Miscellany 50: On Jay Hanson's America 2.0; Health Insurance Reform; Mercury Lamps; Single-Purpose Bills; Black-Culture Morality; Winston Churchill on Success; Internet Download Speed; The Reason for Individual Cars; Why Conservation Fails; Another Indicator of Inflation; Why Do Economists Want Inflation?; What's in a Word?; Fake Art in the White House?; Political Correctness; Where Is Competition?; The Coming of the Electric Car; The Greatest Trade Ever; The Return of Slavery; Barack Obama: The Greatest Mass Murderer of All Time?; Michelle Obama's Ancestors Are From Spartanburg; The Missing Children; A Free Ride for Illegal Aliens – Jail for US Citizens!; Divine Right of Kings

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Commentary on recent news, reading and events of personal interest.

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On Jay Hanson's *America 2.0*

Jay Hanson, creator of the "Dieoff" website (http://www.dieoff.org , which contains many articles about the world's diminishing energy resources) recently published an article entitled "America 2.0" (posted on the Dieoff website, or at http://www.warsocialism.com/America.htm). This article begins with a recapitulation of the fact that global oil production is peaking, and that the

amount of energy available to run our civilization will soon begin to decline sharply. Hanson points out that the current economic / industrial system supporting human life on Earth is incredibly inefficient, requiring over 200,000 calories per person per day, compared to about 3,000 nutritional (food) calories needed per day.

Hanson believes that it is possible, by means of political reorganization, to avoid a catastrophic collapse of human society, as energy resources decline. He believes that America may face anarchy, rebellion, and civil war as energy resources decline, but if the following political steps are taken, energy consumption may be dramatically reduced and these outcomes may be avoided:

1. Remove the "personhood" Constitutional protections from corporations.
2. Make it a federal crime for corporations to advocate anything (including, but not limited to, advertising) in the mass media.
3. Make it a federal crime for anyone employed by a corporation to lobby elected or appointed officials directly or indirectly.
4. Mandate public financing for elections.
5. Assemble teams of the country's best and brightest medical doctors, scientists, engineers and other thinkers—but no representatives of religious groups, economists, or other special interests—to recommend public policy. (We do not need a Manhattan Project for economics—on how to save the corporations and their outrageous profits; we need a Manhattan Project on how the country can survive the net energy cliff!)
6. Encourage public debate on proposed changes.

Hanson's goal is to avoid a massive die-off of people as energy resources decline. This goal will not be achieved. As Joseph Tainter observes in his book, *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), societies do not continue to evolve, but rather evolve to a state of high complexity and then collapse catastrophically. In his book, *Collapse* (Viking / Penguin, 2005), Jared Diamond observes the same phenomenon. As global energy resources start to decline, modern society will not gradually and peacefully evolve to a new low-energy form, but will collapse precipitously. America, with the highest level of energy consumption in the world, will fall fast and hard. Most complex systems do not gracefully evolve into different forms when a serious stress is encountered. Dynamic systems – natural or otherwise – tend to "crash and burn" when serious problems arise. Their demise is usually fast and dramatic, e.g., as in species extinctions, revolutions, economic downturns and failures of firms.

With the end of fossil fuels, human society will return to existing on the recurrent budget of solar energy. The world population will decline from its current level of over six billion people to a few million, as existed for millions of years. Hanson's musings are nothing but a "pipe dream." The industrial world, and America along with it, is running out of the massive amount of energy on which it depends, and it will soon collapse. Large numbers of people will not be kept alive by reducing the number of calories of energy per person from 200,000 back to 3,000 per day. What are people for? The only reason for large human population is to produce massive wealth for the rulers. When the large population size becomes a liability rather than an asset, most people will perish. At some point, such as has now been reached in China, the rulers see that a large population threatens their position (power and wealth), and they move to reduce it, as best they can. When the world's energy resources start to decline, and the rulers see that a large human population no longer serves their purposes, they will not move to keep human numbers high. They will move to maximize their wealth, and people who are starving to death contribute little to it. Using economics, they will manage scarcity to the point where the people still alive

can be productive and contribute maximally to their wealth. As energy resources start to decline, the population will be reduced by famine, disease and war. Of these three alternatives, war is the easiest to manage. Famine and disease may lead to revolution. World leaders will seek reasons to conduct massive wars, to reduce the human population (see Michael Klare's *Resource Wars* (Henry Holt, 2001) or Thomas Homer-Dixon's *Environment, Scarcity and Violence* (Princeton University Press, 1999) for more on this). As the world begins the descent down the back side of Hubbert's Curve, global nuclear war will erupt. Since the supply of energy cannot be increased, the demand for energy will be reduced – by reducing the size of the human population.

Health Insurance Reform

America's health care system is badly broken. It is by far the most expensive in the world (consuming 16 percent of gross domestic product, compared to 9 percent for other industrialized nations), and a large proportion of the population has limited or no access to good or even basic health care. For the past 50 years, as health care services became more and more expensive, the US moved to an insurance-based system. Recent efforts to reform the system have focused on health insurance reform, not on health-care reform or health-care-access reform.

You hear a lot from politicians that Americans do not want "anyone between them and their doctor," and for this reason are opposed to a "public option" – a health insurance organization operated by the government. This is really inane! Under the current system, private insurance companies are between the patient and the doctor. The patient gets the services that the insurance company agrees to, or he will have to pay for them himself. The private insurance company is the rationer of health care. The insurance company is not only the rationer of care, but is paid a profit for this service.

