
From: Gregory Brown [REDACTED]
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DEAR FRIEND.....

TORTURE: YES WE DID

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Tears Apart The CIA's Past Claims... Lied About Brutality, Effectiveness... Torture Led To Fabricated Info On Critical Terrorist Threats... KEY FINDINGS... 'Well-Worn Waterboard'... Forced Rectal Feeding... 'Nudity, Insult Slaps, Facial Holds, Walling, Stress Positions'... Waterboarding Sessions Brought Officers 'To The Point Of Tears'... OBAMA: 'Enhanced Interrogation Techniques' Were 'Inconsistent With Our Values'... CIA FURY: 'Too Many Flaws' In Report... Feinstein: 'Far Worse Than The CIA Represented'... Her Remarks Live.. FULL REPORT... The U.S. Is A Human Rights Violator Of The First Order Under International Law, A Rogue State That Has Explicitly Tortured Innocent People And Never Held Anyone Legally Responsible... A0

On Tuesday the Senate Intelligence Committee released the highly anticipated 500-page summary of its report on the CIA's post-9/11 torture program, providing a sobering glimpse into one of the darkest chapters in the U.S. government's history. In the report, a product of a 5-year investigation, Senate investigators reveal sordid details of the systemic and individual failures by the agency personnel who ran the "enhanced interrogation program" -- the government's euphemism for systematic torture -- during the George W. Bush administration. The program involved capturing terrorism suspects and shipping them to secret overseas prisons, where they were subjected to techniques such as waterboarding.

The CIA's program has long been criticized as un-American and a chilling departure from the nation's values. Opponents allege that it resulted in gross abuses and inhumane treatment of detainees, some of whom were eventually revealed not to have been involved in terror organizations. A0 The 6,300-page report may be the most unsanitized official account to date of the agency's program, which the Senate investigators say was mismanaged, poorly conducted and characterized by abuses far more widespread than the CIA previously conveyed to lawmakers. The newly released

document tears apart the CIA's past claims that only a small number of detainees were subjected to the harsh interrogation techniques. =C2

But Senate investigators found that the CIA had actually kept 119 detainees in custody= 26 of whom were illegally held. And despite CIA insistence that the program was limited in scope, Senate investigators conclude that the use of torture was much more widespread than previously thought.

The study reveals several gruesome instances of torture by mid-level CIA officers who participated in the program, including threats of sexual violence using a broomstick and the use of "rectal hydration" in instances of harsh interrogations that lasted for days or weeks on end. And, contrary to the agency's prior insistence that only three detainees were subject to waterboarding, the Senate report suggests it was likely used on more detainees. The report cites the presence of materials typically used for waterboarding being present at certain "blacksites," or secret prisons, where the agency had previously said waterboarding was not used.

Rather than wrestling with the morality of the agency's torture program or the operation's damaging effect on the U.S.'s international credibility, Senate investigators instead weighed whether the agency's tactics were effective. Through narrative examinations of 20 separate detainee cases, the panel attempted to make the case that the use of harsh interrogation techniques such as waterboarding did not yield valuable intelligence. "The committee reviewed 20 of the most frequent and prominent examples of purported counterterrorism 'successes' that the CIA has attributed to the use of its enhanced interrogation techniques," Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), chair of the intelligence panel, said in a statement Tuesday. "Each of those examples was found to be wrong in fundamental respects."

In some instances, the study finds, the information acquired proved irrelevant to stopping terror threats. In others, the use of the techniques resulted in detainees providing fabricated or inaccurate information, and in still other cases, the information obtained through interrogating the detainees had already been acquired through other techniques. Given that the techniques were ineffective, the study says, the agency routinely misled Congress and the White House when it claimed that the use of torture did in fact contribute to intelligence victories. For instance, the Senate report pushes back against the CIA's argument that torture provided the information about Osama bin Laden's courier that helped the U.S. kill the al Qaeda leader in 2011. In a 10-page discussion on the subject, Senate investigators say the information that led the U.S. to bin Laden was obtained from a detainee while he was in foreign custody, prior to being subjected to torture.

The CIA, however, refutes these conclusions. In a roughly 100-page official response released alongside the intelligence panel's summary, the agency contends that harsh interrogation techniques were effective. =C2 "The sum total of information provided from detainees in CIA custody substantially advanced the Agency's strategic and tactical understanding of the enemy in ways that continue to inform counterterrorism efforts to this day," the agency said in its rebuttal. The response argues that it's not clear whether the valuable information could have been acquired by means

other than harsh interrogation techniques, although the agency concedes that it's possible. "It is impossible to imagine how CIA could have achieved the same results in terms of disrupting plots, capturing other terrorists, and degrading al-Qa'ida without any information from detainees, but it is unknowable whether, without enhanced interrogation techniques, CIA or non-CIA interrogators could have acquired the same information from those detainees," the rebuttal said.

Still, the CIA is not advocating a return to the use of torture during interrogations. Rather, it is most concerned with defending itself against charges that it misled Congress and the White House about the extent and value of the program. The official response vehemently challenges the Senate's allegation that the spies acted outside the limits of what the White House had allowed the agency to do. The agency has said that the enhanced interrogations were part of a government-approved program carried out under express orders from within the Bush administration.

"The image portrayed in the Study of an organization that — on an institutional scale — intentionally misled and routinely resisted oversight from the White House, the Congress, the Department of Justice, and its own OIG simply does not comport with the record," the agency's response said.

Among the Senate report's 20 main conclusions are that the CIA misled Congress, the White House and the Department of Justice, that the agency ignored internal critiques of the program, and that the CIA's use of the techniques went far beyond the legal authority bestowed upon it by the Bush White House. In a statement Tuesday, President Barack Obama said, "The report documents a troubling program involving enhanced interrogation techniques on terrorism suspects in secret facilities outside the United States, and it reinforces my long-held view that these harsh methods were not only inconsistent with our values as a nation, they did not serve our broader counterterrorism efforts or our national security interests." "That is why I will continue to use my authority as President to make sure we never resort to those methods again," Obama added.

"In carrying out that program, we did not always live up to the high standards that we set for ourselves and that the American people expect of us," CIA Director John Brennan said Tuesday in his official response. "As an Agency, we have learned from these mistakes, which is why my predecessors and I have implemented various remedial measures over the years to address institutional deficiencies."

The agency says it has no intention of revamping the current version of its interrogation program, which was curbed as a result of directives from Obama. "It is Director Brennan's resolute intention to ensure that Agency officers scrupulously adhere to these directives, which the Director fully supports," the statement continued. "CIA has owned up to these mistakes, learned from them, and taken numerous corrective actions over the years. Further improvements to CIA practices continue to be made today as a result of our review of the SSCI Study," the agency's response noted, referring to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the intelligence panel's full name.

The document's release marks the conclusion of an explosive, high-stakes feud that played out between the White House's chief spying agency and its powerful Senate overseers about how much of the report to release publicly. The

feud revolved around the executive branch's insistence that the committee redact the pseudonyms used to identify the mid-level CIA officers involved in the program. Despite a month's long fight, Feinstein was ultimately forced to relent and allow the pseudonyms to remain blacked out in order to get her study's summary out the door before the panel's incoming Republican majority takes control of the report in January.

The study, which was first commissioned by Feinstein in 2009, began as a bipartisan effort with then-ranking member Sen. Kit Bond (R-Mo.) as Republicans on the panel, though, withdrew from the study just months after it was commissioned. The document released Tuesday will very likely be the only portion the public sees of the Senate Intelligence Committee's report. Although Feinstein suggested in April that the full report would be released at a later date, Republicans are not likely to seek further declassification once they gain control of the committee, given their opposition to the investigation.

The study set the stage for a dramatic, closed-door dispute between the agency and Feinstein, which resulted in deeply personal jabs and competing referrals to the Justice Department asking for criminal investigations. The CIA accused Feinstein's staff early this year of taking highly sensitive material from the secure agency facility where the investigation was conducted. Feinstein, meanwhile, insisted the investigators had a right to the document, and further accused the agency of improperly monitoring the computers her staff used to construct the study. The Department of Justice declined to investigate either the CIA's or Feinstein's allegations. The CIA has since conceded that it did improperly monitor Senate investigators' computers, and is conducting an independent accountability review board to determine what consequences, if any, its employees should face.

The Committee makes the following findings and conclusions:

<=> The CIA's use of its enhanced interrogation techniques was not an effective means of acquiring intelligence or gaining cooperation from detainees.

>#4: The conditions of confinement for CIA detainees were harsher than the CIA had represented to policymakers and others

#5: The CIA repeatedly provided inaccurate information to the Department of Justice, impeding a proper legal analysis of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program.

#6: The CIA has actively avoided or impeded congressional oversight of the program.

