

## THE FIVE HORSEMEN OF OUR APOCALYPSE

It seems like people are relaxing a bit after our most recent "crises". We've adjusted to losing a third of our savings. Summer is here. Trillion dollar Wall Street bailouts are not in the headlines anymore, nor the continuing foreclosures on innocent homeowners. If we have a job, we're thankful. The media tells us we're dealing with health care, global warming, etc. The government hopeful-pump-priming dollars are arriving. Whew!

Ummm . . . sorry, the clock is still ticking, and ticking faster. The cliff-edge between mega-recession and total collapse is looming closer. We're carefully looking the other way.

We're trained in school and business in linear-rational engineering thinking. Focus on one problem at a time. Find a solution to it. Don't look at externalized costs or the connectedness between things, because that's hard to put numbers on and doesn't help who is paying for the answer.

That isn't how things really work. Every real problem has multiple, inter-twined causes, and needs multiple, inter-twined solutions. Every real solution also solves multiple problems. Real economics has no bottom line. That's linear thinking, and puts out of our sight all the secondary costs and problems and linkages that always occur.

There are at least five major players in the transition we're in. They all interact - wildly - and all need to be tracked at the same time:

PEAK OIL. Yes, we *are* running out of all of our fossil fuels. You can debate timelines, but realities are inescapable: exponential growth and finite resources aren't a match; everyone has been fudging what "proven resources" are left; when things peak, the game changes from a buyer's market to a seller's market; and after picking the low-hanging fruit it takes more and more energy and money to get what's left; it's about more than just "alternative energy" - most of our highways, building roofs, fertilizers, and plastic materials are oil-based.

GLOBAL WARMING. Again we can debate details and timelines. But glaciers and arctic ice *are* melting - way faster than thought. The interim impacts of more violent storms are already taking huge tolls. Another is on the way. And the actions being developed on state and national levels are way too meager and way too slow.

FISCAL FRAUD. Wow. The biggest Ponzi scheme of all. A fantasy world of fake financial valuation and ownership, whose implications and interactions *nobody* can grasp. Two-thirds of Las Vegas homeowners owe more on their mortgages than the houses are worth. Dominos upon dominos of economic collapse here, quivering and ready to fall.

DEBT SPENDING AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE. This is probably the next big shoe to drop. The end of the dollar being the world's reserve currency for exchange. The beginning of April, China first ran up the flagpole at the Group 20 meeting dumping the dollar as the basis of international monetary exchange and foreign trade. With reason. Our trade deficit is the largest in the world, and we're doing nothing about it. Russia, China, and Brazil are discussing bypassing the dollar. China has increased its gold reserves by 75%. China owns over \$2 trillion dollars of U.S. dollar assets. They are

continuing to take actions to abandon the dollar-basis of trade, and some experts say they can accomplish it in 2-3 years. The Chinese are not dumb, and do long-range thinking. They undervalued their currency to promote foreign trade to build up their manufacturing capabilities. That's accomplished. They don't need us any more.

The result? Downside, the dollar value falls by half, our imports double in price. The upside? More and more of the oil-based foreign trade becomes unaffordable. We can rebuild our industrial capabilities with the latest and lowest-energy technology (if we remember to even think of that). Local jobs again; local production, for local needs. Cut the transportation costs out of the equation.

OUR CULTURE OF LIES. OK, folks, here's the root of it all. We can't win unless we acknowledge we're a culture of lies, and get totally out of that game. The charade-dance of health-care reform is a lie. Every time we buy something we take part in a game of deceit. Come on, gas at \$2.99 a gallon is *really* \$3 a gallon. Oh yes, and we forget the price is really \$2.99 plus the small-print 9/10¢. Even a gallon of ice cream is a lie. Remember when they started blowing air into ice cream so now when we buy a gallon we're paying for a half-gallon of air?

So . . . whatever we are looking at or ignoring, huge changes are going to happen and are unstoppably underway. The real question is how easy or hard we're going to make it on ourselves, and how well we get through the changes.

The first step is to acknowledge we've got to let go of our culture's whole fraudulent way of being in the world, and embrace a new way of being in true. It's scary, but the good news - and it's *really* good news - is that what awaits us is a huge and wonderful improvement in our lives.

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