



## 76. Warning Signs for 2020

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*Future Sense is a podcast edited from the radio show of the same name, broadcast on BayFM in Byron Bay, Australia, at [www.bayfm.org](http://www.bayfm.org). Hosted by Nyck Jeanes and well-known international futurist, Steve McDonald, Future Sense provides a fresh, deep analysis of global trends and emerging technologies. How can we identify the layers of growth personally, socially and globally? What are the signs missed; the truths being denied? Political science, history, politics, psychology, ancient civilisations, alien contact, the new psychedelic revolution, cryptocurrency and other disruptive and distributed technologies, and much more.*

*This is Future Sense.*

**Nyck:** You are tuned to BayFM 99.9 and you are now with *Future Sense* with myself, Nyck Jeanes and my co-host Steve McDonald. Good morning, Steve. How are you doing?

**Steve:** Good morning, Nyck. I'm well, and it's quite appropriate to have some crazy music playing this morning, I think, because our theme today is looking at warning signs for 2020—some of the crazy ahead.

**Nyck:** Yes, well, it's certainly getting very crazy out there. There are so many areas which you could look at in the news or in your personal experience, in which I expect you are feeling like an expression that Steve quoted this morning: "no maps for these territories". It's a bit like that at the moment, I think, for many people. How do we find a way forward into the future from here?

**Steve:** Yes, exactly.

**Nyck:** So we've got, well, not a shorter show because I'll still be here, but Steve's got to rush off halfway through the show this morning.

**Steve:** And catch a plane.

**Nyck:** Maybe you know something that I don't know. Are you escaping something? Preparing for 2020 by leaving the country? No, you are going to a pretty extraordinary

meeting tomorrow, and we have mentioned it before. Maybe give a bit of a summary of what's going on.

**Steve:** Yes, I am heading to Canberra today for a meeting with the Governor-General early tomorrow morning to talk about psychedelic medicine, which I think is probably something he doesn't normally talk about very much.

**Nyck:** No, and you won't hear this anywhere else on Australian radio, television or any other media—or in the world—that this man over here, my co-host, Mr McDonald, is going to meet the Governor-General and talk about psychedelic medicines tomorrow.

**Steve:** That's true, and this has come about, well, I guess it's been a bit of a long road to this meeting because I worked for the Governor-General many years ago when he was a commander in the Army and I was one of his subordinates. We spent some time in Africa during the war in Somalia together, and I've been talking to him at reunions over the years, just in little bits and pieces, about psychedelic medicine research and the progress, and particularly its relevance to issues that war veterans face. The recent documentary, which I took around Australia and screened together with our good friend, Mitch Schultz from Texas, the promotion for that documentary led to me passing a message to the Governor-General about the documentary, and then he extended an invitation for me to come and have a chat to him about what's going on.

**Nyck:** Of course, that was *From Shock to Awe*, folks. Perhaps you were there and perhaps you have seen the movie. It is available now, actually, to purchase online, I think.

**Steve:** It is, yes. It's on a few different platforms: *Vimeo*, *Google Play*, *Amazon* and maybe another one as well.

**Nyck:** Well, that's going to be fantastic.

**Steve:** It will be interesting to see what might come out of the discussion. At least, if nothing else, you know, raising awareness at government level of what's going on with some of the breakthroughs happening, particularly the designation in the US of "breakthrough therapy" status to a number of psychedelics over the last couple of years.

**Nyck:** It's fantastic. There's also the local movie that we've talked about called *Green Light*, which looks at medicinal cannabis. All of these areas of medicine, of these alternative psychedelic medicines, are moving forward. No doubt Australia is quite a long way behind, but I have a feeling you might be injecting a little bit of intensity to that discourse tomorrow.

