

Webisode 57DHAFG December 18 2025 In Gloster Mississippi Everything is worse since Drax arrived

In Webisode 57DHAFG [0 RAWSEP View](#) [1 Gloster Mississippi](#) Everything is worse since Drax arrived [2 Covid Vaccines](#) Nobody Puts Baby in this case COVID 19 Vaccines in a Black Box Attempts to block access to COVID vaccines have once again failed as the government by the worst people folds under too much critical pressure [3 Medicine](#) [4 Nature](#) [5 Political Persuasiveness](#) [6 RFK Junior](#) Lack of Knowledge of Science and Medicine [7 Trump Failing Economy](#) [8 Wisconsin](#) [9 Chile](#) [10 United Kingdom](#) [11 Ukraine](#) Main Content

[0 RAWSEP View](#) All roads lead to the European decision to unfreeze Russian assets to aid Ukraine in its defense against Russian aggression Thursday December 18 2025 is the decisive day and the editor of RAWSEP hopes that despite roadblocks such as a Russian lawsuit and reluctance of some countries to take that step that Europe will successfully unfreeze those Russian assets and use them to decisively defeat Russia on the battlefield in the near future Trump economic failures hurt all Americans and his economic failures are built on tariffs that hurt the entire world RFK Junior blocking or delaying vaccines hurts all Americans and also hurts worldwide health The words of Thomas Paine from 250 years ago inspire No Kings rallies and more actions of resistance to American dictatorship The attempts at education in science and medicine to MAHA populace may seem useless in the face of ignorant rejection of science and medicine but Doctor Mike is making the attempt in 2025 The attempt to provide a snapshot of where we are on December 17 2025 follows

[1 Mississippi](#) Air Pollution related to Wood Burning Industry Everything is worse since Drax came here US residents say wood pellet plant harming their town Residents of Gloster Mississippi are suing plant that exports wood pellets to UK and Europe [RAWSEP Top Excerpt](#) In April 2025 amid complaints from residents the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality MDEQ denied Drax permission to increase its emissions [The MDEQ reversal of that decision in October allowing the Drax Gloster mill to become a major source of hazardous air pollutants triggered the lawsuit by Gloster residents against the company](#) [RAWSEP View](#) Although the lawsuit by Gloster residents is not directly industrial wood burning emissions in the UK or about indoor residential wood burning emissions of concern to RAWSEP this lawsuit points out that communities next to mills supporting industrial wood burning such as the pellet mills of Mississippi are subjected to specific types of toxic emissions such as volatile organic compounds VOCs from milling trees into wood pellets intended for burning in the UK at a Drax industrial wood burning plant This is allowed because subsidies are given for wood burning as renewable energy which is lumped in with truly clean renewables such as wind and solar as categories which receive subsidies In reality burning wood emits at least 2 point 8 times the CO2 and PM 2 point 5 as the fossil fuel coal burning CO2 from wood burning contributes to global warming and climate change PM 2 point 5 particulate matter of 2 point 5 micrometer size is the perfect size to infiltrate the human lung setting off a cascade of human health problems and early deaths Wood burning emissions data is also erased from calculations of whether each nation in the world is meeting its climate goals [Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization](#) The Guardian December 17 2025 Amite Bioenergy mill opened in 2014 by British energy giant Drax emits large and sometimes illegal quantities of air pollutants including methanol acrolein and formaldehyde which are linked to cancers and other serious illnesses When I go out I can hardly catch my breath a Gloster Mississippi woman said Everything is worse since Drax came here The facility [churns out billions of wood pellets](#) each year to meet surging overseas demand for [sustainable biomass a renewable alternative to coal](#) Now Gloster residents are suing Drax alleging that the company unlawfully exposed people to massive amounts of toxic pollutants according to the October filing Drax one of the biggest players in the world in the booming biomass industry [has turned the UK largest coal power station a mile wide complex in rural Yorkshire into what is essentially an immense wood stove fueled with Mississippi and Louisiana pine](#) The company whose Yorkshire plant is among the largest [single carbon emitters](#) in the UK has faced scrutiny and lawsuits in the UK for pollution and workplace safety violations Its operations in the US are also beginning to draw legal challenges This case is about holding a multibillion dollar foreign corporation accountable for poisoning a small Mississippi community said an attorney representing the group When the Gloster plant opened many in the low income majority Black town

of 850 people were optimistic that it would revitalize the local economy. But some residents say it has brought little more than noise, dust, and toxic air. Pellet exports from the US have quintupled, growing from 2 million tons in 2012 to about 10.5 million tons in 2023, according to the US Industrial Pellet Association. Most pellets are sent to the UK and Europe where they are classified as a renewable energy source on par with solar and wind, making wood burning eligible for massive subsidies, low interest loans, and other government incentives. But researchers say the drying, crushing, and cooling processes at the mills emit air pollution that could be contributing to the health problems of nearby residents. Air pollution is magnitudes higher in Gloster, especially with VOCs (volatile organic compounds), said a Brown University epidemiologist. She and a team of researchers set up air pollution monitors in the town and found clouds of VOCs concentrated around the mill and neighboring residential areas. In 2020, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, following years of prodding from environmental groups, found the Drax Gloster mill was emitting an average of 796 tons of VOCs per year, more than three times the limit allowed under the mill permit, and fined the company 2.5 million dollars. Louisiana officials too found that Drax had been breaking several of its air quality rules and in 2022 reached a settlement in which Drax paid 3.2 million dollars, admitted no wrongdoing. The settlement was the largest in more than a decade for Louisiana environmental officials, but it appears to be the extent of any serious efforts to rein in the Drax pollution in Louisiana, said an attorney who, when working with the Environmental Integrity Project, reviewed the Drax pollution history in Mississippi and Louisiana. In late 2024, Drax agreed to pay 225 thousand dollars for exceeding the Gloster mill limits for hazardous air pollutants, particularly for methanol. In April 2025, amid complaints from residents, the MDEQ denied Drax permission to increase its emissions. Its reversal of that decision in October, allowing the Drax Gloster mill to become a major source of hazardous air pollutants, triggered the lawsuit against the company. The 6 million dollars in penalties over the past four years are a drop in the bucket for Drax. The company raked in 1.4 billion dollars in profits in 2024 and about 1.3 billion dollars in 2023, according to the Drax adjusted earnings reports. Drax is so profitable and so subsidized that it powers through all of this. The fines do not hurt their bottom line. Air monitors installed detected unexpected spikes in VOCs during the night, something that lines up with complaints of residents of foul odors and difficulty breathing after dark. This could indicate pollution dumping during certain hours. The closer children lived to the mill, the heavier they were. You do not want your kids playing outside because the air is polluted. If they are staying inside, how are they getting physical activity? The company recently expanded a mill in Alabama, established a North American headquarters in Monroe, Louisiana, and opened an office in Houston to lead its carbon capture and sequestration enterprises. Over the past six years, the Urania mill alone has produced enough pellets to fill the New Orleans Superdome nearly twice. Yet several residents in Gloster and Urania said that output has not revitalized their economies. Each of the three large Drax mills in Louisiana and Mississippi employs between 70 and 80 people, a fraction of the workforce supported by many past mills. In Gloster, only 15 percent of the Drax employees reside in the community, according to the company. Related Stories: Wood pellet plant in US broke air pollution rules again. The Guardian, May 29, 2023. Burning imported wood in Drax power plant does not make sense, says Kwarteng. August 11, 2022. Drax to double wood pellet production with biomass firm purchase. March 31, 2021.

