

Thoughts on Coming Apart and the
Coming Great Reset



Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer

Kit Webster

March 22, 2024

The Ukraine Quagmire

Remember that if you are easily offended, then you are easily manipulated too. - Dhar Mann

Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility - Sigmund Freud

Insanity in individuals is rare, but in groups, parties, nations, it is the rule. - Nietzsche

Name one long-term problem that we've solved in the last 4, 8, 12 years? We've only made everything worse. And now we've got this insane border policy...Every problem we have, we've made worse...Beneath the surface, and away from the stock market there are a lot of really serious issues that just aren't being addressed. -Bill Fleckenstein

The fact that so many successful politicians are such shameless liars is not only a reflection on them, it's also a reflection on us. ~ Thomas Sowell

If we don't believe in freedom of expression for people we despise, we don't believe in it at all. - Noam Chomsky

Markets

[Updated Charts](#)

Well, I was wrong about a top in the stock markets , but I still think a top is close.

March 13 – Bloomberg (Christopher Anstey): “Harvard University economics professor Kenneth Rogoff said both President Joe Biden and his predecessor and challenger Donald Trump risk sending US debt levels into dangerous territory as Washington fails to grasp that the era of ultra-low interest rates won’t come back. Washington in general has a very relaxed attitude towards debt that I think they’re going to be sorry about,” Rogoff said... ‘It’s just not the free lunch that Congress and perhaps the two presidential candidates have gotten used to.’

Just finished the Macrovoices podcast with Arjun Murti. Very highly recommended. He and I agree on almost everything energy, and this is an extended review of our energy future. Listen to it [here](#).

This is true



I don't know how to even react to this, it is so absurd



The Ukraine Quagmire

DE stimulated me out of my lethargy around Ukraine.

Let's review the bidding and examine why it is important from the perspective of my overall worldview.

First, let's also get some things out of the way

Ukraine is an unimportant, corrupt country.

Ukraine is intermittently joined with Russia - sometimes having a separate history and sometimes together. The USSR literally starved nearly 4 million Ukrainians in the '30s. You can argue close ties with Poland, for example. All of this is a red herring. Ukraine as a threat to Russia if it joins Nato, because it is so close to Russia, has a kernel of truth, but if you will take a look at a map at Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, you will see that it is also mostly a red herring. But it hides a larger truth I think provides a better lens into what is at stake.

First, as Pippa Malmgren and Peter Zeihan have discussed, Russia is vulnerable to invasion due to the geography of Central Europe. Zeihan puts it this way, " I'm down on paper and video saying that Russia's impending doom (more on that in a minute)

will force it to take a more aggressive security posture, specifically on Ukraine. Today much of Russia's border regions are indefensible. There are few geographic barriers to block potential invasion, forcing the Russians with their dwindling numbers to attempt to defend massive stretches of territory. What barriers the Russians do have — Crimea and the Caucasus come to mind — are only because of the sort of strategic adventurism that Putin is now threatening to Ukraine as a whole. There is a method to the madness. To paraphrase Catherine the Great, Russia can expand, or Russia can die."

As Pippa Malmgren stated, "More is at risk than Ukraine now. Putin is threatening Sweden. Norwegian Intelligence says Putin is coming after them, too. Georgia is in play."

Add to this that Russia is on the verge of demographic collapse. It is at its demographic peak and will only, excluding technology, get weaker.

Further, Putin sees himself as heir to Peter the Great. It is his destiny to restore Russia to its historic greatness in the world.

This is not about Ukraine. This is a geopolitical event that has parallels to the 1930s in Germany. I am of the opinion that Putin will not stop unless he is stopped.

We cannot afford it and we have other problems, but there it is.

Short Takes

Peter Zeihan on TikTok

The CCP is always watching...and no, I'm not talking about spy balloons today. Under the law in China, any company must cooperate with the government. So if you've got TikTok on your phone, you may want to watch your back. However, there is an even scarier company out there, and it's called META. Both companies collect the same data, but Zuckerberg takes this a step further. Your data is bundled, segmented, and sold to scammers as "Likely to fall for XYZ scam."

The potential restrictions on TikTok are only the beginning of what I see as a necessary move toward protecting our personal information and data.

Nature

More than 10,000 research papers were retracted in 2023 — a new record. The number of articles being retracted rose sharply this year. Integrity experts say that this is only the tip of the iceberg.

How low can you go?

