

Biden to act quickly to roll back harmful ‘midnight regulations’ -transition

WILMINGTON, Del. (Reuters) -The Biden administration will take swift action when it assumes office on Jan. 20 to roll back harmful Trump administration policies that have not taken effect by Inauguration day, a spokeswoman for President-elect Joe Biden's transition team said on Wednesday.

“The Biden-Harris White House will issue a memo to take effect afternoon Eastern Time on January 20 that will halt, or delay, midnight regulations,” Jen Psaki told a news conference.

Psaki gave as an example an expected Department of Labor rule that would make it easier for companies to call their workers independent contractors to avoid minimum wage and overtime protections.

“If it takes effect, that rule will make it easier to misclassify employees as independent contractors, costing workers more than \$3.7 billion annually,” she said.

“The memo would potentially freeze this rule and not allow it to be implemented.”

Psaki also told the briefing that more Cabinet-level nominations could be expected from the Biden camp in the next week, but not before the new year, and she repeated complaints that the outgoing Trump administration has failed to cooperate with the transition team.

She said such lack of cooperation could delay production of a federal budget.

Key Cabinet nominations still pending from the Biden camp include those for attorney general and labor secretary.

Speaking with reporters last week, Biden said he has not settled upon a candidate for attorney general, in part because he wants to ensure he lives up to his pledge to appoint a diverse Cabinet. Biden's search for a candidate has been complicated by



a federal probe into the business affairs of his son Hunter. Joe Biden has vowed not to interfere in the investigation or discuss it with his nominee.

Some Republicans have called for the appointment of a special counsel to handle the matter.

The labor issue Psaki referred to is particularly important for franchisers like McDonald's Corp and Restaurant Brands Interna-

tional Inc's Burger King, and the many companies that utilize staffing agencies, because joint employers can be made to bargain with unions and found liable for violations of the U.S. law that governs union organizing.

FILE PHOTO: U.S. President-elect Joe Biden delivers remarks on the U.S. response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, at his transition headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware, U.S., December 29, 2020. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

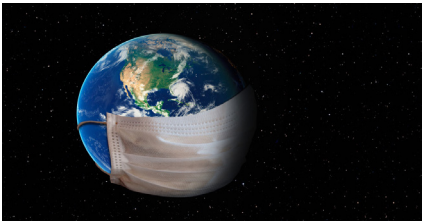
Economists Say The Pandemic Has Blown A \$28 Trillion Hole In The Global Economy

The World’s Economy Has Been Reshaped For Years To Come



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

This year’s output figures will be reminiscent of the 1930’s Great Depression, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It said that the world is at risk of significantly lowered investment, trade and job numbers. The IMF’s economic expert, Gita Gopinath, said this week that “the cumulative loss in output relative to the pre-pandemic projected path is projected to grow from \$11 trillion over 2020-21 to \$28 trillion over 2020-25...this represents a severe setback to the improvement in average living standards across all country groups.” The IMF praised central banks around the globe for stimulus plans that softened the impact that Covid-19 has had on the world economy, and warned that an early removal of these support packages could prove disastrous for recovery efforts.



World Countries Spent Over \$13 Trillion

To Combat Covid-19 Pandemic – Report
Global leaders have committed trillions of dollars to battle the coronavirus pandemic and support the global economy, Japanese business newspaper Nikkei reported on Wednesday, citing its experts. According to estimates, the total amount has now exceeded \$13 trillion across the world. It includes the \$900 billion stimulus package, which has been passed by the US Congress this week. The adoption of additional programs to stimulate the global economy has sent public debt skyrocketing in the world’s leading countries, said the report. Experts project it will reach 125 percent of their total GDP in 2021. International organizations have all been warning that the global economy won’t return to pre-pandemic levels ‘for a long time.’ According to the United Nations, it will contract by 5.6 percent this year as more and more countries have plunged into recession due to the coronavirus crisis. The UN also said that another 207 million people could

be driven into extreme poverty by the severe long-term impact of the pandemic, bringing the total number to more than one billion by 2030. More than 78 million cases of coronavirus have been registered in the world to date. Over 1.7 million people have died. **COVID-19 Pandemic Could Push More Than A Billion People Worldwide Into Extreme Poverty, UN Warns**



