



JOEL M. SKOUSEN'S

WORLD AFFAIRS BRIEF

COMMENTARY AND INSIGHTS ON A TROUBLED WORLD

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YEAR END REVIEW 2022 — OUR NATION IN DECLINE

True conservatives fought crucial battles this year and won against impossible odds in the repeal of Roe vs. Wade, striking down some gun-restrictions and freeing a beleaguered Christian baker. But we are still losing the war. The rulings were so narrow they can be ignored by individual states or are set to be overturned by new rulings and future bad legislation—bad laws that will soon come after this year's election proved that election fraud is so entrenched it can throw major races and erode any political clout that was left to resist this dangerous agenda.

Don't fall for the false hope from optimistic conservative politicians and organizations who claim they can "win back our freedoms." There are no winning strategies when so many people have become corrupted by irrational and evil schemes that, combined with vote fraud, they can outvote us from here on out. Most people are followers of leaders in business, entertainment, news networks, universities and even churches who have fallen headlong into soft-thinking and the dangerous agendas promoted non-stop by the establishment. Agendas like the moral abyss of accepting and promoting gay and transgender deviant behavior as normal—which a society cannot long endure without suffering the consequences.

Then there is the insanity of zero-carbon energy and transportation demands that will clearly end in shortages, poverty and economic disaster, were it not for the real possibility that war will

overtake events before the world can drive itself lemming-like over the cliff of falsified climate science. Even more dangerous is the fact that the entire world is effectively diverted from seeing the approaching world war that will descend upon us later in this decade, by the media concentrating on much less important stories. If the press doesn't beat the drums of concern on a key issue, people go blindly on in their pursuit of normalcy. Far from seeing a reversal of all these dangerous trends in 2023 we expect only an accelerated decline for this once great nation.

Intellectual Corruption: Nothing is more symptomatic of the rapid decline in moral and intellectual values than what is happening at US universities. All of the social sciences are dominated by the Left intent on denigrating Western culture and values, and even the professors of "hard" sciences are falling into this yes-man trap of towing the establishment line on climate change, gay "rights" and vaccines. PC pressure is at a maximum in college classes and no one in position of instruction, authority or administration will tolerate negative views on homosexuality or transgenderism. Administrators now outnumber professors at the most prestigious schools, and racial profiling against white males is worse than ever. Male enrollment is now less than 50% at many schools.

Scholar Victor Davis Hanson writes about the [coming demise of the US university system](#). He rightly observes that government-backed student loans have been the primary cause of university education being priced out of reach of normal people, amid a decided shrinking demand. I personally believe that high school graduates ought to seek other alternatives to get specialized training and avoid wasting their time and money at woke universities.

Remember, there's a **moral element of corruption** to this bizarre change in rational thinking among all levels of educational institutions. Beginning in the 1960s the student Left at universities became synonymous with "free love," and moral abandonment. Homosexuality was still mostly in the closet during those times, but now that it's fully out in the open, it is being promoted to ever-younger age levels. Children are being first groomed to challenge their innate gender and are then enticed into more deviant practices as teens.

And transgender officials in government are ramping up the demands to push this agenda on the nation and stifle dissent. The [Heritage Foundation warned](#) that,

Dr. Rachel Levine, a man who identifies as a woman, urged doctors at state medical boards to pressure Big Tech to stifle "medical misinformation" right after he declared that there is no "scientific or medical dispute" about the benefits of using experimental drugs and surgeries to force male bodies to resemble female bodies or vice versa.

Levine, the assistant secretary of health at the federal Department of Health and Human Services, presented an extremely dubious worldview as the established position of science, and acted as though no rational person would dare dissent.

This kind of sexual and gender lunacy is spreading like wildfire, along with the sexually transmitted diseases that go along with indiscriminate and unsanitary practices that accompany with deviant behavior. We are fast becoming a Sodom and Gomorrah society, ripe for destruction, and there is a growing Satanic component involved. The Gateway Pundit alerted their readers to a "[the largest gathering of](#)

[Satanists](#)" in history happening in Boston next April. It's no longer in the closet or hiding. Satanic influence always involves moral corruption as a means of luring people in. It's even getting harder and harder to find anything worthy to watch on television or in film that isn't tainted with evil innuendo and deviant behavior.