**Steve:** Certainly trying to. We've had a good run of psychedelic documentaries—*Dosed*, as well.

**Nyck:** *Dosed* as well. Also very good. An idea whose time has come.

We're talking a little bit about exactly that today, I guess, in terms of going forward from here: what ideas, what can we do in terms of preparing ourselves for this very uncertain future moving forward? New ideas, radical ideas are the ones, possibly, where some of the greatest possibilities exist, along with also sometimes the maddest ideas that shouldn't be adopted whatsoever. You might have seen today, it was interesting to read that Israel Falou, the Australian rugby player who's a preacher and has been preaching about the fires being a result of the legislation for gay marriage to be legal and for abortion to be more legalised in this country. This is the cause of the fires, according to him, so that's as mad as hell—completely crazy. So we see both sides of the equation there.

**Steve:** It's interesting, 2020 is shaping up to be a year of people being called to account. That's the way it seems, and you can hear that theme in the language you were talking about just there. It's interesting to see that kind of theme cropping up in different places. When you see that—the same theme cropping up from very, very different sources and in different contexts—those subtle signals are good indicators of what might be coming down the track.

**Nyck:** And, of course, 20/20 vision is the term used for visual acuity in which the numerator refers to the distance and the denominator refers to size. So if you've got 20/20 vision, it's perfect vision, but of course, there's the expression "hindsight is 20/20 vision", which is when someone has a realisation about the event that should have been obvious all along yet they didn't catch on because they were acting in the heat of the moment. So in some ways, I think we're exactly at that place as we enter 2020.

**Steve:** Very interesting.

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**Nyck:** We have a slightly shorter show today, although I'll still be here in the chair as Steve is flying off this morning.

Banking is clearly a very good indicator of what's going on in the world, it would seem, especially with *Deutsche Bank* and the situation going on there. Quite extraordinary.

**Steve:** It is, yes. We'll have a look at that in detail right now. Just looking from a very, very large perspective, with the overall collapse of the Scientific-Industrial era—which is, you

know, one of the main themes that we talk about on this show right now—it looks to be a descending, chaotic path until around 2032, so that's quite a number of years ahead of different stages of collapse and various trigger points; and 2020 is certainly shaping up to be a significant year in terms of trigger points. Indications are that we may see a turning point around 2032 where a whole lot of things come together and somehow shift the global perspective in the outlook in a positive way, and even between now and then, it's not all going to be bad news, because basically what we're looking at is the collapse of an old paradigm and the rise of a new paradigm simultaneously. Right now, the old Scientific-Industrial paradigm and the systems that were developed during the revolutions about 300 years ago are still very dominant globally.

If you look at all of our major social systems like economics, which we're going to look at in a moment, our politics—most of our social systems, really—have come out of that Scientific-Industrial way of thinking, and they're still absolutely influential. As they slowly collapse, they're going to become less influential and actually more problematic—we're really seeing early signs of that already, that they're creating more problems than solving, perhaps. Simultaneously, the rise of what's going to replace them is occurring, but of course, it takes quite some time for those new systems to shake out the bugs and get to the point where they become significantly dominant on a global scale.

One of the early stage systems, of course, is cryptocurrency and the use of blockchain, which showed up relatively early. And we'll see other systems rising, which may well replace our old political systems and other systems as well. So a very, very interesting time and what we can bank on is a period when the old systems have collapsed to a certain point and the new systems have risen to a certain point, but neither is really dominant, and that's going to be a critical period globally.

**Nyck:** A very unstable time.

**Steve:** Likely very unstable, and it's really up to us in terms of how much effort we put into building the new world and how early we start doing that as to how significant that critical period gets.

But let's have a look at *Deutsche Bank*, which is in the news right now. Recent media reports are alleging that it has filed for bankruptcy. *Deutsche Bank* is one of the world's 10 largest banks. It's been on a downhill slide for quite some time. There were very early signs in 2015 when it was hit with a US\$2.5 billion fine as a result of its involvement in what was called the LIBOR scandal, which involved manipulation of interbank lending interest rates. The same year that it was hit with that enormous fine, it was also ordered to pay \$257 million in penalties for doing business with countries that were under US sanctions at the time, and consequently recorded a record loss.