Woman carries firewood for cooking near her shelter in Dollow, Somalia. (© Reuters / Zohra Bensemra)

Another 207 million people could be driven into extreme poverty by the severe long-term impact of the coronavirus pandemic, bringing the total number to more than one billion by 2030, warns the UN. According to a new study from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) released this week, a “high-damage” scenario would mean a protracted recovery from the pandemic. The report anticipates that 80 percent of the pandemic-induced economic crisis would persist for over a decade, stalling the pre-pandemic growth trajectory. A “baseline Covid” scenario, based on current mortality rates and the most recent growth projections by the International Monetary Fund, would result in 44 million more people living in extreme poverty by 2030, compared to the development trajectory the world was on before the pandemic. “As this new poverty research highlights, the Covid-19 pandemic is a tipping point, and the choices leaders take now could take the world in very different directions,” said the UNDP’s Administrator Achim Steiner. “We have an opportunity to invest in a decade of action

that not only helps people recover from Covid-19, but that re-sets the development path of people and planet towards a fairer, resilient and green future.” The report indicated that focused investments could prevent the rise of extreme poverty, however, lifting 146 million from its grip, and even exceed the development trajectory the world was on before the pandemic.

Covid-19 Will Push As Many As 150 Million People Into Extreme Poverty In 2021 – World Bank



Extreme global poverty is expected to rise in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years due to the disruption caused by the “extraordinary” coronavirus crisis, the World Bank has warned. According to a new report, the Covid-19 pandemic is expected to push an additional 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty this year, with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction. Extreme poverty, defined as living on less than \$1.90 a day, is likely to affect between 9.1 percent and 9.4 percent of the world’s population this year, it said. That would represent a regression to the rate of 9.2 percent in 2017. Had the pandemic not convulsed the globe, the poverty rate was expected to drop to 7.9 percent in 2020. **Main threats to poverty reduction:**
1. #COVID19 is expected to push up to 115 million people into extreme poverty in 2020.
2. Conflict has displaced almost 80 million people.
3. Climate change will drive between



68 and 132 million into poverty by 2030. “The pandemic and global recession may cause over 1.4 percent of the world’s population to fall into extreme poverty,” said World Bank Group President David Malpass. “In order to reverse this serious setback to development progress and poverty reduction, countries will need to prepare for a different economy post-Covid, by allowing capital, labor, skills, and innovation to move into new businesses and sectors.” The World Bank estimates that by 2030, the global poverty rate could be about seven percent. (Courtesy <https://www.rt.com/business.>)





Hundreds of migrants wait in busses after camp “Lipa” was closed, in Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic



Demonstrators in favor of legalizing abortion react after the senate passed an abortion bill, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. REUTERS/Flor Guzzetti



A team of huskies pull a rig during a training session in Chelford, Britain. REUTERS/Molly Darlington



Supporters of President Donald Trump sit on the “Patriot Elk” formerly known as the”Nightmare NElk” during a “Stop the Steal” protest in Salem, Oregon. REUTERS/Alisha Jucevic



El Paso County detention inmates, also known as “trustees” (low level inmates) and Sheriff officers and morgue staff help move bodies to refrigerated trailers deployed during a surge of coronavirus deaths, outside the Medical Examiner’s Office in El Paso, Texas. REUTERS/Ivan Pierre Aguirre



A cow is photographed on a snow-covered meadow during heavy snowfall in Piornedo, in the Ancares mountains of Galicia, Spain. REUTERS/Nacho Doce



