



New UK Home Secretary Wants ‘Backdoor’ Access To All Encrypted Messages

Patel is an ardent Boris Johnson supporter. As the new Home Secretary, her first call is for the government to gain ‘backdoor’ access to all encrypted messages. The U.S.-led ‘Five Eyes’ intel alliance is meeting with her this week. □ TN Editor

New Home Secretary Priti Patel, pictured last week in London, is having discussions with Britain’s Five Eyes intelligence allies about combating cyber threats and having better access to encrypted messages

British spies want ‘backdoor’ access to encrypted messages on social media to prevent terror threats and child abuse.

Officials from the UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand - known as the ‘Five Eyes’ intelligence alliance - are meeting in London to discuss being able to get ‘lawful access’ to WhatsApp discussions that

could be linked to crime.

It comes after the London Bridge terrorists used WhatsApp to discuss plans which British officials say helped prevent the 2017 plot that killed eight people from being identified.

One such technique suggested by the UK intelligence agency GCHQ is to allow its agents to be 'silently' added to chats or calls so they can observe the conversation without being detected.

Encryption is increasingly being used to protect privacy on social media platforms, with WhatsApp already using it, Facebook due to introduce it to its Messenger app and Google exploring 'encrypted browsers'.

Meanwhile new Home Secretary Priti Patel has pledged to strengthen Britain's links with its Five Eyes allies and confirmed they would also be discussing ways to bolster border defences and tackle foreign 'Islamist' threats.

A spokesperson for the Home Office said: 'We need to ensure that our law enforcement and security and intelligence agencies are able to gain lawful and exceptional access to the information they need.'

Five Eyes intelligence chiefs want tech firms to do more to help them and say such access would only be reserved for 'exceptional cases' where there was a 'serious threat of terrorism or child sexual abuse', with a judge or government minister having the final sign-off.

In a paper produced at the end of 2018 GCHQ and National Cyber Security centre directors Ian Levy and Crispin Robinson said it would be 'relatively easy' for a messaging service to provide 'silent' access.

The paper said: 'You end up with everything still being end-to-end encrypted, but there's an extra 'end' on this particular communication.'

'This sort of solution seems to be no more intrusive than the virtual crocodile clips that our democratically elected representatives and judiciary authorise today in traditional voice intercept solutions, and certainly doesn't give any government power they shouldn't have.'

The pair added it would be exceptional because ‘almost all users would not be affected’.

But the proposal was condemned as a ‘threat to human rights’ and opposed by 50 organisations including Apple, WhatsApp and campaigners Liberty in an open letter.

The letter said: ‘The overwhelming majority of users rely on their confidence in reputable providers to perform authentication functions and verify that the participants in a conversation are the people they think they are, and only those people.’

‘The GCHQ’s ghost proposal completely undermines this trust relationship and the authentication process.’

Read full story here...



Marty The Grocery Store Robot Aggravates Shoppers, Employees

Technocrat-minded engineers build things according to their own image and then wonder why the rest of the world yawns and says “Get Lost!” In this case, Marty the robot manages to annoy everyone. □ TN Editor

Attention shoppers: I’ve seen the future of grocery store technology, and let me tell you, we can do better.

I’m no Marty McFly. I simply reside in a small Connecticut town, which means that in addition to doing Extremely New England things like commuting to the city on the Metro North, bragging about beaches, and the fact that the state inspired the picturesque fictional town in *Gilmore Girls*, I occasionally spend some time on the weekends shopping for groceries at a local Stop & Shop.

Prior to 2019, the Stop & Shop shopping experience was similar to that offered by most any other large grocery store chain. But this year, Stop & Shop introduced giant, gray, aisle-patrolling robots at more than 200 stores in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey.

Now, food shopping comes with unprecedented levels of anxiety and absurdity.

Each of the robots weighs a massive 140-pounds and costs a whopping \$35,000. Oddly, all of the robots are named Marty, and atop their tall frames — which tower over my own 5 foot, 3 inch stature — rests a large pair of google eyes. You know, so as not to come off as *complete* faceless, emotionless, lifeless bots. If you’re confused as to what these rolling mechanical columns do, Martys also wear the following description on their bodies like a name tag:

This store is monitored by Marty for your safety. Marty is an autonomous robot that uses image capturing technology to report

spills, debris, and other potential hazards to store employees to improve your shopping experience.

Essentially, once Marty identifies a hazard using its sensors, it stops in its tracks, changes its signature operating lights from blue to yellow, and repeatedly announces, “Caution, hazard detected,” in English and Spanish. One of several catches to their existence, however, is that the robots don’t actually *clean* anything.

