

From COVID-19 to Ukraine: Bouncing from One Crisis to the Next and the Importance of Staying Focused

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When COVID-19 first came to dominate the news back in March 2020, I [wrote an article](#) for the independent media outlet OffGuardian, warning of the grave dangers we might face. I was not referring to COVID-19, and whatever threat that might have been posing, but to the possibility that powerful actors could seek to exploit the crisis in order to further political and economic agendas.

Drawing a comparison with 9/11, I noted that situations in which the public was fearful created conditions ripe for manipulation, in particular through propaganda. In the case of 9/11, public fear of terrorism ushered in a global ‘war on terror’, whilst, as we now know from documents, US president George Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair communicated over the initiation of a series of ‘regime change wars’ during the weeks following 9/11.

Blair wrote to Bush: ‘If toppling Saddam is a prime objective, it is far easier to do it with Syria and Iran in favour of acquiescing rather than hitting all three at once’.

These wars were less to do with fighting ‘Islamic fundamentalist terrorism’ than they were to do with realising [geo-political ‘regime-change’ aspirations](#). In a nutshell, 9/11 and the fear of terrorism were propagandised in order to mobilise support for wider geo-political objectives. Over 20 years later we are still living with the consequences of these ‘regime-change’ wars.

Two years on from the start of COVID-19, it has indeed become apparent to many that it has been an event involving high levels of propaganda and one in which political and economic agendas have been advanced under its cover.

For example, [we now know that behavioural scientists](#) were used in the UK to increase fear levels in order to coerce populations to comply with lockdown and other measures.

Many people have been pressured to accept a series of injections in return for elusive freedoms. We also now know that propaganda activities have included smear campaigns against dissident scientists and, at least in one major case, were initiated by [high-level officials](#):

In Autumn 2020, Anthony Fauci, Chief Medical Officer to the US President, and National Institute of Health director Francis Collins discussed the need to swiftly shut down the [Great Barrington Declaration](#), whose authors were advocating an alternative COVID-19 response focused on protecting high-risk individuals and thus avoiding destructive lockdown measures.

Collins [wrote in an email](#) that this ‘proposal from the three fringe epidemiologists ... seems to be getting a lot of attention ... There needs to be a quick and devastating published takedown of its premises’.

Rather than a [civilised and robust scientific debate](#), a smear campaign followed. It is also now becoming clear to many that policies of lockdown and mass injection, precisely those policies promoted off the back of widespread fear of a virus, are deeply problematic. A large swathe of scientists and medical professionals are now clearly and repeatedly warning governments and populations that [lockdowns are harmful](#) and [ineffective](#) whilst mass injection of populations may also be doing more [harm](#) than good.

With respect to the advancement of political and economic agendas, [some analysts argue](#) that major economic and political events have run hand-in-hand with COVID-19. These include a drive toward Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) in the context of a major impending crisis in the financial markets that [emerged during autumn 2019](#), and a political-economic project articulated by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and multiple leaders [regarding ‘The Great Reset’](#).

With respect to the political-economic project, the WEF has played a key role in promoting specific ideas about the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and ‘digitised society’ (e.g. ‘Smart Cities’). The book [COVID-19: The Great Reset](#) was published in July 2020 and author Klaus Schwab declared that: ‘The pandemic represents a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine, and reset our world to create a healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous future’. He [also believes](#) that the 4th industrial revolution will lead to a ‘fusion of our physical, our digital and our biological identities.’ It is apparent that the WEF, as an organising force, has considerable reach. In 2017 [Schwab boasted](#):

“When I mention our names like Mrs Merkel, even Vladimir Putin and so on, they all have been young global leaders of the World Economic forum. But what we are very proud of now is the young generation like prime minister Trudeau, president of Argentina and so on. So we penetrate the cabinets. So yesterday I was at a reception for prime minister Trudeau and I will know that half of this cabinet or even more half of this cabinet are for our actually young global leaders of the world economic forum that’s true in Argentina, and it’s true in France now with the president a young global leader.”

With respect to economic events, it is [now established that](#) a major crisis in the repo markets during the autumn of 2019 was followed by high-level planning aimed at attempting to resolve an impending financial crisis of greater proportions than the 2008

banking crisis. One response appears to have been a drive toward control of currencies via the Central Banks (Central Bank Digital Currency, CBDC). For example, the General Manager of the Bank of International Settlements (BIS), Agustín Carstens, [stated in October 2020](#) that:

“We intend to establish the equivalence with cash and there is a huge difference there, for example in cash we don’t know who is using a 100 dollar bill today ... the key difference with the CBDC is that the central bank will have absolute control on the rules and regulations that will determine the use regarding that expression of central bank liability and also we will have the technology to enforce that.”

A recent and telling example of the kind of power that can be wielded by governments in the financial realm was the Canadian government’s attempt to suppress the trucker protests against mandates via [seizure of bank accounts](#).

