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John Robbins 281-965-6390
Jun Gai 281-498-4310

Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins

Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com



Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Pro-Kremlin activists in Germany gave money for Russian army

Jan 30 (Reuters) - A group of pro-Russian activists in Germany donated funds to a Russian army division fighting in Ukraine, and the money was used to purchase walkie-talkie radios, headphones and telephones, according to an officer in the division and messages from the group's organisers seen by Reuters.

The couple at the centre of the group, Elena Kolbasnikova and Max Schlund, handed the sum of 500 euros (\$540) to the officer in person late last year. Their messages show they knew the money paid for telecommunications equipment – despite European Union sanctions which restrict the supply of such gear to Russia's military.

A Jan. 3 Reuters Special Report revealed that Kolbasnikova and Schlund were among a number of individuals in Germany who promote a pro-Moscow stance while maintaining undisclosed ties to the Russian state, sanctioned Russian entities or the far-right.

That report showed Kolbasnikova and Schlund received tickets from the Berlin arm of a Russian state cultural promotion agency, Rossotrudnichestvo, to travel to Moscow for a conference addressed by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Berlin prosecutors have since said they are investigating the agency's Berlin office.

Biden says no F-16s for Ukraine as Russia claims gains Zelenskiy visits southern Ukraine, meets Danish prime minister 'I acted pretty decisively', says UK's Sunak after sacking party chair In diplomatic coup, Taiwan president speaks to Czech president-elect The new evidence gathered by Reuters indicates the couple are more actively involved in the Kremlin's military campaign in Ukraine than previously thought.

In a message sent in October to supporters in a private WhatsApp group, seen by Reuters, Kolbasnikova wrote: "We transferred 500 euros for the 42nd Motorised Rifle Division of the Russian Federation to buy radios, headphones and radio telephones."

"We spoke with them in Donetsk. They are deployed to the frontline. My husband served with one of these guys," She posted the message in capital letters beneath a dozen red exclamation marks.

An EU regulation from Feb. 25, 2022 bans supplying or financing the purchase of certain goods for the Russian military. The list of goods covered includes "radio equipment (e.g., transmitters, receivers and transceivers)."

Under German law, the criminal penalty for anyone found to have violated sanctions is up to five years in prison.

Kolbasnikova and Schlund gave the money, which they said they raised from supporters, to Russian officer Dmitry Tkachev in Rostov-on-Don, a city in the south of Russia, on their way back from a trip to Ukraine's Donbas, Tkachev told Reuters. The Donbas region is largely controlled



by Russia.

At the request of his commander, Tkachev used the money to buy the communication equipment and sent it to the division, which is deployed on the frontline in eastern Ukraine, he said. Tkachev said he serves in the 42nd division and is responsible for signals and communications.

Asked to comment, Kolbasnikova said: "Our lawyer will give you an answer. And also, you will answer for your lies and provocations." She did not identify the lawyer.

In response to Reuters questions Schlund messaged a reporter: "Fuck you, idiot," and added a laughing emoji.

The Russian Defence Ministry did not respond to a request for comment. Oleg Silkin, the acting communications chief of the 42nd division, confirmed that Tkachev is in charge of purchasing equipment but said that the permanent communications chief, Nikolai Sitnikov, is on the frontline in Ukraine and only reachable through special military channels. Reuters was unable to contact him. Asked about details of the purchase, Silkin referred Reuters back to Tkachev. Germany's interior ministry, customs, justice ministry and economy ministry all declined to comment on the activities of the group led by Kolbasnikova and Schlund. The German government's press service did not respond.

The Office for the Protection of the Constitution in North Rhine Westphalia, the region where Schlund and Kolbasnikova live, said the couple's group tries to promote Moscow's official narrative regarding its aggression against Ukraine, but no personal information about them can be shared due to German data protection laws. The office did not reply to a question about Schlund and Kol-

basnikova helping buy gear for the Russian military.