Marty does a whole lot of nothing

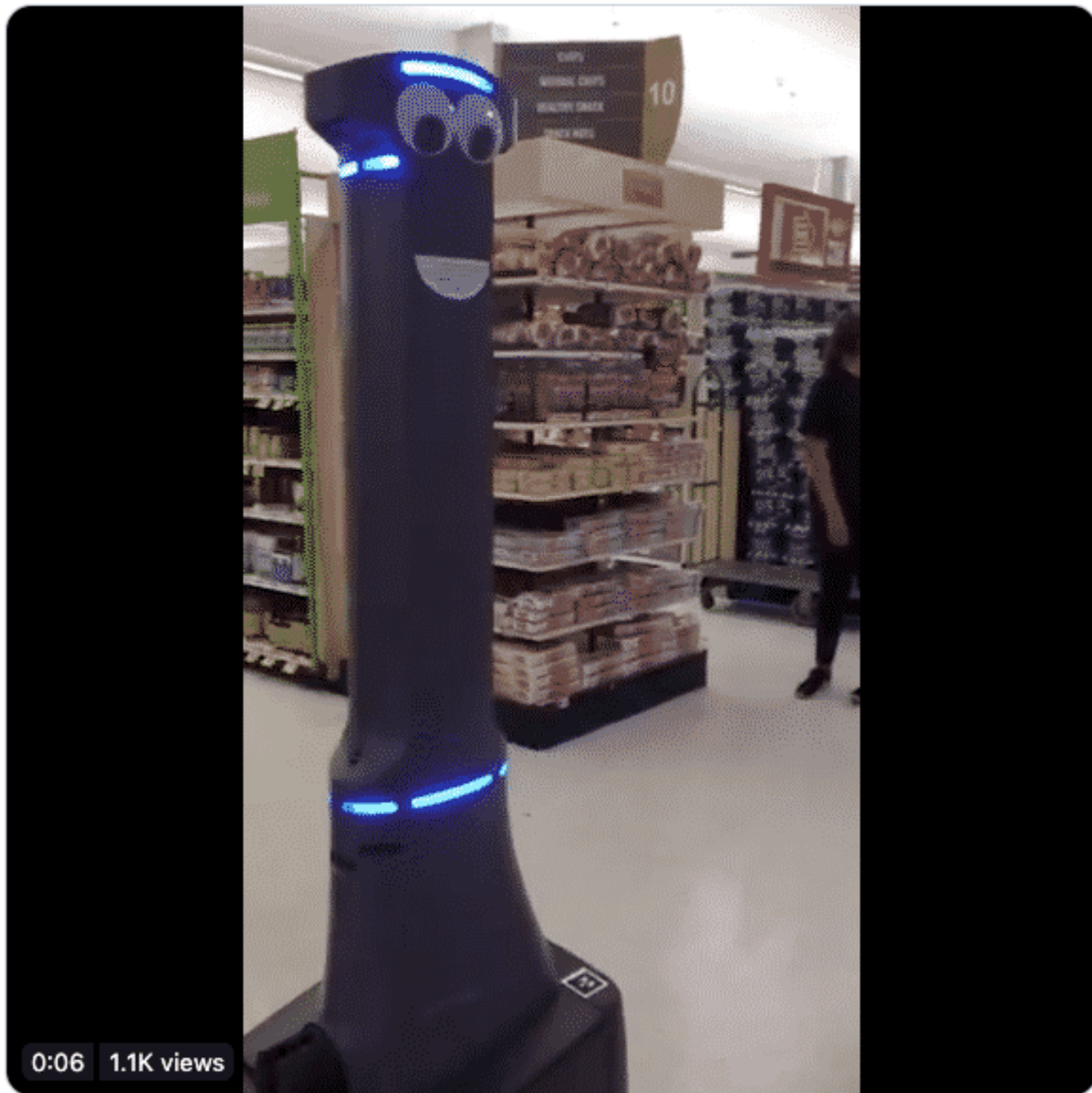
Marty is advertised as an aisle-sweeping superhero, but it’s simply a messenger that shouts about a problem until a more capable human comes and removes whatever the hazard may be. Upon learning this fact, some people, like myself and the woman heard in this video shared by Twitter user @jennlynnjordan, are rightfully confused.



Jennifer Jordan
@jennlynnjordan



Apparently my supermarket has just gotten a robot. Its name is Marty. It detects spills. Doesn't clean them, just starts shouting if it sees one.



9:02 AM · Jul 23, 2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

“Oh, I thought it washed the floor,” the unimpressed mystery shopper can be heard saying. “Wow... I’ve got my husband to tell me there’s a mess!” she continued, delivering a burn to both Marty and her semi-helpful hubby. As Jessica McKenzie reports for the New Food Economy ,

employees aren't the biggest fans of the machines either.

"It's really not doing much of anything besides getting in the way," an employee told McKenzie. And in some cases, the machines even create *morework*.

A January press release states that the in-store robots are supposed to "enable associates to spend more time serving and interfacing with customers," but one of the robot's major flaws is that its sensors appear to treat each hazard with the same level of caution. A harmless bottle cap or errant piece of cilantro will elicit the same response as a spill of clear liquid that someone could genuinely slip and injure themselves on, which means that in certain cases an employee may have to take time that could be spent interacting with a customer to walk across the store and grab a puny little grape that escaped a bag. Seems counterproductive!

[Read full story here...](#)



Green New Deal Would Cost At Least \$250K Per Household In First Five Years

The Green New Deal is economic insanity except that it would fulfill the United Nation's long-held goal of completely destroying Capitalism and Free Enterprise. Out of the ashes, Technocracy will rise triumphant. □
TN Editor

According to a new study, the Green New Deal's implementation would cost the average American family a quarter of a million dollars during the first five years. The costs are even higher for Americans living in Alaska. The study did not even take into account significant parts of the Green New Deal, since they are impossible to calculate. After all, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) hasn't even introduced an actual bill, but only a resolution calling for future bills. It's less a concrete plan and more a worldview statement justifying hundreds of future laws.

The study, jointly co-authored by the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) and Power the Future (PTF), analyzed the additional electricity demanded for various projects like decarbonizing the economy; the costs associated with shipping and logistics; the costs of new carbon-free vehicles; and the costs to retrofit every building in America. Just these four types of costs would add up to more than \$250,000 per household in the first five years, a conservative estimate.

"The Green New Deal is a radical blueprint to de-carbonize the American economy by refashioning how we grow food, move people and goods, source and distribute electricity, and build the structures where we live, work, and play. Our analysis shows that, if implemented, the Green New Deal would cost for American households at least tens of thousands of dollars annually on a permanent basis," CEI President and CEO Kent Lassman said in a statement.

"Perhaps that's why exactly zero Senate Democrats, including the resolution's 12 co-sponsors, voted for the Green New Deal when they

had the chance,” he quipped.

“Economists and experts have been warning us for months about the devastating effects of the Green New Deal, and now we have the numbers to prove it,” PTF Executive Director Daniel Turner said in a statement. “This study only calculates a fraction of the cost of Alexandria-Ocasio Cortez’s radical plan, which amounts to a socialist free-for-all with no regard for the American taxpayer.”

