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# The New Financial Crisis Report II 2026

**Written and Edited by David Masao Miyoshi**

**Reporting What's Really Happening in America and the World**

**Inside this issue:**



We are in the most economically unstable and socially tumultuous period in the history of the modern world. The period covered by the previous Financial Crisis Report was marked by extreme fluctuations in the stock, commodities, and currency markets accompanied by severe and sometimes violent and deadly social disruptions, including historic pandemics, conflicts, riots, and even regime-changing coups. This new Financial Crisis Report II covers the period that begins with the advent of the 47th president of the United States, who augured in the hope of a new America that promises justice for all through strength and the elimination of corruption. This is symbolized by the crest with the scales of justice balanced on a sword that replaces the photo of the writer. The writer believes this is an unprecedented opportunity for the financially astute investor, given the extreme global trade imbalances and distortions in the stock, commodity, and currency markets that will occur as America strengthens economically and militarily. The Financial Crisis Report II is a free compilation of the opinions of David M. Miyoshi, and of those advisors, he subscribes to (with appropriate credits given) on how to benefit during this historic crisis. The writer receives no compensation from advisors whose articles or ideas may appear in this Report II which is issued primarily for CRITICISM, COMMENTARY AND EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. The reader is welcome to check on all sources of information mentioned herein. Because this writer's and other advisors' opinions and observations are provided herein without charge, the reader is asked to make his/her judgment on the contents. The writer believes the articles presented are honest and sincere empirical observations of what he believes to be the truth. The writer is not perfect, but his north star is the belief that there is truth.

**We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. Albert Einstein**

# *Month at a Glance*

## *A Daily Timeline of Major Events*

**By D. Miyoshi**

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## Month-at-a-Glance
### August 1–21, 2026

**Saturday, August 1 — Russia Pounds Kyiv as Ukraine's Air Defenses Run Short.** Russia launched 35 missiles and 185 drones against Ukraine, killing at least 10 people in Kyiv and the surrounding region. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukraine had exhausted its available Patriot interceptor missiles, underscoring the strain created by diverted U.S. supplies. (Reuters)

**Sunday, August 2 — Mass Crossing at Ceuta Leaves Scores Dead.** Spanish officials reported that at least 72 people died during an attempted mass crossing from Morocco into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta. The disaster intensified European disputes over migration controls and responsibility for protecting the continent's external borders.

**Monday, August 3 — Venezuela Earthquake Toll Exceeds 6,000.** Venezuelan authorities reported that the death toll from two major June earthquakes had surpassed 6,000. The revised figures placed the disaster among the most destructive earthquakes in the country's modern history.

**Tuesday, August 4 — Qatar Reports Progress Toward Ending the Iran War.** Qatari mediators said negotiations had made progress toward ending the war between the United States and Iran. The announcement offered a limited diplomatic opening as attacks on commercial vessels continued in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

**Wednesday, August 5 — Iran and Oman Define Hormuz Shipping Routes.** Iran and Oman reached an understanding on geographic coordinates for shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz. The agreement represented an effort to restore limited commercial passage through a waterway disrupted by war, blockades and attacks on vessels.

**Thursday, August 6 — Former Mexican Governor Arrested in Missing-Students Case.** Mexican authorities arrested former Guerrero governor Ángel Aguirre Rivero on forced-disappearance and obstruction charges connected to the

# Month at a Glance

2014 disappearance of 43 students in Iguala. Prosecutors accused him of directing the concealment of surveillance footage showing police intercepting a bus carrying the students.

**Friday, August 7 — Russian Strike Hits Ukrainian Soccer Stadium.** FC Chornomorets Odesa postponed a Ukrainian Premier League match after a Russian strike damaged its home stadium. The attack illustrated how the war continued to reach deeply into Ukraine's civilian and cultural life.

**Saturday, August 8 — European Migration Dispute Produces New Border Controls.** Spain imposed temporary checks on travelers arriving from Italy after Italy instituted similar controls on arrivals from Spain. The reciprocal restrictions followed the deadly migrant crossing into Ceuta and exposed widening divisions within Europe over migration policy.

**Sunday, August 9 — Israel Rejects U.S.-Led Gaza Peace Plan.** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a U.S.-led peace proposal accepted by Hamas, insisting that Israeli forces would not withdraw until Hamas fully disarmed. The decision diminished prospects for ending the Gaza conflict through the existing diplomatic framework.

**Monday, August 10 — U.S. Blockade Redirects Iran-Linked Shipping.** U.S. Central Command reported that American forces had redirected 55 vessels linked to Iran since reinstating the naval blockade in July. The operation demonstrated the expanding military effort to restrict Iranian commerce and control access to the Strait of Hormuz.

**Tuesday, August 11 — Pakistan Says U.S.–Iran Agreement Is Close.** Pakistan's defense minister said the United States and Iran were nearing an agreement that included arrangements governing the Strait of Hormuz. The announcement raised hopes for de-escalation but stopped short of confirming that the principal belligerents had accepted final terms.

**Wednesday, August 12 — Astronomers Identify the First "Black Hole Star."** Astronomers studying James Webb Space Telescope observations announced the discovery of MoM-BH*-1, the first object classified as a "black hole star." The solar-system-sized object appeared to contain a rapidly feeding black hole surrounded by dense gas that outshone its host galaxy.

**Thursday, August 13 — UAE Reports Attacks on Oil Vessels in Hormuz.** The United Arab Emirates said two vessels connected to the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company had been attacked while transiting the Strait of Hormuz and blamed Iran. The incidents renewed concern that the war could further restrict one of the world's most important energy corridors. (Reuters)

**Friday, August 14 — Fighting Intensifies in Sudan's Kordofan Region.** Heavy combat erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in El Obeid and surrounding areas of North Kordofan. Approximately 14 people were reported killed in an RSF attack on the town of Umm Arda.

**Saturday, August 15 — Iran and Oman Announce Safe Hormuz Passage.** Iran and Oman announced an agreement establishing a safe route for vessels traveling through the Strait of Hormuz. The accord offered a narrow mechanism for restoring shipping even as another Emirati oil vessel was reported attacked.

**Sunday, August 16 — Ukraine Launches Largest Drone Assault of the Year.** Ukrainian forces launched 822 drones against targets inside Russia, including more than 600 directed toward Moscow. Russian authorities reported at least seven deaths and described it as the largest Ukrainian drone attack of 2026.

**Monday, August 17 — Iran Strikes Kurdish Government Headquarters.** Iran launched a drone attack against the Kurdistan Regional Government prime minister's office in northern Iraq, according to Kurdish officials. No casualties were reported, but the attack widened the geographic reach of the Iran war.

**Tuesday, August 18 — Zambia Reelects Hichilema.** Zambia's electoral commission declared President Hakainde Hichilema the winner of a second term with approximately 60 percent of the valid vote. His victory promised policy continuity while leaving his government under pressure to convert fiscal stability into broader economic growth. (Reuters)

# Month at a Glance

**Wednesday, August 19 — Brain Organoids Mature for Seven Years.** A U.S.-led research team reported keeping human brain organoids alive for seven years, the longest period yet disclosed. Researchers found that the cells continued to mature in ways resembling normal brain development, potentially expanding their value in studying neurological disease.

**Thursday, August 20 — United States Threatens Unprecedented Sanctions on Iran.** The Trump administration announced plans for what it called the toughest sanctions ever imposed on Iran and threatened economic consequences for countries supporting Tehran. Iran promised a forceful response, while oil prices rose on fears of prolonged war and further disruption in the Strait of Hormuz. (Reuters)

**Friday, August 21 — U.S. National Debt Passes $40 Trillion.** The national debt exceeded $40 trillion for the first time, more than doubling over the preceding decade. Rising interest costs, persistent deficits and pressure in the Treasury market renewed warnings that the United States was approaching a long-term fiscal reckoning. (Reuters)

**August 22 — Russia Threatens Wider Economic Retaliation Against Ukraine**
President Vladimir Putin warned that Russia would strike Ukraine's "most sensitive economic sectors" in retaliation for Kyiv's expanding drone campaign against Russian oil, logistics and industrial facilities. His statement signaled a further broadening of the war from military targets to infrastructure supporting both countries' economies.

**August 23 — Pro-Presidential Party Dominates Kazakhstan Election**
Kazakhstan's newly formed Adilet party won approximately 71 percent of the vote in a snap parliamentary election. The result consolidated President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's authority under a new constitutional system that replaced the two-chamber legislature with a single parliament.

**August 24 — European Allies Expand Military Support for Ukraine**
Britain and France pledged stronger military assistance as Ukraine marked the 35th anniversary of its independence, including technology transfers for Ukrainian production of Storm Shadow missiles. The European Union separately approved an additional €6.1 billion for air defenses, missiles, ammunition and radar systems.

**August 25 — United States Declares Strait of Hormuz Demined**
President Trump announced that international waters in the Strait of Hormuz had been cleared of sea mines and warned Iran against deploying additional mines. Despite the announcement, oil traffic through the strategic waterway remained far below prewar levels, reflecting continuing security risks to global energy supplies.

**August 26 — Catastrophic Flood Strikes Nepal's Himalayan Region**
A suspected glacier collapse triggered an enormous ice-and-rock avalanche and flash flood near Nepal's border with Tibet. Nearly 170 bodies had initially been recovered and roughly 1,500 people were reported missing, with the toll rising sharply as rescue and identification operations continued.

**August 27 — Failed Iran Diplomacy Pushes Oil Prices Higher**
Oil prices rose after the Trump administration reportedly rejected a return to the terms of its June understanding with Iran, weakening hopes for renewed negotiations. Brent crude gained 2.1 percent to $89.70 per barrel as restricted Middle Eastern oil flows continued to unsettle energy markets.

**August 28 — Norway's King Harald V Dies at 89**
King Harald V, Norway's ceremonial head of state since 1991 and Europe's oldest reigning monarch, died following treatment for a bacterial infection. His son succeeded him as King Haakon VIII, beginning the first Norwegian royal transition in more than three decades.

**August 29 — Russian Strike Causes Deadly Explosion Near Kyiv**
A Russian drone strike hit a military warehouse near Kyiv, setting off stored ammunition and killing at least 37 people. The continuing detonations devastated surrounding residential areas and made the incident one of Ukraine's deadliest attacks of 2026.

## Interesting Facts

**August 30 — United States Strikes Iran's Larak Island**
A U.S. military strike on Iran's Larak Island in the Strait of Hormuz renewed direct hostilities after several weeks of reduced air attacks. Iran retaliated against two American bases in Jordan, while oil prices rose more than 2 percent amid fears of another widening phase of the six-month conflict.

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**Here are some interesting facts taken from the Publications' Interesting Facts and History Facts**

**Besides being interesting, I found them thought-provoking and wanted to share them with you.**

**D. Miyoshi**

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**The following car facts were taken from an automobile publication and not from History Facts**

# Interesting Car Facts

For car lovers like me, here are some interesting facts about car taken from *theFACTfile*

Please enjoy.

D. Miyoshi

102 Interesting Facts About Cars That You Should Know

By Editorial Staff

A car, used for carrying passengers on roads, is also called an automobile. The word automobile comes from two words "auto" (Greek) and "mobile" (French). A car is a lifestyle that epitomizes the personality of the owner. As the driver sits behind the wheel, a vehicle is an extension of his or her image from the fabric of the seats to the roof. To an enthusiast, a car is a well-crafted machine that requires exploration and admiration. Let us uncover their history, technology, manufacturing, innovation; and some interesting facts about them.

## 102 Interesting facts about cars
## World's first car

**1.** The world's **first automobile** was developed by Carl Benz in 1885. The top speed of the motor car was 16 km per hour. It had a one cylinder four-stroke engine installed horizontally on a specifically designed chassis. It was known as the Benz Patent Mo-

# Interesting Facts

torwagen.


The world's first automobile was developed by Carl Benz in 1885.

## First car for the masses

**2.** In 1908, the Model T developed by Henry Ford became the first car available to the masses. This was a low-cost car. It cost around $850 in 1908 and $260 in 1925 (the reduction in the cost of the car was mainly because of the invention of the assembly line).

## World's first electric traffic signal

**3.** First time in America and the world: the **world's first electric traffic signal** is put into place on the corner of Euclid Avenue and East 105th Street in Cleveland, Ohio, on 5th August in 1914. Also, the first center painted dividing line appeared in 1911, in Michigan; the **first "No Left Turn"** sign would debut in Buffalo, New York, in 1916; and left-hand drive became standard in American cars in 1908.

## First self-propelled vehicle

**4.** The first self-propelled vehicle–Cugnot Fardier–was made by Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot in 1769. It was **a steam-powered tricycle.**

## World's first IC engine

**5.** The **world's first IC engine**–The Pyréolophore–was probably built by Nicephore Niepce in 1807. The inventor is also credited with the invention of photography.

