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- The World Is Now Facing 10 Million COVID Cases, and a Half-Million Deaths
- Court Orders Brazil's Mega Food Producer JBS To Protect Its Meatpacking Staff from COVID-19
- Novel Coronavirus Contagion Is Expanding in German Meat Industry
- 'Don't Take Your Foot Off the Gas!' IMF Frantic in New, Gloomy World Economy Forecast
- Syria and Yemen Demonstrate the Twin Horrors Brought On by War and Sanctions
- U.S. Envoy for Arms Control Suggests China Is Becoming More Nuclear Warlike
- Foreign Policy Expert Fu Ying Discusses China's Policy in the Face of U.S. Moves Toward Decoupling
- National Security Adviser O'Brien Insults China's President Xi as 'Heir to Stalin'
- Beijing Coronavirus Outbreak Largely under Control, Epidemiologist Explains
- President Xi Jinping Focuses Like a Laser on Eliminating Chinese Poverty This Year as Planned

EDITORIAL

The World Is Now Facing 10 Million COVID Cases, and a Half-Million Deaths

June 25 (EIRNS)—In reviewing the global situation around the coronavirus pandemic over the last couple of weeks, it is hard to not be reminded of the mass psychosis which swept across most of Europe in the mid-14th century in response to the Black Death. Now, as then, the behavior of entire nations and peoples can only be described as mad—apparently oblivious to the real-world consequences of their actions, and inaction.

On Wednesday, June 24, the world hit a total of about 9.3 million cases of COVID-19, which is growing by about 180,000 new cases per day. There are now 480,000 total deaths, with some 5,600 added each day. At this rate (and things will probably escalate, not diminish in the weeks ahead), within four days, on this coming Saturday or Sunday, the world will have hit 10 million COVID-19 cases with a half-million deaths. The U.S. has about one-quarter of the world total in both categories.

In the U.S., the highest five-day moving daily average of new cases occurred in mid-April, at 34,760. On June 23, that number hit 34,720, and it is still rising—after having hit a low of about 20,000 per day two weeks ago. That is more than a 70% increase, and it portends a corresponding, if not exactly proportional, leap in hospitalizations and fatalities shortly down the line. As pretty much every serious epidemiologist and expert has stated, and even many state governors have concurred, the new sharp increase is not a reflection of increased testing—it is proportionally far greater. For example, Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) at the University of Minnesota, said “This is not an artifact of just more testing at all.” World Health Organization Director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference yesterday: “We expect to reach a total of 10 million cases within the next week.”

In reviewing the deepening civilizational crisis confronting humanity, [Helga Zepp-LaRouche](#), in her weekly strategic webcast today, kept returning to the central cause of the systemic collapse: the stupidity of those who continue to push geopolitical and neo-liberal policies, long after they have failed completely. For example, take the coronavirus pandemic. Our emphasis has been that what is required is a worldwide “Health Silk Road,” as the cause of the pandemic has been the economic policies of the last 40 years which have destroyed health care in much of the advanced sector, and never allowed it to be developed in the former colonial nations.

This is the same problem with the global economic collapse. According to the IMF, and several reports from economic think tanks, we are headed toward what one called an “economic apocalypse.” The only way to address this is the way the Schiller Institute will in its conference this Saturday, with a mobilization to bring together the four most powerful nations—the U.S., China, Russia and India—to establish a New Bretton Woods.

Russian [President Vladimir Putin](#)’s June 18 article on the historic background to World War II is a major contribution to cutting the Gordian Knot on the strategic situation with such a summit process. As Helga Zepp-LaRouche put it in the conclusion of her June 24 statement, “[Putin’s Discussion of the Second World War Can Prevent World War III!](#)”:

“President Putin ends his article with a reference to the summit of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, which he has proposed, and which the other four heads of state have already agreed to. This summit, he says, should frankly discuss, among other things, issues of preserving peace and in particular, of overcoming the economic crisis which has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. How severe the impact of the pandemic will be, he points out, depends decisively on the ability of these countries to work together, as real partners, in an open and coordinated manner, and to revive those high humanist ideals and values for which their fathers and grandfathers fought shoulder to shoulder.

“Such a summit must be supported by all peace-loving nations and people, because only the combination of the United States, Russia and China can implement the needed reorganization of the hopelessly bankrupt financial system through a new Bretton Woods credit system, and hopefully, the desolate state of the world will convince France and Great Britain that they have to give up their colonial and imperial traditions.

“Vladimir Putin’s initiative to use the 75th anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War to launch an international discussion about the historical truth of the causes of World War II is a brilliant flank, which may possibly prevent the world from sleepwalking once again into a new world war.”

