

CORRECTION - Last week it was noted Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio was "in the 80+% range & in the US North of 100%". But in the OECD's calculations of "General Government Debt"¹-to-GDP ratios for 29 developed countries for 2014, in a universe ranging from 18% for Estonia to 182% for Greece, Canada placed 10th with 108%, a ratio exceeded only by Greece (182%), Italy (158%), Portugal (150%), Britain (130%), Ireland (125%), US (123%), France (119%), Spain (118%) & Britain (117%). And what was really interesting was that Australia, whose economy is more like Canada's than any other country's, placed 19th, managing to 'make do' with a ratio of only 64% [due to the fact that in the past twenty years it has not had a single year-, & in the last 80 quarters only three with (marginally)-, negative GDP growth - *because its economy was linked to China's rapidly-, rather than the US more modestly-, growing economy?*]

Quote of the week - "What happened in 2008 was not the end of the crisis, it was the beginning" (or as someone recently paraphrased it in a headline '2008 wasn't the real crash ... It was merely a tremour before the earthquake') - Peter Schiff. *Aged 53, he inherited a Libertarian bent from his father who was a life-long, wonky tax protester (&, at age 87 last fall died in prison while serving a 13-year sentence for tax evasion). In 1996 he co-founded-, & has since been President of-, Westport, Conn.-based Euro Pacific Capital, a broker-dealer cum investment advisory firm specializing in foreign securities. In 2006 he predicted the coming of the Great Recession, saying in an interview in August "I see a financial crisis coming for the United States" & at yearend on Fox News "real estate prices are going to come crashing to earth". And, as demonstrated in the six books he has since written, he has been a 'perma bear' on the US economy ever since. While this long put him in the position of 'the boy who cried wolf once to often', he no longer is "the voice of one crying out in the wilderness" (John 1 :23), for there are now growing numbers of others who have come to share his view that in the past decade US policy makers have merely been papering over the cracks in a system that is sleepwalking down a debt-laden, dead end alley.*

Blindly tone-deaf, self-serving politicians? - As of April 1st, the start of the new fiscal year, Canada's 338 MPs & 90 Senators² got a \$3,000 raise, a 1.8% hike for the former & 2.1% for the latter, to \$170,400 & \$145,400 respectively (by law the latter are paid \$25,000 less than MPs). And for a significant number of MPs, other than the trained seals on the back benches on both sides of the House, who get top-ups for their special duties, the dollar amounts will of course be greater; thus the PM's stipend goes from \$334,800 to \$340,000 (*not bad considering that upon becoming Prime Minister he shifted the cost of his family's two nannies from his own pocket onto the tax payers' tab*). The Canadian Tax Payers Federation's reaction was "It's very poor form, considering they are running a \$29BN deficit (*i.e. close to 10% of the budget*), that they can't even show some leadership by tightening their own belts" *While it's only fair to note that their remuneration is tied by law to the average % increase negotiated the previous year by unions with private sector firms with over 500 employees, this pay hike is twice that negotiated by the Harper government in 2015 with the public sector unions, that the legislation provides MPs with the option of freezing their own salaries (which the government decided not to), that the optics stink, & that many MPs already have 'the best-paid job they never had'.*

¹ Which it defines as "the amount of a country's total gross debt as a percentage of GDP ... an indicator of an economy's health and a key factor for the sustainability of government finance.

² The law provides for 105 Senators. But there are now only 90 in place; for in March 2013 then Prime Minister Harper quit replacing those who had died, resigned or reached the mandatory 75-year age limit, & Prime Minister Trudeau has so far only filled seven of the resultant vacancies

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APRIL FOOLS IN MARCH (Euro Pacific Capital Inc, Peter Schiff)

- In the aftermath of the Fed's March policy statement & Janet Yellen's dovish guidance at the press conference, other Fed officials started making hawkish comments. On March 19th St. Louis Fed President James Bullard said the Fed had largely met its inflation & employment goals, and it would be "prudent to edge interest rates higher". Two days later, the Atlanta Fed's Dennis Lockhart added "there is sufficient momentum ... to justify a further step possibly as early as April"³. On the 22nd their Philadelphia colleague Patrick Harker opined "there is a strong case that we need to continue raising rates ... I think we need to get on with it." Finally, on March 24th Bullard reiterated rate that hikes "may not be far off." So Wall Street started assuming a possible rate hike in April, causing the dollar to rally & stocks to swoon. And while some expected Yellen to use her *March 29th* speech at the New York Economic Club to underscore her colleagues' hawkish comments, she instead used it to repudiate all their hawkish prattle in her possibly most dovish comments as Fed Chair, causing gold to jump & the dollar to drop.
- She noted the Fed had not backed off from its December forecast of 2.5-3.0% GDP growth in 2016⁴ & to justify remaining dovish while predicting such a rate of growth, said the Fed's earlier assumption of a 2% "neutral" policy level (when rates aren't stimulative nor restrictive) had been erroneous; & that, given her global concerns, it ought to be 0%. And she went one step further, adding the Fed is no longer just "data dependent", but "globally data dependent", thereby providing an excuse for using any crisis anywhere to justify not raising rates. This ever-expanding/(*changing?*) list of decision-making criteria should be seen for what it really is, a shifting of the goal posts to keep it from EVER (*his caps*) having to raise rates again (at least not until circumstances force its hand). So the Fed is now stuck in a monetary Roach Motel with its Keynesian policies having created a "stimulus trap" that will stay in place until it all spins out of control.

