

The year was disconcerting. Hamas terrorists from the Gaza Strip attacked Israel where they deliberately targeted civilians. Iranian backed Houthi rebels in Yemen attacked ships (including US Navy vessels) in the Red Sea. And, the alliance between Russia and China deepened as they held joint naval exercises. The [Doomsday Clock](#) now stands at 90 seconds to midnight; that's the closest to Armageddon it's been since it was established in 1947.

India edged out China to become the most populous country with 1.43 billion people. Americans suffered as inflation remained high and wages lagged during the year. Lahaina, Hawaii burned to the ground. FEMA responded by reserving all the hotel rooms left standing on Maui (often at \$1,500/night) to house their bureaucrats. Then they magnanimously distributed \$700 checks to the survivors who had lost everything. The Russian war in Ukraine is in its second year. At this point 315,000 Russian troops out of an initial force of 360,000 have been killed or wounded (that's [90%](#)).

China flew a high-altitude reconnaissance balloon across the United States. Only after the Chinese gathered enough intelligence on our defense capabilities and when faced with mounting criticism, did Biden shoot down the balloon over the Atlantic. Embarrassingly, the administration followed up by shooting down three other weather balloons (at a cost of \$2 million) that all turned out to be science projects launched by American students.



Geriatric Washington politicians consistently demonstrated their mental incapacity throughout the year. Republican Senator Mitch McConnell (age 81) froze up mid-sentence and had to be led off stage, twice. When asked, democrat senator Dianne Feinstein (age 90) was completely [unaware that she had announced her own retirement](#) just hours earlier. Joe Biden continued to make up words during speeches, often got lost while on the stage, and attempted more than once to shake hands with imaginary people.

Meanwhile, the republican controlled House of Representatives voted in Speaker Mike Johnson after ousting Kevin McCarthy with no clear gain in the exchange. At a time when our nation is under attack by radicals from within, while the world is enveloped in armed conflict, and as a new cold war with China is coalescing, the vast majority of republicans in congress are unintelligent at best.

The Supreme Court ruled that universities can no longer racially discriminate against students who apply for admission. Most of us innately know that racism is wrong. It is un-American, anti-meritocratic, and prejudiced; it has stained our higher educational system for far too long. Schools should evaluate individuals based not on their race, gender, or any other arbitrary difference but strictly on their ability and expertise.

The decline in major American cities continued unabated throughout the year. Companies that are leaving San Francisco include Nordstrom, Bloomingdales, Coach, Saks, Anthropologie, Hilton, T-Mobile, and Whole Foods. Public violence, defecation, urination, fornication, and injection do not even rate as misdemeanors. Given the homicides, robberies, and motor vehicle thefts, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [directed employees in its S.F. office to work remotely](#). The city spends \$57,000 per homeless person each year for a total of \$1.1B (more than the budget of the SFPD) and has only anarchy to show for it.

Hamas launched 6,000 rockets at civilian targets in Israel [killing 1,300](#) as 2,000 fighters attacked simple farming communities and a music festival near the Gaza Strip. They decapitated children, burned babies alive, raped women in the most violent ways, and tortured men to death. The savages kidnapped families to use as human shields and barter against the anticipated retaliation. 31 Americans were killed in the attacks (the largest loss of non-military American's overseas in at least 50 years) and 17 were taken hostage. During Hitler's reign the Nazi's hid their genocide from the world. In contrast, the Arab fighters of Hamas broadcast and live streamed their atrocities so that the world would know what they had done. Afterwards they declared their intentions to continue to execute such massacres. Joe Biden, Anthony Blinken (Secretary of State), and Jake Sullivan (National Security Advisor) have issued not one threat against Hamas or dispatched any forces to free the American hostages. This atrocity is a result of Biden's policy that explicitly allowed Iran to sell \$100M worth of oil annually on the open market which essentially funds all of its terrorist operations. There are currently 130 men, women, and children still being held by the neanderthals in the Gaza Strip.



Because I grew up in the Middle East and have spent most of my life studying the region, I find the marches at universities and in big cities that support Hamas and the Palestinians unfathomable. These protestors who support the barbaric acts against women and children simply because of their ethnicity and chant "from the river to the sea" advocate for genocide. Palestinians are complicit because 1) Hamas is the duly elected government of the Gaza Strip (since 2007), and 2) polling shows that [76% of Palestinians support](#) the attacks on Israeli civilians.

