

California Water and Infrastructure Report

Formerly, the “California Drought (and Flood) Update”



For September 6, 2018

by Patrick Ruckert

Published weekly since July, 2014

An archive of all these weekly reports can be found at both links below:

<http://www.californiadroughtupdate.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaDroughtUpdate>

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"It might be imagined that the sanest person is one who works with his hands, since he is obliged to prove constantly that the mental processes guiding his hands are in an appropriate correspondence to whatever laws of nature determine the actual results obtained...."

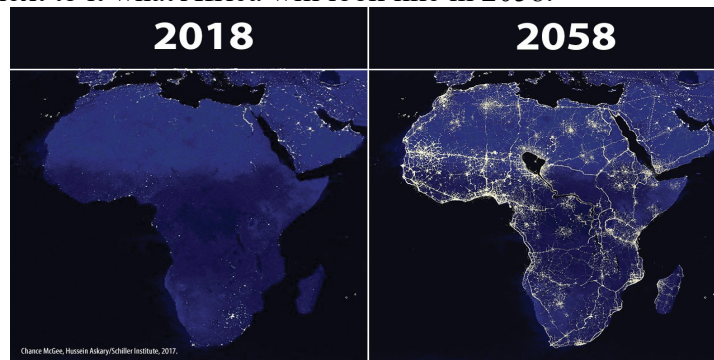
A Note To Readers

When it comes to economics, really, and unfortunately, what most people think must be classified as insane. The quote above is from our Feature this week-- an excerpt from, and a link to, the presentation of the LaRouche PAC weekly “Fireside Chat” of August 30, 2018, by Susan Kokinda. Economics, as it must be understood, is mankind's relation to the real physical universe and how mankind changes that universe through the application of the creative mind making discoveries of the principles of how that universe is organized. That simply means that those such as farmers, manufacturing workers, construction workers, and the engineers who design and build the infrastructure, usually, are the most sane about what is economics. Not simply because they get their hands dirty, but they understand what is required to feed, house and provide all that we use and consume comes from physical production.

Those with little or no connection to such activity are less so, and increasingly over the past near 50 years, makes up a majority of our population. Just one example to illustrate the problem: A colleague reported this today: “World Affairs Council of Houston meeting yesterday, where the former president of OPIC (*Overseas Private Investment Corporation*) literally argued that the reason Kenyan farmers are trapped in poverty is because they don't have access to Uber.”

One other area that Kokinda addresses in her presentation must be mentioned. Those who wish to

maintain their control over a population may pound you with outright lies, that is true, but more insidious is to keep people ignorant of extremely important developments in the rest of the world. Then a “small mindedness,” sets in, assuring that an alternative world to one's experience is never encountered by most. An example of that is occurring this week: Not a single word has been reported in the U.S. or British media about the truly historic conference which took place on Monday and Tuesday in Beijing, the *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAP)*. An unprecedented attendance at this conference of more than 50 African nations' heads of state, agreed to expand the African nations participation in the China One Belt One Road project of building infrastructure and industry. I should add this note here: That at the BRICS summit of heads of state in South Africa last month, President Putin of Russia stated that Russia would “light-up” Africa with nuclear power. That is part and parcel of the African Union 2063 agenda to make all African nations achieve a “middle income” level of living standards for the continent's 1.2 billion people. Below you see an actual satellite photo of Africa at night in 2018. And next to it what Africa will look like in 2058.



A link to a report on that conference in China is included just before this week's “Feature.”

We in the United States used to think of doing big things like that, and under Presidents like Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy, we did them. Had there been satellites in 1933, the entire southeast region of the United States, before the building of the Tennessee Valley Authority, looked like Africa today.

In This Week's Report

The U.S. Drought Monitor this week shows a slight intensification of drought in California.

After a three week lull in major wildfires, it appears that this week we are experiencing a new round of such fires, with the Delta Fire, south of Shasta, exploding yesterday, shutting down the I-5 in both directions.

The Oroville Dam Update begins with a new video on the repairs to the spillways underway. But, the major coverage this week is the report by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) that the Oroville spillways construction and cost estimate has now topped \$1 billion. There is the update from the DWR and links to press coverage of this development. Then there is the new report by the Division of Safety of Dams of the DWR, showing that only the Oroville Dam of all the dams in the state has an unsatisfactory rating.