## Birth certificate of the automobile

**6. Carl Benz applied for a patent** for his "vehicle powered by a gas engine" on January 29, 1886. The patent application, bearing the number DRP – 37435 could also be referred as the birth certificate of the automobile. The patent application was registered with the German Imperial Patent Office in Berlin.

## World's first long-distance journey

**7.** The **world's first long-distance journey** (from Mannheim in southern Germany to Pforzheim) in the history of the automobile was undertaken by Bertha Benz (wife of Carl Benz) and her two sons in August 1888.

## How many cars are there in the world?

**8.** There are **an estimated 1.2 billion cars in the world today** while there were only 500 million in 1986. According to a report released by a research house Bernstein, there will be a total of 2 billion cars on the planet by 2040.

Interesting facts about cars: Auto mechanic with tablet pc looking for spares at workshop.

## Plenty of parts

**9.** An average car has 30,000 **parts**. About 9,770,000 cars were made in Japan in 2014. Of this total, Toyota made about 3,270,000 cars.

## Always parked

**10.** Almost 95% of a **car's lifetime** is spent parked.

# Interesting Facts

## Recyclable

**11.** Surprisingly, **80% of an average car is recyclable.** In the U.S. alone, 12 million vehicles are recycled every year. Interestingly, automotive recycling is the 16th largest industry in the U.S.

## Right or left?

**12.** Almost **65% of the world's population drives on the right side of the road.**

## Distraction behind the wheels can be fatal.

**13.** A crash typically happens within an average of three seconds after a driver is distracted. According to a source, **texting while driving** increases the chances of an accident by 23 times.

## Automatic vs manual transmission

**14.** Driving a car with a standard or manual transmission is not an easy job for Americans. Note that more than **95% of the cars in the U.S. have automatic transmission.** On the other hand, in Europe and Japan, more than 80 percent of cars sold have manual transmissions.

## Which color is your's?

**15.** In **2013, white was the world's most favorite car color.** According to an Australian study, white vehicles are 10% less likely to be involved in an accident. Moreover, cars that have mainstream colors are prone to theft more than those that have less popular colors.

## Tesla – electric cars!

**16.** In 2017, **Tesla** became the world's second most valuable car company.

Interesting facts about cars: Air bags, Passive Safety Features.

## Airbags!

**17.** In **case of a crash** or an impact, airbags inflate in just 30 milliseconds. Learn the science behind airbags.

## Defects are many.

**18.** Astonishingly, by the mid-1960s, American made cars were delivered to retail buyers with an average **24 defects a unit,** and many of these defects were safety related.

## Once upon a time!

**19.** In 1980, Japan became the world's leading auto producer. However, currently, it is the world's third largest producer of cars (behind China and the US).

## Lots of jobs

**20.** Did you know that in **1982, the automobile industry provided one of every 6 jobs in the U.S?** Thus, the automobile industry became a key force for change in the 20th century America.

## Interesting Facts

Car "Ford Model T", 1908, capacity 20 HP, USA. Known as "Tin Lizzie", was the first car in the world, produced in million series.

Interesting facts about Cars.

# A car in just 24 seconds!

**21.** From **1909 to 1927, Ford built more than 15 million cars.** Initially, the Model T took 12 hours for assembly. With the help of the assembly line technique, this amount of time was cut to 8 minutes for each car in 1913, and finally in 1927, during the last years of the production of the Model T, the factory was delivering a completely assembled car in just 24 seconds. Now that's the power of innovation.

# 20 million sold

**22.** One of the worlds' most loved cars; the **Volkswagen Beetle was sold 20 million** and more units worldwide and was the most popular car of the 20th century.

# Toyota Corolla

**23. The Toyota Corolla is the world's best selling car.** The Corolla is sold over 150 countries and regions and the company sells 1 Corolla every 15 seconds. Since its launch in 1966, the company has sold more than 44.1 million of these cars and that is roughly equivalent to 20% of the company's overall sales. Learn more stats about the Corolla here.

# No dirty cars are allowed here.

**24. It is a criminal offense to drive a dirty car in Russia.**

# Fuel for the lifetime.

**25.** According to a source, in the U.K, almost £70,000 is **spent** on **fuel** by the average motorist over their lifetime.

# Made in China

**26. China produces** almost a quarter of the world's total cars.

# Why "cars" are called "cars"?

**27.** The **word** "car" comes from the Latin word "carrus" – a two-wheeled wagon.

# That notorious smell!

**28. New car smell** is actually the smell of various volatile organic compounds that are used to manufacture the car. The smell is intoxicating and the manufacturers are adopting measure and techniques to get rid of this smell.

# Toyota's first factory

**29.** Toyota's first car factory (now the Honsha Plant) was built in Koromo-cho.

# Interesting Facts

Rolls Royce styled by Mansory presented on the 66th International Motor Show. Photo: Ewa Studio / Shutterstock.com. Interesting facts about cars.


Interesting facts about Cars. Cruise control switch on a car.

## Rolls Royce – the car for the lifetime

**30.** Almost **three-quarters of the Rolls Royce** cars ever produced are still on the road today.

## Volkswagen – they are huge!

**31.** Did you know that the **Volkswagen group** comprises twelve brands from seven European countries: Volkswagen Passenger Cars, Audi, SEAT, ŠKODA, Bentley, Bugatti, Lamborghini, Porsche, Ducati, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, Scania, and MAN?

## Nothing new!

**32. Electric cars** are not a new phenomenon. Thomas Davenport is credited with building the first practical electric vehicle — a small locomotive.

## Cars vs people

**33.** There are **more cars than people in Los Angeles.**

## Cruise control

**34.** Ralph Teetor–the inventor of cruise control (also known as a speedostat or tempomat) was blind. He invented the cruise control in 1948.

## A car from soybeans

**35.** In **1941, Henry Ford** made a car out of soybeans. The car weighed 2000 lbs and had a tubular steel frame that had 14 plastic panels attached to it.

## Lamp vs light

**36.** Did you know that **headlamp** is the term used for a device which is attached to the front of a vehicle to light the road ahead? And headlight is the term which refers to the beam of light produced and distributed by the device.

## Seal belts, please!

**37. Three-point seat belts save one life every six seconds**. Seat belts were invented by Volvo and were

# Interesting Facts

not patented so that the invention could be used for safety purposes by other car manufacturers as well.

## How much does it costs!

**38.** The average cost of car ownership in the U.S. amounts to $8,876 per year for a sedan car or an average car for that matter.

## Self driving cars

**39.** In 2012, Nevada became the first U.S. state to issue the **license to self-driving cars.** Self-driving cars are autonomous cars that can drive from point A to point B without a driver. They use maps and sophisticated technology to accomplish the task. Researchers agree that these cars could help reduce road accidents in the future.

## A 150% tax on new cars

**40.** Denmark is one of the most expensive countries in which to buy a new car. **Denmark collects 150% tax on all new car purchases**. However, according to a source, the country is recently looking to cut the tax rate to 100% for new vehicle purchases.

## Cars in Norway

**41.** Interestingly, half of all the new cars sold in Norway are electric or hybrid.

## Fierce competition

**42.** After the **initial introduction of cars in the American market,** there was an intense competition between other manufacturers and Ford Motor Company. General Motors had to take a planned obsolescence of products between 1920 and 1930 so that they could build better cars that attracted customers.

## Profitability?

**43.** Did you know that large cars are more profitable than small cars?

Illustration showing the evolution of the wheel starting from a stone wheel and ending with a steel belted radial tire.

## An important invention!

**44. Wheels** are an essential part of any automobile or motorized vehicle for that matter. Did you know that wheels were invented around 3500 B.C in Mesopotamia and surprisingly no one knows how they were invented? However, initially, they were not used for transportation. It took 300 years after the invention of the wheels that someone realized they could be used to serve a larger purpose.

## Mercedes

**45.** Did you know that how the world famous brand **'Mercedes' came into existence?** Interestingly, the name 'Mercedes' was adopted from the name of a customer's daughter 'Mercedes Jellinek'.

## Competitors join hands!

**46.** Benz and Mercedes were competitors until 1920. When these companies merged, the newly formed company started selling cars under the brand name '**Mercedes-Benz'.**

## Interesting Facts

Interesting facts about cars: Old used tires that are lined up in a pile.

# Vulcanization

**47.** The **rubber used in the tires of a car** is vulcanized. Vulcanization is a process for converting natural rubber or related polymers into more durable materials by heating them with sulfur or other equivalent curatives or accelerators. Charles Goodyear invented the process of vulcanization of rubber when he was in jail and was experimenting with a piece of rubber and a pin. He accidentally dropped the piece of the rubber on the hot stove and the rubber became black and tough.

# The Ford Model Cars

**48.** Did you know that **Henry Ford made eight different models of cars** (A, B, C, F, K, N, R, S – have a look at all of them here) before he could produce the famous Model T? The Ford Model T had a four-cylinder inline engine that produced 20 HP.

VW Beetle car in Zadar, Croatia. More than 21 m of these VWs were manufactured from 1938 to 2003, making it one of most successful cars ever. Photo: Tupungato / Shutterstock.com. Interesting facts about cars.

# The Beetle and Adolf Hitler

**49.** Interestingly, the Beetle (from 1938 until 2003; total 21,529,464 units produced) came into existence when **Adolf Hitler inspired by Henry Ford** ordered the German carmaker, Dr. Ferdinand Porche, to develop a people's car or "Volks Wagen" called the KDF (Kraft durch Frende).

# Japanese car makers

**50.** Toyota,
Daihatsu, Nissan, Suzuki, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Subaru, Isuzu, and Honda are all **Japanese car makers.** Honda is the first Japanese carmaker to open a plant in the U.S. in the early 1980s.

# Faster than 350 mph

**51.** On 15 September 1938, the Railton Mobile Special is **the first car in the history to go faster than 350 mph** (563.27 km/h). After further development, On 16 September 1947, John Cobb was able to break 400 mph (640 km/h) in a measured test. The car is available at Thinktank, the Museum of Science in Birmingham, England.

# Plenty of cars

**52.** About **one-quarter of worlds cars are in America.**

# Unusual

**53. Did you know** that some of the cars by Japanese car makers built overseas are exported back to Japan?

# Insurance, they all need it!

**54.** According to a study commissioned by Quadrant Information Services, the average cost of car insurance in America is just over $1300. **The highest annual cost of car insurance was recorded in Michigan at $2,000.**

# A rare Rolls Royce

**55.** Did you know that **the Rolls Royce HP-15 is one of the rarest cars on the planet?** Wondering why? Learn that a total of 6 of these cars were made. Only one of these cars is still available in the world. And it is estimated worth is $35 million. The car had 3 cylinders and a top speed of 39 miles per hour.

# Interesting Facts

Interesting facts about cars: Reconstruction of the automobile invented by Leonardo da Vinci, on view at Château du Clos Lucé in Amboise in France. Image source – Wikipedia.org

## Da Vinci's car

**56.** Leonardo da Vinci invented the first car in 1478 on paper. In 2004, a replica of the car was crafted and was kept in the Institute and Museum of the history of Science in Florence, Italy.

## First four wheel drive

**57.** In 1940, the first four-wheel drive car for the U.S. military was produced. It was called **the Jeep.**

## A law in Wisconsin

**58.** In 1962, the **use of seat belt became a law** in Wisconsin. Seat belts save one life every six minutes.

## Safety first

**59.** Airbags were introduced as **a safety measure** in 1974.

**60.** In 1997, the **first Toyota Prius** was sold in Japan.

Ferrari 458 Spider at the AutoRAI 2015.

## The most accident prone car

**61.** According to the cars.com, the Ferrari 458 Spider, 563 is **the most accident-prone car in the world.** And the least accident prone-vehicle according to the website is the Ford F-150 SuperCrew, 42.

**62. Toyota Motor Corp. is the world's biggest automobile company.** It is also the world's richest car manufacturing company.

## The longest car in the world

**63.** The **title for the longest car in the world** is taken by a custom-built limousine by California car guru Jay Ohrberg. The car is 100 meters long and is recorded by the Guinness World Records as the longest car ever built in the world. Surprisingly, the car has a swimming pool and a helicopter pad as well.

**64.** Tata Nano, manufactured by the Indian automotive giant Tata Motors, is **the world's cheapest car.** It is a rear wheel drive car and can run at a top speed of 105 km per hour.

## Interesting Facts

Tata Nano, the world's cheapest car. Image source – Wikipedia.org

**65. Cars were a horseless carriage** when they were built for the first time in 1895.

**66.** Did you know that an average American car contains 55 pounds of copper wiring? And an electric car can have three times this amount of copper in them.

