



## **SURVIVAL PAPER # SP04-10**

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### **TEN THREATS TO LIFE AND FREEDOM IN THE TWENTYFIRST CENTURY**



By Jim Jones

#### **Introduction**

The notes for this article were completed well before the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. Prior to that date there existed a public perception that a millennium of peace and prosperity was at-hand. American was degenerating into the land of the dependent and the home of the pacified. An America where “politically correct” was more important than truth (the truth hurts some times) and style was more important than substance. Responsible citizenship, self-reliance and preparedness were replaced by bureaucracy and regulations. Freedom meant being free to pick diet or regular coke and life was about having more cool stuff. Americans in general believed that security and safety was not there job and that freedom was a normal and natural condition. The fact is that security and safety is a personal responsibility that the people cannot delegate. The fact is that freedom exists only as long as the people (Individually) are ready and able to maintain it. Like every other century, the twenty-first century will be filled with opportunities for longer, better and freer life and with threats to our liberty and our survival. My intention here is to outline some of the major threats to life and freedom that will face America and all people in the next hundred years. My perspective is from a study of history and technology. The order I have listed these threats does not necessarily the indicate there probability or magnitude.

#### **Threat #1: Plagues**

A combination of population density and modern technology is creating a growing potential for rapid and lethal spread of worldwide plagues. In the past diseases spread relatively slowly like a fire burning outward from one area. There was time for recognition and isolation. It took about 8 years for the bubonic plague to run through Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Fast killers like Ebola burned out in isolated villages before it could spread. Today an infected person can board a plane travel through several world airports and infect others who travel to other locations infecting thousands in a few days and perhaps millions before the disease is even detected. There are three main sources of what scientists call an “SPE” Species Terminating Event.

1. One of the old plagues such as Anthrax or Bubonic could mutate and spread rapidly throughout the world before it could be identified and stopped.
2. An accidental release from biological research or genetic research laboratories could introduce deadly new viruses for which we have no defense.
3. An accidental or deliberate release (terrorist) release of a biological warfare agent that is specifically designed to spread for many weeks before anyone gets sick could infect millions before we even know its there.

So here we have a totally interconnected world population and virtually hundreds of scenarios that could start a flash fire of infection to consume a major portion of humanity in a matter of weeks

### **Threat #2: Thirst and Famine**

Urban sprawl is eating up more and more prime farmland in the advanced nations while over-population and erosion has already brought starvation to millions in the so-called third-world nations. Cities along rivers and even the Great Lakes (worlds largest bodies of fresh water) are fighting over access to fresh water. Even the bounty of the sea is being fished out in many areas. It is most probable that the underdeveloped nations will first turn on each other for water and food sources while advanced nations will be less and less able to aid the starving people. These shortages will become matters of national survival that will trigger the most desperate and violent measures. Advanced nations may be forced to return to forms of colonialism to acquire food and water sources. The costs of food and water will seriously impact the quality of life in even the most advanced nations. While scientist differ on how many people the plant can support all will agree that there is just so much water and land. It's only a matter of time.

### **Threat #3: Fuel and Energy Shortages**

The race between dwindling supplies of fossil fuels and the development of new energy technology will be a close affair at best. The current sources can keep our civilization running for another 50 years or so but the growing costs will affect the price of every commodity and service on earth. Some nations may be faced with the choice of war or economic devastation. It is important to remember that World War Two was primarily fought over access to oil, coal and mineral resources and the demand has grown tremendously since 1941. The fact is that the supplies of fossil fuels are limited and solar and wind power are total inadequate to power modern civilization. Political and economic chaos will result as energy supplies decline. If new technology should suddenly make fossil fuels obsolete the nations that have depended on oil sales for their economy will be destabilized and desperate.

