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Better-Management Newsletter 21 December 2015

2015 in retrospectively - terrorism, climate change, oil depletion, financial turmoil et al

This year we have seen a lot of drama about terrorists and the effects of mankind on the world we live in.... and the use of debt to try to kick-start the post GFC economy. Debt that can never be repaid or even financed – therefore resulting in lower interest rates than have ever occurred in modern times.

With regard to terrorists, it seems we can only conclude that we helped make them what they are today... Tony Blair, John Howard, GW Bush and his gang of war criminals certainly had a major hand in that. But what about USA's allies like the Saudis?... and we gave them enough money to do so...

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35101612>

On the subject of climate change, I can only observe that nothing seems to be linear. Certainly our procreation rate, or energy use isn't. Every 120,000 years or so, planet Earth has ice ages and inter-glacial periods and during the latter, the ice melt arguably speeds up until the next glaciation commences. I wonder if that is what we are seeing now? Doubtless we are having at least a minor effect to help that along. But to what degree, and will the eventual depletion of fossil fuel resources, solve the perceived problem? I certainly cannot tell. But fossil fuels and nuclear fission contain so many poisons and contaminants, we have sickened ourselves by their use...but to what degree?

The positive side is now that some 2 billion people enjoy lifestyles that only kings could possibly enjoy in the 19th century...or even better. But at what cost?

The ocean garbage patches do seem to be self healing – as this article points out...

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2015/12/17/an-ocean-of-plastic/>

The windward side of every island is a testament to the garbage we throw away. But the earth and its oceans are very forgiving.

We know we are over-fishing the oceans and many marine species takes hundreds of years to restock – that is, if the oceans are allowed to do so. We know that our growing population is displacing natural species, so we are certainly causing the sixth, known mass extinction event. I can accept that.

We know we have already used most fossil fresh water aquifers and their depletion will give us trouble in the years to come. Countries as diverse as China, USA, India and Saudi Arabia have borrowed aquifer water from tomorrow and much of it cannot be repaid within a dozen lifetimes. Imminently the food piper must be paid.

We know we have depleted the global inventory of soils that can be used for food production. We have also modified the genetic composition of many foods.

Many of the stupid things done by humanity will come back to bite us in the bum. But to what degree and when? My own opinion from what I have read in books, the mainstream media and from knowledgeable articles on the web, is quite simply that we have about a 55% chance that the “collapse drama” will start to unfold in 2016. I will be happy to be proven wrong, but if so, it may only be because the can has been kicked further down the road.

Our heroes 2016 will not likely be soldiers, bankers, economists or politicians but those folk who beaver away in industry and technology to find new and better ways to do things that have previously used resources and equipment that may no longer be economic/viable. Robots and “AI” may usher in a new era of redundancy for human labour.

The mobility of the dispossessed is rapidly increasing, but allowed due to feelings of pity that may soon be snuffed out by selfish pragmatism.

If the commodity prices remain where they are at time of writing, then I hypothesise that collapse will be sooner and more disruptive than even the pessimists can project. Even so, high prices cannot possibly solve the situation any longer, because they would destroy most economies in the OECD...

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/12058680/Oil-price-rout-sends-inflation-to-lowest-levels-witnessed-since-Great-Depression.html>

It is interesting that the US stock exchange prices are at last declining, following the US Fed interest rate hike. The US Government has passed the point of no return... and may not be able to put the ZIRP genie back in the bottle. But we will find that out within the next month or so.

2016 could easily start with revolutions in places we never could have imagined. Or revolutions could perhaps not start at all. Militarisation of police forces and spying is a potent weapon against dissent. My 55% crash forecast means there is also a 45% chance that business as usual continues... and we cling to hope, while everything – on the surface - looks normal.

Civil liberties will certainly be further eroded in 2016, every time someone objects to authority or throws a Molotov Cocktail.

My guess is that during 2016 and beyond, the span of my lifetime will see the end of globalisation and the descent into relatively impoverished localism. But will this be bearable?

And so we await what we have no control over.....