#7: The CIA impeded effective White House oversight and decision-making.

#8: The CIA's Operation and management of the program complicated, and in some cases impeded, the national security missions of other Executive Branch agencies.

#9: The CIA impeded oversight by the CIA's Office of Inspector General.

#10: The CIA coordinated the release of classified information to the media, including inaccurate information concerning the effectiveness of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques.

#11: The CIA was unprepared as it began operating its Detention and Interrogation Program more than six months after being granted detention authorities.

#12: The CIA's management and operation of its Detention and Interrogation Program was deeply flawed throughout the program's duration, particularly so in 2002 and early 2003.

#13: Two contract psychologists devised the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques and played a central role in the operation, assessments, and management of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program. By 2005, the CIA had overwhelmingly outsourced operations related to the program.

#14: CIA detainees were subjected to coercive interrogation techniques that had not been approved by the Department of Justice or had not been authorized by CIA Headquarters.

#15: The CIA did not conduct a comprehensive or accurate accounting of the number of individuals it detained, and held individuals who did not meet the legal standard for detention. The CIA's claims about the number of detainees held and subjected to its enhanced Interrogation techniques were inaccurate.

#16: The CIA failed to adequately evaluate the effectiveness of its enhanced interrogation techniques.

#17: The CIA rarely reprimanded or held personnel accountable for serious and Significant violations, inappropriate activities, and systemic and individual management failures.

#18: The CIA marginalized and ignored numerous internal critiques, criticisms, and objections concerning the operation and management of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program. Critiques, criticisms, and objections were expressed by numerous CIA officers, including senior personnel overseeing and managing the program, as well as analysts, interrogators, and medical officers involved in or supporting CIA detention and interrogation operations.

#19: The CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program was inherently unsustainable and had effectively ended by 2006 due to unauthorized press disclosures, reduced cooperation from other nations, and legal and oversight concerns.

#20: The CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program damaged the United States' standing in the world, and resulted in other significant monetary and non-monetary costs.

One of the worst myths official Washington and its establishment media have told itself about the torture debate is that the controversy is limited to three cases of waterboarding at Guantanamo and a handful of bad Republican actors. In fact, a wide array of torture techniques were approved at the highest level of the U.S. Government and then systematically employed in lawless US prisons around the world – at Bagram (including during the Obama presidency), CIA black sites, even to US citizens on US soil. So systematic was the torture regime that a 2008 Senate report concluded that the criminal abuses at Abu Ghraib were the direct result of the torture mentality imposed by official Washington.

American torture was not confined to a handful of aberrational cases or techniques, nor was it the work of rogue CIA agents. It was an officially sanctioned, worldwide regime of torture that had the acquiescence, if not explicit approval, of the top members of both political parties in Congress. It was motivated by far more than interrogation. The evidence for all of this is conclusive and overwhelming. And the American media bears much of the blame, as they refused for years even to use the word "torture" to describe any of this (even as they called these same techniques "torture" when used by American adversaries), a shameful and cowardly abdication that continues literally to this day in many of the most influential outlets.

None of this has been in any plausible doubt for years. Recall that Gen. Antonio Taguba, who led an official investigation into prisoner abuse, said in 2008: "There is no longer any doubt as to whether the current administration has committed war crimes. The only question that remains to be answered is whether those who ordered the use of torture will be held to account." Gen. Barry McCaffrey said: "We tortured people unmercifully. We probably murdered dozens of them during the course of that, both the armed forces and the CIA." Nobody needs this Senate report to demonstrate that the U.S. government became an official squad of torture (with the American public largely on board).

I don't understand why people are so outraged. We have known about rendition, waterboarding, sleep deprivation, forced rectal feeding and other forms of enhanced interrogation for more than a decade. While at the same time one of the most popular shows on American television was "24" where Kiefer Sutherland as Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU) agent Jack Bauer routinely tortured anyone he deemed necessary in a race against the clock to thwart multiple terrorist plots including presidential assassination attempts, weapons of mass destruction detonations, bioterrorism, cyber-attacks, as well as conspiracies which deal with government and corporate corruption. We accepted his "ends justify the means" approach, regardless of the morality of some of his actions. So instead of asking ourselves why are these people attacking us? It has been easier to cast them all as terrorists with us being the good guys eradicating cancer wherever we perceive it under an official policy we called – The War Against Terrorism. And the definition of Torture is simple, "doing something to someone that you wouldn't want them to do you or your friends." And just in case you still can't figure this out feel free to go on the web link below....

An Illustrated A to Z of Torture

Web Link: <http://www.vice.com/read/an-illustrated-a-z-of-torture-cia-284>

Krent Able, Words – December 11, 2014 – Vice.com

Are These People =razy

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Are these people crazy? This was my initial respo=se when I read the article last week in the Washington Post by Nancy Scola — Uber'= not a \$40 billion start-up. It's a mid-sized car company — and it is still my b=lief today. In its current round of fundraising, Uber was valued at =40 billion dollars raising \$1.2 billion that it closed last week and supporters are claiming that this eye-popping figur= for a six-year-old ride-on-demand company isn't crazy because they claim that Uber	s value is based on the bet that it will soon "become a meaningful substitute for people owning cars." Baffled</=pan> by this I s=oke with a knowledgeable friend of mine on Wall Street who not only agreed with me but told me that Goldman Sachs is telling its people that they are coming back to the market next year for more financing at an \$80 billion valuation. Are these p=ople drinking Cool-Aid

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Uber launched in 2009 in San Francisco as a high-e=d car service. It existed to serve those who wanted, in the words of chief executive Travis Kalanick, a "baller&quo=; way of getting around the city. But somewhat by coincidence, that luxury service also happened to be a perfect match for how masses of people wanted to travel. Young people in the =nited States aren't driving nearly as much as they once did. That has put Uber in a posit=on to suck up some of the billions of dollars that people might otherwise pour into cars,=gas and auto insurance. "Uber's strength is that it has tappe= the mobility needs of a young generation of a networked people at exactly the moment their demands =re changing," says Anthony Townsend, senior research scientist at NYU=#39;s Rudin Center for Transportation.

In part, Townsend says, that has to do with the =apid rise of powerful, Internet-connected mobile phones. According to the Pew Rese=rch Internet Project, about 80 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 34 own a smartphon=, and "they don't want to drive because they want to stare at their screens." Add in that more you=g people in the United States are moving into cities, where Uber's distan=e-dependent pricing is less painful than it would be in the suburbs. And the reas=ning behind this astronomical valuation of \$40 billion is that as long as Uber keeps its customer service high and prices within reason, people will find it just as economical and perhaps more enjoyable to use Uber to get around than owning a car. With th=t in mind, considering Uber to be worth a mid-sized car company doesn't s=em so far-fetched.

And they claim that there's more. Because they say that Ub=r today isn't just about getting yourself a ride. It's about getting your stuff a ride to =ou. In some of the 51 countries around the globe where it operates, Uber is =ggressively experimenting with flipping the equation so that cars and drivers are delivering everything fr=m packages to flu shots to kitten snuggles. "Thinking of them as a company that transports people from one place to another is one part of the story," says Sundararajan, pausing our phone call to get into an arriving Uber vehicle. "But you wouldn't come up with a

\$40 billion valuation from just that. Their investors are betting on a behavioral change amount where a lot of people are willing to spend more than they do now to get things on demand."

All of this sounds cool except that there is little barriers to entry for competitors, here in America such as Lyft, Zipcar or GetTaxi and abroad such as Addison Lee in London and Hailo a British new technology platform that matches taxi drivers and passengers through its mobile phone application and is fully available in New York City and has announced the launches of services in Madrid, the rest of Ireland, Barcelona, Washington DC, Tokyo and Osaka by the end of the year, as well as stiffening competition from local taxi and limousine companies. Remember Groupon, the deal a day website that featured discounted gift certificates for restaurants, spas and other services and goods. Groupon launched in November 2008, and the first market for Groupon was Chicago, followed soon thereafter by Boston, New York City, and Toronto. By October 2010 Groupon served more than 150 markets in North America and 100 markets in Europe, Asia and South America and had 35 million registered users.

The idea for Groupon was created by now-ousted CEO and Pittsburgh native Andrew Mason. The idea subsequently gained the attention of his former employer, Eric Lefkowsky, who provided \$1 million in "seed money" to develop the idea. In April 2010, the company was valued at \$1.35 billion. According to a December 2010 report conducted by Groupon's marketing association and reported in Forbes Magazine and the Wall Street Journal, Groupon was "projecting that the company is on pace to make \$1 billion in sales faster than any other business, ever". However, a report from Forrester Research in October 2011 suggested that the Groupon business model was a "disaster" and that the firm had become an example of how fast an Internet darling can fall. Since then Groupon has been acquiring as many companies as it can to stay alive as fewer and fewer people are using its initial proposition.

