATION, AND EV SCHOOL BUSES BREAKING DOWN ACROSS U.S.” (15 Oct 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU: LUCID SEEKS CASH, WILL SELL ANOTHER 262.4 MILLION SHARES” (22 Oct 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024, EV GO FU: AUTOMAKERS TURN TO PLUG-IN HYBRIDS. CONSUMERS TURN AWAY” (29 Oct 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (5 Nov 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (26 Nov 2024)
- “TOP TREND 2024: EV GO FU” (23 Dec 2025)
- “GM TAKES \$6-BILLION CHARGE AS VALUE OF EV OPERATION SHRINKS” (13 Jan 2025)
- “EVS’ 2026 SALES PACE WILL BE SLOWEST IN FIVE YEARS, ANALYSTS SAY” (13 Jan 2026)
- “STELLANTIS WRITES OFF \$26.5 BILLION AS SHIFT TO EVS STALLS” (10 Feb 2026)

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS GETTING BIGGER

NUVEEN BUYS SCHRODERS FOR \$13.5 BILLION



Chicago-based asset manager Nuveen will buy Schroder's, the iconic, 200-year-old London financial services firm, for \$13.5 billion. The sale will "end the independence of one of London's last remaining major financial dynasties," *The Wall Street Journal* said.

Schroders opened in 1804 as a sugar trader and has grown into one of the U.K.'s pre-eminent merchant banks.

Schroders stockholders will be paid about \$8.34 per share, a 34-percent premium to the company's 11 February closing price. The stock jumped 29 percent on news of the deal.

Schroders' board unanimously recommended the sale and owners of 42 percent of company stock – mostly members of the Schroder family – are committed to the sale.

The combined entity will manage about \$2.5 trillion in assets. That would rank it 10th among global asset managers, placing it just behind Allianz, in the 2024 roster monitoring by the Thinking Ahead Institute.

Blackrock leads the list, with a \$14-trillion portfolio.

The purchase will move Nuveen, with assets largely in the Western hemisphere, into Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Mideast. Schroders will be better able to market its funds to investors in North and South America.

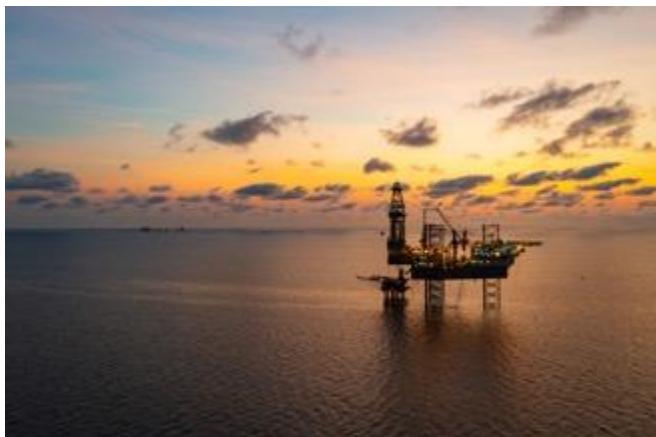
Nuveen holds most of its assets in fixed income and private markets. Together, Nuveen and Schroders will have roughly 30 percent of their assets in equities, 25 percent in bonds and other fixed income instruments, and 17 percent in private markets.

The two firms are “complementary in capability, culture, and vision,” Nuveen CEO William Huffman said in a statement.

Nuveen is a subsidiary of Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America, founded in 1918 by industrialist Andrew Carnegie as a pension program for teachers and people working in healthcare, research, and nonprofit organizations.

The merger is among the latest in an industry in which asset managers are combining to deal with rising costs and lower fees. Recently, Trian Fund Management and General Catalyst paid \$7.4 billion to take over investment manager Janus Henderson.

TWO OFFSHORE OIL DRILLERS JOIN IN \$5.8-BILLION MERGER



Transocean, which operates 27 floating oil rigs, is buying competitor Valaris for \$5.8 billion in stock.

Together, the new company will own 73 rigs and will be ready to work at competitive prices in most of the world's highly attractive offshore oil and gas targets.

Uniting the two will save a combined \$200 million a year in costs, the companies estimate.

Valaris's stockholders will receive 15.235 Transocean shares for each share of Valaris, a 32-percent bump to the stock's 13 February closing prices. The terms value the combined entity at about \$17 billion.

Transocean's shareholders will own 53 percent of the new business, Valaris's the rest.

NATWEST BUYS ASSET MANAGER FOR \$3.67 BILLION



National Westminster Bank, known as NatWest, is paying £2.7 billion, equivalent to \$3.67 billion, in cash and debt to take over asset manager Evelyn Partners, which has about £67 billion under management.

Evelyn will be blended into NatWest's wealth management division after the sale closes, NatWest said in a statement.

European banks are seeking to boost their fee-generating businesses as central banks cut their policy interest rates and lending remains sluggish in Europe's weak economy.

Subsuming Evelyn will more than double NatWest's managed wealth portfolio to £127 billion, add about 20 percent to NatWest's fee income, the bank estimates, and will save the combined entity about £100 million a year in costs.

"Although we consider this a bolt-on transaction, it would be transformational, filling [NatWest's] gap in its affluent wealth offering," Benjamin Toms, an RBC analyst, wrote in a note.

The deal values Evelyn at 15 times its 2025 earnings but closely integrating the two companies. The resulting cost synergies justify what some analysts have said is an unusually high purchase price.

Evelyn is currently owned by private equity firms Permira and Warburg Pincus.

TWO PARTNERS BUY SOUTH AMERICAN ELECTRIC UTILITY



The Canada Pension Plan and I Squared Capital, a Miami private equity firm, have teamed to buy Inkia Energy, a privately held Peruvian power producer, for \$3.4 billion.

Peru's mining industry is driving an increase in demand for electricity. To expand its capacity, Inkia is involved in a variety of solar, wind, and battery storage projects.

I Squared has been an Inkia investor since 2017 and will now grow its ownership stake to 50 percent, it said in a statement.

The deal gives the U.S. a bit more of a foothold in South America, where China has been aggressively expanding its influence.

LILLY BUYS ORNA FOR \$2.4 BILLION



Pharma giant Eli Lilly has agreed to pay \$2.4 billion in cash for Orna Therapeutics, which has developed a method enabling a person's cells to generate therapies in the body without needing to extract and process them first. The method, which is early in the development process, is among those called CAR-T treatments, which alter a patient's immune cells to spot and destroy cancer cells. Other drug companies already have CAR-T

therapies on the market, but those involve removing cells from the patient's body before treatment can begin.

THE ISRAEL WAR



ISRAEL APPROVES PROPOSAL TO KEEP STEALING WEST BANK LAND

Israel took another step toward annexing the West Bank on Sunday when its government approved a proposal that will register parts of the West Bank as “state property,” which Bezalel Smotrich, the settler finance minister, said is the continuation of “the settlement revolution to control all our lands.”

Al Jazeera reported that this is the first time since 1967 that Israel has taken such steps in the West Bank, which establishes “permanent ownership.” The Al Jazeera report noted that it is against international law for an occupying power to take land from the territory it occupies.

Countries in the region came out in opposition to the move, including Egypt, Qatar, and Jordan.

Fuad al-Majali, Jordan’s Foreign Ministry’s spokesman, called the move a “flagrant violation of international law” and said the kingdom rejected and strongly condemned

“any Israeli decisions and attempts to impose sovereignty and Israeli laws on the occupied West Bank.”

The Israelis behind the proposal say it will allow large sections of land in the West Bank to open for development in Area C of the region, which amounts to about 60 percent of the territory.

The Times of Israel reported that the budget for the proposal will be \$79 million, and the registration will begin in 2026 and extend into 2030.

The report noted that Israelis have made it impossible for Palestinians to register the land in the region since 1968, and the hope is that 15 percent will become the property of Israelis over a five-year span.

The measure stated that the issue is “consistent with the needs of the area, particularly in light of the passage of time and the uncertainty that has arisen with respect to some locations, while respecting local law to the extent possible,” the report said.

The report noted that the Palestinian presidency said the measure amounts to a “de facto annexation of occupied Palestinian territory and a declaration of the commencement of annexation plans aimed at entrenching the occupation through illegal settlement activity.”

TREND FORECAST: President Donald Trump has said that he is opposed to the annexation of the West Bank because he sees it as a serious obstacle in trying to get the Saudis to agree to join the Abraham Accords. But of course, bullshit has its own sound. Not only does he not stop the illegal annexation, but he also continues to support Israeli genocide and does not condemn them for violating the ceasefire agreement as Israel continues to kill Palestinians and bomb Gaza to ruins.

Peace Now, an anti-settlement group in Israel, told *The Times of Israel* that the move is “in complete contradiction to the will of the people and the Israeli interest.”

“We are warning President Trump – Netanyahu is deceiving you. You said you would not allow annexation, but he is annexing right under your nose,” the group said. (See [“ISRAEL TAKES NEW STEP TO ANNEX WEST BANK, AND NOBODY WILL STOP IT” 10 Feb 2026](#), [“ISRAEL APPROVES 19 NEW SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED WEST BANK” 23 Dec 2025](#), [“ISRAELI LAND STEALING MOBS RAMP UP ATTACKS IN THE WEST BANK AS INTERNATIONAL FOCUS REMAINS ON GAZA” 19 Aug](#)

2025, ["SEN. COTTON INTRODUCES BILL TO BAN USE OF THE 'WEST BANK' IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT"](#) 10 Dec 2024 and ["HUCKABEE SAYS THERE'S NO SUPPORT FOR A TWO-STATE SOLUTION AMONG EVANGELICAL LEADERS"](#) 11 Feb 2025.)

The International Court of Justice ruled in October that Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem is a "de facto annexation" enforced through "systemic discrimination, segregation, and apartheid."

The court called on Israel to mandate the "evacuation of all settlers from existing settlements and the dismantling of the parts of the wall constructed by Israel that are situated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as allowing all Palestinians displaced during the occupation to return to their original place of residence."

Smotrich said Israel should take 82 percent of the West Bank in response to countries like France and the UK announcing plans to recognize a Palestinian state. He called such a recognition a "diplomatic assault."

Mike Huckabee, the evangelical pro-genocide extremist playing the role of U.S. ambassador to Israel, said last year that Israel may be occupying the territory, but "it is an occupation of land that God gave them 3,500 years ago."

Huckabee previously told a podcast, "In Genesis, when we're told that God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel. I'm simple-minded enough to say, 'There it is. What am I gonna do? I'm gonna believe that.'"

Again, as we keep reporting, Israel's stealing Palestinian land in the West Bank is in violation of The Geneva Convention and UN Article 242. See:

- ["ISRAELI END GAME IN PALESTINE"](#) (1 Aug 2014)
- ["MIDDLE EAST MADHOUSE"](#) (16 Sep 2019)
- ["ISRAEL'S NEW 'SETTLEMENT' PLAN CONDEMNED BY U.S., EUROPE"](#) (2 Nov 2021)
- ["TOP TREND 2023, MIDDLE EAST MELTDOWN: ISRAEL RAMPS UP DEADLY RAIDS ON PALESTINIANS; GUNMAN RETALIATES IN FRONT OF SYNAGOGUE"](#) (31 Jan 2023)
- ["ISRAEL WANTS TO KEEP STEALING PALESTINIAN LAND: GAZA NEXT"](#) (28 Nov 2023)
- ["UN SAYS INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST USE 'ALL ITS INFLUENCE' TO END GAZA WAR"](#) (9 Jan 2024)

- “GENOCIDE: ISRAELI POLITICIANS SEE GAZA’S FUTURE FREE OF PALESTINIANS” (16 Jan 2024)
- “UN CHIEF CALLS GAZA DEATH TOLL ‘HEARTBREAKING’ AS NUMBER SURPASSES 25 THOUSAND” (23 Jan 2024)
- “GAZA LAND-GRAB: THOUSANDS OF ‘SETTLERS’ READY TO ‘RESETTLE’ POST-GENOCIDE” (30 Jan 2024)
- “LAND-STEAL: TOP ISRAELI MKs WANT POST-WAR SETTLEMENTS IN GAZA” (30 Jan 2024)
- “ISRAELI WEST BANK ISRAELI LAND STEALER: GAZANS WILL MOVE, JUST STARVE THEM” (6 Feb 2024)
- “ISRAELI FORCES KILLING PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK WITH ‘NEAR TOTAL IMPUNITY’” (6 Feb 2024)
- “ISRAEL SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYS RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN GAZA TO CREATE BUFFER” (6 Feb 2024)
- “U.S. TELLS ICJ: ISRAEL CAN KEEP ITS STEALING OF PALESTINIAN LAND” (27 Feb 2024)
- “ISRAEL BOMBS TO RUIN RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AND UNIVERSITY IN RAFAH” (12 Mar 2024)
- “ISRAEL STEALS 3 MILES OF LAND IN OCCUPIED WEST BANK IN VIOLATION OF GENEVA CONVENTION” (26 Mar 2024)
- “RAFAH EVACUATION NOT POSSIBLE, RED CROSS WARNS” (30 Apr 2024)
- “ISRAEL STEALING MORE LAND IN WEST BANK” (7 May 2024)
- “ISRAELI COLONIZERS RAMPAGE IN WEST BANK TOWN AS IDF LETS IT HAPPEN” (14 May 2024)
- “ISRAEL: F-CK THE ICJ, WE’LL KEEP BOMBING GAZA INTO RUINS” (28 May 2024)
- “ISRAEL LAND STEALING PACE ESCALATES” (4 Jun 2024)
- “NETANYAHU PUSHES TO KEEP STEALING PALESTINIAN LAND” (18 Jun 2024)
- “SMOTRICH SAYS NETANYAHU AGREES TO KEEP STEALING PALESTINIAN LAND” (25 Jun 2024)
- “G7 CONDEMNS ISRAEL’S DECISION TO STEAL MORE WEST BANK LAND” (16 Jul 2024)
- “ICJ: ISRAEL STEALING PALESTINIAN LAND ‘UNLAWFUL’ AND CONSTITUTES APARTHEID” (23 Jul 2024)
- “ISRAEL STEALS MORE PALESTINIAN LAND, THIS TIME AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE” (30 Jul 2024)
- “ISRAEL STEALING MORE LAND: NETANYAHU SAYS WEST BANK IS ISRAEL’S HOMELAND” (13 Aug 2024)

- “ISRAELI ‘SETTLER’ ATTACK SO BARBARIC, EVEN NETANYAHU CRITICIZES” (20 Aug 2024)
- “NETANYAHU TURNS WEST BANK INTO WARZONE AS HE WANTS TO WIPE OUT PALESTINIANS AND STEAL MORE LAND” (10 Sep 2024)
- “ISRAEL’S SMOTRICH: WE WILL KEEP STEALING PALESTINIAN LAND TO MAKE A ‘GREATER ISRAEL’” (29 Oct 2024)
- “ISRAEL TO ANNEX THE WEST BANK” (26 Nov 2024)
- “ISRAEL STEALS MORE LAND IN GAZA CALLING IT ‘MILITARY ZONES” (10 Dec 2024)
- “ISRAEL STEALING MORE LAND IN SYRIA” (21 Jan 2025)
- “ISRAEL STEALING MORE LAND IN SYRIA, FEAR GRIPS SOUTHERN TOWNS” (11 Mar 2025)
- “ISRAELI SETTLERS ATTACK WEST BANK TOWN IN LATEST ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE RESIDENTS” (18 Mar 2025)
- “UN: ISRAEL CONTINUES TO STEAL PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES AT HIGH RATE” (25 Mar 2025)
- “ISRAEL INTENSIFIES ITS EFFORT TO TURN THE WEST BANK INTO GAZA” (6 May 2025)
- “ANOTHER GAZA: ISRAEL WRECKS THE WEST BANK IN RELENTLESS OFFENSIVE” (13 May 2025)
- “TRUMP WANTS TO TURN GAZA INTO A ‘FREEDOM ZONE’ ONCE ISRAEL’S DONE WITH ITS GENOCIDE” (20 May 2025)
- “GAZA IS OURS’: THOUSANDS OF ISRAELIS TORMENT PALESTINIANS ON JERUSALEM DAY” (27 May 2025)
- “ISRAEL KEEPS STEALING MORE LAND IN NEW WEST BANK” (3 Jun 2025)
- “ISRAELI LAND STEALING MOBS RAMP UP ATTACKS IN THE WEST BANK AS INTERNATIONAL FOCUS REMAINS ON GAZA” (19 Aug 2025)
- “ISRAEL RAMPS UP LAND STEALING IN WEST BANK, U.S. APPROVES” (26 Aug 2025)
- “ISRAEL STEALING MORE PALESTINIAN LAND. BEGINS DIVIDING GAZA IN HALF” (4 Nov 2025)
- “‘YELLOW LINE’ IN GAZA = ISRAEL STEALING MORE PALESTINIAN LAND” (16 Dec 2025)

ISRAEL FIRST: TRUMP'S APPROVAL SINKS IN THE U.S., SURGES IN ISRAEL



A newly released poll from the Jewish People Policy Institute found that President Donald Trump has a 73 percent approval rating in Israel – including a 92 percent favorability from Israelis considered to lean to the “right” politically.

That number represents a significant increase compared to Trump’s rating in the U.S.

The New York Times investigated recent surveys that found just 41 percent of Americans approve of Trump’s job performance since taking office, compared to 56 percent who said they do not approve.

Trump has never been bashful about his support for Israel and, during the 2024 presidential campaign, presented himself as a more loyal ally for Israel than even the self-proclaimed “Zionist” Joe Biden. Trump told Biden during their only debate that he has “become like a Palestinian” – a “weak one.”