2 Covid Vaccines: Black Box threatened Nobody Puts Baby in this case COVID-19 Vaccines in a Black Box. Attempts to block access to COVID vaccines have once again failed as the government, by the worst people, folds under too much critical pressure. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Doctor Angela Rasmussen, December 17, 2025. A CNN reporter alleged that US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under Trump appointed Marty Makary was likely going to put a black box warning label on COVID vaccines. A Black Box Warning is the strongest warning label of the FDA, intended to inform both patients and prescribers of serious risks associated with taking that drug. Putting a black box warning on COVID vaccines would almost certainly deter people from getting vaccinated and reduce vaccine uptake overall. This was completely on brand for the MAHA approach to drug regulation: use any administrative trickery at your disposal to strip Americans of their access to lifesaving vaccines. As for why this was even being considered, it was the result of Senior Advisor for Clinical Science and newly promoted Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) Acting Director Tracy Beth Høeg, supposedly uncovered data proving that

COVID vaccines killed at least ten children This mystery data which nobody has seen or verified compelled Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research CBER Director Vinay Prasad to feign horror and write a long memo announcing a sweeping restructuring of all vaccine approval processes This is premature considering my colleague Jeremy Faust MD reported that the FDA own analysis did not find 10 deaths and may have found none Fortunately today FDA Commissioner Marty Makary said that no black box warning was forthcoming for COVID vaccines at this time The Makary stated reason was that Prasad thinks maybe the again unverified and probably nonexistent deaths were due to the short interval between the first and second doses used in 2020 There is no evidence that these deaths even occurred much less any that suggests a short 2 3 month interval between doses was somehow deadlier than receiving an updated annual shot This is both encouraging and not It is good that FDA is not going to slap a black box warning on COVID vaccines based on what so far amounts to child death vibes detected by Høeg It is also good that this decision appears to have been made after negative press attention But it is not a relief because they will likely just use a different strategy What goes in a black box? Black box warnings are not typically used as a way to discourage people from taking a particular type of medication They are evidence based warnings which mean that they are backed by data that is thoroughly reviewed by FDA experts prior to issuing it They are meant to help inform health care providers who will benefit from a drug and whether those benefits are outweighed by the risks They help patients make an informed choice about their own health care For example here is the black box warning on Valium This tells people that abusing valium or other benzodiazepines can lead to addiction and can kill you if you take too much or mix them with other intoxicating drugs like opioids or booze Despite claims of radical transparency and Gold Standard Science the FDA has been completely opaque They do not want to show their evidence that vaccines are dangerous because they do not have any They tell you that FDA had to be reformed because it was so biased and kept too much behind closed doors but not that FDA is being led by three unelected and grossly incompetent political operatives By refusing to allow a MAHA narrative to go unchallenged we can stop regulatory decisions that will decrease access to vaccines By exposing efforts to unfairly deprive people of vaccines we can deprive MAHA of opportunities to do so by demanding the one thing they fear more than anything else accountability

**3A** Medicine Not Maha untruths but medical research based on the scientific method Controlling Blood Sugar Cut Heart Disease Risk in Half Study Says People who brought their blood glucose down to a normal level had a lower risk of death from heart disease or hospitalization for heart failure after 20 years Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times December 15 2025 People with prediabetes who get their blood sugar under control may cut their risk of death from heart disease or heart failure by half according to new research Prediabetes which is estimated to affect 38 percent of US adults is a condition in which blood sugar levels are elevated but do not meet the threshold for diabetes Lowering blood glucose levels is only one component of reducing cardiovascular disease risk People still need to maintain a healthy weight follow a good diet and exercise Prediabetes is the canary in the coal mine and often a sign of broader metabolic dysfunction

**3B** Medicine New York City RAWSEP View Not Maha untruths but medical research based on the scientific method From the article headline Flu Cases Skyrocket in New York City Earlier Than Expected The city and surrounding region have some of the highest levels of flu like illness in the United States Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization New York Times December 16 2025 Flu season has arrived early this year in New York City with cases climbing dramatically during the past month New York City and the surrounding areas including Long Island and North Jersey had some of the highest levels of flu like illness in the United States as of December 6 according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Emergency rooms across the city reported a marked rise in flu cases starting the third week of November About 22 percent of New Yorkers outside the city have received a flu shot this season according to state data In New York City just over a quarter of children 6 months and older have received the flu shot this season The New York City Health Department says that there has been a 6 point 5 percent decline in the number of flu shots administered to children compared with the same period last year No figures on adult vaccination levels in New York City were available

**3C** Medicine and Congress Healthcare Vote Top House Democrat demands immediate vote on extending healthcare subsidies Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization Democratic House minority leader Hakeem Jeffries has called on Mike Johnson the Republican speaker to immediately allow a vote on legislation to extend Affordable Care Act tax credits for another three years Mike Johnson should bring the bill to the floor immediately Jeffries wrote on X after a discharge petition to force a vote on the measure over the Johnson objections received the 218 signatures necessary for its success thanks to four Republican defectors It is unclear when Johnson will bring the bill up for a vote While he must do so within a certain period of time the House is also set to go on recess after tomorrow through the end of the year and the measure could wind up being considered in January at which point the ACA tax credits will have expired Mike Johnson the House speaker has insisted he has not lost control of the House after four swing district Republicans joined with Democrats to force a vote on extending the soon to expire ACA tax credits for three years The beleaguered speaker told reporters earlier I have not lost control of the House

**3D** Medicine and Healthcare failure UnitedHealth reduced hospitalizations for nursing home seniors Now it faces wrongful death claims A collage combining imagery and documents related to healthcare and insurance Illustration Angelica Alzona Guardian Design The company says it is protecting nursing home residents by curbing unnecessary hospital transfers Whistleblowers allege cost cutting tactics have endangered the elderly Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The Guardian December 17 2025 Three nursing home residents died because employees of the American healthcare giant UnitedHealth Group helped delay or deny them critical hospital care two pending lawsuits and a complaint to state authorities have alleged The three cases involve a UnitedHealth partnership initiative that places medical staff from the company direct care unit Optum inside nursing homes to care for residents insured by the company insurance arm UnitedHealth says one of the initiative goals is to protect patients by reducing unnecessary hospital admissions Those are admissions the insurance giant would otherwise have to pay for In Georgia the family of a woman filed a lawsuit alleging that the 58 year old died because Optum and her nursing home failed to hospitalize her for hours after she started foaming at the mouth and appeared to be having a seizure In Ohio the family of a retiree filed a lawsuit claiming that the 70 year old died after Optum and her nursing home failed to send her to the hospital though she had suffered a traumatic head injury and began vomiting In New York a physician assistant alleged in a complaint to state authorities that a 63 year old nursing home resident died due to gross negligence by an Optum employee The employee refused to hospitalize the man despite his kidney failure according to text messages he says he shared with state investigators

**4** Nature and Science How the Pandemic Lockdowns Changed the Beak of a Songbird For ecologists the Covid 19 pandemic has presented a remarkable natural experiment in what can happen to wild animals when humans stay home Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times December 15 2025 About 20 years ago the dark eyed junco a forest dwelling sparrow began to colonize urban Los Angeles They rapidly diverged from their wildland counterparts adopting different breeding behaviors and displaying different physical traits including shorter wings The urban juncos also developed shorter stubbier beaks a shift that may have been driven by a change in diet But when the UCLA campus shut down during the pandemic something remarkable happened The beaks of juncos born on campus reverted to their wildland shape Several years later after the pandemic related restrictions had been lifted the distinctive urban beak shape returned researchers reported in a new study on Monday For ecologists the Covid 19 pandemic represented a remarkable natural experiment an opportunity to study what wild animals did when humans stayed home During what has become known as the anthropause mountain lions crept closer to cities and sea turtles ventured closer to shore while birds lowered the volume of their songs scientists have found But the new study which was published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences is the first to link the pandemic lockdowns to a change in the physical form of a wild animal population We were really shocked The findings highlight how deeply embedded humans are in natural ecosystems and how rapidly our actions can reshape other species In their natural forest habitats

dark eyed juncos survive primarily on seeds and insects. But those that live on the UCLA campus have diets that more closely resemble those of the average college student. Things like cookies bread and pizza. But Covid 19 restrictions sharply limited human activity on campus for most of 2020 and 2021. Bird beaks began to change. There was a time lag to the phenomenon. The juncos born in the spring of 2020 shortly after the restrictions first went into effect had the standard urban style beaks. But those born in 2021 and 2022 had the longer slimmer beaks more typical of the wildland juncos. The urban beak shape returned in junco chicks born in 2023 and 2024. The researchers suspect that it was a case of rapid adaptive evolution. When human food became scarce on campus birds with traditional wildland shaped beaks might have been better positioned to survive on natural food sources like seeds and more likely to reproduce the following year.