While some may not like the phrase “California water wars,” the fights over water policy can be described accurately with only that phrase. This week the only item on the topic is the Trump administration maneuvers and the state government counter maneuvers to redivide up the inadequate flows of water that California presently has. Fight as they may, it will not solve that problem.

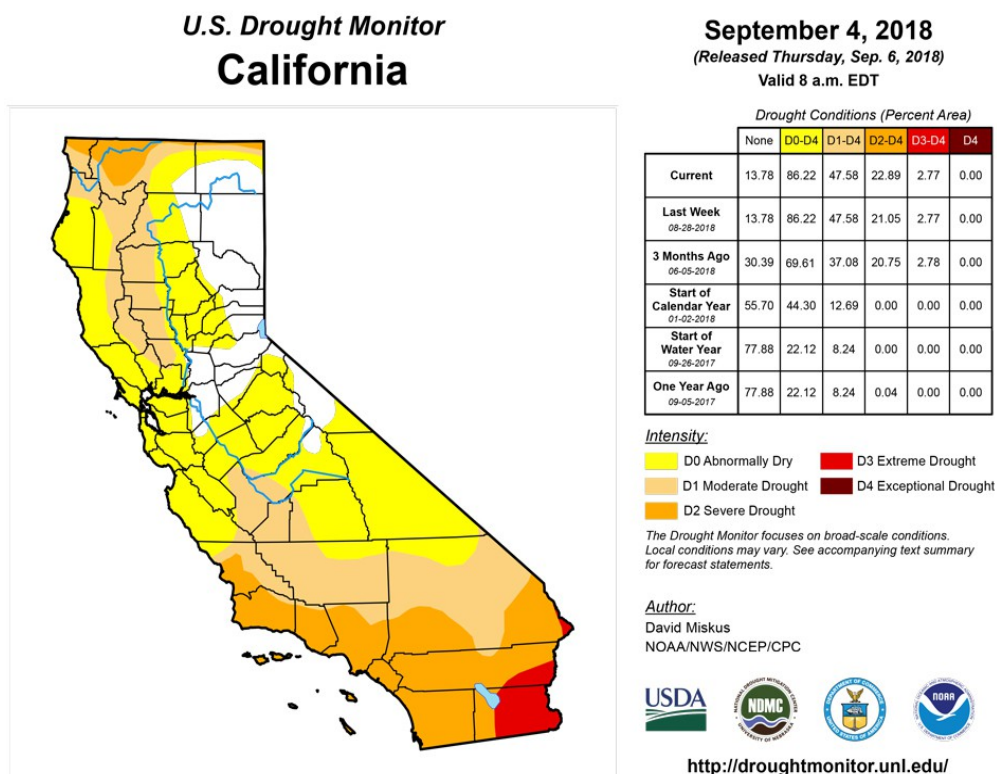
Water levels at Lake Mead and Lake Powell on the Colorado River are now dropping to dangerous

levels, as reported by one article this week.

Two more items in this report are: First, A Giant Backlog in Global Infrastructure Development, and second, the So-Called ‘Emerging Market Currency Crisis’ Is Getting Serious.

Then the report concludes with the Feature, as discussed above.

U.S. Drought Monitor - California



The West

A drier than normal Water Year during the cold season (October 2017-April 2018) with less mountain snow than normal in the southern two-thirds of the West (used for spring and summer snow melt runoff), combined with a very warm and exceptionally dry summer (May-August 2018), has produced numerous negative impacts. This was most notable in Oregon where the combination of a poor winter snowpack and a hot and dry summer have produced widespread poor pasture and range conditions and very low stream flows and livestock ponds, and required water hauling, supplemental hay, and delayed forest harvesting, along with reduced livestock herds.

Fires Once Again

After a three week lull with no major fires breaking out in the state, this week began with a new one that closed down I-5 and as of this writing is still very much out of control. Called the Delta Fire, north of Redding, it is so fast moving it scared the hell out of a lot of people. As of this afternoon, 45 miles

(72 kilometers) of I-5 in Northern California will remain closed until at least Friday morning. Meanwhile Cal Fire reports that it has exhausted its \$432 million fire budget and is requesting another \$234 million just as the most intense fire danger begins.