PROTEST ORGANISERS

Schlund, who studied in a Russian military academy, moved to Germany in 2012. He later began a relationship with Kolbasnikova, who is originally from Ukraine and has worked in Germany as a nurse.

Since Moscow's Feb. 24, 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the couple have organised protests in the city of Cologne, urging the German government to stop arming Ukraine and to make peace with Moscow.

As part of their activities, they have previously publicized how they gathered donations in Germany and used the money to bring humanitarian aid, including medicines, to people in the Donbas region during their visit last year.

The help for the 42nd division was disclosed to a circle of supporters in the WhatsApp group, to which Schlund and Kolbasnikova only admit people they have vetted, according to a person familiar with the group.

In her post about the radios and other gear, Kolbasnikova said she was sharing the information to show to supporters how their contributions had been spent. She and Schlund shared photos, voice notes and receipts relating to the transaction.

In one photo she posted, two unidentified men in camouflage gear are pictured next to open boxes of equipment laid out on the trunk of a Soviet-designed Lada car with a Donetsk licence plate. A telephone receiver, a Baofeng-branded radio, and a box of headphones can be seen. Baofeng is a Chinese firm.



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主持人: 王潔



主持人: 馬健

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- 每周五晚7點, 主持人: 蓋軍, 《美南時事通》

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

01/28/2023

Happy Lunar New Year!

My dear brothers and sisters, Mayor Turner, Congressman Al Green. This is the 27th year we have all come together to celebrate the Lunar New Year in the International District. Every year, like a family reunion, we come here to watch wonderful international performances and meet with each other and make our new year wishes.

With the rapid development of the International District over the past 20 years, because of your hard work we have turned this raw land into a thriving business district and have become one of the top business models in the City of Houston.

Today we also have good news for you. The first minority owned bank in our District, Global One Bank, has opened for business today. We will continue to work with our brothers and sisters to create more business in our district.

Dear brothers and sisters, today we are facing a very serious challenge in our community and across the nation. We must all unite to fight against hatred, unfairness and discrimination for ourselves and for our next generation.



Wea H. Lee
Wealee@scdaily.com

Chairman of International District Houston Texas
Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center
Republic of Guiana Honorary consul at Houston Texas



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



France's Kevin Aymoz performs during the exhibition gala at the ISU European Figure Skating Championships in Espoo, Finland. Antti Hamalainen/Lehtikuvva via REUTERS



People fish on the frozen Gull Lake during the 2023 Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Extravaganza near Brainerd, Minnesot. REUTERS/Drone Base



A Ukrainian woman holds a dog as she looks at a residential building damaged after a Russian strike, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in Kramatorsk, Ukraine. Reuters/Ammar Awad



Anastasia, 4, stands next to an artwork of the famous street artist Tvboy in the town centre, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Bucha, outside Kyiv, Ukraine. REUTERS/Valentyn Ogrenko



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates with the Australian Open trophy after winning his final match against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas. REUTERS/Hannah McKay



An interior view of the prison building which was damaged by shelling in July in the course of Ukraine-Russia conflict, in the settlement of Olenivka in the Donetsk Region, Ukraine, in this picture taken during a media tour organized by the Russian Defence Ministry. REUTERS/Alexander Ermochenko

SPECIAL REPORT

The World Has Entered A New Age Of Epidemics

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



Illustration above depicts the world in a Petri dish.

In the 1950s, 400-500 Americans died every year from measles and another 100 from chicken pox. In the last major outbreak of rubella — in 1964-'65 — some 11,000 pregnant American women lost their babies and 2,100 newborns died.

• **The 1960s vaccine revolution** all but wiped out these diseases by 2000. But now they are back — in the U.S. and around the world.

• **Much onus for this regression** so far has been laid on the global anti-vaccination movement. But experts blame much more sweeping reasons, primarily a tectonic change in how humans live now as opposed to three, four and five decades ago.

• **At the top of the list:** we are living closer together in ever-swelling cities, trading and traveling much more, creating climate change, migrating in big numbers — and failing to keep vaccination levels high enough for “herd immunity.”