The discussion about health care reform has focused on private-insurance-based systems. During the discussion of health-care options, there has been much clamor from the people about the shortcomings of the current system. In striking comparison, there has been relatively little "noise" from the medical community, and virtually no comment at all from the insurance community or from the legal community, which reap massive rewards from the insurance-based, heavily litigious present system. These groups are being "bought off" by the government. The government will not consider any option that will diminish the ability of these groups to profit handsomely from people's medical-care needs.

The proposals set forth by the government (US Senate or House of Representatives) are very expensive. Just this past weekend the House passed a bill (8 November 2009) which will at 1.2 trillion dollars to the national debt. The government is very duplicitous in discussion this, stating that it will cover some of the cost by reducing fraud and abuse in the Medicare system. This is really dumb! The level of Medicare fraud is estimated to be about 60 billion dollars per year. If the government had any desire to reduce fraud and abuse, it would do so. It has proved beyond a doubt that it is unable or unwilling to operate an honest health insurance system.

The US government has no intention of allowing its citizens direct access to basic health care at reasonable cost. It insists on a system that passes all costs through insurance company middlemen, to give them a "piece of the action." It has paid through massive NIH grants for the development of exotic drugs that the public cannot resist, and allows private pharmaceutical

companies to reap the massive profits from these drugs ("socialize the costs and privatize the benefits"). The US government has designed a health care system that provides fabulous wealth to the medical establishment, to insurance companies, and to lawyers. It costs most citizens far more than it should, and it provides little or no care for a substantial proportion of the population. It is designed to provide massive wealth to the wealthy elite, and it performs that function very well.

Mercury Lamps

To reduce energy consumption, the government is pushing mercury fluorescent bulbs as replacements for incandescent ones. Mercury lamps are extremely toxic. If one is broken in a home, the home must be decontaminated. The use of these lamps is extremely damaging to the environment.

All attempts to conserve energy are useless. The world is running out of fossil fuels – at current rates of consumption, all petroleum and natural gas will be gone in a few decades, and all coal soon after. At some point, energy resources will start to decline dramatically. Human society will have to live on much less energy, and this will mean that there will be far fewer people on the planet. If the government were at all caring of the environment and of human society, it would forbid the use of mercury-vapor (fluorescent) lamps, and focus its attention on environmentally sound ways to reduce demand for energy.

The replacement of incandescent lamps by mercury fluorescent lamps will do nothing to change the fact that the human society is fast running out of fossil-fuel energy. It does nothing to solve the energy crisis. All it will do is add pollution to the environment, as we run out of energy. (Actually, there is not an "energy crisis" at all. There is plenty of solar energy to run a fabulous Garden-of-Eden planet. What there is is a "people crisis" – a massive human overpopulation that is destroying the biosphere.)

Single-Purpose Bills

The tactic for getting special-interest laws passed by the US Congress is very simple. A bill concerned with an important issue, deserving of discussion, is expanded to include many unrelated issues that are undeserving of discussion and would never be passed as bills on their own. That is why bills run to 1,000 pages or more – the main issue is covered in far fewer pages.

This practice of passing "omnibus" bills is very damaging of the Constitution. Under the Constitution, all matters not explicitly identified in the Constitution are not to be addressed by the US federal government, but are to be delegated to the States. Under our Constitution, the US Congress should deal only with important issues that are explicitly mentioned in the Constitution. The practice of packing bills with extraneous add-ons should be stopped. Each bill should address a single – and Constitutionally permitted – issue. If an issue does not warrant discussion in its own right, Congress has no business considering it.

Black-Culture Morality

When I was young, I worked summers in a machine shop in Spartanburg, South Carolina. The shop no longer exists. It was a single-story brick building with a metal roof, and was very hot. I learned how to operate big machine-shop equipment, such as lathes, drill presses and milling machines. The work was hard, but I learned a lot and enjoyed the experience.

The shop was small – just the owner, a full-time machinist, and me. One day, the owner happened to comment on the major difference between the morals of blacks and whites. Of course, he was speaking of black culture and white culture – heaven forbid that anything he said might have been construed as a comment on racial differences. He observed that when a black man caught his wife sleeping with another man, there would be a fight – the woman would be physically punished as well – but the next day the two men would be working together as if nothing at all had happened. With whites, there would be a fight, but the men would never speak to each other again.

At the present time, the proportion of blacks in US prisons (as a proportion of all blacks) is much higher than the proportion of whites (as a proportion of all whites). Apologists cite all sorts of explanations for this, including higher levels of poverty, influence of parents, discrimination and racial profiling.

On November 3, 2009, Yahoo News / POLITICO carried the following story about the great disparity in the proportion of whites and blacks under investigation for ethics violations in the US Congress.

<u>Racial disparity: All active ethics probes focus on black lawmakers</u>
<u>John Bresnahan, Tue Nov 3, 4:54 am ET</u>

The House ethics committee is currently investigating seven African-American lawmakers — more than 15 percent of the total in the House. And an eighth black member, Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.), would be under investigation if the Justice Department hadn't asked the committee to stand down.

Not a single white lawmaker is currently the subject of a full-scale ethics committee probe.

The ethics committee declined to respond to questions about the racial disparity, and members of the Congressional Black Caucus are wary of talking about it on the record. But privately, some black members are outraged — and see in the numbers a worrisome trend in the actions of ethics watchdogs on and off Capitol Hill.

"Is there concern whether someone is trying to set up [Congressional Black Caucus] members? Yeah, there is," a black House Democrat said. "It looks as if there is somebody out there who understands what the rules [are] and sends names to the ethics committee with the goal of going after the [CBC]."