“No family should be forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars in the first year alone to fund AOC’s ideological wishlist. Thankfully, Americans see through the Green New Deal and are beginning to fight back,” he added.

CEI and PTF analyzed the estimated costs for households in five states — Alaska, Florida, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania. In every state except Alaska, the Green New Deal would cost a typical household more than \$70,000 in the first year of implementation, approximately \$45,000 for each of the next four years (adding up to \$250,000 for the first five years), and more than \$37,000 each year after that. In Alaska, the average family would pay more than \$100,000 in the first year, \$73,000 for the next four years, and more than \$67,000 each year afterward.

“Most provisions of the GND are so broad and open-ended that the list of potential programs necessary to implement the program is limited by the capacity of legislators to imagine a new government program,” the study notes. “Therefore, it is impossible to calculate the whole or maximum cost of the GND. However, other parts of the GND are more precise, sufficiently so that an approximate minimum cost estimate is available.”

Read full story here...



Brookings: Global Spending On SDGs Now Exceeds \$20 Trillion

Sustainable Development is rapidly degrading Capitalism and Free Enterprise with massive malinvestment to realize the Utopia-based 17 SDGs specified by the UN's 2030 Agenda.

"Malinvestment is a mistaken investment in wrong lines of production, which inevitably lead to wasted capital and economic losses." (Ludwig von Mises) Malinvestment causes booms and bubbles, which are currently seen throughout the world. □ TN Editor

Pouring several colors of paint into a single bucket produces a gray pool of muck, not a shiny rainbow. So too with discussions of financing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Jumbling too many issues into the same debate leads to policy muddiness rather than practical breakthroughs. Financing the SDGs requires a much more disaggregated mindset: unpacking the specific issues, requiring specific resources, in specific places.

In a forthcoming paper, we zoom out on the global SDG financing landscape in order to zoom back in on country-specific contexts and gaps. In particular, we consider how much the world’s governments are already spending on SDG-related issues every year, how spending varies across income levels, and how the spending patterns link to country-by-country estimates of needs. We focus on the public sector due to its lead responsibility for tackling both the public goods and the “no one left behind” issues embedded in the SDGs and the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, the latter including a “social compact” commitment to provide universal access to basic services. This research can be considered as complementary to assessments of where the private sector can best contribute to SDG financing. Below we summarize some preliminary findings, noting that all results are subject to refinement as we complete the analysis.

1. GLOBAL PUBLIC SECTOR SDG SPENDING IS ALREADY MORE THAN \$20 TRILLION PER YEAR

Our first key finding is that, as of 2015, governments around the world were already spending approximately \$21 trillion per year on SDG-related sectors: health, education, agriculture, social protection, infrastructure, justice, and conservation. If recent global economic trends continue under a business-as-usual scenario, SDG-related public spending (hereafter described more simply as “SDG spending”) likely reaches \$33 trillion or more by 2030, in constant dollar terms. In other words, global SDG spending in the public sector alone will grow by around \$12 trillion per year, simply through the world’s ongoing processes of economic growth.

Does this extra \$12 trillion per year of SDG spending tell us anything about prospects for SDG achievement? Not at all. The global aggregates are about as useful as tracking world rainfall totals when trying to grow a plant in the Sahel. First of all, as Figure 1 shows, the majority of current global SDG spending is taking place in high-income countries, telling us very little about how well each dollar is linked to SDG outcomes in each of those countries, and telling us even less about

financing adequacy in lower-income countries. Second, a majority of the SDG spending growth out to 2030 is likely to take place in fast-growing upper-middle-income countries (UMICs), but this again tells us little about how the new resources might shape better SDG outcomes in those places, or what will generate outcomes in less economically prosperous places.

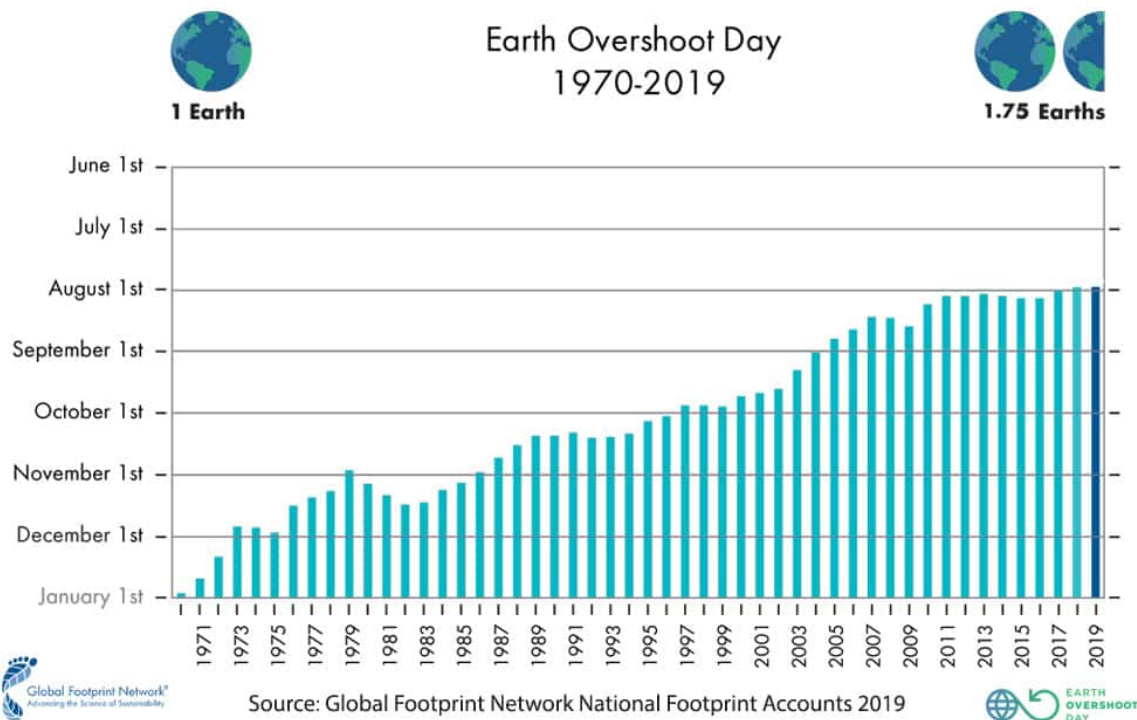
In lower-middle-income countries, we estimate that total SDG spending will increase from around \$780 billion in 2015 to more than \$1.9 trillion in 2030. This is spread across a population likely to grow from 2.9 billion people to 3.5 billion people over the same period, equivalent to a growth in per capita spending from around \$265 to around \$530. Meanwhile, in low-income countries (LICs) with even faster population growth, we estimate that SDG-related spending will increase from only around \$70 billion in 2015, roughly \$115 per capita, to almost \$180 billion in 2030, roughly \$210 per capita. This per capita figure works out to a steady 4 percent annual growth rate in the LICs.