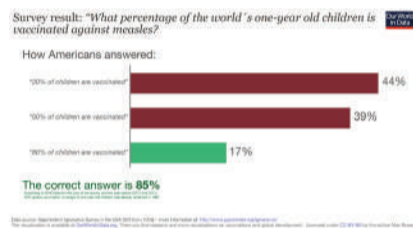
“What changed is that society changed,” Jeremy Farrar, an expert on infectious disease and director of the U.K.-based Wellcome Trust, tells Axios.

• **Driving the news:** Disease was un-

der control for a few decades, but now the environmental circumstances under which they were contained have utterly changed. So new answers have to be found.

The big picture: For 2019, U.S. officials have confirmed 481 measles cases in 16 states as of Saturday, according to the website Precision Vaccinations. The Centers for Disease Control confirms 151 cases of mumps for January and February in 30 states and the District of Columbia. And Kentucky alone has an outbreak of 32 cases of chickenpox as of last week. Measles cases will “certainly” surpass 2018 due to lack of vaccinations

Europe, too, has had a surge of mumps, pertussis, rubella and tetanus over the last two years, reports the World Health Organization. Measles alone killed 72 people in Europe last year, among 82,596



who contracted the disease, according to the agency.

• In the U.S., the outbreaks are often concentrated in tight-knit communities like former Soviet immigrants in Clark County, Washington.

• Three states — New York, Texas and Washington — are the “leading measles hot-spots” in the U.S., per Precision Vaccinations.

• The diseases are often brought into these communities by travelers returning from countries like Israel, Madagascar, the Philippines and Ukraine.

How the revolution happened: The vaccine against measles was licensed in 1963, chickenpox in 1995, mumps in 1967, and rubella in 1969. Jonas Salk’s polio vaccine — igniting the vaccine revolution — came into use in 1955, and the oral version, created by Albert Sabin, was commercialized in 1961.

But the revival of these once-unavoidable, disfiguring and sometimes deadly diseases is only part of the new age of epidemics — they are a component of the general breakdown of the decades-old political and social order.

• **This is particularly apparent in the anti-vaccination movement, what has been rebranded “vaccine hesitancy.”** “People wonder, ‘Why am I still getting vaccinated if disease no longer exists?’ It’s not a stupid question,” Farrar said.

• **But the trend includes the other social factors as well:** climate change, migration, urbanization and elevated travel, which are spreading disease-carrying species such as mosquitoes, bats and rats.

What’s next: Farrar is pressing for governments to create a commercial impetus for companies to figure out how to navigate the new age. But to get started, says Peter Hotez, dean at the Baylor College of Medicine and author of “Vaccines Did Not Cause Rachel’s Autism,” they need to separate out the various factors.

• **Malaria in Greece and Italy** have been blamed on climate change, but Hotez

says human migration and re-emerging poverty may also be at fault.

• **In Texas, the appearance of Zika and dengue** may be attributable to any or all the same factors. “We don’t know,” he said. (Courtesy axios.com)

Related

Measles outbreak is bringing vaccine exemptions into spotlight

The federal government may try to take action if states don’t tighten their vaccine exemption laws and measles continues to spread in sections of the U.S., FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb tells Axios.

Driving the news: Overall case numbers of measles remain low in the U.S. but the disease is growing in areas of high non-vaccination rates. Some states like Washington are considering tightening their exemptions even as they continue to face a more organized anti-vaccination movement.

Background: The highly contagious disease can only be controlled if there’s a large vaccination rate in the population, which the World Health Organization says should be 93%-95% of people.

• States are allowed to adopt their own rules over what types of exemptions are allowed for vaccines. All of them allow exemptions for medical reasons, but many also provide exemptions on religious and/or philosophical grounds.

• These pockets of unvaccinated people are transmitting measles in the U.S., which is particularly dangerous to those who can’t get vaccinated, including babies under 12 months and people with susceptible immune systems.

• Gottlieb says the vaccine is one of the most effective ones (97% with 2 doses) created so far, and for one of the most contagious viruses.

