Rockefeller Foundation To Disband '100 Resilient Cities Project', Lay Off Staff

But, it's not what you think. They say the major objectives of 100RC have been met and that the resources are going to be repurposed to other projects. The Rockefeller Foundation will shift some funding to the Atlantic Council, another hotbed of Trilateral Commission members. TN Editor

The Rockefeller Foundation will end funding and dismiss the staff at its 100 Resilient Cities program, the largest privately funded climate-adaptation initiative in the U.S., the foundation announced Monday.

Rockefeller will shift some of its resilience funding to the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based think tank, with a $30 million grant to the council's Adrienne Arsht Center for Resilience, the foundation said in a press release. Rockefeller also announced a $12 million grant "to allow continued support and transition time to the 100 Resilient Cities network through much of 2019."

"With a new grant in place to the Atlantic Council and new structures within the Rockefeller Foundation to carry forward its resilience work, the grant that funds 100RC will conclude in 2019," the foundation said in its release.

The 100 Resilient Cities program was started by Rockefeller in 2013 to help U.S. cities — including Boston, Miami, New York and Los Angeles — as well as cities overseas prepare for threats related to climate change. Bloomberg News reported last week that the foundation was planning to disband the program.

A spokesman for Rockefeller, Matt Herrick, said the 100 Resilience Cities program isn't shutting down. Instead, he said, it is "transitioning" to other offices, including the foundation's Jobs and Economic Opportunities initiative.

"The work will continue in one form or another through 2019," he said.

'Tough Day'

Andrew Brenner, a spokesman for 100 Resilient Cities, said by email that Monday was "a tough day."

"This morning our staff of 86 was informed that their last day would be July 31, 2019 — myself included — with severance following," Brenner said by email. He said he believed that the change would result in the closure of the organization's offices in New York City, Mexico City, London and Singapore.

Read more: Rockefeller's Climate Resilience Program Said to Be in Jeopardy
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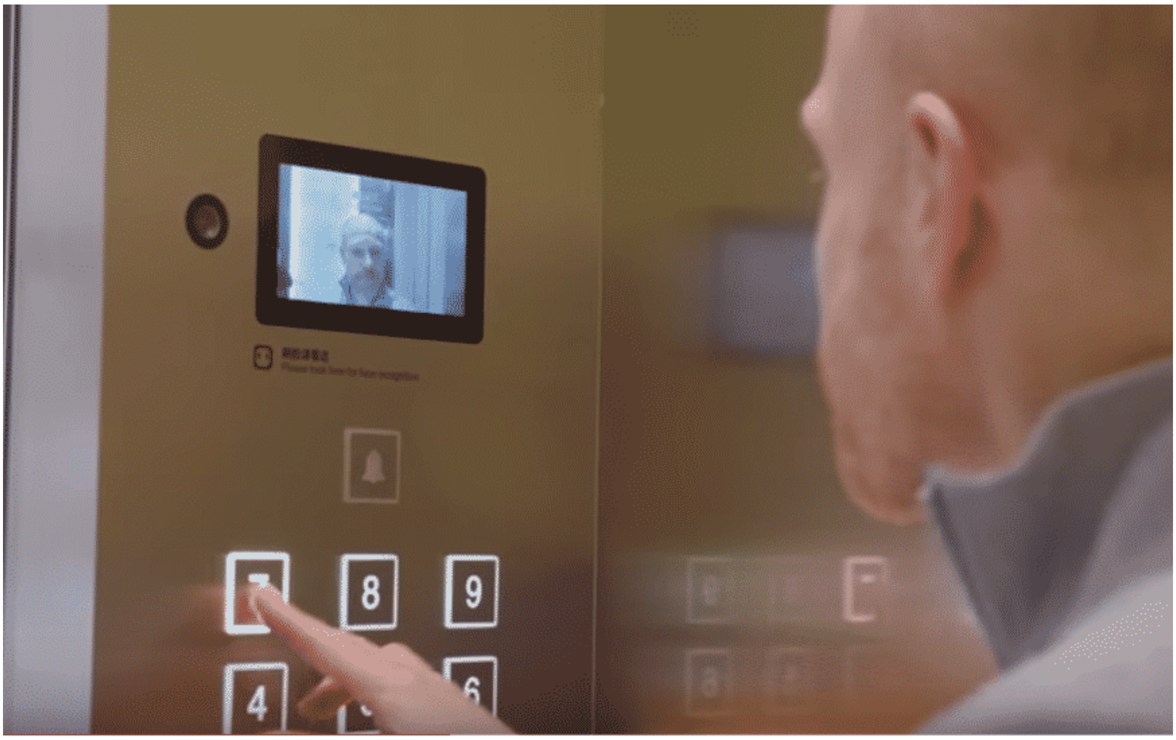