**Nyck:** That's a moving feast, that one—sanctions that are imposed by the US on one country or another for various personal reasons.

**Steve:** I know, absolutely. That was the early signs of a big slide and then the *International Monetary Fund* was the first to really step out in public and warn that *Deutsche Bank* is the largest contributor to systemic risk for the global financial system. They said if *Deutsche Bank* quivers, the rest of the global financial system will shake.

**Nyck:** Sounds like a song, doesn't it?

**Steve:** That's right. The next year, in 2016, both the German Finance Minister and the bank's CEO spoke out in the media saying that the bank was rock solid and everything was fine. As a result of that announcement, their share price dropped 22% in value.

**Nyck:** Plausible deniability.

**Steve:** That's right. I mean, any time that a government stands up and says 'everything's fine, you don't need to worry about this', everybody looks at what they're talking about.

**Nyck:** Nothing to see here. Go back to your television sets and take your drugs—your legal ones—and everything's OK.

**Steve:** Exactly. Have a beer.

The bank's share price is down 84% since its all-time high in 2007, which is quite a big slide. It's been compared to the collapse of *Lehman Brothers*. I just looked at a chart this morning where someone has plotted the slide in share value of *Lehman Brothers* up to the global financial crisis. Of course, *Lehman Brothers* were really a major trigger of the global financial crisis in 2008. Someone has overlaid the sliding share price of *Deutsche Bank* on this same chart, and by golly, it looks like a mirror image.

**Nyck:** Pretty identical.

**Steve:** They have predicted that if the share price continues to slide at this same rate, then it will reach zero dollars by the 15th of January, 2020.

**Nyck:** Yes, which is an interesting time that we've identified already ourselves—that middle of January time coming up next year. For those of you who are into things like astrology, it's a very strong astrological time—the conjunction of Saturn and Pluto at that time and other factors as well. It does indicate something going on in that particular reflection. You may not

be into that, but it's nevertheless just part of the equation to look at—the various signs and signals that you can see in both the very traditional, ordinary structures such as graphs of profit-and-loss, and the movement of the outer planets. Big stuff.

**Steve:** And apart from the astrology, we sometimes quote *Armstrong Economics* and their computerised prediction model, which has a really solid record of being accurate, which is quoting an economic turning point on the 18th of January, so that's very interesting as well. Quite a few indicators from different sources coming together there. Their economic turning point is saying that we'll be entering an inflationary phase after the middle of January 2020, primarily due to commodity shortages which cause rising prices. That also links to some other news that we've got to talk about this morning about potential food shortages.

**Steve:** But poor old *Deutsche Bank* is currently facing 7,000 regulatory actions and lawsuits.

**Nyck:** 7,000!

**Steve:** Only 7,000. Of course, it has a long history of hiding losses, and it's reached the point now where the losses have got so big it's hard to hide them. And of course, because its value is sliding, no-one wants to buy any of its assets that it might like to sell off and try and fix things up, so it's not looking good at all. They say that if it does collapse, it will impact the *European Union* particularly heavily, and of course, the world's central banks are running out of levers to pull to try and adjust the economy and save the economy from its nosedive at the moment, so it's shaping up to be very, very dire situation all around, with global consequences, and it may well be the trigger for another global financial crisis. But we'll find out in January or soon after. The commentators are saying that we ought to be seeing even clearer messages probably by late December this year, that something's going to happen.

**Nyck:** Indeed.

Someone has just texted in: "Hi, guys. Reminds me of the saying, 'if you own a gun, you can rob a bank. If you own a bank, you can rob everyone.'"

**Steve:** That sounds right.

**Nyck:** In fact, I looked up this morning a piece by Robert Reich, who's an American economist, professor, author and political commentator. He was serving in the administrations of Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, also an adviser to Barack Obama's Economic Transition Advisory Board—here's a man that's a real heavy weight as part of the establishment. He says: "There are basically five ways to accumulate a billion dollars in America (it's probably also true in Germany). These are: 1. Profiting from a monopoly, 2. Insider trading, 3. Political payoffs, 4. Fraud and 5. Inheritance." So, when you

get people like that, of that sort of authority, stating what to many of us is kind of the bleeding obvious, you know that things are being revealed.