• Measles can cause various complications, including pneumonia, brain damage and sometimes death, and it has been

linked to longer term immune problems.

What’s happening now

WHO reported last week that measles cases tripled globally in 2018 from the prior year, and current reports show multiple deadly outbreaks in the Philippines, Ukraine, Israel and Madagascar.

In Washington state, the number of confirmed cases has more than doubled since Gov. Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency on Jan. 25, to 54 as of Feb. 13.

• Clark County, where a majority of the Washington cases are located, reported a 70% MMR vaccination rate for 19-35 month olds. But since the outbreak, there was an almost 450% increase in vaccination rates in January compared with the same month the prior year.

In New York, there is an outbreak in Rockland County, Monroe County and New York City, and Texas reported 8 cases in 5 different counties as of Feb. 14.

“It’s a self-inflicted wound,” says Peter Hotez, dean at Baylor College of Medicine who published a study last year showing possible U.S. “hotspots” of measles due to vaccine exemptions, that he says is already proving to be true.

• Pro-vaccination groups are “losing the battle” to anti-vaccination groups, who’ve been very active on social media and forming at least one PAC to promote their message, he says.

The other side: Barbara Loe Fisher, co-founder and president of the nonprofit National Vaccine Information Center often labeled as anti-vaccination, tells Axios that 100 cases of measles in a population of 320 million “is not a public health emergency.”

• “[I] should not be used to justify eliminating the legal right to exercise informed consent to vaccination, which is protected by the inclusion of flexible medical, religious and conscientious-belief vaccine exemptions in public health laws,” she says. (Courtesy axios.com)



“It’s an avoidable tragedy,” Gottlieb, who says he’s usually a proponent of state rights, tells Axios. “Too many states have lax laws.”



who contracted the disease, according to the agency.

The \$16 TRILLION Bug — Pandemic May Cost U.S. Economy Total Annual Output



George Washington is seen with printed medical mask on the dollar banknote. (Photo/ © Reuters /File Photo)

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

The U.S. economy may lose a whopping \$16 trillion due to the devastating impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, both in output and people’s lives, new research has found. While most studies assess the costs of the deadly virus by its impact on the national gross domestic product (GDP), a paper published in the Journal of the American Medical Association earlier this week offered a different approach. The authors of the study — former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and Harvard University economist David Cutler — also took into account losses associated with those who have died due to the virus, in addition to the purely economic costs. With the number of coronavirus infections in the US nearing eight million and deaths surpassing 215,000, the researchers believe that the outbreak may result in an estimated 625,000 cumulative deaths in the country through next year. Given the theoretical “conservative value of \$7 million per life,” premature deaths linked to the coronavirus could wipe out nearly \$4.4 trillion, according to their calculations.

The virus is believed to have long-term effects on health, especially for survivors with severe or critical disease. As those complications lead

to increased risk of premature death, they also have far-reaching consequences for the entire economy, with losses amounting to another \$2.6 trillion for cases forecast through the next year, the authors noted.



Even those who did not contact the deadly virus could also be affected by it, the paper adds. Suffering caused by the possible death of loved ones, as well as the effects of isolation and loneliness, may lead to deteriorating mental health conditions. This also takes its toll on the economy, which could lose approximately \$1.6 trillion due to mental health impairment, according to the research. The rest of the losses — nearly half of the total — are associated with a drop in income due to the coronavirus-triggered recession. The authors cited a previous estimate from the Congressional Budget Office, which projects a total of \$7.6 trillion in

lost output during the next decade.

“The economic loss is more than twice the total monetary outlay for all the wars the US has fought since September 11, 2001, including those in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria,” the study reads. “The total cost is estimated at more than \$16 trillion, or approximately 90% of the annual gross domestic product of the US,” it concludes, adding that the estimated loss for a family of four would reach nearly \$200,000.