Immorality of any type doesn't come without chronic violations of the promptings and warnings of conscience. The end result of that is chronic bad judgment about everyday habits and decisions in life—the root cause of most poverty, failed marriages and juvenile delinquency today.

All of this leads to a bigger national problem: the **loss of the blessings of protection from God** that we used to enjoy in this nation whose destiny has always been to be a beacon of liberty and goodness—which we are now failing to perform.

Religious Corruption: All of the mainstream or large denomination Christian churches in this nation went along with the "Respect for [Gay] Marriage Act," once tax exempt churches were given a very narrow exemption against being prosecuted for not performing gay marriages. It's a trap because even though their tax exempt status may not be in jeopardy, they all will eventually be sued for discrimination and harassed. Shame on clerical leaders for buying into excessive tolerance for evil. Evil is never satisfied with tolerance, except as a stepping stone to taking over every aspect of people's lives.

Even though the conservative wing of the Catholic Church is still the most articulate and vocal defender against abortion, the Vatican itself under the direction of Pope Francis has begun to attack Pro-life clerics with a vengeance. Steve Wood, the President of Family Life Center International wrote to me that,

Fr. Frank Pavone, the National Director of Priests for Life, the National Pastoral Director of Rachel's Vineyard, and the president of the National Pro-Life Religious Council has been laicized by the Vatican – kicked out of the priesthood. Why is our abortion and homosexual-marriage supporting president given Holy Communion by spineless clerics, while Fr. Pavone can't even say Mass? Why are the 89 Catholics in the House of Representatives who voted for the Disrespect for Marriage Act not disciplined, while Fr. Pavone is laicized? Why are homosexual-loving clerics promoted and given papal audiences, while Fr. Pavone is kicked to the curb?

-Obviously, because the globalist/Marxist Pope is hostile to the pro-life position.

The Economy: Inflation will remain high (except in housing), supply chain issues will get worse. Don't believe the rosy economic figures posted after the holiday shopping season. Sure, holiday [Sales were up 7.6% in 2022](#)— but that figure was outpaced even by the understated official rate of 8.5% Inflation—which is actually around 15%. All that means is that sales were down in real terms, and it was an even worse disaster for retail brick-and-mortar stores as most people shopped online. The products that defy online shopping best are the ones where people need to feel or try out the look and function at a physical store.

Suicidal Climate Change Demands: The EPA is increasing environmental requirements on oil refineries to make sure none can afford to repair, upgrade, or build new ones. And, why should they when the administration is telling them that gasoline and diesel vehicles will be done away with in ten years or so. Oregon and Washington just joined California in [banning new gas-](#)

[powered vehicles](#) starting in 2035. Coal powered power plants are being deactivated around the country by utilities for the same reason—administration handwriting on the wall that coal is being banned as well. The EPA is not responding with diminished regulations on the newer, safer, and more affordable small nuclear plants which could easily replace coal and natural gas. It's obvious they want an energy crisis to further their "great reset," and not a sane energy policy.

Politics: Don't look for a political savior to fix any of this, either by the Republican's razor thin margin of victory in the House of Representatives or in the upcoming 2024 presidential election. As far as Congress is concerned it's not only a House divided and a lost Senate but a party so badly divided that it will be difficult for any GOP leader to arise as Speaker of the House to begin the business of legislation without compromising with Democrats to achieve the minimum 218 votes. Forget about a real conservative rising to the top.