**5 Political Persuasiveness** The essay *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine has long been revered for its bold expression of democratic ideals and its plain spoken language. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The New York Times December 17 2025. Thomas Paine published *Common Sense* in January 1776 to help persuade the 13 British colonies to leave monarchy behind and declare independence as they did the following July. Two hundred and fifty years later the fiery pamphlet written by Paine remains as relevant as ever. Last spring and this fall demonstrators protesting the actions of President Trump and his administration copied a famous line onto placards. In America the Law Is King! to warn Americans against the idea of kingly rule the most fundamental point Paine wished to make. What we now call the American Revolution began on April 19 1775 when British regulars exchanged fire with local militiamen in Lexington and Concord after which patriots pursued them all the way back to Boston. By July George Washington was installed across the river in Cambridge as commander in chief of the Continental Army. For months it was not clear what the ultimate purpose of this conflict would be. Many delegates at the Continental Congress still favored reconciliation with the king. Until Paine published *Common Sense* in Philadelphia on Jan 9 1776 an irresistible argument for independence had yet to be made to the general public. Washington likely received a copy as soon as a horseman could carry it up. *Common Sense* went on to become an extraordinary best seller and arguably the most important pamphlet in American history. Paine claimed that 120 thousand copies were sold in three months. An estimate puts the number at no more than 75 thousand within a year among a population of three million people. In place of a king skeptics wondered who or what would rule? Paine proposed a charter that colonists would write and authorize which would safeguard certain rights and freedoms for the people. The change of authority that Paine sought is affirmed every time a federal official swears an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States rather than to kneel to a king. Paine was successful partly because the style of his writing was as revolutionary as his ideas. *Common Sense* created a new political language. Paine drew heavily on John Locke Jean Jacques Rousseau and Montesquieu but without ever naming them or quoting their works directly. Paine translated their notions into succinct strident and deceptively simple sentences that everyday readers could understand. The first section of *Common Sense* narrates the origins of government with a classic Enlightenment experiment asking What was it like in the state of nature before governments were instituted among people? Let us suppose a small number of persons settled in some sequestered part of the earth in a state of natural liberty. Paine wrote sounding like a schoolteacher. Then kings arrive like snakes in the garden. Mankind being originally equals Paine went on their equality could only be destroyed by some subsequent circumstance. Look at the present race of kings he declared and we should find the first of them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang. Paine used imagery he thought they could relate to. Ripping up monarchy by the roots he asserted that William the Conqueror did not establish an honorable origin for English kings when he invaded in 1066. This frank and gritty language is from the tavern not the library. Paine who was born in England and did not arrive in the colonies until 1774 slung insults at George III whom he called the Royal Brute of Britain. In his depiction of the crimes of the king we see another reason *Common Sense* was so effective. Paine recognized the urgency of his historical moment. This assertion retroactively established the birth date and place of the new nation as the previous April at Lexington and Concord. Paine drew a line in the sand and insisted the line had already been crossed. Among his challenges was to activate the outrage and sympathy of people living in 13 discrete colonies not yet united as a nation to make what was happening in Massachusetts matter in Georgia. Paine tried to imagine what a truly united country might feel

like Readers were meant to feel that they shared an interest with all colonists up and down the Eastern Seaboard Like many of the founders Paine offered a vision for the nation that was in some ways quite limited as was his notion of which kinds of people deserved sympathy The anger of Paine was against the William the Conqueror seizure of power against the consent of the English natives Paine did not extend equal sympathy to enslaved people of African descent although he was less supportive of slavery than many of his peers The Paine insistence that 18th century Americans can begin the world over again casts the complicated history of a people as a matter to be erased rather than confronted As the nation prepares to mark the 250th anniversary of independence it is crucial to ask not whether Common Sense is perfect but rather what kind of wisdom it offers at this moment In 1776 Paine looked toward the future Right after Paine declared In free countries the law ought to be king Laws in the United States have often been unjust and just laws have often been unequally enforced Perhaps Paine understood that the idealistic political experiment he hoped to help launch would always be a work in progress

**6A** RFK Junior **RAWSEP View** Lack of Knowledge of Science and Medicine versus Doctor Mike representing Medicine Not Maha untruths but medical research based on the scientific method **From the article headline** Anti Vaccine Influencers Are Only Getting Stronger **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The New York Times December 17 2025 An illustration featuring a man with a stethoscope handing a microphone to a person wearing a MAHA hat and a T shirt with Vax crossed out and holding a book titled Quackery 101 A woman is between them with her hands raised as if to stop the handoff This month Doctor Mikhail Varshavski the New Jersey based family medicine physician and medical social media influencer better known as Doctor Mike appeared on the popular YouTube channel Jubilee As part of its series Surrounded he debated a bunch of RFK Junior supporters one at a time He started with the claim that RFK Junior is decimating public health and should step down as secretary of health and human services and then the RFK Junior supporters challenged Doctor Mike for almost two hours He does a magnificent job of calmly and clearly explaining the benefits of putting fluoride in tap water as well as the basics of the scientific method From my perspective The supporters of RFK Junior do not have a good grasp of the science behind the points they are arguing and while there is truth to some of the facts they recite these facts are warped beyond recognition or taken out of context While the RFK Junior fans are very skeptical of Big Pharma they do not extend that skepticism to Big Wellness even though Doctor Mike encourages them to In spite of the excellent performance of Doctor Mike most of the RFK Junior fans appear inured to the reasoning of the doctor digging deeper into their own beliefs and support for the man they call Bobby In a clip that Jubilee posted to Instagram one of the RFK Junior supporters involved in the debate jumped into the comments to continue to spar with people and disagree with Doctor Mike Watch the whole episode I think he got destroyed He did not deny any facts I brought In June I wrote a column in which I suggested that public debates like these could be a useful way to rebuild the trust of Americans in vaccines I thought of this as a kind of sunshine effect Encourage these views to be aired in the open where they can be debunked directly But I changed my mind about it this year While I commend Doctor Mike for fighting the good fight I no longer believe that debating the RFK Junior Make America Healthy Again stalwarts is going to build trust back up This kind of format in which **someone with real scientific expertise is put on the same level as an impassioned layperson** is not going to work as long as RFK Junior is in office As of December 12 there were 126 confirmed cases of measles in an ongoing outbreak in South Carolina and 119 of those cases were among unvaccinated people Almost all of the people affected were under 18 The United States is on track to lose its measles elimination status While a vast majority of parents are still giving their children basic childhood inoculations **anti vaccine influencers continue to chip away at the trust of the public** According to a KFF Washington Post survey of 2716 parents polled between July and August Nearly half 45 percent of parents who have skipped or delayed vaccines for their children aside from Covid 19 or flu say they have seen content related to vaccines for children online