**Steve:** That's right, and wherever you're listening to us, whether it be live to our radio broadcast or listening to the podcast later, if you look in your local country, you'll probably find local signs of economic problems either approaching or happening right now. In recent news here in Australia, just on Friday, *ABC News* reported: "Insolvency practitioners offering a stark warning to Australian businesses, get your affairs in order, bad times are ahead" (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-11-15/business-is-booming-for-liquidators-and-that-is-a-bad-sign/11705492>). They're seeing record liquidations at the moment, which is a really bad indicator. There has been lots of lots and lots of news coming in.

I've been looking at a potential global financial crisis for a number of years, and in fact, I expected it to happen a couple of years ago, to be really honest. I was in the US at the *Arlington Institute* and we had a meeting with some folks from Washington who were compiling economic data for the US government. They were an independent organisation that was set up soon after the 2008 global financial crash, a non-profit organisation that decided they'd try and monitor the economic data more carefully to predict the next crash. If I remember rightly, this was, I think, 2016 that I was having a conversation with them, and they were saying that the indicators were as bad back then as they were immediately before the *2008 Global Financial Crisis*. That led me to think that we were very, very close back then, but markets are a tricky thing and it really comes down to sentiment. I think because things had been that bad before, people weren't quite so panicked and so they just waited to see it slide even further into the red before panicking, and it seems that panic is getting pretty close right now.

**Nyck:** It's crazy.

We'll take a break here. You are tuned to *Future Sense* with Steve McDonald and Nyck Jeanes.

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**Nyck:** You are tuned to *Future Sense* right now with Steve McDonald and myself, Nyck Jeanes through till eleven o'clock this morning, and Steve is going to be out of the door in about half an hour or so.

Last week's *Echo* [Byron Bay's local newspaper] has an editorial by guest editor Aidan Ricketts, who's well known in the area—an activist academic over there in Lismore—and he talks there about a thing called the "Overton window", which I hadn't heard of before (<https://www.echo.net.au/2019/11/race-bottom-australian-politics/>). I think it's relevant to today in terms of the political discourse and the window of opportunity of change that seems to be ever-closing on us in this country, and in many countries, with the inability to broaden the public discourse about how we are going to deal with the many issues that we have going forward into 2020 and beyond. "The Overton window is a range of ideas

tolerated in public discourse, also known as a window of discourse. It was named after Joseph Overton, who stated that an idea's political viability depends mainly on whether it falls within this range rather than on politicians' individual preferences," which is interesting. "According to Overton, the window contains the range of policies that a politician can recommend without appearing too extreme to gain or keep public office in the current climate of public opinion." Later on, a further commentator, Joshua Trevino, postulated that the degrees of acceptance of public ideas roughly fall in this sequence. First of all, they're unthinkable, secondly, they're radical, thirdly, they become acceptable, then they become sensible, then they become popular, and then they become policy. "Shifting the Overton Window involves proponents of policies outside the window, persuading the public to move and/or expand it. Proponents of current policies or similar ones within the window seek to convince people that policies outside it should be deemed unacceptable", and we seem to be really in that in that lock at the moment with most of our governments in Western cultures, that we're not really be able to broaden that discourse, whether it's about climate, for example, or economics even, even though the statistics are starting to mount up to show us that things aren't right. Things are looking shaky. Things are not easily determined anymore.

**Steve:** Of course, it depends which statistics you're looking at—the real ones or the fake ones—doesn't it?

**Nyck:** Yes, well, there is that, too. And of course, fake news is part of the Overton window, I guess you could say now, too.