As for the presidential race in 2024, Trump's star is fading slowly and Ron DeSantis' star is rising. Personally, I've had it with Trump and his continued support for the Covid vaccine, and his inexcusable partying with the homosexual crowd at Mar-a-Lago. Hopefully, Ron DeSantis will be smart enough to avoid those kinds of fatal compromises, but being as politically ambitious as he is, I don't hold out much hope that he will stand fast for Christian family values either. If the Left is able to defeat Donald Trump for the nomination, I expect they will turn on DeSantis; and instead of praising and promoting him, they will attack him with all the fervor they can muster, as the more dangerous candidate that he is to them in many respects. He's more astute and savvy than Trump, and does his homework, but he's not as good a speaker or as spontaneous as Trump. But most conservatives are now ready

for more substance over hype. If the media is mild with their criticism it could mean DeSantis is compromised and not to be trusted.

Illegal Immigration: The waves of illegals pouring across the border and even [coming up out of manhole covers](#) in border cities has become a veritable flood with no end in sight. This is a massive onslaught against our cultural and voting demographics, and is impossible now to reverse.

Border Patrol agents are no longer even trying to impede illegals, but are “acting as clerks to process and parole thousands of illegal immigrants a week.” When containment facilities are full, they release them into the arms of tax-funded churches and NGOs that ship them around to other states. Word has gotten out, and hundreds of thousands are converging on Mexico to make the crossing while the gates and policies are wide open. The Daily Signal covered the “[Six Biggest Lies](#)” about containing immigration. Here are the worst:

DHS claims that in fiscal year 2022 “over 1.4 million noncitizens were removed under Title 8 or expelled under Title 42, [a figure largely falsified] more than any previous year,” but there were more than 2.7 million encounters at the border, a historical record. Even allowing that some were repeat encounters, DHS itself admits that well over a million illegal aliens were released into the U.S. in fiscal year 2022. In fiscal year 2022, a mere 69,019 aliens were deported.

*Biden’s migration policy is to allow millions of people to enter the U.S. and claim asylum, despite a low probability that they will qualify, and then **refuse to deport** those who fail in the process. This gives millions of people **de facto permanent U.S. residency**, a usurpation of congressional power and an*

injustice to both legal immigrants waiting in line and American taxpayers at home who pick up the costs. Congress shouldn’t fund it.

Yes, governors Abbott of Texas and DeSantis of Florida are [busing illegals to blue states](#) with sanctuary cities, but that isn’t solving the problem or getting Democrats to change their policies. Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, a Democrat, simply [declared an emergency](#) to get more federal and state funds to provide meals and housing for them. The mayor of El Paso, TX also declared a similar emergency over surging migrant numbers. No one is stopping the flow!

Arizona even [lost its legal battle](#) with the federal government and must now dismantle their temporary wall of shipping containers that served as a makeshift, but effective border wall. The feds won because part of the border land is federal property—the perverse result of letting western states join the union only if they gave up control of wide swaths of open land to the federal government.

GOP gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake also [lost her legal suit in Arizona](#) for the skewed election ballot process in Maricopa County. The biased judge tried to insist that she must prove “malicious intent” by election officials, which is almost impossible to do without tapping phones. She did have witnesses to that effect, but the judge refused to accept their testimony. Other election suits have been won over the issue of irregularities sufficient to taint the results—without proving malicious intent. But not in Arizona.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott warned about “[total chaos](#)” in Texas if the Supreme Court doesn’t preserve Title 42, which allows for immediate deportation if a migrant is a Covid threat. Well, the Supreme Court obliged this week by preserving Title 42, but it’s a false

victory since it doesn't mandate that the government has to actually do anything with Title 42.

Vaccine Dangers: The continued exposure of vaccine dangers reached a high point last year, but it still largely failed to gain traction against continued media censorship and government medical authorities' refusal to acknowledge the dangers and ban these vaccines. Here are some of the more recent findings:

Dr. Paul Thomas [produced a study](#) comparing the major disease or damage rates between vaccinated and unvaccinated children (6-12 year olds):

Vaxxed/Unvaxxed:

60% / 5.71% - Chronic Conditions

16.67% / 0% - Arthritis

48% / 0% - Heart Disease

10% / 0% - Diabetes

7.7% / 0% - Asthma

2.5% / 0% - Autism (Check out Steve Kirsch's latest exposure of the [Autism coverup](#))

9.4% / 0.47% - ADHD

6.0% / 0% - Cancer

Florida Supreme Court to Convene Grand Jury to Investigate COVID-19 Vaccines

By a request of Gov. Ron DeSantis the Florida Supreme Court has agreed to impanel a statewide grand jury to investigate wrongdoing related to COVID-19 vaccines, according to the [Epoch Times](#).

