

## New Decade, New Rules



Decadal boundaries are arbitrary things untethered to any physical phenomena other than the usual boring changing of the seasons. But just two weeks into the new decade the atmosphere seems different from the past decade, and it has been difficult for me just to keep up with the sweeping changes that are taking place, never mind analyze them. Yet write I must, because not only is the mass media completely useless at best and harmful at worst, but also even the more enlightened and independent-minded commentators seem mired in paradigms that are out of date and reliant on invalidated political and economic assumptions. This prompts me to step into the breach and try to set things straight.

Here is a quick list of what's new so far this decade:

- If you want to blow up a US military base in the Middle East, or anywhere else for that matter, just go ahead. Nothing will happen to you. Just be sure to warn them first, so that they can evacuate or hide in bomb shelters. If you don't have diplomatic channels to the US, just ask the Swiss for help. Don't worry about US air defense systems—they don't have any. But don't get carried away, because the point of the exercise is to provide a teachable moment.
- As a corollary to this point, if you happen to be a US drone operator, your job is no longer as safe as playing a video game (in which you assassinate some folks). This realization has probably caused some US drone operators to soil their diapers and to then seek psychological counseling, in the course of which they may be told that mass murder is bad for their karma. Let the healing begin!
- If you are a sovereign nation and happen to have some US military bases on your territory that you want gone, that's now doable. But you can't just tell the Yankees to go home; you also have to pay them something, so be prepared for some heavy haggling. If this bargaining doesn't go well for them, it may be followed by depression, which may or may not be followed by acceptance—because depression can be the permanent end-state of the grieving process.
- If you want to assassinate public officials who are traveling abroad on official business and under diplomatic immunity, that's still totally illegal and a war crime—unless they happen to be US officials, in which case I guess it would be fine—since the US Attorney General William Barr (and former defense attorney to pedophile extraordinaire Jeffrey Epstein) said that it's perfectly legal (though morally repugnant, I hasten to add).
- If you are the US military, don't assume that you can fly missions from your

foreign military bases, even if they are on the territory of a NATO ally—and especially if that ally is NATO’s number two Turkey. Specifically, don’t assume that you can run your political assassination missions from Turkey’s Incirlik airbase. The Turks are now armed with Russian air defense systems and will knock you out of the sky faster than you can say “no-fly zone.”

- If you are a US military contractor, you can breathe a sigh of relief because it no longer matters whether the weapons systems you build are any good, work at all, or are useful for any stated or unstated purpose. Their excellence is evaluated based on just one parameter: how expensive they are. The US military is the most expensive in the world, ergo, it is the best, no annoying questions allowed. The House of Representatives recently voted to forbid military action against Iran, which is like having bees vote against honey. But apparently the new rules are such that the legislators will get their campaign contribution kickbacks from the defense contractors even if the weapons don’t get used. Some of them will be sold to the hopeless Saudis (who last year beat their own record on beheadings) and buried in the sand; some to assorted NATO vassals. The new modus operandi for the US military is “Let’s not and say we did.”

- Boeings, 737 MAX’s especially, have been known to crash whenever somebody sneezes. More recently, Boeing executives have also been going sky-diving sans golden parachutes. And we now have two cases of Boeings crashing for political rather than mechanical reasons; Malaysian Airlines MH17 over Ukraine was one case; and now Ukraine International Airlines PS752 over Iran is another. My working theory is that this 737-800 was a zombie. It got hacked and flown by remote control: transponder was turned off, radio was turned off, then it executed an inexplicable banking turn to starboard and toward restricted airspace over Teheran. And then it was shot down by an Iranian surface-to-air missile. Nothing else matches the facts so far, but I’ll wait for the results of the investigation. The new rule is: if you can’t win diplomatically and can’t compete militarily, then try to cause a minor humanitarian disaster and prepare to make hay politically. But please, people, don’t get caught concocting your fake news narratives while the plane is still in the air!

- If your country has been in the grip of a civil war and you want to end it, you need to go straight to Moscow and talk to Putin. Be it Libya, or Syria, or Afghanistan, or Iraq, Moscow is where Western foreign policy errors get straightened out. You can still fly to New York (provided you can get a visa) but then you’ll be forced to sit through endless meetings the UN and listen to Americans bloviating about “freedom and democracy” while nothing gets done. Geneva is still a fine destination in case you are shopping for a high-quality wristwatch. For everything else, there is Moscow. If you want quick results, leave the Americans completely out of the loop.

- If you are a former industrial power that has squandered its resources on solar panels and wind generators while shutting down your coal-fired power plants (to avoid a potential  $4\pm 15^{\circ}\text{C}$  global average temperature rise by 2100) as well as your nuclear power plants (because of Fukushima) you need to go to Moscow as well. To smooth out the ragged, intermittent power output from sun and wind you’ll need lots of cheap natural gas imports, and here Russia’s Gazprom is your friend. (The  $+4^{\circ}\text{C}$  is from the IPCC consensus estimate, and  $\pm 15^{\circ}\text{C}$  is the size of the error bars on that number based on standard error propagation analysis of errors on current climate measurements; so, yeah, it could be  $+19^{\circ}\text{C}$ , or it could be  $-11^{\circ}\text{C}$ , or anything in between—take your pick!—though  $\pm 19^{\circ}\text{C}$  doesn’t look physically possible while  $-11^{\circ}\text{C}$  would put us in the middle of the next hundred-thousand-year glaciation cycle.) Your other option is to wait for your “renewables” to get worn out, then reread printouts of this article by candlelight while gently weeping.

- Back on Planet Earth during the 2020s, the US is looking quite comparable to the Roman Empire in the 3rd century AD, during which the legionnaires were being paid in copper coin instead of silver and were being awarded farmland that had been overrun by barbarians while the populace subsisted on bread and circuses (in the case of the US, that's beer, cannabis/opiates and television/internet porn). Living very far beyond its means, the US takes on 3.5 units of new debt for each unit of GDP it produces. Half of the US population spends more than it earns. This shall not last! Already, in what's looking like a rerun of the Great Depression, hundreds of thousands are living on the streets; this looks like a major trend. Looking at the West more broadly, young people around the world are not particularly drawn to its combination of gay pride and Sharia law (here's where we cross-dress and prance around waving the rainbow flag, and here's where we gang-rape virgins and flog people for sodomy and adultery). This shall not last either.

I hope that you will find these thumbnail sketches of our new reality helpful. I'll be doing my best to unfold them into more full-blown analyses in the coming weeks. Given the pace of change so far this decade, it's going to be difficult to keep up, but I'll try.