Delta Fire north of Redding burns 15,000 acres in first 9 hours

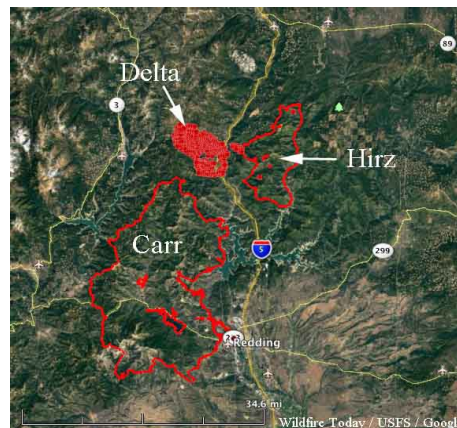
Posted by [Bill Gabbert](#)

https://wildfiretoday.com/2018/09/06/delta-fire-north-of-redding-burns-15000-acres-in-first-9-hours/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook

September 6, 2018)

The Delta Fire has closed Interstate 5 and is causing evacuations 24 miles north of Redding, California. Nine hours after it was reported at 12:51 p.m. PDT on September 5 a mapping flight found that it had burned 15,294 acres. A heat-detecting satellite four hours later saw an additional 4,000 acres on the northwest and northeast sides of the fire.

Interstate 5, the primary north/south highway in Northern California, is closed from 10 miles north of Redding at Fawndale Road to 3 miles south of Mount Shasta at Mott Road. The fire is burning on both sides of the Interstate along a five-mile stretch.



Vicinity map showing the location of the Delta, Hirz, and Carr fires. The red lines were the perimeters at 10 p.m. PDT September 5, 2018. The red dots represent heat detected by a satellite at 2:42 a.m. PDT September 6.

Initially reported as three fires, they merged into one, exhibiting extreme fire behavior with rapid rates of spread up to one mile per hour. Wednesday evening the fire front was more than three miles wide on the northern side with 300-foot flame lengths.

Abandoned trucks litter California highway as wildfire rages, shuts down I-5

by Associated Press

Thursday, September 6th 2018

<https://katu.com/news/nation-world/abandoned-trucks-litter-california-highway-as-wildfire-rages-shuts-down-i-5>

REDDING, Calif. (AP) — An explosive wildfire closed down dozens of miles of a major California freeway only weeks after a nearby blaze that left neighborhoods in ruins and killed eight people.

Truckers abandoned their vehicles as flames roared up hillsides. In a video, a passenger in a vehicle screams: "Oh my God, I want to go!" as trees burst into flames and sheets of fire roiled on the side of

the roadway.

About 17 big-rigs were abandoned and at least four caught fire, Lt. Cmdr. Kyle Foster of the California Highway Patrol's Mount Shasta office told the Los Angeles Times.



A fire rages as motorists travel on Interstate 5 near Lake Shasta, Calif., Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2018. (Jerri Tubbs via AP)

Oroville Dam Update

Video: Oroville Spillways Phase 2 Update August 29, 2018

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=e9kDFx3cUZg
[California DWR](#) Published on Sep 5, 2018

Material is processed at the rock crushing plant before being transported to the roller-compacted concrete (RCC) plant for the manufacture of RCC. Heavy haulers are continuously loaded with RCC, which is immediately placed on the southern half of the emergency spillway apron. Crews then work to spread, shape, and compact the RCC into the final form.

Oroville Dam repair costs soar past \$1 billion

By Ralph Varabedian

Sep 05, 2018 | 9:35 PM

<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-oroville-cost-20180905-story.html>

Fixing the Oroville Dam spillway wrecked by storms in 2017 will cost \$1.1 billion — a \$455-million hike from initial estimates — the state Department of Water Resources announced Wednesday.

The swelling cost can be blamed on design changes that have been made over the last 16 months and damage to the facility near Oroville, Calif., that was far more extensive than initially presumed, the department said. The Department of Water Resources designed the repairs and issued a contract to Kiewit Corp. in April 2017 based on an estimate that the company could perform the work for \$275 million. But the cost of that portion of the project has shot up to \$630 million. In addition, the department's internal costs have grown by \$100 million, reaching \$310 million. The agency also paid \$160 million in emergency response costs, including removing sediment and installing temporary power lines.

Oroville Dam repairs now exceed \$1 billion and ‘may be adjusted further’ as work continues

By Ryan Sabalow and Dale Kasler

September 05, 2018 11:28 AM

<https://www.mercedsunstar.com/news/state/california/article217824370.html>

The price tag for the [2017 crisis at Oroville Dam](#) has surged past \$1 billion.