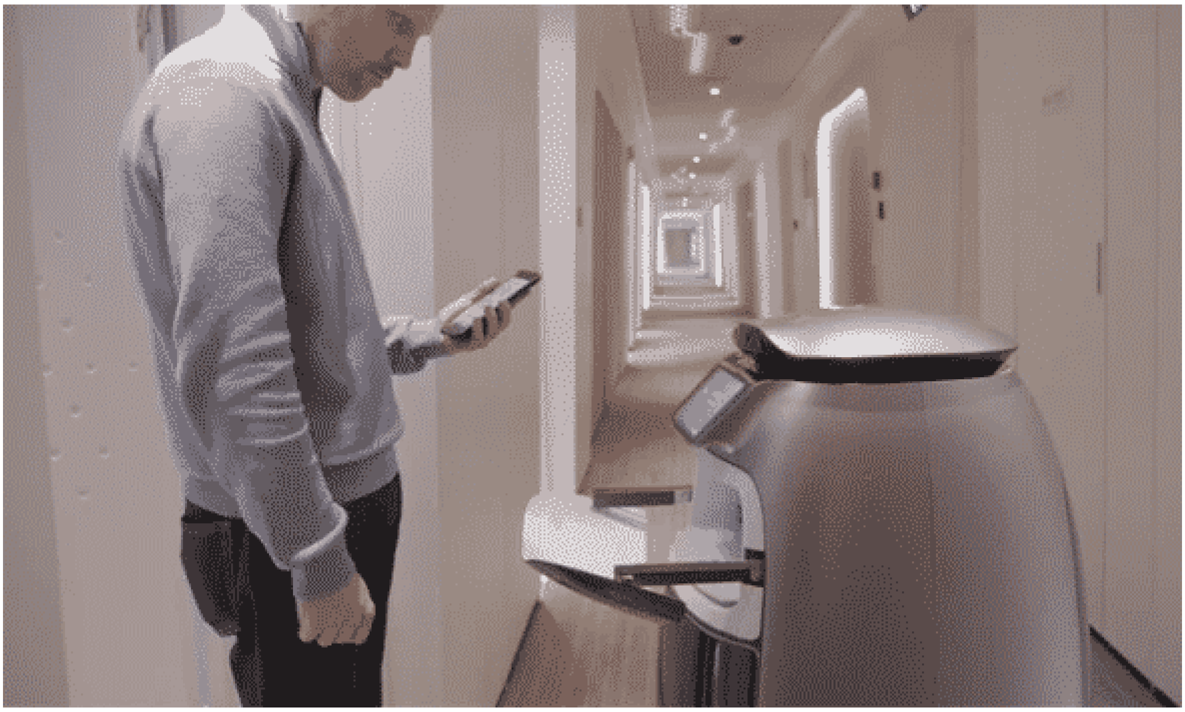
Facial Recognition Coming To Hotels, Making Check-In Easy But Creepier

Hotels are being retrofitted from top to bottom into “smart hotels” where everything is controlled by apps, AI and robots. Ostensibly, maids still have a job to make up rooms after a stay. Facial recognition is your ticket to VIP treatment. □ TN Editor

Alibaba has created the hotel of the future and it’s wild, wonderful, and just a little creepy. FlyZoo, which is reportedly a Chinese pun for “must stay,” is a 290-room ultra-modern boutique hotel in Hangzhou, China that lets guests play with technology, check in with ease, and spend the night in the future for a low price of around $205—and at the cost of your privacy.