The Supreme Court of WA state has announced that like Oregon, it has approved "alternative" ways for prospective attorneys to become licensed without the bar exam. Their decision says the exam "blocks marginalized groups from entering the practice of law."

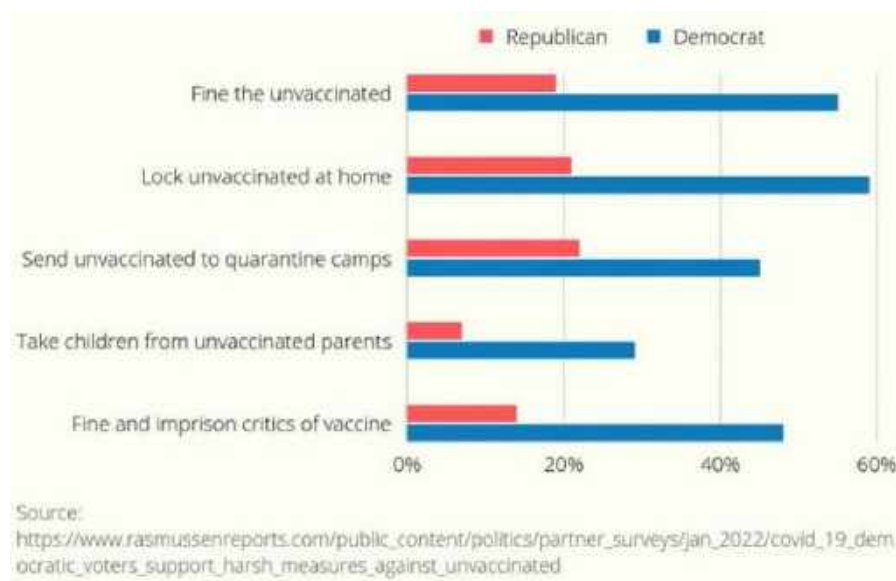
Wow!

US Supreme Court reverses decision on SB 4, which allows Texas immigration law to take effect.

This is not a final order - it is a "we're not going to weigh in until the lower courts have ruled" thing. I am of two minds on this - this should not be necessary, but since it is, it is a good thing and it will force Biden's/Congress' hands. But, for now, it is back to the lower courts to fight it out, perhaps leading to another trip to the Supreme Court.

Remember when?

Further to my article last week about my epidemic theory of human behavior - and this one actually applies to a pandemic.



Random fact

Cleopatra lived closer to the invention of the iPhone than she did to the building of the Great Pyramid.

Further to my thoughts on my disease theory of human nature

Pet rocks are back in South Korea

The election of Vaughan Gething as the first minister of Wales means that, for the first time, none of the four U.K. nations are led by a white man.

Pippa Malmgren discussing the RFK, Jr. candidacy and comparing it to Obama's in her newsletter behind a paywall. The reference to the VP possibility is to Nichole Shanahan, the former wife of Google cofounder Sergey Brin -

It may seem that picking an outsider to politics as VP is a form of insanity. Even I would suggest that there is a risk of what happened to President Obama. He won, but he had no idea how to operate the incredibly complex machinery of government and so had no choice but to allow the Democratic Party to run more and more of it every day. Arguably, this is how the DNC came to control levers of power that were traditionally in the hands of the President. I remember the tone at the time. The Democrats like Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid thought of Obama as a clueless kid who had no IOUs or chips in the world's highest stakes poker game. Obama picked his fights carefully but accomplished less because he had to fight the worst enemy you can have in Washington. He learned the hard way that the enemy is often (if not always) your own team. Kennedy knows this all too well. So, he is saying let's bring in management, outside expertise, people who are not part of the system. Now, this is exactly what President Trump stands for. So, we already know that the public wants a sensible outsider who can "clean up Washington."