**6B** RFK Junior Lack of knowledge of Science and Medicine When Patients Lose Faith in Medicine **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The New York Times December 17 2025 To the Editor Re My Patient Was Making a Fatal Decision and I Could not Stop Him Opinion guest essay

December 5 2025 As a physician I admire the doctor writing sensitively on the challenges and dilemmas physicians face in this case dealing with patients and families who have a deep distrust of doctors and medicine It seems apparent that the young man who refused the advice of the Doctor to allow the implantation of a pacemaker would have refused any available life prolonging intervention But this story is not just about this patient it illustrates something larger going on in our society as well In his 2004 book *How Mumbo Jumbo Conquered the World* describes the flight from reason that was taking place in every area of human endeavor By now 21 years later conspiracy theories and nonsense have become so pervasive that one is obliged to frequently reorient sanity **Anger at authority along with its attendant acting out of hostile fantasies is no longer the sole province of toddlers it has become thanks to our current political environment accepted and normalized** Letter To the Editor Being a physician would be easy if patients always followed our advice But the right of a parent to choose includes making a decision different from the one the physician believes is best RAWSEP Interjection What if a parent makes the decision to not vaccinate their children? Is it ethical for a physician to make no effort to change the mind of the parent? **Back to the article excerpt** The hospital can be overwhelming to patients If a patient refused a procedure I recommended I acted within the limits that patient allowed Asking family members to intervene was complicated At times the family members argued among themselves or insisted that I follow their wishes and the situation became messier Death is a tragedy

**7A** Trump Failing Economy US lost 105 thousand jobs in October and added 64 thousand in November according to delayed data The Data shows the headline unemployment rate continued to climb and hit 4 point 6 percent a four year high last month **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The Guardian December 16 2025 The US labor market grew by more than expected last month recovering some of the damage inflicted by the federal government shutdown according to official data An estimated 105 thousand jobs were lost in October and 64 thousand were added in November an anticipated report showed on Tuesday Jobs growth was higher in November than anticipated by many economists with a consensus forecast of some 40 thousand jobs added But the headline unemployment rate continued to climb and hit 4 point 6 percent a four year high last month amid apprehension around the strength of the US economy Previous estimates for overall jobs growth in August and September were also downgraded from a drop of 4 thousand to 26 thousand and from growth of 119 thousand to 108 thousand respectively The latest jobs numbers typically released monthly were delayed due to the government shutdown Federal government jobs declined by 162 thousand in October and 6 thousand in November

**7B** Trump Failing Economy Cooling Labor Market and Elevated Inflation Stoke Fed Divisions Fed officials explained their opposition to the decision of the central bank this week to cut interest rates by a quarter of a percentage point **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The New York Times December 12 2025 Officials at the Federal Reserve shed further light on Friday on the divisions that led to the fractured decision this week to lower interest rates with views splintering over the risk posed by inflation and how concerned to be about a softening labor market The central bank voted to cut interest rates by a quarter of a percentage point for a third meeting in a row a decision that was far from unanimously supported Two members of the policy setting Federal Open Market Committee voted for no cut while four others expressed their disapproval by registering what is known as a soft dissent President Trump has vowed to pick someone who will support substantially lower interest rates but ongoing divisions at the Fed underscore how difficult it may be to deliver that Almost all of the current roster of presidents from the 12 regional reserve banks was unanimously reappointed on Thursday to new five year terms by the board Trump is currently engaged in a legal battle with Lisa D Cook a governor he is trying to fire over allegations that she committed mortgage fraud The Supreme Court will hear that case in January

**7C** Trump Failing Economy Utilities Heating Costs Expected to Rise 9 point 2 percent This Winter Colder weather and rising electricity and fuel costs will lead to a big jump in costs for individuals according to estimates from a group representing state energy officials **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The New York Times December 17 2025 Consumers already tapped out from rising

home energy costs face yet another strain on their pocketbooks surging heating costs. Higher electricity and natural gas prices coupled with forecasts for unusually cold temperatures across parts of the country are expected to drive up bills as winter takes hold. The average US household is projected to spend nearly 1 thousand dollars this winter to heat its home up 9 point 2 percent from a year earlier according to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association which represents state governments in securing federal money. Even as costs rise the federal government is offering states less money to help low income residents pay for heat. The budget for a critical federal program has been cut by about a third this year compared with two years ago. Democratic lawmakers have repeatedly blamed Trump for rising energy costs saying he has blocked or stalled numerous wind and solar projects which typically produce electricity at much lower cost than fossil fuel power plants. They add that his embrace of companies involved in AI could drive up energy costs by sharply increasing demand for energy and spending on grid upgrades that are paid for by all utility customers. The energy directors group said residents of states in the Northeast are experiencing the highest heating cost increases. These states mostly have Democratic governors and colder weather. States in the South and Southwest tend to have lower cost increases the group said. These states mostly have Republican governors and milder winters.

**7D** Trump Failing Economy US Unemployment Rate Rises a Warning Sign for Economy Employers added 64 thousand jobs in November according to data delayed by the government shutdown. The unemployment rate ticked up to 4 point 6 percent the highest level in four years. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The New York Times December 16 2025. The unemployment rate rose in November a warning sign for the health of a labor market that has been strained by federal layoffs and rising costs. The jobless rate last month rose to 4 point 6 percent up from 4 point 4 percent in September the last month for which officials had a full picture of the labor force before the weeklong government shutdown. It is the highest unemployment rate since September 2021 when the economy was emerging from the pandemic and an increase from 4 point 0 percent in January. Employers added 64 thousand jobs in November partly reversing a decline in October. The federal government has lost 168 thousand jobs over the past two months as workers hit by deferred resignations came off the payroll. Wage growth has also slowed notably to a level not seen since 2021 a measure that comes at a time when an increasing number of Americans are expressing pessimism about the economy. Digging into those numbers a little more manufacturing lost 5 thousand jobs in November. So far the sector has not appeared to benefit from The Trump trade war which he and his administration have argued will bring manufacturing jobs back to the United States.

**7E** Trump Failing Economy Next Fed Chair in No Win Scenario as Selection Process Draws to a Close The person picked to replace Jerome H. Powell will be thrust into a credibility problem that will be difficult to escape. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The New York Times December 17 2025. It was always going to be one of the Kevins. At least that was the impression among many across Wall Street and Washington when it came to The Trump selection for the next chair of the Federal Reserve. That placed Kevin A. Hassett a longtime loyalist and economic adviser to Trump and Kevin M. Warsh a former Fed governor who had been in spitting distance of becoming chair during the Trump first term in leading positions to take over for Jerome Powell in May. The decision comes down to who Trump believes will be more successful in delivering the substantially lower borrowing costs that he has long struggled to get from the Fed under Powell. Will the new chair be just as unflappable as Chair Powell and be able to cut through the criticism and make the decisions that are best for the economy and its people? she asked. That is the greater test of a Fed chair than if they can please the president.

**7F** Trump Failing Economy White House Shrugs Off Rise in Unemployment Rate The Trump administration looked to recast elements of a dour jobs report Tuesday as a sign of strength. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The New York Times December 16 2025. The White House on Tuesday sought to recast a dour November jobs report as a sign of economic progress shrugging off an uptick in the US unemployment rate and other potential hints of weakness now looming over the economy. Top

aides to President Trump instead argued that the data showed a nation still on track and poised to grow substantially next year as they forged ahead with their new campaign to assuage voters anxious about their finances. Construction jobs did rise by about 28 thousand in November the data showed but manufacturing jobs fell by about 5 thousand and jobs in transportation and warehousing declined by more than 17 thousand. In fact the government found that wage growth slowed to 3 point 5 percent in November. The figure suggested that many Americans may not feel the benefit of bigger paychecks at a moment when prices remain stubbornly high.