Altogether, these numbers indicate considerable growth in SDG spending across income levels. But the huge variations in orders of magnitude also underscore how little the multitrillion-dollar growth in global annual SDG spending aggregates mean, for instance, in the world's poorest countries.

2. SDG SPENDING RISES PROPORTIONATELY WITH GDP PER CAPITA

Delving a layer deeper, our research draws attention to the limits even of considering averages by country income category. As shown in Figure 2, there is a clear relationship between public SDG spending and GDP per capita. For every dollar of higher income, countries have, on average, a correspondingly higher level of average SDG spending. Importantly, when drawing a line through the cross-section, its slope is greater than one, suggesting that SDG spending rises faster than GDP per capita. For every 10 percent higher level of average GDP per capita, we find average SDG spending to be 13 percent higher.

Read full story here...



July 29: The Day When Earth Ran Out Of Resources

Sustainable Development Technocrats have no idea how many resources the earth has to serve mankind, but that doesn't stop them from telling you that you have over-shot your annual quota. □ TN Editor

On July 29, humanity will have used nature's resource budget for the entire year, according to Global Footprint Network, an international sustainability organization that has pioneered the Ecological Footprint. It is Earth Overshoot Day. Its date has moved up two months over the past 20 years to the 29th of July this year, the earliest date ever.

Earth Overshoot Day falling on July 29th means that humanity is currently using nature 1.75 times faster than our planet's ecosystems can regenerate. This is akin to using 1.75 Earths. Overshoot is possible

because we are depleting our natural capital - which compromises humanity's future resource security. The costs of this global ecological overspending are becoming increasingly evident in the form of deforestation, soil erosion, biodiversity loss, or the buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The latter leads to climate change and more frequent extreme weather events.

"We have only got one Earth - this is the ultimately defining context for human existence. We can't use 1.75 without destructive consequences," said Mathis Wackernagel, co-inventor of Ecological Footprint accounting and founder of Global Footprint Network.

His just released book, *Ecological Footprint: Managing Our Biocapacity Budget*, demonstrates that overshoot can only be temporary. Humanity will eventually have to operate within the means of Earth's ecological resources, whether that balance is restored by disaster or by design. "Companies and countries that understand and manage the reality of operating in a one-planet context are in a far better position to navigate the challenges of the 21st century," Wackernagel writes.

Accelerate solutions to #MoveTheDate

"With Earth Overshoot Day occurring ever earlier in the year, and a big part of it being the growing amounts of CO₂ emissions, the importance of decisive action is becoming ever more evident. For this reason, we are working with all parties to find effective approaches," said María Carolina Schmidt Zaldívar Minister of Environment, Chile, and chair of the Climate COP25 scheduled this December in Santiago de Chile.

Moving the date of Earth Overshoot Day back 5 days each year would allow humanity to reach one-planet compatibility before 2050. Solutions that #MoveTheDate are available and financially advantageous. Significant opportunities are to be found in five key areas: cities, energy, food, population, and planet. For instance, cutting CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel burning by 50% would #MoveTheDate by 93 days.

Christiana Figueres, the former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bertrand

Piccard, founder of the Solar Impulse Foundation, and Sandrine Dixon-Declève, co-president of the Club of Rome, are among those who took to Twitter in recent weeks, calling to #MoveTheDate in video statements. Shoot your own statement.

Just days ahead of Earth Overshoot Day, Global Footprint Network launched the beta version of the #MoveTheDate Solutions Map where people are invited to champion existing solutions. Users can also connect with each other on the basis of geography and focus of interest, accelerating the implementation of new projects in the real world. Developed with startup Mapotic, the social platform also features solutions identified by partners, starting with Buckminster Fuller Institute award laureates.

The #MoveTheDate Solutions Map is designed to complement the Footprint Calculator. The latter, which enables people to calculate their own Ecological Footprint and their personal Earth Overshoot Day, draws more than 2.5 million users per year and is now available in eight languages, with Chinese and Portuguese most recently added.

The relevance of one-planet compatibility for successful business strategies is explored in a whitepaper by Schneider Electric and Global Footprint Network that was published July 22. Follow the twitter discussion via #SEMoveTheDate. Previous research by both organizations shows that if 100% of the existing building and industry infrastructure were equipped with available energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies from Schneider Electric and partners, the date of Earth Overshoot Day would move back by 21 days at least.

Read full story here...



Japan: Human-Animal Chimeras On Fast Track

The U.S. is already 4 years ahead of Japan in creating chimeras by injecting human stem cells into animal embryos. Technocrat scientists invent because they can, not because there is a moral imperative to do so. □ TN Editor

Supporters say research could be vital first step towards growing organs that can then be transplanted into people in need

Human-animal hybrids are to be developed in embryo form in Japan after the government approved controversial stem-cell research.