COLLAPSING WESTERN FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Court Orders Brazil’s Mega Food Producer JBS To Protect Its Meatpacking Staff from COVID-19

June 25 (EIRNS)—A Brazilian labor court has ordered the country’s mega food producer/processor, JBS SA, to test its workers for COVID-19 at one of its meatpacking plant in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, amidst reports that 32 meat-packing plants in the country have infected workers, Reuters reported June 23. This is a pattern seen in similar plants in the U.S. and Europe.

Rio Grande do Sul is Brazil’s third-largest chicken exporter and producer. JBS was ordered to test all workers at its Tres Passos plant in the state and put any worker who tested positive on 14 days paid leave. Thus far, 4,957 workers in the state’s meatpacking plants, across 23 municipalities, have tested positive, accounting for 24.15% of the states 19,710 cases.

Novel Coronavirus Contagion Is Expanding in German Meat Industry

June 25 (EIRNS)—After the mass infections at Tönnies in Rheda-Wiedenbrück and Wiesenhof near Oldenburg, another slaughterhouse now reports coronavirus infections. According to information from the

Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) media network, it is a slaughterhouse of the Danish Crown company in Cloppenburg. According to this, three employees had tested positive for coronavirus.

Germany, like most European countries, used to have a slaughterhouse in every town, generally run by the local municipality or a consortium of local meat producers. Such facilities were so overloaded with EU pro-animal regulations and facing competition from meat cartels, that they were shut down and replaced with the private meat industry. But some cases, such as the city of Fürth, show that where there is a political will, city slaughterhouses can survive.

Slave-labor conditions in the German meat industry were already exposed by the Germany's public health institute, the Robert Koch Institute, reported the "German Foreign Policy" news website on May 12: "Disastrous living conditions of Eastern European slaughterhouse workers in Germany lead to massive infections with the COVID-19 virus.

"The infection of hundreds of workers from Eastern and Southeastern Europe with the COVID-19 virus in Germany causes protests by the diplomatic missions of their countries of origin. The workers who work at low wages for German slaughterhouses often live in disastrous conditions; According to the Robert Koch Institute, this resulted in a 'striking accumulation' of tuberculosis cases among Romanian slaughterhouse workers in 2018. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic is now favored by the fact that their desolate living conditions have not been improved since then, but have continued to be ignored. The situation of Eastern and Southeastern European workers in Germany results from the fact that the stark income gap in the EU often leaves citizens from peripheral countries with little choice but to earn their wages in the wealthy center of the European Union; they have to put up with the lowest wages and miserable living and working conditions. In this way, they secure cheap exports and a leading global market position for the German meat industry."

‘Don’t Take Your Foot Off the Gas!’ IMF Frantic in New, Gloomy World Economy Forecast

June 25 (EIRNS)—The International Monetary Fund just issued an update to its April forecast of a 3% decline in world GDP, to now predict that the collapse will be 4.9%. France, Italy and Spain are forecast to have drops of over 12%, followed by the U.K. with over 10% and Germany and the U.S. with or close to 8%, Russia with over 7% and Japan with almost 6%. Only China will show a growth rate—of 1%.

Since their mid-April projection, economic data suggest “even deeper downturns than previously projected,” the Fund said. And the new forecast assumes countries will not re-impose comprehensive lock-downs even if the pandemic flares up again.

John Lipsky, a former IMF senior adviser who is now with the Atlantic Council, explained in the *Washington Post* what the IMF is really trying to say. “Today’s IMF report is a warning to the world about what will happen if policymakers take their foot off the gas.... The uncertain spread of the virus, risk of rising trade tensions, and debt vulnerabilities in emerging economies all lead to the same conclusion—we have not done enough”—meaning even further quantitative easing and hyperinflationary measures are required.

Syria and Yemen Demonstrate the Twin Horrors Brought On by War and Sanctions

June 25 (EIRNS)—If there were any two exhibits to show why the regime of permanent warfare and accompanying sanctions must be brought to an end, they are Syria and Yemen. UN officials, humanitarian and economic experts have been warning that both countries are on the edge of utter disaster due to the wars and sanctions against both countries. Schiller Institute President Helga Zepp-LaRouche has repeatedly insisted that all sanctions against nations must be immediately lifted, because under the current pandemic conditions they lead to genocide.

In Syria, Joseph Daher, who teaches at Lausanne University in Switzerland and is a part-time affiliate professor at the European University

Institute in Florence, Italy, where he works on the Wartime and Post-Conflict in Syria Project, told the Carnegie Middle East Center's Diwan blog yesterday that the Caesar Act and general sanctions "could—and probably will—contribute to intensifying socioeconomic problems in Syria. They could lead to the deepening impoverishment of some sections of the population and represent a further obstacle to economic recovery."