In fact some analysts claimed that Groupon operates "like" a Ponzi scheme, according to interpretation of Initial public offering (IPO) documentation, because it has publicly disclosed that it is losing approximately US\$100 million per quarter, has a net negative balance of \$230 million, and is using later investors' money to pay off earlier investors.

But let's get back to Uber. Because a \$40 billion valuation is significantly more than that of Tesla (\$28), Fiat (\$16), Mazda (\$16) and Subaru (\$12). It is just \$14 billion less than General Motors and two-thirds of the value of Ford (\$64) which is having its best year ever. And please explain how Uber is worth more than half of BMW (\$73) and in the vicinity of half of the value of Daimler/Mercedes Benz (\$90). The Uber model is that it keeps 20% of the gross revenues with its drivers getting the remainder. Its most optimistic projection is that Gross Revenues in 2015 will be \$10 billion, which after cost would leave the company netting a little north of \$1.2 billion or 33 times gross.

And there are already signs of that the big auto companies are getting into the game as competitors to Uber. BMW, for example, has launched i Ventures, a venture-capital wing inspired by the idea that "the emerging field of mobility services is in a continuous state of evolution." That branch of BMW has already put money into a location-aware city

services app, the online parking marketplace ParkatmyHouse.com and a New York City transportation start-up incubator. I remember in the 90s when Wall Street touted the notion that every dot.com <<http://dot.com>> target=> would overwhelm the existing brick and mortar companies. And some did, but most didn't and although Amazon is currently valued more than \$157 billion, it has yet to make a penny of profit.... Yes Uber is a good company offering a great product/service, but it is difficult for me to believe that Uber is really worth \$40 billion but then if Amazon is really worth \$157.5 billion today, anything is possible.....

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Flooding, dangerous heatwaves, ill health and violent conflicts among=likely risks if the world keeps burning fossil fuels at current rates, IPCC= expected to say

Whatever deniers are saying Climate Change is happening, it's almost entirely man's fault and limiting its impacts may require reducing greenhouse gas emissions to zero this century, the U.N.'s panel on climate science said this month. The fourth and final volume of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's giant climate assessment offered no surprises, nor was it expected to since it combined the findings of three reports released in the past 13 months. But it underlined the scope of the climate challenge in stark terms. Emissions, mainly from the burning of fossil fuels, may need to drop to zero by the end of this century for the world to have a decent chance of keeping the temperature rise below a level that many consider dangerous.

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The IPCC didn't say exactly what such a world would look like but it would likely require a massive shift to renewable sources to power homes, cars and industries combined with new technologies to suck greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. The report warned that failure to reduce emissions could lock the world on a trajectory with "irreversible" impacts on people and the environment. Some impacts already being observed included rising sea levels, a warmer and more acidic ocean, melting glaciers and Arctic sea ice and more frequent and intense heat waves. "Science has spoken. There is no ambiguity in their message. Leaders must act. Time is not on our side," C2◆U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the report's launch in Copenhagen.

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Amid its grim projections, the report said the tools are there to set the world on a low-emissions path and break the addiction to burning oil, coal and gas which pollute the atmosphere with heat-trapping CO2, the chief greenhouse gas. "All we need is the will to change, which we trust will be motivated by knowledge and an understanding of the science of climate change," IPCC chairman Rajendra Pachauri said. The IPCC was set up in 1988 to assess global warming and its impacts. The report released Sunday caps its latest assessment, a mega-review of 30,000 climate change studies that establishes with 95-percent certainty that most of the warming seen since the 1950s is man-made. The IPCC's best estimate is that just about all of it is man-made, but it can't say that with the same degree of certainty.◆=A0 And only a small minority of scientists challenge the mainstream conclusion that climate change is linked to human activity.

Global Climate Change, a NASA website, says 97 percent of climate scientists agree that warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities. Yet the American public isn't as convinced. A year-old survey by Pew Research showed 67 percent of Americans believed global warming is occurring and 44 percent said the earth is warming mostly because of human activity. More recently, a New York Times poll said 42 percent of Republicans say global warming won't have a serious impact, a view held by 12 percent of Democrats and 22 percent of independents.

The rift between developed and developing countries in the U.N. talks opened up in Copenhagen over a passage on what levels of warming could be considered dangerous. After a protracted battle, the text was dropped from a key summary for policy-makers — to the disappointment of some scientists. "If the governments are going to expect the IPCC to do their job," said Princeton professor Michael Oppenheimer, a lead author of the IPCC's second report, they "shouldn't get caught up in fights that have nothing to do with the IPCC." The omission meant the word "dangerous" disappeared from the summary altogether. It appeared only twice in a longer underlying report compared to seven times in a draft produced before the Copenhagen session. In its place the less loaded word "risk" was mentioned 65 times in the final 40-page summary. "Rising rates and magnitudes of warming and other changes in the climate system, accompanied by ocean acidification, increase the risk of severe, pervasive, and in some cases irreversible detrimental impacts," the report said.

World governments in 2009 set a goal of keeping the temperature rise below 2 degrees C (3.6 F) compared to before the industrial revolution. Temperatures have gone up about 0.8 C (1.4 F) since the 19th century. Emissions have risen so fast in recent years that the world has used up two-thirds of its carbon budget, the maximum amount of CO2 that can be emitted to have a likely chance of avoiding 2 degrees of warming, the IPCC report said. "This report makes it clear that if you are serious about the 2-degree goal ... there is nowhere to hide," said Alden Meyer of the Union of Concerned Scientists, an advocacy group. "You can't wait several decades to address this issue."

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said the report demands "ambitious, decisive and immediate action." "Those who choose to ignore or dispute the science so clearly laid out in this report do so at great risk for all of us and for our kids and grandkids," Kerry said in a statement. The IPCC said the cost of actions such as shifting to solar and wind power and other renewable sources and improving energy efficiency would reduce economic growth only by 0.06 percent annually. Pachauri said that should be measured against the implications of doing nothing, putting "all species that live on this planet" at peril.

Bob Ward, policy director at the LSE's Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change, said the report made clear it was "still technically possible to avoid dangerous climate change" but that required emissions reductions would "only be possible if action starts immediately". "If strong action is not well underway by 2020, the chance of avoiding dangerous climate change will be very small, if indeed possible at all," he said. "I think there will be an international agreement in Paris next year, but the commitments by individual countries to cut emissions will not be consistent with the goal of avoiding global warming of more than 2C." "World leaders may wait until there is even more evidence of the damaging impacts of climate change before they accelerate action to cut emissions, but any further delay will increase the magnitude of the risks the world faces."

We are at risk of pushing our climate system toward abrupt, unpredictable and potentially irreversible changes with highly damaging impacts. Earth's climate is on a path to warm beyond the range of what has been experienced over the past millions of years. The range of uncertainty for the warming along the current emissions path is wide enough to encompass massively disruptive consequences to societies and ecosystems: as global temperatures rise, there is a real risk, however small, that one or more critical parts of the Earth's climate system will experience abrupt, unpredictable and potentially irreversible changes. Disturbingly, scientists do not know how much warming is required to trigger such changes to the climate system while many deniers are now saying that it is too difficult and expensive.

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When was the last time we accepted "It's too hard" as an excuse? Is that what they said in the U.S. when President John Kennedy wanted to go to the moon? Is that what they said before the Iron Curtain fell in Eastern Europe? Or before smallpox was eradicated from the face of the earth? No. In just the same way, we can't accept "it's too hard" as a reason not to tackle the climate crisis. And the fact is, the solutions are here, right in front of our eyes. Between 2007—2012, electricity generation from both wind and solar grew by over 300 percent in the U.S, and are set to continue growing rapidly over the next two decades. China is already the world's biggest investor in low-carbon energy, already has the most renewable energy installed capacity in the world and is expected to invest an additional \$294 billion through 2015, to counter climate change. Further, the country recently announced it will ban coal use in the dense, smoggy capital of Beijing by 2020. The transition to clean energy won't happen overnight, but it will happen sooner than we think..... not because we want to but because we have to as anymore denial may take us over the tipping point.

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Inside the Nation's Largest Homeless Encampment

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Web Link: <http://youtu.be/pQn1z2HBlrA>

Last week I did a segment on the explosion of homeless children in America because the number of homeless children had reached a staggering 2.5 million last year, an historic high, according to a new report released by the National Center on Family Homelessness. While during the same week that the report was released in the city of San Jose, California at the 68-acre shantytown "The Jungle," just minutes away from downtown and the high-tech giants that made Silicon Valley one of the world's most opulent locations city officials started evicting and shutting down for good. For years, the city turned a blind eye to "the Jungle." But the camp along the muddy bank of Coyote Creek has become more crowded in recent years and is awash in rotting trash, rats and human waste — so bad that the endangered steelhead trout have essentially disappeared.