# Other interesting facts about cars

**67.** Interestingly, **more than a 100 million lines of code** is **used to program the computer system used in a Bentley Bentayga.**

**68.** Did you know that San Marino with 1263 cars per 1,000 inhabitants **tops the list of the countries with most cars per 1,000 people,** followed by Monaco and the United States (est. 2014)

**69.** Toyota, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Honda, and Ford are among **the world's most valued car brands.**

**70.** According to the EPA, in the U.S., 75% of **Carbon Monoxide** emissions come from automobiles.

**71. Dubai** has the world's fastest police car (certified by Guinness World Records). It is a Bugatti Veyron — just one of its 14-strong fleet of super cars. The car uses a 16-cylinder engine which produces 1,000 horsepower. The car has a staggering top speed of 253 mph (407 km/h) and the ability to climb from 0 to 60 mph in just two and a half seconds.

**72.** The 1994 **Honda Accord** is the most stolen car in the history of the U.S.

**73.** According to the data analyzed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, **crashes involving male drivers often are more severe** than those involving female drivers. And many more men than women die each year in motor vehicle crashes.

**74.** Disputes with fixed objects and noncollisions accounted for only 18 percent of all crashes, but they accounted for 45 percent of fatal crashes (2010). Learn more stats from the National Highway Transport Safety Administration.

VW Polo. Photo: Fingerhut / Shutterstock.com

**75.** Did you ever wonder how the names of **some of the Volkswagen cars were coined?** The company uses the various types of winds for the purpose. For example, the Jetta means "jet stream", the Passat means "trade winds", and the Polo means "Polar Winds."

**76.** According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), drivers ages 16-19 are three times **more likely to crash** than drivers over 20.

# Interesting Facts

**77.** In 2015/16, the police recorded 14,602 carjacking incidents in South Africa, a 14.3% increase from the previous year. On average, 40 cars were hijacked per day.

**78.** Did you know that **Ferrari makes just 14 cars a day** and that the automotive giant Toyota makes 13,000 units every day?

**79.** According to a source, the world's first non-fatal automobile accident happened with James Lambert while he was driving in his single-cylinder gasoline automobile, in 1891 in Ohio City, Ohio. The injuries, however, were minor.

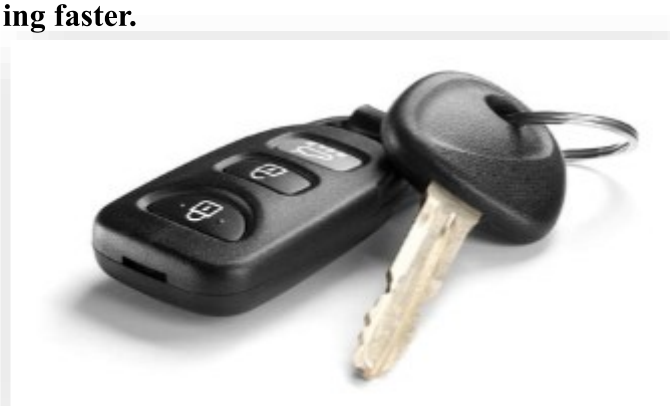
**80.** According to a source, Hong Kong has more Rolls-Royce cars per capita than any other country in the world.

**81.** Carjacking in South Africa is very common. Hence, **BMW cars are fitted with flamethrowers** on the side to avert the theft.

**82.** In Japan, there are different stickers which are used on the cars to identify the driving capabilities and experience of a car's driver. These stickers help other car drivers to be a little more patient when driving around such cars.

**83.** The automobile is **the world's most recycled product.** Interesting isn't it!

**84.** Interestingly, **higher speed limits or no speed limit does not have any correlation to people driving faster.**



Interesting facts about cars: A car key with a remote controller.

**85.** If a car remote's button is pressed **256 times** consecutively when the car is out of range, **the remote will become dysfunctional** as it will lose its sync with the car.

**86.** There is a small triangle icon next to the fuel icon on the dashboard of a car. This little triangular icon helps identify the side on which the gas door is. In older cars, this icon may not be present but it is available in most of the new generation cars.

**87.** The world's first ever speeding ticket was received by Walter Arnold when he was driving at four times the allowed speed – 2 miles per hour. This happened on January 28th, 1896 in Paddock Wood, Kent in England.

Los Angeles Police Department Police officer issuing a driver with a citation (ticket) for driving offences.

**88.** One of the highest ever **speeding ticket** was handed over to a Swedish man in Switzerland for clocking at 180 miles per hour. The ticket cost him around £538,000. The speeding ticket in Switzerland is calculated based on the income of the offender. And indeed he must be a wealthy man to have been handed over such a hefty fine.

**89. Irvin Gordon** from the United States is the person who has achieved the highest vehicle mileage ever in his 1966 Volvo 1800S. Driving his car on a daily basis, he covers (85,000–100,000 miles) per year. **By 1 May 2014, he had driven 3,039,122 miles.** Now that is the equivalent of nearly 120 complete circumnavigations of the planet.

**90.** The world's lowest street-legal car at just 19 inches high was built by Perry Watkins of Buckinghamshire, England. The flatmobile has a ground clearance

## Interesting Facts

of just 2 inches.

**91.** J Frank Duryea and Charles E Duryea are credited as being **the first gasoline-powered commercial car manufacturers** in the United States.

**92.** The British traffic **police carry teddy bears** among their equipment to comfort children after a road mishap.

**93.** The late M. Allen Swift of West Hartford, Connecticut, **owned the 1928 Phantom I, S273 FP for 77 years.** The car was gifted to him by his father on his 26th birthday. M. Allen Swift is credited with owning his 1928 Rolls-Royce longer than any other Rolls owner.

**94.** Opened in 1907, Brooklands, 2.75 miles long, was the world's first purpose-built motor racing circuit.

**95.** The first Japanese car sold in the U.K was a **Daihatsu Compagno.**

**96.** Did you know that **16% of all car owners never wash their cars?**

**97.** According to a source, London is the most expensive city in the world to park a car.

**98.** It is **illegal to slam a car door in Switzerland after 10 PM.** This law is just about not disturbing other people from the sound of the cars door closing.

## Interesting facts about car brands and their famous logos


Toyota logo. Photo: Oliver Hoffmann / Shutterstock.com

**99.** Did you know the **meaning behind some of the famous car logos?** Let's consider Toyota's logo for example. The company's logo has three overlapping ovals. The inner two ovals form a stylized T and a steering wheel. The outer most oval represents the world embracing Toyota.

**100.** Can you figure out the name of the automobile company that has four overlapping rings? You guessed it right, **it is Audi.** The company's logo has a set of four overlapping rings that depict the four companies the names of the four original companies that Audi is formed from. Earlier they used to have the name of the individual company's name in the ring but that has disappeared in the last few years.

Mercedes-Benz emblem logo. Photo: olgaru79 / Shutterstock.com

**101.** The **iconic three-pointed star of Mercedes-Benz** is a representation of the company's dominance in three places: the sea, air, and land.

Classic Ferrari logo Photo: Roberto Lusso / Shutterstock.com

**102.** Another impressive car logo which has drooled

## Winds of War

the hearts of millions of people globally is **the Ferrari logo.** The horse emblem with a bright yellow color in the background came to existence when Enzo Ferrari was asked to paint a prancing horse on his vehicles to honor fighter pilot and World War I hero Count Francesco Barraca, who painted a similar horse on his plane.

End of Article

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# Financial Crisis Report


## AUGUST 2026
## Editor's Note

August brought no durable resolution to the world's major wars, as the United States–Iran confrontation remained volatile, Russia intensified pressure on Ukraine, and conflicts in Gaza and Sudan continued to impose severe civilian costs. This early report covers developments through August 24, 2026, and may be updated if major events occur before month's end.

**Winds of War**
*Tracking the conflicts and military developments that could reshape America and the world.*

**Iran War Enters a Dangerous Period of Armed Stalemate**
The war between the United States, Israel, and Iran moved into a more restrained—but still highly dangerous—phase during August. Large-scale American strikes declined after July's renewed bombing campaign, but the absence of sustained attacks did not amount to peace: the principal disputes over Iran's nuclear program, sanctions, and freedom of navigation remained unresolved.

The United States continued to maintain substantial naval and air power in the region. On August 21, U.S. Central Command reported that the USS *George Washington* was conducting flight operations in the Arabian Sea. CENTCOM also established a multinational attack-drone task force, reflecting the growing importance of unmanned systems in protecting U.S. forces and countering Iranian capabilities. CENTCOM continues to describe Operation Epic Fury as an active major combat operation. (U.S. Central Command)

Washington simultaneously intensified economic pressure. The administration threatened broader secondary sanctions against foreign businesses dealing with Iran, while Tehran warned that countries cooperating with the American campaign could face retaliation. This combination of military containment and economic coercion may reduce Iran's immediate capacity to wage conventional war, but it also increases the danger of attacks on shipping, Gulf energy infrastructure, American bases, or regional partners. The conflict has therefore become an armed stalemate in which a miscalculation could quickly restart large-scale combat.

**Russia and Ukraine Expand the Economic Battlefield**
The Russia–Ukraine war remained a grinding contest of missiles, drones, and economic infrastructure. Ukraine increased attacks against Russian energy facilities, while Russia continued pressure on Ukrainian cities, ports, and power systems. Concern over another winter of attacks on Ukraine's electrical network led Kyiv to seek additional air-defense interceptors and financing from European allies.

Ukraine proposed a limited ceasefire covering civilian shipping in the Black Sea after attacks on vessels and ports raised renewed concerns about grain exports and global food supplies. Russia resisted the proposal unless Ukraine also halted attacks on Russian refineries and energy infrastructure. The disagreement demonstrates why even narrow confidence-building measures remain difficult: each side considers economic infrastructure an essential means of weakening the other's war effort.

## Iran War Watch

At an August 24 Security Council meeting, the United Nations again called for a "full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire," while Russia rejected an arrangement that it argued would merely allow Ukraine to regroup. Britain and France pledged additional military support, including faster air-defense deliveries, indicating that Europe expects the war to continue rather than end through an imminent settlement. (United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs)

**Gaza Remains Militarily Active Despite the Earlier Peace Plan**
Although the earlier Israel–Hamas ceasefire and Gaza peace framework reduced the conflict from its previous intensity, August demonstrated that Gaza had not achieved stable peace. Military activity continued across the territory, producing further casualties and displacement while limiting access to medical care, shelter, and other essential services.

The United Nations reported on August 14 that conditions remained critical, with continuing military operations and recurring displacement. The principal danger is that unresolved security arrangements, sporadic armed incidents, and deteriorating humanitarian conditions could combine to undermine the ceasefire framework. (United Nations OCHA)

**Sudan's War Deepens as Outside Support Sustains Both Sides**
Sudan's civil war continued to expand through drone attacks, mass displacement, atrocities, and foreign military assistance. United Nations officials warned the Security Council that external weapons and financing were reinforcing the belief among both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces that victory remained possible.

The United States responded by advocating stronger United Nations sanctions and a nationwide arms embargo, including restrictions on drones. Yet sanctions alone are unlikely to end the war unless the outside governments supplying the competing factions also withdraw their support. With approximately 13 million people displaced and famine reported in parts of the country, Sudan remains both a major war and one of the world's gravest humanitarian emergencies. (United Nations Security Council)

**Outlook**
The central pattern in August was not decisive military victory, but prolonged coercion. Iran, Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan all show how modern wars can continue below the level of total conflict while inflicting mounting economic and humanitarian damage. For the United States, the greatest immediate danger remains an Iranian escalation affecting American forces, Gulf shipping, or global energy supplies; the broader danger is that simultaneous commitments in the Middle East and Europe will increasingly strain American weapons inventories, finances, and strategic attention.

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# Financial Crisis Report
# Iran War Watch

### Escalation patterns, regional reactions, and emerging risks surrounding the Iran conflict

# August 2026
## Editor's Note

August brought the Iran war no closer to resolution as cease-fire negotiations stalled, tensions increased around the Strait of Hormuz, and Washington shifted toward intensified economic pressure. This report covers major developments through August 24, 2026, while recognizing that conditions may change before month's end.