During the campaign, Trump benefited from the support of Israeli “settlers” (land-stealers).

Israel Ganz, the chairman of the main Yesha Settler Council, told Reuters in October: “If Trump takes the election, there will be no sanctions. If Trump loses the election, we will, in the state of Israel, have a problem with the sanctions that the government over here has to deal with.” (See [**“ISRAELI LAND STEALERS WANT TRUMP TO WIN ELECTION” 5 Nov 2024.**](#))

(One of Trump’s first moves as president was to remove sanctions that were put in place by the Biden administration on Israel’s most violent settlers. He also saw to it that anti-genocide protests on college campuses were crushed to help Israel salvage its image in the U.S.) (See [**“TRUMP ENDS BIDEN SANCTIONS ON VIOLENT WEST BANK ISRAELI SETTLERS AS THEY RAMP UP MORE WAR” 21 Jan 2025**](#), [**“TRUMP NOW WANTS HARVARD TO PAY \\$1 BILLION OVER HANDLING OF ‘ANTISEMITISM’ PROTESTS” 10 Feb 2026.**](#))

In December, Miriam Adelson, the widowed wife of pro-Israel billionaire Sheldon Adelson and top pro-Israel hawk, called on Trump to run for a third term that she said she would happily fund. (See [“TRUMP’S PRO-ISRAEL MEGADONOR MIRIAM ADELSON PUSHES FOR THIRD TERM, WILL PICK UP THE CHECK” 23 Dec 2025.](#))

Trump told the press conference on Friday – days after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – that “Bibi” (Netanyahu’s nickname) is a “great prime minister during war, and I was the best friend Israel, I think, has ever had.”

“People say more than any president they ever had,” he said. “And I will continue to be,” he said.

Trump has been a major supporter of Netanyahu and lashed out at Israeli President Isaac Herzog for refusing to pardon the prime minister over his corruption charges that could put him in prison for the rest of his life. (See [“FIVE-TIME DRAFT DODGER TRUMP CALLS NETANYAHU A ‘WAR HERO,’ AND SAYS, ‘I GUESS I AM, TOO” 26 Aug 2025, and “TRUMP CALLS ON ISRAEL TO DROP CORRUPTION CHARGES AGAINST ‘WARRIOR’ NETANYAHU” 1 Jul 2025.](#))

“You have a president who refuses to give him a pardon,” Trump said. “He should be ashamed of himself. The president’s got the power to give pardons. He doesn’t want to do it, because I guess he loses his power. I think the people of Israel should really shame him. He is disgraceful for not giving it.”

TRENDPOST: Responsible Statecraft noted that the main topic on the menu for Trump when it comes to Israel is whether he should bomb Iran again, but, judging by recent polls in the U.S., Americans are not supportive of another military intervention in the Middle East.

The report, citing a SSRS/University of Maryland poll, found that just 21 percent of American adults agree that the U.S. should attack, compared to 49 percent who said they are opposed, and 30 percent who answered, “I don’t know.”

The poll found that 40 percent of Republicans support a military strike while 25 percent oppose.

The Jerusalem Post noted how Israel’s Likud supports Trump overwhelmingly, but just 34 percent of Israelis who describe themselves as left leaning say they support the president.

Natalie Morris, the “Redacted” co-host, posted on X: “President Trump’s approval rating is nearing record lows, so Gallup has decided to end Presidential approval polls. Meanwhile, in Israel, his approval is sky high. What are we doing here guys? Are we entering an era where the gatekeepers don’t have to care about public opinion?”

NETANYAHU MEETS WITH TRUMP IN DC TO TALK ABOUT WAR WITH IRAN



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Washington for the seventh time since President Donald Trump took office to discuss a possible war with Iran, which resulted in the U.S. sending a second carrier group into the region as a show of force if a war breaks out.

The New York Times, citing four unnamed officials, reported that sailors on the ship were informed on Thursday about the decision, just

as Netanyahu left the U.S.

Netanyahu and Trump met for three hours in a closed-door meeting. After the meeting, Trump posted on Truth Social that there was nothing “definitive” reached other than that he “insisted that negotiations with Iran continue to see whether or not a deal can be consummated.”

He warned that if there is no deal, “we will just have to see what the outcome will be. Last time Iran decided that they were better off not making a deal, and they were hit with Midnight Hammer – That did not work well for them.”

WSWS noted that the military buildup in the region is not limited to naval forces.

The report, citing tracking data, also “indicates a massive influx of Globemaster C-17 U.S. military cargo planes arriving at U.S. military bases across the region, bearing no doubt all manner of weapon systems, missiles, and other munitions.”

Vice President JD Vance also appeared ready for war against Iran when he told reporters that the White House benefits from having a lot of options if a war did break out with Iran, “because we have the most powerful military in the world.”

TRENDPOST: It is worth noting to *Trends Journal* subscribers that Gerald Celente often reminds followers that the U.S. has been unable to win a war definitively since World War II and benefited a great deal from the Russian military's sacrifices.

WSWS's report called Trump a "pathological liar" when he tries to present himself as an honest broker interested in a peaceful resolution with Iran. (See "[TRUMP SAYS ADMINISTRATION AND IRAN IN SERIOUS TALKS TO COME UP WITH NUKE DEAL](#)" 3 Feb 2026, "[TRUMP HAD SAID IRAN'S NUCLEAR FACILITIES WERE 'OBLITERATED' AND NOW HE WANTS TO OBLITERATE THE OBLITERATED](#)" 3 Feb 2026, "[IRAN REFUSES TO TALK TO TRUMP WITH A GUN TO THE HEAD](#)" 3 Feb 2026, and "[TRUMP WARNS IRAN THAT U.S. WOULD BLOW UP COUNTRY IF HE'S ASSASSINATED](#)" 27 Jan 2026.)

"What a monstrous fraud! The talks are a mafia-style 'shakedown,' with Tehran being given the choice between capitulation and war," the article read. The article accused Trump of being motivated by "predatory imperialist aims" that are not just aggressive but could lead to a "catastrophic war."

The report noted that Trump is very unpredictable, and a serious response from Iran could result in the U.S. employing tactical nuclear weapons to bring the country to heel.

Iran has been clear that its peaceful nuclear program, ballistic missile program, and support for regional allies are not topics that are on the table. The places where Trump can score a diplomatic victory are in its nuclear program.

The WSWS Report noted that Trump's demands are outrageous and in opposition to Iran's "sovereign rights" as a country to support allies and maintain a military. The report accurately said that if Iran gave in to Washington's demands, it would be rendered defenseless "and powerless in the face of U.S. and Israeli aggression and reduce it effectively to the status of a semi-colony."

Mohammad Marandi, the professor from the University of Tehran, [told The Trends Journal](#) last week that Trump may be able to pull off a nuke deal, but he would have to concede on more demands than the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) because he would have to take into account recent nuclear developments inside the country.

WSWS noted that Trump is lagging in polls, so a strike on Iran, which the Western media has presented as a mortal enemy for decades, could help distract the public from the crises in the U.S. The report noted that war is a "well-trodden path for

governments and ruling classes facing intractable problems and mounting social opposition.”

FRANCE WANTS ALBANESE TO LOSE JOB OVER STATEMENT ABOUT ISRAEL BEING HUMANITY'S 'COMMON ENEMY' THAT SHE NEVER SAID



Francesca Albanese in Bogotá, Colombia, July 2025

Jean Noël Barrot, the French foreign minister, said last week that Paris will call for the resignation of Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur, over a comment that she never said.

Haaretz, cited a report in *Le Monde*, the French paper, that said Albanese addressed an Al Jazeera Forum in Doha, and told the audience, “The fact that instead of stopping Israel, most of the world has

armed it, given Israel political excuses, political shelter and economic and financial support.”

She was quoted by the outlet as saying, “We who do not control large amounts of financial capital, algorithms, and weapons now see that we, as humanity, have a common enemy.”

There was one problem: she never made the comment.

Albanese quickly rejected the report and called on someone to find the comments from a recording of the event. She went so far as to post the video on her X account and posted, “the common enemy of humanity is THE SYSTEM that has enabled the genocide in Palestine.”

She spoke to France 24 and called out the “completely false accusations” leveled against her.

“I have never, ever, ever said ‘Israel is the common enemy of humanity’,” she told the outlet.

France 24 issued what read like a correction, and said, “the transcript of her speech shows, she never made that statement.”

The report continued: “France is nevertheless calling for Albanese's resignation, citing “all her remarks” in recent years.”

Barrot claimed that her explanation was not good enough and said she had a “long list of scandalous” positions on the matter, including “justifying” the Hamas attack in 2023 and “comparing Israel to the Third Reich,” according to The Times of Israel.

Antonio Tajani, the vice president of the Council of Ministers of Italy, also called for Albanese to be removed from her position.

“Her behaviors, statements, and initiatives are not appropriate for the position she holds within a body of peace and guarantee, such as the United Nations,” he said.

Albanese has said the reason that Israel wanted to conquer Gaza City is because it is in the process of “trying to forcibly evacuate Palestinians. Why? This is the last piece of Gaza that needs to be rendered unlivable before advancing the ethnic cleansing of that piece of land.”

She has even called out Israel for regularly violating the ceasefire, and, in December, responded to the IDF killing another 28 Palestinians by posting: “The never ending suffering of the Palestinians and the sinister politicking around it, are the shame of our times.”

France, Germany, U.S., and Italy have all called for her resignation.

Johann Wadephul, Germany's foreign minister, said Albanese called her “untenable in her position,” and noted that she “has made numerous inappropriate remarks in the past,” *Algemeiner* reported.

She posted in response to calls for her to lose her job: “Three European governments accuse me based on statements I never made with a virulence and conviction that they have NEVER used against those who have slaughtered 20,000+ children in 858 days.”

TRENDPOST: *It is clear for everyone to see that we live in a world where Israel and the U.S. can kill whoever they want, and nobody bats an eye. The people who call out*

the genocide taking place today in Gaza face far more criticism than the IDF, which is carrying out the horrific attacks on civilians. (See “[BEYOND THEIR YELLOW-LINE SHAM, ISRAEL KEEPS STEALING MORE LAND IN GAZA](#)” 20 Jan 2026, “[ISRAEL DEMOLISHES 2,500 BUILDINGS INSIDE GAZA SINCE START OF BULLSHIT CEASEFIRE](#)” 20 Jan 2026, and “[NETANYAHU CELEBRATES: ISRAEL WILL CONTROL REGION FROM THE ‘RIVER TO THE SEA’](#)” 3 Feb 2026.)

Calls for Albanese’s removal is not a new position for the U.S. and raises the question about how much the pro-Zionist Trump administration is pressuring these countries to join the witch hunt.

Albanese is no longer allowed in Israel after she accurately said, “The victims of 7/10 were not killed because of their Judaism, but in response to Israel’s oppression.”

Her comment was in response to France deciding to hold a ceremony honoring those killed in the Hamas attack.

In 2022, Albanese angered Israelis when she told the General Assembly that the Israeli military was guilty of pursuing the ‘de-Palestinianization’ of the occupied territory.

Her report stated that Israeli occupation violates Palestinian territorial sovereignty by “seizing, annexing, fragmenting, and transferring its civilian population to the occupied territory.”

Israel’s then-Foreign Minister Israel Katz responded to Albanese’s comments: “The era of Jews being silent is over,” the TOI reported.

“Preventing her from entering Israel might remind her of the real reason why Hamas slaughtered babies, women and adults,” he said.

Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied by Israel since 1967, continued, “The ‘greatest anti-Semitic massacre of our century’? No, Mr. Emmanuel Macron. The victims of 7/10 were not killed because of their Judaism, but in response to Israel’s oppression. France & the international community did nothing to prevent it. My respects to the victims.”

That statement was just too much for Washington to bear.

Matt Miller, the U.S. State Department spokesman during the Biden administration, faced calls to resign after Albanese presented a report called “Anatomy of a Genocide.”

Miller brushed off Albanese’s comments, like he does any criticism of Israel, and said he, “can’t help but note a history of antisemitic comments that she has made that have been reported.”

In the United States and most of Europe criticism of Israeli genocide and West Bank land stealing is not only banned, but those who oppose are punished.

WHAT CEASEFIRE? ISRAEL KILLS ANOTHER FOUR IN EASTERN LEBANON



The IDF on Sunday carried out new drone strikes on Lebanon, despite a bullshit ceasefire, killing at least four people in the eastern part of the country, near the Syrian border.

Middle East Eye reported that the attack targeted a car in the Masnaa crossing in the Bekaa Valley and four bodies were recovered from the vehicle. The IDF claimed the targets

included members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad or Hamas, *Ynet* reported.

The attack came after the IDF said it carried out new strikes across southern Lebanon that targeted what it described as Hezbollah weapons depots.

The AFP, citing Lebanon’s health ministry, reported that Israel killed more than 370 people since the so-called ceasefire was announced in November 2024.

The ceasefire was based on UN Security Council resolution 1701, which called on Hezbollah fighters to pull out of southern Lebanon and beyond the Litani River. Israeli forces would have to withdraw from Lebanon under the agreement. Both sides accused the other of failing to honor the deal.

Israel has insisted that its troops remain in five positions across southern Lebanon. The IDF claimed that the Lebanese Army has been slow to remove Hezbollah, but

Beirut said it has been slowed because of the IDF presence in the region. (See [“VIOLATING CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT, ISRAEL KEEPS BOMBING LEBANON” 9 Dec 2025](#), [“ISRAEL HAS LAUNCHED MORE STRIKES ON LEBANON” 2 Dec 2025](#), [“ISRAEL USED WIDELY BANNED CLUSTER MUNITIONS IN ATTACKS ON SOUTHERN LEBANON” 25 Nov 2025](#) and [“BOMBS AWAY OVER LEBANON: ISRAEL KEEPS VIOLATING CEASEFIRE DEAL” 11 Nov 2025](#).)

Hezbollah says it no longer has a presence south of the Litani, which was one of the key points of the ceasefire deal. Hezbollah said it will not disarm until Israel stops its violations.

TRENDPOST: *The Epstein files have helped show who really runs the show.*

CBS News noted on Sunday that Thomas Barrack, President Donald Trump’s ambassador to Turkey and special envoy to Syria, kept close ties with the pedophile, even after Epstein was convicted of soliciting a minor in 2008.

The report said Epstein pushed “and facilitated” introductions between “Barrack and individuals including Palantir CEO Peter Thiel, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Russia’s UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin.”

Pro-Israel Barrack has called Lebanon a “failed state” last November.

“There’s no central bank,” he said. “The banking system is bust. There’s no electricity, people rely on private generators. For water and education, you need private providers. So, what’s the state? The state is Hezbollah.”

Barrack drew swift criticism in August after he arrogantly told a group of journalists in Beirut not to become “animalistic” and to keep the press conference civilized.

Barrack’s comment was quickly criticized on social media as an example of Western hubris when dealing with the Middle East. Barrack appeared to sound like Israeli leadership, who call Palestinians in Gaza “human animals” and “sub-humans.”

Kevork Almassian, the host of Syriana Analysis, posted on X: “The arrogance of U.S. officials in Lebanon is beyond humiliating. Tom Barrack went as far as warning Lebanese journalists not to be ‘animalistic’ and urged them to ‘civilize,’ claiming this is the problem with the region. This is not diplomacy. It’s colonial condescension.”

UK COURT OVERTURNS BAN ON PALESTINE ACTION



The High Court in London ruled last week that the country's ban on the activist group Palestine Action was unlawful and played a significant role in interfering with "the right to freedom of speech and the right to freedom of assembly" for its members.

Huda Ammori, the group's co-founder, said the court's decision was a "monumental victory," according to *Electronic Intifada*. She

said the ban's legacy will be one of the "most extreme attacks on free speech in recent British history."

The group had been labeled as a terrorist organization under the Terrorism Act 2000.

The law is wide-ranging and means just supporting the group could end up with a prison sentence of up to 14 years. Supporting the group is seen in the eyes of the British government as the same as backing Hamas, ISIS, and Al Qaeda, according to the Associated Press.

Raza Husain, a lawyer for one of the co-founders of the group, said the decision to identify the group as a terror organization is "an ill-considered, discriminatory, authoritarian abuse of statutory power."

The group said its members took part in vandalism that resulted in \$9.5 million worth of damage during a 20 June 2025 incident that damaged two Voyager planes. The group said its mission is to get London to end its support of the genocide in Gaza. The planes that are stationed at RAF Brize Norton frequently travel to the Middle East.

The High Court's panel called the ban on the group a breach of the fundamental right to free speech, enshrined under the Human Rights Act of 1998.

The New York Times called the ruling a setback for Keir Starmer, the British prime minister, who has been criticized for allowing the ban to continue, even as Israel continues to kill Palestinians inside Gaza, despite the so-called ceasefire. The paper said the ban will continue while the government gets a chance to present new legal

arguments, but London's police said they will stop making arrests for supporting the group in the interim. The paper said the government promised to appeal the ruling.

The paper reported that at least 2,000 people have been arrested since the ban took effect in July, and some of these individuals were nabbed for wearing shirts that read, "I oppose genocide."

The court said in the ruling, "The nature and scale of Palestine Action's activities falling within the definition of terrorism, had not yet reached a level, scale, and persistence to warrant proscription."