African-American politicians have long complained that they're treated unfairly when ethical issues arise. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus are still fuming over Speaker Nancy Pelosi's decision to oust then-Rep. William Jefferson (D-La.) from the House Ways and Means Committee in 2006, and some have argued that race plays a role in the ongoing efforts to remove Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) from his chairmanship of that committee.

Last week's actions by the House ethics committee are sure to add fuel to the fire.

The committee — which has one African-American lawmaker, Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.), among its 10 members — on Thursday considered three referrals from the recently formed Office of Congressional Ethics. It dismissed a case against Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.), who is white, but agreed to open full-blown investigations of California Democratic Reps. Maxine Waters and Laura Richardson, both of whom are black.

The committee was already investigating five other African-Americans. Rangel is the subject of two different probes, one involving a host of issues he has put before the committee and another involving allegations that corporate funds may have been used improperly to pay for members' trips to the Caribbean in 2007-08. Reps. Carolyn Kilpatrick (D-Mich.), Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) and Donald Payne (D-N.J.) and Del. Donna Christensen (D-U.S. Virgin Islands) are also included in the second of those investigations.

A document leaked to The Washington Post last week showed that nearly three dozen lawmakers have come under scrutiny this year by either the House ethics committee or the Office of Congressional Ethics, an independent watchdog created in 2008 at the insistence of Pelosi. While the list contained a substantial number of white lawmakers, the ethics committee has not yet launched formal investigative subcommittees with respect to any of them — as it has with the seven African-American members.

The OCE has also been a particular target of ire for the Congressional Black Caucus. Black lawmakers, including CBC Chairwoman Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), met with OCE officials earlier this year to raise their concerns. Spokesmen for Lee and the OCE both declined to comment.

A number of CBC members opposed the resolution establishing the OCE, arguing that it was the wrong response to the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal, which helped Democrats seize control of the House in 2006.

Setting up the OCE "was a mistake," Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.) told The Hill newspaper recently. "Congress has a long and rich history of overreacting to a crisis."

Cleaver, though, now finds himself part of the four-member subcommittee that will investigate Waters, who voted against the OCE. Waters is being probed over her intervention with the Treasury Department on behalf of a minority-owned bank in which her husband served on the board and owned at least $250,000 in stock.

While she has flatly denied engaging in any unethical or improper behavior in her dealings with OneUnited, Waters was described by colleagues and Democratic aides as "livid" over the ethics committee's decision to investigate her.

"She was hopping mad," a Democratic lawmaker said of Waters. "She feels this is a complete miscarriage of justice."

Another CBC member said black lawmakers are "easy targets" for ethics watchdog groups because they have less money — both personally and in their campaign accounts — to defend themselves than do their white colleagues. Campaign funds can be used to pay members' legal bills.

“A lot of that has to do with outside watchdog groups like [Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington] that have to have a level of success to justify OCE,” the CBC member said. The good-government groups were strong backers of the OCE’s creation.

But these same groups won’t go after Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.), this lawmaker claimed, “because she has plenty of money to defend herself,” and the outside groups don’t want to take a risk. The Democrat said the ethics committee would be going up against Harman’s lawyers and “going up against” the powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee if they push the OCE to pressure the ethics committee to act.

Harman was allegedly recorded on a 2005 federal wiretap discussing with an Israeli operative her bid to become Intelligence Committee chairwoman. Harman has denied any wrongdoing, but an attempt by the ethics committee to get a transcript of the taped call was rebuffed by the Justice Department.

What especially galled black lawmakers was that the ethics committee voted to move forward with the Waters and Richardson probes following the OCE referrals, while Graves — who OCE also thought should be investigated by the ethics committee — saw his case dismissed.

Even worse, the ethics committee issued a 541-page document explaining why it wouldn’t look into allegations that Graves invited a witness to testify before the Small Business Committee — on which he sits — without revealing his financial ties to that witness.

“It is kind of crazy,” said an aide to one senior black Democrat. “How can it be that the ethics committee only investigates African-Americans? It doesn’t make sense.”

White lawmakers have certainly been the subject of ethics committee investigations before. Former Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Texas) was admonished by the committee for his dealings with corporate lobbyists, while ex-Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.) was the target of an investigation over his dealings with teenage male House pages in late 2006. Foley resigned after the sex scandal was revealed.

And the document leaked to the Post last week shows that a number of white lawmakers — including senior House Appropriations Committee members John Murtha (D-Pa.), Pete Visclosky (D-Ind.), Alan Mollohan (D-W.Va.) and Jim Moran (D-Va.) — have drawn the attention of the committee and the OCE.

The two congressional ethics watchdogs are looking into these members’ ties to the PMA Group, a now-defunct lobbying firm that won tens of millions of dollars in earmarks from members of the Appropriations Committee. The lawmakers who arranged for the earmarks received hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from PMA’s lobbying clients.

But it seems unlikely that the PMA case will become the subject of a full-blown ethics committee investigation. The Justice Department is also looking into the PMA allegations; the FBI raided PMA’s office last year, and Visclosky and his former chief of staff have been served with document subpoenas. And under ethics committee rules, the panel cannot conduct an investigation of any member or staffer already being probed by a law enforcement agency.

The nation’s only black senator, Roland Burris of Illinois, is currently under investigation by the Senate Ethics Committee. It’s not clear whether that committee is currently investigating any

white members, although Sen. John Ensign (R-Nev.) is likely to be in its sights if the Justice Department doesn't pre-empt a committee investigation.

Jonathan Allen contributed to this story.

[End of excerpt.]

The concept in the US is "equal justice under the law." Are blacks being singled out for investigation and prosecution, or is black culture fundamentally different in its morality? Should "equal justice under the law" be replaced with "equal outcomes under the law," as is the basis of the US' affirmative-action programs?