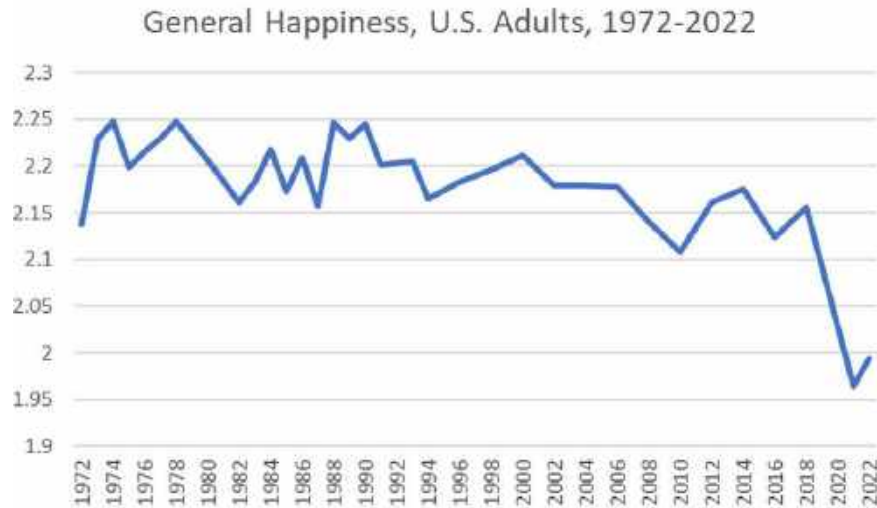
Nichole is totally unqualified, which seems to be more of a feature than a bug these days.

Gallup

For the first time in the report's 12-year history, the U.S. didn't earn a spot among the top 20 happiest countries in the world. It's No. 23 -- down from a 15th-place finish the previous year.

The report, which ranks countries by age group for the first time, shows the U.S. decline is at least partly attributable to Americans under age 30 feeling worse about their lives. The U.S. still ranks in the top 10 countries for those 60 and older, with a score of 7.258 out of 10. But for those under 30, it ranks 62nd, with a score of 6.392.

While the U.S. lost ground, Finland retained its crown as the happiest country in the world for the seventh straight year. But it wasn't No. 1 for those under 30 or over 60. Lithuania and Denmark, respectively, took those honors.



The Omnibus spending bill to keep the government going, yet again, is 1,012 pages. The crap in there must be impressive. "New spending bill contains at least \$9 million in earmarks from deceased senator Diane Feinstein." The Bee captures the horror:



Dozens Injured At Capitol After Omnibus Bill Tips Over

It Ain't Easy Being Green

Anybody see global warming on here - anywhere? (BTW, cannot find gender and racism is not that big of a deal.)



Hertz

CEO steps down after being hit with expensive EV repairs and low resale prices following purchase of 100,000 Teslas

Damn, things are complicated

“Mars influences Earth’s climate, scientists discover. Mars affects Earth’s climate by dragging it closer to the Sun in 2.4 million-year cycles, scientists have found. Researchers have discovered geological evidence proving how the gravitational pull of Mars influences long-term global warming, speeding up the circulation of the oceans. The team, from the University of Sydney and Sorbonne University, used drilling data dating back 65 million years from hundreds of sites worldwide to look at how deep-sea currents change over time. Earth is around 200,000 years into the current warming cycle, and will reach the next warming peak in around one million years.”

Since the last El Nino began and partially due to the reduction of aerosols in the atmosphere, the atmosphere has warmed more and faster than anyone anticipated. Either things will go back to trend when El Nino ends later this year, or we are in uncharted territory with regard to atmospheric warming.

BOOM!

Can you say, executive overreach?

From The Washington Post

The Biden administration on Wednesday finalized stringent new tailpipe emission rules that will force automakers to toss most of their gas-powered models to the curb by 2030 and sell primarily electric vehicles.

The unprecedented move from the Environmental Protection Agency is part of President Biden’s climate change agenda meant to overhaul the U.S. auto industry and Americans’ travel habits, but it’s expected to face legal challenges.

The *Morning Dispatch* added, "Benjamin Zycher, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute focusing on energy and environmental policy, questioned the actual climate benefits of the rule—which, “under the explicit EPA assumptions and estimates, would be about 0.023°C by 2100,” he wrote in a comment submitted to the EPA in July. “Because the standard deviation of the surface temperature record is 0.11°C, that effect would not be detectable.””

War, Energy and Food

From *Geopolitical Futures*

A Ukrainian lawmaker claimed that France was considering deploying a European military mission in northern Ukraine to free up Ukrainian troops who are guarding the border with Russia's ally Belarus. Citing conversations with unspecified French colleagues, Aleksey Goncharenko said France is attempting to form a coalition, likely including Poland and the Baltic states. The number of troops has not been decided, but French President Emmanuel Macron is committed to the idea, Goncharenko said.

Miscellany

The power of teamwork



There's never a wizard around when you need one (I dreamed of having a mentor like Merlin - still do)