The sprawling camp has become a major embarrassment, and a potent emblem of Silicon Valley's homeless crisis. In 2013, San Jose and the surrounding Santa Clara County estimated almost 7,600 homeless people, more than in San Francisco. And 75% of them were sleeping outside, on sidewalks, in parks and under freeway embankments — a percentage greater than in any other major U.S. metropolitan area. Officials have blamed soaring housing costs for the displacement. As Silicon Valley rocketed out of the recession, workers streamed in, driving the average apartment rent within 1½ miles of San Jose up to \$2,633 in September, from \$1,761 two years earlier, according to the rental website RentJungle.com and the median home price is nearly \$700,000.

"The city really made a good-faith effort," said Claire Wagner, communications director for HomeFirst, which runs a homeless shelter and services agency in San Jose. But while 144 inhabitants have found housing, more than 50 have rent subsidies in hand but nowhere to go. In 2011, the state ended special redevelopment assessments, which essentially brought affordable housing construction to a halt, said Ray Bramson, San Jose's homelessness response manager. "Encampments are not the problem, homelessness is the problem," Bramson said. "If you have 10 applications to choose from, nine with stable rental histories and work, and you have somebody living in a creek; what are you going to do?" Loving added. Last week, some inhabitants of the Jungle were packing up to leave while others said they planned to remain as long as possible. San Jose police and city officials hand out notices warning residents of the homeless encampment known as the Jungle that they must vacate the premises.

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As today's students face a world filled with global conflict, disappearing jobs, skyrocketing education costs, and increasing poverty in America, action is more crucial than ever. We know hunger and homelessness are increasing epidemics plaguing the United States — striking Americans of every age, ethnicity, and religion, hitting urban and rural communities alike. Just last year, the national poverty rate rose to include 13.2% of the population. 1 in 7 people were at risk of suffering from hunger in the United States. In addition, 3.5 million people were forced to sleep in parks, under bridges, in shelters or cars. The combination of the high cost of living, low-wage jobs, and high unemployment rates only exacerbate these problems and force countless Americans to choose between food, housing, and other expenses. Studies show that money devoted to food is typically the first to be sacrificed. Families will often pay their fixed payments first, such as rent and utilities, rather than pay for food. Unfortunately, these problems will only continue to grow if our society does not make it a national priority to address them in any systemic way.

The homeless population includes people from all walks of life:

- * In the U.S., more than 3.5 million people experience homelessness each year.
- * 35% of the homeless population are families with children, which is the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.

- * 23% are U.S. military veterans.
- * 25% are children under the age of 18 years.
- * 30% have experienced domestic violence.
- * 20-25% suffer from mental illness.
- * In urban communities, people experience homelessness for an average of eight months.

People become homeless for a variety of reasons. Homelessness is primarily an economic problem, and is also affected by a number of social and political factors. The number of people experiencing homelessness exploded in the 1980s, as federal funds were withdrawn from low-income housing and social assistance programs for low-income families and the mentally ill. Current federal spending on housing assistance programs targeted at low-income populations is less than 50% of 1976 spending levels.

Lack of Affordable Housing: There is a severe lack of affordable housing in the United States. The growing gap between wage earnings and the cost of housing in the United States leaves millions of families and individuals unable to make ends meet. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, families across the country would need to earn a "housing wage" of \$15.37 an hour, nearly three times the current minimum wage, to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the average fair market rent. Even in West Virginia, the least expensive rental state in the country, a full-time wage earner would have to earn over \$8.78/hour—33% higher than the federal minimum wage—in order to afford a two bedroom apartment.

Low Incomes: Many low and minimum wage workers cannot afford food and shelter. Over the past twenty-five years, wages for the lowest income workers have not kept pace with the increase in living costs, nor the increase in salaries of those in the highest income brackets. The minimum wage has continually decreased in value since the late 1960s; adjusting for inflation, the current minimum wage is worth 27% less than it was in 1968. This leaves the lowest income workers unable to afford necessities like housing, food and medical care.

Lack of Affordable Medical Care: The cost of health care and insurance has risen dramatically over past years and can cost a family up to \$8000/year. For families living on low or middle incomes, this cost can be prohibitive. For families or individuals that lack health insurance, a sudden illness, chronic disease, or accident can be financially devastating.

Political Factors: Cuts in federal assistance for housing programs and social services have coincided with the rise in homelessness in the U.S. During the 1950s and 1960s, federal housing programs and services nearly eradicated

homelessness; however, during the 1980s, housing programs were slashed by half and the homeless population in the U.S. began to grow.

Programs designed to provide a safety net for people living at or near the poverty line, like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), have faced changes or cuts that often make it more difficult or impossible for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness to access services. TANF components like sanctions, work requirements, time limits, and immigrant restrictions cut many people off from benefits. Without a safety net to help, many of the lowest income people must choose between things like food, medical care, and housing to make ends meet.

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Social & Medical Factors: While economic factors are the main causes of homelessness, long-term issues like mental illness, drug addiction, and alcoholism can exacerbate situations of poverty and put people at greater risk of homelessness. Surveys of people experiencing homelessness show that about 25% of the homeless population suffers from some form of mental illness; the high cost of health insurance leaves homeless people without access to proper care to treat mental illness. Drug and alcohol addiction affect about 20% of the homeless population who, again, often lack access to proper, affordable care for these illnesses.

We can end homelessness in the U.S. by tackling its root causes—low wages and a lack of affordable housing—and by improving support services like TANF, housing vouchers, and health care. And as of the start of this week there were still people living in The Jungle, not because they want to but because they have no place else to go. This is a shame, not only because it is in one of the richest areas in America but because it is in America..... The richest country in the world....

A gravedigger at the cemetery of the Ebola treatment UNIT in Suakoko District in Bong County

The good news is that in Monrovia, Liberia (city of 1 million) which had become the epicenter of Ebola with more than 100 new cases in August, patients dying outside of treatment units filled to capacity with bodies lay rotting in the streets and mathematical models projecting that Liberia would face thousands of new cases weekly by December, by mid November 2014 these grim projections have proven to be wrong. Although the Ebola epidemic is still growing in Sierra Leone and Guinea's numbers are swinging up and down, Liberia is now reporting only about 20 new patients a day. Treatment units have hundreds of empty beds, and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has lifted the state of emergency put in place in August. Now Liberia and the other affected countries face new challenges: rebuilding their shattered Health Care Systems, tampin down local outbreaks, and looking for ways to drive the number of new cases to zero.

No one is quite sure what has caused the epidemic to wane. Safe burials may be a big factor, says Katri Jalava, a Finnish veterinarian and an epidemiological consultant to the World Health Organization. It's a local custom to wash the corpse and then use the same water to wash the hands of the bereaved, she says. "In terms of a disease like Ebola that is absolutely mad." Most agree that people's everyday behavior has changed as well. Ubiquitous street signs warn that "Ebola is real" and tell Monrovia residents "Don't be the next case." Outside many homes are small hand-washing stations with bleach, and Liberians have stopped hugging and shaking hands. Yet "this is still a catastrophe," says Kevin De Cock, an epidemiologist at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. Even 20 daily Ebola cases would have been unimaginable a year ago. And Guinea has shown that success in fighting Ebola can be short-lived: Twice, that country was on the cusp of ending the outbreak, and twice the virus came roaring back.

Some have even questioned whether Liberia's recent drop in cases is real. At a meeting at the Liberian ministry of health last week, a U.S. Agency for International Development representative said he had been sent specifically to find out if the numbers can be trusted. "Yes," answered Swedish statistician Hans Rosling, who has spent the past month in Monrovia helping the Liberian government interpret epidemiological data. A CDC researchers, for instance, have used mouth swabs to test dead bodies in Monrovia for Ebola; about 20% to 30% are now positive, down from close to 90% during the height of the epidemic. The real number of cases may be twice the reported number, but not much more, Rosling says. "We're in a new phase now."

The international response has been slow to adapt. Although the Pentagon has said it will build fewer new Ebola treatment centers, their construction is ongoing. "That doesn't make sense at all," says Thierry Goffeau, head of the Doctors Without Borders (MSF) mission in Liberia. "It's clearly a waste of human and financial resources." Rosling, too, says tactics have to change. In September, the main job was building clinics, removing the dead, and keeping as many patients as possible isolated. Now, it's about setting up a flexible system to respond to new outbreaks, identifying patients quickly, and tracing their contacts to prevent more infections. "What we needed to do in the first phase was rugby," Rosling says. "Now it is chess." Liberia's medical system, which collapsed under the weight of Ebola, is gearing up again. Doctors are returning to work, clinics are reopening. Goffeau says that is sorely needed: "People are dying at home of many other diseases than Ebola, because they have no access to health care." But medical staff still face an important risk. One in every hundred or thousand patients may carry the Ebola virus, which could start new cycles of infection. There are reports that doctors at some clinics are now doing surgery and delivering babies in Ebola protection suits.