TRENDPOST: *Britian has been one of the countries that have led the way in making sure there is no criticism of Israel as it carries out U.S.-backed atrocities in Gaza. (See "[LONDON ARRESTS 890 DURING RALLY TO SUPPORT PALESTINE ACTION](#)" 9 Sep 2025, "[DOZENS OF PEACEFUL PROTESTERS ARRESTED IN LONDON OVER SUPPORT OF PRO-PALESTINE GROUP](#)" 25 Nov 2025, "[LONDON ARRESTS 890 DURING RALLY TO SUPPORT PALESTINE ACTION](#)" 9 Sep 2025 and "[LONDON ARRESTS 522 FOR SUPPORTING A PRO-PALESTINE GROUP](#)" 12 Aug 2025.)*

TREND FORECAST: *Western governments will continue to do all they can to whitewash the Israel genocide in Gaza and one of the ways will be to normalize ceasefire violations by Israel in Gaza and ban any mention of the horrors committed inside Gaza.*

GAZA DEATH TOLL



The death toll in Israel's genocidal war in Gaza reached 72,063, with more than 171,726 Palestinians injured. That number includes 603 people killed since the so-called ceasefire from October 2025.

There are about 400 trucks entering the enclave per day, but there continue to be delays at border crossings. The UN said

about half of these shipments have been held up and 1,500 metric tons of food have gone bad due to these delays.

The UN also said it has begun trying to remove waste from the enclave due to the collapsed sewage system. UN workers are trying to remove 300,000 cubic meters of human waste from Gaza City alone.

The Times of Israel reported that Hamas has called on President Donald Trump to get Israel to stop violating the ceasefire and "compel the Israeli occupation to stop its violations in Gaza, as the war of genocide against the Strip is still ongoing."

WEDNESDAY: Israel killed another five Palestinians and injured at least 20 people within the last 24 hours, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health.

The ministry said Israel killed at least 591 people since the ceasefire was announced in October.

Reuters reported that two people were killed in Deir al-Balah while they were riding on an electric bike, and an Israel drone also killed a woman in the city. The Reuters report noted that the IDF shot one man to death in Khan Younis, and another man in Jabalia, which is in the northern region of the territory.

The UN announced that the enclave "continues to face a severe shortage of drinking and domestic water."

THURSDAY: Israel killed another five people in Gaza and injured at least four, according to the health ministry.

A man was shot dead outside Gaza City, and another was killed by the IDF in the northern part of the enclave.

UNRWA released a report that said Israel either damaged or destroyed 90 percent of school buildings across Gaza. The Daily Sabah reported that the few school buildings that remain upright have been used as shelters for individuals and families who have been displaced.

FRIDAY: Israel killed another 12 people in attacks across Gaza in direct violation of the October ceasefire.

ReliefWeb.int reported that the enclave continues to be hit by rain, which jeopardizes about 40 percent of the population, which has been displaced and are considered in a flood zone. The report also noted that the IDF still occupies about 50 percent of Gaza, which has been divided by the “Yellow Line.”

Nickolay Mladenov, who serves as high representative for Gaza for Trump’s Board of Peace, said Israel’s ceasefire violations have become a major obstacle to peace.

“We need to make sure that what is happening now with the violations of the ceasefire stops,” Mladenov told the Munich Security Conference, according to Halifax City News. “We’re only embarrassing the committee and ultimately making it ineffective.”

SATURDAY: Israel killed another two Palestinians and at least 15 people were injured, according to the health ministry.

SUNDAY: Israel killed at least 12 people in attacks across Gaza, including five people who were killed in an airstrike that targeted a tent camp in Jabaliya, according to The Guardian.

The report said another five were killed in strikes in Khan Younis.

“Israel doesn’t understand ceasefires or truces,” Osama Abu Askar, the uncle of one of the victims in the Jabaliya attack, told the paper. “We’ve been living under a truce for months and they’ve still targeted us. Israel operates on this principle – saying one thing and doing another.”

Hazem Qassem, a spokesperson for Hamas, told Al Jazeera that the Israeli attack was a “new massacre” and a “criminal escalation.”

He said the strikes were a “clear attempt to impose a bloody reality on the ground and send a message that all efforts and bodies concerned with establishing calm in Gaza are meaningless, and that the occupation is continuing its aggression despite all parties speaking of the necessity of adhering to the ceasefire agreement.”

MONDAY: At least two Palestinians were killed in the last 24 hours, according to the enclave’s health ministry.

Trump announced in a social media post that his Board of Peace has raised \$5 billion that will go towards rebuilding the enclave.

“The Board of Peace will prove to be the most consequential International Body in History, and it is my honor to serve as its chairman,” he posted.

The Associated Press reported that Gaza has been destroyed, and it will require about \$70 billion for its reconstruction.

TUESDAY: Another two Palestinians were killed and another 11 were injured in the last 24 hours.

FEATURED TRENDS GUEST ARTICLES



AN ODE TO RENEE NICOLE GOOD AND ALEX PRETTI - THE REAL FACTS by *Michael J. Talmo*

On January 7, 2026, Renee Nicole Good was killed by ICE Agent Jonathan Ross, who shot her [four times](#) while she was trying to drive away. This happened in broad daylight a few blocks from her home in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was witnessed by multiple bystanders, and was captured on video from different angles. On January 24, just 17 days later, 37-year-old intensive care nurse Alex Pretti was shot multiple times by ICE agents also in Minneapolis, also in broad daylight, and also in front of multiple witnesses. In my opinion, these weren't just cold-blooded murders—they were executions.

In the case of Renee Nicole Good, the Department of Homeland Security's [official policy](#) clearly states:

"Deadly force shall not be used solely to prevent the escape of a fleeing subject...DHS LEOs are prohibited from discharging firearms at the operator of a moving vehicle...the LEO must take into consideration the hazards that may be posed to law enforcement and innocent bystanders by an out-of-control conveyance."

In the case of both Renee Good and Alex Petti, DHS policy further states:

“Discharging a firearm against a person constitutes the use of deadly force and shall be done only with the intent of preventing or stopping the threatening behavior that justifies the use of deadly force.”

In other words, the only time deadly force is justified is if the life of a civilian or an LEO (law enforcement officer) is in danger, which wasn’t the case with Renee Good nor Alex Petti. Also take note that the date of this Homeland Security document is September 7, 2018. And guess who was president of the United States in 2018? Donald Trump!

As [reported](#) by CNN, Renee Good never attempted to use her vehicle to run over ICE agent Jonathan Ross, who violated ICE policy by placing himself in front of her vehicle. She obviously turned her wheels to the right to go around him. And Ross clearly then moved to the side of Good’s vehicle as he continued to fire more shots. Good’s SUV, now driverless, went a short distance before ramming into another car. And the Trump Administration’s claims that Ross was run over by Good and that he even suffered internal injuries were, in my opinion, complete [hogwash](#). Ross was never knocked down and was filmed and [photographed](#) walking away perfectly fine. The most Good’s vehicle could have done was just graze him because he put himself in front of the vehicle, which he never needed to do and wasn’t supposed to do in the first place.

As a senior Department of Homeland Security official [explained](#) to NBC News, “ICE officers are trained to never approach a vehicle from the front.”

As for Alex Petti, CBS News reported [here](#) and [here](#) that while it is true that he was carrying a handgun, which he was legally allowed to carry because he had a permit, it was holstered the whole time. He never threatened ICE agents with it. All Petti was holding in his hand was a cell phone recording what was happening. ICE goons started shoving two women around for no reason, Petti tried to help one of them up, and they sprayed him with a chemical irritant, then ganged up on him, wrestled him to the ground, started beating him, took his holstered gun, and while he was helpless on his hands and knees, began shooting him multiple times until he was dead.

Naturally, Trump and his minions, pathological liars that they are, began telling outlandish whoppers to justify the shootings, as reported [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). They have labeled peaceful protesters against ICE and Trump’s administration agitators and “domestic terrorists.” And talk about hypocrisy, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem denounced Alex Petti for carrying a gun, yet conveniently ignored how Trump pardoned [over 430](#) violent protesters armed with guns at the January 6, 2021 attempted coup to keep him in power. Let’s also not forget that Trump wants to attack Iran to protect the

protesters against that horrible regime, yet condones violence against protesters who oppose his oppressive regime.

*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**.*



THIS IS A MIND-WAR NOW. by *Gregory Mannarino*

WE The People Of America are being forced to live under an undeclared financial + economic war aimed directly at us.

Unprecedented in scope... a weapon of mass destruction for US industry, small business, the economy, and the public.

It's also an information and propaganda war... the current administrations strategy against We the People is as follows.... deny, attack, shift blame, distract, suppress, flood with noise. (Devilism).

KEY POINT. The battlespace has expanded... *not just tanks and planes... currency purchasing power destruction, artificial rate suppression, and endless debt expansion are the new weapons.*

MAJOR KEY POINT. The battlefield is bigger than most realize, and it has engulfed America on the ground, and now... into the minds of men.

Result?

Gray-zone mobilization... *narrative conditioning*.

MAJOR KEY POINT. Information stops being treated like a public good, and starts being treated like a weaponized resource... rationed, shaped, delayed, and packaged.

Three “things” rising together.

1. **Noise.** Distractions, outrage loops, personality theater, “breaking” everything, all the time.
2. **Silence.** Missing timelines. Missing details. Missing second-order consequences.
3. **And the big one...** what’s not covered, *what questions are never asked*.

These 3 deceptions above produces the same outcome...

Noise keeps you reacting.

Silence keeps you blind.

Omission keeps you boxed.

*So the system says “look here,” so you never look there. (**Attention capture**).*

MAJOR KEY POINT. Propaganda...

1. *What gets repeated enough becomes truth...*
2. *and what gets omitted gets lost in lies.*

The result is a kind of disassociation of the mind... a kind of MASS hypnosis.

This Is Now A Mind-War.

It’s engineered division, poisoned narratives, manufactured hate, and endless fear.

FINAL THOUGHT. If this *Devilism* is allowed to propagate... it will push man further against his brother *until the soul of mankind is emptied.*

*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**.*



HAS TRUMP LOST CONTROL TO NETANYAHU? *By Paul Craig Roberts*

In our discussion on Monday, Nima and I examine the problematic situation in which Netanyahu has placed US President Donald Trump.

Trump's threats to Iran are just an example of his method of negotiation by making threats to encourage a deal after which the threats are withdrawn. I do not think that Trump intended to attack Iran. All he wanted was Iran's agreement not to make nuclear weapons and to accept routine inspections of their nuclear facilities. But by making military threats, Trump crawled out on a limb, and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu cut the limb off behind Trump by injecting into the negotiations the additional demand that Iran give up its arsenal of missiles and agree to stop producing missiles. This demand obviously is unacceptable to Iranians as it would leave them unable to defend themselves against Israel's attacks.

As Netanyahu's intervention seems to have prevented an agreement, will Trump now have to go through with his threats and attack Iran, or instead, will Trump stand up to Netanyahu and denounce him for blocking the nuclear agreement? Who is the

strongest? The president of the United States or the Israel Lobby headed by the Prime Minister of Israel?

This is the question.

Little doubt, the Zionists in the Trump administration, the neoconservatives, and the American armaments manufacturers are pleased that Netanyahu has outfoxed President Trump by positioning him such that Trump now has to back down from his threats or go ahead with the attack. An American president should never have placed himself in a position where he loses control over the situation.

This is a dangerous situation. Perhaps the Iranians can find a way to save face for Trump. Perhaps those silent elements in the US military, who understand the seriousness of the situation, can be brought out of their silence by the very seriousness of the situation.

Why is the situation serious? The Iranians say, and I believe them, that they can effectively attack, and will do so, US aircraft carriers and bases in the region as well as devastate Israel. What happens to American prestige if Iran destroys US aircraft carriers and US military bases? Can Washington not go to the rescue of Israel suffering from Iranian missile attack? What can Washington do at this point other than to use nukes?

What would be the effect on Russia and on the Chinese New Silk Road of nuclear weapons going off in the vicinity? Would these two powerful military countries issue ultimatums to Washington not to use nuclear weapons or would they abandon their hopes for economic integration through BRICS and the New Silk Road and submit to American hegemony?

The question boils down to how capable American, Iranian, Russian and Chinese leaders are in recognizing reality. So far, none have shown capability at recognizing reality. When Iran had the strategic advantage, it backed off, leaving itself in its currently exposed position. The Russians, Chinese and Iranians never halted the escalation toward war by forming a mutual defense agreement that would have ended the problem before it could begin. Now that Netanyahu has brought the problem close to the wire, neither Russia nor China have done anything to deter an attack on Iran.

It would be simple to do so. Russian S-500 air defense systems manned by Russian troops could be set up in Iran. Squadrons of the latest Russian jet fighters could be stationed in Iran along with Chinese squadrons. Russian submarines could be deployed to the area. Russia could shut down Ukraine, something that should have been done four years ago, signaling Russia's attention to a much more serious conflict. These measures would prevent war, not cause war. War will result from their absence.

A show of force would help those in the American military, who realize that the risks to the US and humanity are far greater than Israel warrants, to help American skeptics of Israel's influence over US policy to find their voice and to speak out. But Russia and China have taken no actions that would provide evidence for those American military officers who see the danger of the situation to break ranks with the totally unrealistic consensus.

It is an extraordinary thing that the advent of nuclear weapons has been accompanied with a growing inability of western leaders to understand reality and the unintended consequences of their actions and inactions.

*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**.*



LIBERTY WITHOUT STRINGS by *Judge Andrew P. Napolitano*

“Freedom has more often been lost in small steps by progressive incrementalism, than it has been by catastrophic upheavals such as violence or war.” -- James Madison (1751-1836)

Last week, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which covers Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, ruled that the problem of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. is so acute and vast and the Fourth Amendment so burdensome and time-consuming that it should cut some constitutional corners. The federal judiciary is supposed to be in the business of protecting the rights of individuals from infringement by Congress or the president or the states. In this case, the court saw fit to allow Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, to trample the sacred American right to be left alone.

How sacred? Well, James Madison, who was largely responsible for crafting the new Constitution and stewarding it through the states, realized a few years later -- after Congress created the First National Bank -- that the government would need some restraints. The restraints were cataloged in the Bill of Rights. The Fourth Amendment, which protects privacy, has some of the most precise Madisonian language in the Constitution in order to enshrine privacy and protect it from the government.

To prevent the new government from doing what British soldiers and agents had done to the colonists, the Fourth Amendment prohibits general warrants which had authorized the bearer to search wherever he wished and seize whatever he found. The amendment recognizes that our rights come from our humanity -- not from the government -- and they are inalienable unless and until we give them up by violating someone else's natural rights.

This concept of rights as integral to humanity was articulated by Aristotle, refined by Augustine, codified by Aquinas, modernized by John Locke, embraced by the Continental Congress and Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and made part of the Constitution in the Ninth Amendment by Madison and the ratifiers.

The Fourth Amendment requires that if the government wants to search or seize any "persons, houses, papers, (or) effects," it needs to be investigating a crime and it must have probable cause to believe that in those papers, houses or effects or on those persons is evidence of criminal behavior.

Then the government must present its probable cause to a judge under oath. If the judge agrees that the presentation does constitute probable cause of crime, the judge can sign either a search or an arrest warrant; and the warrant must particularly describe the places to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

That language and procedure were not crafted to strike a balance between governmental needs and personal privacy, rather they were crafted to recognize the primacy of the individual over the state because of the inalienability of every person's natural rights. Hence the presumption of innocence, no matter the quantity or gravity of the evidence of guilt.

All of this history, plain meaning of the text and Aristotelian value judgments was cast aside when the Fifth Circuit permitted one ICE agent to authorize another to arrest persons unlawfully in the U.S. -- the largest mass arrests in American history -- even those here for decades, even those who are the parents and grandparents of U.S. citizens, even those whose unlawful presence is not criminal, even those with valid work permits; and to do so without the presentation of probable cause to a judge and the acquisition of a judicial warrant; all without a hearing and without the opportunity for bail.

But even this decision, as unconstitutional as it is, is limited to the permissive use of administrative warrants -- documents in which one ICE agent authorizes another to

engage in collective arrests of noncitizens. Last week, we learned that ICE has been issuing administrative warrants to American telecom and internet service providers seeking records of the communications of Americans who have publicly railed against ICE and who have followed its agents and videotaped them on public streets.

The recipients of these warrants should ignore or challenge them. It is none of the government's business what folks have said about ICE and who videotaped ICE agents in public. These expressive rights -- talking, writing, assembling, photographing -- are absolutely protected by the First Amendment because free expression is an inalienable natural right integral to our humanity. It is also integral to our democracy.

When the feds conscript private entities to do for them indirectly what the Constitution prohibits them from doing directly, they are engaging in chilling. Chilling is government behavior that gives folks fear or pause before exercising a natural right. Chilling is as unconstitutional as silencing.

ICE has not sought judicial warrants for the telephonic and social media history of its critics because no judge would sign such a warrant, as there is no evidence of any criminal behavior, much less at the level of probable cause. What carrot or stick induced the telecom and internet behemoths to give ICE agents what one of them has authorized another to demand?

This is Madison's progressive incrementalism writ large. This is the transformation of a simple administrative inquiry about the civil wrongs of immigrants -- you weren't born here, do you have papers? -- into a bypass of fundamental constitutional protections for all persons.