#### **Threat #4: Changing Climates**

Environmentalists would have us believe that industry is responsible for the so-called “global warming” phenomenon. That may or may not be true, but the fact is the earth’s climate always changes. There are cycles of warm and cold within larger trend towards and away from ice ages. The climate will always be changing and if humans put their cities in the wrong place or were depending on growing food in an area that will soon be a desert, nature doesn’t care. Massive social and economic displacements, killer storms, massive flooding, food shortages, new tropical diseases and wars for survival are the normal effects of climate changes that have been repeated many, many times throughout history. Our high-density population and high technology society is much more vulnerable than the farming and hunting societies that existed during past climate shifts. It may well be that Mother Nature may reduce the population density by her own means before the 21<sup>st</sup> century is out.

#### **Threat #5: Regulation and Confiscation**

A healthy society is always a bit closer to anarchy than it is to order. All human progress and creativity has come from some degree of conflict and disorder. Most cultures reach a point where stability becomes the primary goal of the state. Economic, social and political statuesque are protected at the expense of individual freedom and progress. Ancient China was once fare in advance of the western world but became a frozen autocracy that stifled all freedom and exploration. The world is covered with the ruins of once free and great nations that became stable and then died. There is a growing trend on the part of even the so-called free societies to meet every threat or social deviation with new laws or regulations. When any part of society refuses to conform to the established norm strict regulation, confiscatory taxation or even outright confiscation is used. Terms like “politically correct” and “the new world order” have become acceptable terms that define the decline of freedom. The future may hold a totally pacified, totally stable and totally stagnated society in which there is no place for any true freedoms. There are several special interests and economic factors that work to increase regulation and confiscation year after year.

- The media, by nature seeks to find or manufacture and magnify issues, there-by putting pressure on the politicians to pass more laws and establish more agencies so they can appear to be doing something about it. Most of these regulations increase taxes, decrease freedom and often create more problems than they fix.
- Most legislators are lawyers whose friends are lawyers. They think in terms of making laws. Their friends thrive on new laws. We call them “law makers” not “law evaluators” or problem solvers.
- New regulations generate huge profits for consultants, lawyers, accountants and many special interest groups. These groups tend to lobby with cash for more regulations not less.

The relentless pressure of the media, lawyers, politicians and special interests will whittle away at liberty until even the most basic freedoms are assaulted. But first they must disarm the general population. Of course all this would go much faster if the population were disarmed.

### **Threat #6: Organized Crime vs. Law and Order**

We are witnessing the development of a true world alliance of organized crime. These huge organizations have the resources to corrupt governments, finance terrorists and even acquire the most sophisticated weaponry. While their command networks are worldwide, their power reaches right down to the street gang in every community. In response to this growing threat, the governments of the world find justification for suspension of basic freedoms for their whole populations as they move towards becoming a “police state”. There is a symbiotic relationship between organized crime and the state.

- The existence of crime justifies more laws, more taxes, more agencies, and more confiscation. So while stopping crime is the stated goal of the state, actually crushing it is not in their best interest.
- The more things that are illegal, taxed or regulated the more economic territory is given to organized crime. The US crime syndicate thrived on the prohibition of alcohol in the 30s. The Russian Mafia grew huge in a state where virtually everything was regulated.

So as more and more power and wealth move to organized crime and to the state, the honest citizen is increasingly robbed, taxed, regulated, intimidated and violated into extinction. In many countries today this evolution has left people only two choices for survival; join the criminals or work for the state. Of course all this would go much faster if the population were disarmed.