It is interesting to note that while blacks are represented in prisons in much higher proportions than their numbers in the population, it is whites and other races who are responsible for most of the dollar amount involved (e.g., Bernie Madoff). Blacks tend to be involved in petty crimes or crimes of violence. In my view, locking someone up for a long time is really cruel – and quite unnecessary. In pioneer times, if you locked up an Indian, he would usually die quickly. In most advanced European nations, prison terms of more than ten years are very rare. The US locks people up for long terms because there is much economic activity generated by doing so (lawyers' fees, prison construction, prison maintenance, law enforcement activity, incarceration expenses).

If it were up to me, which it is not, I would limit all jail terms to one year, and all to four years, with exile (banishment, e.g., to Mexico) for all more "serious" cases. I would use "shaming" punishments, such as stocks, pillories, lashing and caning, for lesser offenses. In fact, if it were up to me I would immediately close all prisons. All prisoners serving time sentences (all of which are four years or less) would be sent to work farms, for rehabilitation. There would be no walls, fences, or locks in these work farms. Offenders are sent to the farms as a high privilege, as an alternative to exile, in consideration of their merit or potential for rehabilitation. Anyone who decided that the privilege of staying on the farm was not for him would have the option of choosing exile instead. Anyone who escaped would be declared an outlaw – outside the protection of the law – and stripped of his civil rights. He would be "fair game" for any citizen who considered him a threat. This arrangement would not only be more humane, but it would get the state out of the grizzly business of executing its own citizens and taking of human life, except in war.

I agree with the assertion that justice delayed is justice denied. All sentences would be decided within one month. If appealed, a case would be retried within a second month by a separate judge and jury, and the lesser sentence applied.

In the November 14, 2009, issue of the Spartanburg Herald-Journal is an article, "Robber gets life without parole." The man was found guilty of armed robbery, assault and battery of a high and aggregated nature and grand larceny, more than $5,000. He had previous first-degree burglary conviction. This man would not be given a four-year term in a rehabilitation camp. He would be immediately exiled to Mexico or similar place outside our society. If he ever returned, he would not last long.

Winston Churchill on Success

Winston Churchill once remarked that success is the process of lurching from one failure to another with great enthusiasm.

Internet Download Speed

Several times last year I was contacted by my telephone provider, AT&T, to try out their "high-speed" data subscriber link (DSL) service, instead of continuing with the "DSL-Light" service that I had been using for several years. I pointed out to them that it appeared to me that most of the download time was "overhead," and had little to do with the actual file transfer. Nevertheless, they persevered, and offered for me to try the fast DSL for three months at no additional cost.

I agreed to this. For the three months, I could see no difference whatsoever, and I went back to the DLS-Light.

Recently, I changed my telephone service from AT&T to Charter Communications, and they made a "big deal" out of the fact that their broadband Internet access was five times faster than AT&T's DSL. (By the way, my switch to Charter Internet from AT&T had nothing to do with the data transfer speed – it was simply to reduce the number of bills at the end of the month.) Once again, even though the download speed was five times faster, I saw virtually no difference in the time required to do e-mail. I did notice that I could upload files faster to my website, but this is something that very few people do.

The television ads that suggest that their broadband service is five times faster than DSL are totally misleading. Most of the time spent on a computer doing Internet access has little to do with downloading large files or other data blocks. The overall speed will be about the same for most users.

The Reason for Individual Cars

US society has evolved to one in which the dominant mode of transportation is the individual car, or automobile. As a means of mass transportation, this mode of transportation is exquisitely inefficient and wasteful. One might ask why the government would promote such a system, when the petroleum age will last for such a short time. Would it not be better to invest the energy of limited petroleum resources in research for a better – and sustainable – post-petroleum world?

The reason for the government's promoting individual cars is precisely *because* it is grossly inefficient. The government wishes to achieve scarcity – in all resources – as quickly as possible. Economics is the science of managing scarcity. Leaders become powerful by exercising control over scarce resources. A king would have no power in a Garden-of-Eden setting in which food and living space was freely available to everyone. It is said that a king's glory is in his population. That is very true, for two reasons. First, the ruler of a large population can amass much more wealth from a large population that a small population. Second, as the population grows, resources become scarcer, and his power in allocating these scarce resources increases. (Kings crave both wealth and power – as well as sex.) Until the population reaches the point, as in present-day China, where its magnitude is clearly

unsustainable and revolution likely, no country advocates negative or zero population growth. Instead, they give tax incentives – even “children’s allowances” – to have larger families.

Why Conservation Fails

The following discussion about efficiency is presented in Jay Hanson’s flash video, *Limits to Growth: America*, posted at http://www.dieoff.org/l2.html , and also at the Wikipedia entry on the Jevons effect, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jevons_paradox, an excerpt of which follows:

In economics, the Jevons Paradox (sometimes called the Jevons effect) is the proposition that technological progress that increases the efficiency with which a resource is used, tends to increase (rather than decrease) the rate of consumption of that resource. It is historically called the Jevons Paradox as it ran counter to popular intuition. However, the situation is well understood in modern economics. In addition to reducing the amount needed for a given use, improved efficiency lowers the relative cost of using a resource – which increases demand and speeds economic growth, further increasing demand. Overall resource use increases or decreases depending on which effect predominates.

The Jevons Paradox has been used to argue that energy conservation is futile, as increased efficiency may actually increase fuel use. However, this ignores other benefits from increased efficiency, such as increased quality of life. Furthermore, fuel use will decline if increased efficiency is paired with a green tax that keeps cost of use the same. Also, the Jevons Paradox only applies to technological improvements that increase fuel efficiency; corporate or government policies that impose efficiency standards normally increase costs, and so do not display the Jevons Paradox.