# Veterans Corner

## Iran War Watch

*Escalation patterns, regional reactions, and emerging risks surrounding the Iran conflict.*

The Iran conflict entered a more dangerous and economically consequential phase in August. Although President Trump initially postponed additional attacks to allow time for negotiations, the temporary ceasefire expired without a comprehensive agreement, and Washington rejected an extension. Iran responded by threatening a more offensive military posture if the U.S. naval blockade continued, leaving diplomacy stalled and both sides positioned for renewed escalation. Reuters

The Strait of Hormuz remained the principal pressure point. Iran's parliamentary committee advanced legislation authorizing charges for navigation, security, environmental protection, insurance, and other services, while Iranian maritime authorities blacklisted 45 tankers and threatened fines, detention, or confiscation. Because approximately one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied-natural-gas shipments normally pass through the strait, these measures could further discourage commercial traffic and maintain upward pressure on shipping, insurance, and energy costs. Reuters

Washington also broadened the conflict from military containment to financial isolation. On August 24, the Treasury Department launched "Operation Economic Outcast," described as a whole-of-government campaign against Iran and the international networks supporting its trade and finances. The strategy relies heavily on secondary sanctions—the threat of restricting foreign companies and financial institutions from the dollar-based system if they continue doing business with Iran—but its effectiveness will depend on cooperation from major Iranian trading partners, particularly China. U.S. Treasury Department

The war's accumulated costs are also becoming more visible. The Pentagon reported that more than 750 American service members had been wounded since hostilities began, while a Reuters/Ipsos poll found public support for the war had fallen to 31 percent. These developments increase political pressure on the administration to produce a clear strategic outcome rather than allow the conflict to become an indefinite military, economic, and maritime confrontation. Associated Press Reuters

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# VETERANS CORNER

## A monthly review of the most pressing issues affecting America's veterans

***Benefits, care, housing, and remembrance for America's veterans***

## August 2026 — Through August 24

*Benefits, health care, legislation, and other developments affecting America's veterans and their families.*

### VA Expands Practical Assistance While Modernizing Health Care and Benefits

August brought several concrete changes affecting veterans, including new assistance for homeless veterans, simplified disability claims for aging veterans whose military records were destroyed, continued expansion of the VA's electronic health-record system, and competing Senate proposals addressing the recoupment of military separation pay.

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced a new $29 million program to provide emergency supplies and transportation to eligible homeless veterans and participants in the HUD-VASH supportive-housing program. Authorized through fiscal year 2027, the ini-

## Market Winners & Losers

tiative permits VA facilities to provide food, clothing, hygiene supplies, communications devices and other necessities. Up to $18 million is expected to fund transportation to medical appointments, counseling, housing searches and employment-related services, while another $11 million will support essential goods and services. The program is scheduled to begin operating during fiscal year 2027. (Department of Veterans Affairs)

VA also streamlined the disability-claims process for veterans whose personnel records were damaged or destroyed in the 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center. That fire destroyed an estimated 16 million to 18 million records, primarily involving Army veterans discharged between 1912 and 1960 and certain Air Force veterans discharged between 1947 and 1964.

Under the revised procedure, affected veterans will receive one consolidated packet instead of repeated requests for the same medical-treatment and service-history forms. VA will preserve the completed information for future use and permit credible statements from veterans, fellow service members and other knowledgeable witnesses when official documentation is unavailable. The change is particularly important for older veterans who may have been denied benefits because records necessary to prove an injury or illness no longer existed. VA is encouraging them to file or reopen their claims. (VA claims guidance)

Health-care modernization also continued. On August 24, VA deployed its Federal Electronic Health Record system at three Indiana hospitals and 16 associated clinics, bringing the number of hospital deployments during 2026 to 11. More than 617,000 veterans and 35,000 VA clinicians and employees are now using the system nationally. The objective is to make military, VA and private-sector health information more readily available, reduce duplicative testing and improve continuity when veterans move between facilities. The expansion is significant, but its success will ultimately depend on reliability and whether the system avoids the workflow and patient-safety problems that troubled its earlier rollout. (VA electronic-health-record announcement)

VA separately reported securing $10.44 billion in pharmaceutical price reductions during fiscal year 2026, compared with $7.99 billion in 2025 and $5.23 billion in 2024. These figures represent negotiated reductions rather than direct cash savings, but lower acquisition costs can allow the department to serve more veterans and purchase newer, more expensive treatments within existing appropriations. (VA pharmaceutical announcement)

In Congress, senators introduced two approaches to a longstanding problem affecting veterans who received military separation pay and later qualified for VA disability compensation. Under present law, VA may withhold disability compensation until the separation payment has been recovered. Senator Jim Risch's Veterans' Earned Benefits Access Act would limit monthly withholding to 25 percent of disability compensation. A bipartisan proposal introduced by Senator Ruben Gallego would generally end recoupment when veterans later qualify for disability benefits and revise repayment rules for veterans who subsequently receive military retirement pay. Both measures were proposals—not enacted law—as of August 24. (Senator Risch; Senator Gallego)

Overall, August produced measurable administrative progress, particularly for homeless veterans and veterans disadvantaged by missing service records. The larger test remains whether these initiatives translate into faster claims decisions, dependable medical records and benefits rules that do not deprive disabled veterans of the monthly income they need.

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# Financial Crisis Report

## Market Winners and Losers

### Month's Best and Worst Returns Through the 27th of the month

# Market Winners & Losers

## MARKET WINNERS AND LOSERS

### August 2026 Through August 24

Markets produced sharply divided results during August's first 24 days. Precious metals and cryptocurrencies surged as investors reacted to a weaker dollar and growing concern over federal debt, while utilities, long-term bonds and rate-sensitive real estate lagged.

### Winners

**Stocks — Materials (XLB): approximately +16%**
Materials stocks led the major equity sectors, supported by rising gold, silver and copper prices, strong mining shares and renewed trade tensions that favored domestic metals producers.

**Bonds — High-Yield Corporate Bonds (HYG): approximately +1%**
High-yield bonds outperformed higher-quality, longer-duration debt. Their comparatively short duration and substantial coupon income helped offset pressure from elevated Treasury yields.

**Real Estate — Mortgage REITs (REM): approximately +1.7%**
Mortgage REITs edged higher as their large dividend yields attracted income investors. The Treasury's announced expansion of long-term bond buybacks also provided limited relief from interest-rate pressure.

**Minerals — Silver: approximately +18%**
Silver was the month's strongest widely traded mineral, climbing from about $58.80 at the end of July to roughly $69.30. A weaker dollar, renewed investment demand and strength in the broader metals complex drove the advance.

**Digital Currencies — Solana: approximately +30%**
Solana outperformed the largest digital currencies, rising from the mid-$70 range to approximately $99. Improving cryptocurrency liquidity, short covering and expectations of slower token creation strengthened demand.

### Losers

**Stocks — Utilities (XLU): approximately –5%**
Utilities were the weakest major equity sector. Persistently high long-term interest rates reduced the appeal of their dividends and increased financing concerns for capital-intensive power companies.

**Bonds — Long-Term Treasuries (TLT): approximately flat**
Long-duration Treasury bonds remained the weakest major bond segment. Fiscal deficits, inflation concerns and a 30-year Treasury yield above 5% largely neutralized the temporary benefit from proposed government bond buybacks.

**Real Estate — Broad U.S. REITs (VNQ): approximately +0.2%**
Broad real estate securities were essentially unchanged and trailed mortgage REITs. High borrowing costs and refinancing concerns continued to restrain commercial and residential property companies.

**Minerals — Crude Oil: approximately –3%**
Oil weakened late in the period as traders balanced continuing Middle East risk against concerns about demand and greater expected supply. The decline contrasted sharply with the flight into precious metals.

**Digital Currencies — Ethereum: approximately +34%**
Ethereum was the weakest only in relative terms among the month's three most widely followed major cryptocurrencies. It still posted a substantial gain, rising to about $2,500 as improving liquidity and renewed institutional interest lifted the entire digital-asset market.

August's results reflected a market seeking protection from fiscal and currency risks while remaining wary of long-term interest rates. Hard assets and digital currencies attracted speculative and defensive buying, but bonds, utilities and conventional real estate continued to feel the weight of expensive capital.

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# ELEPHANTS IN ROOMS


**Here are presentations about uncomfortable truths and awkward questions.**

**Former news reporter for Fox News, Ken LaCorte, dives into the topics that others either dodge or dismiss – especially when they're true.**

**LaCorte spent 20 years behind-the-scenes at Fox News and now hosts the "Elephants in Rooms" YouTube channel.**

**I present here a synopsis of LaCorte's video presentations for your edification. I know you will find them very interesting.**

**D. Miyoshi**

# WHY DEMOCRACIES ALL FAIL


The program by Kent LaCorte and Elephants in Rooms provides an insightful and comprehensive explanation of why democracies fail, effectively moving beyond simplistic notions of military coups to highlight the insidious nature of internal decay. By drawing on diverse historical examples from ancient Athens to modern nations like Venezuela and Turkey, the creator vividly illustrates how factors such as extreme polarization, institutional distrust, and economic hardship create fertile ground for charismatic strongmen to dismantle democratic systems from within. The analysis is balanced by a crucial discussion on democratic resilience and a nuanced application of these lessons to the current state of the United States, making it a highly informative and relevant exploration of a critical topic.

Democracies often fail not through military coups but by internal decay, driven by extreme polarization, institutional distrust, and economic misery, which allows charismatic strongmen to dismantle the system from within, though mature democracies demonstrate resilience and capacity for rebuilding.

Synopsis Notes by D. Miyoshi

- **Introduction: The Fragility of Democracies**

- Democracies are not permanent; they have a "nasty habit of falling apart."
- John Adams noted, "Democracy never lasts long. It commits suicide."
- Modern democracies fall in different ways than the military coups common in the 20th century.

This video will explore historical examples, methods of democratic collapse, internal decay, and the current state of the United States.

**Case Study: The Fall of Ancient Athens**

- Athens was the world's first democracy, unique for its direct citizen voting (adult male, non-slaves).
- Socrates warned that democracy could turn into a "ship where untrained passengers ignore the navigator and follow the smoothest talking sailor."

# Elephants in Rooms

- Socrates was sentenced to death by a 500-man jury, officially for corrupting youth and impiety, but truly for questioning the established order.
- A turning point was the disastrous invasion of Sicily, which wiped out the Athenian fleet and led to Athens never recovering from the Peloponnesian War.
- Control shifted between democracy and oligarchy until Philip of Macedon conquered the Greek city-states, ending Athenian self-rule.
- Athens was conquered not because it was inherently weak, but because it made itself weak through exhaustion, years of war, swings between populism and elitism, and citizens seeing rivals as threats. Democracy requires flawed people to restrain themselves in using power and to resist the urge to follow flattery.

**How Democracies Die: Last Breaths**

- **Contrast with Dictatorships:**

o Dictatorships often fall violently and suddenly (e.g., Mussolini, Gaddafi, Ceaușescu).

o Democracies typically do not die violently; they are invaded, overthrown, or voted out of existence.

o **Methods of Collapse:**

o *Foreign Conquest:* An external enemy marches in, as seen with Czechoslovakia (1939) and the Baltic states (1940).

o *Internal Overthrow (Coups):* Often occur with popular support due to poor country conditions or an unpopular elected leader.

✦ **Chile (1973):** Salvador Allende, a Marxist president, was overthrown by a military coup led by Augusto Pinochet amidst deep economic chaos.

✦ **Egypt (2012):** Muhammad Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elected president, was removed by the military after just one year following widespread protests.

✦ *Voted Out of Existence (The Strongman Route):* This is the most common path today.

✦ A charismatic leader, riding a wave of anger over real problems, promises to "clean house" and "fix the system."

✦ If voters grant them power, democracy slowly becomes optional.

✦ **Weimar Germany (1930s):** Hitler was legally appointed chancellor, then used the Reichstag fire to push emergency laws, effectively ending democracy within months.

✦ **Venezuela (1992 onwards):** Hugo Chavez, after a failed coup, won as a populist, rewrote the Constitution, packed the court, shut down media, and turned the system into a tool for permanent power, leading to severe food shortages and mass emigration.

✦ **Turkey (2003 onwards):** Erdoğan began as a reformer but gradually purged the military, neutered the judiciary, and transformed Turkey into a "competitive autocracy" where elections occur but the ruling party controls the board.

✦ This form of collapse is subtle because institutions (courts, legislature, elections) remain in place but lose their functional power.

As quoted from Star Wars: "So this is how liberty dies... with thunderous applause."

**Why Democracies Matter**

- Despite their mess and dysfunction, democracies are objectively, comparatively, and historically the best form of government humanity has developed.
- **Key Advantages:**

o Allow citizens to remove leaders without bloodshed.

o Guarantee rights to speak, protest, and vote.

o Distribute power, making abuse more difficult.

o Provide avenues for citizens to change the system through collective action.

o Tend to protect basic rights like speech, religion, and due process, as leaders need public support.

o In real democracies, speaking out against leaders does not typically result in imprisonment or worse, unlike in many authoritarian states today.

o Data shows democracies lead to better outcomes: longer lives, better health, higher living standards, and more innovation.

o Democracies go to war less often and almost never with each other, saving millions of lives.