At Redemption Hospital in Monrovia, whose inpatient department was closed this summer after several doctors died from Ebola, MSF is trying to protect staff with a new triage unit, which opened on 19 November. Patients with Ebola-like symptoms are interviewed; if they meet the criteria for a suspect case, they stay in one of 10 small rooms while their blood is tested. Those who test negative can enter the inpatient ward, while an ambulance takes Ebola patients to a treatment unit. MSF has also started distributing malaria drugs to hundreds of thousands of people, not just to lower the burden of that disease, which was neglected for months, but also to reduce the number of people visiting hospitals with a fever. Reopening Monrovia's schools poses similar quandaries. One idea is to screen pupils' temperature as they enter the school. "But what do you do if a 10-year-old kid has a high temperature and the other kids start pointing at him and shouting 'Ebola'?" Rosling says. In a meeting with President Sirleaf, he has argued for a cautious approach: Opening some schools and carefully studying what happens.

The capital region still serves as a reservoir from which patients travel to rural areas and spark fresh outbreaks, De Cock says. And now that the rainy season has ended, travel may pick up. In Bong County, for instance, a few hours northwest of Monrovia, two big outbreaks are spreading, at least one seeded from the capital. The treatment unit in the district of Suakoko, run by the International Medical Corps, is full, and new patients are brought in daily. Sambhavi Cheemalapati, the unit's PROGRAM coordinator, says she is seeing far more patients than are accounted for in the official numbers. Aid should focus on spreading prevention messages in these remote locales, Goffeau says. "If the people really understand what Ebola is and how to avoid infection, we might stop this epidemic," he says. Such REGIONAL flare-ups make it unlikely that the Liberian epidemic will be over anytime soon, Rosling says. Still, he believes it's possible that the country may see its first day without a single case as early as December. Given the cataclysmic projections of just 3 months ago, that would be a remarkable turnaround.

<<http://i1.huffpost.com/gen/2333076/humbs/n-TORTURE-large570.jpg>>

GENEVA (AP) — Police brutality, military interrogations and prisons were among the top concerns of a U.N. panel's report Friday that found the United States to be falling short of full compliance with an international anti-torture treaty. The report by the U.N. Committee Against Torture, its first such review of the U.S. record since 2006, expressed concerns about allegations of police brutality and excessive use of force by law enforcement officials, particularly the Chicago Police Department's treatment of blacks and Latinos. It also called for restricting the use of taser weapons by police to life-threatening situations. But it had no specific recommendation or reaction to a grand jury's decision not to indict the white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri who fatally shot a black and unarmed teenager.

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The report also criticizes the U.S. record on military interrogations, maximum security prisons, illegal migrants and solitary confinement while calling for tougher federal laws to define and outlaw torture, including with detainees at Guantanamo Bay and in Yemen. It also called for abolishing interrogation techniques that rely on sleep or sensor deprivation "aimed at prolonging the sense of capture." "There are numerous areas in which certain things should be changed for the United States to comply fully with the convention," Alessio Bruni of Italy, one of the panel's chief investigators, said at a news conference Friday in Geneva. He was referring to the U.N. Convention Against Torture, which took effect in 1987 and the United States ratified in 1994. The U.N. committee's 10 independent experts are responsible for reviewing the records of all 156 U.N. member countries that have ratified the treaty against torture and all "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

This is my country that they are talking about. The hope of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Cesar Chavez and Martin Luther King. It is the home of Jazz, Country and Hip Hop music. It is the country that created the electric light bulb, skyscraper, Airplane, frozen food, credit card, microwave oven, transistor, cell phone, personal computer, Internet, GPS and Social Media. It created the largest Middle Class in the world, as well as the Greatest Generation that won the war against world dominated tyranny. It has

had its ugly periods – Trail of Tear.... =lavery.... Civil War..... Japanese Internment..... Jim Crow laws.... Vietnam.... Iraq.... And Af=hanistan to mention a few.... Still this nation of ours create= the greatest country in the world.... So we have to wonder why and how we lost our way..... We should use this report as a wake-up call and rally against the condition= that resulted in Sandy Hook, Ferguson and the growing inequality in America=and this is my rant of the week....

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WEEK's READINGS

You don't have to be Stevie Wonder to know that t=e world is inching back into a Cold War and one of the biggest reasons is that militar=sts and neocons are pushing Europe to the brink of conflict by building fences around Russia and Putin. Speaking to the Russian state-owned news agency Tass on Monday, the 83-year-old former Sovi=t President said that "triumphalism" emanating =rom Washington had led to rising tensions between East and West, though he added there was still time to res=lve the growing dispute before it led to direct conflict. Reported by =he Telegraph, Gorbachev said: "Now there are once again signs of a Cold War." "This process can a=d must be stopped. After all, we did it in the 1980s. We opted for de-escalation, for reunification [of Germany]. And back then it was a lot tougher than now. So=we could do it again."

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Gorbachev warned that building ◆=9Cfences" around Russia would only increase tensions. "=Even Germany which after reunification presented itself very well and called for renovation is now just on the bri=k of a split [from Russia]," he said. "And now nothing takes place without the presence and a push from America." Gorbachev◆=80◆s interview came on the same day that a truce deal between the Ukrainian government and rebels in the Luhans= region came into effect. The conflict, which started in April, has claimed more than 4,000 lives, with Moscow-back=d separatists clashing with forces loyal to Kiev almost daily over the past s=ven months.

The ageing statesman, who initiated the policy of perestroika in 1986, which led to a thawing of tensions between the superpowers, added =hat a "tortured" America was responsible for the current standoff. "I don't want to praise =ur government too much," he said. "It has also made quite a few errors= but today the danger comes from the American position. They are tortu=ed by triumphalism."

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Didn't we learn from World War 1?=C2◆ Obviously not. Although the immediate cause for the outbreak of war was generally considered to be Germany's invasion of Poland. The real reason was the seething anger of Germans stoked by

the Nazis with the Treaty of Versailles. Germany – having surrendered in 1918 – was forced to sign a treaty which included Germany taking the blame for World War One, reducing territories, agreeing to disarm and significantly diminish the military, and agreeing to pay roughly 6.6 billion pounds in reparations. The German people felt this was unduly harsh, and developed a deep-set resentment of the Allied victors of WW1 for dealing them this intense punishment leading to the rise of the Nazis and Hitler who promised to reestablish Germany back to its rightful position.

Although Ronald Reagan never claimed to have bested the Soviet Union and won the Cold War. Neocons like to point to Reagan saying, "Tear down this wall," as if that kind of rhetoric is effective and somehow caused the coming apart of the Soviet Union. When in fact, that speech was made in 1987, but the wall didn't come down until years later after the first President Bush refused to make aggressive statements about Gorbachev, who was then able to quietly withdraw support from Eastern Europe that led to the end of the Berlin Wall. The neocons simply misrepresented what happened and claimed that Reagan had followed their approach in dealing with the Soviet Union. This political rhetoric taken out of context is both myth and the result of malice and intellectual laziness.

Indeed, the very idea that there was a winner of the decades-long rivalry between the superpowers was a political formulation rather than one based on the historical facts. The notion that the United States forced the collapse of the Soviet Union and vanquished communism is not only a myth but a dangerous canard, Jack Matlock says in his new book, *Superpower Illusions: How Myths and False Ideologies Led America Astray—and How to Return to Reality*. Matlock was a U.S. ambassador to the U.S.S.R. during the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations.

Because Americans are prone to repeating this line, that the Soviet Union lost, there is a widespread belief in Russia of the myth that Gorbachev was tricked by Reagan and Bush Sr. to give away the store and that ever since, the U.S. has been set on turning Russia into a colony fit only for supplying cheap energy and raw materials. In the U.S., the collapse of the Soviet Union was seen as a military victory, which led to a spirit of triumphalism and a feeling of omnipotence as the "sole superpower." If the U.S.S.R. has indeed been brought to its knees by military pressure, then this would mean that the U.S. has the means to take down any ideology or political system it finds dangerous or repugnant. Other countries drew this conclusion, too: If a country had a problem, then the U.S. was expected to set it right.

The truth is that the Soviet Union didn't collapse because of external pressures. Nor did the Cold War end with the collapse of the Soviet Union. It ended because of a negotiated settlement that was potentially to the benefit of both sides. Communist rule ended because Mikhail Gorbachev maneuvered it out of exclusive power. It was Gorbachev who ended Communist rule. He did it in the Soviet Union's own interest. The people who present it as a victory of one country over another are incorrect, but it was the victory of one idea over another. This idea that somehow the U.S. beat the Soviet Union has led to failed policies from Washington but also misunderstandings from other countries, particularly the Russians.

