

Coalescing Crises

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I've written recently that, in my opinion, the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic is only the first in a cascading and overlapping series of major crises that will beset America and the world in the first half of this new decade of the 2020s. The virus emerged rapidly and spread like a rhizome, sending out tendrils that disrupted human societies in many interconnected ways: illness, suffering, and death on a massive scale (1.8 million Americans infected and 104,000 dead so far); taxing the medical system to the point of overwhelm; and necessitating cessation of social activities and a dramatic shutdown of economic commerce. 40 million Americans have lost their jobs. Now that the country is trying to "re-open," the question asked so often in the mainstream media of whether or not a "second wave" of the virus will occur is, to me, a no-brainer. The answer is that yes, it will — a second wave for sure, then almost certainly a third, and probably a fourth.

But, as it turns out, we don't even have to wait for the second wave of the pandemic before confronting yet another additional crisis. We've already learned that the virus disproportionately impacts the demographic of infirm older people, especially those in nursing homes, as well as minority communities in general, which has obvious social and economic ramifications.

The trigger for this most recent crisis was the death (effectively murder) on Memorial Day in Minneapolis of a black man, George Floyd, at the hands — or rather, knees — of local police. Law enforcement officers had been sent to the scene to investigate a relatively minor allegation — passing a counterfeit \$20 bill as payment in a store. Floyd was apprehended on the street outside, taken into custody, and handcuffed.

Although all the facts aren't available to the public yet, Floyd somehow ended up prone on the ground on his stomach with four officers holding him down, one of whom placed his knee on Floyd's neck and held it there in a chokehold (technically, a "neck restraint") for more than eight minutes. Readers have no doubt seen the bystander cell phone videos and know the tragic story. After repeatedly saying that he couldn't breathe, pleading for his life, and despite the urgings of onlookers that the police officer applying force let him up, Floyd died. Even one of the other officers suggested turning over Mr. Floyd after he became unresponsive, but that prudent advice was ignored. So now George Floyd is dead — killed by police — like so many black people before him.

All four police officers were fired the next day, but, to add insult to fatal injury, it took four additional days before the lead officer (the one whose knee was

pressed on Floyd's neck for eight minutes) was arrested and charged by the Hennepin County Prosecutor with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. So much for the wheels of justice turning with alacrity.

The issue of institutionalized, systematic, and pervasive racism in America is anything but new, of course. It's as old as the colonization of the New World 500 years ago and has been called (rightly) America's "original sin." It's virulent and violent in just about every way. In addition, holding police accountable through the legal justice system for alleged transgressions is historically the exception rather than the rule and about as rare as hen's teeth.

At this point, however, the story of George Floyd's death is old news, and it's not the subject of this commentary. My subject is the nationwide public demonstrations in reaction.

The very next day, following the airing of bystander phone videos of the tragedy by the mainstream media, massive public protests arose and have continued in every major American and many international cities. Those were:

- protests whose intensity and large numbers of participants initially surprised and overwhelmed city and state authorities in Minnesota and elsewhere and left officials scrambling to come up with some strategy to restore order and maintain public safety
- protests that began peacefully and have largely remained so, but have now been marred by vandalism, arson, and looting in some locations, which is provoking the predictable reaction from the law-and-order side that military force must be used to protect property
- protests that represent the most widespread and serious expression of cumulative, sustained outrage over racial injustice, socio-economic inequality, and murderous abuses by police seen in America since the 1960s
- protests that have now provoked a response by law enforcement that can be accurately described as aggressive in intent and military in scale, and which, like the protests themselves, has already produced disturbing results — incidents of excessive force and disregard for public safety

After all this, no one knows what will happen next.

Will the protests die down? Eventually. Will order be restored? Superficially, at least, and for awhile. Will curfews in major cities signal some future lockdown of martial law? Perhaps. Will a new outbreak of Coronavirus COVID-19 infections spike up within two weeks in cities across the country? Quite possibly. Will any of what's happening lead to real, positive change in America? Time will tell.

But really, no one knows exactly what will ensue. Not the media, not the government, not the public. And I don't know, either. Damn near anything is possible.

Here's what astrology tells me, however. Throughout 2020, four major outer-planet transits are dominating the heavens, symbolically representing the zeitgeist of civilization. Two involve Jupiter as one of the bodies in the pair, and two more involve Saturn.

- Jupiter is conjunct both Saturn and Pluto simultaneously in late Capricorn, kicking off two cycles, a new 20-year Jupiter-Saturn cycle, and a new 13-year Jupiter-Pluto cycle. The effective period of the two transits is from February 2020 through March 2021.
- Saturn is conjunct Pluto, also in late Capricorn, starting a new 35-year Saturn-Pluto cycle. The effective period of this transit is from December 2018 through January 2021.
- Saturn is forming a in last-quarter square to Uranus, from late Capricorn/early Aquarius to late Aries/early Taurus. This marks the three-quarter point of the 44-year current cycle, which spans 1988-2032. In terms of phases, this is the beginning of the Winter quarter. The effective period of the transit is from January 2020 through February 2023.

In previous commentaries and articles, I've written at length about the symbolic and technical meanings of each of these transits, so I won't reiterate that here. Suffice it to say, though, that taken together they paint a vivid picture of 2020 as a year characterized by major difficulties in government and economics, where conflict is inevitable, as well as confrontations with raw and blunt power, both explosive and repressive. We will see polarized divisions and shocking demonstrations of destructive force.

In short, don't look for life to lighten up any time soon. The pandemic will almost certainly continue in repeated waves. The current protests may be quelled, but the outrage over injustice and demand for systemic, institutional change will continue. Further disruptions are likely to occur, increasing the palpable and disturbing sense of America disintegrating before our eyes.

Like it or not, change is upon us in a big way. But don't expect anything to be resolved soon. I've written already and will repeat again that, considered from an astrological perspective, my strong opinion is that the next period of possibly getting our heads screwed on a bit straighter collectively does not arrive until mid-decade, about 2025.

Until then, breakdown is the essential process.

For a deeper (and somewhat more prescient) dive into the symbolism and meanings of the Saturn-Pluto transit, arguably the most potent astrological factor in humanity's condition in 2020, read Commentary #99, which I wrote and posted two years ago, and which is linked here: [The Saturn-Pluto Cycle](#)