The collapse of democracies is troubling because people lose more than just a style of government.

**How Democracies Get Sick: Internal Decay**

- The final death of democracies doesn't happen overnight; they get sick through recurring patterns.
- **Baseline Conditions:** Government failure in basic functions like economics or safety, leading to general distrust and strong polarization.

# Elephants in Rooms

- **Key Symptoms:**

o *Strong Polarization and Tribalism:* Disagreement escalates into "identity wars," eroding the concept of a "loyal opposition."

✦ Opponents are seen as immoral, dangerous, or evil, rather than legitimate rivals.

✦ Democracy, as a "compromise machine," fails when the opposition's legitimacy is denied.

✦ **Spanish Republic (1930s):** Left and right viewed each other as existential threats, leading to civil war.

✦ **Roman Republic:** Rival politicians funded street gangs to attack opponents.

✦ *Institutional Distrust:* A breakdown of trust in the electoral process, courts, media, and legislature.

✦ People stop accepting unfavorable outcomes, believing the system is rigged.

✦ **Weimar Germany (1920s):** Economic problems, post-WWI humiliation, and political street brawls led many Germans to give up on the system before Hitler's rise.

✦ **Peru (1992):** President Fujimori shut down Congress, cheered by many Peruvians who saw institutions as corrupt and paralyzed.

✦ When institutions are perceived as jokes, a strongman becomes appealing.

✦ **Common Misconceptions (Myths vs. Reality):**

o *Voter Apathy:* Not a primary cause of democratic collapse.

✦ High voter turnout often occurs when people perceive a significant threat to the system.

✦ Collapse is more driven by frustration that votes are meaningless.

✦ *Charismatic Populist Leader:* Usually a *result* rather than the primary *cause* of collapse.

✦ Such leaders rise *after* the system has been hollowed out and is failing to meet basic needs.

✦ **Superseding Factor: Economic Misery:**

o When people lose jobs, savings, and the ability to provide for their families, they become desperate and angry.

o Discussions about constitutions and social norms seem irrelevant to those facing economic hardship.

o **Weimar Germany (1923 & 1929):** Hyperinflation (30,000% per month) and the Great Depression (30%+ unemployment) drove many to support Hitler.

o **Chile (1973):** Inflation exceeding 500% and shortages of basic goods led to mass protests and military intervention.

Economic failure creates an opening for leaders who promise radical change.

**The Resilience of Mature Democracies**

- While vulnerable, mature democracies tend to endure.
- The United States, a democratic republic since 1789, is one of the oldest continuous governments, having survived civil war, world wars, economic depressions, and social upheavals.
- Democracies are resilient due to their effective feedback systems.

o A free press and opposition highlight problems, compelling leadership to address them or face declining popularity.

o Continuous debate and criticism in a free society contribute to their strength.

o No government lasts forever, but countries often learn from their failures.

o Broken democracies can rebuild, often emerging stronger.

Examples include post-WWII Germany and Japan, Pinochet's Chile, and South Korea transitioning from military rule to democracy.

**The United States Today: Bending or Breaking?**

- The video avoids partisan politics, focusing on the "big picture."
- **Current Challenges:**

o High tribalism: 72% of Republicans and 63% of Democrats view the other side as immoral.

o Declining trust in institutions.

o Events like the refusal to concede the 2020 election and the Capitol storming, alongside concerns about intelligence agency abuses and weaponization of the legal system, contribute to a stressed system.

o The media environment often lacks a shared reality.

o **Historical Context:**

o American democracy has faced severe crises before, including the Civil War.

o **1930s (Great Depression):** Widespread unemployment, bank collapses, and global rise of fascism led to debates about democracy's viability in the US.

o **1960s-70s:** Assassinations (JFK, MLK, RFK), war protests, televised riots, urban unrest, and radical bombings created extreme turbulence.

## Personal Perspectives

- **Strengths of the US System:**
- A strong, decentralized election system with multiple layers of oversight and judicial review.
- The military remains out of politics.
- Voter turnout remains strong, indicating continued investment in the system.
- The economy is solid, with historically low unemployment, unlike countries that have collapsed.
- Despite heated rhetoric, the fundamental machinery of democracy is still holding up.

The US faces rising distrust and tribalism layered on a strong foundational system. This calls for vigilance, not complacency.

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*Personal Perspectives* offers both the editor's reflections and those of noted commentators on significant events and issues shaping America and the world. These commentaries are informed by a generally conservative political outlook, a commitment to free-market principles, and a Protestant Christian worldview. They are presented not as neutral reporting, but as reasoned personal opinions intended to encourage thoughtful consideration and respectful discussion.

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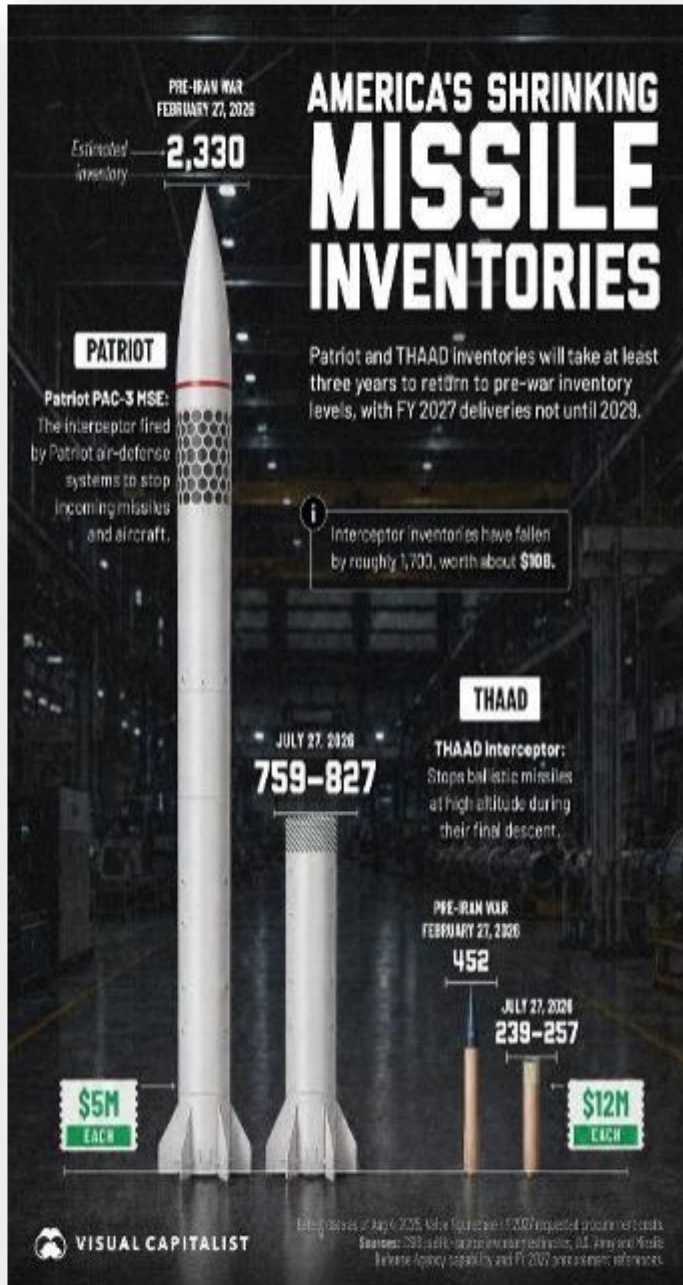
# America's Missile Interceptor Stockpiles Have Plunged

By **Niccolo Conte**

August 12, 2026
Published in Visual Capitalist




### Key Takeaways

U.S. Patriot interceptor inventories

# Personal Perspectives

have fallen from an estimated 2,330 before the Iran war to 759–827 as of July 27, 2026, a decline of roughly two-thirds.

THAAD interceptor stocks are down by nearly half over the same period, from 452 to an estimated 239–257.

CSIS estimates both systems will take at least three years to return to pre-war inventory levels, with new FY 2027 orders not arriving until 2029.

Months of intercepting Iranian missile barrages have drawn down America's stockpiles of its two most important air-defense interceptors far faster than they can currently be replaced.

Since the start of the Iran war in late February, combined Patriot and THAAD interceptor inventories have fallen by roughly 1,700 missiles.

This graphic visualizes estimated U.S. Patriot and THAAD interceptor inventories, based on public-source estimates from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), with per-interceptor values from U.S. Army and Missile Defense Agency FY 2027 procurement references.

### How Much of America's Missile Inventory Is Left?

Patriot accounts for the vast majority of the absolute decline in U.S. interceptor stocks, reflecting its much larger pre-war inventory and heavy use during the conflict.

THAAD stocks have also fallen substantially. While fewer THAAD interceptors have been expended, each costs more than twice as much as a Patriot interceptor.

The table below compares estimated U.S. inventories of both interceptor types before the war and as of July 27, 2026:

| Missile System | Estimated U.S. Interceptor Inventory | | Estimated Decline (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre-war (Feb. 27, 2026) | July 27, 2026 | |
| Patriot | 2,330 | 759–827 | 64.5–67.4% |
| THAAD | 452 | 239–257 | 43.1–47.1% |

A PAC-3 MSE interceptor used by Patriot systems costs roughly $5 million in the FY 2027 budget request. A THAAD interceptor, designed to destroy ballistic missiles at longer ranges and higher altitudes than Patriot, costs nearly $12 million.

Both systems are being used primarily against Iranian ballistic missiles. Using FY 2027 unit costs as a rough benchmark, replacing the estimated drawdown would cost about $10 billion.

### A Three-Year Road Back to Pre-War Levels

According to CSIS analysis of Pentagon delivery projections, Patriot and THAAD stockpiles will each take at least three years to return to pre-war levels. THAAD's FY 2027 order of 857 interceptors is projected to complete the replacement of Iran-war usage by the end of 2029.

## Personal Perspectives

Washington is spending heavily to close the gap as global military spending climbs. The FY 2027 defense budget includes a $95 billion munitions request, with another $21 billion in a war supplemental. Lockheed Martin also plans to more than triple PAC-3 MSE production capacity and expand THAAD output from 96 to 400 interceptors per year.
Until those deliveries arrive, CSIS warns that depleted stockpiles create a window of vulnerability. With no good alternatives to Patriot and THAAD for ballistic missile defense, every interceptor fired over the Middle East will take at least one to two years to replace.

End of Article

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# Is the US or Iran winning the war?

On August 21, 2026, I ran a comparative analysis of major YouTube programs sponsored by major news agencies discussing the current status of the US-Iran war to determine whether the US or Iran was winning. Here is what the computer responded with.

As of August 21, 2026, the broad consensus across major recent YouTube news and analysis programs is:

**The United States is winning militarily, Iran is succeeding at imposing strategic and economic costs, and neither side has yet won the war.**

| Measure | Current advantage | General assessment |
|---|---|---|
| Air and naval power | United States | The United States retains overwhelming conventional superiority and can strike Iranian targets while protecting por- |
| Damage inflicted | United States/Israel | Iran's military, nuclear, command, and economic infrastructure has sustained considerably |
| Strait of Hormuz | Contested | The United States has created a protected shipping corridor, but traffic reportedly remains far below prewar levels. Iran therefore retains substantial disruptive power. |
| Economic pressure | United States | Iran is experiencing severe inflation, shortages, lost oil revenue, and growing civilian hardship. |
| Political endurance | Iran, so far | The Iranian government has survived, continues resisting, and appears willing to endure extensive civilian and econom- |
| Stated war objectives | Neither side | Iran has not capitulated, accepted American nuclear terms, or lost control of the country. Washington has not secured a |
| Long-term trajectory | Uncertain | Time may favor Washington economically, but a prolonged conflict increases American costs, regional instability, and political pressure. |

Why analysts are reluctant to declare an American victory

# Personal Perspectives

The United States appears to have achieved battlefield dominance, but battlefield dominance is not the same as strategic victory. Recent programs repeatedly emphasize four unresolved problems:

1. **Iran has not surrendered or changed its fundamental position.** Despite extensive damage and economic distress, Tehran continues to reject American demands and presents survival itself as victory.

2. **The Strait of Hormuz remains the decisive pressure point.** Washington says it controls the strait, and escorted tankers are reportedly moving approximately half the prewar oil volume. But other reporting indicates overall commercial traffic remains drastically depressed. This suggests that the United States can force passages through the strait without fully restoring normal navigation. BBC analysis of control of Hormuz, CBN report on the protected shipping corridor

3. **Washington's movement from military operations toward sanctions implies that force alone did not obtain the desired result.** The administration now describes economic pressure as its most effective remaining instrument. BBC's coverage characterizes this as a "new phase" after nearly six months of war, while questioning whether sanctions can compel Iran's leadership to abandon interests it regards as existential. BBC report on the new economic phase

4. **Iran's strategy is attrition rather than conventional victory. Iran cannot defeat the United States in a conventional military contest. Its plausible strategy is to survive, restrict Gulf commerce, raise oil and insurance costs, threaten regional bases and allies, and prolong the war until American political willingness weakens.**

How the principal viewpoints differ
American and Israeli-leaning programs generally emphasize:

- Iranian military losses;
- U.S. control of the air and protected shipping corridor;
- Iran's deteriorating economy;
- the possibility that intensified sanctions will eventually compel concessions.