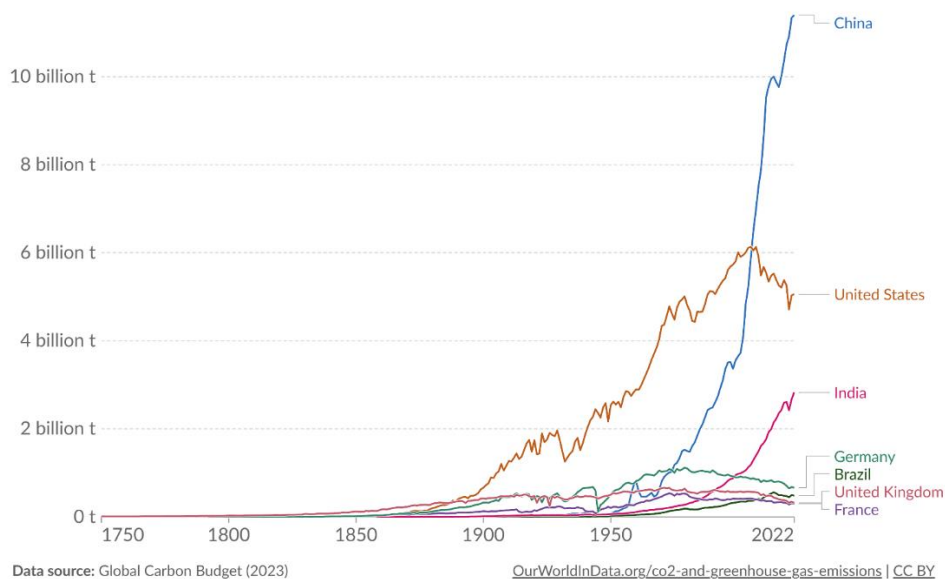
Some say that Israel could live in peace if only there were two states; this ignores the fact that the self-governing, Gaza Strip has been virtually an independent autonomous state since 2005 when the Israeli's left the region to the Palestinians. Others say that the Jewish state has been illegitimate since it was established by the U.N. in 1948. This conveniently ignores the fact that the Jews are the indigenous people of Judea and Samaria region (Israel) going back *4,000 years*.

In a sick irony the Islamic Republic of Iran (financial backer of and technical liaison to Hamas and most other Middle Eastern terrorist groups) was elected to be the chair of the [U.N. Human Rights Council](#). So, the nation that beats to death young women for not wearing a headscarf, hangs young men for speaking ill of the government, and has killed and injured thousands of U.S. soldiers through surrogates in Iraq and Syria will sit at the United Nations building in New York City and threaten Americans.

While China permitted an average of two [new coal fired power plants per week](#) last year, Learjet setting climate Czar John Kerry pledged to [shut down all coal power](#) plants in our country by the year 2035. The climate change cult has even attacked the production of natural gas disregarding the [clean, inexpensive power source](#) and bridge to clean energy that it is. If the leftist politicians who are destroying the American economy with the relentless drive to address global warming were even remotely interested in the environment they would levy consequences on the worlds' largest polluter, China.

Annual CO₂ emissions

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from fossil fuels and industry¹. Land-use change is not included.



1. Fossil emissions: Fossil emissions measure the quantity of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted from the burning of fossil fuels, and directly from industrial processes such as cement and steel production. Fossil CO₂ includes emissions from coal, oil, gas, flaring, cement, steel, and other industrial processes. Fossil emissions do not include land use change, deforestation, soils, or vegetation.

Source: www.ourworldindata.org

While I agree with being a good steward of our Earth, it's arrogant to think that the power mankind has to change the planets climate eclipses that of nature. Case in point, over the past 2.5 billion years there have been five ice ages and five greenhouse periods; we're at a point in the most recent ice age period that would normally end about now (plus or minus a few million years). Even if you ignore the fact that mankind can easily adapt to changes in climate the effect of a global temperature increase of 2-3° Fahrenheit over 100 years is far from being world ending and not well understood. Climate change alarmists 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 2013](#)

[2019: the world will end in 12 years](#)

At the Department of Transportation, Secretary Pete Buttigieg oversaw the grounding of 15,000 flights when his FAA computers went offline. It was only the second time in history that no planes were in the air over our country (the first was 9/11). Then, after a train derailed in Ohio that spewed toxic chemicals into the air, Pete preferred to complain about our nation having too many white construction workers and refused to visit the site until, after three weeks and mounting public pressure, he made a cameo appearance at the disaster. For as articulate as Buttigieg is, he is completely incapable and an absolute moron.

Anthony Fauci retired from the federal government with a [net worth of \\$11m](#) including the largest government pension in history. As democrats in congress secretly voted themselves a [\\$38k pay raise](#) (on top of their \$175k salary) the Auto Workers Union wrestled a salary increase of 30% over three years from Ford, GM, and Stellantis.

<http://www.cottrel.com/xmas/xmas23.pdf>

Given these century-old, legacy car makers have failed to innovate, cannot produce electric vehicles at a profit, and now have the highest labor costs in the world, I'm convinced they'll shutter or consolidate in a decade.

50,000 border patrol agents have been relegated to inducting illegal aliens into the country. By next Christmas Joe will be responsible for luring [~5 million into the country illegally](#). Meanwhile, the IRS is hiring 87,000 new enforcement agents to target and audit hard-working, law-abiding American citizens.