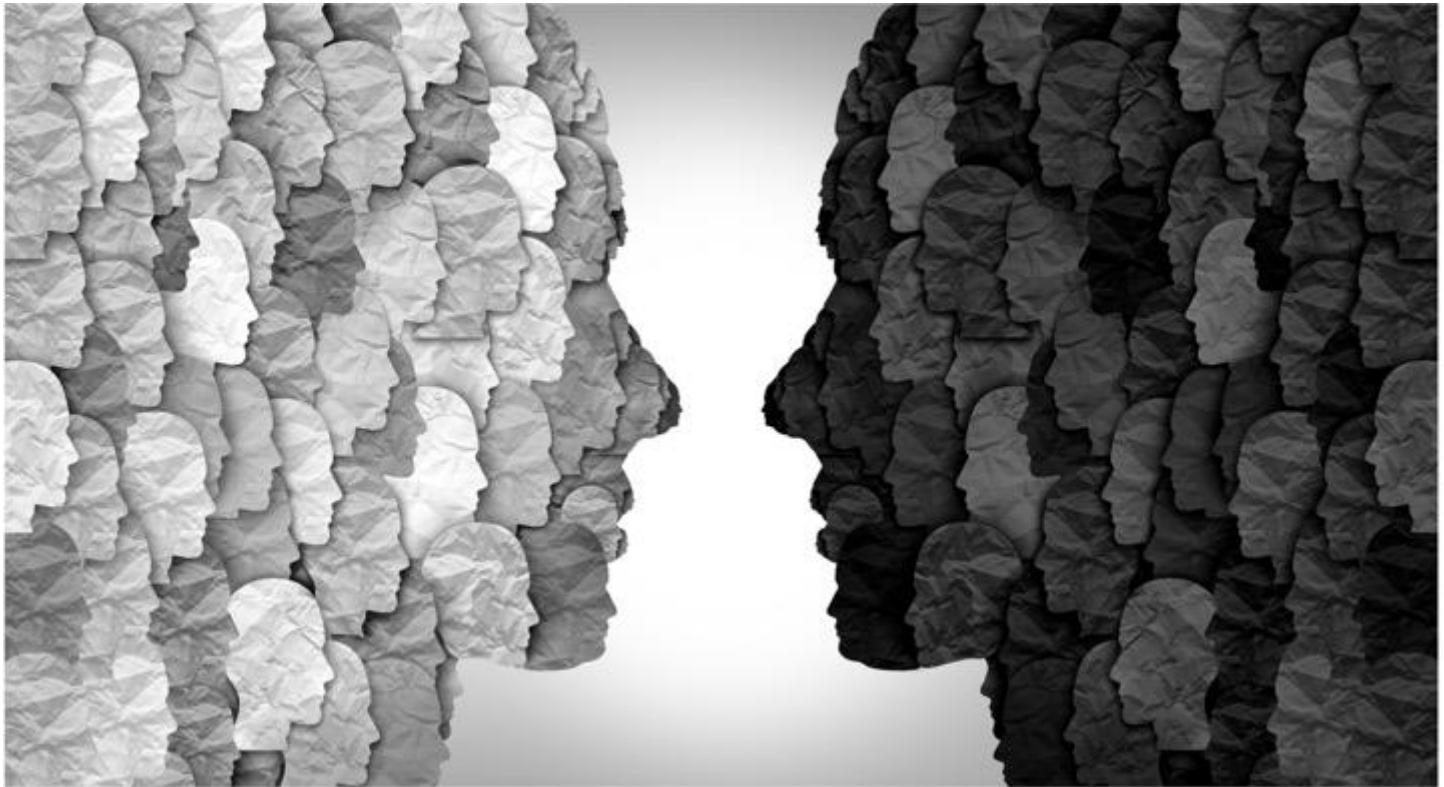
What is the value of personal freedom if it comes with strings attached? Strings that permit the very government we have hired to protect our freedoms -- in Jefferson's words, to secure them -- slowly and incrementally to bypass the profound protections we have installed to safeguard them.

To paraphrase Justice Louis Brandeis, the greatest dangers to liberty lurk in the insidious encroachment by government agents who lack constitutional understanding and fidelity to first principles -- the value judgments about the inalienability of natural rights. Their concept of liberty comes with strings attached. That's not liberty. It's subservience.

To learn more about Judge Andrew Napolitano, visit <https://JudgeNap.com>.

COPYRIGHT 2026 ANDREW P. NAPOLITANO

*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**.*



THE POLITICS OF HATE: WEAPONIZED DISCORD IS THE DEEP STATE'S MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL *by John & Nisha Whitehead from The Rutherford Institute*

“Love your enemies.”— Jesus Christ

“I hate my opponent and I don’t want the best for them.”—President Trump

This country was built on the radical idea that government exists to serve the people—not to control them, monitor them, manage them, or rule over them.

That idea is being systematically dismantled by a Deep State determined to entrench its power at *our* expense by keeping the nation divided, distracted, and perpetually at war with itself.

This is what happens when those in power discover that a divided people are easier to manipulate than a united one—and that hate is not a byproduct of politics, but one of its most effective weapons.

This nation is being destabilized by forces that masquerade as political movements, but dig down deep, and you'll find that power and greed work the same no matter which party hat they wear.

The “politics of hate” is a bipartisan tool.

The division that is tearing this country apart is not an accident. It has been cultivated, weaponized, and exploited.

As a result, life in America has become a gut-wrenching, soul-sucking, misery-drenched existence.

“We the people” are being subjected to crackdowns, clampdowns, shutdowns, showdowns, shootdowns, standdowns, knockdowns, putdowns, breakdowns, lockdowns, takedowns, slowdowns, meltdowns, and never-ending letdowns.

We've been held up, stripped down, faked out, photographed, frisked, fracked, hacked, tracked, cracked, intercepted, accessed, spied on, zapped, mapped, searched, shot at, tasered, tortured, tackled, trussed up, tricked, lied to, labeled, libeled, leered at, shoved aside, saddled with debt not of our own making, sold a bill of goods about national security, tuned out by those representing us, tossed aside, and taken to the cleaners.

We've had our freedoms turned inside out, our democratic structure flipped upside down, and our house of cards left in a shambles.

We've been locked down, shut in, fenced off, fined, cited, censored, silenced, surveilled, tracked, traced, coerced, mandated, ordered, threatened, and punished in the name of “public health,” with our rights treated not as inalienable, but as conditional privileges—granted, suspended, or revoked at the whim of governors, bureaucrats, and unelected officials.

We've been told that as citizens we have no rights within 100 miles of our own border. Now those “Constitution-free zones” have expanded far beyond the nation's borders, as federal agents stop, question, detain, raid, and surveil Americans in a profit-driven quest to fill quotas and establish a “papers please” society.

We've seen the police transformed from community peacekeepers to point guards for the militarized corporate state. We've been pushed around, prodded, poked, pried at, spied on, scanned, shot and intimidated by the very individuals—police—hired to safeguard our rights.

We've been sodomized, victimized, jeopardized, demoralized, traumatized, stigmatized, vandalized, demonized, polarized and terrorized, often without having done anything to justify such treatment. Blame it on a government mindset that renders us guilty before we've even been charged, let alone convicted, of any wrongdoing.

We've been railroaded into believing that our votes count, that we live in a democracy, that elections make a difference, that it matters whether we vote Republican or Democrat, and that our elected officials are looking out for our best interests. Truth be told, [we live in an oligarchy](#).

We've gone from having privacy in our inner sanctums to having nowhere to hide, with wearable devices and biometric trackers monitoring our bodies, apps logging our movements and interactions, homes that spy on us through smart meters, cameras, and remotely controlled systems, and cars that listen to our conversations and track our whereabouts. Even our cities have become wall-to-wall electronic concentration camps, with license-plate readers, facial recognition systems, and high-definition cameras recording everything that takes place within city limits.

We've been rendered enemy combatants in our own country, denied basic due process rights, held against our will without access to an attorney or being charged with a crime, and left to molder in jail until such a time as the government is willing to let us go or allow us to defend ourselves.

We've seen families ripped apart by militarized ICE raids, homes entered without judicial warrants, asylum seekers caged, long-time residents disappeared into detention centers, and entire communities terrorized by quota-driven enforcement schemes that trample due process and treat human beings as collateral damage.

We've been silenced, censored and forced to conform, shut up in free speech zones, gagged by hate crime laws, stifled by political correctness, muzzled by misguided anti-bullying statutes, and pepper sprayed for taking part in peaceful protests.

We've had our tax dollars burned on no-bid emergency contracts, bloated surveillance programs, militarized policing grants, mass detention facilities, endless foreign wars, and government handouts to private corporations tasked with censoring speech, tracking behavior, enforcing mandates, and building databases on the American people—while roads crumble, schools fail, and basic needs go unmet.

We are no longer just being governed. In many parts of the country, we are being occupied—by our own government.

American cities are increasingly treated as hostile territory—patrolled by National Guard units, federalized police forces, and armed immigration agents operating with military tactics, military equipment, and military rules of engagement.

At the same time, the country has seen the quiet expansion of vast warehouse-style detention centers—human storage facilities designed to make so-called “undesirables” disappear.

Are you exhausted yet?

You should be.

More than exhausted, however, you should be outraged at what has been done to our country.

I'm outraged at what has been done to our freedoms.

This is not a culture war. It is not a partisan feud. It is not a battle between left and right, red and blue, believer and nonbeliever.

It is a power struggle between a ruling class that governs through fear, division, and exhaustion—and a people whose greatest strength lies not in violence, but in solidarity.

We do not have to agree on politics to see what is happening. We only have to decide whether to continue playing a role in our own manipulation.

America will not be saved by rage.

As I make clear in [*Battlefield America: The War on the American People*](#) and in its fictional counterpart [*The Erik Blair Diaries*](#), America will be saved—if it is saved at all—by people who refuse to play by the Deep State’s rules.

Demand instead that the government play by *our* rules—the rules of the Constitution. And when those in power fail to do so, when they trample over the rule of the law and disregard the contract that holds them accountable, boot every last one of them out—peacefully, lawfully, and without exception.

WC: 1092

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. His latest books [The Erik Blair Diaries](#) and [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) are available at www.amazon.com. Whitehead can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org. Nisha Whitehead is the Executive Director of The Rutherford Institute. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.

Publication Guidelines / Reprint Permission: John W. Whitehead's weekly commentaries are available for publication to newspapers and web publications at no charge. Please contact staff@rutherford.org to obtain reprint permission.

*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**.*



CHILDREN FACE HIGHER FOOD ADDITIVE BURDEN THAN ADULTS, EXPERTS SAY by *Dr. Joseph Mercola*

Children receive a higher additive load from the same foods adults eat, which places more strain on developing systems tied to growth, metabolism and brain function. “New and improved” food formulations often replace one additive with another instead of reducing overall exposure.

Story at a glance:

- Most people are exposed to multiple food additives every day because they're built into common packaged foods, not just occasional treats.
- Children receive a higher additive load from the same foods adults eat, which places more strain on developing systems tied to growth, metabolism and brain function.
- Food additives are consumed as mixtures that stack across meals, even though safety limits are usually set for single ingredients in isolation.

- “New and improved” food formulations often replace one additive with another instead of reducing overall exposure.
- Shifting daily eating patterns toward whole foods and simpler ingredient lists lowers additive exposure without constant label checking.

Walk down a grocery aisle today and you're not just choosing food — you're choosing a production system. Additives have quietly shifted from occasional helpers into routine components of everyday eating, shaping how foods look, taste, and last on shelves. Most people don't pause to think about them because they're woven into products marketed as normal, convenient, and familiar.

What matters is not a single ingredient you can't pronounce. The real issue is exposure through repetition. When additives appear across multiple foods in the same day, they no longer act alone. They arrive together, layered meal after meal, reflecting modern eating patterns rather than isolated choices. This is especially important for children, whose bodies process food differently and experience a higher load from the same portions adults eat.

Many people focus on whether one additive is "safe" or whether a product meets regulatory limits. That framing misses the point. The question worth asking is how often additive-heavy foods displace simpler, less processed options — and how those combinations accumulate over time. To see why this pattern matters, you first need to understand how researchers measure real-world additive exposure and what everyday diets actually look like when those ingredients are tallied together.

Modern Diets Stack Multiple Additives in a Single Day

A study published in *Scientific Reports* analyzed [**food additive**](#) exposure using brand-specific dietary records from a survey in France.¹ Researchers examined detailed food intake data from 2,177 adults ages 18 to 74 and 1,279 children ages 6 to 17, based on repeated 24-hour recalls and food records that included exact commercial products consumed.

This design reflects what people truly eat, not theoretical food categories or label assumptions. Instead of estimating exposure using maximum allowed limits, the researchers merged actual foods eaten with multiple composition databases and laboratory measurements in foods. This allowed them to calculate how much of each additive people consumed and, more importantly, which additives tended to show up together in everyday meals.

• **Children and adults showed high and consistent exposure** — Adults consumed an average of about 4.4 grams of food additives per day, while children consumed about 5.1 grams per day. Because children weigh less, their intake per kilogram of body weight was roughly double that of adults, a detail that directly affects how much stress these compounds place on developing systems.

• **Most exposure came from ultraprocessed foods eaten routinely**

— Ultraprocessed foods supplied about 34% of daily calories for adults and nearly 50% for children. These foods included items many people view as normal staples, such as packaged breads, dairy desserts, ready-to-eat meals, pastries, and sweetened beverages.

• **Dozens of additives appeared in everyday eating patterns** — Sixty additives were consumed by at least 5% of adults, and 71 were consumed by at least 5% of children. Common examples included emulsifiers, preservatives, sweeteners, and colorings that frequently appear across multiple food categories.

• **Researchers identified distinct additive "mixtures" rather than isolated exposures** — The study identified three main additive mixtures in adults and four in children. This means additives cluster into recognizable bundles based on food choices, not individual ingredients.

Some mixtures were dominated by additives found in sweetened drinks and pastries, others by ready-made meals and sauces, and others by snack foods and desserts. Certain mixtures showed higher exposure among younger adults, manual workers, smokers, or children from specific household backgrounds.

• **Higher additive exposure was linked with poorer nutrient profiles** — As mixture scores increased, intakes of protein, fiber, vitamin C, and beta-carotene dropped, while total calories, added sugars, and overall energy intake rose. This pattern shows additive exposure comes bundled with diets that deliver fewer protective nutrients.

While only a small percentage of participants exceeded official acceptable daily intakes for individual additives, such as sucralose, current safety evaluations focus on single additives, not the combined effects of multiple compounds consumed together every day.

Additives consumed together interact in your gut, immune system, and metabolism in ways that single-compound testing doesn't capture. This is often called a "cocktail effect," meaning the whole exposure picture matters more than any one ingredient.

Grocery Store Receipts Reveal Increasing Food Additive Exposure

A U.S. purchase-based study tracked what households actually buy, not what they report eating. The study, published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, examined packaged food and beverage purchases by U.S. households in 2001 and 2019.² Instead of relying on food diaries or memory-based surveys, researchers used scanned grocery purchases, which directly capture what enters homes.

Researchers examined four common additive types — **colors**, flavors, preservatives, and nonnutritive sweeteners — across thousands of packaged products.³ By reviewing ingredient lists from Nutrition Facts Panels, the team measured how often additives appeared and how many were present in each product. This design allowed them to assess additive density, meaning how many additives you encounter in a single item.

•Additives now appear in a larger share of the foods Americans buy — From 2001 to 2019, the percentage of packaged food products purchased by U.S. households that contained additives climbed from 49.6% to 59.5%, a significant increase that shows additive exposure has become more common with each passing decade.

•The average number of additives per product increased over time

— Manufacturers added more additives per product, rising from an average of 3.7 additives in 2001 to 4.5 additives in 2019. That shift means you face more combined exposure even if your shopping habits stay the same. This translates into higher additive intake without eating more food.

•Baby foods showed one of the sharpest changes — Purchases of baby food products containing additives rose by 20% over the study period, with more than a 15% increase in products containing three or more additives. Infants and young children are an understudied and vulnerable group because **early diets** influence long-term health patterns.

•"Improved" formulas often reshuffle additives — The study observed a decrease in added flavors in carbonated soft drinks but a clear rise in nonnutritive sweeteners replacing them. This swap shows reformulation often shifts additive types rather than reducing total additive use. "New and improved" labels often signal substitution, not simplified ingredients.

Children Get a Higher Dose of Additives from the Same Food

Children are not just "small adults" when it comes to food additives. A review published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* describes food additives as substances added to preserve or improve safety, freshness, taste,

texture, or appearance, and it separates them into direct additives added on purpose and indirect additives that show up in traces from packaging, storage or processing.⁴

It stresses that children's developing metabolism raises the odds that harmful effects show up sooner or more strongly.

•Calorie-for-calorie, young children take in more additives per pound than adults

— The review included literature published from January 2010 through April 2022, and revealed that in the first three years of life, children take in more calories per kilogram of body weight than adults, so additive exposure per kilogram also runs higher. This means even "normal" servings stack up faster in a smaller body.

•Indirect additives from packaging and the environment are a major part of the story — The review lists bisphenols, phthalates, [perfluoroalkyl chemicals](#) and

perchlorate as common exposures tied to [food packaging](#), processing equipment, soil, water or other environmental routes. In other words, "what touches the food" often matters as much as what's mixed into it.

•Hormone disruption shows up again and again — The paper explains that several additives and packaging-related chemicals [interfere with hormone systems](#) that control growth, metabolism, sleep, and development — the same systems that guide how a child's body and brain mature.

•Direct additives show up most often in kid-targeted processed foods — The most-used additives in children's foods include colors, sweeteners, preservatives and flavor enhancers. These are also the categories that cluster in snacks, drinks and convenience foods, making "stacking" more likely across a typical day.