**Steve:** That's right. It very much fits with the profile of the values shift that's taking place as we move beyond the Scientific-Industrial era and that way of thinking. We are actually going through a regressive values search and this is a normal change dynamic in a complex system where it will trend in the opposite direction before making a large change. As we come to the realisation that our Scientific-Industrial way of life is no longer working for us, the normal human response—and this is an evolutionary dynamic—is to look backwards to previous times when things were okay and values were working. We don't look back to the Scientific-Industrial era, we look back before that, and so our thinking and our values are regressing back to Agricultural era and even beyond in some cases. That's reflected in a rigid mindset where we look to absolute truths, and try and find absolute truths and hang onto those. That rigidity results in very, very narrow thinking and saying, 'no, no, I'm right, you're wrong'. There's an intolerance of shades of grey and intolerance of open discourse, really. We're certainly hearing that in many public debates right now, particularly climate, as you said. You can see the religious flavour to the words in public debate there. Even just the labels: believers or deniers. You're either a believer in climate change or denier. You could substitute the topic, whatever it is, for God ...



**Nyck:** Yes, well, I personally have a problem with the word denialist because, of course, it does inflect, infer, the Holocaust—Holocaust denialism—and when you put the words climate and denial together, I think that is definitely problematic. It's going a little too far.

**Steve:** Yes, it's the result of people really clutching at straws, trying to get their point across. We're just going to talk a little bit about the weather now.

**Nyck:** Like everybody else on the planet, just about. Or not.

**Steve:** That's right. We have a recording that we play sometimes, which is "the host of this programme is not a doctor". We actually need a new one, Nyck, if you could talk to the station.

**Nyck:** Ah, we'll recorded it. Well, we have this one here:

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That covers it.

**Steve:** That's good. I like that. We don't really need one that says 'the host of this programme isn't a climate scientist'. Anyway, as you might anticipate, our perspective here is not necessarily in line with the mainstream hysteria around this issue. But what we are really interested in is looking at what's actually happening in the world right now and identifying those emerging things which are signs of what's to come for the whole world. Through an understanding of change dynamics, we know that when we go through transformational change on a large scale, there are small pockets of society that lead the change. They start thinking in more complex ways, their values shift, and they are the pathfinders for the rest of us. By looking for those little pockets and with the benefit of the wonderful research of Dr Clare W. Graves who studied this stuff for many, many years, we have a reasonable knack of identifying where those real trends lie, and one of the trends we're seeing at the moment is, as Nyck just pointed out, a strong trend in public narrative, which includes a lot of fear-fuelled debate. Of course, we know that the human brain behaves differently when it becomes fearful—we tend to shut down our logical thinking processes and become more emotional in our expression—and we're certainly seeing that in some of the key spokespeople around the world talking about climate issues. Another trend in the public debate is the unscientific use of science, saying things like 'the science is settled', 'the science is closed', when, in fact, if something's settled or closed, it's actually not science, it's dogma. Science is always an open discussion about what's happening right now, and the evidence that we have compared to new emerging evidence and changing theories is a constant thing in science. So any time anyone's trying to shut down debate and is using science as an excuse, it's not science.

**Nyck:** Currently, with all these issues, I think, a lot of that has to do with complexity and the unwillingness to receive and accept a greater degree of complexity in these kind of debates; that there are many other factors that may not be included. We don't know all the evidence, we're dealing with a complex system when it comes to the weather, to climate, which is, despite our amazing science on this planet—yes—is pretty well beyond our ken to truly understand right now.

**Steve:** Yes, and the public narrative that we're seeing at the moment—this rigidity in the debate—can be explained by this regressive values search that I was talking about earlier, where we're going back to older values which tend to be more black-and-white. There's also some suggestion, and this is simply speculation on my part, that the public debate may be manipulated by the old paradigm powers to serve some agenda that they have, but we don't have any necessarily concrete evidence on that. But there's certainly a pattern of thinking displayed in the linear trend being presented in the public debate and that linear trend does not represent leading-edge thinking at all. In fact, it represents ignorance of the nature of complex systems change, which is never linear in its path. So there's a whole bunch of things going on there, pointing to the need to remain curious. We're not pretending that we know exactly what's going to happen, unfortunately—I wish we did—but what we do know is that we need to be curious and we need to be looking at all the evidence that is available to us so that we can continue to adjust our understanding over time.