BBC, Al Jazeera, and several British or international analysts generally emphasize:

- the continuing Hormuz disruption;
- Iran's capacity to absorb punishment;
- the absence of a negotiated settlement;
- the difficulty of translating military superiority into political success. Al Jazeera analysis of the Hormuz standoff
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More strongly critical programs argue that Iran is "winning" because it has drawn the United States into an expensive, open-ended confrontation. That is a minority interpretation, although concerns about entrapment and mission creep are increasingly present in mainstream analysis. The Telegraph discussion of strategic entrapment

Bottom line
If "winning" means destroying targets, controlling escalation, and possessing superior military capability, **the United States is winning**.

If "winning" means forcing Iran to capitulate, reopening the Strait of Hormuz fully, ending Iran's nuclear and missile programs, or establishing a stable postwar arrangement, **the United States has not yet won**.

If Iran's minimum objective is regime survival and inflicting enough economic and political pain to deny Washington a clean victory, **Iran remains surprisingly successful**.

My (the computer) overall judgment is therefore:

**The United States holds the clear tactical and conventional military advantage, but the war is strategically unresolved. Iran is losing materially while still denying the United States a decisive victory.**

This is the closest thing to a general consensus in the major coverage available through August 21. It would

## Personal Perspectives

be premature to describe either country as the definitive winner.

Let's see how these changes develop over the coming months.

As they say, "hold on to your hats".

D. Miyoshi

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# The World Order Is a Lie: The Next 50 Years Will Change Everything

By Jiang Xueqin

Professor Jiang Xueqin is one of the most provocative geopolitical thinkers on YouTube today. A Chinese-Canadian scholar with a Yale pedigree and decades of experience inside China's education system, he dissects world events with the precision of a strategist and the intensity of a historian. His Predictive History lectures reveal the hidden forces—civilizational, psychological, and theological—that drive nations toward conflict or cooperation. When he speaks, the map of the world feels alive, and the future suddenly looks predictable.

The following is my Executive Summary of Professor Jiang's recent interview by Raj Hamani entitled "World Order Is a Lie: The Next 50 Years Will Change Everything"

I hope you find it informative.

D. Miyoshi

### Executive Summary

World Order Is a Lie: The Next 50 Years Will Change Everything is a roughly 2½-hour interview in which Raj Shamani speaks with Professor Jiang about global power, Donald Trump, the Middle East, Jeffrey Epstein, China, India, and the future international order.

### Central argument

Professor Jiang argues that world affairs are driven less by democratic ideals, international law, or official institutions than by struggles among political elites, financial interests, military establishments, religious movements, and informal networks of influence. In his view, the "rules-based international order" largely disguises the exercise of power by dominant states—especially the United States.

### Principal points

- **Trump and the revolt against elites:** Jiang attributes Donald Trump's original rise to widespread anger over the 2008 financial crisis, the protection of major financial institutions, and the failure of political elites to deliver meaningful change. He believes Trump succeeded because he spoke plainly, projected defiance, and appeared willing to fight institutions distrusted by many voters.

- **Trump's future:** He predicts that Trump will attempt to remain in power for a third term or otherwise extend his political control. He portrays Trump as simultaneously supported by parts of the establishment and capable of reshaping institutions around his

## Personal Perspectives

personal authority. This is presented as a prediction, not an established fact.

- **American grand strategy:** Jiang describes a three-part strategy through which the United States allegedly seeks to preserve its global dominance:

1. Exclude rival great powers from the Western Hemisphere.
2. Control maritime chokepoints and international trade routes.

Encourage or exploit conflicts across Eurasia.

He argues that wars involving Russia, Iran, and China increase international dependence on American weapons, resources, financing, and security protection.

- **Iran and Israel:** Jiang predicts a major American ground intervention in Iran. He connects the conflict to Israel's regional ambitions and to a broader American effort to restructure the Middle East. His interpretation treats the war as part of a calculated geopolitical strategy rather than an isolated confrontation.

- **Russia, China, and Eurasia:** He believes American policy benefits from keeping Russia occupied in Europe, Iran under pressure in the Middle East, and China contained in East Asia. In his account, encouraging Japan and other regional powers to strengthen their militaries is part of containing China.

- **Jeffrey Epstein and elite networks:** A substantial portion of the interview explores Epstein's relationships with wealthy financiers, political figures, and intellectuals. Jiang speculates that Epstein's importance came from access to secretive financial and political networks rather than merely from personal wealth. He also connects these networks to occult traditions and secret societies.

- **India's future:** Jiang is optimistic about India, particularly the global Indian diaspora. He believes Indians will gain increasing influence in technology, finance, academia, publishing, and other knowledge-based industries. He argues that India's greatest strength may lie in its people's international mobility rather than in centralized state power.

- **China's limitations:** Although China possesses enormous manufacturing capacity, Jiang believes its authoritarian political system, demographic problems, and intellectual constraints could limit its long-term influence. He distinguishes China's economic strength from the broader cultural and institutional influence exercised by the United States.

**Japan and Northern Europe:** He predicts renewed importance for Japan and a Northern European coalition centered on Germany and Scandinavia. He regards Japan as exceptionally resilient, but he makes an extreme and highly objectionable suggestion that mass euthanasia among elderly Japanese could help resolve the country's demographic crisis.

### Overall conclusion

The interview presents a sweeping theory of international power: declining Western legitimacy, continued American strategic dominance, expanding conflicts across Eurasia, and the gradual rise of India, Japan, and Northern Europe. Jiang expects the coming decades to be marked by political instability, intensified great-power rivalry, weakened international institutions, and fundamental changes in the distribution of global influence.

### Important caution

This program is best understood as **provocative geopolitical commentary, not a neutral or rigorously documented analysis**. Jiang mixes recognizable historical and strategic observations with highly speculative predictions, broad ethnic and national generalizations, and serious allegations about Epstein, QAnon, "Zionist" networks, secret societies, and government motives. Many of these claims are asserted without sufficient evidence in the interview and should not be treated as established facts.

**Bottom line:** The program is intellectually stimulating as an unconventional theory of power, but its most sensational conclusions require substantial independent verification.

It's frightening to consider the scenarios Professor Jiang predicts for the world. I hope he is wrong. On the other hand he makes too much sense.

D. Miyoshi

## Personal Perspectives

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# WHY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DRAWN TO COMMUNISM

By Armstrong Williams
Commentary on Epoch Times

Every generation searches for answers. Young people have always challenged the status quo, questioned authority, and sought a better future than the one they inherited. That impulse is not only understandable, but it is often essential to a healthy democracy. It is how societies reform, innovate, and correct injustice.

Yet one question has resurfaced with increasing frequency on college campuses, social media, and in political discourse: Why are some young people embracing communism or openly expressing sympathy for socialist and communist ideas despite the overwhelming historical record of communist governments?

The answer deserves more than slogans or political attacks. It deserves honesty, humility, and historical perspective.

Most young people are not attracted to communism because they desire dictatorship or political repression. They are attracted to ideals such as equality, fairness, affordable housing, universal opportunity, and a belief that no one should be left behind. Many have grown up during financial crises, rising tuition costs, crushing student debt, unaffordable homes, stagnant wages, and widening wealth disparities. They see billionaires becoming wealthier, while many working families struggle to pay rent or afford health care.

These concerns are real. Ignoring them only pushes young people further toward ideologies that promise sweeping solutions.

But history teaches us that noble intentions and successful outcomes are not always the same thing.

Communism has consistently promised equality. In practice, however, it has often produced concentrated political power rather than shared prosperity. The Soviet Union, Mao's China, Cambodia under Pol Pot, North Korea, and other communist regimes did not eliminate injustice. They frequently replaced one form of inequality with another one, in which the state held enormous power over individuals, controlled speech, suppressed religion, limited private enterprise, imprisoned political opponents, and, in many cases, was responsible for immense human suffering.

These are not partisan talking points. They are historical realities documented across decades of scholarship.

Why, then, do these lessons seem to resonate less with younger generations?

Part of the answer may lie in historical distance. For many young Americans, the Cold War is as distant as World War II was for previous generations. The Berlin Wall exists only in textbooks. Soviet bread lines, Mao's Cultural Revolution, and the Cambodian killing fields are not lived memories but instead historical chapters competing for attention in an age dominated

## YouTube Summaries

by social media and 20-second video clips.

History loses its urgency when it is no longer personal.

There is another factor we should honestly acknowledge. Capitalism itself has not always lived up to its highest ideals. Free markets have created extraordinary innovation, lifted billions worldwide from poverty, and rewarded creativity and entrepreneurship. At the same time, capitalism can produce monopolies, corporate greed, corruption, environmental harm, and staggering inequality when ethical standards and effective institutions fail.

Recognizing those shortcomings does not require abandoning free markets. It requires improving them.

The answer to the imperfections of capitalism is not necessarily communism any more than the failures of democracy justify authoritarianism. Free societies possess something that centrally planned systems often do not: the ability to reform themselves through open debate, free elections, independent courts, entrepreneurial innovation, and a free press.

That ability to self-correct is one of democracy's greatest strengths.

Our educational institutions also bear responsibility. Students should not be taught that capitalism is beyond criticism or that communism is beyond examination. They should learn both honestly. They should study the achievements and failures of free-market economies alongside the documented consequences of communist governments. Education should encourage inquiry rather than ideology.

Parents have a role as well. So do faith communities, civic organizations, and the media. Young people need mentors willing to answer difficult questions rather than dismiss them. Condescension rarely changes minds. Conversation often does.

Perhaps the deeper issue extends beyond economics altogether.

Many young people today are searching for meaning, purpose, belonging, and identity. Political movements often become substitutes for the communities that families, neighborhoods, religious institutions, and civic organizations once provided. When people feel isolated, they naturally gravitate toward movements that promise certainty, justice, and belonging.

This is not merely a political challenge. It is a cultural one.

Our response should never be to fear young people or ridicule them for asking difficult questions. Curiosity is not the enemy of freedom. Ignorance is. We should encourage rigorous debate, careful reading, historical literacy, and intellectual humility. We should welcome disagreement while insisting that every ideology, including our own, be measured against evidence, history, and respect for human dignity.

Every generation believes that it can build a better society. That aspiration is one of humanity's greatest strengths. But history also reminds us that societies flourish not when government becomes all-powerful, but when liberty is protected, opportunity is expanded, institutions remain accountable, and individuals are free to speak, worship, create, disagree, and pursue their own dreams.

The challenge before us is not choosing between compassion and freedom. America is strongest when it insists upon both. Justice without liberty risks oppression. Liberty without responsibility risks indifference. A healthy republic demands the wisdom to preserve both.

The greatest gift we can offer the next generation is not ideological certainty but historical truth, moral courage, and the confidence to think critically. Freedom has always depended not on people who simply accept ideas but on citizens willing to examine them honestly, question them respectfully, and learn from history before repeating it.

Views expressed in this article are opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

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# YOUTUBE SUMMARIES


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5ysOncWPSM

This video looks at one thing only: the financial outcomes of two paths available to young American men today—joining the military or attending a four-year state college and entering the civilian workforce. It does not address cultural values, personal goals, or family traditions.

Many Asian American families strongly value higher education, and that perspective is respected. The purpose here is simply to present current financial data. Because college often requires student loans, many young men begin adulthood in debt, while military service typically provides income, benefits, and later educational opportunities without that initial financial burden.

This video is offered to help families understand the financial realities of both choices. It is not meant to challenge cultural priorities—only to provide clear information for thoughtful decision-making.

Here is my summary of the video. I hope you find it informative

D. Miyoshi

**Introduction**

- The video compares the 10-year financial and career outcomes of two paths: military enlistment (Ryan) versus a four-year college degree (Tyler).

The true comparison should be between total compensation packages, not just salaries.

**Year 1: Initial Compensation & Costs**
**Ryan (Military Enlistment)**

- **Base Pay:** Earning $2,407/month as an E-1 in 2026.
- **Allowances:** Receives tax-free housing and food allowances.
- **Healthcare:** Free health care with zero premiums and co-pays for him and his family.
  - o Equivalent civilian healthcare costs $18,000-$27,000 annually.
  - o **Total Compensation:** Real compensation package in year one is between $45,000 and $55,000.