Human cells will be grown in rat and mouse embryos, then brought to term in a surrogate animal, as part of experiments set to be carried out at the University of Tokyo.

Supporters say the work - led by renowned geneticist Hiromitsu Nakauchi - could be a vital first step towards eventually growing organs

that can then be transplanted into people in need.

But opponents have raised concerns that scientists are playing God.

They worry the human cells could stray beyond the targeted organs into other areas of the animal, effectively creating a creature that is part animal, part person.

For that reason, such prolonged experimentation has been effectively banned or gone unfinanced across the world in recent years.

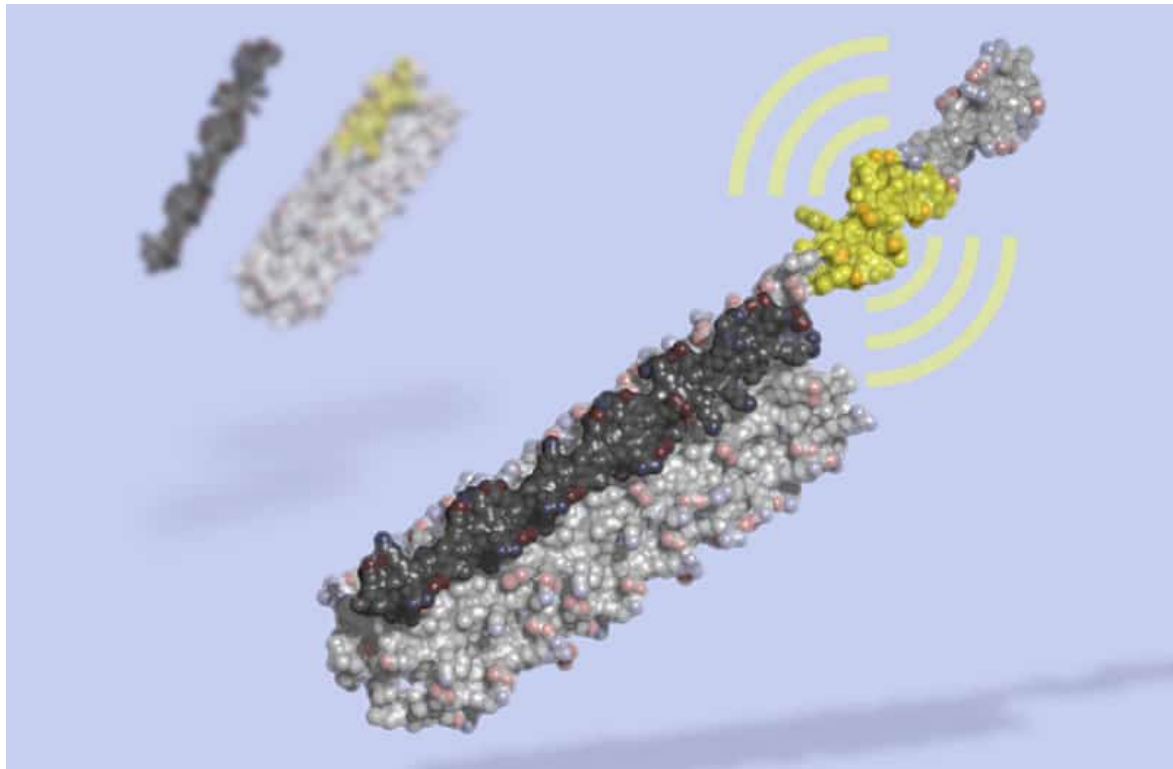
In Japan itself, scientists were forbidden from going beyond a 14-day growth period. But those laws were relaxed in March when the country's education and science ministry issued new guidelines saying such creations could now be brought to term.

Now, Dr Nakauchi's application to experiment is the first to be approved under that new framework.

"We don't expect to create human organs immediately, but this allows us to advance our research based upon the know-how we have gained up to this point," he told the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper.

He added that he planned to proceed slowly, and will not attempt to bring any hybrid embryos to term for some years, rather growing the hybrid mouse embryos to 14.5 days, when the animal's organs are mostly formed, and the hybrid rat embryos to 15.5 days.

Read full story here...



GMO: Move Over CRISPR, Here Comes LOCKR

Scientists have created 100% synthetic proteins that can control how cells behave, including the death of the cell. Since proteins are the building blocks of life, LOCKR sets a dangerous precedent. □ TN Editor
Scientists have invented a synthetic protein designed to control the inner workings of cells. In a pair of papers, published yesterday (July 24) in *Nature*, the researchers demonstrate how the tool can be used to tweak gene expression, orchestrate protein binding events, and cue functional changes in the cell in response to environmental conditions.

“Cells receive stimuli, then have to figure out what to do about it. They use natural systems to tune gene expression or degrade proteins, for example,” says Bobby Langan, a coauthor of both studies and a former graduate student at the University of Washington in an announcement. The newly designed tool—named LOCKR for Latching, Orthogonal Cage/Key pRotein—fiddles with these inbuilt systems by introducing bioactive peptides in their circuitry. The peptides only pop out when

released by specific molecular “keys.”

LOCKR consists of six helices, tightly bound to form a cage. One of the helical structures, bound more loosely than the others, can be displaced by a specific molecule, the key. When the key clicks into place, the helix moves aside and reveals a peptide customized to perform a particular function.

In their demonstrative studies, the researchers used LOCKR to trigger cell death, degrade specific proteins, and direct the movement of materials through living cells. Individual LOCKR proteins can also be connected to form circuits, systems able make changes within the cell in response to internal and external stimuli. The researchers first tested their tool in yeast, then successfully designed a modified version that works in lab-grown human cells.