What's happening right now is that there's a lot of cold weather in North America once again, and there are records being broken over there. I have a report here from [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) about something called the *Accumulated Winter Season Severity Index*, which is put out by the *Midwest Regional Climate Center* in the USA. They're looking at the current early cold weather being experienced in North America, similar to last winter, and they've reported that over 70 cities from the Great Basin and Rockies to the Plains, Midwest and Eastern Great Lakes have seen an extreme start to the winter in the USA and it's not officially winter there yet. So that's a pretty big indicator—over 70 cities reporting extreme weather. This index, also known as the *Winter Misery Index*, takes into account the intensity and persistence of cold weather, the frequency and amount of snow, and the amount and persistence of snow on the ground. Wind and mixed precipitation such as freezing rain are not a part of the index. It uses five categories: mild, moderate, average, severe and extreme, and they're reporting extreme this year. So there's a whole bunch of records being broken there and this is a bit of a repeat of what happened last winter.

We've been talking a fair bit this year on the show about the crop-growing season in North America being cut short due to the early onset of winter and the late onset of summer, and many, many consequences on the agricultural industry, including frozen ground at the time when farmers normally start planning their summer crops, and floods from the meltwater, meaning that they can't get access to the fields, and then late planting, which means that the crops don't have enough time to provide a normal yield, and consequent shortages. I think probably the largest reported shortage from last growing season was in corn.

**Nyck:** One of the staple crops of the of the world at the moment.

**Steve:** It is, but it wasn't the only one.

This cold weather that we're seeing is in line with what we would expect to see during what they call *Grand Solar Minimum*. Our sun is just entering right now, a period called *Grand Solar Minimum*, and what that means is that the sun is going quiet in terms of its activity. This happens every solar cycle, of course, which run roughly about 11 years but there's a variation—they're not always exactly 11 years long—and we see that raising of solar activity during every solar cycle. But then every 3 or 400 years, there's something called the *Grand Solar Minimum*, which is a larger cycle, over and above the normal, shorter cycles, and we're just entering a grand solar minimum right now. When the sun's activity reduces, what it means is that there are fewer sunspots, and the solar wind which normally is projected over the Earth from the sun and provides protection in a number of ways to the Earth, particularly from the impact of cosmic rays from outer space, and that typically impacts our climate and weather. The things that we expect to see and have seen during previous grand solar minimum periods are an increase in cold weather, even to the extent of mini ice ages during previous periods, such as the *Dalton* and *Maunder Minimums* which occurred during normal solar cycles, not during the *Grand Solar Minimum*; and also drought. It's not a linear trend where it just gets cold and snowy everywhere.

**Nyck:** Yes, I think it's important that we're not saying that, because clearly the extremes are becoming more extreme. That's what's going on.

**Steve:** Exactly. Extremes in both directions during the change and that's normal for change in a complex system—that you get performance spikes in both directions. During periods of mini ice ages, for example in extreme cold, typically it doesn't get cold everywhere on the planet. There are parts of the planet that have shown warming during times when the northern hemisphere, for example, was experiencing a mini ice age, and certainly—and I'm guessing this is because a lot of moisture from the Earth's atmosphere gets locked up in snow and ice—there are periods of extreme drought and we're seeing that happening right now. It's looking like Australia may be facing an extended drought now along with other countries, and certainly that's been contributing to the widespread fires that we've been seeing, not just in Australia, but also overseas in places like California. For those of you who might not be monitoring the news in Australia, we're in the middle of a bushfire crisis here.

**Nyck:** Much earlier than usual and quite extreme across the east coast of Australia and also in Western Australia.

**Steve:** Yes, and in the last week or two, there have been 500 homes lost in bushfires in New South Wales alone, which is our state here. It's extreme weather and this grand solar minimum period is forecast to last up until around 2055, so this is not a short-term thing

that we're facing here, and it's something that we are going to have to adapt to in serious ways.