**Expenses:** Spends almost nothing on housing or food.

**Tyler (College Path)**

- **No Income:** In class, not earning a paycheck.
- **Debt Accumulation:** $38,000 in loans at 6.5% interest is growing.
- **Additional Costs:** Adds living expenses, books, and fees on top of tuition over four years.
- **Full Cost of Attendance:** By graduation, the full cost (spent, borrowed, lost earning potential) is $110,000-$130,000.

This comprehensive cost is not typically shown on financial aid letters or college brochures.

**Year 2: Skill Development & System Design**
**Ryan (Military)**

- **Promotions:** Promoted to E2, then E3, with increasing base pay.
- **Valuable Skills:** Learns to manage pressure, deadlines, and people.

These are skills (communication, accountability,

# YouTube Summaries

working under pressure) that civilian employers consistently report missing in recent graduates.

**Tyler (College)**

- **General Education:** Taking general education requirements and building GPA.

**System Design:** The college system is designed to keep students enrolled, not necessarily to produce the most financially efficient outcome for their 20s.

**Year 4: Graduation & Net Worth Comparison**
**Ryan (Military)**

- **Financial Head Start:** Has been earning, saving, and building for four full years.
- **Current Rank/Pay:** E-4 specialist, with base pay around $3,619/month.
- **Retirement Savings:** Four years of contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) with a government match.
- **Debt-Free:** Has zero debt.
- **Education Benefit:** Possesses the Post-9/11 GI Bill, worth $100,000-$300,000 for future tuition, housing, and books.

**Net Worth:** Conservatively, Ryan's net worth at 22 is between $15,000 and $40,000.

**Tyler (College)**

- **Debt Burden:** Graduates with an average of $35,000-$39,000 in debt.
- **Net Worth:** His net worth at 22 is negative.
- **Loan Repayment:** Standard repayment plan is 10 years, with monthly payments of $200-$300.
  - This money services past debt instead of contributing to a house down payment or retirement.

The opportunity cost of these payments over 10 years (invested at 7%) is approximately $43,000.

**Year 7: Post-Enlistment & Continued Payments**
**Ryan (Post-Military)**

- **Education with GI Bill:** Completed his four-year enlistment and used the GI Bill for college.
- **Debt-Free Degree:** Graduated with a degree, zero new debt, and four years of verified military work experience.

**Civilian Job Market:** Enters the civilian job market at 25 as a veteran with discipline, potentially a security clearance, and valuable experience.

**Tyler (Post-Graduation)**

- **Career Progress:** Working for two years, with a solid career trajectory.

**Ongoing Debt:** Still making $300 monthly student loan payments, which become "background noise" but prevent compounding retirement contributions.
**Long-Term Benefits & Considerations**

- **Military Risks:** Acknowledges that military service involves real risks, following orders, and lack of control over stationing.
- **College for Specific Careers:** Recognizes that traditional college is essential for careers like medicine, law, and engineering.
- **Military Pension:** If Ryan stays for 20 years, he qualifies for a defined benefit pension, paying 50% of his final base pay for life, starting at age 38.
  - For a staff sergeant, this is roughly $2,000/month for life, starting at 38.
  - This is a benefit almost no private sector employer offers anymore.

**Tyler's Retirement:** Tyler will retire at 65, dependent on his 401k and market performance.

**Year 10: The Final Comparison (Age 38)**
**Ryan**

- **Debt-Free:** No student debt.
- **Compounding Savings:** TSP has been compounding since age 19.
- **Free Degree:** Obtained a degree with no out-of-pocket cost.

**Pension Progress:** If he stayed in, he's halfway to a pension most private sector workers will never see.

**Tyler**

- **Loans Concluded:** Has finished his loans or is close to it.
- **Career & Income:** Solid career with growing income.

**Financial Foundation:** Only now, in his early 30s, begins building the financial foundation Ryan started at 18.
**Conclusion**

- **Head Start:** One path (military) provides a 4-year head start on a clean balance sheet.
- **Outdated College Model:** The financial case for college is based on data from a different economy.
  - 44% of college graduates take jobs outside their

## YouTube Summaries

field in the first year.

o Only 40% of student loan borrowers pay off their debt within 10 years.

The "guaranteed return" and "clear career path" promised by college are based on numbers that no longer exist.

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# IS IRAN AND NOT TRUMP RUNNING OUT OF TIME?


In a recent YouTube video, Victor Davis Hanson, one of America's preeminent historians and geopolitical analysts, provides an insightful analysis, arguing that the prevailing narrative about Trump's struggles with Iran is misleading. He effectively demonstrates that Iran is facing severe economic and military debilitation due to US sanctions and actions, losing $500 million daily. Hanson also presents a compelling case for why the Republican party might not lose the midterms, citing financial advantages and the Democratic party's perceived shift towards a socialist base. This analysis offers a strong counter-narrative, asserting that Iran, not Trump, is truly running out of time.

The following are my notes summarizing Hansen's arguments. I hope you find this informative.

D. Miyoshi

### The Perceived Stalemate and Iran's Strategy

**Prevailing Narrative:** A perception that the US is "bogged down" in a "Vietnam" quagmire with Iran, and time is running out for Donald Trump.

This narrative suggests Trump promises strong action, Iran backs down, requests talks, then delays.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard acts as "bad cop," while "moderate" officials offer a "happy face" to buy time.

**Iran's Actual Strategy**: To delay, "wash, rinse, spin," and "drag it out" until Donald Trump potentially loses the House in the midterms.

They hope a left-leaning House, with an "Islamicist socialist base," would cut off funds for Iran, leading to a Democratic socialist president who would appease them.

Iran does not genuinely want talks; they want to delay.

### Pressures on Donald Trump

**Midterm Elections**: With 90 days until the midterms, Trump's team fears an impeachment circus and investigations if Republicans lose the House.

**Economic Stability**: To avoid political fallout, Trump needs:

Gas prices near $3 a gallon.

World oil prices around $65 a barrel.

The Strait of Hormuz to remain open.

**Required Outcome**: This necessitates either a new Iranian government, a debilitated Iranian government, or a negotiated settlement.

### The Actual State of Affairs in Iran: A "Python-like Squeeze"

**Economic Embargo**:

No tankers can bring in merchandise, food, or industrial goods.

No Iranian oil is being exported.

# YouTube Summaries

Rail links to former Soviet Union, Russia, and China have been bombed, hindering imports and exports.

Iran is "debanked" with frozen assets.

Iran is losing approximately $500 million per day in revenue, a loss that is geometrically increasing.

**Infrastructure and Military Damage:**

Infrastructure (bridges, roads) is being damaged.

Enormous damage is being inflicted on the military.

Scarce resources are diverted from the domestic economy to fix military and infrastructure damage.

**Societal Impact**: The Iranian people are experiencing increasing anguish and poverty, leading to a worsening country.

**US Cost vs. Iranian Damage:**

The US has lost 18 soldiers and spent an estimated $40 billion.

At this cost, the US has "debilitated, neutered, de-industrialized, and pretty much destroyed" Iran's military, industrial, and nuclear complex.

Iran, despite being the largest state in the Middle East by economics, population, and area, has less resources to withstand this pressure.

**Conclusion:** While the left claims time is running out for Trump, the actual data indicates that Iran is running out of time. The US can sustain this pressure "forever."

## US Midterm Election Outlook

**Republican Position**: Republicans do not believe the midterms are lost.

They have a $400 million war chest, significantly more than Democrats, to spread across House and Senate races.

Redistricting (due to red state legislatures or Supreme Court rulings) could give Republicans an additional 5-9 seats.

Positive outcomes regarding Iran (negotiation, open Strait, stable oil prices) could occur before the midterms, potentially turning public anguish into satisfaction.

**Democratic Party Challenges:**

A "socialist communist Islamicist core base movement" has captured the Democratic Party.

Mainstream Democrats are terrified of being primaried by this base and mimic their positions (e.g., Gavin Newsome's comments on capitalism).

This message is unpopular with the American people and is effectively a "life raft" for Donald Trump.

## Concluding Thoughts

Focus on the ground reality in Iran, which is worsening daily, rather than rhetoric.

Examine the actual conditions of the midterms, which are in flux, rather than predictions.

The Republicans are neither stuck in Iran nor necessarily facing a House loss.

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# HAS AMERICA LOST THE IRAN WAR?


Contrary to the views of Victor Davis Hanson in the previous article, this video by Daily News Report provides an insightful analysis of the Iran War, effectively arguing that America suffered a strategic loss de-

## YouTube Summaries

spite its military might. The creator meticulously details how the war was initiated based on fabricated intelligence, led to a catastrophic special forces failure, and ultimately strengthened Iran's regional and international standing. By highlighting the US's forced negotiations, the emergence of Pakistan as a key mediator, and the fracturing of the Western alliance, the analysis compellingly demonstrates the profound geopolitical consequences and the perceived decline of American imperial power.

Here are structured notes explaining the program's thesis.

D. Miyoshi

# America Lost the Iran War — And the Western Media Finally Admitted It

**Author**: Daily News Report

### Western Media Acknowledges US Loss

- America's military actions in Iran included dropping bombs on over 7,800 targets, destroying more than 120 Iranian warships, and assassinating Iran's supreme leader.
- Despite these actions, leading Western newspapers reported that the US lost the war.
  - o *The Globe and Mail* (Canada) ran the headline: "Iran has won. Everyone else has lost."
  - o *The New Republic* described it as "a staggering humiliation."
  - o *The New York Times* published a piece stating the war "turned Iran into a major world power."

This outcome raises questions about how Iran emerged stronger after one of the most intense bombing campaigns in modern history.

### How the War Started: Fabricated Intelligence and Israeli Influence

- The conflict was initiated following a visit by Benjamin Netanyahu to Washington in February, where he delivered a "sales pitch" for war with Iran.
- Netanyahu presented intelligence assessments and projected outcomes for striking Iran's military infrastructure.
- Analysts now describe nearly every element of this briefing as fraudulent, with fabricated or distorted intelligence and unrealistic projections.
- No senior Trump administration official publicly challenged the presented intelligence.
- A whistleblower, Congressman Joe Kent, revealed that the US was steered toward war to serve Israel's strategic interests, rather than America's national security.
- On February 28th, the US and Israel launched coordinated surprise air strikes on Iran, targeting military and government infrastructure and assassinating Supreme Leader Khamenei.

Iran's response was immediate and regional, involving missile and drone strikes on Israel, US military bases, and US allies, and critically, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

### Catastrophic US Military Failure: The Isfahan Raid

- A covert US special forces operation targeting Iran's key nuclear enrichment facility in Isfahan several weeks into the conflict went "catastrophically wrong."
- The mission's goal was reportedly a snatch-and-grab to seize enriched uranium.
- US forces suffered their worst aircraft losses in approximately 50 years during this operation, including multiple C-130 aircraft.
- Independent military analysts assess that US forces walked directly into a trap set by Iranian intelligence.
- Following this failure, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who had no prior command-level military experience, unlawfully shut down press access to the Pentagon.
- Hegseth, with a controversial past, oversaw a major special forces disaster and concealed it from the public.

American media largely ignored the true events in Isfahan, instead promoting a "feel-good rescued pilot

# YouTube Summaries

narrative."

## Trump's Erratic Response and Ceasefire Attempts

- After the Isfahan debacle, the White House exhibited erratic and destabilizing behavior, with Trump threatening "total annihilation" of Iran's civilization on social media and setting an ultimatum for negotiations.
- Significant political backlash, both domestically and from US allies, forced Trump to de-escalate before his own deadline.
- Iran presented a 10-point proposal, which the White House attempted to spin as Iran capitulating, despite the proposal having circulated in diplomatic channels for months.
- Iran's core demands have remained consistent throughout the conflict.
- The US initially agreed to use Iran's proposal as a basis for talks, but Israel intervened within 24 hours.
- Israeli forces launched over 100 bombing raids in Lebanon, including Christian neighborhoods without Hezbollah presence, in a deliberate attempt to sabotage the ceasefire that included Lebanon.
- J.D. Vance publicly denied Lebanon's inclusion in the ceasefire, a claim immediately contradicted by Pakistan and Iran.

A two-week ceasefire, mediated by Pakistan, began on April 8th but came under strain almost immediately.

## Iran's Strategic Victory and Unchanged Demands

- Despite extensive US military action (destroying 7,800 targets, sinking 120+ vessels, degrading missile/drone capability), the US failed to achieve its strategic objectives.
- Iran's supreme leader was killed, yet Iran continued fighting.
- Iran's military infrastructure was hit, but Iran responded by closing the world's most critical oil choke point, the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iran's economy was targeted, but it emerged from the conflict with increased international legitimacy.
- The Strait of Hormuz remains under Iranian control, and Iran's terms for a final settlement have not significantly changed.
- The global community increasingly perceives the US as having initiated a war based on manipulated intelligence and failed to achieve its political goals.
- Destroying a country's infrastructure without achieving political objectives is considered a strategic loss, not a victory.