On Wednesday, the state Department of Water Resources revealed a \$1.1 billion cost estimate for the massive repair work at America's tallest dam. The cost of the emergency response, and the subsequent repairs to the dam's two flood-control spillways, has periodically risen since officials made their initial estimates following the crisis, which triggered the [evacuation of 188,000 residents](#).

The state expects the federal government to pick up the lion's share of the costs.

The initial cost estimate was pegged at \$200 million. In January, DWR officials said the price had grown to \$870 million.

Since the crisis, state officials have said they expect the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reimburse the state for up to 75 percent of the costs, with the local water districts that store water behind Oroville Dam covering the rest.

So far Mellon said FEMA agreed to pay 75 percent of the \$116 million in costs submitted by the state. That figure hasn't changed since January. Mellon said the state is still submitting expenses to FEMA for possible reimbursement, but the process could take a long time before it's all sorted out.

But the possibility that FEMA could reject some of the state's funding requests have lingered since the spring 2017 when then--DWR Director Bill Croyle told a legislative hearing that FEMA could reject reimbursement if the agency believed the crisis was caused by poor maintenance.

Oroville Spillways Construction and Cost Estimate Update

Published: Sep 05, 2018

From the Department of Water Resources

<https://water.ca.gov/News/News-Releases/2018/Sept-18/Oroville-Spillways-Construction-and-Cost-Estimate-Update>

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today provided an update on construction activities and estimated costs for the Oroville Spillways Emergency Recovery Project.

Main Spillway

- November 1, 2018 is a public safety construction milestone to complete placement of all concrete on the main spillway. Dry finishing, concrete curing, joint sealing, completing sidewall backfill and site clean-up on the main spillway will continue after November 1.
- The upper chute is 63 percent complete. Crews have placed 50 of 150 erosion-resistant concrete (ERC) structural slabs and two of 50 ERC structural walls on the uppermost 730 feet of upper chute.
- The middle chute is 77 percent complete. Crews continue to place ERC structural slabs and walls on the middle chute. To date, crews have placed 175 of 228 slabs and 51 of 76 walls.
- Repair work on the dentates is 45 percent complete. Placement of reinforcing steel and ERC slabs on the energy dissipaters, or dentates, at the base of the main spillway is ongoing.

Emergency Spillway

- Placement of roller-compacted concrete (RCC) on the southern half of the emergency spillway

splashpad is 72 percent complete. Crews have temporarily stopped RCC placement for scheduled maintenance on the RCC batch plant. RCC placement will resume on Monday, Sept. 10.

- The RCC buttress at the base of the emergency spillway will be built later this year. Drilling of steel dowels into the emergency spillway monolith structure that will support the buttress is complete.
- Work at the emergency spillway site is not dependent on the public safety construction milestone and will continue past November 1, 2018.



*A drone provides an overview of the recovery effort on the upper chute of the Lake Oroville main spillway and the emergency spillway splashpad on the hillside above the secant pile wall at the Butte County, California site.
DWR/2018*

Cost Estimate Update: As work continues to meet the November 1, 2018 public safety construction milestone to fully reconstruct the main spillway, DWR has updated its cost estimates. The current estimate for emergency response and reconstruction of the main and emergency spillways is \$1.1 billion. Cost estimates are based on actual and projected work and may be adjusted further as work continues through completion of the project in 2019.

DWR will continue to submit expenditures to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for reimbursement. To date, FEMA has approved reimbursement of \$87.4 million of the \$116.5 million submitted by DWR.

To view photos and video of the Oroville Spillways construction, visit DWR's [Oroville Spillway photo gallery](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

Report: Oroville Dam has unsatisfactory rating for 2nd year in a row

KCRA Radio

Sep 4, 2018

[Mike Luery](#)

<https://www.kcra.com/article/yikes-woman-discovers-7-foot-boa-constrictor-in-living-room/22992660>

OROVILLE, Calif. (KCRA) —

A new report on the safety of more than 1,200 California dams reveals only one dam is listed as unsatisfactory -- and that dam is Oroville.

The [new report by the Division of Safety of Dams in the Department of Water Resources](#) shows an old problem is still active at Oroville Dam, which has the “unsatisfactory” rating due to safety deficiencies.