**Nyck:** And I guess that's our point here, is that rather than looking at the evidence for some sort of linear change—and we would suggest that perhaps you should broaden your thinking if you think that way—we're going to have to adapt on this planet to a much more complex and extreme range of events that occur that impact us in all sorts of ways, and to assume that one direction that we need to go in is the only way to go, is perhaps rather naive at this point in time. We actually need to start taking in the much bigger picture and the much more long-range picture, which is not something we do very easily on this planet, especially now in our First World countries in recent times in the Industrial era.

**Steve:** That's right. It's a very complex issue, which is further complicated by the use of computer models to try and predict what's happening with the climate. Those computer models are simply the result of someone's ideas being programmed into a computer, and then the computer runs its programme and produces a result. They are quite disconnected from the reality of what's actually happening, and so it's becoming more and more important to look at what's actually happening in the day-to-day weather reports and then draw conclusions from that; and looking at, as we've just mentioned, things like an unusually cold winter in Europe and North America last year and now signs of what could be another unusually cold winter. I do believe that they've had to dig into some food reserves, and particularly probably corn in the US, as a result of last winter's crop losses and you only need a few years of this happening for it to develop into a serious crisis.

**Nyck:** Of course, a lot of those crops are grown to feed animals for human consumption, so that's a whole equation that will change significantly over the coming years should these should these effects occur, as Steve is articulating here.

**Steve:** And there are some predictions, for example from Professor Valentina Zharkova who we've mentioned a few times previously on the programme, of global food shortages by around 2028 that will require major preparation to avoid loss of life and extreme hardship on a global scale. It's just becoming extremely important to be open-minded and curious and to take note of what is actually happening in day-to-day reports rather than computer predictions which may or may not be accurate.

**Nyck:** And of course, the response, which we often talk about here, is about local resilience. How can you firm up? Can you make your own community resilient; your own source of food, your own source of water, all those necessities? We're a long way behind. The value of water on this planet has been completely underestimated as we know. It's been used and bought and sold in all sorts of various ways which are not conducive to long-term strategy

for watering the planet or the plants upon it, and we're now in a structure where that is at a crisis point as well.

Let's take another break. You've got to go pretty soon.

**Steve:** I do. Time flies.

**Nyck:** Do you to have to go now?

**Steve:** No, I'll come back for a few more minutes.

**Nyck:** All right.

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**Nyck:** Thanks for joining us here and thanks for a couple of texts coming in. We'll come to those if need be. Steve is leaving in about 10 minutes so we're going to wrap up this particular little piece this morning here.

A piece from *Al Jazeera* from a couple of weeks ago was talking about street protests around the world, as we all know, so many of them going on. *Al Jazeera* reports thus: "The alarming spread of street protests and civil unrest across the world in recent weeks looms large on the radar of global financial markets (we were talking about *Deutsche Bank* before) with investors wary that the resulting pressures on stretched government budgets will be one of many consequences. Money managers and risk analysts seeking a common thread between often unconnected sources of popular anger from Hong Kong to Beirut and Cairo to Santiago, reckon the unrest is particularly worrying following years of modest economic growth and relatively low joblessness. If, as many fear, the world is slipping back into its first recession in more than a decade, then the root causes of restive streets will only deepen and force embattled governments to loosen purse strings further to find better employment, education, health care and other services to placate protesters."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2019/10/24/civil-unrest-around-the-world-is-impacting-financial-markets>

**Steve:** Very interesting, and if you just tuned in, we're talking about warning signs for 2020, so indicators of problems ahead as we approach the end of the year now in 2019. We've been speaking about potential economic disruption, particularly early in 2020, and perhaps the collapse of *Deutsche Bank* being a major trigger for that. We've also been talking about the extreme weather, which is nothing new, of course—it's been in the news a lot lately—and it seems that there's more to come with an unusually early start to winter in North America; and as you just mentioned, Nyck, increasing civil unrest. That seems to be another trend that may continue next year.