Daher doesn't deviate from the official narrative that Assad and "his cronies" are mostly responsible for the collapse of the Syrian economy, but he does acknowledge that sanctions are worsening economic conditions in the country. He notes that sanctions targeting any entity working on supporting the production or import of oil and gas in Syria "will create even greater shortages of these resources and increase their price. This will have dire consequences for ordinary Syrians as well as increase production costs for manufacturing and agriculture, both highly dependent on oil and gas."

Regarding Yemen, UN humanitarian coordinator Mark Lowcock told the UN Security Council on June 24 that Yemen will "fall of a cliff" if humanitarian aid is not massively stepped up. Lowcock reported, among other things, that the \$1.35 billion pledged at a Saudi-sponsored donors conference earlier this month was only about half of what was promised last year and far less than what is needed. He warned that as a result, incentive pay for 10,000 aid workers will be cut. "Water and sanitation programs that serve 4 million people will start closing in several weeks," he said. "About 5 million children will go without routine vaccinations, and by August, we will close down malnutrition programs. The wider health program, which 19 million people benefit from, will stop too." Lowcock further warned that Yemen's economy "is heading for an unprecedented calamity, due to the lack of fuel deliveries since June 8 and the collapse of the Yemeni rial which has caused a 10-20% rise on food prices in the last two weeks alone." Lowcock stated that the coronavirus pandemic is adding another misery for Yemenis already brought on by famine and the failure of the economy. "So, my last point, there is a stark choice before the world today: Support the humanitarian response in Yemen and help to create the

space for a sustainable political solution, or watch Yemen fall off the cliff,” he declared.

What Lowcock did not mention, but further adding to the misery in Yemen is the arrival of swarms of desert locusts. *The Herald* of Nigeria reported that a swarm of billions of locusts arrived in the capital Sana’a on June 24, invading crops and leaving farmers of the war-torn Arab country in despair. According to local residents and farmers, earlier this month, the desert locusts invaded several other Yemeni provinces.

STRATEGIC WAR DANGER

U.S. Envoy for Arms Control Suggests China Is Becoming More Nuclear Warlike

June 25 (EIRNS)—Marshall Billingslea, the special presidential envoy for arms control, all but accused China of preparing for nuclear war during a press conference from NATO headquarters yesterday. China, of course, did not participate in the June 22 arms control meeting in Vienna between Billingslea and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, nor did the Chinese ever give any indication that they would consider attending. Rather than offering incentives for China to attend the meeting or accept its argument that there was no need for it to attend, Billingslea instead simply proclaimed that China had an obligation to be there and negotiate with the U.S.

Second, he claimed that there’s a “tidal wave” of international pressure on China to join the U.S.-Russian talks, though there is no evidence of such pressure, and he proclaimed that he expected said pressure to grow, “because it is, simply put, unacceptable that China engage in this secretive and destabilizing buildup,” he said. That China is allegedly involved in a secret nuclear arms buildup was the next claim, for which he offered no evidence, but which forms the basis for China to participate in trilateral talks with the U.S. and Russia.

Later, he claimed that the Chinese are engaged in a “very worrisome shift” in their thinking about the use of nuclear weapons, implying that they

have abandoned their long-held doctrine of minimal deterrence, the third claim for which he provided no evidence. “Apparently, they intend to achieve some form of nuclear parity with both the United States and Russia,” he averred. “And whether that parity is qualitative at the outset or perhaps quantitative, this seems what they are determined, in fact, to do.” He pointed to China’s alleged activities at the Lop Nur test site and Chinese pursuit of a nuclear triad as “proof” of the country’s “shift” in thinking about nuclear weapons.

Foreign Policy Expert Fu Ying Discusses China’s Policy in the Face of U.S. Moves Toward Decoupling

June 25 (EIRNS)—Fu Ying, former vice foreign minister and the former chair of the National People’s Congress Foreign Affairs Committee, and who now chairs the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University, penned a lengthy and very sobering article regarding the situation facing China with the intense anti-China drumbeat coming out of the U.S. While she hopes that reason will prevail in the U.S. and that a complete decoupling will not occur, she—and Chinese leaders—are preparing for more to come. Fu says there is no indication that the outcome of the U.S. elections will make any difference, in particular, as she fears that the elections look like they will be centered around anti-China rhetoric.

She observes that the COVID epidemic, which she compares with 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis, has been a major game-changer in the international situation, and has served to exacerbate the tendencies in the U.S. toward greater unilateralism. What is China to do in that kind of situation? she asks. Continue to establish good working relationships with the rest of the world, stand fast in promoting cooperation rather than competition, and promote multilateralism rather than go-it-alone solutions.

As the U.S. retreats from international cooperation, China should move forward in utilizing those cooperative mechanisms that have already been established in dealing with major issues facing mankind, she writes. China must also do more to explain itself to the world. “In short, China has grown

from a weak country to a big country with stronger power and certain international influence,” Fu concludes.

