

The year started when the 116th congress, with a democratic majority in the House of Representatives, convened in January. Donald Trump became the first U.S. president to visit North Korea when he walked across the Demilitarized Zone for a peace summit. And, ISIS was eradicated in Syria and Iraq.

The Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris was nearly destroyed when it burned. Two Boeing 737-MAX planes crashed within months of each other; soon afterward the fleet was grounded. Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas with winds of 185 mph. A 75' scuba diving boat, the [Conception](#), caught fire and sank while anchored off the coast of Santa Barbara; 34 people died making it the worst maritime disaster in the state since 1865.

We're on the brink of a data & communications revolution enabled by 5th generation mobile phones and the "Internet of Things". You see the beginning of this in computer based connected cars, video doorbells, wearable fitness devices, smart thermostats, and household digital assistants (Alexa & Siri) that work seamlessly with each other, cell phones, and big brother. Eventually smart mattresses will track sleep, medical implants will monitor heartbeats, and vending machines will request refills when needed.

California continued its collapse. While only 12% of the nations' population live here, we have [47% of the homeless](#). Exaggerating the problem, politicians have decriminalized theft and legalized drugs; San Francisco has 70 car break-ins every day and shop lifters receive a courtesy summons to court instead of being charged with a crime. Third World diseases such as Typhus and Hepatitis are resurgent while syringes handed out to addicts by liberal bureaucrats wash up on sandy beaches. With no political opposition and no accountability democratic lawmakers have ruined our once majestic cities and much of the state.

Astronomers discovered a planet with water in its atmosphere ([K2-18b](#)) 110 light years away and scientists took the first ever picture of a [black hole](#) located at the center of the [M87](#) galaxy. China, India, and a private [Israeli company](#) all sent probes to the moon; some were successful, others not. SpaceX flew its [Dragon](#) capsule, capable of carrying astronauts, for the first time during a supply mission to the International Space Station. The renewed interest in space is invigorating and personifies the pioneering spirit that typically changes the course of history. The United States will return to the moon in 2024 with the "[Artemis](#)" missions (named for the Greek goddess and twin sister of Apollo). The first woman is slated to walk on the lunar surface and we'll establish a permanent base there. 571 human beings have been in space but only 12 have set foot on the moon (all of whom were American). Meanwhile, the Andromeda Galaxy and Milky Way galaxy (where we live) will collide in the distant future. If you were to look at the night sky 4 billion years from now, this is what you'd see:



For more, NASA has an excellent simulation of the collision [here](#).

Theresa May was forced out as prime minister of England after she failed to implement Brexit. Boris Johnson, a conservative, was elected to succeed her in two separate votes where Mr. Johnson and his party won by a landslide. Britain is finally on course to leave the European Union, which will likely happen in 2020.

ARAMCO, an Arabian oil company owned by the Saudi royal family, sold shares on a stock exchange for the first time. With annual revenues of \$110 billion and valued at \$2 trillion ARAMCO is worth more than Apple, Google, and Exxon-Mobile combined. In the meantime, the White House is negotiating with China on import tariffs. These tariffs are as much about discouraging Chinese theft of American intellectual property (i.e. patents), which undermines the U.S. economy, as they are about fair and balanced trade.

The leader of ISIS, [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](#), was killed in a U.S. special forces operation when he detonated a suicide bomb with his young children by his side. The Washington Post ran an outrageous [headline](#) that referred to al-Baghdadi as an “austere religious scholar”.

Nine American [women & children](#) were shot point blank and killed when a Mexican cartel attacked their caravan as they traveled to a wedding near the U.S. border. Encouraging illegal immigration and demands for an open border, which most democratic politicians now support, poses a clear and present danger to our country. Illegal aliens (who cost U.S. taxpayers [\\$115 billion every year](#)) are released from jail, as required by sanctuary state laws, to prey on Americans. It is telling that only [20% of Hispanics](#) support “catch and release” of families who cross our borders illegally.

A million people in Hong Kong protested against China’s oppressive government. As a result of the Opium Wars the tiny island nation was leased to the British for 99 years. When the lease expired in 1997 China agreed that the territory would remain autonomous for 50 years. It now seems unlikely that China will honor that agreement. While Antifa radicals preached “[resistance](#)”, attacked bystanders on the West Coast, and called for abolishing capitalism and our democracy, protesters in Hong Kong, faced with real tyranny, waved American flags.