These political and economic agendas have major potential consequences for our societies and, [arguably](#), lead to a profound, and highly problematic, concentration of power and curtailment of democracy. One [legitimate fear](#) is that we are witnessing a drive toward a Chinese-style social credit system, in which the integration of personal data and money through digital ID allows assets to be stripped by authorities and, more broadly, unprecedented levels of control over the lives of people.

It is certainly clear that liberal democracies are experiencing severe restrictions on civil liberties and free speech – witness recent events in Canada – and persistent economic and political crisis. It is clear and empirically demonstrable that populations have been subjected to coercive and aggressive attempts to [limit their autonomy](#), including restrictions on movement, right to protest, freedom to work and freedom to participate in society. Most notably, increasing numbers of people have been required to take an injection at regular intervals in order to allow their participation in society. These developments have been accompanied by often openly aggressive and discriminatory statements from major political leaders with respect to people resisting the injections. The threat to civil liberties and ‘democracy as usual’ has been, arguably, unprecedented.

Image on the right is from Children’s Health Defense



However, resistance has been substantial. We were, until last week, witnessing a mainstreaming of debate over both the efficacy of lockdowns and the wisdom of mandated injections. US podcast giant Joe Rogan [aired discussion](#) of the WEF only two weeks ago, whilst the premier entertainment show Saturday Night Live (SNL) ran a comedy sketch mocking middle class obsessions regarding masks and boosters. Another popular YouTube giant, Russell Brand, has been repeatedly [airing talks](#) questioning multiple aspects of the COVID-19 response as well as highlighting [deceptions and manipulations](#) people have been

subjected to in the last two years. Underlying this kind of mainstreaming of dissent have been persistent and widespread protests against COVID-19 restrictions and a multitude of [well-organised groups](#) and [movements](#) pushing back against various COVID-19-related policies.

The war in the Ukraine, however, has dramatically and profoundly shifted the focus of mainstream political and media attention. It is well established across the scholarly literature that war situations are accompanied by massive levels of propaganda and censorship, heightened emotions and a relative ease with which authorities can dictate the contours of public and political debate.

This certainly appears to be the case in relation to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But whatever the rights and wrongs of this particular conflict, there is a very real danger that it will be instrumentalised by authorities in order to divert attention from the multiple issues that had been surfacing with respect to COVID-19. This is extremely worrying for anyone seeking to understand the actions of authorities during the COVID-19 event, the [corruption and dangers witnessed in relation to the mRNA injection](#), and to obtain accountability.

But also, perhaps more importantly, war fever might also serve as a new distraction from the underlying political and economic agendas that some analysts have been warning us about. Indeed, war in the Ukraine has significant potential to serve as a new enabling event facilitating the drive toward restrictions on liberties and the roll-out of agendas that, for example, the WEF has been waxing lyrical about for two years. A distracted and war-terrified public will be easy to manipulate whilst policies such as [digital ID](#), mandated injections and Central Bank Digital Currencies are ushered in. Indeed, the current drive toward [expanding the powers](#) of the World Health Organisation (WHO) is a clear example of the dangers of further centralisation of power: Under the guise of [pandemic preparedness](#), the objective is to allow the WHO to force states to implement the kinds of restrictive measures we have seen over the last two years. The Council of the European Union [announced](#), on 3 March 2022, that negotiations were to commence with respect to this new legislation. The possibility of a global bio-security regime, that radically disempowers local and community-level autonomy, should be of serious concern to all of us.

We simply cannot afford to continue tumbling from one highly propagandised crisis to the next and allowing our emotions to be harnessed by those who wield political and economic power. Many people over the last two years have learned much about issues such as propaganda, mainstream media bias as well as the levels of corruption, or conflicts of interest, that exist in both national and [global institutions](#). It is important those lessons are kept in focus and not clouded by events in the Ukraine. Now is the time for calm and rational assessments of the events we are living through and, more than ever, determined engagement with widening public understanding of the agendas that many now believe to have been underlying COVID-19.

This includes the need to interrogate the propaganda and manipulation populations have been subjected to over the last two years and the increasingly discredited policy responses involving lockdowns and mass injections. Even more importantly, critical examination and awareness of the concentration of power and loss of democracy inherent in developments such as digital ID and CBDC digital currencies, and their interconnection with political visions regarding 4IR and digitised society, is more vital than ever. It is these processes that present the most serious and substantive threat to people, potentially ushering in an era of what some describe as [global totalitarianism](#). Finally, a weather eye must be kept on how

the Ukraine crisis might be feeding into and enabling the political and economic processes already advanced during COVID-19.

More than ever before, we must have the confidence to challenge those in positions of political and economic power. We are, without doubt, at a pivotal moment in our histories. People must stay focused on the big picture.

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