Do we really want to go back to the Cold War? Do we really want to go back to the days that one incident could provoke the total mutual destruction of both the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as much of the rest of the world? Didn't someone think that wooing the Ukrainians away from Russia into the European Union with the possibility of joining NATO might be interpreted by Putin and the Russian leadership as an aggressive way to box them in especially when Neocons are prone to publically celebrate with victory dances? More than anyone on the planet, Mikhail Gorbachev instigated the end of the Cold War and as such we should seriously heed his warning that American triumphalism is bringing about a new Cold War and this is not good.

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Again is this myth a result of intellectual laziness or malice?

As Alex Kingsbury wrote in U.S. News in 2010, "it's some of both. One thing to note is that modern histories of the Cold War start at the end of World War II, which gives a very short and simplified view of history. The histories of the Cold War published in the 1960s started back in 1917. But the modern incarnations of the U.S. victory myth are even more recent. Reagan, for example, never claimed that we won the Cold War. He wrote about it in his memoirs as a negotiated settlement between partners. In 1992, when George H. W. Bush was losing the [presidential] election, he began saying that "we won the Cold War" on the campaign trail. Since then, a lot of this triumphalist mythology has come from the neocons whose ideas were rejected by Reagan, who in the end was more interested in negotiating. Reagan warned early on that in our negotiations with the Soviets, we should never question their legitimacy. That it was important to deal with them with respect. He always did, which is why he was able to accomplish what he did." They always talk about class when a football player scores a touchdown and doesn't celebrate. Where is our class here in America....

Despite the nation's improving crime rates, a number of large U.S. cities are still especially dangerous. Nationwide, 368 violent crimes were reported for every 100,000 people in 2013. Such crimes include murder, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery. In America's 10 most dangerous cities, there were more than 1,300 violent crimes per 100,000 residents. Based on violent crime data published by the FBI's 2013 Uniform Crime Report, these are America's most dangerous cities.

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In many of these cities, high murder rates are especially problematic. Three of these cities — Detroit, St. Louis, and Baltimore — had nation-leading murder rates of 45, 38, and 37 per 100,000 people, respectively, in 2013. In all, eight of the 10 cities with the highest violent crime rates were also among the 25 cities with the highest murder rates.

The economies of a majority of the nation's most dangerous cities have been struggling for some time. Median household income in eight of America's most dangerous cities was more than \$10,000 below the national median of \$52,250 in 2013.

Education is another factor related to crime rates. Less than 85% of adults had completed at least a high school diploma in all but one of these cities, versus the national rate of 86.6%. In Cleveland, just 78.2% of adults had completed at least high school. However, reducing poverty and improving education to help fight crime can be challenging in many cities. There are "structural disadvantages in that crime is such a cultural norm that it's hard to fix," Roman said.

The FBI has attempted to discourage direct comparisons of crime rates between cities because local factors cause reporting to vary considerably between cities. Despite this characterization, Roman suggested that some comparison can be useful. "To me it's analogous to saying we shouldn't rank how well schools are doing. How are you ever supposed to help the lowest-performing schools if you don't tell them they're the lowest-performing school?"

To identify the most dangerous cities in America, 24/7 Wall St. reviewed violent crime rates among the nation's cities with populations of 100,000 or more from the FBI's 2013 Uniform Crime Report. Property crime rates also came from the FBI's report. The data were broken into eight types of crime. Violent crime was comprised of murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault; and, property crime was made up of burglary, arson, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. In addition to crime data, we also reviewed median household income, poverty rates, and educational attainment rates from the 2013 Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

These are the most dangerous cities in America.

10. Birmingham, Ala.

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,345
- > Population: 212,001
- > 2013 murders: 63 (25th highest)
- > Poverty rate: 30.7% (18th highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 84.0% (105th lowest)

More than 1,300 violent crimes per 100,000 residents were reported in Birmingham in 2013, the 10th highest rate in the country. Still, this was an improvement from 2012, when more than 1,500 violent crimes per 100,000 residents were reported. In 2013, aggravated assault accounted for more than half of the violent crimes in Birmingham. The city's poor socioeconomic climate may explain the high crime rates. The city's poverty rate was 30.7% in 2013, nearly twice the national rate of 15.8%. Additionally, median household income was just \$31,152 in 2013, or more than \$20,000 less than national median. Low incomes, in turn, may be connected to low levels of education. Just 25.9% of Birmingham residents have at least a bachelor's degree as of 2013, well below the national rate of 29.6%.

9. Milwaukee, Wis.

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,364
- > Population: 600,805
- > 2013 murders: 104 (15th highest)
- > Poverty rate: 29.0% (29th highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 81.8% (tied-73rd lowest)

Violent crime in Milwaukee has been on the rise in recent years, with the number of reported incidents rising from 1,045 per 100,000 residents in 2010 to 1,364 per 100,000 residents in 2013. However, an increase in the number of reported crimes may not mean that Milwaukee has gotten more dangerous. A 2012 report by the Journal Sentinel, a local Wisconsin newspaper, found that police in Milwaukee had misreported thousands of crimes in prior years, which led to lower crime rates. Further, while Milwaukee reported a large number of violent crimes, its property crime rate was comparatively low, ranking just 83rd among cities with at least 100,000 residents.

8. Rockford, Ill.

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,375
- > Population: 150,209
- > 2013 murders: 19 (82nd highest)
- > Poverty rate: 23.2% (74th highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 83.6% (95th lowest)

Rockford was one of only three cities where the aggravated assault rate exceeded 10 incidents per 100,000 residents in 2013. The city's murder and non-negligent manslaughter rate was 13 per 100,000, much lower than in many other dangerous cities, but still close to three times the national murder rate of 4.5 per 100,000 residents. Property crimes, too, were slightly less prevalent than in other dangerous cities. There were just 248 motor vehicle thefts per 100,000 Rockford residents last year, slightly higher than the national rate, but exceptionally low compared to other large cities with high violent crime rates. Yet, arson was quite common, with 71 incidents per 100,000 in 2013, more than in all but four other cities.

7. Baltimore, Maryland

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,401
- > Population: 622,671
- > 2013 murders: 233 (6th highest)
- > Poverty rate: 23.3% (73rd highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 81.8% (tied-73rd lowest)

The number of violent crimes in Baltimore fell from 9,316 in 2010 to 8,725 last year, coinciding with the nationwide decline in violent crimes in recent years. However, Baltimore is still among the most dangerous cities. There were just 4.5 murders per 100,000 people in the United States last year. In Baltimore the murder rate was 37 per 100,000 residents, higher than in all but four other large U.S. cities. Robberies were a major contributor to the area's violent crime statistics, as 600 incidents were reported per 100,000 residents, versus a national robbery rate of less than 110 per 100,000 residents last year.

6. Little Rock, Ark.

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,407
- > Population: 197,399
- > 2013 murders: 35 (49th highest)
- > Poverty rate: 18.7% (131st lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 89.9% (80th highest)

Little Rock not only had one of the highest violent crime rates in the nation in 2013, it also had one of the country's worst property crime rate. Last year, more than 1,400 violent crimes and over 7,800 property crimes were reported for every 100,000 residents. By comparison, nationwide there were 368 and 2,731 such crimes per 100,000 people,

respectively. Yet, Little Rock's crime rate has improved slightly since 2010, when more than 1,500 violent crimes were reported for every 100,000 people. Prison overcrowding remains a major issue for Pulaski County, which includes Little Rock. Police have claimed that preventing repeat offenders from being detained for long enough periods of time may be exacerbating the local crime problem.

5. Cleveland, Ohio

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,478
- > Population: 389,181
- > 2013 murders: 55 (29th highest)
- > Poverty rate: 36.9% (3rd highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 78.2% (44th lowest)

Low educational attainment and poverty rates among Cleveland residents may explain, in part, the area's high violent crime rate. Just 78.2% of area adults had completed high school and 16.5% had at least a bachelor's degree as of last year, both among the lower figures nationwide. Also, Cleveland's median household income of \$26,096 was lower than that of every other large U.S. city except for Detroit. Robberies accounted for the bulk of Cleveland's violent crime rate, with 897 reported per 100,000 last year, second only to Oakland. The burglary rate was even higher. More than 2,100 burglaries — thefts occurring without the victim present — were documented per 100,000 area residents last year, the second highest rate in the country and more than three times the national rate of 610.

