

Lessons from 2024 to Take Into 2025

Compared to some of our recent years, 2024 has seemed to be rather calm. We didn't have a pandemic to worry about, there was almost no rioting, and while we did have our share of natural disasters, there was nothing that looked like it might turn into a TEOTWAWKI event. It wasn't a perfect year; but it wasn't all that bad either.

But now we are preparing to go into 2025. None of us truly know what the new year might hold for us. I'm sure that it will bring its share of problems; even though I have no idea as to the specific types of problems or their severity. Nevertheless, our best gauge for predicting what will happen in the future, is looking at what has happened in the past; especially if we can find trends in that past. Human nature being what it is, people tend to make the same mistakes over and over again.

It takes a lot to break out of the old patterns. Most people will respond to problems the same way, over and over again. This meets the definition of insanity: doing the same thing, but expecting different results. We preppers try to break out of this mold, refusing to follow the herd and finding our own way.

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So, while the herd may go the same way as always, it is up to you and I to learn the lessons from the things which have happened in the past, using those lessons to help us survive

the problems which will come our way in the future.

Shortages

If there's one legacy we've received from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the problem of ongoing supply chain shortages. While this problem isn't as acute as it was during the pandemic and immediately after, it still exists. Business decisions were made during the time of the lockdowns, which can't just be reversed. This has left the overall supply chain with some problems which will just not go away.

One place we've seen this is in petroleum products. Several refineries were modified during the pandemic, when people weren't driving as much. Once the pandemic ended and people started driving more, there wasn't enough refinery capability to meet the need, resulting in higher gas prices.

But when we're talking about petroleum products, we're talking about much more than just gasoline. A whole host of products, from aspirin to plastics depend on the petrochemical industry. And the petrochemical industry isn't the only industry that suffered through the lockdown. At the same time, we were suffering shortages from COVID lockdowns, there were a number of large food-processing plants that were destroyed in one way or another. While we have mostly recovered from that, each one demonstrated just how fragile our supply chain is.

The thing is, for the supply chain to work, the amount produced has to match the amount consumed by a rather slim margin. Too much production, and companies can't make money. Too little, and they don't meet people's needs. While the law of supply and demand comes into play here, the bigger problem is providing people with the products they need, not how much the products sell for.

Our supply chain has been built over decades, with each addition requiring time to adjust and fit in. When that is

disrupted by something like the pandemic, it can take a long time for things to settle back out again. Worse, the disruption can have a downstream impact, where other products can't be manufactured in the quantity needed. Each additional problem sparks other problems, making an already complicated system even more complex.

I am not sure that we'll ever get back to the place we were before with the supply chain; but that shouldn't make any difference to us as preppers. We should be able to use our stockpile of supplies to make up for any shortages we encounter, replenishing it when those items are back in stock again. This is different than what we all planned for; but there's no reason why it can't work.

Politics

One thing we do know about the coming year is that Donald Trump will be inaugurated as president again on January 20th. At least, that's what will happen if the Secret Service does its job and protects him from any further assassination attempts.

Considering that this is Trump's second term in office, we pretty much know what to expect from his opposition. They will "spin" everything he says and does, in order to be able to cry out "The sky is falling!" Our nation's legacy news media has lost all capability for objectivity, being further left than even the most left-leaning politicians. Every week there will be new reports of how the things that Trump is doing will either end the world as we know it or cause the opening shots of World War 3.

Fortunately, there are a lot more people now who have had their eyes opened to the games of the mainstream media, than there were during his first term in office. But there are still plenty of people who will take those reports as the

gospel truth, using that to justify their hate, in whatever way that hate might manifest itself.

It's a bit surprising that there haven't already been riots breaking out, like those that happened during his first term in office. But then, there has been nothing to be gained, politically speaking, by staging those demonstrations and riots. They'll wait until they can make political hay from it, somehow blaming Trump for their misdeeds.

While much of this will be no more than noise, we saw before just how dangerous those mobs can be. We also saw how well organized they were, with some shadowy figures paying protesters and providing them with crude weapons (bricks, 2x4s) to use. That's enough to make these situations dangerous to anyone caught in the way.

For you and I, the best thing to do is avoid any such gathering, even if it appears peaceful. A peaceful demonstration can turn ugly in the blink of an eye, and if there are "organizers" there to make that happen, there's no telling just how bad it will be. Don't think you can defend yourself in such a crowd. You can't carry enough ammunition to ensure your own safety.

Natural Disasters

Like always, the biggest risk that we are facing is natural disasters; and it appears that the most dangerous natural disasters that the country has faced in the last few years are hurricanes. The amount of damage that one hurricane can do is incredible, destroying homes and businesses throughout the wide swath of the storm.

I know that it's more exciting to talk about TEOTWAWKI events, but for those whose homes are destroyed by a hurricane, that hurricane is such an event. Many never fully recover, back to the life they had before that hurricane hit. Those that do

recover, only do so through a long and arduous process. Rebuilding is expensive, and insurance never pays for it all. At a minimum, insurance companies won't pay for demolition and site cleanup. So, the homeowner has a choice to pay for that out of the repair settlement or come up with the money from somewhere else.

FEMA has proven inadequate at bringing help to those who have suffered through such an incident, even though that's what they're supposed to do. Their operations aren't streamlined enough to serve as in a rapid reaction capacity, so what they end up doing more than anything is bringing red tape into the lives of those who are trying to put their lives back together again.

That's not to say that FEMA doesn't do any good at all. As I understand it, they pass out a considerable amount of taxpayer money to those whose lives have been torn apart by a disaster. In that sense, we need them just as much as anyone else. We just shouldn't count on them to help us through those first weeks, when we need things like food and water.

Fortunately, as preppers, that's where we have an advantage of everyone else. This is a classic example of when we need to use our stockpile in order to survive. The recovery period is often considerably longer than the disaster and that's really when we'll need our stockpiles.

Weakness & Fear

Perhaps the biggest problem that 2023 and the previous years has created is the way that weakness and fear has been instilled in most people's lives. We are no longer the strong, independent people that we were a couple of generations ago. Oh, there are still some who are; but society as a whole has lost much of that. That loss has made us a much less resilient people, unable to deal with problems like disasters.

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There are a hundred ways we can see this manifesting itself all around us. The feminization of men is probably one of the biggest. But it is by no means all of the problem. The general population is much more dependent on central government than it was a generation ago. On top of that, the dramatic shift in society, where people's emotions are taking precedence of fact or reality is the most debilitating. When people can cry about any offense, expecting society to come to their aid, they become unable to deal with anything on their own.

Going forward, this is the biggest danger we face; not a natural disaster or even a TEOTWAWKI event. Any society which can't stand up under the normal stresses and problems of life is doomed to failure. Unless we can turn our society around, I fear that there isn't much hope for America's future.

Electing President Trump to office, and a Republican majority to both the House and Senate is only the first step in bringing about this change. There is a long battle remaining ahead of us, as our political leaders can only do so much to bring about that change. As long as the media is supporting the weak amongst us, telling them that they are right, the weak will remain weak. There needs to be a groundswell of opinion, going back to conservative values, especially the values of self-sufficiency and taking care of your own problems.

That's the challenge that faces us in the coming year.