The paper comes as US lawmakers debate another stimulus package, set to mitigate damage from the virus. The research stressed that any such economic relief should allocate at least five percent of the funds for increased testing and contact tracing, as an investment of approximately \$6 million leads to averted costs of an estimated \$176 million.



“Increased investment in testing and contact tracing could have economic benefits that are at least 30 times greater than the estimated costs of the investment in these approaches,” the study said. It added that financial support for health measures should not be dismantled even when the concerns about the pandemic begin to recede.

Related

U.S. Employers Cut Record 2 MILLION JOBS As Coronavirus Batters Economy



The Hollywood sign in Los Angeles, California. (File Photo/ US © Reuters / P.T. Fallon)

Job cuts announced by US employers have hit nearly 2 million so far this year, with the entertainment industry accounting for 40 percent of total layoffs, according to global outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas. In its report published on Thurs-

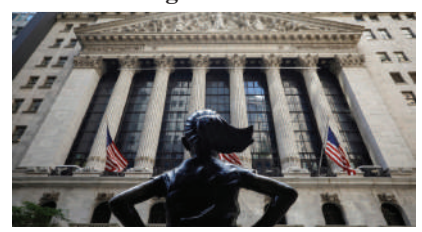
day, the company said that last month’s layoffs in the US were down 56 percent from July, but still 116 percent higher than at the same period one year ago. August job cuts of nearly 116,000 lifted the total number of this year’s layoffs to 1,963,458. The number has already broken the previous record for the whole of 2001, when US-based employers announced a total of 1,956,876 cuts. Most of the jobs — nearly 800,000 — vanished from the entertainment sector so far this year, followed by firms operating in retail and services. In August, entertainment and leisure companies, including bars, restaurants, hotels, and amusement parks, posted the second-highest number with 17,271 job cuts.

Air and transport companies downsized their staff even more last month. According to the report, 26,545 job cuts were announced in the struggling sector — 59 percent lower than in the previous month, but 647 percent higher than in August 2019.

“The leading sector for job cuts last month was transportation, as airlines begin to make staffing decisions in the wake of decreased travel and uncertain federal intervention,” said Andrew Challenger, senior vice president at Challenger, Gray & Christmas. “An increasing number of companies that initially had temporary job cuts or furloughs are now making them permanent.”

The coronavirus pandemic is still battering the US labor market. According to the latest Labor Department data, seasonally adjusted initial claims for jobless benefits for the week ending August 29 stood at 881,000. While it is around 130,000 down from the previous week’s totals, it is only the second time the number of new jobless claims dropped below 1 million since the pandemic hit in March.

U.S. Economy Suffers Sharpest Drop Ever As GDP Crashes Nearly 32% During Coronavirus Peak



The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE)

(File Photo © Reuters / B. McDermid)

In the worst plunge ever recorded, the US economy contracted by 31.7 percent in the second quarter at the height of the Covid-19 crisis, according to revised data released by the Bureau of Economic Analysis on Thursday.

The latest US gross domestic product (GDP) reading is slightly better than the estimate issued last month, when the agency said that the world’s largest economy shrank at an annual rate of 32.9 percent in the April-June period.

Despite the upward revision, based on better than previously estimated private inventory investment and personal consumption expenditures (PCE), the GDP drop is still the sharpest on record. The previous worst quarterly drop since tracking began in 1947 was observed in the first three months of 1958, when GDP fell 10 percent on an annualized basis.

In the worst plunge ever recorded, the U.S. economy contracted by 31.7 percent in the second quarter.

The plunge came as most business activities were paralyzed for weeks, and millions of Americans lost their jobs amid strict stay-at-home orders to contain the spread of the deadly virus. Despite having the highest number of coronavirus infections, the US gradually lifted lockdowns, possibly paving the way for partial recovery in the next quarter.

However, there are concerns that a second wave of Covid-19 may come this fall, further disrupting the economy.

“The full economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic cannot be quantified in the GDP estimate for the second quarter of 2020 because the impacts are generally embedded in source data and cannot be separately identified,” the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) said. (Courtesy www.rt.com/business)