The proposition was first put forward by William Stanley Jevons in his 1865 book *The Coal Question*. In it, Jevons observed that England's consumption of coal soared after James Watt introduced his coal-fired steam engine, which greatly improved the efficiency of Thomas Newcomen's earlier design. Watt's innovations made coal a more cost effective power source, leading to the increased use of the steam engine in a wide range of industries. This in turn increased total coal consumption, even as the amount of coal required for any particular application fell. Jevons argued that any further increases in efficiency in the use of coal would tend to increase the use of coal. Hence, it would tend to increase, rather than reduce, the rate at which England's deposits of coal were being depleted.

[End of Wikipedia extract.]

Another Indicator of Inflation

When I was young, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insured bank accounts to the limit of $10,000. Now the insurance amount is $250,000 – 25 times as much.

Perhaps the best single indicator of the extent to which the US government has debased the currency is the price of gold. It was $42 per ounce when I was young, and is about $1,100 per ounce today – inflation by a factor of 26.

With its policy of vastly increasing the US population (from about 150 million when I was young to over 300 million today), the price of some commodities is increasing much faster than the average rate of inflation. Last week I visited relatives in Indiana and Ohio. My relative in Columbus, Ohio, mentioned that farmland near Columbus was now selling for $80,000 per acre. When I was young, $300 per acre was the price of good farmland – this is a 267-fold increase.

Why Do Economists Want Inflation?

In economics texts, it is usually stated that high inflation is undesirable, because it favors short-term investments over longer term ones, which in the long run will be much better for our descendents. But it is usually also stated, without discussion, that deflation is bad. Why would economists assert that a low level of inflation is good, and that deflation is bad? Intuitively, any level of inflation seems undesirable, since it depreciates the value of your money savings, and any level of depreciation seems desirable, since it appreciates the value of your money savings.

One reason cited for a low level of inflation is that it enables central bankers to control the economy by setting the interest rate (bank discount rate). (The inflation rate is usually a few percentage points higher than the bank discount rate.) If the economy is "overheated," then raising the interest rate will (usually) reduce credit and slow it down, and vice versa. If the rate of inflation is zero or negative, then this does not work. The reason is a little complicated. In brief, it is that our money system cannot function without inflation.

The money system in the United States (and most of the world) is "debt-based" money, with interest. Money is created when a loan is made (out of "thin air" – loans are not made simply by relending depositor's savings, as is widely believed). The fundamental problem with this system is that when bankers create the money for the loan, they do not create the money for the interest on the loan. To keep this system going, borrowers have to lend ever-increasing amounts. The system must continue to grow, or it collapses (by debt forgiveness or bankruptcies). This system is a wonderful one for forcing economic growth, although it is a terrible one for managing a planet. It encourages economic growth forever, leading to the eventual destruction of the environment. It encourages the development and consumption of all resources, until nothing is left. Under this system, there is always inflation, equal in amount to the amount of interest charged on loans. The debt is always growing, the economy is always growing, and the currency is always inflating (depreciating in value). This system forces people to work forever, since the value of their savings is always shrinking. Since resources are always being consumed at a greater and greater rate, scarcity increases. It is an economist's and politician's dream (since it continually increases wealth, scarcity, and the power to control the allocation of scarce resources).

The reason that economists decry deflation is that it cannot exist under a debt-based money system (with interest). Inflation is a necessary by-product of debt-based money with interest. This is the direct reason why economists want inflation. Even without debt-based money with interest, however, economists would still want inflation. The reason for this is that with inflation, a person's savings are continually depreciating in value, so that the individual must continually work or reinvest their savings just to stay even. With deflation, your savings would become more valuable over time, even if you did not reinvest them. There would be less incentive to work or invest, except for greed. The rulers would not like this at all. Keep those bastards working! Have inflation continually depleting the value of their savings. Wipe them out with periodic recessions.

The debt-based money system, with its built-in inflation, is an incredibly powerful incentive to keep people working. Since a person does not know how long he will live or what his unexpected expenses (such as health care!) might be, he must work long and hard to save a large amount of money – much more than he would typically expect to need, not just to insure against emergencies or an unexpectedly long life, but because the value of his savings will shrink in the future due to inflation. This system not only stimulates economic growth and destruction of the environment, but contains an incentive for people to produce much more than they need for future contingencies (because inflation is continually robbing their savings of value).

What's in a Word?

I was saddened to hear of the death recently of William Shirer. For many years I read and enjoyed his column, *On Language*.

Recently, I read an interesting book on arthritis: *The Arthritis Cure: The Medical Miracle that Can Halt, Reverse, and May Even Cure Osteoarthritis* by Jason Theodosakis, Brenda Adderly and Barry Fox (St. Martin's Press, 1997). The authors point out that the etymology of the word "arthritis" is the Greek "arthro" (joint) and "itis" (inflammation). The word properly applies to joint diseases involving inflammation, such as rheumatoid arthritis. It does not properly apply to joint diseases that do not involve inflammation, such as the wearing-out of joints due to old age. The proper term for these diseases, which typically do not involve inflammation, is "arthrosis," which means "degenerative joint disease."

By the way, the treatment for arthrosis is daily doses (tablets) of the over-the-counter chemicals chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine sulfate (or hydrochlorides).

Speaking of words, I read recently (can't recall where) that we don't have a "shortage of energy," we have a "longage of people."

Fake Art in the White House?