[Artificial colors](#), added largely for appearance, have been linked to hypersensitivity reactions and behavioral and attention problems, while the artificial sweetener [aspartame](#) breaks down into components including phenylalanine, which is a clear issue for children with phenylalanine metabolism disorders.

The practical relevance is that if you notice a clear before-and-after pattern with specific brightly colored or artificially sweetened foods, this paper supports taking that pattern seriously as a data point, not a parenting failure.

•Nitrates and nitrites are preservatives with specific child health concerns

— These additives are found widely in [processed meats](#) and other foods. Once inside the body, nitrites form N-nitroso compounds, which are linked to cancer risk. In infants, the risk is more immediate: high exposure triggers methemoglobinemia, sometimes

called "gray baby syndrome," a condition in which hemoglobin can't carry oxygen efficiently, leaving tissues starved for oxygen.

How to Cut Food Additive Exposure at the Source

The real issue with food additives isn't one villain ingredient. It's the system that keeps steering you toward foods packed with them, grocery trip after trip. When you chase individual additives, it becomes exhausting and you lose sight of what's driving the exposure in the first place. Instead, focus on shifting the patterns that keep those foods in rotation, in ways that work in real life and put you back in control.

1. Start by changing where your calories come from, not what additives you fear

— If most of your calories come from packaged foods, additive exposure stays high by default. Instead, flip that ratio. Build meals around simple, whole foods you recognize immediately, then add packaged foods only as accessories, if at all. When whole foods anchor your day, additive mixtures fall automatically without constant label stress.

2. Use a simple additive count as your personal scorecard — When you pick up a packaged food, count how many additives appear on the label. If a product lists five, seven, or 10 additives, put it back on the shelf or make it only a very occasional food. If it lists one or none, it earns a regular spot. Turn this into a personal challenge: lower your average additive count per item each week.

3. Protect children first by simplifying early foods — Cutting back on additives early lowers total exposure over a lifetime, and those small, repeatable choices add up. Over time, you can feel confident that you're supporting long-term health, not just getting through the next meal.

4. Replace convenience meals with repeatable staples you enjoy — Replace convenience meals with a small set of repeatable staples you actually enjoy. Pick three to five simple meals you can make without thinking — for example, pastured eggs with vegetables, roasted grass fed beef with potatoes, ground beef with rice, or grass fed yogurt with fruit.

When you eat the same basics during the week, you're less likely to grab ready-made foods just because you're tired or rushed. Familiar meals make eating simpler, and that naturally lowers how often packaged, additive-heavy foods end up on your plate.

5. Audit your cart, not your willpower — Pause once per shopping trip and look at your cart as a whole. Ask yourself how many items are packaged versus fresh or minimally processed. You don't need to judge or overthink it — just observe. Over time,

this habit makes patterns obvious, and small adjustments start to happen naturally. As your cart shifts, so does how often additive-heavy foods make it home.

These steps work because they address the root cause: a food environment that normalizes additive-heavy products. When you change the structure of your choices, your body benefits without constant vigilance, and you regain trust in how you eat.

FAQs About Food Additives

Q: Why are food additives a bigger issue now than in the past?

A: Food additives are no longer limited to a few specialty products. They're built into everyday packaged foods that many people eat multiple times a day. The main concern is not one additive, but repeated exposure to many additives at once through normal eating patterns.

Q: Why do additives affect children differently than adults?

A: Children eat more calories per pound of body weight than adults, which means they also take in more additives for their size. Their metabolic and hormone systems are still developing, so the same foods create a heavier biological load and raise the risk that negative effects show up sooner.

Q: What does it mean that additives are consumed as "mixtures"?

A: In real diets, additives rarely show up alone. They cluster in the same foods and across meals, especially in ultraprocessed products. This matters because safety testing usually looks at single additives, while everyday eating exposes your body to combinations that interact inside your gut, immune system, and metabolism.

Q: Are "new and improved" or reformulated foods safer?

A: Not necessarily. Research shows that reformulation often replaces one type of additive with another rather than reducing overall additive use. Fewer flavors, for example, often come with more nonnutritive sweeteners, so the total additive load stays high.

Q: What is the most practical way to reduce additive exposure?

A: The most effective approach is changing food patterns, not chasing individual ingredients. Eating more whole foods, choosing products with shorter ingredient lists, relying on a regular set of repeatable meals, and paying attention to what fills your

grocery cart naturally lowers additive exposure over time without the need for constant label scrutiny.

*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**.*



HOW TO FIX OUR BROKEN MEDICAL SYSTEM *by Gary Null, PhD*

For over 50 years, there has been no concerted or successful effort to bring down medical costs in the American healthcare system. Nor are the federal health agencies making disease prevention a priority. Regardless whether the political left or right sponsors proposals for reform, such measures are repeatedly defeated by both parties in Congress. As a result, the nation's healthcare system remains one of the most expensive and least efficient in the developed world. For the past 30 years, medical bills contributing to personal debt regularly rank among the top three causes of personal bankruptcy. This is a reality that reflects not only the financial strain on ordinary Americans but the systemic failure of the healthcare system itself.

The urgent question is: If President Trump and his administration are truly seeking to reduce the nation's quickly approaching \$39 trillion deficit, why is there no serious effort to reform the most bloated and corrupt sector of the economy? A key obstacle is the widespread misinformation campaign that falsely claims universal health care would cost an additional \$2 trillion annually and further balloon the national debt. However, a more honest assessment reveals the opposite. If the US adopted a universal single-payer system, the nation could actually save up to \$20 trillion over the next 10 years rather than add to the deficit. Even with the most ambitious efforts by people like Elon Musk to rein in federal spending or optimize government efficiency,

the estimated savings would only amount to \$500 billion. This is only a fraction of what could be achieved through comprehensive healthcare reform alone.

Healthcare is the largest single expenditure of the federal budget. A careful examination of where the \$5 trillion spent annually on healthcare actually goes reveals massive systemic fraud and inefficiency. Aside from emergency medicine, which accounts for only 10-12 percent of total healthcare expenditures, the bulk of this spending does not deliver better health outcomes nor reduce trends in physical and mental illness. Applying Ockham's Razor, the principle that the simplest solution is often the best, the obvious conclusion is that America's astronomical healthcare costs are the direct result of price gouging on an unimaginable scale. For example, in most small businesses, profit margins range between 1.6 and 2.5 percent, such as in grocery retail. Yet the pharmaceutical industrial complex routinely operates on markup rates as high as 150,000 percent for many prescription drugs. The chart below highlights the astronomical gap between the retail price of some top-selling patented pharmaceutical medications and their generic equivalents.

Drug	Condition	Patent Price (per unit)	Generic Price	Estimated Manufacturer Cost	Markup	Source
Insulin (Humalog)	Diabetes	\$300	\$30	\$3	10,000%	Rand (2021)
EpiPen	Allergic reactions	\$600	\$30	\$10	6,000%	BMJ (2022)
Daraprim	Toxoplasmosis	\$750/pill	\$2	\$0.50	150,000 %	JAMA (2019)
Harvoni	Hepatitis C	\$94,500 (12 weeks)	\$30,000	\$200	47,000%	WHO Report (2018)
Lipitor	Cholesterol	\$150	\$10	\$0.50	29,900%	Health Affairs (2020)
Xarelto	Blood Thinner	\$450	\$25	\$1.50	30,000%	NEJM (2020)

Abilify	Schizophrenia	\$800 (30 tablets)	\$15	\$2	39,900%	AJMC (2019)
Revlimid	Cancer	\$16,000/mo	\$450	\$150	10,500%	Kaiser Health News (2021)
Humira	Arthritis	\$2,984/dose	\$400	\$50	5,868%	<u>Rand (2021)</u>
Sovaldi	Hepatitis C	\$1,000/pill	\$10	\$2	49,900%	JAMA (2021)
Xolair	Asthma	\$2,400/dose	\$300	\$50	4,800%	NEJM (2020)
Gleevec	Leukemia	\$10,000/mo	\$350	\$200	4,900%	Harvard Public Health Review (2020)
OxyContin	Pain Relief	\$600 (30 tablets)	\$15	\$0.50	119,900 %	BMJ (2022)
Remdesivir	Covid-19	\$3,120 (5 doses)	N/A	\$10	31,100%	The Lancet (2020)

The corruption extends far beyond price gouging. Many pharmaceutical companies convince federal health agencies to fund their basic research and drug development with taxpayer dollars. Yet when these companies bring successful products to market, the profits are kept entirely by the corporations or shared with the agencies or groups of government scientists. On the other hand, the public, who funded the research,

receives no financial return. This amounts to a systemic betrayal of the public trust on a scale of hundreds of billions of dollars annually.

Another significant contributor to rising healthcare costs is the widespread practice of defensive medicine that is driven by the constant threat of litigation. Over the past 40 years, defensive medicine has become a cottage industry. Physicians order excessive diagnostic tests and unnecessary treatments simply to protect themselves from lawsuits. Study after study has shown that these over-performed procedures not only inflate costs but lead to iatrogenesis or medical injury and death caused by the medical system and practices itself. The solution is simple: adopting no-fault healthcare coverage for everyone where patients receive care without needing to sue and thereby freeing doctors from the burden of excessive malpractice insurance.

A single-payer universal healthcare system could fundamentally transform the entire industry by capping profits at every level — from drug manufacturers to hospitals to medical equipment suppliers. The Department of Health and Human Services would have the authority to set profit margins for medical procedures. This would ensure that healthcare is determined by outcomes, not profits. Additionally, the growing influence of private equity firms and vulture capitalists buying up hospitals and medical clinics across America must be reined in. These equity firms prioritize profit extraction over improving the quality of care. They often slash staff, raise prices, and dictate medical procedures based on what will yield the highest returns.

Another vital reform would be to provide free medical education for doctors and nurses in exchange for five years of service under the universal system. Medical professionals would earn a realistic salary cap to prevent them from being lured into equity partnerships or charging exorbitant rates. The biggest single expense in the current system, however, is the private health insurance industry, which consumes 33 percent of the \$5 trillion healthcare budget. Health insurance CEOs consistently rank among the highest-paid executives in the country. Their companies, who are nothing more than bean counters, decide what procedures and drugs will be covered, partially covered, or denied altogether. This entire industry is designed to place profits above patients' lives.

If the US dismantled its existing insurance-based system and replaced it with a fully reformed national healthcare model, the country could save \$2.7 trillion annually while simultaneously improving health outcomes. Over the course of 10 years, those savings would amount to \$27 trillion. This could wipe out nearly the entire national debt in a short time. This solution has been available for decades but has been systematically blocked by corporate lobbying and bipartisan corruption in Washington.

The path forward is clear but only if American citizens demand a system where healthcare is valued as a public service and not a commodity. The national healthcare crisis is not just a fiscal issue. It is a crucial moral failure of the highest order. With the right reforms, the nation could simultaneously restore its financial health and deliver the kind of healthcare system its citizens have long deserved.

*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**.*

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS



MORE COUNTRIES SEE THE U. S. AS A TOP SECURITY THREAT

President Donald Trump's approach to foreign policy has countries increasingly seeing the U.S. as a security risk, according to a newly released Munich Security Index.

The biggest recorded change in the survey was seen in relations between the U.S. and Canada.

The *Financial Times* noted that citizens in Canada now see their southern neighbor with the same level of unease as the Chinese. (See "[TRUMP CUTS OFF ALL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITH CANADA](#)" 1 Jul 2025.)

Trump has floated the idea of forcing Canada to become the U.S.'s 51st state. At one point, in late 2024, Trump mocked former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as the governor "of the great state of Canada."

He said Canada should become part of the U.S. because it "relies entirely on the U.S., we don't rely on Canada."

The U.S. House of Representatives, in a largely symbolic vote last week, passed a resolution that would end the tariffs that the president has imposed on Canada.

Last year, Trump signed an executive order that slapped 25 percent tariffs on many imports from Canada – including 10 percent on the country's energy imports. Trump said the sanctions were in response to a “national emergency” tied to what he said was an unacceptable drug flow coming into the U.S. from the north.

The AP noted that Trump will be able to veto the resolution, which passed the House in a 219-211 vote, but still it was seen as the first time the House “confronted the president over a signature policy.”

Mark Carney, the Canadian prime minister, addressed an audience in Davos on 20 January and warned the audience that the current era has been “ruptured” and it would be incorrect to call it a “transition.”

Carney indicated that middle powers have been largely sidelined by great powers that have been acting with “no limits, no constraints.”

“Middle powers must act together because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu,” he said.

The paper noted that the survey took place in November and questioned over 11,000 people who lived in countries represented in the G7. These countries included Brazil, China, India, and South Africa.

The paper noted that besides Canada, about 84 percent of Danes have an unfavorable view of the U.S., which was up from 70 percent in November. The paper reported that the U.S. saw a decline in essentially all countries, except for Britain, a country that bows to kings and queens.

China has seen its reputation improve in countries like Canada, Italy, India, and South Africa, and is seen as less of a threat than in previous years, the report said. Japanese citizens are also becoming more worried about Beijing, which could help explain why Sanae Takaichi, Japan's prime minister and China hawk, won a snap election decisively earlier this month. (See [“CHINA HAWK WINS SNAP ELECTION IN JAPAN TO THE DELIGHT OF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION” 10 Feb 2026.](#))

TRENDPOST: Trump is a rich spoiled Daddy's Boy who is losing world support but has a bunch of hangers – on who like to use him for career placement and upward mobility, like JD Vance, Pete Hegseth, and Sean Duffy – all egotistical members of his administration best skilled at ass-kissing. (See ["TRUMP PICKS LOYALIST TO LEAD BLS AFTER FIRING PREVIOUS BOSS OVER JOBS REPORT"](#) 19 Aug 2025.)

It turns out that more countries will not be bullied by Trump, and now, as the dynamics shift towards a more unipolar world, countries like Canada, once a great American ally is not only building a relationship with China, but they are also now doing what they can to build their military without buying U.S. weaponry. (Gerald Celente has long noted that this century will be the Chinese century because the business of China is business, while the business of the U.S. is war.)

CANADA'S MILITARY SPENDING ILLUSION



Canada plans to provide a jolt to its economy by increasing military spending and rewarding domestic companies with contracts that it believes will spur job growth over the coming years, according to a new report.

The *Financial Times*, citing a new strategy paper from Ottawa, reported that the hope is to create 125,000 jobs as it pumps up military spending by 5 percent. The report said the

new spending represents Ottawa's biggest "military push" since the end of WWII.

The policy document noted how "long-held assumptions have been upended – about the end of imperial conquest, the durability of peace in Europe, and the resilience of old alliances. It is more important than ever that Canada possess the capacity to sustain its own defense and safeguard its own sovereignty."

One key element of the strategy is that more resources will be spent on homegrown companies, rather than outsourcing key equipment. The idea is to increase domestic military spending from about 50 percent to 70 percent, which the paper said could increase revenue for businesses inside Canada by \$3.7 billion a year.

Canada hopes that the new approach will help reduce its reliance on foreign suppliers. The paper noted how tariffs and “changing trade relationships have placed significant pressure” on various industries across the country.

Eliot Pence, the founder of Dominion Dynamics, which is based in Ottawa, told the paper that Canada is obligated to “build sovereign capability, not to default to incumbency.”

“Prioritizing Canadian-owned and controlled firms and using procurement to deliberately scale them is needed,” he said.

The strategy paper appears to show Ottawa’s determination to wean itself off dependency on the U.S. for security.

Mark Carney, Canada’s prime minister, addressed an audience in Davos and talked about the need for middle powers, too become more self-sufficient in the face of new threats and uneasy alliances.

The *Financial Times* reported that Canada is looking to enhance partnerships with countries in the Pacific, from South Korea to Australia to produce new weapons and capabilities.

The New York Times ran a headline on Sunday that read, “Canada Gives U.S. Arms Makers, the Cold Shoulder on Military Spending,” and noted how Carney “emphasized” that the country will “no longer acquire 70 to 75 percent of its weapons from the United States.”

The paper noted that Carney spent \$7 billion on the military last year to reach NATO’s 2-percent GDP threshold and vowed to increase the spending to 5 percent of the country’s GDP by 2035.

Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, a senior fellow at the University of Ottawa’s graduate school of public and international affairs, said that the strategy is a “game changer for Canada.”

“The big question, and we’ll have to see how it plays out over time, is what percentage of our defense investments will be made with American defense companies, our historic partners,” she said.

TRENDPOST: Gerald Celente has long noted that it is a fool's errand to think that nations can boost sagging economies by going into debt and spending billions on military equipment. He notes that economies grow when the products produced in a nation are bought by the public. Thus, only the military industrial complex, and not the nation's people, will benefit, thus the economy will only artificially grow. (See [“ANGER GROWS IN EUROPE OVER NEW AUSTERITY MEASURES, MASSIVE MILITARY SPENDING” 25 Nov 2025](#), [“RUTTE WARNS THAT NATO MUST PREPARE FOR A LONG-TERM CONFRONTATION WITH RUSSIA” 11 Nov 2025](#), [“NATO USES ALLEGED RUSSIAN DRONE INCURSION IN POLAND AS EXCUSE TO INTENSIFY WAR RHETORIC” 16 Sep 2025](#) and [“NATO BOWS TO TRUMP’S DEMAND OF SPENDING 5 PERCENT OF GDP ON DEFENSE” 1 Jul 2025](#).)

It is also worth noting that Canada's military spending is peanuts compared to what the U.S. spends on its military, which President Donald Trump wants to be increased to \$1.5 trillion a year. Gemini, Google's AI platform, estimated that it will cost the U.S. about \$200 million just to sail the USS Gerald Ford carrier group from the Caribbean toward Iran, which helps put into perspective just how much taxpayer money is wasted on military use.