Thanks to technology culled from across Alibaba’s vast network of companies, most notably Fliggy, Alibaba’s online travel platform, guests can immerse themselves in the crossroads of hospitality and technology. [As *Skift* reports], it all starts with booking through an app, where guests can pick a floor and a view, exploring the minimalist room.

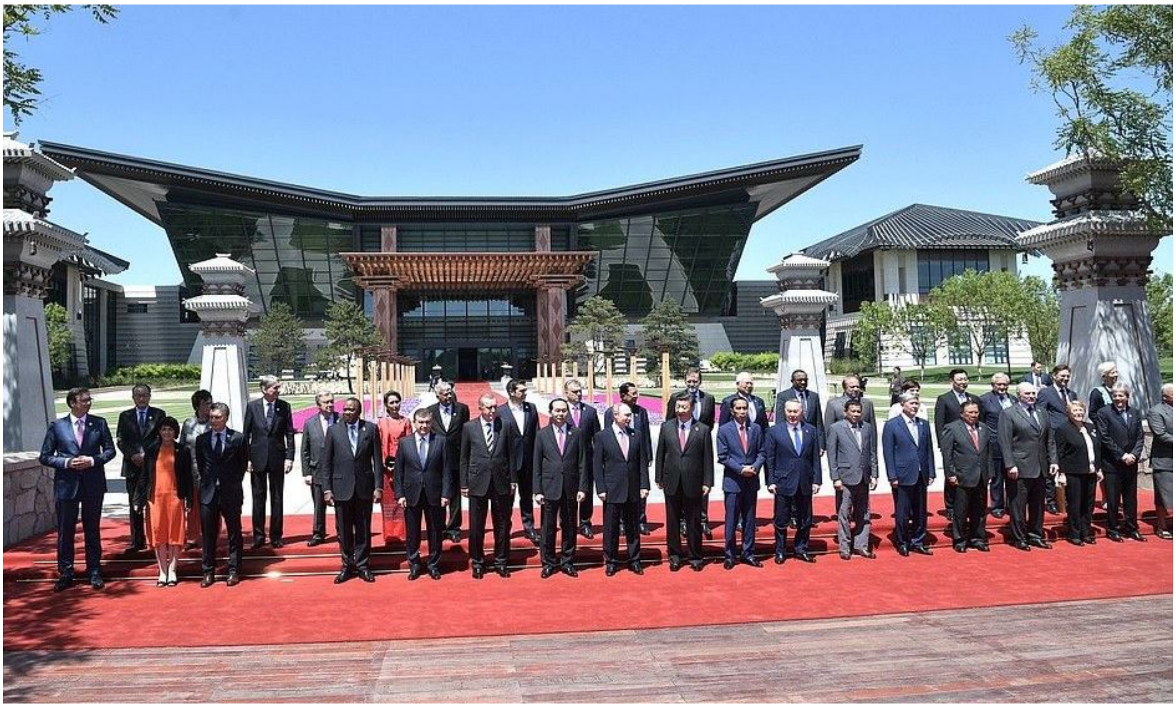
Check-in is a breeze, too, especially for Chinese guests who can use the app to scan their faces to expedite the process (for now foreign guests must use lobby kiosks). No need to pick up a key from the lobby, because the elevator will scan your face and take you to the correct floor, and your face will open the room door.



Once inside the room, requests for water, new towels, extra pillows, and more will be taken by Ask Genie, Alibaba’s Alexa-like assistant, and a three-foot tall robot will deliver the goods. Too hot? Too cold? Too many lights? Ask Genie to shut the curtains or crank up the heat.