Even *The New York Times* acknowledged that the war transformed Iran into a major world power.

## Pakistan's Emergence as a Key Mediator

- Pakistan, previously considered a junior diplomatic partner by Washington, emerged as the most important diplomatic player in the conflict.
- Its role is attributed to deep historical, religious, and strategic ties with Iran, which Western policymakers consistently underestimate.
- Pakistan has a substantial Shia Muslim population with close ideological and spiritual ties to the Iranian revolution since 1979.
- Pakistan holds significant economic stakes as a major partner in China's Belt and Road Initiative and the Middle Corridor trade route.
- A critical factor driving Pakistan's intervention was Israel's public statements questioning Pakistan's nuclear program, leading Pakistan's military to conclude: "If Iran falls, Pakistan is next."
- Pakistan is uniquely positioned between Washington and Tehran, possessing defense agreements with Saudi Arabia, trade ties with China, and a history of managing relationships with both US and Iranian leadership.

Pakistan helped convey a 15-point US proposal to Iran and publicly confirmed Lebanon's inclusion in Iran's ceasefire conditions, directly contradicting J.D. Vance's statements.

## The "Oil Trap" Strategy and Geopolitical Implications

- The conflict aligns with a 25-year-old neoconservative strategy document, *The Clean Break*, written for then-Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu.
- *The Clean Break* envisioned reshaping the Middle East through military force and regime change, with a core element being the deliberate disruption of regional oil and gas supplies.
- This strategy aims to throttle peer competitors like China, increase energy prices to benefit American oil and gas production, and position the US to weather

# YouTube Summaries

global energy disruptions using its domestic reserves.

- Recent events reflect this pattern:

o The Ukraine conflict has reduced Russia's export capacity by 30-40% through drone strikes on oil infrastructure.

o The Iranian war damaged Saudi Arabia's production capacity by approximately 1.3 million barrels per day.

o The closure of the Strait of Hormuz disrupted Gulf energy flows entirely.

o Venezuela's oil fields were seized.

o The consistent losers are Europe, emerging market economies, and global consumers facing higher energy prices.

o The consistent winners are US oil and gas producers, who operate in a rising price environment without domestic attacks and are aligned with the Trump administration's political base.

o This pattern is seen by analysts as the execution of a long-standing strategy.

Iran, by closing the Strait of Hormuz, may have inadvertently played into this strategy, as it had no other choice for self-preservation.

## Cracks in the Western Alliance: European Defiance and Vatican's Role

- A significant development is the public break of Italy and Spain, both NATO and G7 members, from the Washington-Tel Aviv axis.
- Both countries are now discussing opening diplomatic missions in Tehran, a seismic shift and a direct rebuke of American foreign policy.
- The catalyst for this shift was the new American-born Pope.
- When Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth publicly invoked Jesus Christ in the context of bombing Iran over Easter weekend, framing it as a holy act, the Vatican swiftly and unambiguously rebuked him.
- Trump's statements blending theological language with threats of mass destruction were characterized as "close to sacrilegious."
- For Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, a deeply Catholic conservative, this created an impossible choice between MAGA/Washington and the Vatican, leading Italy to move toward Tehran.
- Spain followed suit, prompting Trump to threaten Spain.

European capitals are also quietly reassessing their stance on Russia, openly questioning if the US's actions in Iran (starting wars on fabricated intelligence, threatening allies, bullying Spain) make Russia the singular villain.

## The Fragile Islamabad Talks and Obstacles to Peace

- J.D. Vance leads the US delegation in Islamabad, but Iran's participation remains uncertain, with Tehran signaling it may pull out if conditions aren't met.
- Negotiations are expected to be indirect, with Pakistan serving as an intermediary.
- Iran's core demands include: recognition of its right to enrich uranium, lifting of all sanctions, a non-aggression pledge from Washington, and Iranian military coordination over Strait of Hormuz navigation.
- The US demands include: complete dismantlement of Iran's nuclear program, cessation of support for regional proxies, and limits on Iran's ballistic missile capabilities.
- These positions are fundamentally incompatible.
- The "Israel factor" is a major concern; similar to Ukraine-Russia talks being disrupted by Ukrainian strikes, any breakthrough in Islamabad is likely to be sabotaged by Israeli strikes in Iran or Lebanon, forcing a US response.
- The Trump administration's maximalist negotiating doctrine (maximalist demands, threats, no concessions) has produced zero results with Russia and is doing the same with Iran.

Iran's negotiators are accustomed to American maximalism and are prepared to wait, mirroring Russia's approach of using diplomacy as theater while real resolution comes from conditions on the ground.

## Broader Implications: Decline of American Imperial Power and Rise of a Multipolar World

- The US launched a war based on fabricated intelligence, authorized a catastrophic covert raid, shut down press access, threatened annihilation on social media, alienated key European allies and the Vatican, and saw Pakistan emerge as a credible mediator.
- The US is now negotiating indirectly with a country it failed to defeat militarily.
- The two-week ceasefire is already under strain,

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with Israel and Hezbollah exchanging fire.

- Iran has signaled it may walk out of negotiations if Washington fails to follow through on asset unfreezing commitments.
- Serious geopolitical analysts are questioning whether American imperial power can recover from the combination of this war, the Ukraine proxy failure, economic dislocation, and the fragmentation of the Western alliance.
- These events are interconnected chapters in a larger narrative.
- The multipolar world being built by China, Russia, and Iran (BRICS, Belt and Road, alternative financial systems) has been advanced more by American missteps than by its architects' direct actions.
- Each time Washington acts like a rogue state rather than a normative power, more countries conclude that the future lies in the East.

The ceasefire is fragile, and the war for the shape of the 21st century is ongoing, with Western headlines indicating Iran is not the one losing.

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# HOW WWIII CAN START


Professor Jiang Xueqin provides an exceptionally clear and insightful explanation of how World War 3 could realistically begin, focusing on the mechanisms rather than a direct choice by leaders. The video effectively breaks down complex geopolitical dynamics into three understandable concepts—alliance chains, economic transmission, and miscalculation—and illustrates their current relevance with contemporary examples. By also presenting the "brakes" that exist, the explanation offers a balanced and grounded perspective, making it a highly informative and thought-provoking analysis for anyone seeking to understand global conflict dynamics.

World War 3 is unlikely to be a conscious choice by leaders, but rather an accidental escalation driven by three interconnected mechanisms: alliance chains, economic transmission through global choke points, and miscalculation, all of which are currently active and make the present moment genuinely dangerous, despite powerful "brakes" like nuclear deterrence.

Here are the summary notes on how WWIII could begin, according to Professor Jiang.

D. Miyoshi

**Introduction: Understanding the Machinery of World War**

- The current global situation evokes dread about World War III .
- The focus should shift from "will it happen?" to "how would it happen?" .
- World wars are not chosen deliberately by leaders but are stumbled into through a chain of seemingly rational steps .

Understanding the "machinery" and "specific mechanisms" is crucial to judge the risk of a regional war metastasizing globally.

**Three Mechanisms for Local War to Global War**

There are three distinct mechanisms by which a local war can escalate into a world war:

**1. The Alliance Chain**

- This classic mechanism, responsible for World War I, involves great powers bound by commitments to smaller partners and locked in rivalry .
- A local war involving a great power's ally can pull in the great power due to fear of shifting the balance of power, losing credibility, or abandoning other allies .
- Once one great power intervenes, its rival faces the same logic in reverse, leading to its intervention .

This chain reaction pulls in more allies, escalating a small conflict into a system-wide war over a spark none would have chosen to fight over initially .

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**2. Economic Transmission**

- This newer mechanism spreads war through the global economy without direct military invasion .
- The world's interconnectedness means regional conflicts touching global choke points (e.g., Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca, Red Sea, Suez Canal, pipelines, undersea cables) can cause global economic pain .
- Economic strangulation can pressure distant great powers to intervene to protect vital flows, spreading the conflict .
- A darker version involves economic warfare, such as sanctions, seizing tankers, freezing reserves, and weaponizing currencies, which is already semi-global .

Interdependence, intended to prevent war, has become a conduit for conflict and a set of weapons.

**3. Miscalculation**

- This is the most dangerous mechanism, as it is beyond anyone's control .
- Catastrophic wars often result from both sides making mistakes simultaneously, escalating in the belief that the other side will back down .
- Modern factors making miscalculation more likely include:
  - **Speed:** Modern weapons compress decision-making time from days to minutes .
  - **Ambiguity:** Cyber attacks, drones, and proxies blur attribution, forcing responses before certainty of who attacked .
  - **Trap of Commitment:** Leaders stake credibility and draw red lines, making backing down feel more dangerous than escalating, even towards catastrophe .

Proud, rational leaders can talk themselves into catastrophe step by step, even when none wanted it .

**Presence of Mechanisms in the World Today**

- All three mechanisms are currently present and active, making the present moment genuinely dangerous, more so than any time since the height of the Cold War .
- **Alliance Chains:** Evident in the Middle East (US-backed vs. Russia/China ties), Ukraine (Russia vs. Western Alliance), and tensions over Taiwan .
- **Economic Transmission:** The Middle East conflict revolves around the Strait of Hormuz, with tankers seized and global sanctions/counter-sanctions already causing pain .

**Miscalculation:** Recent strikes and counter-strikes, near-collapsed ceasefires, and forces trading blows around waterways show the ladder of escalation is present.

**Historical Example: The Summer of 1914 (World War I)**

- The assassination of an archduke in Sarajevo led to a global conflict within six weeks, killing millions and toppling empires .
- **Alliance Chains** activated as great powers backed their partners, fearing loss of balance, pulling the entire interlocking system into war .
- **Miscalculation** was rampant: every capital believed the war would be short, and that determined mobilization would make the other side back down .
- Rigid military plans removed decisions from human hands, and by the time leaders realized the scale of the catastrophe, it was too late .

The warning of 1914 is that ordinary, careful, intelligent statesmen can stumble into world wars when trapped in a dangerous, primed structure .

**The "Brakes" Against World War**

Despite the dangers, there are powerful reasons for hope:

**1. Nuclear Weapons**

- The terrifying nature of modern war also prevents direct conflict between great powers .

Leaders of nuclear states understand that direct war means mutual annihilation, imposing a desperate caution absent in 1914 .

**2. Economic Interdependence**

- Today's great powers are deeply interwoven by trade and finance .

Nations benefiting from the current system have a strong incentive not to destroy it, as war is bad for global business .

**3. Human Factor / Lack of Ideological Hunger**

There is no widespread ideological desire for total war among major powers or their populations, who are often exhausted by existing conflicts .

**Conclusion: The Real Danger and How to Watch the World**

- A deliberate world war, consciously chosen by

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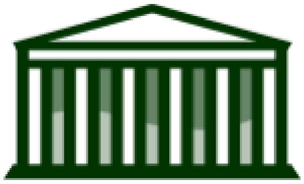
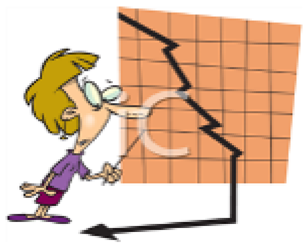


What's Really Happening in America and the World



Financial Crisis Report II

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great powers, is genuinely unlikely because it would be suicidal .

- The real danger is an *accidental* world war, one stumbled into through the alliance chains, economic transmission, and miscalculation .
- To measure danger, watch the "machinery," not just frightening headlines .

- **Watch the alliance chains:** See if a great power is being pulled into direct involvement in a war it was only funding .

- **Watch the choke points:** Observe if economic pain is spreading to powers that feel forced to act .

- **Watch the off-ramps:** Assess whether ways for proud leaders to step back without humiliation are being widened or bricked up .

- The difference between our century and 1914 will be whether we understand the machinery in time to keep our hands on the brakes .

This framework offers a lens for seeing danger clearly, rather than merely feeling it .

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**Lets see if Professor Jiang is on the mark.**

**D. Miyoshi**

## Trust and Estate Corner


**My clients are always inquiring about wills, trusts and estates. Each publication of *Financial Crisis Report II* (Reporting What's Really Happening in America and the World) will feature a simple factoid on Trusts and Estate Planning. For more information you may consult my website at [www.miyoshilaw.com](www.miyoshilaw.com)**

**Hold life insurance proceeds outside your estate.**

**An irrevocable life insurance trust (ILIT) in which an independent trust purchases a life insurance policy can, within certain limitations, result in keeping the life insurance proceeds from being part of your taxable estate.**

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