The International Atomic Energy Agency announced that [Iran breached the limit](#) on its stockpile of enriched uranium. The rogue nation seized two British oil tankers and shot down a surveillance drone over international waters. For 40 years now the country has been the world’s largest state sponsor of terrorism. U.S. sanctions and a generation of Persians born long after the violent Islamic revolt of 1979 provide the seeds of a revolution that has the first real chance of changing the country since my family left Tehran.

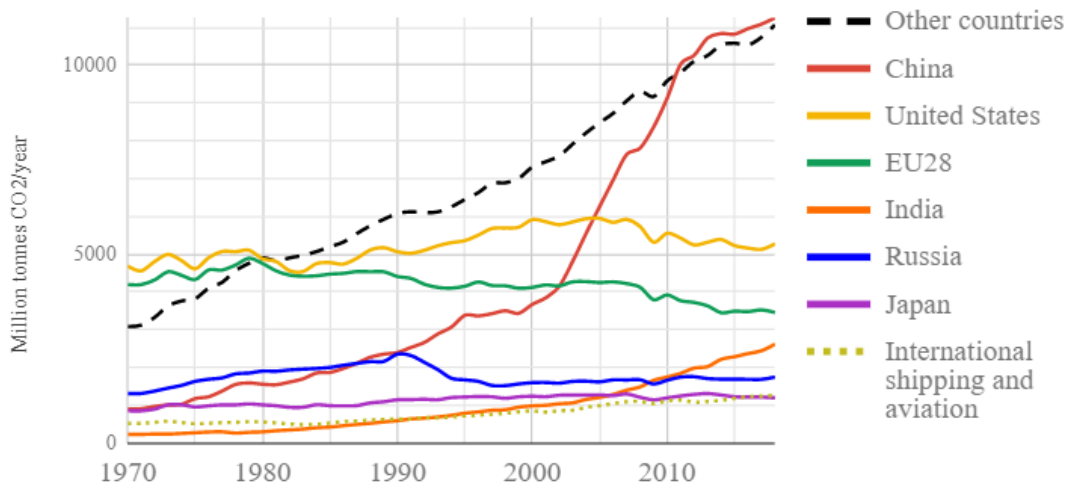
Climate change activists say the Earth will soon be uninhabitable. But they’ve been saying that for 50 years now:

- [1969: Everyone on the planet will disappear by 1989](#)
- [1970: Ice Age by 2000](#)
- [1971: new Ice Age in 50 years](#)
- [1988: Maldives under water by 2018](#)
- [1989: New York City’s West Side under water by 2019](#)
- [2004: Britain to have Siberian climate by 2020](#)
- [2008: Arctic will be ice-free by 2018](#)
- [2019: the world will end in 12 years](#)

In fact there have been [5 ice ages](#) and 4 greenhouse periods on the planet dating back 2 billion years. Even if you’re convinced that mankind can dominate the planet’s natural climate cycles then why would you waste time forcing the U.S. to radically change its economy when it is already [reducing its carbon output](#) and produces less than half the carbon dioxide of China?

The truth is that purveyors of the climate change movement seek absolute control over people and economies (such as socialists like Bernie Sanders) or are driven by profits that result from peddling fear (Al Gore made \$300 million off of marketing climate change).

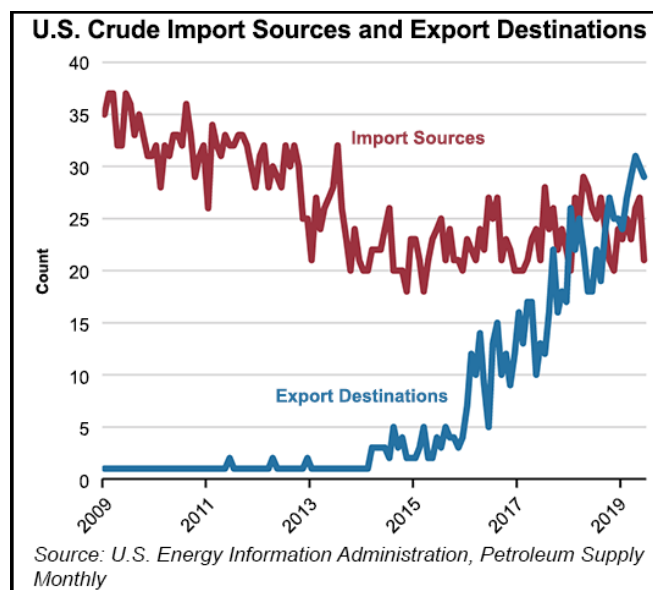
World fossil carbon dioxide emission 1970-2018