Hungry guests can head to the hotel restaurant where a robotic bartender is mixing up drinks and food ordered via the FlyZoo app will be delivered by other robots. Forget your wallet? No problem: Face-scanning technology will send the charges straight to your room bill.

The hotel’s technology is impressive, because as *Skift* notes, Alibaba had a lot of tech to pull from: There’s Fliggy providing user experience design, Damo Academy for artificial intelligence, data analytics labs, and robotics, and Tmall Marketplace for marketing.



Europe Embraces China's Belt And Road Initiative

As a Technocracy, China is driven to create infrastructure and develop the global supply chain, both of which are central to its Belt and Road initiative. Europe is playing both sides of the fence with America on one hand, and China on the other. TN Editor

The multipolar transformation that is occurring across the Eurasian continent confirms the industrial and diplomatic cooperation between China and the European continent in spite of strong opposition from the United States.

Xi Jinping's visit to Europe confirms what many of us have been writing about over the past few months and years, namely, the reality of an ongoing global transformation of a world dominated by the United States to a pluralistic one composed of different powers collectively shaping a multipolar world.

Europe therefore finds itself in fortuitous position, balanced as it is between its old world links to the United States on the one side and the fledgling Eurasian one being ushered in by Russia and China on the other.

Countries like Germany and France, but even the United Kingdom, have long implemented commercial policies that encourage integration between the countries of the Eurasian supercontinent. In 2015, the United Kingdom was among the first Western countries to join the Chinese Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which finances projects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The Chinese BRI mega project kicked off in 2014 with the ambitious goal of integrating trade between China and Europe by sea and by land, in the process incorporating all the countries in between. The idea, as a natural consolidation of trade, is to shorten the delivery times of goods by rail and integrate sea routes. The project covers not only ports and rail lines but also the construction of technological infrastructure to achieve global interconnectivity using the 5G technology developed by the Chinese tech giant Huawei.

Germany and France have over the years deepened their partnerships with Beijing. Paris in particular boasts historical ties with China stemming from the nuclear cooperation between China General Nuclear Power Group (CGNPC) and Électricité de France (EDF) stretching back to 1978, as well as the aerospace one between Airbus and the Chinese aviation companies that has been ongoing since 1985.

Italy has in recent months approached the BRI as a result of the new government consisting of the Lega Nord and Five Star Movement (M5S). The decision to sign a memorandum of understanding between Beijing and Rome underlines how the new government wants to maintain a balanced position between Washington and Beijing in certain sectors. This is exactly the approach of Germany, which has elected to continue deepening its ties with Moscow vis-a-vis hydrocarbons and Nord Stream 2 in the face of pressure from Washington. Moreover, both Germany and Italy have confirmed that they want to rely on Huawei for the implementation and management of 5G traffic, which is fundamental to a world dominated by the internet of things.

The decisions of Germany, France and Italy to continue their cooperation with Moscow and Beijing in various fields flies in the face of the narrative advanced by the American-controlled scaremongering media controlled that attempts to discourage European politicians from acting in the interests of their countries and engaging with Russia and China.

Call For SDR As 'True Global Currency' Is A Red Herring

The SDR has been around for 50 years and is structurally incapable of becoming the world's 'true global currency'. Thus, this story by a globalist academic and high-ranking UN official is a red herring meant to deflect attention away from Fintech that is expected to finance the Green Economy, aka Sustainable Development and Technocracy.

We (Sutton and Wood) wrote about SDRs and Bancor in the 1970s. It never caught on then, and there is no reason that it will catch on now. The current pressure on global finance is to scrap all national currencies. Since SDRs are based on a basket of those currencies, they will be worthless as well. TN Editor

This year, the world commemorates the anniversaries of two key events in the development of the global monetary system. The first is the creation of the International Monetary Fund at the Bretton Woods conference 75 years ago. The second is the advent, 50 years ago, of the Special Drawing Right (SDR), the IMF's global reserve asset.