While I was visiting a relative in Indianapolis last week, he showed me an article about fake art in the White House. A painting alleged to be done by Alma Thomas is a near-identical copy of "Snails," done by Henri Matisse in 1953 (the piece is a collage of sheets of paper of different shapes and colors – Thomas changed most of the colors to blue). Strange.

Political Correctness

On the 29 October 2009 edition of the Fox News television program "O'Reilly Factor," Mr. Bill O'Reilly described the case in which the town of Kent, Connecticut, proposed to erect a monument to a young man, James Gadiel, killed in the September 11, 2001, attack on the New York City Trade Center Twin Towers. The town asked the dead man's father, Peter Gadiel, what inscription he would like to see on the monument, and the father proposed, "Murdered by

Muslim Terrorists." The town has refused to use this inscription, citing that it would be racially insensitive.

The men who killed James Gadiel may be characterized many ways. One could say, "Murdered by human beings," or "Murdered by men," or "Murdered by illegal aliens," or "Murdered by Egyptians," or "Murdered by religious fanatics," or "In the wrong place at the wrong time," or, perhaps most appropriately, "Murdered because of the United States Government's Policy of Mass Immigration, Mass International Free Trade and Open Borders." Since James was young and had not yet had a chance to accomplish anything of note in his life, the town is not erecting the monument in honor of him or in celebration of his life's work, but instead – by its own admission – to remind the public of the attack.

How does Kent wish to characterize the attack, or the attackers? It seems that the most salient aspect of the attack is that it was carried out by Moslem extremists, in furtherance of their religious convictions. Peter Gadiel's suggestion seems appropriate – it characterizes why his son was killed rather well. What if it does offend Moslems? The criminals who executed his son are best characterized as Moslem terrorists. This country was conquered by Christians, not Moslems. By all rights, few or no Moslems should be here, just as few or no Christians are allowed in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Moslem nations. The town of Kent should not be at all reluctant to offend Moslems. This is not their land. They did not kill and die to found this nation. They have no moral right to be here, and should not be granted the privilege of being here in large numbers, just as Christians are not granted the privilege of flooding Moslem nations. They have no right to be protected from criticism for assassinating Americans, and should not be granted this privilege.

In view of the town's reluctance to bring attention to the fact that James Gadiel was killed by Moslem terrorists, out of fear of offending anyone, perhaps the town of Kent should articulate why it is erecting the monument in the first place. It is not to honor James, since he was young and without notable accomplishments. If it is not to name and defy James' killers – the Moslem terrorists – what is the purpose?

Last week (Thursday, November 5, 2009), a major in the US army massacred 13 people at Fort Hood, Texas. The man, Nidal Malik Hasan, is the son of Palestinian immigrants to the United States. He is a US citizen. He is a Moslem. It is reported that he screamed "Allahu Akbar" – "God Is Great" – as he began his attack. Liberals are scurrying to attempt to show that Hasan's committing the massacre had nothing to do with his Moslem faith, or if it did, it was because he found life in the US difficult because of it – he is the victim! If there were no Moslems in the United States, the 3,000 victims of the 9/11 massacre and the 13 victims of the Fort Hood massacre would not have died at the hands of religious fanatics screaming "Allahu Akbar."

The direct cause of Hasan's massacre and of the 9/11 massacre is the US government's long-standing policy of mass immigration, massive international free trade, and open borders. The perpetrators of these crimes were motivated primarily by their religious beliefs – Islam. Their attacks were motivated by Islamic extremism and are essentially characterized by the fact that they were planned and executed by Islamic extremists. To attempt to represent them otherwise is disingenuous and dissimulating.

The November 23, 2009, issue of *Time* magazine (available on November 14) devotes its cover story to Hasan. It appears that this rampage was the direct result of the US government's policy of political correctness to promote diversity. Here follow some quotes from the article.

When an Army officer is reported to proudly call himself a Muslim first, an American second; when he appears at a public-health seminar with the PowerPoint presentation "Why the War on Terror Is a War on Islam"; when he applauds the killing of a U.S. soldier by a Muslim convert at an Arkansas recruitment center; and when he is caught corresponding with a radical imam in Yemen who has called on all Muslims to kill American soldiers in Iraq, you wonder just how brightly the red lights had to flash before anyone was willing to stop and ask questions.

"He was very vocal about being a Muslim first and holding Shari'a law above the Constitution," says an officer who attended the Pentagon's medical school with Hasan but would speak only off the record because his commanders ordered him not do discuss the case. "When fellow students asked, 'How can you be an officer and not hold to the Constitution",' he'd get visibly upset – sweaty and nervous – and had no good answers." This officer was so disturbed when Hasan gave a talk asserting that the U.S. was waging a "war on Islam" that he challenged the lieutenant colonel running the course. "I raised my hand and asked, 'Why are you letting this go on? This has nothing to do with environmental health,'" which was the actual focus of the course. "'I'm just going to let him go,'" replied the lieutenant colonel, who had even approved the topic in advance.

"It was a systemic problem," the officer says. "The same thing was happening at Walter Reed." The vital question for the military and our own security is whether political correctness – or the desire to promote diversity – prevented the Army from recognizing and dealing with a problem in its midst, a problem in plain sight. According to a co-worker, Hasan would not even allow his photo to be taken with female colleagues. "People are afraid to come forward and challenge somebody's ideology," explained Hasan's classmate, "because they're afraid of getting an equal-opportunity complaint that can end careers." NPR reported that top officials at Walter Reed held meetings in the spring of 2008 in which they debated whether Hasan was "psychotic." "Put it this way," an official told NPR, "Everybody felt that if you were deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, you would not want Nidal Hasan in your foxhole."