4. St. Louis, Mo.

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,594
- > Population: 318,563
- > 2013 murders: 120 (12th highest)
- > Poverty rate: 26.6% (44th highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 83.3% (91st lowest)

More than 5,000 violent crime were reported in St. Louis last year, or nearly 1,600 per 100,000 people. Still, much like the rest of the nation, violent crime in St. Louis has dropped in recent years. In 2010, more than 6,200 violent incidents were reported in the city, or 1,747 per 100,000 residents. Despite this improvement, St. Louis still struggles with tragic levels of certain serious crimes. A total of 120 murders were reported in St. Louis last year, or 38 per 100,000 people, among the worst rates for any large U.S. city. Additionally, according to local news reports, there were considerably more murders this year through October than during the same period in 2013.

3. Memphis, Tenn.

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,656
- > Population: 657,691
- > 2013 murders: 124 (11th highest)
- > Poverty rate: 27.7% (35th highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 82.5% (82nd lowest)

There were 7,200 aggravated assaults reported in Memphis last year. This was one of the largest figures among U.S. cities and a major contributor to Memphis' high violent crime rate of 1,656 per 100,000 residents. In addition to a high violent crime rate, Memphis also suffers from high levels of property crimes, which totaled nearly 40,000. There were 366 arsons in 2013, for example, more than in all but five other large U.S. cities. Like residents in a majority of the country's most dangerous cities, Memphis residents are far more likely to live in poverty than most Americans. The area's poverty rate of nearly 28% in 2013 was among the highest rates nationwide.

2. Oakland, Calif.

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 1,977
- > Population: 403,887

- > 2013 murders: 90 (20th highest)
- > Poverty rate: 19.5% (135th highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 80.9% (62nd lowest)

Oakland has historically suffered from high crime and last year was no exception. Oakland reported nearly 2,000 violent crimes per 100,000 residents in 2013. Moreover, the city reported 1,219 robberies per 100,000 residents, the most of any large American city. In addition to violent crime, property crime was also quite high in the city, at over 6,200 such incidents per 100,000 residents last year. By comparison, the national rate was 2,731 per 100,000 residents. However, despite its high levels of crime, Oakland is rapidly gentrifying. Gentrification may contribute to lower violent crime rates in the long run, according to the Urban Institute's John Roman.

1. Detroit, Mich.

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 2,072
- > Population: 699,889
- > 2013 murders: 316 (3rd highest)
- > Poverty rate: 40.7% (the highest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 78.6% (46th lowest)

Detroit's violent crime rate of 2,072 per 100,000 residents was the highest in the nation last year. This is despite the fact that the violent crime rate fell from 2,123 incidents per 100,000 people in 2012. Further, there were a total of more than 300 murders in Detroit last year, also among the worst figures nationwide. Like many other dangerous cities, Detroit residents are quite poor. A typical household earned less than \$25,000 in 2013, and nearly 41% of people lived in poverty, both the worst figures among large U.S. cities. The region's history of high crime rates may have encouraged residents over the years to take their protection into their own hands. Like in several other Michigan counties, residents of Wayne County, where Detroit is located, are more likely to have concealed gun permits than residents in the vast majority of populous areas. The number of applications for permits has risen dramatically in recent years.

No one would have thought that Chicago, New York and Los Angeles was safer than Milwaukee, Memphis and Rockford, Illinois. And I am sure that Camden, New Jersey (which probably wasn't counted because its population is below 10,000) is probably more dangerous than even Detroit. One can see from the comparison between the safest and the most dangerous cities, the cities with the most income inequality and the ones that have large numbers of people falling through the safety net into deep poverty tend to be much more dangerous. And the only way to start addressing this challenge is through early education of the young and training of the adults. Obviously incarceration hasn't worked and if we as a society continue to ignore generational poverty things are bound to get worse.

The geographic origin of AIDS is now known

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<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/eb/HIV_in_Africa_2011.svg/300px-HIV_in_Africa_2011.svg.png>

The AIDS epidemic has spread with the development of transport, including rail, as here in the Republic of Congo in 1967.

A study published in SCIENCE MAGAZINE reveals for the first time where, when and how the world's AIDS pandemic originated. Thanks to a statistical analysis of all the genetic data available on the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), an international research team has just confirmed that the scourge broke out in 1920 in Kinshasa, the capital of what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. By comparing this result with historical data, researchers explain how, from a single contamination by a chimpanzee, HIV spread to humans.

AIDS is one of the most devastating diseases in the history of humanity. Since its transmission to humans by great apes, the pathogen responsible, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) has infected 75 million people. However, thirty years after the discovery of its existence, little was known about the chain of events at the origin of the global pandemic. An international team, led by the universities of Oxford and Louvain in collaboration with IRD researchers, has just published a new study in Science magazine that reveals where the pandemic broke out and how it spread.

Epidemic of the disease discovered in Kinshasa

Thanks to GENOME SEQUENCING of the virus and the latest phylogeographic techniques, researchers have recreated the epidemic's genetic history. Scientists had previously identified chimpanzees from South Cameroon as the source of AIDS. There have been several human contaminations by these great apes throughout history, but only one of these cases led to the spread of HIV to humans.

To determine where and when the epidemic originated, researchers compared the genetic diversity of the viruses collected in the countries of the Congo Basin, considered potential birthplaces. The result: the origin of the scourge was Kinshasa, the capital of what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and dates back to 1920.

Emergence of a pandemic

Once the geographic origin of HIV was determined, scientists were able to link their genetic data on the VIRUS' evolution with historical data, to determine the circumstances that enabled its outbreak in Kinshasa and its spread among human populations. Belgian colonial archives on the former Zaire reveal that at the beginning of the century a great deal of trade took place by river (ivory, rubber, etc

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Then between 1920 and 1950, urbanisation and the development of transport, particularly railways, made Kinshasa one of the most connected cities in Central Africa. At the end of the 1940s, over a million people passed through the city each year to reach the north or south of the country or travel to neighbouring countries. This unusual cocktail of factors, combined with the virus' genetic adaptability, led to its very rapid spread throughout the country (large like

West Europe) as well as secondary outbreaks as far as South and East Africa. Later, after the 1960s, other social changes, such as the rise in prostitution and the use of non-sterile needles in public HEALTH initiatives, undoubtedly contributed to transforming small outbreaks of infection into a real pandemic.

Social Security: 5 Facts You Must Know

Social security is a complicated program, yet you cannot afford to NOT know everything you should about your benefits. Even knowing this, it can be hard to find the information you need in order to make the most informed decisions for you and your family. In the following TOP 5 list below, The Motley Fool's Financial Planning Team reveals five essential, but little known facts, about the Social Security Program and how it will affect millions of Americans. Although most people expect Social Security to be there for them when they retire, they could be wrong – and by then it might be too late.

Number 5: Social Security is Massive

In 2014, over 59 million Americans will receive Social Security. Among them are:

38 million retired workers

9 million survivors and dependents

11 million disabled workers and dependents

Number 4: The Elderly Could Not Survive Without This Program

Many elderly Americans heavily rely on Social Security; it's the major income source for most older Americans. In fact, 9 out of 10 people age 65 and older receive Social Security benefits, which at times comprises 38% of income. Even more important, half of married couples and three quarters of singles receive at least half their retirement income from Social Security.

Number 3: The workforce is shrinking

Demographics are not in our favor as fewer workers support more retirees. In 1950 there were 16 workers per Social Security recipient. In 1960 there were 5 workers per recipient. By the year 2033, only 2.1 workers will support one retiree.

Number 2: The Numbers Just Don't Add Up

Social Security relies on its trust fund in order to cover shortfalls between taxes paid and benefits paid. The trust fund is projected to run out of money in 2033. Once that happens, retirees can only expect to receive about 75% of the benefits they would have received.

Number 1: The #1 Way to Increase Your Benefits

Every year you wait to claim social security benefits until age 70 you will boost your annual payouts by 8%. Waiting until you're 70 will give you 32% more in benefits than if you took them at age 66 and you can receive 76% more than taking them at age 62. If you can afford to delay benefits until age 70 and if you live past age 82, you will receive more in lifetime income from Social Security than if you had waited until full retirement age.

The smart way to get more income in retirement

Getting a part-time job is one way to increase your income in retirement, but it isn't the smart way. In a brand-new free report, our retirement experts explain a straightforward strategy that people are already using to get more income in retirement. The method is so simple you'll be shocked you didn't think of it yourself. To access this free report instantly, simply click here now.

By: Jordan DiPietro – Nov. 28, 2014 – The Motley Fool

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

Wanting something is not enough. You must hunger for it. Your motivation must be absolutely compelling in order to overcome the obstacles that will invariably come your way.

Les Brown <<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/l/lesbrown401284.html>>

Black-White Wealth Gap Has Reached A 24-Year High

The economy is recovering, but not the bottom line for black Americans, according to new figures from the Pew Research Center. The median wealth of black households dropped an astonishing 34 percent from 2010 to 2013, according to Pew's analysis of Federal Reserve data. That of white households grew slightly over the same period. In dollars, that meant the median white household was worth \$141,900, while the median black household was worth just \$11,000. Wealth was defined here as the difference between the value of the household's assets -- like a house and stocks -- and its liabilities.