### **Threat #7: Human Obsolescent**

Ancient cultures and religions placed the highest value on the production of many children. In those times the child death rate required that a family produce many children in order to assure some survivors. The ability of a family or a nation to produce food and provide defense was directly related to the size of its population. Even in the industrial age the size of the work force and the army was the key to victory. Computer technology is rapidly making unskilled, semi skilled and even some highly skilled professions unnecessary. While there will be a need for engineers, developers and programmers, 90% of today’s jobs will not exist in the next few decades. Intelligent machines will increasingly replace even teachers, lawyers, accountants and medical professionals. Will society tolerate a useless population? Will unnecessary people become unstable and violent? Will there be wars just to do something? Robots and smart weapons are replacing divisions of soldiers. A small number of high-tech soldiers with weapons can make a small rich nation equal to a big nation. The balance of military, political and economic power is shifting away from people. Computers already control the information sources people need to make important decisions. If people are

no longer needed to meet the needs of people then what are people needed for? As food, fuel and water sources become depleted we may be able to have a much smaller population supported by more technology but who will control it? We can not and should not stop progress but we must be aware of how it will effect our survival so that we can use it to increase life and freedom not destroy it.

### **Threat #8: Overpopulation**

Integrally related to all of the other challenges is the paradoxical hazard of over-survival. The more diseases we cure, the better nutrition we provide, the more wars we avoid, the closer we get to shortages of food, water, fuel and space. The more people there are the more regulation and regimentation is called for. The more people are jammed into an area the more they become violent. Even with the best technology there are limits to how much food, water and even fresh air is available. If we are unable or unwilling to solve this dilemma the state or Mother Nature will reduce the population for us. In Chicago in 1945 the area just south of 95<sup>th</sup> street still had some farms and open fields. By 1990 you have to go out past 195<sup>th</sup> to find any farmlands. Multiplying all the urban areas at this rate through the 21<sup>st</sup> century and you have an urban area from the Mississippi River to Detroit Michigan and on to the east coast. Is that what we want? Over population in poor nations is creating a massive illegal immigration problem in the more developed nations. This trend is destabilizing these societies and economies and could result in civil wars. Remember that the Vandals that sacked Rome in 410 AD) were not so much invaders as they were illegal immigrants that were permitted into Roman territory.

### **Threat #9: Racial and Religious Conflicts**

The current racial and religious conflicts will only be magnified by the struggles for energy, food and space. Many of these conflicts are rooted in religious ideas and hatreds that are centuries old. By nature they are not rational or reasonable and are easily manipulated by demigods. As wealth, resources and technology become more concentrated in the major nations, third world countries and displaced minorities will have no other recourse but terrorism. These groups have nothing to lose and no incentive to be reasonable or compassionate. Shootings, bombings, chemical weapons, biological weapons and even nuclear devices may be used indiscriminately. The very technology that supports a modern society will make it the most vulnerable. As with the threat of organized crime, terrorism will only accelerate the sweeping away of personal freedoms by the state.

### **Threat #10: The Unknown Factor (Stuff Happens!)**

All previous threat scenarios are based on established trends, scientific data and past history but there are always the unexpected and unpredictable events that change everything. The two most important sources of unpredictable change are nature and technology. The emergence of new religions and

ideologies are generally in response to upheavals resulting from acts of nature and/or technological development. Natural sources of disaster include climate shifts, radiation waves from exploding stars, variations in solar energy, large meteor impacts and massive earthquakes in highly populated areas. The earth may go on for millenniums without such events but they do and will happen. For example: an earth quake on the scale of past events in the New Madrid area of the United States could seriously effect the economic capacity of the nation. While no one can be sure what technological revolutions will take place in the future, we can be sure they will happen and that they will have great political, social and economic impact. The unintentional consequences of the invention of the cotton gin were the expansion of slavery and eventually the Civil War. The invention of movable type printing and the flintlock rifle lead to revolutions and liberty. New technology virtually always threatens the established power structure unless they can control it to their advantage. The struggle will be to assure that these advances are used to extend life and expanded freedom for all.

## **Conclusion**

Awareness is the first step towards freedom and preparedness is the first step towards survival. The ten threats to life and freedom (and any others) that I have outlined above are only threats. They are threats that you and your children and their children must face and overcome in order to preserve a good life with true freedoms. The course of the twenty-first century must be determined by the actions of responsible and self-reliant people.

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