**8 Wisconsin** Judge Allows Election Case to Proceed Against Trump Advisers A judge ruled that at least two of three defendants would have to stand trial in a case stemming from a plan to deploy fake electors after Donald Trump lost the 2020 presidential election. Wisconsin is one of five states that brought criminal charges related to the 2020 Trump campaign efforts to circumvent the outcome of the vote. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The New York Times December 15 2025. A Wisconsin judge ruled on Monday that there was sufficient evidence for two men to face trial on charges that they illegally tried to keep President Trump in power after his 2020 election loss. The two defendants are James Troupis a lawyer and former judge who is accused of being an architect of the plan to deploy fake electors in a number of states that Trump lost and Mike Roman a top staff member in the 2020 Trump campaign. The preliminary hearing for a third defendant Kenneth Chesebro another lawyer who also faces charges was delayed amid questions of whether statements he had made to investigators were admissible. The defendants face 11 forgery related charges in connection with the drafting of false elector certificates representing an alternative outcome to the Wisconsin presidential election that year when Trump lost to Biden.

**9 Chile** Presidential Election Result Is More Than Just a Swerve to the Right. The Guardian December 17 2025. General Augusto Pinochet the strongman who imposed a reign of terror on Chile from 1973 to 1990 must be smiling in his grave. His brazen defender and admirer José Antonio Kast has just been elected president of Chile. Kast a right wing politician who has praised the military dictatorship and once said that if Pinochet were alive he would have voted for me won by an overwhelming margin on Sunday beating his center left opponent by about 16 points. It is the first time since democracy in Chile was restored 35 years ago that any supporter of the dictatorship has won such high office. The Kast victory is not necessarily a public endorsement of his veneration for Pinochet. His campaign promises appealed to an angry weary and confused populace eager for radical change a vow to expel hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants a crackdown on crime and narco-trafficking a pledge to slash government spending and boost economic growth. What Chile needs now is a deep intellectual renewal of its progressive forces a painful reckoning with its shortcomings and fractures. How well the Chilean opposition responds to this sobering defeat will determine whether Kast truly represents an ominous swerve toward the current desolate panorama of would be dictators around the world or whether he proves a mere parenthesis in the Chile erratic but perpetual advance toward freedom and justice.

**10A United Kingdom** Businesses owned by China Automobiles On British Roads Chinese Cars Are Racing Ahead BYD Chery and other Chinese automakers are winning over drivers in Britain where tariffs are low and buyers are open to new brands. Cars made in China are attracting a fast growing number of buyers in Britain drawn by the price and features. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The New York Times December 17 2025. On a recent Monday Dougal Keith drove an electric car out of his dealership in Leeds in northern England and hit the accelerator. The car a Chinese made BYD Seal Excellence can reach 60 miles per hour in 3 point 8 seconds a key selling point. Another is the price tag about 48 thousand pounds 64 thousand 400 dollars which is 20 percent cheaper than a top range Tesla Model 3. Keith who has been selling cars for more than four decades said customers were skeptical of buying vehicles made in China when he opened a showroom in 2023 for BYD the largest automaker in China. Now he has six dealerships devoted to the brand. Encouraged by the success of his BYD dealerships this month Keith opened two locations to sell cars made by Changan a Chinese state owned automaker. Next year Keith expects sales at his company which runs 28 dealerships selling a variety of global brands to hit about 500 million pounds more than 50 percent higher than in 2024 boosted by the demand for Chinese cars. In September the BYD dealership in

Leeds sold more cars than any of his other dealerships in the area It is pretty good going for a brand that two years ago nobody had heard of he said Image A broad undeveloped area with a stream and a swath of forest The countryside in the Derbyshire Peak District National Park BYD which promotes longer range batteries has attracted buyers who want to drive long distances without stopping and charging for long

**10B** United Kingdom Russian Threat UK Spy Chief Warns of Acute Russia Threat The Frontline is Everywhere In her first public speech as head of MI6 Blaise Metreweli said Russia was attempting to export chaos to Europe through hybrid attacks and disinformation Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times December 15 2025 The new spymaster of the British Secret Intelligence Service warned on Monday that Russia posed an acute threat to the West plotting arson and sabotage operations assassinations and cyber and drone attacks across Europe The new frontline is everywhere said the chief Blaise Metreweli who in October became the first woman to lead the agency known as MI6 after a career as an intelligence agent Metreweli kept her remarks focused on Russia She referred to China which Britain has characterized as a national security threat in a single phrase as a central part of the global transformation taking place this century She also said nothing about the United States despite a long intelligence sharing relationship between MI6 and the CIA an arrangement that has come under question with the return of Trump Metreweli did refer to the Five Eyes a group of allies Australia Britain Canada New Zealand and the United States whose agencies share intelligence If anything Metreweli suggested that Britain needed to rely more on itself with the pillars after World War II security under pressure and as she put it new blocs and identities forming and alliances reshaping Our world is more dangerous and contested now than for decades Metreweli said describing an interlocking web of security challenges military technological social ethical even each shaping the other in complex ways We are living in a space between peace and war she said

**10C** United Kingdom Alliance with Europe Again A warning for Keir Starmer from his own past if you are not bold on Brexit and Europe your Labor rivals will be Leave support is falling That is an opportunity the PM should seize before pro Europe challengers for the Labor leadership do Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The Guardian December 17 2025 Seven years ago it took just eight words to electrify the Labor conference and to show the party was falling out of love with its then leader Although not exactly the kind of soaring oratory that gets reproduced on T shirts the words were greeted with wild cheering as most of the hall was on their feet and cheered Keir Starmer then Brexit spokesman was not really accustomed to his speeches having such an effect All he had said was Nobody is ruling out remain as an option But context is everything During that darkly divisive time of 2018 departing from his agreed text in this way was always going to be seen as laying down the gauntlet to Jeremy Corbyn who was trying to prioritize leave supporters in working class seats over the instincts favorable to Europe of his Labor party In just one speech this grey suited shadow Brexit secretary was transformed if only for a while into a risk taker who would stand up for most Labor MPs members and voters against a leader he would later replace Who are Keir Starmer Labor rivals in 2025? 1 Wes Streeting who just about everyone assumes would be a candidate in any leadership election is among a clutch of cabinet ministers letting it be known they want to go further on Europe Aides to Angela Rayner another probable runner in a contest to replace Starmer insist she will not discuss her position on a customs union because it would only escalate unhelpful speculation The danger is obvious If Starmer rules out more meaningful steps towards a close relationship with the EU he allows rivals to occupy the space where the overwhelming majority of Labor MPs members and voters are to be found I happen to be someone who both wants him to survive and believes he can do so in spite of all this overheated speculation But it would be prudent of him to remember the impact just a few words had for him seven years ago There are options for a big offer on Europe that the prime minister should not rule out

**10D** United Kingdom Luxury Business Falling sales at Stella McCartney fuel fears over fashion label future Directors blame challenging market conditions as losses widen from 25 million pounds in 2024 to 33 million pounds Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times December 17 2025 Sales at the Stella McCartney fashion label sank by more than a quarter last year tipping it further

into the red and adding to fears it could run out of money by 2028. Before tax losses at the British brand led by the daughter of former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney widened to 33 point 6 million pounds in 2024 from 25 million pounds the year before while sales fell 27 percent to 16 million pounds according to accounts filed at Companies House. The latest loss comes after the brand directors warned it could run out of cash by 2028 even if its parent company Anin Star Holding which is controlled by the designer did not call in its loans. The label has not made a before tax profit since 2017 and has warned for several years about a need for additional funding to keep going. Directors said the company which is known for its ethical stance and not using animal products had identified contingency measures to spin out cash reserves for longer but admitted they may consider alternative sources of funding to secure the long term viability of the business. The Stella McCartney brand whose vegan handbags sell for nearly 1 thousand pounds said sales rose in the UK and in its stores last year but that was offset by a decline in royalty and wholesale income. Luxury labels struggled last year with even their comfortable clientele forced to economize amid the rising cost of living and Chinese shoppers reining in spending. British labels such as Burberry have also blamed slower UK sales on the previous government decision to end tax breaks for tourists. McCartney bought back a 49 percent stake in her eponymous brand in January this year that had been controlled by luxury conglomerate LVMH. Before that deal the label was independent for just over a year after McCartney ended a 17 year partnership with rival luxury conglomerate Kering the owner of Gucci and bought back its 50 percent stake in her brand. McCartney whose late mother was the photographer and animal rights activist Linda McCartney designed her first jacket as a teenager. After work experience at Christian Lacroix she rose to become the creative director of the Parisian fashion house Chloé before starting her own label in a joint venture with Kering in 2001.