“It signals the dawn of de novo designer proteins,”

[Read full story here...](#)



Population To Fall As U.S. Fertility Rates Hit 'All-Time Low'

Population reduction has been a key objective in the U.N.'s Sustainable Development implementation as expressed in its Agenda 21/2030 Agenda. Demographers have been warning for years that population collapse was imminent. □ TN Editor

The general fertility rate in the United States continued to decline last year, according to a new report from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics.

"The 2018 general fertility rate fell to another all-time low for the United States," the researchers wrote in the report, published Wednesday.

The report found that the general fertility rate dropped 2% between 2017 and 2018 among girls and women age 15 to 44 nationwide.

US fertility rate is below level needed to replace population, study says

In 2017, the total fertility rate for the United States continued to dip below what's needed for the population to replace itself, according to a separate report published by the National Center for Health Statistics in January.

America's fertility rate and the number of births nationwide have been on the decline in recent years. A report of provisional birth data published by the National Center for Health Statistics in May showed the number of births last year dropping to its lowest level in about three decades.

Now the center's latest report presents selected highlights from that 2018 birth data.

For the report, researchers examined birth certificate data from the National Vital Statistics System's Natality Data File, taking a close look at births among white, black and Hispanic women in 2018.

When examined by race, the data showed that fertility rates declined 2% for white and black women, and 3% for Hispanic women, between 2017 and 2018.

The data also showed that the teen birth rate, for ages 15 to 19, fell 7% from 2017 to 2018. When examined by race, the data showed that teen births declined by 4% for black teenagers, and 8% for white and Hispanic teens.

Also among all births, the percentage delivered at less than full term, or 39 weeks, increased — with preterm births climbing from 9.93% of births in 2017 to 10.02% in 2018, and early-term births rising from 26% in 2017 to 26.53% in 2018.

The percentages of births delivered at full-, late- and post-term declined, according to the data. Full-term births were down from 57.49% of births in 2017 to 57.24% in 2018, the data showed, and post-term births declined from 6.58% to 6.2%.

[Read full story here...](#)



Neom: World's Largest Smart City Rises In Saudi Arabia

A modern-day Babel is attempting to rise off the desert floor in the Mideast, intentionally built from the ground up with latest Smart City technology that will be run by robots and AI. □ TN Editor

The walls are covered with graffiti in the sleepy fishing village of Khurayba. There are supplications to God, advertisements for vacation rentals and house painters. Near the local school, there's a scribbled plea: "Open the windows of hope and drive out the despair."

It's here in northwest Saudi Arabia that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman wants investors to put their money to realize his US\$500 billion vision for the region. Called "Neom," it promises to be the most freewheeling part of the kingdom, with state-of-the-art resorts and smart technologies run by robots.

But it's also here where the risks to the 33-year-old prince's grand plan for his country are writ large. Neom is the boldest pillar of a social and economic transformation that so far has seen at least as many delays as successes. Indeed, the question since the prince announced the vast development at an extravaganza in 2017 has been whether it can become a reality.

A three-day trip to the region, which is roughly the size of Massachusetts, showed the scale of the task as well as the potential. Many of the locals who have lived there for years are looking forward to some prosperity, while others are concerned they will be removed and their homes bulldozed.

The area has stunning, untouched shorelines with waves rippling in the turquoise water. Purple volcanic mountains loom over the Red Sea. Historic sites include a wadi where locals believe Moses landed when he crossed over from Egypt, alighting in a valley along the water.

Construction workers have already descended on the small towns and

some building has started. The small Neom Bay airport, with its gleaming white interior, opened for commercial flights last month. Workers were driving construction equipment along the roads. An “I (heart) Neom” sign sits outside a heavily secured base camp of temporary housing for employees, the road leading to sleek white homes lined with solar-powered streetlights.

“It’s not only a vision on paper,” said Lojain Alharbi, a 25-year-old Neom employee who works as a business analyst for the sports sector. “It’s already happening.”

In an interview with Bloomberg in October 2017, Prince Mohammed said that by 2030, the completion date for his transition to Saudi Arabia 2.0, Neom will contribute US\$100 billion to economic output.

The name comes from “neo,” meaning new, and “m,” the first letter of mustaqbal, Arabic for future, he said. There will be 12 small cities or towns next to the sea in Neom and others in the valleys and mountains, he said in another interview a year later, as well as an industrial zone, a huge port and several airports.

What Neom Says Is Happening

- There’s interest from foreign companies and more talks are expected.
- Neom plans to start a fund to invest in businesses that will either be based there or sell goods and services there.
- More than 400 firms are “interested in discussing opportunities” with the fund.
- Seven foreign companies are vying to lead development of Neom Industrial City, the project’s second phase.
- Plans to build a causeway linking Saudi Arabia to Egypt are going ahead.

Yet looming large is not just the cost or the challenge of luring foreign investors into what some see as a vanity project, it’s also the politics.

As Saudi Arabia’s de facto leader, Prince Mohammed purged relatives, jailed dissidents, tightened his grip on the military and waged a war in Yemen that created the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. The murder

last year of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents in Istanbul caused an international outcry, pushing several prominent figures to withdraw from the Neom advisory board.

The project is closely tied to Prince Mohammed and until he assumes the throne when his father, King Salman, dies, there will be uncertainty about the transition and what might happen to his plans.

Read full story here...



John Whitehead: The Tyranny Of The Police State Disguised

As Law-And-Order

As police departments are further militarized and as training is increasingly degraded, overreactions are common and atrocities against innocent citizens are seen more frequently across the nation. □ TN Editor

“But these weren’t the kind of monsters that had tentacles and rotting skin, the kind a seven-year-old might be able to wrap his mind around—they were monsters with human faces, in crisp uniforms, marching in lockstep, so banal you don’t recognize them for what they are until it’s too late.” — Ransom Riggs, Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children

Enough already.