The new report shows Oroville Dam is still listed as unsatisfactory for the second year in a row.

The Department of Water Resources said it is committed to restoring the spillway to protect residents

downstream, which could be a critical step in rebuilding public confidence.

California Water Wars

Trump administration talks of boosting Central Valley water deliveries. But is it just talk?

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-trump-water-20180902-story.html>



San Luis Reservoir is used by both state and federal water managers to store exports from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. (Gary Coronado / Los Angeles Times)

With talk of boosting water deliveries to Central Valley agriculture, the Trump administration is telling growers exactly what they want to hear.

But given California's complex water system and a web of federal and state environmental regulations, such promises could prove more political than practical. An Aug. 17 memo from Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, which directed agencies to give him a plan within 25 days to send more water to Central Valley agriculture, was met with cheers from angry farmers who have for years complained that endangered species protections are cutting their irrigation deliveries and wasting water supplies. "This gives ... water users hope that there will be a more balanced approach to water supply adequacy and reliability that is sorely needed on our farms and in our rural communities," Frances Mizuno, interim executive director of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority, said in a statement.

But experts say there is little the Interior can do on its own to reverse the delivery decline. California's massive federal irrigation system, the Central Valley Project, must comply with U.S. Endangered Species Act requirements and adhere to state environmental regulations and water rights permits.

The Interior Department's attempt to do that under President George W. Bush's administration was thwarted by the courts.

Federal and state export operations are also intertwined in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta — the center of California's sprawling water supply system — to a degree that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for Interior to strike out on its own.

Zinke ordered the Bureau of Reclamation, which oversees the Central Valley Project, and other Interior agencies to develop an "initial plan of action" that would — among other things — maximize water deliveries, streamline federal environmental reviews of project operations and prepare "legislative and

litigation measures” to increase deliveries.

The same day Zinke sent his memo, the reclamation bureau made a potentially more substantive move.

Regional reclamation director David Murillo gave notice that his agency wanted to formally start negotiations to revise a longstanding agreement that coordinates state and federal water operations in the delta and the Central Valley.

A review of the 1986 pact has been underway for several years. But federal and state agencies have yet to settle on changes to the agreement, which in some ways favors state operations in the delta.

Because the federal system has significantly more upstream reservoir capacity than the State Water Project, the Central Valley Project under certain conditions must release more fresh water to prevent delta salinity levels from climbing.

Revise the terms so the state assumes more of the water quality burden, and the Central Valley Project could send more water south to Westlands and other irrigation districts.

The reclamation bureau’s demand to start negotiations “is a real attempt to gain leverage over the state,” said attorney Kate Poole of the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group.

But state water contractors, including Southern California agencies, are bound to fight any revisions that hurt their delta deliveries. And the process could drag on for years.

Colorado River

Water levels continue to drop at Lake Mead, Lake Powell

Colorado River basin, which feeds the two reservoirs, has been drying out over the last two decades

By [The Associated Press](#) |

September 3, 2018

<https://www.denverpost.com/2018/09/03/lake-mead-lake-powell-drought-colorado-river/>

PHOENIX — Water levels at Lake Mead and Lake Powell are dropping to dangerous levels, reflecting the Colorado River’s worsening “structural deficit,” scientists said.

Scientists from the Colorado River Research Group said Lake Powell has declined because of extra water releases flowing into Lake Mead, the Arizona Republic reported last week.

“I want people to know that what’s going on at Lake Mead is very, very closely tied to what’s going on at Lake Powell,” Doug Kenney said, the group’s chair and a professor at the University of Colorado. “We’re draining Lake Powell to prop it up.”

Lake Powell is about 48 percent full, and Lake Mead is about 38 percent full. By the end of the year, Powell’s levels are projected to fall 94 feet (29 meters) below where the reservoir stood in 2000 when it was nearly full.