Hong Kong, of course, has been very much in the news. There was a recent report suggesting that it was close to collapse in the mainstream media. Whether that's true or not, it's hard to say. As I've said a couple of times on the show, I think it's quite likely that there are foreign powers stirring the pot in Hong Kong. I've got no doubt that there's a lot of dissatisfaction and unrest there with proposed changes being put forward by the Chinese government, but also, I think, given that there's a trade war and quite possibly a cyber war and other versions of unseen warfare going on between superpowers at the moment—particularly China and the US—if I was one of those superpowers and I was wanting to cause trouble, then I would be looking for seeds of trouble that can be watered and nurtured, and certainly Hong Kong is a great example of that, so if there's not some foreign intervention stirring the pot in Hong Kong at the moment, I would eat my hat if I had one.

**Nyck:** Well the *Hang Seng*, one of Asia's most prominent share markets, is down 12% since the protests there started. It stabilised slightly, but there you go—there's a clear, strong, powerful economic result of those protests which benefits somebody out there, for sure.

**Steve:** That's right. And of course, that's not the only centre of civil unrest around the world. There's been widespread protests, particularly organised by *Extinction Rebellion* (<https://rebellion.global>), calling for action on climate change, and there's no reason why that won't continue into next year. There's also an alarming report that I just picked up from Sweden—a report of grenades being used in street violence in Sweden. They are apparently surplus munitions which have filtered into the country from problems in Eastern Europe—warfare in Eastern Europe. This particular report talks about one particular gentleman who was riding his bicycle home with his wife and saw an object on the ground, stopped and picked it up, and it turned out to be an M75 hand grenade manufactured in Yugoslavia, and it exploded and killed him. Apparently it's not the first time—apparently there's been 30-something grenades turn up in Sweden, being used in street violence there, which is really alarming.

**Nyck:** Well, maybe it's not this, but I think one of the things that's been in the media a little bit in regards to Sweden in particular, having received many Middle Eastern refugees in the last few years—and there's an incredible increase in refugees coming from all over the place, but particularly from cultures and countries which don't, understandably, have the same cultural stability as a country like Sweden—and the interface between those cultures becomes problematic and probably has been ignored or certainly has not been dealt with or not faced adequately by those generous countries like Germany and Sweden, and some others who've received many refugees in this time.

**Steve:** Certainly Sweden's far right wing party has been blaming the problems on liberal immigration policy, and even President Trump has weighed in, saying that Sweden is having problems like they never thought possible due to large numbers of immigrants. What the truth is, who knows? But certainly police are attributing it to gang violence and a failure of

integration. I just found some numbers in the article here: 45 grenades were seized by police—going back as far as 2015, that report is from—and then in 2017, there was a slight decrease: 39 were seized and 21 were detonated, but I mean, that's alarming, 21 grenades being detonated.

**Nyck:** When you see it in a country like Sweden, yes. You see it in Iraq or Afghanistan or countries like that, of course, but ...

**Steve:** Let's hope it's not a sign of things to come, but certainly, generally I think we can quite reasonably expect a continuing increase in civil unrest around the world next year, and, of course, this all harks back to the values shift that's going on as a result of our transition out of the Scientific-Industrial era into what's next. That transition is essentially being driven by increasing complexity and the tension that creates within our life conditions, which is driving people to call for change and to want change.

**Nyck:** Yes. Well, we're going to have to let you go, I think.

**Steve:** Yes, I'm going to have to slip away. It's not always we have a show that focuses on the downside of the change, but I think it's important not to ignore that, and certainly what we've discussed today—impending financial issues, it seems, extreme weather, and increasing civil unrest—are things that we need to keep in mind and we need to start to think about adapting to and dealing with in different ways on a global scale.

**Nyck:** Excellent. Thanks, Steve. We'll be with you next week and a report from the Governor-General will be exciting, and a one-off here.

**Steve:** That's right. I'll try to get a photo.

**Nyck:** Yes, try to get a photo. Fantastic.

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