

Weekly Update by Mark Armstrong

- 31 January 2020

Greetings from Tyler,

The worldwide scare over the spread of the coronavirus continues to prompt concern if not panic. China publicly admits they may have as many as 10,000 cases of the deadly sickness. But they've quarantined whole cities, recommended people stay home. News is that they've closed factories and stores and that some cities are like a ghost town where the streets are empty.

Some are skeptical of China's numbers. A London medical expert has said that there may actually be as many as 100,000 cases in China and around the world.

The World Health Organization weighed in, weeks after the first realization that there was a new mutant virus on the move, declaring an "emergency." It's been discovered that the virus has a 14 day incubation period and that it can be passed from one person to another even before the infected party knows they're sick. Hospitals in China are worrying over a shortage of test kits. But the doctor in Wuhan (*who hasn't been home in over a week, for fear that he might infect his own family*) says that early tests may turn up negative, even though the virus is present and maybe positively identified by subsequent testing.

While travel to and from China is being curtailed by the United States and many other nations, Australia continues to allow flights from China carrying hundreds of passengers at a time. Additionally, as many as 200,000 Chinese students are scheduled to return to their studies in Australia after having visited home during an annual break. At present, it appears Australia will continue to allow flights and thousands of people to arrive from China.

The U. S. stock market dropped precipitously today (*600 points*) and is said to be "spooked" by speculation about how this sickness might play out economically. Certainly, trade and tourism are already being affected. It remains to be seen how long the epidemic will persist, or what the long-term economic impact will be.

Today, January 31st is the day that Britain is officially free from the European

Union. Despite the fact that there will be a ceremonial recognition of that fact, the remainder of 2020 is to be treated as a transition period with many details on immigration, trade and a myriad of other concerns yet to be ironed out. Other members of the EU are looking on and wondering whether they too may want to divest themselves of membership. We may well be witnessing the beginning of a trend that will ultimately cripple an organization primarily dependent on the German economy.

Another wrinkle may turn out to be the fact that President Trump has signaled that he's about to turn his attention to Europe in regard to trade policy.

While America's legislative bodies have been preoccupied and paralyzed with the impeachment charade, President Trump has been running up the scoreboard with accomplishments. While Senators dealt with various legal arguments that consumed the entire week, the President was signing the USMCA trade agreement. He hosted Prime Minister Netanyahu at the White House and unveiled a new proposal for Middle East peace, backed by several Arab nations traditionally on the side of the Palestinians.

He also held two sold-out (*many time over*) rallies, one in New Jersey, and the other in Des Moines, Iowa. The happy, energetic enthusiasm on display among his supporters is a far cry from what we see on the network television panels. They're not happy, and that's apparent even with the sound on mute. It seems they've all had their dogs run over this week, or at least that's their demeanor. For all our sakes we hope that the Senate will see fit to wrap up the ugly spectacle. But that would mean a lot of long faces on network outlets. Better theirs than ours. Have a great Sabbath!

Mark

Source: <http://www.intercontinentalcog.org/fridayupdates.php>

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