DeSantis is seeking to investigate Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna and their executives, as well as other medical associations or organizations involved in the provision of the COVID-19 vaccines in Florida. Among other things, the governor seeks to probe whether any deceitful information was disseminated

about "vaccines purported to prevent COVID-19 infection, symptoms, and transmission."

I'm not optimistic anything will come of it. Establishment investigations never do produce any real exposure of Big Pharma corruption. Even hospitals are **now deceiving patients** by calling the dangerous Covid drug remdesivir, "Veklury," because of increased refusals to accept the deadly remdesivir. So, they appear to have rebranded it to fool people, according to a [report by America's Frontline Nurses](#).

Future Bio-Weapon Pandemics: Will the next man-made pandemic come in 2025? It's likely as Bill Gates and the WHO ran a "tabletop" simulation in Belgium about the next pandemic, projecting it to hit in 2025. It [will be dubbed SEERS](#), Severe Epidemic Enterovirus Respiratory Syndrome of 2025.

Our greatest fear that between now and the coming war, will be trying to evade the return of bio-weapon releases and the inevitable return to masks, travel restrictions, and economic lockdowns, and all the economic havoc that this produces when living under emergency orders—which have never gone away. So, beware, and **get very healthy** so you can resist what's coming without succumbing to dangerous vaccines and drugs. Never trust the medical establishment again to solve chronic health problems or Deep State induced pandemics.

Here's an [articulate video presentation](#) by "The Patriot Nurse" on what's changed in the establishment medical system since Covid that explains, in her words, "why you need to become your own doctor." She doesn't mean that literally, but that each person know how to take care of their own health problems outside of the medical system, which no longer has your best interest at heart. She says a lot of the most caring

people have been forced out of the system due to conflicts between their conscience and the new dangerous protocols they are forced to use.

As further evidence of government foreknowledge of what's coming, the recently passed Omnibus Spending Bill authorizes \$300M to be used in a [future flu pandemic](#), including surveillance tools to track people says NewsSwars: *"to prepare for or respond to an influenza pandemic."* reads the language of the bill. *"\$300,000,000 shall be available until expended, for activities including the development and purchase of vaccine, antivirals, necessary medical supplies, diagnostics, and other surveillance tools..."*

The Continued Covid Plandemic: Even Covid is still being projected around the world. China has gotten tired of being the only country to keep locking down its citizens for whatever variant of Covid still plagues the country. So China has decided to let its people travel the world and spread the virus back to us. In response, the US is now [requiring a negative COVID test](#) (inaccurate as they are) for everyone traveling from China. As we know from the first time, that won't help for long and new variants will continue to be used by the CDC to harass us.

Government Waste: Senator [Rand Paul's Annual 'Festivus' Report](#) details \$482,276,543,907 government waste that never goes away. It includes:

- \$2.3 million used by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for an experiment involving injecting puppies with cocaine,
- \$202,000 used by the Department of Defense (DOD) on Starbucks delux espresso machines
- \$3 million for the construction of a Gandhi museum.
- \$28 million on "camouflage" uniforms for Afghanistan that did not work.

- \$2.1 million on encouraging Ethiopians to wear shoes,
- \$1.1 million on "training mice to binge drink alcohol,"
- \$519,000 using mice to study racial aggression,
- \$187,500 on "verifying that kids love their pets."
- \$1,700,000,000 to maintain 77,000 empty Federal buildings (GSA)
- \$168,000,000 to help illegal immigrants avoid deportation (DHS)
- \$69,000,000 for overpaying government contractors for a terminated contracts (GSA)
- \$140,000,000 of COVID relief funds to construct an 11,000 square foot spa
- \$3,000,000 to study hamsters fighting while on steroids (NIH)
- \$689,222 to study the romance between parrots (NSF)

WORLD AFFAIRS

Putin's War on Ukraine and his Cancer:

While both Russia and Ukraine are gearing up for a major winter or Spring offensive, [both sides are hinting they are open to negotiations](#). However, the two positions are irreconcilable since Putin wants to retain the oil and grain rich Donbass region and the strategic bases in Crimea and Ukraine wants them back.