Luiza Erundina, 85, leftist Guilherme Boulos’s candidate for vice-mayor, holds her hand to a man’s from inside the “cata voto” (Vote Catcher), a car with a plastic booth to protect herself from the coronavirus during the campaign in Sao Paulo, Brazil. REUTERS/Amanda Perobelli



Students from American Univeristy of Beirut stand among policemen as they protest over tuition fees in Beirut, Lebanon. REUTERS/Mohamed Azakir

Expansion Could Be Scaled Back As President-Elect Biden And Congress Prioritize Pandemic And Recession Problems
The Future Of Warfare

Under Trump, The Nuclear Weapons Industry Has Boomed



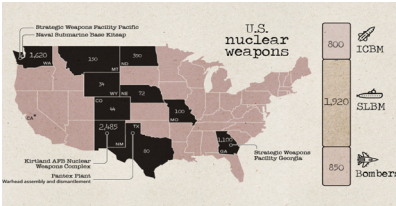
Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Introduction

While the country has been coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, economic decline and the election, President Donald Trump’s administration quietly and steadily steered America’s nuclear weapons industry to its largest expansion since the end of the Cold War, increasing spending on such arms by billions of dollars with bipartisan congressional support. Overall, the budget for making and maintaining nuclear warheads has risen more than 50 percent since Trump was elected in 2016, substantially outpacing the rates of increase for the defense budget and overall federal spending during his presidency before the pandemic. On Monday, Congress approved Trump’s proposal to increase spending next year alone for the production of such weaponry by roughly \$3 billion.

President-elect Joe Biden may embrace other priorities as he confronts the pandemic, tries to steer the country out of a recession, and is pressured to address social programs neglected under the Trump administration, as well as a ballooning deficit created by the 2017 Trump tax cuts and COVID-19 stimulus spending. But the creation of a larger and more modern nuclear warhead complex of factories, laboratories, and related businesses is already playing out around the

country, despite slowdowns in other federal projects due to the pandemic. Four factories in Texas, South Carolina, Tennessee and New Mexico dedicated to producing warheads are being modernized. Four existing warheads are being substantially rebuilt with modern parts, on top of another such upgrade – costing \$3.5 billion – that was completed last year. This pace compares with an average modernization of one type of warhead at a time during the Obama administration.



Map Of America’s Nuclear Weapons Arsenal

“I think Biden will look at the full suite of these issues. It is well known to him and his advisers that the cost of nuclear modernization is very high and that that money can be better invested elsewhere. But how he decides to allocate those resources and when he decides to take on those bureaucratic fights is something they still themselves don’t know,” Wolfsthal told a Nov. 18 symposium organized by the

Ploughshares Fund, an anti-nuclear advocacy group.

Nuclear Manufacturing Ramping Up

Besides the ramp-up in warhead production, hundreds of new strategic missiles and bombers and a dozen advanced submarines — all designed to carry nuclear weapons to targets in Russia, China, North Korea or Iran — are under intensifying development by Defense Department contractors and private laboratories across the country. The Air Force signed a contract on Sept. 8 to begin spending at least \$93 billion on new land-based, nuclear-tipped missiles, for example, and the Navy has been accelerating its spending for new missile-carrying submarines that will cost a total of \$128 billion. The projected spending on all these systems has been estimated by congressional experts at roughly \$50 billion a year over the next decade alone. A nuclear warhead ordered into production by Trump and his advisers — a three-foot tall, cone-shaped weapon with roughly half the explosive force of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima, using a modified existing design — was built last year, and has begun to be deployed. The administration also reversed an Obama-era decision to retire the largest nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal, the B83, keeping roughly 100 warheads, each with the power of 1.2 million tons of TNT, or 80 times the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima, in active status. The nuclear security enterprise “is busier than it has been since the end of the Cold War,” Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, Trump’s appointee as the NNSA administrator until November, affirmed in Sept. 17 testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee. Trump’s top arms control adviser, former Pentagon official Marshall Billingslea, after completing a tour of the multiple nuclear weapons sites this autumn tweeted awkwardly on Sept. 10 that the Texas facility where each of America’s nuclear warheads is assembled is “booming.” Pantex, he boasted, is now the “busiest it’s been in two decades.”