When it introduced the SDR, the Fund hoped to make it "the principal reserve asset in the international monetary system." This remains an unfulfilled ambition; indeed, the SDR is one of the most underused instruments of international cooperation. Nonetheless, better late than never: turning the SDR into a true global currency would yield several benefits for the world's economy and monetary system.

The idea of a global currency is not new. Prior to the Bretton Woods negotiations, John Maynard Keynes suggested the "bancor" as the unit of account of his proposed International Clearing Union. In the 1960s, under the leadership of the Belgian-American economist Robert Triffin, other proposals emerged to address the growing problems created by the dual dollar-gold system that had been established at Bretton Woods. The system finally collapsed in 1971. As a result of those discussions, the IMF approved the SDR in 1967, and included it in its Articles of Agreement two years later.

Although the IMF's issuance of SDRs resembles the creation of national money by central banks, the SDR fulfills only some of the functions of money. True, SDRs are a reserve asset, and thus a store of value. They are also the IMF's unit of account. But only central banks – mainly in developing countries, though also in developed economies – and a few international institutions use SDRs as a means of exchange to pay each other.

The SDR has a number of basic advantages, not least that the IMF can use it as an instrument of international monetary policy in a global economic crisis. In 2009, for example, the IMF issued $250 billion in SDRs to help combat the downturn, following a proposal by the G20.

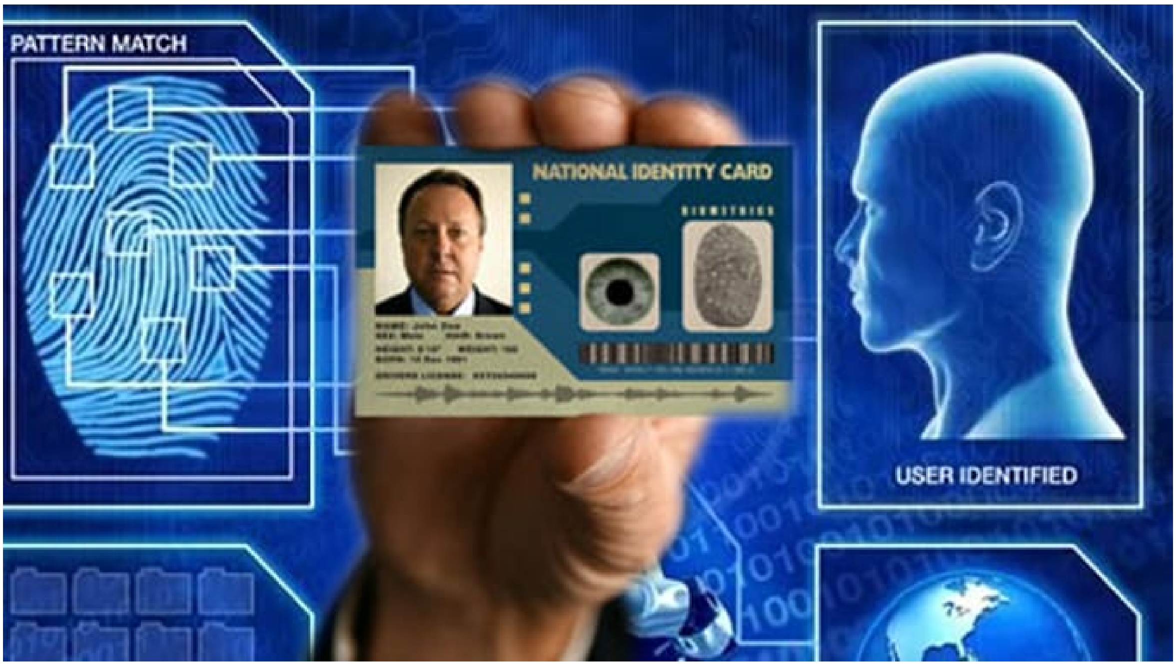
Most importantly, SDRs could also become the basic instrument to finance IMF programs. Until now, the Fund has relied mainly on quota (capital) increases and borrowing from member countries. But quotas have tended to lag behind global economic growth; the last increase was approved in 2010, but the US Congress agreed to it only in 2015. And loans from member countries, the IMF's main source of new funds (particularly during crises), are not true multilateral instruments.