Zelenski's highly promoted visit to the US including a speech to Congress netted him \$35B more in military aid, but much of that will be consumed by the Patriot missile battery the US is sending to Ukraine, which won't do them much good. The Patriot System is too expensive a weapon system with a limited number of missiles that, although only semi-accurate, can't tackle the hundreds of small suicide drones and cruise missiles that Russia is launching daily against mostly non-military civilian infrastructure. He sent [120 such missile attacks just this week](#).

The [Patriot System](#) is designed to defend against tactical ballistic missiles and high speed aircraft attacks and are entirely unsuitable and overly expensive for the smaller cheaper drones and cruise missiles Russia is employing in Ukraine. Each Patriot missile battery contains 7-8 launchers for a total of 128 missiles. Crews normally fire 2 missiles at each target to ensure a hit, and thus Ukraine would run out of these missiles in a few days against a swarm of Russian drones or short range missiles.

Depending on the type of missile that is fired, the cost of each is between \$4m and \$5m. The US doesn't have a large stockpile of these missiles to hand out, and they cannot be put back into production quickly as they are all hand-built. Perhaps worst of all, these Patriot batteries cannot be moved quickly like the [HIMARS rocket artillery](#) system to avoid being targeted by Russian counter-battery artillery, missiles and drones.

In short, they aren't going to be effective in this war. A better and more cost effective choice would be the [Avenger air defense missile system](#) they use to defend the White House which consists of eight modified Stinger missiles, with a range of a couple of miles—appropriate and economical against drones that Russia is employing. Or, the latest [M-SHORAD system](#) mounted on a Stryker A1 combat vehicle. Both use a modified version of the Stinger missile pre-loaded into multiple launch tubes.

It's too early to tell who's going to ultimately win this war. Almost all experts I've talked to believe Russia will NOT risk nuclear war over Ukraine, and Russia can't win it conventionally as long as the West keeps supplying lethal effective missiles like the HIMARS system which can thwart any major offensive by targeting rear echelon supply lines, troops and headquarters.

But I fear the US is sending over the expensive and ineffective Patriot system to further discourage Congress' willingness to keep supporting the war effort. If the West pulls out support, like they have in the past in so many communist attacks on pro-western nations (Nationalist China in 1949, Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, etc) Eastern Ukraine will permanently fall into Russian hands. Both sides of this war are corrupt but the Ukraine people don't deserve to live under Russian tyranny. However, weakening Russia's conventional capability does help the West when Russia joins with China to do their planned pre-emptive strike on US military targets.

The one major unknown is how **Putin's declining health** is going to affect the war. Finally, the West received some pretty good insider information out of Russia on the state of Putin's cancer, and it doesn't look good for Putin. The [UK Daily Mail reports](#): *“Putin 'is being kept alive on Western cancer drugs' so he can continue to wage his war in Ukraine... but medics hint Russian leader may be in his last year in power because 'no medicine can be endlessly successful'”*

This could result either in an increased desire for a negotiated settlement or a massive push for his generals to end the war in favor of Russian military might—which isn't easily solved given Russia's logistic problems.

China Ramping Up Taiwan Intrusions: China is back practicing their [attack tactics against Taiwan](#). China deployed 71 warplanes to the skies around Taiwan during the latest strike drill, then blamed the US for provoking this show of force. In response, the US has given the go-ahead for a bit more token military aid to Taiwan — [automatic mine laying equipment](#), which won't deter the attack but will simply make it more costly for China once on the ground. If the US

were as serious about deterring an attack on Taiwan as they are about weakening Russia in Ukraine, they would give a lot more offensive military equipment to Taiwan, including a robust anti-missile defense. But they are not doing that.