**10E** United Kingdom. The Guardian view on The Trump BBC lawsuit grievance politics with a purpose Editorial. The US president has repeatedly targeted American media in an attempt to muzzle debate and scrutiny. His attempt to export the bullying must be resisted. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The Guardian. December 16 2025. On the day that the government launched a high stakes consultation to consider fresh ways of funding the BBC in the digital era the corporation could have done without another difficult news event of its own. The Trump decision to follow through on threats to sue over the content of a Panorama program broadcast in October 2024 may not have come as a surprise given the Trump litigious record in the United States. But it will add to the general air of beleaguering at the corporation and further embolden its domestic political enemies.

**11A** Ukraine. Europe using Russian frozen assets. This Week Is Pivotal for Ukraine and for the Voice in Its Future of Europe. Often left out by the United States in peace negotiations European countries are working to assert their leadership and bolster Ukraine with an ambitious funding plan. But can they agree? Photo of Chancellor Friedrich Merz of Germany Prime Minister Keir Starmer of Britain President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine and President Emmanuel Macron of France at a meeting in London this month. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The New York Times. December 16 2025. For months European countries have struggled to agree on a bold proposal to finance Ukraine and its war effort. Now as the United States is racing ahead to try to end the war started by Russia nearly four years ago European leaders are working feverishly to finalize that funding plan. They hope it will help ensure that they have a seat at the table as negotiations intensify and that Ukraine is in as strong a position as possible to make a deal. It is also a chance for the European Union to forcefully disprove The Trump depiction of the 27 nation bloc as weak and indecisive. On Thursday that resolve will be put to the test when European leaders meet to decide if they can agree on a plan to use the assets of Russia frozen in Europe to back a loan that would help Ukraine fund the war and its government for the next two years. But with just days to go obstacles to an agreement remain as Belgium in particular expresses persistent doubts. What was meant to be a show of strength could still turn into a display of disunity and weakness at a diplomatically pivotal moment. Is Europe willing to do what it takes? It is very much a moment for Europe to stand up and be counted said a senior fellow at Bruegel an economic think tank in Brussels. This is a point of maximum danger. After months of struggling to gain a voice in negotiations European leaders did seem to find a toehold in meetings this week the most extensive negotiations on ending the fighting since Russia invaded Ukraine. Top officials from some of the close

European allies of Ukraine including Finland France and Germany as well as from the European Union leadership spent hours on Sunday and Monday discussing plans to end the war rebuild the economy and secure against another invasion Figuring out financing for Ukraine could be key not only to supporting Kyiv but also to securing the Europe continued influence in a diplomatic fight European leaders see as central to their own future security It would serve analysts say as a sort of turning point for shoring up the Europe geopolitical importance in a fraught era of an aggressive Russia and a transactional United States The notion that the Europe future is being decided by Russia and the United States you know galls At the conclusion of the whirlwind meetings Monday Ursula von der Leyen president of the European Union executive arm pointed to the funding plan as a priority on the path toward peace The needs of Ukraine are both immense and urgent she said in a statement calling the discussions on Thursday a decisive moment If Europe can agree to it the loan in question would use about 210 billion euros about 245 billion dollars in Russian government assets frozen in Europe to back 90 billion Euros in zero interest loans to Ukraine over the next two years That would fill two thirds of the Kyiv estimated financing needs with the potential for more money later Ukraine would need to pay the loan back only if Russia paid reparations for the war A depository in Brussels that holds about 185 billion Euros of immobilized Russian state assets The Russian Central Bank recently said that it had filed a lawsuit in Moscow against the depository But while the loan plan has many positives offering Kyiv the resources to keep fighting and allowing Europeans to support Ukraine without turning to their own overburdened budgets the idea also comes with major risks Both the government of Belgium where most of the assets are held and some outside financial experts have warned that the plan could spook foreign investors making them nervous about stashing their savings in Europe Continued reluctance was on display last week Even as member states agreed on Friday to indefinitely freeze Russian assets held in the bloc a first step toward making a loan to Ukraine using those funds Belgium Bulgaria Italy and Malta did so grudgingly As negotiations speed up Russia is making its own moves to scuttle the proposal The Russian Central Bank said on Friday that it had filed a lawsuit in Moscow against the Belgian depository that holds about 185 billion Euros of the immobilized Russian state assets Given the threat of continued legal action Belgium is asking other European nations to share the risk It has insisted that pots of money from elsewhere should also be used in the plan Smaller sums are held in Britain and France among other places If you go together then you are under a big umbrella and you are not the only one that is exposed to all the risks the Prime Minister of Belgium said after he met with Keir Starmer the British prime minister in London on Friday That London meeting appeared to produce no breakthroughs In a statement the Starmer office said only that the two leaders had agreed to continue to work together closely on the issue The Trump administration position also looms over negotiations Washington has at times signaled interest in using the frozen assets as part of a peace deal In a 28 point plan that leaked last month the White House suggested unfreezing the Russian assets and using part of the money for a joint Russian American investment program Europeans balked at that and are rushing to show that they can make use of the funds to help Ukraine themselves The money was referred to again in statements after the meetings in Berlin on Monday though exactly what was discussed was not clear There is a political goal here to make sure that those reserves are put to productive use said the managing director for Europe at the Eurasia Group a research firm In Paris in Berlin and in Brussels they are using that threat to put pressure on Belgium The question is whether it will work Ambassadors from across the European Union vetted the text of the frozen asset plan until nearly midnight on Monday and Belgium was still pushing for more assurances that it would not be left exposed Those discussions are expected to go down to the last moment A man who will preside over the meeting of leaders on Thursday as president of the European Council has said that talks will continue until some agreement to fund Ukraine is reached Should the bloc fail to come up with a financing plan he said it would be a complete political and moral failure that would put Ukraine in an incredibly vulnerable position

**11B** Ukraine Europe using Russian frozen assets Ukraine Plan Calls For Enhanced Military With US and European Backup The latest proposal is designed to deter future Russian aggression But Russia is not part of the talks and has shown little willingness to negotiate Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times December 16 2025 The US European plan to secure Ukraine against future Russian attacks once the current war ends calls for a more robust Ukrainian military the deployment of European

forces inside that country to deter another invasion and increased use of American intelligence according to officials familiar with drafts of two security documents that detail the proposal. American and European diplomats meeting with the Ukraine leaders over the past two days in Berlin have mostly signed off on the security guarantees the officials said publicly and privately. US officials said that Trump had agreed to submit the security guarantees to the Senate where treaties are typically ratified though they did not make clear whether they would formally submit the guarantees as a treaty. Zelensky said early Tuesday that the documents would be finalized in the coming days and that he expected American officials to then convey it to Russia and meet with Ukrainian negotiators after that perhaps this weekend.