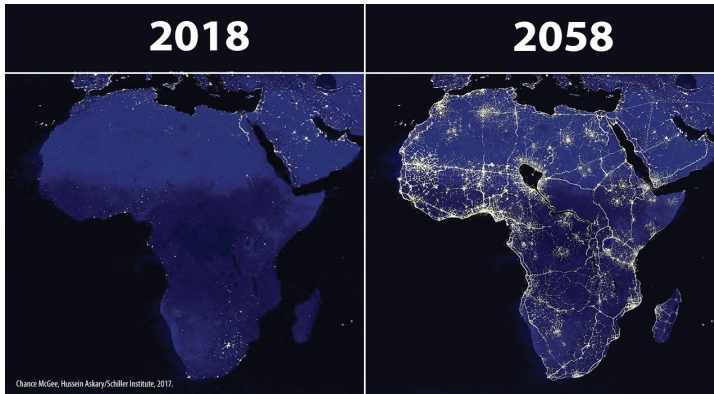
The Colorado River basin, which feeds the two reservoirs, has been drying out over the last two decades, scientists said. With the demands from farms and cities exceeding the available the water supply, the strains on the river and reservoirs are being compounded by growing population, drought and climate change.

The Colorado River and its tributaries support about 40 million people and more than 7,800 square miles (20,200 square kilometers) of farmland.

Infrastructure

Giant Backlog in Global Infrastructure Development: Transport, Electricity, Water

Sept. 5 (EIRNS)—The investment special broadcast yesterday by ARD, Germany's national first television network, shed light on the giant underdevelopment of infrastructure globally. At the moment, and certainly for some time, China is the only really major investor, with its New Silk Road strategy, the special observed.



According to OECD figures, investments in the range of \$71 trillion are required globally by 2030. Dirk Rogowski, manager of Veritas Investment, which has created a special infrastructure fund, sees the need for \$94 trillion by 2040—of which in his view \$15 trillion are not yet covered. Nearly half of that sum will have to go into transport infrastructure—already now 31.7 million km of road globally require maintenance. “That is 40 times the distance between Earth and Moon and back,” Rogowski said.

In terms of energy, the United Nations states that still some 1.1 billion humans have no access to electricity, and global demand will increase by 40% in the next two decades. Water supply is another area, where giant investments are required—estimated to cost \$7.5 trillion by 2030—and the UN states that currently some 663 million humans have no access to fresh water.

An Historic Moment: China-Africa — 'A Shared Community of Interest for All Humanity'

<https://larouchepac.com/20180904/historic-moment-china-africa-shared-community-interest-all-humanity>

The deliberations of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit yesterday in Beijing mark an historic shift for humanity, for all time. The centuries-long colonialist era, under the British imperium or under whatever other disguises it has been perpetrated—is now over and done with. This was an implicit premise of President Xi Jinping in his keynote, and in the remarks of his fellow speakers—all institutional leaders: President Cyril Ramaphosa, of South Africa, in the BRICS; President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, current chair country of the African Union (AU); Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations; and Moussa Faki Mahamat, AU Commission Chairman. AU Commission Chairman Faki announced that the African Union will open a permanent representative office in Beijing, during his visit.

Even the dramatic visual setting of the Xi panel underscored the significance of the event. Seated on stage behind the speaker's lectern, facing outward to the thousands in the audience, were the heads of state and government of 53 African nations. "The confidence of African leaders is now on the world

stage," observed Schiller Institute President Helga Zepp-LaRouche today. Collaborating with China, "Africa will be a powerhouse of the future."

President Xi Jinping announced specific commitments and plans for joint work, and spoke in powerful images of the spirit involved. He said that China and Africa will "walk together towards prosperity." We will "think with one mind, and work with one heart."

And That Financial Crisis Just Keeps Bubbling

So-Called 'Emerging Market Currency Crisis' Is Getting Serious

Sept. 4 (EIRNS)—The currencies of many countries resumed and/or accelerated their fall Monday, as public warnings became louder of blowouts in the global corporate/household debt bubble. Figures from former European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet interviewed by AFP ("could be more devastating than the financial crisis of 2008"), to JPMorgan Chase's star "quant" (quantitative analyst) Marko Kolanovic on CNBC ("great liquidity crisis" later in 2019) were warning of crisis, or even "social chaos."

A typical financial press warning was "Global Debt Soars, Along with Fears of Crisis Ahead" in the *Sydney Morning Herald* Sept. 4: "Ten years after the worst financial panic since the 1930s, growing debt burdens in key developing economies are fueling fears of a new crisis that could spread far beyond the disruption sweeping Turkey. [This] is only a preview of debt problems that could engulf countries such as Brazil, South Africa, Russia and Indonesia, some economists say."