Serbia is Prepping to Go to War with Kosovo Again: Just to show you that globalist internationalist agreements that go against natural ethnic allegiances never work, Serbia is once again strong enough to challenge the UN-mandated Kosovo independence. We may have war in the Balkans again, says [Aljazeera News](#).

Israel preparing to attack Iran. This is not new news, but a prediction that Israel is in reality getting much closer to making the attack, now that Iran has been free from the shackles of the “Nuclear Deal” with the West, and again make further progress with nuclear enrichment. It will likely be a surprise attack, and Israeli air and missile forces have been drilling regularly for such a strike. The former Israeli intel chief is [calling for an attack soon](#). But, the official Defense Ministry is saying, “[2-3 years](#)” from now—to throw off the Iranians from knowing it will be sooner. When the attack finally comes, it will ignite another Middle East war, and may be timed to divert US forces from defending Taiwan as China strikes in the South China Sea, creating a potential two front situation for the US military.

PROBABLE TIMETABLE FOR WWII

In each year end brief, I reiterate my estimate of when I think war is coming. It hasn’t changed but bears repeating for new subscribers. Having some idea of the timing is important because this Third World War will be different than all other wars America has been involved with.

First, we’ll face peer capable enemies with powerful military forces. That hasn’t happened since we were up against Germany in WWII, and

never occurred during our recent wars of intervention against lesser militaries in the phony “war on terror.” Fighting Russia and China will be very different, and the American mainland will be attacked.

Russia has the most powerful nuclear forces in the world, and China as the most powerful conventional forces and the world’s largest navy. Together they will be tough to beat, especially if our own globalist government **absorbs a nuclear first strike on our military forces** (in accordance with [PDD-60](#)) in order to force us into a militarized global government in response.

The pre-emptive strike will only happen, however, when both are ready. Russia is almost ready now with her nuclear forces, but will never be fully ready in conventional forces due to the weaknesses caused by the war against Ukraine. China, in contrast, is already ahead of the West in conventional forces, but still has more to build in order to feel confident going up against slightly superior technology in the West. Her growing nuclear arsenal is unknown but also growing steadily.

So China’s timetable is the controlling one, in my opinion, and China’s military claims they will have achieved first class military status by 2027. That puts her capabilities into the “ready” category in the middle of the last half of this decade, which is where I have estimated she would be ready for several years now.

Still, that doesn’t mean the strike will happen then. We are dealing with 3 major conspiratorial powers— the Western Globalists, Russia and China, neither of which fully control the timetable of the others. No one knows when the war will start precisely, but I do believe Russia and China will need a **trigger event** to justify it.

Despite all the nuclear blustering by Putin, I don't think Putin will use Ukraine to start a nuclear WWIII—because China isn't ready to back him up yet. In fact, China is somewhat irritated with Russia's invasion seeing how it is weakening Russia's conventional military and setting the world on alert.

My best estimate is that North Korea will provide the trigger event by attacking South Korea, which will demand a US military response because we have so many US troops stationed there for defense—approximately 28k Army, Air Force and Marine personnel. That attack could come on orders from China, which controls NK, or in response to NK's leader Kim Jong Un's vow to attack US forces in Asia if the US tries to interdict and stop China's invasion of Taiwan. In either case, I don't think China will signal NK to start the war until China is ready.

Everyone needs to get as prepared as you can—considering both relocation out of blast areas and preparing for fallout and the famine that will come on the heels of the EMP strike by Russia and China that will precede briefly the nuclear strike on military targets—not cities per se (at least not at first).

Imagine the **financial issues** you will face when war comes and takes down the electric grid. First of all, the internet will be down and shortly thereafter all cell phones stop working when the tower's generators runs out of fuel—if the tower equipment even survive the EMP, which is doubtful.

If you are into bitcoin or other digital currencies, you will lose everything when the internet crashes, so take your profits now and get out. Keep paper records of your monthly bank statements to back up your loss of digital records when the grid goes down. If digital banking comes sooner than the war (which I doubt) you'll

lose any ability to access your funds. While cash is still being allowed, you need to stockpile at least 3 month's worth of cash, as cash will be recognized by all, and they won't be printing or creating any more electronically for a while during war.