**11C** Ukraine Says It Hit a Submarine With Underwater Drones As it tried to demonstrate its continuing ability to fight Ukraine said it had used drones to inflict serious damage on a Russian Kilo class submarine at a Black Sea port. The New York Times December 15 2025 Ukrainian underwater drones struck a Russian submarine for the first time on Monday causing critical damage to the vessel and making it the first publicly acknowledged use of the new class of Ukrainian weapons according to the Ukraine domestic intelligence agency. At the time of the attack the Kilo class submarine was docked in a Russian Black Sea port near the city of Novorossiysk and carried four launchers for Kalibr cruise missiles which Moscow regularly uses to attack across Ukraine the agency said. Kilo class vessels are not nuclear powered and do not carry nuclear armed ballistic missiles. Russia confirmed the attack but denied that its submarine had been damaged. While Ukraine claimed the strike on Monday was the first time it had struck a submarine with sea drones it was not the Ukraine first attack on a Russian submarine. Ukraine previously struck another Kilo class submarine the Rostov on Don twice with missiles while it was docked in Crimean ports first in September 2023 and again in August 2024. It said the vessel had been damaged beyond repair.

**11D** Ukraine Europe using Russian frozen assets The Zelensky Dilemma How Much Must Ukraine Cede to Make Peace? Two days of talks between President Volodymyr Zelensky and allies have brought some progress on security guarantees but Russia remains opposed to any foreign forces in Ukraine. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The New York Times December 16 2025 President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine expressed a tense and wary optimism on Tuesday about proposed guarantees for the Ukraine future security so long as they were detailed and confirmed by the US Congress. But what might make them acceptable to Ukraine he suggested would prompt Russia to reject them. Zelensky spoke after two days of peace proposal talks with US and European negotiators who had emphasized progress on Monday and promoted what they called a NATO like security agreement. Zelensky acknowledged that the United States had gone a long way to spelling out what kind of security guarantees it might offer Ukraine in any peace deal but he added that significant details had still to be worked out.

**11E** Ukraine Europe using Russian frozen assets Putin calls European leaders little pigs as he insists Russia will achieve its goals in Ukraine by diplomacy or force Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The Guardian December 17 2025 Meanwhile Putin of Russia on Wednesday lashed out at European leaders saying Russia would achieve its territorial goals in Ukraine either through diplomacy or by military force. Putin said the aims of what Moscow calls its special military operation would be met unconditionally. If they do not want a substantive discussion he said then Russia will liberate its historical lands on the battlefield. The Putin hardline comments came as US officials claimed that earlier talks with Ukraine in Berlin had resolved about 90% of the most difficult issues. But major doubts remain over whether the Russian leader is prepared to compromise on his sweeping demands. Putin has repeatedly insisted that Kyiv cede the remaining parts of the eastern Donbas region still under Ukrainian control a demand that the White House has at times appeared to endorse but which Ukraine has flatly rejected. Moscow has also pushed for strict limits on the Ukraine military a ban on western troops on Ukrainian territory and an end to western military support. The Russian leader on Wednesday also denied that Moscow was planning to invade Nato territory claiming instead that the alliance had begun preparing for a possible military confrontation with Russia with a view to 2030. Merz of Germany says he will work with EU partners to alleviate concerns on use of frozen Russian assets. Merz calls for EU move on frozen assets to put pressure on Russia as he warns against the Moscow ambitions. The EU use of Russian funds that are frozen needs solid legal basis or we

risk handing Putin victory Meloni warns    Confiscating Russian assets to fund Ukraine would be declaration of war Orbán of Hungary warns    Who stands where on EU reparations loan for Ukraine?

**11F** Ukraine    Europe using Russian frozen assets    Putin thinks democracy is the weakness of the west    We have to prove him wrong Rafael Behr Rafael Behr The Russian strategy of exporting chaos to provoke extremism only works if liberals succumb to cynicism and despair    Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization    The Guardian    December 17 2025    I once spent an exasperating week showing a Russian friend around London    He insisted on seeing everything and admiring nothing    Museums monuments shops all compared unfavorably with St Petersburg and Moscow    This got tiresome after a few days so I asked my friend if there was anything at all about Britain that impressed him    The stability he said without hesitation    You can feel the stability    That was a different world the late 1990s    I do not remember the year but I remember knowing what my friend was talking about because I had felt the same culture shock in reverse when first visiting Russia    It was the decade of degenerate democracy under Boris Yeltsin    The Soviet Union had collapsed    It was not obvious where the unravelling would stop    Criminal violence was endemic    The drunk president was propped up by a lawless oligarchy pillaging state assets and calling it privatization    Soviet power was unaccountable but at least predictable    Vladimir Putin is as crooked as everyone else who rose to the top in the entourage of Yeltsin    But he restored order and national self esteem which mattered more to most Russians than the slow suffocation of political freedom    It is not a familiar dilemma to British voters because democracy and stability have not seemed mutually exclusive    Our multiparty system allows peaceful rivalry between different political and economic interests    The opposition can become the government without bloodshed    The defeated regime yields without fear of retribution    Under conditions of rules based competition democracies can accommodate dissent before it turns to revolution    That makes them innovative and resilient    It is how free societies outperformed tyrannies and won the 20th century    Vengeful dictatorship wants a rematch    Putin thinks he can turn the strength of the west into its greatest vulnerability    An authoritarian megalomaniac sees merit in a political system if it raises no obstacle to the will of the leader    He therefore sees liberal democracy as stupid and weak    A deep well of resentment that fuels the export of chaos by Putin    Sowing discord and shredding consensus is meant to rob western societies of the stability that was once their superpower    In the ultimate vindication for Putin the moral lesson of the cold war will be inverted    Instead of authoritarian regimes crumbling because their captive subjects craved freedom it will be demoralized citizens of failing liberal societies turning to strong leaders for order    The realization of that dark fantasy can seem plausible especially given the spectacle of The Trump misrule in the US    That has to be our spur to vigilance in Europe    In the end dictators always underestimate the resilience of societies governed by law and institutions because they cannot believe in a system that is stronger than the rule of one man

**11G** Ukraine    Trump Failing Economy conquered by European business success not based on Artificial Intelligence    RAWSEP View    The true European secret weapon is using Russian frozen assets to aid Ukraine in winning the war    From the article headline    is the secret weapon of Europe against Trump it could burst his AI bubble    Growth in the US economy and the political survival of Trump rest on AI    The EU must use its leverage and stand up to him    Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization    The Guardian    December 17 2025    The unthinkable has happened    The US is the adversary of Europe    The stark profound betrayal contained in the Trump administration national security strategy should stop any further denial and dithering in the capitals of Europe    Cultivating resistance    The current trajectory of Europe in European nations is now the stated policy of the Washington of Trump    But contained within this calamity is the gift of clarity    Europe will fight or it will perish    The good news is that Europe holds strong cards    The US bet on AI is now so gigantic that the pension of every Maga voter is bound to the precarious survival of the AI Bubble    AI investment now rivals consumer spending as the primary creator of American economic growth    It accounted for virtually all 92% GDP growth in the first half of this year    Without it US GDP grew only 0 point 1 percent    Despite The Trump posturing he is on shaky economic ground    The Trump political coalition is shaky too    In July and again this month he has been unable to force Senate Republicans to pass his AI moratorium bill which would have prevented states from drafting their own AI laws    The Steve