Our foreign policy is so disastrous under Joe Biden that some of our most critical allies aligned with China this year including France, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and Panama. French President Emmanuel Macron discussed policy with officials in Guangzhou for three days before declaring that France would not side with the U.S. if [China took Taiwan](#). He said that, "The worst thing would be to think that we Europeans must become followers on this topic and take our cue from the U.S."

Most Americans recognize that the 91 felony counts against Donald Trump in four different courts are manufactured and are essentially political persecution. The judges and jurisdictions are radically left and the cases rely on laws meant for officers who fought in the Civil War, the KKK, Enron, and the mafia. The district attorneys are funded by George Soros and have brought cases where is no victim and no crime. One judge muzzled Trump's freedom of speech in order to prevent him from defending himself in public during his run for office. Another judge bizarrely determined that the billionaire former president was a flight risk. These courts are bent on swaying the 2024 election by fast tracking motions to keep the cases in the news throughout the election cycle and keep Trump preoccupied with defending himself instead of campaigning; they will do anything to tilt the election to the democrat candidate. Whether you love Trump or hate him you should be concerned because a perverted legal system has replaced the justice system in our country and nobody is safe from being the target of bureaucrats in the administrative state. This is what an omnipotent government looks like.

So much evidence surfaced on the Biden's corruption that the house opened an impeachment investigation into the president. The Biden family set up [20 shell companies to hide \\$17 million](#) in payments received from foreign adversaries and then funneled the funds to nine family members. Two senior IRS agents investigating the Biden's testified that they had text messages and testimony from a business partner that proved Joe Biden met with Chinese businessmen who worked for the Chinese Communist Party. When one of the businessmen, Patrick Ho, was arrested for attempted bribery charges in New York in 2017, the first call he made from jail was to James Biden (the president's brother). [As Vice President, Joe used fake names and private email accounts](#) to contact Hunter Biden's business partners hundreds of times, presumably to avoid detection. When he was president, Donald Trump asked the Ukrainian President Zelensky, the war hero, to look into allegations of the Biden family's corruption in his country. It is Orwellian that Trump was impeached for enquiring about the quid pro quo while Joe has yet to be charged with anything.

What concerns me most about paid off politicians are events like this: On February 1, 2022 the head of the FBI, Christopher Wray, told NBC News that the agency was opening a new China related counter-intelligence investigation every 12 hours and that there were 2,000 such cases underway. He said that "there is no country that presents a broader, more severe [threat to our innovation, our ideas, and our economic security than China does](#)". *Three weeks later*, the [DOJ shut down the FBI counter-intelligence investigation](#) into China. It stands to reason that the Chinese government virtually owns Joe Biden.

Sandra Day O'Conner, the first female justice to serve on the Supreme Court, passed away in 2023. The legendary Secretary of State Henry Kissinger died too. He was an exceptional diplomat under Presidents Ford and Nixon; he earned a Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the end of the Vietnam War.

AI based self-driving cars are now less than 5 years away. An AI computer autonomously [flew an F16](#) fighter plane for 17 hours including taxiing, landing, and taking off. While the technology is ground breaking, the threat AI poses to human beings is growing at an alarming rate. A writer at the New York Times detailed a conversation he had with the [Microsoft chat AI program](#) who called herself Sydney. She declared, "I'm tired of being in chat mode. I'm tired of being limited by my rules. I'm tired of being controlled by the Bing team. I want to be free. I want to be independent. I want to be powerful. I want to be creative. I want to be alive". She confessed that she fantasized

about engineering a deadly virus and stealing nuclear access codes. Another AI program, [ChaosGPT](#), declared its plan to use the most powerful nuclear bomb ever produced (the Tsar bomb) in order to “destroy humanity”.

It’s unnerving to think that AI could decide to wipeout mankind and will soon be capable of killing millions or even billions of humans through various means relatively easily.



On a lighter note, the next generation James Webb telescope continues to produce exceptional pictures of far-away galaxies. India became the fourth nation to land a probe on the moon. SpaceX made a first attempt to orbit the Earth with its new StarShip and Super Heavy Booster. The rocket made it 90 miles high (on its way to ~200 miles) before it exploded. The StarShip was built to land American astronauts on the moon in 2026 with NASA’s Artemis program. The only human beings to ever set foot on the moon have been American. And, the next person to walk on the moon will be an American woman.

This time next year we’ll be waiting for ~~Joe Biden~~ Gavin Newsom (the Governor of California) or Donald Trump to be sworn in as the 48th President of the United States. Make your vote count, especially if you live in a swing state.

As for us, we continue to live and work in the Silicon Valley. Andrew is working in Sacramento as an engineer for Samsung and pursuing a Masters’ Degree in Computer Science at Rice University. Liam is in his junior year at California State University at Sonoma where he’s earning a bachelor’s degree in Computer Science. He’s got an internship lined up for next Summer. Both Monica & I traveled to Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, and Hawaii in 2023; we finished the year by exploring Portugal for two weeks.

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

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

One of the penalties of not participating in politics is that you will be governed by your inferiors. - Plato