National Security Adviser O’Brien Insults China’s President Xi as ‘Heir to Stalin’

June 25 (EIRNS)—In a speech today, National Security Adviser Robert O’Brien gave a blood-curdling speech at the Arizona Commerce Conference Center in which he compared Chinese President Xi Jinping to Joseph Stalin. The speech is one of four that are planned, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Attorney General William Barr, and FBI Director Christopher Wray giving the follow-ups in the near future. Inside China, these are viewed as part of the Trump re-election bid, making the theme “China, China, China,” as the Republican Congressional Committee advised weeks ago.

Deputy National Security Adviser Matthew Pottinger is said to have had a role in the speech, but O’Brien also refers to John Garnaut, an Australian journalist formerly with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, who has come to play a role in the Australian government. “The Chinese Communist Party is a Marxist-Leninist organization. The party chairman Xi Jinping sees himself as Josef Stalin’s successor. The Chinese Communist party is the last ruling party that never split with Stalin, with the partial exception of North Korea.” There is thus a direct line from Stalin, to Mao, to Xi.

Then he went through the crimes of Stalin, followed by the CCP’s supposed “camps” in Xinjiang, its suppression of the press, and its total monitoring of the population. “But this is not just the concern of the Chinese people, but also of you,” he said. Because the CCP, he claimed, is also monitoring your calls, looking at your Facebook pages, and keeping track of your goings-on, essentially listing what is done as a matter of course by the U.S. National Security Agency, but putting instead a “Chinese” hand to it. He also alleged that the CCP is intent upon instituting control over the whole world, and “Americans should be concerned,” because “Xi Jinping’s ambitions for ideological control are not limited to

his own people. The CCP's stated goal is to create community of common destiny for mankind.”

The ostensibly mild-mannered O'Brien is a real piece of work. Raised a Catholic, he converted to Mormonism in his 20s, and spent time at an all-white university in South Africa during apartheid. His only public writing at that time was an article condemning the alleged depredations of the anti-apartheid movement.

THE NEW GLOBAL ECONOMIC ORDER

Beijing Coronavirus Outbreak Largely under Control, Epidemiologist Explains

June 25 (EIRNS)—On Thursday, China had 19 new cases of COVID-19, of which 13 were in Beijing, 1 in neighboring Hebei Province, and 5 from Chinese overseas travelers returning home, reported Associated Press. This brings to 249 the total cases since the outbreak around the wholesale market in Beijing. Three million tests were carried out, centered around the massive market area. Beijing had 100 cases break out over the June 12-15 extended weekend, but quick action allowed the authorities to declare the virus contained by June 18. The subsequent testing seems to have confirmed this.

Rather than shut down the entire city as was done in Wuhan, the authorities have issued restrictions in those parts of the capital that have been affected by the virus. They have also shut down most of the food markets in the southwestern part of Beijing. Air travel has also been restricted from Beijing to other parts of the country prevent the spread. The schools have also been canceled. Wu Zunyou, the chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said today that the city had contained the outbreak.

The Chinese health authorities are also using mass testing as a major element in controlling the virus. Teams of volunteers knocked on doors, made phone calls, and messaged through WeChat, conveying that that, if individuals had been to the market in the last two weeks, they should

contact local authorities immediately. Beyond that, they took extra precautions for the vulnerable, such as targeting care homes for the elderly.

Anyone who was a particularly close contact of someone who had tested positive was taken to isolation sites. By June 23, seven of the forty neighborhoods had graduated from the strict measures that had lasted for about ten days.

President Xi Jinping Focuses Like a Laser on Eliminating Chinese Poverty This Year as Planned

June 25 (EIRNS)—As the COVID-19 threat began to subside in China, President Xi Jinping has been thoroughly engaged in moving forward with the goal of eliminating poverty in China in the year 2020. As the country began to gradually return to production, President Xi spent his time traveling to Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces and last week to Ningxia to examine the effects of the anti-poverty efforts in the rural areas.

“The mission of achieving the goal of poverty alleviation as scheduled already had many hard bones to bite, and the epidemic has increased its difficulty. It must be mobilized and deployed as soon as possible,” Xi said, calling the campaign “significant to both China and the world.... Poverty alleviation has always been an important part of my work, and I spent the most energy on it. ... Some poor people can eat meat only a few times a year. Many children do not go to school or drop out of school. Many people are basically sick,” he was quoted by the Teller Report on June 24. Of his continual travels to the countryside to see the conditions of the small farmers, Xi said, “Only by seeing the real situation of poverty in China can we make the right decision.”

- Watch the [Morning Briefing with Harley Schlanger](#) on Friday June 26: Every weekday morning Harley will brief you on what you need to know to start your day. Subscribe to the LaRouchePAC YouTube channel and hit the notifications button to be notified when Harley’s briefings are posted. Or you can listen to the audio file on [SoundCloud](#).