One of our biggest problems, even if you own property free and clear, is paying the property taxes. Government employees and school people are still going to demand to have your property tax funds even you can't raise money. They don't care. While I think there eventually will be a moratorium on foreclosures and tax sales at the beginning of war, at some point they will start back up, so you need to preserve some cash to pay in order to keep from losing your property and all the preparations you've put into it.

Beware of the several states that allow the county authorities to grab the **entire value of your home** instead of just the amount of tax you owe. The [Epoch Times tells you what states](#) to avoid:

Homeowners lost more than \$777 million in life savings on more than 5,600 homes, based on their market value, in transactions that took place from 2014 to 2021. The true total is probably higher because statistics from New York state and some statistics from the other states studied weren't available. On average, homeowners lost 86 percent of their equity, the study found.

Government entities, which often unload properties [in a tax sale] for a fraction of their market value, collected an estimated \$26 million more than they were owed on about 1,300 homes. At the same time, private investors, who purchase tax liens, took in about \$250 million more than what they were owed on about 2,600 homes.

Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, South Dakota, and the District of Columbia have laws on the books that let local governments and private investors “steal” substantial amounts of home equity from homeowners who are late on their property taxes, according to Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF).

Nine other states—Alaska, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Rhode Island, Texas, and Wisconsin—safeguard home equity in the foreclosure process but provide loopholes that permit governments or private entities to capture excess equity value that PLF says should belong to the homeowner.

These laws allow government officials and investors to take homes that have been in families for generations and leave some people homeless over tax debts that, in some cases, work out to less than 1 percent of their property’s value, according to PLF.

For using precious metals to safeguard wealth, I only recommend recently minted Silver dollars. They are legal tender, but don’t use them to pay taxes as the government won’t give you more than their face value—\$1. Stockpile cash to give back to government.

Don’t use gold for barter because it’s too valuable to get change for, and few will know how to determine whether it is authentic or not, compared to a US minted silver dollar. I like the dollar because it is big, fat and heavy and fairly easy to convince people that it’s worth \$30 or so. Junk silver that is worn won’t hold its value for barter quite as well as newly minted silver dollars do.

Remember that your most effective strategy for investing for war or severe social unrest is to

eliminate your future need for money. That’s better than having hundreds of thousands in pensions that won’t pay, or paper market assets that will disappear. Stockpile everything you normally use and you won’t need to buy at black market prices, or use up money or assets you have saved. Of course, that means you have to have a secure, concealed safe room or storage area to protect all of those stockpiles, both from pillagers and, perhaps, even government agents who may demand you give up “excess food” or be declared a hoarder!

I realize all this may seem like an overwhelming task, but do what you can and you’ll be ahead of the rest. At joelskousen.com you’ll find both the *High Security Shelter* book and the *Secure Home* book which covers all of the do-it-yourself information you need. The small booklet, *10 Packs for Survival* also has a great barter list at the end.

PREPAREDNESS TIP: FOUR MORE YEARS by Andrew Skousen

Each New Year’s celebration I find myself wondering **how much time is left.** We live in the “calm before the storm” in peace and prosperity that can lull us into a false sense of security. Once the storm clouds become obvious, it will be too late to prepare before the storm will break upon us in all its pent-up fury. I suspect we only have until around 2027 to really prepare. There may be more time, but I strongly recommend planning to get the bulk of your preparedness done in the next four years (and my dad agrees with me). I say this both to jolt us awake about the seriously short time left and to give us hope that there is (barely) enough time left to prepare if we work hard at it. It is time to accelerate our efforts.

Location: Where will you be living four years from now? High interest rates in 2023 are already causing housing to slow dramatically.

New homes are down and lumber is very cheap again. That is good if you are looking to buy land and build on it.