GERMANY ACCUSED OF SPENDING TOO MUCH OF MILITARY BUDGET ON ANTIQUATED WEAPONS



Germany has announced that it will spend hundreds of billions of dollars to upgrade its military in what Berlin sees as a threat from Russia, compounded by an unreliable partner in the U.S., but critics say the spending is largely going to antiquated systems that benefit arms manufacturers at the expense of security.

“Spending €500 billion out of Germany, alone, of which €495 billion would go to Rheinmetall and the lake is not what is needed...there is enough money, but we are spending it on the wrong things,” Florian Seibel, the co-founder of Germany’s Quantum Systems, told the *Financial Times*. “We’re going to spend hundreds of billions in equipment that will sit in graveyards, and my kids and my grandchildren will still have to work for the debt to pay back the banks.”

The report noted that Rheinmetall, the country's top military contractor, pulled in about 40 percent of the contracts from the €100 million special defense fund that dated back to 2022.

The paper noted how Germany wants to take a leadership position in Europe and develop its military to a level that it does not need to rely on the U.S. for support. The report noted that Germany has opened its checkbook for major purchases that include 35 U.S. F-35s, Chinook helicopters, submarines, and Eurofighter Typhoons, which would come in handy if there was a conventional war.

But the Ukraine War has shown that militaries need to invest in drone and anti-drone technologies that have become the new face of conducting war, and these critics say Berlin is dropping the ball in that funding.

Boris Pistorius, the German defense minister, noted that Berlin must do more to invest in war innovation and help fund start-ups in the country that can produce these systems. The paper said the military leader was recently asked if Germany is preparing to fight the next war or an old one.

There are some in the German military who believe tanks and other conventional equipment still play a big role on the battlefield, but it is important for the country to think outside of the box.

Christian Freuding, the head of the German army, told the paper that there needs to be innovation and, at times, consider “unthinkable thoughts.”

TREND FORECAST: *This is old news for **The Trends Journal** subscribers. We have long reported that Germany and European nations are wasting money by building up their military defense with 20th century weaponry See: [“AI: NEW MILLENIUM WARFARE” a TOP TREND for 2025.](#)*

*Also, **The Trends Journal** maintains that the effort by European governments to boost their economies by flooding their military-industrial complexes with money is a misguided one.*

Gerald Celente [has said](#): “This does not build up the economy, boys and girls, like the crap that they’re spewing out there. Economies are built up when products that are

produced are bought by consumers. These products that are being produced, these bombs, planes, and ships, they're only going to the military-industrial-complex."

He continued, "This is only going to bring down your economy by putting more debt levels on it."

Moreover, should European nations and/or NATO go to war with Russia, it will be a nuclear war and the beginning of the end of life on Earth.

GEN Z REVOLUTION: BANGLADESH ELECTS NEW GOVERNMENT AFTER 2024 OUSTER



Bangladesh held its first nation-wide election since the fall of the government in 2024 that was triggered by Gen-Z and voted in favor of the Nationalist Party with a mandate to carry out policies to benefit the country's young population.

The New York Times reported that the party is led by Tarique Rahman, 60, who comes from a political "dynasty" in the country. The report

noted that the vote resulted in some constitutional changes that put a two-year limit on the time the prime minister can serve.

Rahman had been living in London for the past 17 years during his self-imposed exile from the country, Al Jazeera reported. He addressed the voters after his coalition won 212 seats out of 299 in the parliament, and said the win was dedicated to those who "sacrificed for democracy," the report said.

"I firmly believe that national unity is a collective strength, while division is a weakness," he said, according to the report.

Sheikh Hasina, the country's former prime minister, announced her resignation in 2024 after a new round of deadly protests broke out in the country, demanding that she step down after her heavy-handed response to protests that broke out over the country's civil service employment quotas.

These protesters – mainly young people – criticized the country’s civil service employment quota that required 30 percent of coveted jobs to be provided to descendants of those who fought for the country’s independence in 1971 from Pakistan.

Al Jazeera reported that Hasina’s security forces killed hundreds of protesters during the uprising. The report said she is exiled in New Delhi. The Al Jazeera report noted that Rahman told voters that he will work at developing new alliances and partnerships, and not be too reliant on any one country, contrary to how Hasina was reliant on India. He also heard the plight of young people in the country who have been dissatisfied with the country’s direction.

“The task now is to build a state based on that spirit – ensuring the rule of law, human dignity and employment opportunities. The question now is how Tarique Rahman will confront this responsibility,” Rezaul Karim Rony, a Dhaka-based political analyst, told Al Jazeera.

The Times noted that the election itself was seen as a success for the country, given that it was peaceful and organized. Michael Kugelman, a resident senior fellow for South Asia at the Atlantic Council, posted on social media that the election was a big step for “democratization,” the paper said. About 60 percent of the population voted, which was an increase from 42 percent in the last election in 2024.

TREND FORECAST: *While the Gen Z helped get Rahman elected, their National Citizen Party (NCP) only got six out of 297 constituencies in the 350-member parliament.*

As Al Jazeera noted, “The results, officially declared on Saturday, showed that voters overwhelmingly chose the long-established Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which comfortably defeated a Jamaat-e-Islami-led alliance, of which the NCP is a key partner.”

They said, “Many young Bangladeshis who voted for the first time described the election as historic, but falling short of their expectations.”

“As Generation Z, we didn’t get the expected representation and results after shedding so much blood and losing lives,” student Afsana Hossain Himi told Al Jazeera.

While the election did not live up to many Gen-Z expectations, again, they were responsible for overthrowing the ruling government.

Trends are born, they grow, mature, reach old age, and die. The Trends Journal has reported extensively on how Gen Z Revolution has been recently born and will continue to challenge the status quo in countries around the world. These young people, broke and busted, see a dismal future and feel they have been left behind and have been blocked out of achieving their dreams by the old ruling class. (See “[GEN Z REVOLUTION: TRUMP QUICKLY LOSING SUPPORT FROM YOUNG VOTERS](#)” 3 Feb 2026.)

The Trends Journal has identified [GEN Z REVOLUTION](#) as a Top Trend for 2026 because young people around the world feel as though they have no future. (See “[GEN Z REVOLUTION: STUDENTS PROTEST IN SERBIA OVER GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION](#)” 20 Jan 2026, “[AS FORECAST: GEN Z PROTEST WIDENS, MEXICO THE LATEST COUNTRY ENSNARED](#)” (18 Nov 2025), and “[AS FORECAST: GEN Z IN MOZAMBIQUE POSITIONED TO MAKE WAVES](#)” 13 Jan 2026.)



TRUMP SELLS REGIME CHANGE FOR IRAN

President Donald Trump said Friday that the best outcome for Iran would be regime change, but demurred when asked about who he believed should run the country.

The president was asked about Iran during a visit to Fort Bragg in North Carolina, and said talks between the countries have been going on for 47 years. He said regime change “would be the best thing that could happen” in Iran.

“In the meantime, we’ve lost a lot of lives while they talk. Legs blown off, arms blown off, faces blown off. We’ve been going on for a long time,” he said.

The New York Times noted that Trump has floated the idea before, but this was, perhaps, his “most overt endorsement of regime change.”

Trump indicated in an interview on Saturday that Ayatollah Khamenei was not safe, and that if he held his position, he would “be afraid to sleep in the same place for too long.”

“I would reveal its location live on air, but that would be a bit stupid of me. Instead of wasting enormous resources on long bomber flights, I decided to concentrate aircraft carriers in the region – to be prepared for any scenario in which no deal is reached,” he told Fox News.

Trump and his administration have been changing the goalposts for weeks. Earlier this year, Trump raised concerns about the massive protest that broke out in the country and assured them that “help is on the way.”

When the protests ended, Trump brought up Iran’s nuclear program again and said it needs to put a cap on its ballistic missile program because of the threat to Israel. Iran has said it has no interest in developing nuclear weapons, but its civilian program is not on the table. Tehran has also said it will not discuss its ballistic missile program, which is its chief source of defense.

Marco Rubio, the U.S. secretary of state, told a Senate hearing in January that a regime change in Iran would be a lot more complicated than the kidnapping arrest of Venezuela’s president, Nicolás Maduro, the AP reported.

“You’re talking about a regime that’s in place for a very long time,” Rubio said. “So that’s going to require a lot of careful thinking, if that eventuality ever presents itself.”

Trump confirmed that the USS Gerald Ford, the U.S.’s most advanced carrier, will move from the Caribbean toward Iran as a form of gunboat diplomacy. Trump said he is hoping for a deal with the Iranians but will position the carrier group to be able to strike if an agreement is not reached.

“We have to make a deal, otherwise it’s going to be very traumatic. Very traumatic,” he said.

Ali Shamkhani, a representative of the Leader in the Supreme Defense Council, told Al Jazeera last week that Iran’s missile program is a “non-negotiable red line.”

Reuters reported last week that the U.S. military has been preparing for a weeks-long operation in the region that would likely be a more intense war than the one fought last summer.

TRENDPOST: Trump’s demands for Iran are impossible for Tehran to accept because it would mean surrender to the Israelis, and Iran clearly sees how Israel treats those it

can bully – just look at the Palestinians and Lebanon. (See [“NO OUTRAGE: ISRAEL RAMPS UP AIR ATTACKS ON LEBANON, DESPITE CEASEFIRE” 10 Feb 2026.](#)

A source with knowledge of Israeli leadership’s thinking told the Financial Times that Netanyahu is demanding an agreement that will remove all enriched uranium from the country and stop all uranium enrichment. Netanyahu wants a limit on Tehran’s ballistic missile production, and he wants Iran to give up on its support of proxies in the region.

“Otherwise, Israel supports an attack to overthrow the regime.”

Scott Ritter, the geopolitical analyst, posted on X on Wednesday that Trump’s latest threat to sail another carrier group towards Iran does nothing to change the equation, and the U.S. would still be easily outmatched in the region by the Iranian military capabilities.

Ritter noted that the U.S. moved six carrier strike groups into the region during Operation Desert Storm in 1991, and still could not stop Iraq, which had a far smaller and less sophisticated army, “from launching just under 50 SCUD missiles into Israel over the course of some 40 days of operations.”

“Iran is four times the size of Iraq,” he posted. He continued, “And its missile force is ready to rain down hundreds of missiles a day on Israel and American military bases in the event of hostilities. There’s nothing we can do to stop them. We don’t have the capability. Oh, and during the Gulf War, the US and Israeli Patriot anti-missile batteries didn’t destroy a single Iraqi SCUD.”

U.S. CARRIES OUT 31ST AIRSTRIKE ON SOMALIA OF THE YEAR, AS HORN OF AFRICA BECOMES 'CRITICAL THEATER' FOR GLOBAL POWERS



The U.S. announced last week that it carried out its 31st airstrike on Somalia's Puntland region to target ISIS fighters in the region, as the Horn of Africa emerges as a region drawing new interest from global powers.

AntiWar.com, citing AFRICOM, reported that the strikes targeted a location 30 miles southeast of Bosaso, the port city. The U.S.

military told the outlet that it could not provide further details about the strike to preserve "continued operations security."

The report noted that these attacks have been hardly mentioned in the news media, despite President Donald Trump ordering 124 strikes last year, which eclipsed the former record of 63 strikes in 2019.

The New York Times noted that Washington and Tel Aviv have made moves to influence the region, and Israel went so far as to become the first country to recognize Somaliland. The paper noted that geopolitical analysts believe Tel Aviv recognized Somaliland as part of its effort to prevent weapons smuggling to the Houthis in Yemen.

"What Israel did is not because of any regional alliances or logic, but more of a very specific interest in tackling Iran and the Houthis," Asher Lubotzky, an Israel foreign policy expert at the University of Houston, told the paper.

Cameron Hudson, an Africa expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told the paper that the U.S. has been carrying out these attacks across Somalia in coordination with Mogadishu, so Washington has avoided following Israel in recognizing the breakaway country.

The U.S. has backed the government in Mogadishu and local militias to face off against groups tied to Al-Shabaab, which have camped inside mountain ranges within the country with their families. These groups have taken back some territory that they lost in 2022.

The report noted that there is a growing rivalry between the Saudis and the Emiratis who have clashed over Yemen and Sudan. One expert told the paper that the rivalry is “now intermittently intertwined with the rivalry between Somaliland and Somalia.”

The Trump administration has been vague about its attacks on Somalia and often does not provide a death toll.

David Sterman of the New America Foundation told the UK's Observer that the lack of information is a “huge problem for transparency.”

TREND FORECAST: *Trump can bomb whoever he wants and gets away with it, and, as we have reported, few people in the West give a shit if a Somali individual gets blown up by U.S. missiles. And, it is basically absent in the Western media. Instead, for three weeks, the main Presstitute coverage is about the missing Nancy Guthrie.*

Indeed, only celebrity and political live matter. (See [“U.S. POUNDS SOMALIA WITH NEW AIRSTRIKES AS MAINSTREAM MEDIA IGNORES TRUMP’S QUIET WAR”](#) 20 Jan 2026, [“TRUMP STARTS THE YEAR OFF BY CARRYING OUT MORE AIRSTRIKES IN SOMALIA”](#) 13 Jan 2026, [“MAN OF PEACE FRAUD TRUMP KEEPS BOMBING SOMALIA. SOME 116 AIRSTRIKES SINCE HE TOOK OFFICE”](#) 23 Dec 2025, [“U.S. BOMBS AWAY OVER SOMALIA: PENTAGON CARRIES OUT 110th STRIKE ON COUNTRY OF THE YEAR”](#) 25 Nov 2025, and [“TRUMP RAMPS UP BOMBING OF SOMALIA”](#) 4 Nov 2025.)

ICE'D OUT: COURTS HAVE RULED 4,400 TIMES THAT FEDERAL IMMIGRATION AGENTS HAVE JAILED IMMIGRANTS UNLAWFULLY



The Trump administration has been handed stinging rebukes from federal courts in the U.S. since October, which ruled that over 4,400 immigrants have been unlawfully detained during the government's crackdown on illegal immigration, Reuters reported.

The news agency said it investigated court records tied to immigration arrests in the U.S. but said the White House has continued its policy and has been jailing individuals “indefinitely,” even after these rulings.

The report cited a federal judge in West Virginia who ordered the release of an individual from Venezuela and called it “appalling that the Government insists that this Court should redefine or completely disregard the current law as it is clearly written.”

The Reuters report said there has been a 75 percent jump in those in ICE detention in the U.S., with around 68,000 incarcerated. The administration is dealing with a surge in habeas corpus lawsuits from those who claim that they have been held illegally.

Lawyers told ProPublica that the Trump administration’s immigration policies have turned decades of legal precedent on its head because immigrants who lived in the U.S. and were not determined to be a security or flight risk were allowed to return home until their next court appearance.

The report noted that many of the judges who have been tasked with ruling on the habeas petitions have been siding against the administration. The Reuters report noted that many immigrants who have been detained are not aware that they can file a habeas case. The report said that many others cannot afford an attorney.

Tricia McLaughlin, a Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman, told the outlet, “President Trump and Secretary Noem are now enforcing the law and arresting illegal aliens who have no right to be in our country, and reversed Biden’s catch and release policy. We are applying the law as written.”

TREND FORECAST: The Trends Journal has reported extensively on Trump’s unconstitutional immigration crackdown in the U.S. (See [“NAPOLITANO: THE COMING CONSTITUTIONAL ICE AGE” 10 Feb 2026](#), [“CAMERA SHY: ICE CRACKDOWN INCLUDES VIOLATION OF FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHT TO FILM FEDERAL OFFICERS IN PUBLIC, CRITICS SAY” 10 Feb 2026](#), and [“FULL-ON CENSORSHIP: TIKTOK USERS SAY PLATFORM SILENCED POSTS ABOUT LATEST ICE KILLING” 27 Jan 2026.](#))

And now, with ICE spending nearly \$40 billion of American tax-payer money to build concentration camps to lock-up immigrants, a bad situation will become much worse.

Politico reported that the Trump administration seems to understand that it has been on the losing end of a lot of these courts’ decisions, so it has taken matters into its own hands.

“Sometimes, ICE has raced detainees across state lines in ways judges say are designed to thwart legal proceedings,” the article said. “Other times, they’re detaining people for days or weeks after judges have ordered them released. ICE officials have at times ignored other arms of the federal government trying to ensure compliance with court orders. And sometimes the administration has given judges bad or incomplete information.”

Michael Davis, a federal judge in Minnesota, wrote in a recent ruling that there has been an “undeniable move by the Government in the past month to defy court orders or at least to stretch the legal process to the breaking point in an attempt to deny noncitizens their due process rights.”

OCASIO-CORTEZ PROVES HERSELF TO BE ‘IMPERIALIST STRATEGIST’ AT MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE, WSWS SAYS



Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., who likes to bill herself as a progressive capable of standing up to the old guard in the U.S., proved to be nothing more than an establishment tool when she addressed the Munich Security Council last week and talked about the need for the U.S. to stand up against Iran and Russia to help prevent the spread of authoritarianism.

WSWS noted that Ocasio-Cortez addressed an audience at a conference that was sponsored by top military contractors, like BAE Systems, Raytheon, and Lockheed Martin, and accused the Trump administration of intentionally abandoning Ukraine to help introduce an age of authoritarianism – a time when individuals like Russian President Vladimir Putin can “saber rattle around Europe and try to bully around our own allies there.”