Enough with the distractions. Enough with the partisan jousting.

Enough with the sniping and name-calling and mud-slinging that do nothing to make this country safer or freer or more just.

We have let the government’s evil-doing, its abuses, power grabs, brutality, meanness, inhumanity, immorality, greed, corruption, debauchery and tyranny go on for too long.

We are approaching a reckoning.

This is the point, as the poet W. B. Yeats warned, when things fall apart and anarchy is loosed upon the world.

We have seen this convergence before in Hitler’s Germany, in Stalin’s Russia, in Mussolini’s Italy, and in Mao’s China: the rise of strongmen and demagogues, the ascendancy of profit-driven politics over deep-seated principles, the warring nationalism that seeks to divide and conquer, the callous disregard for basic human rights and dignity, and the silence of people who should know better.

Yet no matter how many times the world has been down this road before, we can’t seem to avoid repeating the deadly mistakes of

the past. This is not just playing out on a national and international scale. It is wreaking havoc at the most immediate level, as well, creating rifts and polarities within families and friends, neighborhoods and communities that keep the populace warring among themselves and incapable of presenting a united front in the face of the government's goose-stepping despotism.

We are definitely in desperate need of a populace that can stand united against the government's authoritarian tendencies.

Surely we can manage to find some common ground in the midst of the destructive, disrupting, diverting, discordant babble being beamed down at us by the powers-that-be? After all, there are certain self-evident truths—about the source of our freedoms, about the purpose of government, about how we expect to be treated by those we appoint to serve us in government offices, about what to do when the government abuses our rights and our trust, etc.—that we should be able to agree on, no matter how we might differ politically.

Disagree all you want about healthcare, abortion and immigration—hot-button issues that are guaranteed to stir up the masses, secure campaign contributions and turn political discourse into a circus free-for-all—but **never forget that our power as a citizenry comes from our ability to agree and stand united on certain principles that should be non-negotiable.**

For instance, for the first time in the nation's history, it is expected that the federal deficit will surpass \$1 trillion this year, not to mention the national debt which is approaching \$23 trillion. There's also \$21 trillion in government spending that cannot be accounted for or explained. For those in need of a quick reminder: "A budget deficit is the difference between what the federal government spends and what it takes in. The national debt is the result of the federal government borrowing money to cover years and years of budget deficits." Right now, the U.S. government is operating in the negative on every front: it's spending far more than what it makes (and takes from the American taxpayers) and it is borrowing heavily (from foreign governments and Social Security) to keep the government operating and keep funding its

endless wars abroad. Meanwhile, the nation's sorely neglected infrastructure—railroads, water pipelines, ports, dams, bridges, airports and roads—is rapidly deteriorating.

Yet no matter how we might differ about how the government allocates its spending, surely we can agree that the government's irresponsible spending, which has saddled us with insurmountable debt, is pushing the country to the edge of financial and physical ruin.

That's just one example of many that shows the extent to which the agents of the American police state are shredding the constitutional fabric of the nation, eclipsing the rights of the American people, and perverting basic standards of decency.

Let me give you a few more.

Having been co-opted by greedy defense contractors, corrupt politicians and incompetent government officials, America's expanding military empire is bleeding the country dry at a rate of more than \$15 billion a month (or \$20 million an hour)—and that's just what the government spends on foreign wars. The U.S. military empire's determination to police the rest of the world has resulted in more than 1.3 million U.S. troops being stationed at roughly 1000 military bases in over 150 countries around the world. That doesn't include the number of private contractors pulling in hefty salaries at taxpayer expense. In Afghanistan, for example, private contractors outnumber U.S. troops three to one.

No matter how we might differ about the role of the U.S. military in foreign affairs, surely we can agree that America's war spending and commitment to policing the rest of the world are bankrupting the nation and spreading our troops dangerously thin.

All of the imperial powers amassed by Barack Obama and George W. Bush—to kill American citizens without due process, to detain suspects indefinitely, to strip Americans of their citizenship rights, to carry out mass surveillance on Americans without probable cause, to suspend laws during wartime, to disregard laws with which they might disagree, to

conduct secret wars and convene secret courts, to sanction torture, to sidestep the legislatures and courts with executive orders and signing statements, to direct the military to operate beyond the reach of the law, to operate a shadow government, and to act as a dictator and a tyrant, above the law and beyond any real accountability—were inherited by Donald Trump. These presidential powers—acquired through the use of executive orders, decrees, memorandums, proclamations, national security directives and legislative signing statements and which can be activated by any sitting president—enable past, present and future presidents to operate above the law and beyond the reach of the Constitution.

Yet no matter how we might differ about how success or failure of past or present presidential administrations, *surely we can agree that the president should not be empowered to act as an imperial dictator with permanent powers.*

Increasingly, at home, we're facing an unbelievable show of force by government agents. For example, with alarming regularity, unarmed men, women, children and even pets are being gunned down by twitchy, hyper-sensitive, easily-spooked police officers who shoot first and ask questions later, and all the government does is shrug and promise to do better. Just recently, in fact, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals cleared a cop who aimed for a family's dog (who showed no signs of aggression), missed, and instead shot a 10-year-old lying on the ground. Indeed, there are countless incidents that happen every day in which Americans are shot, stripped, searched, choked, beaten and tasered by police for little more than daring to frown, smile, question, or challenge an order. Growing numbers of unarmed people are being shot and killed for just standing a certain way, or moving a certain way, or holding something—anything—that police could misinterpret to be a gun, or igniting some trigger-centric fear in a police officer's mind that has nothing to do with an actual threat to their safety.

No matter how we might differ about where to draw that blue line of allegiance to the police state, *surely we can agree that police shouldn't go around terrorizing and shooting innocent, unarmed*

children and adults or be absolved of wrongdoing for doing so.