Bannon wing of Maga fears that AI will displace workers in large numbers and is appalled by what children are exposed to on digital platforms. Maga voters particularly mistrust the political power of Big Tech. Big Tech is a dangerous topic for Trump. Ursula von der Leyen the president of the European Commission has two cards to play that might pop the AI bubble. First Dutch company ASML commands a global monopoly on the microchip etching machines that use light to carve patterns on silicon. These machines are essential for Nvidia the AI microchip giant that is now the most valuable company in the world. ASML is one of the Europe most valuable companies and European banks and private equity are also invested in AI. Withholding these silicon etching machines would be difficult for Europe and extremely painful for the Dutch economy. But it would be far more painful for Trump. The US feverish investment in AI and the data centers it relies on will hit a wall if European export controls slow or stop exports to the US and to Taiwan where Nvidia produces its most advanced chips. Via this lever Europe has the means to decide whether and by how much the US economy expands or contracts. Second and much easier for Europe is the enforcement of the EU long neglected data rules against big US tech companies. Europe must join India Brazil and China in standing up to Trump. The Brazil president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is an example of how to do so. He has been dignified and resolute in the face of extraordinary bullying from Trump. In a single month in September Lula proclaimed in an open letter to Trump that Brazil democracy and sovereignty are not negotiable. The Brazil of Lula countered The Trump tariffs with its own and passed a new law forcing digital platforms to protect children in Brazil from sexual harassment and other online harms. Then Lula rhetorically mugged Trump in a UN general assembly speech just before The Trump turn to speak. As a result of the Lula refusal to be cowed Trump softened his tone immediately. Lower tariffs are now expected after negotiations between the two leaders. Trump said earlier in December that he thinks European leaders are weak. He does not believe they will defend the liberties of Europe and their hard won democracy against him. So far the response from European leaders is proving him correct. But what Trump does not yet understand is that von der Leyen holds the US economy and his presidency in her hands. She must have the courage to go entirely beyond any prior norms of her behavior. In other words if she grabs Trump where it hurts Europe will win this fight.

**11H** Ukraine. Europe using Russian frozen assets. The Russian Central Bank in Moscow. Kyiv would only repay the money to the EU if Russia agreed to pay reparations for the damage inflicted during the war. European Union Explainer What is the row about the EU using frozen Russian assets to support Ukraine? Complex plan would involve EU lending 90 billion Euros to Ukraine which some fear could destabilize Eurozone. Putin says move is akin to theft. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The Guardian. December 17, 2025. After months of debate EU leaders will decide on Thursday whether or not to use Russian immobilized assets to fund Ukraine in what could be a make or break moment for Europe. What is the plan? The EU has frozen 210 billion Euros 184 billion pounds 247 billion dollars of Russian central bank assets which are mostly held at Euroclear in Brussels. As the fourth anniversary of the full scale invasion approaches the EU wants to use this money to generate a loan for Ukraine. Under the complex plan the EU would borrow from Euroclear to provide Ukraine with an initial 90 billion Euro loan about two thirds of the Kyiv funding needs for 2026 and 2027. The EU expects the Ukraine other allies to provide the rest. Kyiv would only repay the money to the EU if and when Russia agreed to pay reparations for the colossal damage inflicted during the war. The EU would then repay Euroclear. Throughout the cycle Russia would remain the legal owner of the assets. Euroclear often described as a bank for banks was until recently a little known part of global financial plumbing. It is now looking after 40 point 7 trillion Euros worth of assets for its clients who include central banks investment banks and supranational organizations. there is a plan B. EU member states could use unallocated funds in the EU budget as collateral for a loan for Ukraine a tried and tested method of raising money which was proposed by the European Commission this month. Belgium backed by Italy Bulgaria and Malta argues this is a legally safer way to help Kyiv leaving the Russian billions intact for the Ukraine reconstruction. Other officials involved in the decision argue the frozen assets plan is the only real option. Borrowing secured against the EU budget requires unanimity and the government against Ukraine of Hungary has already said it would veto such a move. The reparations loan in contrast only requires a majority agreement. In theory Belgium could be outvoted but high ranking EU officials have indicated they do not want to go down that road. What happens if there is no agreement? If the summit scheduled to run on Thursday

and Friday ends with no clear plan to fund Ukraine the EU credibility would be in tatters Europe would find it even harder to sway peace talks orchestrated by a transactional US president who has already dismissed the leaders of the continent as weak Merz issued a stark warning about the risks of failing to agree the frozen assets plan If we do not succeed in this then the European Union ability to act will be severely damaged for years if not longer and we will show the world that we are incapable of standing together and acting at such a crucial moment in our history Even if EU leaders sign off on the frozen assets idea it would still need to be turned into law to meet Ukraine urgent military and civilian needs by springtime Decisions on the immense cost of rebuilding Ukraine 524 billion dollars 506 billion Euros by the latest estimate remain unclear Any peace agreement also has to resolve the issue of the Ukraine borders and security when Russia shows no obvious interest in ending the war

**11i** Ukraine Europe using Russian frozen assets The Guardian view on combating Europe national populists protect the less well off from the winds of change Editorial As EU countries face multiple challenges in a new era they must fight to preserve the continent social model That means a new economic approach

**Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke**

**Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization**

The Guardian December 15 2025 More than a year after the election that handed Donald Trump a decisive comeback victory the Democratic party has still not released its postmortem analysis But last week an influential progressive lobby group published its own Kamala Harris campaign its authors argued failed to connect with core constituencies because it did not focus enough on addressing basic economic anxieties By prioritizing the menace to democracy that Maga authoritarianism represented progressives neglected the bread and butter issues that were uppermost in the minds of many people As the EU braces for a tumultuous period of politics between now and the end of the decade that is a lesson that needs to be fully absorbed in Brussels Paris and Berlin The White House as its recently published national security strategy makes clear is hopeful that patriotic parties in Europe will soon replicate the Trump success In the EU Franco German engine room the Marine Le Pen National Rally RN and Alternative für Deutschland AfD lead the polls backed by large swaths of blue collar voters But among mainstream leaders and parties it is hard to discern a response that is adequate to troubling times The challenges Europe faces are expensive and era defining They include the war in Ukraine maintaining the momentum of the green transition addressing demographic change and developing economies that are less vulnerable to bullying by Trump and China According to the Brussels based Breugel thinktank the new age of geopolitical insecurity could require an additional 250 billion Euros in annual EU defense spending The Mario Draghi report last year on European economic competitiveness demanded massive investment in public goods and infrastructure to be partly funded by jointly held EU debt Such a fiscal paradigm shift would boost growth figures that have flatlined for years But at both the pan European and national levels there continues to be a lack of boldness when it comes to revenue raising The EU so called frugal nations oppose the idea of collective borrowing and the Brussels budget proposals for the next seven years are deeply unambitious In France the idea of a wealth tax on the superrich is overwhelmingly popular with voters But the Emmanuel Macron beleaguered centrist government though desperate to cut its budget deficit refuses to contemplate such a move The reality is that in the absence of such measures the less comfortable will pay the price of financial adjustment through austerity budgets and greater inequality Bitter recent disputes over pension cutbacks in both France and Germany testify to a developing struggle over the future of the European social model a phenomenon that the RN and the AfD have happily exploited to promote a politics of welfare chauvinism The Ms Le Pen party for example has opposed moves to raise the retirement age and has said that it would target any benefit cuts at non-French nationals In the US the Trump pledges to protect blue-collar interests were deeply disingenuous as subsequent Medicaid cuts and tax breaks for the wealthy underlined But in the absence of a convincing progressive counteroffer from the Harris campaign they worked on the campaign trail Without a fundamental change in economic approach social contracts across the continent risk being ripped up Governments must avoid handing this political gift to the Trumpian forces already on the march in Europe