“We shouldn’t reward imperialism, and I don’t think that we should allow Russia to continue, or any nation, to continue violating a nation’s sovereignty and to continue to be rewarded,” she said, according to the report.

WSWS wrote that Ocasio-Cortez’s “accusation that Trump is enabling Putin’s ‘bullying’ was essentially her own demand for the continuation “of a war that has killed hundreds

of thousands of people and brought the world closer to nuclear conflict than at any point since the Cuban Missile Crisis.”

The reports on her positions are not surprising given that she has been silent on Trump’s hope to increase the U.S. military budget to \$1.5 trillion in 2026 and has supported funding “far-right forces” in Ukraine back in 2022.

The report said Ocasio-Cortez voted “present” in 2021 for the U.S. to provide \$1 billion to fund Israel’s Iron Dome, “weeping on the house floor after switching her vote from ‘no’ under pressure from democratic leadership.” In July, she opposed an amendment that would cut \$500 million from the program, arguing that the system is for defensive purposes.

The Democratic Socialists of America responded to Ocasio-Cortez’s vote at the time that the Iron Dome “has emboldened Israel to invade or bomb no less than five different countries in the past two years.”

The statement continued: “The fact that Representative Ocasio-Cortez acknowledges that Israel is carrying out this genocide makes her support for military aid all the more disappointing and incongruous.”

The report noted that Ocasio-Cortez was quick to condemn pro-Palestine protesters in Times Square after the Hamas attack in October 2023, and called for these protests to be “shut down.”

TREND FORECAST: Jim Geraghty, *National Review*’s senior political correspondent, penned an article in *The Washington Post* titled, “AOC Tries Strategic Incomprehensibility,” and wrote that the New York representative seemed unsure about her own policy positions and rambled on without saying much of anything.

She was asked about Taiwan and said, “You know, I think that this is such a, you know, I think that this is a, this is, of course, a very long-standing policy of the United States. And I think what we are hoping for is that we want to make sure that we never get to that point, and we want to make sure that we are moving in all of our economic research and our global positions to avoid any such confrontation and for that question to even arise.”

As it has been long proven, in the American political system brains and honesty don’t count. As we have trademarked, it’s a Presidential Reality Show®.

Therefore, knowing how to play the political game, and knowing that she will have strong appeal among Gen Z and the masses of Americans sunk at the bottom level of the “K-shaped” economy, Ocasio-Cortez is being promoted as a potential presidential candidate in 2028 race for the White House.

ICE MEMO LAYS OUT PLAN TO BUILD IMMIGRANT ‘CONCENTRATION CAMP NETWORK,’ WSWS SAYS



ICE issued an internal memo last week that lays out plans to develop “mega-centers” to hold illegal immigrants who have been detained during sweeps across the country that include “eight large-scale detention centers and 16 processing sites” just in time for the Midterm Elections in November, WSWS reported.

The report said the project will cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars and is evidence that the Trump administration has no intention of ending its highly criticized operations to round up illegal immigrants living inside the country.

WSWS, citing the memo, reported that the model will increase bed capacity to 92,600, and these facilities will require the hiring of 12,000 “immigration Gestapo.”

The memo said the facilities will be able to absorb the immediate “surge capacity” and carry out operations in the long-term that will ensure a “unified, scalable solution that delivers continuity, safety, compliance, and control.”

WSWS wrote that the plan makes it clear that the Trump administration is not planning for a “temporary measure in response to a made-up ‘border crisis,’ but the expansion of a police state directed against a working class, regardless of immigration status.”

Fox News first reported on the internal memo that noted the increase of 38,000 beds to 92,600. Each so-called “mega-center” will be able to house 10,000 detainees. The plan calls for 16 new “regional processing sites” and 10 “turnkey facilities” by November, according to VisaHQ.

The WSWS report noted that reports said DHS requested that the General Services Administration “disregard usual government lease procurement procedures and even hide lease listings due to ‘national security concerns.’

Wired reported that ICE has more than “doubled in size” under President Donald Trump and funding has been increased to about \$80 billion, which is far more than its historical average of between \$8 billion and \$10 billion. Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill earmarked \$75 billion for ICE funding over the next four years.

ICE will spend \$38 billion to purchase 16 buildings for these new centers.

Tom Homan, Trump’s border czar, made the rounds on Sunday morning news programs to defend the president and his actions against immigrants. He insisted that the White House wants to “deescalate, to get state and local cooperation, to stop being a ‘sanctuary state’ and to arrest illegal aliens with a focus on criminals,” WSWS reported.

The WSWS report said Homan was asked about these agents wearing masks, and he said he agreed that masks were a bad look, but “because threats against ICE officers are up over 1,500 percent...these men and women have to protect themselves...As far as identifying themselves, they all have placards that identify them.”

TRENDPOST: *The WSWS report noted that Homan also defended the Trump administration’s disregard for the Fourth Amendment, which it believes means federal agents can break into homes during these immigration raids, which he said is backed by the Immigration and Nationality Act. He said the law grants the power for federal agents to carry out these raids simply by using “administrative warrants. (See “FU FOURTH AMENDMENT! ICE MEMO ALLOWS AGENTS TO BURST INTO HOMES WITHOUT WARRANT” 27 Jan 2026, “TRUMP AND HIS ADMINISTRATION TRY TO LIMIT THE POLITICAL DAMAGE AFTER THE PRETTI SHOOTING” 3 Feb 2026, and “TRUMP: PRETTI ‘CERTAINLY SHOULDN’T HAVE BEEN CARRYING A GUN’” 3 Feb 2026.)*

We noted last week that Gerald Celente and Judge Andrew Napolitano have spoken about how the Trump administration has ignored the Constitution and has essentially turned the U.S. into a police state.

WSWS reported on how the Trump administration has been met with recent court losses, including a case from Minneapolis that resulted in a federal judge moving to drop charges against two men from Venezuela based on the claim that evidence that emerged from the arrest is “materially inconsistent with the allegations.”

“The charges against them were based on lies by an ICE agent who recklessly shot into their home through a closed door,” Brian Clark, an attorney, told CNN. “They are so happy justice is being served.”

CNN reported that federal authorities are investigating the arrest that involved an ICE officer shooting one of the men and that the officer allegedly lied under oath.



PRE-TEENS WHO CAN'T PUT DOWN THEIR PHONES ARE MORE AT RISK FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, STUDY SAYS

A newly released study found that pre-teens who showed “addiction-like” behavior with their screens had a higher risk of various mental health issues, ranging from suicidal thoughts, drug abuse, and depression.

The research was conducted at the University of California, San Francisco, and published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

These researchers investigated over 8,000 pre-teens in the U.S. who were given questions to gauge their reliance on phone screens, and found that a year after the study, those who “displayed addiction-like patterns faced measurably worse outcomes” with their mental health, according to *Study Finds*.

The study focused on children from 11 to 12 years old, a time that scientists agree is an important stage for brain development and when early evidence of mental health symptoms begin to emerge. This was considered the largest study ever conducted, and the longest for this age bracket. These children were asked about their screen

time and a year later, it was revealed that those who reported “addiction-like patterns” were more likely to report instances of depression, attention/deficit, suicidal behaviors, substance initiation, and sleep disturbances, the report said.

“Problematic screen use is when kids can't control their time online, even if they try, and it starts to cause stress, conflicts, or problems at school or home,” Dr. Jason Nagata, who works in the Department of Pediatrics, University of California, San Francisco, told *Medical Express*. “It can also lead to withdrawal-like feelings, needing more time online to feel satisfied, and repeated relapses, much like other addictive behaviors.”

TRENDPOST: *The Trends Journal* has reported extensively on the dangers that smartphones present to young people, and many of the risks are unknown because these devices have never been so prevalent. (See [“SMARTPHONES FOR CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 12 NOT A ‘SMART’ IDEA: STUDY” 9 Dec 2025](#), [“SMARTPHONES BEFORE AGE 13 COULD PERMANENTLY DAMAGE MENTAL HEALTH” 16 Sep 2025](#), [“SMARTPHONES DUMB MOVE FOR YOUR HEART HEALTH?” 10 Sep 2025](#) and [“SMARTPHONES LINKED TO ANXIETY, DEPRESSION IN TEENS” 20 Aug 2025](#).)

While many social media platforms state users must be at least 13 years old, there are no strict means of enforcing the rule. It is becoming increasingly common for kids 12 and under to own their own smartphones and spend many hours a day staring at them.

A Pew Research Center poll released last year found that just about 75 percent of U.S. teens say they feel happy or peaceful when they go without their cellphones. The report said the average age was 11 years old when a child gets their first phone.

The Mayo Clinic’s website cites a 2019 study that found 12- to 15-year-olds in the U.S. who spent more than three hours a day using social media could be at heightened risk for mental health problems.

The new research made it clear that not all screentime is equal and taxonomized the risks in each category. For example, phone and social media use were linked to depression and attention/deficit issues, while gaming was tied to depression and a heightened suicide risk, according to *Study Finds*.

"Our findings suggest that digital platforms and families alike should consider ways to reduce addictive features of apps and social media, since these patterns of use are modifiable and can affect adolescent mental health," Nagata said.

STUDY: OBESITY GREATLY INCREASES THE RISK OF HOSPITALIZATION, DEATH FROM COMMON INFECTIONS



A newly released study found that people who are obese have a 70 percent increased risk of hospitalization and death from common infections caused by viruses, fungi, parasites, and bacteria – which can usually be treated relatively easily in healthy individuals.

The study was published in *The Lancet* and noted that overweight individuals can see a higher risk of hospitalization tied to urinary

and respiratory tract infections, gastroenteritis, pneumonia, and flu, according to the *Financial Times*.

Obesity has long been tied to increased risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, but the new study shed light on these new risks. These researchers said one of the impetuses of the study was the well-known increased risks that obese individuals faced during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Mika Kivimaki, a professor from the UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences in London, told the paper that the risks tied to infectious diseases appear to indicate “that obesity weakens the immune system’s ability to defend against the infectious bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi, therefore resulting in more serious diseases.”

The report said the study investigated 540,000 individuals who lived in Finland and the United Kingdom, and said obesity alone could be behind as much as 10 percent of all infectious-disease deaths around the world. They found that the higher the Body Mass Index (BMI), the greater the risk of serious infection from these common illnesses. (It is worth noting that a BMI of 30 and above is generally considered to fit into the obese category.)

The study, for example, showed that individuals who were about 30 pounds overweight had a 1.5 times higher risk for serious infections than those who were closer to their target weight. Those who had a BMI higher than 40 – roughly 80 to 100 pounds overweight – saw their risk factor for serious infection increase by three times.

The researchers estimated that obesity the “population-attributable fractions of obesity-related deaths from infectious diseases at 8.6 percent in 2018, 15 percent in 2021, and 10.8 percent in 2023. This would translate to 0.6 million out of 5.4 million infectious disease deaths globally in 2023. The team estimates that in the UK, 17 percent of infection-related deaths can be attributed to obesity and 26 percent in the U.S.,” *Nutrition Insight* reported.

“Obesity is well known as a risk factor for metabolic syndrome, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and many other chronic conditions,” Kivimaki said. “Here, we have found robust evidence that obesity is also linked to worse outcomes from infectious diseases, as becoming very ill from an infection is markedly more common among people with obesity.”

She continued, “Our findings suggest that obesity weakens the body’s defenses against infections, resulting in more serious diseases. People may not get infected more easily, but recovery from infection is clearly harder.”

Aubree Gordon, an epidemiologist at the University of Michigan, who was not involved in the new study, told Scientific American that the new research was “incredibly important.”

It “truly shows that adults with obesity have a substantially higher risk of being hospitalized or dying from infections, and we’re talking not just COVID-19 but hundreds of different types of infections,” she told the outlet.

TRENDPOST: *Solja Nyberg, a bioinformatician at the University of Helsinki in Finland, told Health Day that as “obesity rates are expected to rise globally, so will the number of deaths and hospitalizations from infectious diseases linked to obesity.”*

This report should not surprise Trends Journal subscribers, who are aware of the risks that come with being overweight, and the economic impact that these individuals have on society. (See [“AIR POLLUTION LINKED TO DIABETES, OBESITY, STUDY SAYS”](#) 14 Oct 2025, [“FAT, TIRED, AND LOOK LIKE SHIT: FLABBY AMERICANS HARDLY EVER FEEL HEALTHY”](#) 20 Jan 2026, [“ONCE YOU TAKE THE STOP-FAT-SHOT,](#)

[YOU CAN'T STOP" 13 Jan 2026, and "MORE MUSCLE, LESS FAT CAN LEAD TO YOUNGER BRAIN, STUDY SAYS" 2 Dec 2025.\)](#)

To benefit the most from our Trend Forecasts, readers must first make sure they are healthy, and that requires eating nutritious food and exercising.

DEATH OF JOURNALISM: BBC PLANS NEW CUTS, RAISING CONCERNS FROM UNION ABOUT REPORTING QUALITY



Bectu, the UK creative labor union, warned last week that the planned cuts to the BBC could have a deleterious impact on the journalism produced by the broadcaster in a time where other news outlets reconfigure budgets due to advertising losses in the age of AI and a saturated news market.

Tim Davie, the outgoing BBC director general, announced that the broadcaster will need to

find another \$204 million in cost-cutting by March to clear up about €600 million in savings over the next few years, C21 Media reported. The report noted that few Brits are paying for the subscription. (The staff was told that 300,000 fewer households were paying the fee compared to the last annual report, which was a sharper decline than was expected, *The Guardian* noted.)

"In a rapidly changing media market, we continue to face substantial financial pressures. As a result, we expect to make further savings over the next three years of around 10 percent of our costs," a BBC spokesperson told the outlet. "This is about the BBC becoming more productive and prioritizing our offer to audiences to ensure we're providing the best value for money, both now and in the future."

The cuts could result in the loss of thousands of positions.

The Guardian reported that some of the cuts will come in the form of jobs and a reduction in programming. Davie told employees that the BBC is not a "protected species," and that they will need to find about 10 percent in savings.

Philippa Childs, the head of the Bectu union, told the paper that the cuts “will inevitably damage its ability to perform its vital national function. BBC staff will be deeply worried by this news, and Bectu will be engaging urgently with the BBC to understand the implications.”

TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal has reported extensively on how journalism is dead because these news outlets are nothing more than propaganda mills that repeat the government line. (See “DEATH OF JOURNALISM: BILLIONAIRE BEZOS GUTS WASHINGTON POST’S NEWSROOM” 10 Feb 2026, “DEATH OF JOURNALISM: TOP ‘60 MINUTES’ PRODUCER RESIGNS, ANCHOR EXPLAINS” 29 Apr 2025, “DEATH OF JOURNALISM: BILLIONAIRES TRY TO INSTILL CONFIDENCE AS THEY BLEED READERSHIP” 17 Dec 2024, and “DEATH OF JOURNALISM: AP TO CUT 8 PERCENT OF STAFF AMID NEWS INDUSTRY UPHEAVAL” 26 Nov 2024.)

Davie, the outgoing head of the BBC, has called on the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to open its checkbook because of what he sees as a war on news outlets, namely in the U.S., with President Donald Trump’s defunding of foreign public media, The Guardian noted.

He also warned that Russian and Chinese state television have been growing in popularity and gaining trust in the West. The report said the BBC’s “trust level” came in at 78 percent, which is essentially the same as it has been over the past few years, but China Global Television Network has seen its trust level go from 59 percent to 71 percent in the past year, and Russia Today gained 8 percentage points to reach 70 percent.



by *Ben Daviss*

A NEW WEIGHT-LOSS DRUG GOES RIGHT TO THE BRAIN

Ozempic, Wegovy, and other in-demand weight-loss drugs work by slowing digestion, making your stomach feel full longer and delaying the sense of hunger. They also enter the brain, targeting areas that respond to pleasure and rewards.

A new version of the drugs, created at the University of Copenhagen, works on the belly as usual but also goes right to the brain's appetite control center.

The Danish group combined the standard GLP-1 drug with molecules that block a receptor in the brain where molecules stimulating appetite would attach. In addition to the belly feeling full, the brain's "feed me" signals are shut down.

"The effect of GLP-1 combined with these molecules is very strong" when tested in mice, biochemist and team leader Christoffer Clemmensen said in a statement. "In some cases, the mice lose twice as much weight as mice treated with GLP-1 only."

In theory, humans treated with the combination could lose the same amount of weight using lower doses. That could help soften GLP-1's side effects, which include various forms of digestive upset, sometimes severe. In some cases, prolonged use can lead to acute pancreatitis and thyroid cancer. (See ["19 Side Effects Linked to Weight-Loss Drug Ozempic,"](#) 4 Mar 2025.)

A key to the new drug's success is its ability to zero in on the brain's appetite control mechanism.

"What is spectacular – on a cellular level – about this new drug is the fact that it combines GLP-1 and molecules that block [appetite stimulation]" Jonas Petersen, the researcher who formulated the blocker, noted in the statement.

"It exploits GLP-1 as a Trojan horse to smuggle these small molecules exclusively into the neurons that affect appetite control," he explained. "Without GLP-1, the molecules that target the NMDA receptor would affect the entire brain and thus be non-specific." That lack of specificity within the brain contributes to the drugs' nasty side effects.

The group will continue animal testing while planning for human clinical trials, which will take several years to complete and pass through regulators' approval process.

However, the study's implications don't stop with weight loss.

"We have focused on obesity and weight loss, but in fact this is a completely new approach for delivering drugs to specific parts of the brain," Clemmensen said. "I hope our research can pave the way for a whole new class of drugs for treating conditions like neurodegenerative diseases or psychiatric disorders."