Obama pledged to reduce the nuclear arse-

nal, then came this weapon. Phil Hoover, an engineer at Sandia National Laboratories, shows off a flight test body for a B61-12 nuclear weapon. Sandia engineers have spent the past few years designing, building and testing the top-secret electronic and mechanical innards of the bomb.

Building Nuclear Weapons To Last A Century

Two of the most important additions to the nuclear weapons complex are advancing at secure sites east of Knoxville, Tennessee, and in the sand hills northeast of Augusta, Georgia, with the labor of thousands of workers. One is an immense \$6.5 billion bunkhouse where uranium is cast into explosive shapes for hydrogen warheads, and the second is a \$4.8 billion factory where dozens of plutonium cores for those warheads will eventually be produced. The former, nearly as big as a Manhattan city block, was begun during the Obama administration and is slated for completion in 2025; it’s been rising steadily beneath what the company overseeing the work says are the two tallest free-standing construction cranes in the Western hemisphere. The latter, already a thick-walled concrete shell as big as five city blocks, is slated to begin machining the cores later this decade. In the meantime, another factory operation – located at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, where America’s first such bombs were created – will itself begin churning out new cores for weapons in 2023, for the first time in seven years, at a cost exceeding \$3 billion.



An August 2020 aerial view of Los Alamos National Laboratory (Photo/Los Alamos National Laboratory via Flickr)

Congressional Dissent

In the final year of Trump’s term, there wasn’t much dissent among those committees about the nuclear programs. A May letter to the House committee chairman, Rep. Adam Smith, D-Calif., and the top Republican, Mac Thornberry,

R-Tex., urging lower defense spending in the next fiscal year so more funds could be spent combatting the pandemic drew signatures from only 30 House members. Smith said this fall that he would not contest the Trump administration’s spending plans but told the Ploughshares symposium he now believes the size of the nuclear arsenal poses a “threat” and that the country could have “a lot fewer nuclear weapons.” He added that while he supports reexamining the costly decision to modernize the nuclear-tipped land-based missile force, “I’m not optimistic” the program will be halted. More serious dissent to Trump flowered in the House Appropriations committee. Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D, who has represented an Ohio district along the shores of Lake Erie for the past 37 years and became chair in 2019 of the appropriations subcommittee that funds nuclear weapons work, said last spring that the administration’s plans were “not realistic nor executable.” The NNSA, she said “is trying to do far too much, too quickly,” making it prone to repeat its many, past, “costly mistakes.” In a July committee vote, Kaptur persuaded her colleagues to slice \$2 billion from the administration’s proposed increase in its overall military spending bill. Her move would have still given the agency a 7% budget boost of \$1 billion, but it evoked strong protests from then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, who said in a September letter to Congress that it will create “unacceptable risks” to America’s nuclear deterrent. In the massive budget bill approved last Monday, which included nearly a trillion dollars for pandemic relief, the nuclear weapons production establishment again came out a winner, as Congress rejected Kaptur’s view and provided NNSA with an extra \$2.8 billion sought by Trump. (Courtesy <https://publicintegrity.org/>) Editor’s Note: This story was published in partnership with the *Los Angeles Times*.