Data source: [EDGAR – Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research](#)

On the domestic economy:

- Unemployment is at [3.5%, the lowest since 1969](#) (this includes record lows for women, Hispanics & blacks)
- Wages were [up 3.1%](#) for the year; more Americans are employed than ever before
- 6.4 million jobs have been added to the economy in the past 3 years
- There are [7.3 million job openings \(and only 5.9 million currently unemployed\)](#)
- Household income is at a 50-year high
- The U.S. recently became energy independent and a [net oil exporter](#) (for the first time since 1949)
- Interest rates and inflation remain low
- 401k's tied to the S&P 500 are up 50% since 2016



After 2 years, 2,800 subpoenas, and 700 warrants the 448-page Mueller report concluded there was no collusion with Russia to steal the 2016 election (which was the basis of the investigation). Undeterred, the left continued its [scorched earth](#) policy of trying to reverse an election they lost. The unhinged house leadership cultivated a “whistleblower” who heard from a bureaucrat about his opinion of a phone call he overheard between the White House and the President of Ukraine. Witnesses were called to testify. They had no firsthand knowledge of any crime but instead turned out to be disgruntled bureaucrats who were angry that the president ignored their <http://www.cottrel.com/xmas/xmas19.pdf>

foreign policy advice and consent. After fomenting anger in their rabid base, with no real evidence, and out of options, they impeached President Trump. If you've read the [transcript](#) (which only takes 10 minutes) and believe that President Trump met the constitutional standard for "high crimes and misdemeanors", then please tell me why. Using impeachment to remove a president simply because one political party in a branch of government opposed the choice of the people set an alarming precedent. This virtual coup all started 17 minutes after President Trump was inaugurated when the Washington Post declared "[the impeachment has begun](#)".

Learjet liberal elites, mainstream media, and the modern left have metastasized and grown far apart from the average American. These factions are now intolerant, aggressive, and totalitarian. Consequently, democrats haven't recognized the legitimacy of a republican president since George H.W. Bush won 30 years ago. It's increasingly clear that they'll never again honor an election that they don't win.

To say Donald Trump is inarticulate is an understatement. He often turns off voters with his bluster, bravado, and brash personality. He doesn't pick his battles but instead seeks to destroy anyone who attacks him (although at this point, I'm not sure I blame him). Don't mistake my support of the president's policy's as loyalty to the man. I support his agenda of putting American's standard of living, personal safety, economy, and our Constitution above all else including his own self interests. It's hard to deny that he took the job of "public servant" in a way we haven't seen in decades. He donates his presidential paycheck (\$400,000) to charity every year, put his businesses on hold, and will lose perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars while serving. In contrast, the career politicians Bill Clinton and Barack Obama each made \$150 million simply because they worked in government.

There's an election in 10 months. The choice could not be more contrary: continued peace and prosperity that our country has not experienced in half a century or the division, tyranny, and poverty that comes from the democratic party's drive to socialism. It really is as simple as that.

As for us, Monica & I continue to live and work in the San Francisco Bay Area. Andrew lives in Sacramento where he's developing the next generation of microprocessors for Intel. Liam is attending California State University at Sonoma where he's pursuing a degree in Computer Science. Monica & I went to Vienna & Prague this year; both cities were remarkable, unique, and beautiful.



We always appreciate hearing from our family and friends; please keep in touch.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
from the Cottrell Family*

The diabolical genius of Marxism-Socialism is that it provides the emotional and intellectual roadmap for autocrats to persuade millions of people to support their own enslavement to government.

Mark Levin – Constitutional Lawyer