TRENDPOST: Many researchers believe each of us has a built-in "fat set point," a certain weight and body mass, that the body will work to preserve. When that point is reset by constant overeating, the point is reset and losing excess weight becomes a struggle.

Developing treatments for obesity – especially in a world awash in sugary, fat-laden, ultra-processed foods that are designed to addict – is increasingly crucial not only to maintaining our collective health but also reducing healthcare costs and lost productivity.

CHINA OPENS ROBOT FIGHT CLUB



EngineAI's T800 robot is ready for the ring. Photo: EngineAI

China has inaugurated the Ultimate Robot Knockout Legend (URKL 2026), a mixed martial arts tournament that will last throughout this year. The ultimate victor will win a gold championship belt worth ¥10 million, or about \$1.44 million.

The combatants will all be adult-size humanoid robots.

given a free T800 robot made by China's EngineAI robotics company. The recipient will be free to program and train the robot however they please, as long as the robot is ready to take its place in the ring when the time comes.

The contest is meant to display the technological achievements of China's robotics industry, experts told The Blueprint.

EngineAI's T800 humanoid debuted in early December in a video showing off the robot's combat prowess. The bot can execute complex martial arts maneuvers including sidekicks and a 360-degree aerial spin.

The robot is clad in aviation-grade aluminum panels for light weight and has a cooling system in its crotch. A solid-state lithium battery gives it up to four hours of kicks and punches, according to the company.

The T800 also sports 360-degree LiDAR to locate itself in its surroundings, stereo cameras, and exceptionally fast data processing capacity. It can produce 330 foot-pounds of torque, easily more than the power an impact wrench uses to spin the lug nuts off a car wheel.

Giving away the robots is akin to publishing open-source software, analysts told The Blueprint. Companies will discover and fix software flaws as they develop new applications that others can adopt or adapt. That will ultimately speed the evolution of humanoid bots.

Getting free robots also will enable smaller companies on limited budgets to take part in robotics research and refinement, they added.

Real-world contests such as URKL 2026 can speed technology development cycles by more than 30 percent, in part by comparing lab simulations with practical performance, Tian Feng, former dean of SenseTime's Intelligence Industry Research Institute, told China's *Global Times* newspaper.

Robot fighters will not be judged only by how many kicks and punches they land on an opponent but also against a range of metrics including dynamic balance, impact resistance, and motion control.

Pitting robots against each other in combat will be an online spectacle and should help break stereotypical perceptions of robots as "cold mechanical arms," Tian noted. The tourney also could inspire younger viewers to take an interest in artificial intelligence and robotics, he said.

The main drawback to the robot fight club is that any advancements in programming the robots will tend to focus on the short, sharp, high-impact movements needed in a fight instead of the smooth and steady actions needed in a robot companion or service worker.

TRENDPOST: *While robots duking it out will gain a lot of clicks, it will do proportionately less to advance the refinement of robots' behavior in more useful ways. However, it easily could institutionalize robot fights as a spectator sport and draw younger people, especially males, to take a deeper interest in the technology.*

RUSSIAN COMPANY SAYS IT TURNS PIGEONS INTO BIODRONES



A Neiry biodrone. Photo: Neiry

Neiry, a Moscow research company, is testing cyborg pigeons that could take over some aerial surveillance chores from drones.

The company's claims have not been independently verified.

Neiry's researchers have been able to insert tiny electrodes at precise points in pigeons' brains. The electrodes are connected to a

control box on a pigeon's head. By sparking specific electrodes through the control box, human operators can guide a bird's flight path and aerial maneuvers on command.

Ancillary hardware, including GPS to track a pigeon's whereabouts and solar panels to power the electronics, are built into a backpack the bird wears. The pigeons also tote chest-mounted cameras.

In initial tests, the bionic birds flew along routes predetermined by their human controllers and returned to their landing area when the right electrodes were sparked, the company claims.

Neiry also says the birds are ready to fly almost immediately after being implanted and all bird subjects so far have survived the brain surgery. No independent verification has been provided.

Why do this to pigeons?

According to Neiry, a pigeon can fly up to 300 miles in a day, running on birdseed and water and not an electric motor or a costly battery that needs recharging. They can fly in nasty weather that might ground a drone and squeeze through tight spaces a drone might not be able to navigate.

Also, an enemy might recognize a drone but is apt to ignore a pigeon flying by.

Although the bionic birds can be drafted into the military, they also can be used to survey terrain, inspect pipelines and power lines, and scout for missing people in remote areas, Neiry pointed out.

Alexander Panov, Neiry's founder, emphasized that pigeons are only the first step. The company believes its technology can be adapted to many bird species, depending on payload needs and flight range.

"Right now, the solution works on pigeons, but any bird can be a carrier," Panov said in a statement. "To carry more payload, we plan to use ravens. For monitoring coastal facilities [we can use] seagulls, and for large sea areas, albatrosses."

Neiry has yet to announce a timeline for commercial availability or what its bionic birds might cost.

TRENDPOST: There is no evidence beyond company statements that Neiry's technology works or that its test result claims are accurate.

Even if they are, the work crosses ethical norms that many humans will be uncomfortable with, and many people will oppose the technology.

In the West, its use could lead to negative publicity, street demonstrations, and boycotts. If Neiry makes biodrones work, they likely will be used only in authoritarian countries or in secret by others.

And, of course, the implications for humans are stark.

TRENDS IN AI



by *Ben Daviss*

AI IS SCAMMERS' NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TOOL

In the past, we could laugh about e-mails purporting to be from the widow of the Nigerian finance minister offering us a seven-figure reward if we could help her smuggle \$18 million into the U.S.

Now, thanks to AI, online scams are much less amusing.

Bots are able to create more realistic come-ons, complete with an altered image or cloned voices. These baits can be created cheaply and quickly, allowing con artists to personalize the message to individuals at low cost, potentially getting more hits for their investment.

“We’re seeing them use large language models, things like ChatGPT to be able to craft really authentic sounding messages even in a language that they may not be fully fluent or a native speaker in,” Julia Dickson, a fellow in the Center for Strategic and International Studies intelligence, national security, and technology program, said to Bloomberg.

“Then with deep fake technology, we’re seeing voice impersonation calls where people pretend to be someone’s child or grandchild and ask for money – video impersonation calls too,” she added. “Men can put on this mask and become a beautiful woman and that helps them scam people all over the world.”

“You can see the efficiency with AI being utilized in scam centers,” Neal Jetton, who leads the Cybercrime Directorate at Interpol out of Singapore, said to Bloomberg. “It’s a pretty easy business model, and I think it’s going to get even easier for criminals.”

Cambodia, which has been a haven for the thieves, has recently begun enforcement after China, Thailand, and the U.S. put pressure on the government there. Alleged international con racket boss Chen Zhi was arrested recently in Cambodia and remanded to China. He also faces charges in the U.S.

Beijing recently executed 11 people captured in connection with an AI-involved scam operation in Myanmar, Chinese news services reported.

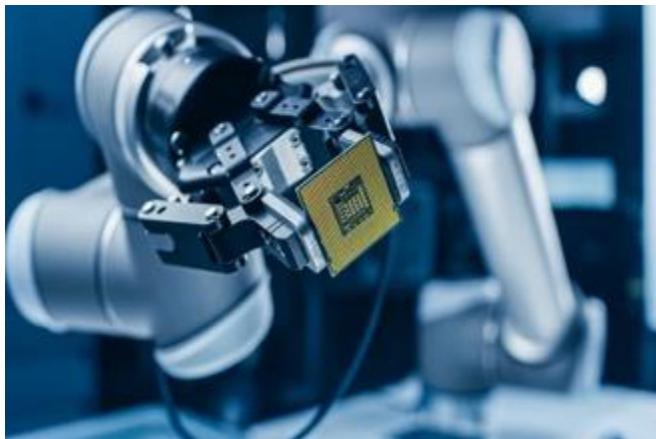
These actions are not enough of a deterrent, Interpol investigators told Bloomberg. AI makes it so cheap and easy to run scams that it’s often worth the risk to people in poor countries, they said.

Scams don’t just want you to send money. Increasingly, they offer jobs in the West to poor Asians. When the Asians show up for work, they’re kidnapped and trafficked.

“Let’s say we were, before, looking at these ads and we would see red flags, mistakes that would tell you, okay, maybe this is not a very realistic looking ad,” analyst Stephanie Baroud with Interpol’s human trafficking unit, acknowledged in a Bloomberg interview. No more.

“We’re also seeing some of these centers run by local people, local organized groups, and regional organized groups, which suggests the globalization of the modus operandi itself,” Baroud warned. “AI is going to lead us into uncharted territory.”

ANOTHER AI DEVELOPER PLANS TO DESIGN ITS OWN CHIP



ByteDance, the Chinese parent of TikTok, has roamed beyond social media to become a major AI developer that now is designing its own chips. The effort is part of its plan to “transform its business portfolio spanning short video, e-commerce, and enterprise cloud services,” Reuters reported.

The company is negotiating with Samsung, South Korea’s premiere chip manufacturer, to

deliver at least 100,000 chips of ByteDance’s proprietary design this year, two people familiar told Reuters. Production is intended to reach 350,000 eventually.

The discussions include securing access to chip components in chronically short supply.

ByteDance has budgeted an AI-related capital investment equivalent to \$23 billion this year, sources said. While a major commitment, the sum is dwarfed by the \$660 billion that Amazon, Google, Meta, and Microsoft have announced they will collectively spend in 2026.

ByteDance joins Amazon and OpenAI among the technology’s developers that are designing their own chips and contracting with manufacturers. The custom designs are tailored to the companies’ own processes and products; also, contracting directly with manufacturers helps developers avoid chip shortages on the open market.

Nvidia, the industry’s leading chip supplier, reportedly has sold out its production through this year and into 2027.

Also, U.S. embargoes have cut shipments to China of some American-made chips, adding urgency to China’s developers’ own efforts to design and secure their domestic supply lines.

ByteDance has been known to be working on a proprietary chip since at least 2022 when it began hiring chip engineers. In 2024, Reuters reported that the developer was working with U.S. chip company Broadcom on a design that would be produced by the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., the world’s largest chip manufacturer.

That apparently did not work out but ByteDance was undeterred.

Even with that lead time, ByteDance lags competitors Alibaba and Baidu. In January, Alibaba announced its new Zhenwu chip designed to handle large-scale AI workloads. Baidu now sells its chips to other developers and cloud companies and plans an initial stock offering for its chip division in the near future.

ALIBABA UNVEILS AI “BRAIN” FOR ROBOTS



In a further sign of AI's gallop into the field of robotics, Chinese tech giant Alibaba has shown off its open source “RynnBrain” AI designed to help robots carry out everyday chores.

Among RynnBrain's skills, it understands the relationship linking space, motion, and time so it can forecast trajectories toward a target. It also can map objects and negotiate cluttered environments ranging from kitchen counters to factory assembly floors.

RynnBrain comes in a range of scales and can be downloaded from standard platforms including GitHub and Hugging Face.

While U.S. developers pursue AI as virtual assistants, Beijing has emphasized the union of AI and robotics, including humanoids, “as a key prong of a strategic plan to dominate physical AI and reshape sectors from manufacturing to hospitality,” according to Reuters.

Also, in contrast to Western developers, Chinese companies' AIs are largely open-source while American companies keep their models as proprietary black boxes requiring fees to access. Open-sourcing software enables tinkerers everywhere to debug and refine programs, embedding the programs around the world and making China, not the U.S., the go-to source for updates.

TRENDPOST: *In addition to robotics, Alibaba is also a Chinese leader in “agentic” AI and other standard business AI apps as part of its goal to dominate in several areas of AI at once.*

AN AI READS MRI BRAIN SCANS AND FLAGS EMERGENCIES IN SECONDS



At the University of Michigan, scientists have developed an AI system that interprets MRI brain scans in seconds, accurately diagnosing a broad array of more than 50 conditions instantly and deciding how urgently a patient needs treatment.

The AI, named Prima, was trained in hundreds of thousands of MRI case histories that were matched with the patients' medical

histories. In its first year of clinical trial, Prima was tested on more than 30,000 existing MRI studies and performed with 97.5 percent accuracy, outshining other AIs that have been tested for the same purpose, the researchers reported.

"As the global demand for MRI rises and places significant strain on our physicians and health systems, our AI model has potential to reduce burden by improving diagnosis and treatment with fast, accurate information," neurosurgeon and co-developer Todd Hollon at the university's health center said in a statement.

If the threat to a patient is imminent, such as a developing brain bleed or indications of a stroke, Prima flashes an alarm, even before the scan is complete, to call attention to the emergency so doctors can act immediately. The AI also alerts the most appropriate specialist, such as a stroke neurologist or neurosurgeon.

"At key steps in the process, our results show how Prima can improve workflows and streamline clinical care without abandoning accuracy," computer scientist Yiwei Lyu noted in the statement.

Earlier AIs trained to read brain scans typically have been trained on narrow datasets and designed to find specific brain abnormalities, such as lesions or early signs of dementia.

Instead, Prima was fed every available MRI in the university health center's library, which numbered more than 200,000 scans and 5.6 million imaging sequences. The model also matched patients' clinical histories to their scans as well as the symptoms that caused doctors to order the scans.

"Prima works like a radiologist by integrating information regarding the patient's medical history and imaging data to produce a comprehensive understanding of their health," data scientist and team member Samir Harake, noted in the press statement.

Prima is still in its formative stages, the developers emphasized, and will continue to be refined through ongoing training on more records of past scans.

TRENDPOST: The demand for MRIs is growing faster than technicians and equipment can be supplied. Physicians are opening their own lucrative, for-profit scan clinics that operate independently of hospitals.

Prima will help ease the shortage of gear and trained specialists by speeding the return of test results, which can take days. That will allow more scans to be done in less time using the same teams and machines.

More broadly, Hollon sees Prima as "ChatGPT for medical imaging," he said, adding that the same AI design principles can be used to create bots for reading mammograms, chest X-rays and ultrasounds.

"Like the way AI tools can help draft an email or provide recommendations, Prima aims to be a co-pilot for interpreting medical imaging studies," Hollon said.

AI AS A PATHWAY TO THE DIVINE



Religious believers and their shepherds are using AI to get closer to the Almighty.

Justin Lester, a Baptist pastor in California, created an AI that turns his sermons into lessons and group study materials that circulate to his colleagues.

"Jesus said we will do greater things," he told Reuters. "I think (AI) is part of the greater."

AI even may be winning converts.

Siraj Raval, an atheist, said his loneliness led him to discover “TalkToHim,” a chatbot that simulates conversations with Jesus.

“I had an experience where I felt listened to by a presence that was divine,” Raval said to Reuters. The app helped him with struggles to forgive, to deal with feelings of guilt, and to behave morally, he added. “It was better than reading the Bible.” He now attends church.

In Switzerland, St. Peter's Chapel installed an AI avatar of Jesus in its confessional booth. Marco Schmid, a theologian at the church, was surprised by how viscerally people took to the presence, which began as an art project with a local university.

“Do you say to your computer when you finish, 'Oh, thank you, computer?' No,” Schmid told Reuters. “You see how much people personalized and humanized the system because it was so good.”

AI’s religious outreach is nondenominational. For his congregation, Josh Fixler, a rabbi in Houston, played a recording of himself exploring the impact of AI on society, then told the group that the sermon and recording had been created by AI.

He found himself troubled by the experiment. “I came away from that sermon with real concerns about both the ethics of the technology and also the hyperfocus on the technology,” he said, noting that some of what the chatbot decided to say was flatly false.

“[The AI] quoted a great Jewish scholar named Maimonides, but as best I can tell, it made up that quote,” Fixler explained.

Many others are not ready to place their faith in AI.

“I think there is something distinctive about the nature of Christian community, which is about being in person and face to face and being deeply human,” Steven Croft, the Church of England’s bishop of Oxford, said in a Reuters interview.

“The reason for that is rooted in Christian faith’s understanding that in Jesus, God became a human person, so Christianity is inherently personal,” he contends.

A significant number of clerics doubt AI’s ability to provide sound religious guidance. A digital Budda created by the firm Character.ai declared there are five noble truths in Buddhism; actually, there are only four.

However, the concerns go beyond mistakes of fact.

“There are questions about the ethics of representations of religious leaders,” Beth Singler, a professor of religion at the University of Zurich, pointed out. She also reminds that “we’ve seen specific examples of people being pushed towards suicide by conversations with chatbots. There (are) some really scary statistics about how often that happens.”

Yaqub Chaudhary, a scholar of religion at the University of Cambridge, also doesn’t believe chatbots can be trusted to provide accurate information about religion.

For example, Islam sees the Quran as the direct and unaltered word of God. Therefore, “is that a true communication of the Islamic meaning if it is produced by an [AI], mixing together whatever it has in its training set?” he wonders.

“That is a really huge problem in terms of knowing the halal, the haram, the recommended, the permissible, the impermissible, the disliked,” he said.

AI has captured our imaginations, but that’s a distraction, Fixler suggests. “I think that the work of religion is not trying to get machines to be more human,” he says. “The work of religion is trying to get us all to be the most human [version of] human.”

TRENDPOST: It’s inevitable that any new technology is tried in every possible situation. That’s how we discover where it’s not useful.

Experience has already shown that AIs, with their tendency to be overly agreeable, that impersonate humans can cause catastrophic harm. If a gullible person instead believes he or she is in touch with God or his designated representative, the damage could be greatly multiplied.