《纵情夏日》：追寻人与自然的和谐共生



《纵情夏日》
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译者：张竝
版本：新经典 | 南海出版公司 2020年9月

面对自然，人要学会谦卑。人与自然的关系，是芭芭拉·金索沃小说的母题。这种关系，可能是《毒木圣经》里的紧张对峙，也可能是《纵情夏日》中的和谐共生。如果说《毒木圣经》是充满《圣经》意味的宏大史诗，那么《纵情夏日》就是一部欢快和谐的小品。

“山齿鹑究竟发生了什么？为何再也听不见它们隔空相呼了？加尼特曾从推广服务中心的刊物上了解到，羊茅草是罪魁祸首。人们栽种这种普普通

通的羊茅草，是为了当饲草用。可羊茅草长得太密实了，山齿鹑尚未学飞的雏儿无法在其中飞行……想必对这里的动物而言，周围的世界破土而生，渐渐长成一副彻头彻尾的新面貌，完全不似它们世代生息的环境，也着实怪得离谱吧。那些迷失在饲草密林里的山齿鹑幼鸟实在叫人悲伤。但人又怎么离得开饲草呢。”

01生态与利益的冲突

金索沃认同著名环保作家奥尔多·利奥波德的环保理念，在《沙乡年鉴》中利奥波德提出“当一个事物有助于保护生物共同体的和谐、稳定和美丽时，它就是正确的；当它走向反面时，就是错误的”，金索沃不是极端的环保主义者，彻底禁绝人类的一切活动；而是提倡人类要通过顺应自然规律的行为，给予环境积极的影响，这些行为也包括适当的清除。

小说中，迪安娜认为捕食者更重要，“捕食可以剔除年老体弱的个体，控制种群的爆炸式增长”，因此他赞成埃迪猎杀火鸡，但反对埃迪猎杀郊狼等捕食者的行为。当卢萨得知忍冬是外来物种，会破坏生态后，就坚决将它铲除，“这种藤蔓一经引入就会紧紧地盘绕，占据所有的绿色之地，而那些地方本应是人类和野外生灵

为中心，还是以“人的利益”为中心？迪安娜认为食肉动物是生态链重要的一条，因此要保护食肉动物郊狼，但埃迪却认为郊狼会捕杀牲畜，影响农民利益，因此要做赏金猎人。卢萨是上过大学的昆虫学家，致力于环保，提倡有机农业，科尔的侄子里克等亲戚却愿意种植收益更高的烟草，愿意破坏树林、打猎和采摘人参。加尼特热爱使用杀虫剂，觉得这样才能杀死害虫，南妮则强烈反对杀虫剂。

芭芭拉·金索沃（Barbara Kingsolver），美国人文领域最高荣誉“国家人文勋章”获得者。生于1955年，在肯塔基州乡间长大。迄今出版了9部长篇小说，代表作有《毒木圣经》《豆树青青》《纵情夏日》《罅隙》《迁徙行为》《无所庇护》等。

观念的对立，核心是争取利益最大化的对象不同，但人与自然并非对立，而是和谐共生。

“自然的利益”和“人的利益”并不冲突，维护自然的利益，会促进人的利益；相反，一味维护人的利益，不仅损害了自然的利益，最终也会损害人的利益。这部小说借三位女性之口，向三位男性详细解释这个理念。“哪怕只是踏出一步，对足底的甲虫而言都有如惊雷，牵动起一张大网上无形的丝线，既把配偶引向配偶，亦将捕食者引向猎物，是始，亦是终”。人类的微小活动都会对自然产生重要影响，自然界的生杀予夺，并没有道德判断，而是生物链的合理闭环。所以人类要尊重自然规律，保护那些看起来会破坏，实际在平衡生态的物种。

迪安娜告诉埃迪，郊狼并不以牛羊为主食，相反，郊狼能够帮助农民清除破坏农作物的田鼠，杀死郊狼等肉食动物，反而会让他田鼠失去天敌，带来更加破坏性的后果。由于郊狼的天敌狼在美国几乎被人为“抹除”，猎杀郊狼反而会增加幼狼的生存几率，让郊狼变得更多。卢萨告诉侄子里奇，种植利润率高的烟草，砍伐森林树木获利，看似短期能获得最大收益，但是长期不利于生态平衡。她发现了伊斯兰教和犹太教的节日离得很近，城里对羊肉需求量大的机会，大量养殖山羊，获取不菲回报。南妮告诉加尼特，使用杀虫剂并不会让害虫减少，反而会杀死食用害虫的有益生物，让害虫更快繁殖。总结起来，就是：要尊重生物链的完整，“根本没有什么杀光就幸福快乐的故事”。