If you have been saving up, it could be your last chance to move to a more secure location. It will take all four years to build on raw land, and accomplish the necessary preparations, so if that is your plan you need to start the process this coming year. In future years you run the risk of not finishing a house and your preparations in time. Watch for properties that already have significant homestead or self-sufficiency infrastructure (animal outbuildings and fenced pastures, solar panels, a well, solar water heating, etc.) so you don't have to implement everything yourself.

Those near military targets like those listed in our book, *Strategic Relocation*, need to especially concentrate on moving. Likewise those who live in the middle of urban centers surrounded by masses of unprepared people. At least move to the outskirts with larger lot sizes even if it means a little longer commute. As the danger of war looms closer arrange to work remotely so you aren't caught up in a commute or in downtown when a first strike happens.

A great many people won't be able to move before Hard Times and will have to make do with preparing at home where you are. Don't give up entirely—there are things you can do to make any existing single family home more survivable.

If your relocation dreams are clearly not going to materialize, look for other unique ways to improve your options. Consider family and close friends who have rural property in a more secure location but need help improving the land or keeping it up. Look for appropriate ways to offer help or ask if you can raise a garden or animals on their land. Make sure it is always mutually

beneficial. Don't be a freeloader. If you are an active participant, adding value to the property, you have a much better chance of being kept on in Hard Times—sometimes even over other family and friends vying to be let in.

Beware of verbal promises from anyone to “come over if something happens.” Consider all the other family and friends they will have said that to and rigorously ask yourself where you will rank in priority when it comes to a lifeboat scenario for the landowner. Most landowners don't know how to make the most of their land and if you help improve their land while being independent on a small corner of it that does not compete with their goals and, hopefully, improves the land, they will be more likely to let you stay on. If the relationship fails, at least you will have gained some experience in homesteading and that practical experience is worth more than the improvements to the land you may have to leave behind.

Finances: Try to keep your income lifeline alive as much as possible in the coming economic ups and downs. Although our savings are deteriorating with inflation, be careful to set aside money for big projects while converting a little extra of your spending budget each month for hard goods (tools and food storage) that will hold their value. Throttle back on any unnecessary spending now, especially eating out and junk food. Keep a tight budget even as you enjoy the good years left. It will never be as easy to make money as it is now, but you will need to convert the extra money from these years of plenty into what you need for the lean years ahead.

Evaluate Key Projects: Two years ago I published [15 categories of preparedness](#) to consider and think about. Here they are with the most important topics first: Water, Land, Shelter, Sanitation, Growing Food, Stockpiling Food,

Self Defense, Medical Care, Physical and Mental Conditioning, Raising Animals, Alternate Energy, Communication, Transportation, and Maintenance/Repair. As you read these topics consider where your self-sufficiency is weakest and where you are missing equipment or skill most needed in a crisis. No one can be fully prepared on every topic, but you can get the basics down solid. The biggest holes I see in other's preparedness are: lacking a fallout shelter, replenishable water source (well or rainwater collection), lacking building/repair tools and reloading equipment, and securing your house and property. The most valuable missing skills I see are: growing and saving seeds in a large-scale garden, training in firearms and self-defense, butchering and processing animals, baking with sourdough, and experience fixing things, repairing cars and electronics.

Prioritize Your Efforts: Working backwards from the end of 2027, consider what training and projects must get priority so you can meet your most important needs. Try to fit the largest projects in first (assuming you can proceed with them), and work the smaller ones in around them. Focus your effort on what will make the most difference in a crisis—water, shelter, food and repair skills.

Although the time is growing short there are indications that God is giving us a little more time: Russia is taking longer than they wanted in retaking Ukraine; China is being more cautious about going after Taiwan. The wars on Iran and the overthrow of Syria, have been pushed back. The pieces in the geopolitical chessboard are having to wait for the goals they so obviously have geared up for. But the delay won't last forever. These powerful players are not giving up, only waiting for the right time to move. Eventually it will erupt in another world war and, for us at least, it will happen overnight. One day we will have relative peace and prosperity and

the next will bring war and devastation—the beginning of many years of hard times. I am not making a prediction about when it will be, except that I think there are still a few precious years left. How we fare in those hard times will depend on what we do with that time. [END]