Another way to look at it: The median wealth of white households was 13 times higher than the median wealth of black households last year. That's the widest gap measured since 1989, when white people's fortunes were 17 times bigger. Between then and now, the gap was at its narrowest in 1998 and 2001, when white households were six times as wealthy as black households. For many middle-class Americans, wealth is tied to the value of their homes. When the housing market crashed in 2007, the value of Americans' assets took a beating across racial groups. Yet in the recovery, blacks have not bounced back as well as whites.

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Black homeownership rates in the U.S. have historically been lower than white homeownership rates for a variety of reasons, but primarily due to a long history of racist housing policies that legal reforms have not entirely erased. During the housing boom of the last decade, blacks were more likely to get stuck with high-cost subprime mortgage loans than whites. In the crash, blacks were more likely to lose their homes than whites. The gap between white and Hispanic households, meanwhile, was at a 12-year high in 2013. According to Pew's report, white households' median net worth was about 10 times that of Hispanic households: \$141,900 vs. \$13,700. And Hispanics' median wealth had fallen 14 percent from 2010 to 2013. Over the same period, median income for black, Hispanic and other minority households plunged 9 percent. Median income for white households fell just 1 percent.

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

For the Engineer in all of us!

Hope you enjoy this. . . It's an engineer thing! But even a Non-Engineer can understand it after watching the full demo. It is even so simple that an disbarred lawyer can understand it!!!

Web Link: <http://showyou.com/v/y-pNe6fsaCVtl/crazy-circle-illusion?u=multimotion> <<http://showyou.com/v/y-pNe6fsaCVtl/crazy-circle-illusion?u=multimotion>>

Enjoy... Enjoy.... Enjoy.....

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...A0TRULY AMAZING JUGGLERS

Enjoy..... Enjoy..... Enjoy.....

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Ray Charles

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was an American singer-songwriter, musician and composer known as Ray Charles and sometimes referred to as "The Genius". He was a pioneer in the genre of soul music during the 1950s by fusing rhythm and blues, gospel, and blues styles into early performances recorded by Atlantic Records. He also helped racially integrate country and pop music during the 1960s with his crossover success on ABC Records, most notably with his two Modern Sounds albums. While with ABC, Charles became one of the first African-American musicians to be given artistic control by a mainstream

record company. Frank Sinatra called Charles "the only true genius in show business", although Charles downplayed this notion. He was blind from age seven. His best friend in music was South Carolina-born James Brown, the "Godfather of Soul", and like Charles an active lifelong Republican.

The influences upon his music were mainly jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, and country artists of the day including Art Tatum, Louis Jordan, Charles Brown, and Louis Armstrong, though he maintained that he was most influenced by Nat King Cole. His playing reflected influences from country blues, barrelhouse and stride piano styles. Rolling Stone ranked Charles as number ten on its list of "100 Greatest Artists of All Time" in 2004, and number two on their November 2008 list of "100 Greatest Singers of All Time". In honoring Charles, Billy Joel noted: "This may sound like sacrilege, but I think Ray Charles was more important than Elvis Presley".

Charles possessed one of the most recognizable voices in American music. In the words of musicologist Sinatra, and Bing Crosby before him, had been masters of words. Ray Charles is a master of sounds. His records disclose an extraordinary assortment of slurs, glides, turns, shrieks, wails, breaks, shouts, screams and hollers, all wonderfully controlled, disciplined by inspired musicianship, and harnessed to ingenious subtleties of harmony, dynamics and rhythm... It is either the singing of a man whose vocabulary is inadequate to express what is in his heart and mind or of one whose feelings are too intense for satisfactory verbal or conventionally melodic articulation. He can't tell it to you. He can't even sing it to you. He has to cry out to you, or shout to you, in tones eloquent of despair — or exaltation. The voice alone, with little assistance from the text or the notated music, conveys the message.

In 1979, Charles was one of the first of the Georgia State Music Hall of Fame to be recognized as a musician born in the state. Ray's version of "Georgia On My Mind" was made the official state song for Georgia. In 1981, he was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and was one of the first inductees to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame at its inaugural ceremony in 1986. He received the Lifetime Achievement and the President's Merit Award, is a recipient of the Presidential Medal For the Arts, Kennedy Center Honors in 1986, Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1987 and France's Legion of Honor, received the NAACP Image Awards "Hall of Fame Award" in 2004, and is one of the original inductees into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In 1991, he was inducted to the Rhythm & Blues Foundation. In 1993, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts. In 1998 he was awarded the Polar Music Prize together with Ravi Shankar in Stockholm, Sweden. In 2004 he was inducted to the National Black Sports & Entertainment Hall of Fame. The Grammy Awards of 2005 were dedicated to Charles. He was presented with the George and Ira Gershwin Award for Lifetime Musical Achievement, during the 1991 UCLA Spring Sing. In 2003, Charles was awarded an honorary degree by Dillard University. Upon his death, he endowed a professorship of African-American culinary history at the school, which is the first such chair in the nation. A \$20 million performing arts center at Morehouse College was named after Charles and was dedicated in September 2010. The United States Postal Service issued a forever stamp honoring Ray Charles as part of its Musical Icons series on September 23, 2013.

During a career that spanned some 58 years, Charles performed a total of more than 10,000 concerts, and starred on over 100 albums, many of them top sellers in a variety of musical genres. He appeared in movies such as "The Blues Brothers," and starred in commercials for Coca-Cola, Diet Pepsi and California Raisins, among numerous others. In 2004, the biopic *Ray* was released for the world to see the historic life and times of the "Genius." The movie garnered six Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture, and Jamie Foxx took home the Best Actor award for his portrayal of Ray. Charles' last public performance was on July 20, 2003, in Alexandria, VA. In 1998, Charles received the Polar Music Award, an award given for significant achievements in music. Charles also appeared at two Presidential inaugurations in his lifetime.

Referring to his gift Charles once said: "I don't call myself a blues singer or a jazz singer or a country singer. I just call myself a singer that can sing the blues, a singer that can sing jazz, a singer that knows how to sing country music, but in my own way." With this said this week I invite you to enjoy the musical genius and one of the best there ever was.....
 =>Mr. Ray Charles.....

Ray Charles -- (Live At Montreux 1997) -- <http://youtu.be/lumnmhnPJKQ> <<http://youtu.be/lumnmhnPJKQ>>

Ray Charles -- Song For You (1994) -- http://youtu.be/JSIv_n-gBmk <http://youtu.be/JSIv_n-gBmk>

Ray Charles -- I Can't Stop Loving You -- <http://youtu.be/aQXsM1=2wZ8>

Ray Charles -- Don't Let The Sun Catch You Crying -- <http://youtu.be/rHUrkdqCopA> <<http://youtu.be/rHUrkdqCopA>>

Ray Charles -- Just For A Thrill -- <http://youtu.be/N3QT97g1Snc>

Ray Charles & Chaka Khan -- I'll Be Good To You -- <http://youtu.be/d4ZLumKHGIY> <<http://youtu.be/d4ZLumKHGIY>>

Ray Charles -- I'm Busted -- <http://youtu.be/VLWoiC-3b60> <<http://youtu.be/VLWoiC-3b60>>

Ray Charles -- What'd I Say -- <http://youtu.be/vzkLs7ymZqU> <<http://youtu.be/vzkLs7ymZqU>>

Ray Charles -- You Don't Know Me -- <http://youtu.be/6GX8UalMq8k>

Ray Charles -- I Got A Woman -- <http://youtu.be/Bbqks4aGom8> <<http://youtu.be/Bbqks4aGom8>>

Ray Charles -- Oh What a Beautiful Morning -- <http://youtu.be/8cjk-m78IBQ>

Ray Charles -- -- <http://youtu.be/1OTRRzSuWro> <<http://youtu.be/1OTRRzSuWro>> an= <http://youtu.be/8xk1P1913y0> <<http://youtu.be/8xk1P1913y0>>

Ray Charles with Ruben Studdard & The Harlem Gospel Singers -- Imagine -- <http://youtu.be/b87sO7I8cRI> <<http://youtu.be/b87sO7I8cRI>>

Ray Charles & George Michael -- Blame It On The Sun -- <http://youtu.be/1yrj1oUbib4> <<http://youtu.be/1yrj1oUbib4>>

Ray Charles & John Legend – Touch -- <http://youtu.be/8UlayxF0=Mk>

Ray Charles & Joe Cocker – You Are So Beautiful -- <http://youtu.be/PaolYRw3TMI> <<http://youtu.be/PaolYRw3TMI>>
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