02人类生活与自然规律的和谐

“和谐”是男性与女性的和谐，城市与乡村的和谐。三位男性接受了三位女性的环保主义理念，男性与女性最终达成友好的理解。

埃迪悄悄离开了迪安娜，留下纸条，“让一个男人承认他遇到了死对头太难了”，迪安娜意识到，“在这片山林，再也不会因他而起的伤害”。卢萨作为一个父亲是波兰人，母亲是巴基斯坦

人的混血女性，一个大学毕业的昆虫学家，在阿巴拉契亚山脉的保守小村子里，从对婆家的本能抵触，坚决不改夫姓，到最终发现婆家亲戚们的淳朴，主动提出要保留怀德纳的姓氏；看到朱厄尔的丈夫离家出走、朱厄尔患上乳腺癌后，主动提出要收养朱厄尔的两个孩子，并将科尔·怀德纳家的农场变为有机农场。

加尼特从对杀虫剂的热爱，到得知南妮的女儿因为杀虫剂患上唐氏综合征早早夭折（因此南妮给女儿取名“蕾切尔”——致敬《寂静的春天》作者蕾切尔·卡森），开始重新思考杀虫剂的危害。

当然了，如果小说只关心环保，难免陷入说教，在理念之上还有人性的美。回到《纵情夏日》这个题目，既然是夏天，蓬勃的繁殖欲望就要充分流淌。

夏日是繁殖的季节，森林里的动物植物们纵情抒发繁殖的冲动，这股冲动也勾动了迪安娜、卢萨和加尼特的心。金索沃笔下男性女性都是可爱的，他们直面自己的欲望，并做出了最好的处理。

迪安娜是敬业的护林员，丈夫嫌弃她不像个淑女而离婚，迪安娜看似没有“女人味”，但这正是她对自己最美的定义——“两年的独居生活已使她懒于打理自己的外表，在这方面她乐得做个瞎子”。

面对精壮小伙子埃迪毫不掩饰的好感，迪安娜也充分表达对埃迪身体的渴望，在性生活中，她也毫不羞怯地占据主动。但是当她发现埃迪到来是为了猎杀郊狼，她也愿意放弃埃迪的爱情。迪安娜发现自己怀上了埃迪的孩子，她决定下山和南妮住在一起，悉心抚养这个小生命。

卢萨在丈夫出车祸去世后，面对十七岁侄子里奇的示爱，内心虽然渴望，但是理智战胜贪念，将里奇聘任为自己的农场助理，并且教育他学习自己的环保理念（“除了割草机和镰刀，不能用别的东西除草，不能去碰树林，不得伤害松鼠、鹿和郊狼，也不得采摘人参”）。卢萨也从经营农场中体会到自己与科尔和科尔家人的紧密联结。

加尼特对南妮从嫌恶变为理解，甚至重新感受到身体的勃发，他羞怯而闷骚地对南妮示爱。羞涩的示爱获得了南妮热情的回应“她将一侧脸颊贴着他那陈旧、虚弱的心脏，用她那粉色的耳廓捕捉他心中唱起的歌”。

在故事结尾，每个人都获得了最好的结局。读到此处，真让人嘴角不自觉咧开。

在秋季寒冷的雨天读完这本小说，浑身都暖洋洋的，仿佛也来到阿巴拉契亚山的密林，感受到满溢着蜂蜜、花香和群鸟啁啾的夏日。当然也许这部小说太理想化了，也许它回避了一些更现实、更尖锐的矛盾，但正是怀抱这样的理想，才让小说充满蓬勃的希望。