Nor can we turn a blind eye to the transformation of America's penal system from one aimed at protecting society from dangerous criminals to a profit-driven system that dehumanizes and strips prisoners of every vestige of their humanity. For example, in Illinois, as part of a "training exercise" for incoming cadets, prison guards armed with batons and shields rounded up 200 handcuffed female inmates, marched them to the gymnasium, then forced them to strip naked (including removing their tampons and pads), "bend over and spread open their vaginal and anal cavities," while male prison guards promenaded past or stood staring. The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the entire dehumanizing, demoralizing mass body cavity strip search—orchestrated not for security purposes but as an exercise in humiliation—was legal. Be warned, however: this treatment will not be limited to those behind bars. In our present carceral state, there is no difference between the treatment meted out to a law-abiding citizen and a convicted felon: both are equally suspect and treated as criminals, without any of the special rights and privileges reserved for the governing elite. In a carceral state, there are only two kinds of people: the prisoners and the prison guards.

No matter how we might differ about where to draw the line when it comes to prisoners' rights, surely we can agree that no one—woman, man or child—should be subjected to such degrading treatment in the name of law and order.

In Washington, DC, in contravention of longstanding laws that restrict the government's ability to deploy the military on American soil, the Pentagon has embarked on a secret mission of "undetermined duration" that involves flying Black Hawk helicopters over the nation's capital, backed by active-duty and reserve soldiers. In addition to the increasing militarization of the police—a de facto standing army—this military exercise further acclimates the nation to the sight and sounds of military personnel on American soil and the imposition of martial law.

No matter how we might differ about the deference due to those in uniform, whether military or law enforcement, surely we can agree that America's Founders had good reason to warn against

the menace of a national police force—a.k.a. a standing army—vested with the power to completely disregard the Constitution.

We labor today under the weight of countless tyrannies, large and small, disguised as “the better good,” marketed as benevolence, enforced with armed police, and carried out by an elite class of government officials who are largely insulated from the ill effects of their actions. For example, in Pennsylvania, a school district is threatening to place children in foster care if parents don’t pay their overdue school lunch bills. In Florida, a resident was fined \$100,000 for a dirty swimming pool and overgrown grass at a house she no longer owned. In Kentucky, government bureaucrats sent a cease-and-desist letter to a church ministry, warning that the group is breaking the law by handing out free used eyeglasses to the homeless. These petty tyrannies inflicted on an overtaxed, overregulated, and underrepresented populace are what happens when bureaucrats run the show, and the rule of law becomes little more than a cattle prod for forcing the citizenry to march in lockstep with the government.

No matter how we might differ about the extent to which the government has the final say in how it flexes its power and exerts its authority, surely we can agree that the tyranny of the Nanny State—disguised as “the better good,” marketed as benevolence, enforced with armed police, and inflicted on all those who do not belong to the elite ruling class that gets to call the shots— should not be allowed to pave over the Constitution.

At its core, this is not a debate about politics, or constitutionalism, or even tyranny disguised as law-and-order. This is a condemnation of the monsters with human faces that have infiltrated our government.

For too long now, the American people have rationalized turning a blind eye to all manner of government wrongdoing—asset forfeiture schemes, corruption, surveillance, endless wars, SWAT team raids, militarized police, profit-driven private prisons, and so on—because they were the so-called lesser of two evils.

Yet the unavoidable truth is that the government has become almost indistinguishable from the evil it claims to be fighting, whether that evil takes the form of terrorism, torture, drug trafficking, sex trafficking, murder, violence, theft, pornography, scientific experimentations or some other diabolical means of inflicting pain, suffering and servitude on humanity.

No matter how you rationalize it, the lesser of two evils is still evil.

So how do you fight back?

How do you fight injustice? How do you push back against tyranny? How do you vanquish evil?

You don't fight it by hiding your head in the sand.

We have ignored the warning signs all around us for too long.

As I make clear in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, the government has ripped the Constitution to shreds and left us powerless in the face of its power grabs, greed and brutality.

What we are grappling with today is a government that is cutting great roads through the very foundations of freedom in order to get after its modern devils. Yet the government can only go as far as "we the people" allow.

Therein lies the problem.

The consequences of this failure to do our due diligence in asking the right questions, demanding satisfactory answers, and holding our government officials accountable to respecting our rights and abiding by the rule of law has pushed us to the brink of a nearly intolerable state of affairs.

Intolerable, at least, to those who remember what it was like to live in a place where freedom, due process and representative government actually meant something. Having allowed the government to expand and exceed our reach, we now find ourselves on the losing end of a tug-

of-war over control of our country and our lives.

The hour grows late in terms of restoring the balance of power and reclaiming our freedoms, but it may not be too late. The time to act is now, using all methods of nonviolent resistance available to us.

“Don’t sit around waiting for the two corrupted established parties to restore the Constitution or the Republic,” Naomi Wolf once warned. Waiting and watching will get us nowhere fast.

If you’re watching, you’re not doing.

Easily mesmerized by the government’s political theater—the endless congressional hearings and investigations that go nowhere, the president’s reality show antics, the warring factions, the electoral drama—we have become a society of watchers rather than activists who are distracted by even the clumsiest government attempts at sleight-of-hand.

It’s time for good men and women to do something. And soon.

Wake up and take a good, hard look around you. Start by recognizing evil and injustice and tyranny for what they are. Stop being apathetic. Stop being neutral. Stop being accomplices. Stop being distracted by the political theater staged by the Deep State: they *want* you watching the show while they manipulate things behind the scenes. Refuse to play politics with your principles. Don’t settle for the lesser of two evils.

As British statesman Edmund Burke warned, **“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men [and women] to do nothing.”**

Read full story here...

ABOUT JOHN W. WHITEHEAD

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of [The Rutherford Institute](#). His new book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People* is available at www.amazon.com. Whitehead can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org.