The best alternative would be to turn the IMF into an institution fully financed and managed in its own global currency – a proposal made several decades ago by Jacques Polak, then the Fund's leading economist. One simple option would be to consider the SDRs that countries hold but have not used as "deposits" at the IMF, which the Fund can use to finance its lending to countries. This would require a change in the Articles of Agreement, because SDRs currently are not held in regular IMF accounts.

The Fund could then issue SDRs regularly or, better still, during crises, as in 2009. In the long term, the amount issued must be related to the demand for foreign-exchange reserves. Various economists and the IMF itself have estimatedthat the Fund could issue $200-300 billion in SDRs per year. Moreover, this would spread the financial benefits (seigniorage) of issuing the global currency across all countries. At present, these benefits accrue only to issuers of national or regional currencies that are used internationally – particularly the US dollar and the euro.

More active use of SDRs would also make the international monetary system more independent of US monetary policy. One of the major problems of the global monetary system is that the policy objectives of the US, as the issuer of the world's main reserve currency, are not always consistent with overall stability in the system.

[Read full story here…]



EU Moving Toward Universal Biometric National ID Cards

The trend for universal biometric identification is racing forward. Europe will soon add its population to the estimated 3.6 billion citizens globally that will carry a biometric national ID card by 2021. In addition, the UN has mandated that all humanity be identified by 2030. This is an essential element to implement global Technocracy. TN Editor

The European Commission has proposed a host of new measures aimed at “denying terrorists the means to act” which include the mandatory inclusion of two biometrics – fingerprints and a facial image – in all ID cards and residence documents for Union citizens and their family members issued by EU Member States.

According to the Commission’s proposal: “Up to 370 of the 440 million citizens in 26 Member States (DK [Denmark] and UK do not issue ID cards) could hold national ID cards," although "identity card ownership is common and compulsory in 15 Member States" and there are five other Member States in which citizens "are obliged to hold a non-specific document for identification purposes. In practice this very frequently is an identity card."

The measure essentially aims at fingerprinting the majority of EU citizens – which will compliment the fingerprinting of non-EU citizens as required by the Visa Information System (VIS), for those who require a visa to enter the bloc, and as foreseen by the Entry/Exit System, which will hold the fingerprints on almost all non-EU nationals exempt from visa requirements.

A document released alongside the proposals states (emphasis added):

> "*It is estimated that 80 million Europeans currently have non-machine readable ID cards without biometric identifiers. As* ***many of the EU's security measures rely on secure travel and identity documents*** *– such as the systematic checks carried out at the external borders on all citizens using the Schengen Information System – this creates a security gap, because of the increased risk of falsification and identity fraud. It also leads to practical difficulties for citizens when travelling or moving to another Member State.*
>
> *The Commission is therefore proposing measures to strengthen the security features of ID cards and residence documents of EU citizens and their non-EU family members.* ***More secure documents will enhance EU external border management, increase the protection against falsification and document fraud and make it more difficult to misuse or copy such documents.*** *This will benefit the security of all citizens, public authorities and businesses.*"

Proposals for new rules on national ID cards have been put forth alongside proposed measures to ease cross-border access to financial information for law enforcement authorities; to make the acquisition of explosives precursors more difficult; and for stricter controls on the import and export of firearms.

The Commission also published yesterday a proposal for new rules allowing easier cross-border access to "e-evidence" for police and judicial authorities, with the measures **described by civil society organisations EDRi** as "maximising risks for fundamental rights violations."

Alongside the new proposals came the latest progress report on the Security Union: **Fourteeneth progress report towards an effective and genuine Security Union** (COM(2018) 211 final, pdf)

Some official documentation (such as impact assessments) is currently unavailable. This page will be updated when it is.

Read full story here…