But others are convinced that his religion protected him from stronger action by the Army. "He'd have to murder the general's wife and daughter on the parade ground at high noon in order to get a serious reprimand," says Ralph Peters, an outspoken retired Army lieutenant colonel who now writes military books and a newspaper column. While stressing "there shouldn't be witch hunts" against Muslims in uniform, Peters insists that "this guy got a pass because he was a Muslim, despite the Army's claim that everybody's green and we're all the same." A top Pentagon official admits there may be some truth to the charge. "We're wondering why some of these strange encounters didn't trigger something more formal," he says. "I think people were overly sensitive about Muslims in the military, and that led to a reluctance to say, 'This guy is nuts.' The Army is going to have to review their [sic] procedures to make sure someone can raise issues like this."

[End of *Time* excerpt.]

In its zeal to promote diversity and political correctness, with draconian punishment for people who are found guilty of gender or cultural insensitivity, the US government has made its own citizens afraid to question traitors in its midst.

It is interesting to note that another Islamic extremist, John Allen Muhammed – the "Beltway Sniper" – was executed today.

Where Is Competition?

Along Interstate Highway 85 from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Greenville, South Carolina, the advertised price of on-the-highway hotels is $29 per night. I have traveled a fair amount up and down the East Coast, and do not see highway hotels at this price – usually they are $55-65 per night. What is it about this stretch of I-85 that causes hotel prices to be so low? Why aren't they this low everywhere along I-85?

The Coming of the Electric Car

In the past few months, Kia automobiles have been advertising new cars for $6,999 in local (Spartanburg, SC) television ads, and Toyota has been advertising new cars for $6,988. This is about half the price from a year or two ago. Just before the switch from analog to digital television last year, color television sets were selling for as little as $88 at Walmart in Spartanburg.

Is the same thing happening with cars as happened with televisions? Is the automobile industry – and the US government, via its "Cash for Clunkers" program – frenetically promoting gasoline-engine cars because it knows that they will soon be obsolete?

The Greatest Trade Ever

On the television a few days ago, someone was discussing Gregory Zuckerman's book, *The Greatest Trade Ever: The Behind-the-Scenes Story of How John Paulson Defied Wall Street and Made Financial History* (Broadway Books, 2009), about John Paulson's making billions by betting that the recent economic downturn would happen. Sounds like interesting reading.

The Return of Slavery

It is not generally recognized that the basis for slavery is economics. Our ancestors were slave-owners because it made economic sense, not because they were less moral than we (the Bible does not condemn slavery, but calls on slaves to obey their masters). As soon as modern civilization began to tap the energy of fossil fuels and the global population began to explode, there was a surplus of people. At that time, slavery was abolished – exploiting surplus labor of free human beings was less expensive than caring for slaves.

The world's large human population has been made possible because of fossil fuels. Within the next few years, as fossil fuels deplete, global population will decline to the same level as before the fossil fuel, i.e., to a few hundred million (or less) on the entire planet. At that time, slavery will return, because it will once again be economically advantageous.

If the population were to drop to very low levels, to about a density of one person per ten square kilometers of habitable terrain or 2-3 per 100 square kilometers of total area (see Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones' *Atlas of World Population History* (Penguin, 1978)), there would be sufficient food and space for all people, without the need for agriculture or civilization. At that

low population density, there is neither slavery nor economic exploitation. Governments arise only when there is scarcity. Economics is the science (the "dismal science") of managing scarcity. Political and economic leaders will work to make sure that the population does not drop to these low levels again. Economics will soon bring back slavery as fossil fuels exhaust.

Barack Obama: The Greatest Mass Murderer of All Time?

It is said that Josef Stalin was responsible for the deaths of 20 million Russians, and that Mao Tse-tung was responsible for the deaths of 70 million Chinese.

The world is running out of petroleum, and world leaders are doing nothing about it. As petroleum resources decline, the global human population will decline from its present six billion people back to pre-petroleum levels, that can be supported by the recurrent budge of solar energy, i.e., to a few hundred million or less.

The maximum number of people that the US land can support under primitive agriculture is about 40 million people. In the absence of the social structure required to support agriculture, the number of people that can be supported is far less – on the order of a few million. As petroleum production wanes, the population of the US will drop from its current level of 310 million to about 40 million or less – very possibly as low as 5-10 million. By means of effective planning, the US government could take steps to move gracefully to a lower population level. By ignoring this inevitable and imminent development, the US government will be contributing directly to the violent deaths of 270-300 million Americans.

Barack Obama is the leader of the United States. He is choosing to do nothing about the coming petroleum decline. Hubbert's Peak is now passing, and global oil production is about to decline. As this happens, the world will be consumed in violent warfare. Obama is doing nothing to prepare for this future. By promoting the US policy of ignoring this situation, Obama is contributing directly to the deaths of 270-300 million Americans.

Unless he changes his ways, Barack Obama will go down in history as the greatest mass murderer of all time.

Michelle Obama's Ancestors Are from Spartanburg

My home town is Spartanburg, South Carolina. I was interested to see that the October 18, 2009 issue of the *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* contained a front-page article ("First Lady can trace her heritage to Spartanburg County") that First Lady Michelle Obama's ancestors hail from Spartanburg (Peter's Creek, near the Pacolet River). Mrs. Obama is reported to be a descendent of Melvinia Shields, who lived in Spartanburg at the time of the War Between the States.

The article is posted at http://www.goupstate.com/article/20091018/ARTICLES/910181050. See the article "Reporters trace Michelle Obama's ancestors back to Spartanburg," published on October 8, 2009, and posted at http://www.goupstate.com/article/20091009/ARTICLES/910099980 for additional information.