A London *Telegraph* warning piece, on Sept. 2, "The Ticking Time Bomb That Could Blow Into a Financial Crisis," was reposted in New Zealand and Australia financial sites. It focused on the market in corporate "leveraged loans," most often used in leveraged buyouts (LBOs) of companies, and now totaling well over \$1 trillion in the United States alone, more than doubled since 2012. The article uses repeated comparisons to the crash scenes in the well-known film "The Big Short," as the LBO market today.

An op-ed in the *South China Morning Post*, "Emerging Markets Currency Crisis Is the Product of the Global Liquidity Deluge," long-time financial columnist Anthony Rowley wrote, "What is scary about this impending new currency crisis is that it could also precipitate a debt crisis ... particularly in the corporate sector.... What is happening now in corporate debt markets, mainly in emerging economies, should be worrying people much more than it is. Why? For one, corporate debt in emerging and developing economies now significantly exceeds levels before the 2008 global financial crisis."

Rowley says that capital controls "are on the cards" for many economies—pointing to a return toward Bretton Woods regulations. Also on the cards are currency defense measures: Kyodo News reported in late August that the Japanese and Chinese governments are discussing possible bilateral currency swaps between their central banks in case of a financial crisis. The swap being negotiated is far larger than the Japan and China have set up before (\$27 billion compared to \$3 billion).

Argentina's plunging currency led the way, falling another 5.5% from Sept. 1-4; the Australian dollar fell to a 20-month low; the Indian rupee to a 5-year low; Indonesia's rupiah to a 6-year low. Brazil's real fell 2% on Monday, to a 2.5-year low. The South African rand fell 2% more, forcing the rise of its 10-year interest rate to 9.45%. ABN Amro Bank forecast Turkey's lira would fall to an unheard-of 8.2 to the dollar by the end of the year, in "a severe crisis, a perfect storm."

Waves of corporate debt defaults are coming, against European, British, and also U.S. banks.

Feature

Reality vs Insanity

By Susan Kokinda

LPAC Fireside Chat

August 30, 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5550XLBpKQ>

What follows is an excerpt from Susan Kokinda's presentation:

Reality has to be defined from a Promethean standpoint: That is, how does man know the universe and act on the universe? Nothing which operates below the principled fight between an oligarchical system and a truly human system is reality!

Back to LaRouche's discussion of this question how you shape the thinking of the population: It's not surprising where LaRouche locates the segment of society which is most susceptible to sanity. He says, "It might be imagined that the sanest person is one who works with his hands, since he is obliged to prove constantly that the mental processes guiding his hands are in an appropriate correspondence to whatever laws of nature determine the actual results obtained. ... Sanity, the appropriate perception of real connections in the world, involves the thinker's assuming personal responsibility for the consequences of his concepts in respect *to those persons who act upon them in connection with lawfully determined processes.*" [Emphasis in original.]

Now, look, this is where the blue-collar vote for Trump comes from. Blue-collar workers, farmers, these are people who have a connection to reality. You can't go into some fantasy world and think that you can plant corn in January in Montana, and that somehow you're going to have a crop. There's enough of a connection to the real world, such that, you maintain a layer of the population which was able to respond as it did in the 2016 election, and give Trump the margin of victory, which gave him the Presidency.

But then, the question is, what is the layer of the less-susceptible to reality, and obviously, the further you get away from productive employment, or living in a productive household, the more controllable you are. And when you look at the composition of our economy today, I think the manufacturing base of our society is somewhere in the 20% range, you have a huge pool of people, who are floating around in a state of mind where reality never knocks on the door.

But then, LaRouche takes it one more step, and this is what I want to really stress in terms of how people think, in terms of intervening into this midterm process. He gets into the nitty-gritty of the actual brainwashing, and what LaRouche says, is:

"The small group operates exactly like a brainwashing group, particularly if established within a controlled aversive environment. Its smallness precludes its attempting to exert any meaningful influence on the major issues of material consumption, leisure, political institutions and so forth. Consequently, it is compelled to limit its deliberations to secondary issues, to alternatives as defined in the limits for demands established by the aversive authority controlling the larger environment."

Look: An entire layer of the population has been decoupled from reality. And it's not just fake news. It is this question of removing people from any relationship to the real universe to causal action. The fact that the causes of the crisis facing the nation cannot be addressed in this kind of process, is the fundamental aspect of this. Instead, the population descends into smaller and smaller identities and issues, which will never, ever fundamentally change anything.