See also the New York Times article "In First Lady's Roots, a Complex Path from Slavery") posted at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/08/us/politics/08genealogy.html?_r=1.

The Missing Children

This week's edition of *People* magazine arrived today (13 September 2009). The cover article, which is titled, "Vanished without a Trace," discusses the problem of missing children. According to many writers, the large number of missing children is the result of alien abductions. We are not the top of the food chain, and the missing children are used for food and for body parts. For more on this, refer to, for example, *The High Strangeness of Dimensions, Densities and the Process of Alien Abduction* by Laura Knight-Jadczyk (Quantum Future Press, 2004); *The Threat: Revealing the Secret Alien Agenda* by David M. Jacobs (Fireside / Simon & Schuster, 1998); *Secret Life: Firsthand Documented Accounts of UFO Abductions* by David M. Jacobs (Fireside / Simon & Schuster, 1992); *UFOs and Abductions: Challenging the Borders of Knowledge* edited by David M. Jacobs (University Press of Kansas, 2000); *Alien Agenda: Investigating the Alien Presence among Us* by Jim Marrs (Perennial / HarperCollins, 1997); and *Sight Unseen: Science, UFO Invisibility and Transgenic Beings* by Budd Hopkins and Carol Rainey (Pocket Books / Simon & Schuster, 2003); Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens by John E. Mack (Scribners, 1994).

A Free Ride for Illegal Aliens – Jail for US Citizens!

The US House of Representatives just passed a version of a health-care reform bill, which now goes to the Senate. Under this bill, all US citizens will be required to purchase health-care insurance. If they have sufficient income to do so and refuse to do so, they will be fined, and if they do not pay the fine, they will go to jail. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi was asked what she thought about this, and she stated that it was "fair" – equitable.

There was a public outcry when the government proposed earlier to include coverage for illegal aliens under new legislation, and so the government has now claimed that it will not do so. This is a lie. If illegal aliens show up at emergency rooms, as they do now, it is highly unlikely that they will be turned away. Their care will be paid for, as it is now, by those insured or by the US taxpayer. This practice will continue. It may well be that the government will not permit illegal aliens to purchase insurance, but they will be provided health-care services just as before and American citizens will cover the cost, just as before.

The US government has aided and abetted the invasion of America by 12-20 million illegal aliens. The US Constitution requires the President and other high officials to defend the country from invasion. The US President and other high officials take an oath that they will obey the Constitution. They not only refuse to rid the country of illegal aliens, but they provide social and economic services to them. In doing this, they are guilty of high treason and gross malfeasance in office.

Illegal aliens are taking up space. Each person added to the US population results in the destruction of an acre of natural land, in conversion to roads, buildings and other infrastructure. Illegal aliens, by their presence here, have been responsible for the destruction of millions of acres of US land. Illegal aliens are destroying our country and culture. They kill Americans in

large numbers – the number of Americans killed each year by illegal aliens is larger than the number of Americans killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Under the law, they should all be deported immediately.

Yet what is the policy of the US government? It is to provide them free social and economic benefits, including education and medical services. It grants citizenship to their children born in this country, and then grants them citizenship because they then have a US-citizen relative (an "anchor baby"). Under the proposed health-care legislation, illegal aliens will continue to receive free health care at emergency rooms, paid for by US citizens' medical insurance and taxes. Yet any American who refuses to purchase mandatory health insurance will go to jail. Under the proposed legislation, illegal aliens will get a free ride, and US citizens will go to jail. This is not the first time that this outrageous situation has occurred. Illegal aliens are not punished for their crime of illegal invasion – they are usually not pursued and they are usually not deported – whereas US citizens are invariably pursued and punished for theirs.

Illegal aliens are guilty of a very serious crime – destroying our environment, taking up our space, destroying our culture and killing US citizens. Under the Constitution, they should not be here. Yet they go unpunished for their crime. Under the House bill, US citizens will be required to pay (through insurance or taxes) for health care services for the millions of illegal aliens who seek medical care at emergency rooms. US citizens will be required, through their insurance and taxes, to cover the cost of this service, and they will go to jail if they do not. Why does the US government care more for illegal aliens than it does its own citizens? The reason is clear – their presence here enriches the wealthy by increasing the size of the population (through increased consumption) and by providing a cheap labor supply.

How long are US citizens going to be abused by their government? How long are they going to stand by while the US government gives the country away to illegal aliens and requires the citizens to support them? My sister still owns the home that I grew up in in Spartanburg. A few weeks ago her husband (my brother-in-law) applied to the city for a permit to make some repairs to this house. He was told that since he was renting this house, even though it was a family home, it was considered a "commercial property" – and only a licensed contractor (which he is not) could make structural repairs to the house. How long are US citizens going to allow the government to strip away their liberties? Not very long, in my view. The country's founders established this nation "of, by and for the people," but this nation is no longer theirs – it is now for the wealthy elite. In the US at the present time, there are two major political parties, and they both serve the wealthy elite. For each of the recent elections, US voters have tried to change the system by throwing the incumbents out of office. But since both parties stand for the same thing – serving the wealthy elite – there is no change. The US electorate is extremely frustrated. When it is not possible to change things via the ballot box, other means are sought. In my view, there will soon be a revolution in the United States.

Divine Right of Kings

For thousands of years, world leaders held to the doctrine of "divine right of kings" – that since God is omnipotent, everything that is is His will, and they were in charge since He placed them in charge and wanted them in charge. By the same reasoning, if a subject were to drive a spear through the heart of the king, by God's omnipotence this is exactly what He wanted – the Divine Right of People.