Given the rancorous nature of the election & the visceral hatred of some Republicans for the Fed, she has reason to be far more careful than any of her predecessors not to risk the Fed becoming a political football in the lead-up to an election by raising rates.

JOBS DATA BOLSTERS YELLEN'S CAUTIOUS POLICY POSITION
(Australian Financial Review, Carlos Torres)

- The March new job creation report showed a slowly improving economy⁵ pulling discouraged American workers *back* into the work force (although some have to settle

³ Which seems like an odd comment, given the fact his own organization's GDPNow real time growth indicator, that had gone from 1.2% to 2.7% in the first two weeks of February, by March 19th had slipped to 1.8% (& since has cratered to 0.7% last Friday, April 1st) .

⁴ Which, given the recent collapse of the Atlanta Fed's GDPNow indicator, is beginning to look a bit iffy; for low growth in a first quarter affects the GDP growth potential for the entire year.

⁵ This flies in the face of the fact that the Atlanta Fed's GDPNow real time growth rate has cratered from 2.7% in mid February & 2.3% one month later to, at last report (April 4th) 0.4%.

for part-time jobs). It showed payrolls grew by 215,000⁶, 10,000 more than expected but down from 245,000 in February, although the unemployment rate ticked up from 4.9% to 5.0% as more people resumed looking for work. This shows business remains confident in the US' prospects despite the slower global growth & turmoil in financial markets that prompted the FOMC last week to signal a slower pace of rate hikes. As the participation rate rose to 63%, up 0.6% from last September's four-decade low, Janet Yellen said in her New York speech there is more slack in the labour market than indicated by the jobless rate & "I am particularly thinking about the ...high levels of involuntary part-time employment", adding there are more discouraged workers "who could be brought (back?) into the labour market".

This is the 'bottle is half full' counter to Schiff's doomsday 'bottle is empty' view. The truth likely lies somewhere in between, with his assessment possibly closer to reality. And to put all of the above in perspective, almost two-thirds of the new jobs created in March were part-time ones [with at least some filled by people who already had a (part-time) job but couldn't make ends meet], it takes 100,000- 200,000 new jobs a month to keep up with the labour force's 'organic' growth & each 0.1% hike in the participation rate requires 160,000 new jobs - the AFR is supposedly one of the least biased newspapers in Australia, but has an "economic liberalism' bent, favouring small government, deregulation, privatization, lower taxes & trade liberalization.

SENATOR WANTS PROBE INTO GUN RESEMBLING iPhone (AP)

- Sen. Charles Schumer (D., NY) wants the Department of Justice & ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) to investigate before a .38 calibre gun that looks like a cell phone comes to market, saying a gun looking like an everyday item could violate federal law & pose a threat to law enforcement, and "is just a disaster waiting to happen".

Ideal Concept, the company pushing it online at US\$395 says "In today's day and age carrying a concealed pistol has become a necessity" & touts its "high velocity & increased accuracy"

EUROPE'S MIGRANT CRISIS (Vue Weekly, Gwynne Dyer)

- On April 4th the deal between the EU & Turkey to *try* & stem the flood of refugees into Europe goes into effect but there are three reasons why it will blow up in everybody's face. One, the EU won't be able to "process" arriving migrants as fast as they come : they have been arriving at the Greek islands of Chios & Lesbos at a nearly 2,000 daily-, i.e.700,000 annual-, rate &, as the weather improves even more will attempt the short sea crossing from Turkey⁷. While so far new arrivals have been moved to the Greek mainland, under the EU-Turkey deal they will remain on the islands awaiting a decision on their asylum claims in detention camps where living conditions will soon become

⁶ 60+% of them only part-time, many of them "involuntarily" so, i.e. not because people want to, but because it is the only thing that's 'on offer'..

⁷ Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that the flow of migrants into the Greek Islands has moderated somewhat which some attribute to the word spreading that there is a considerable risk of being sent back to Turkey (& from there to where they came from?); this, however, merely, would toss the problem back into the lap of Turkey, Lebanon & Jordan, who will have trouble dealing with the situation without a great deal more outside help.& Jordan.

intolerable⁸, prompting, potentially violent, protests; for, while the EU has authorized the despatch of 4,000 security- & immigration officials and translators to process the newcomers, few have as yet arrived and, even if they had, this number is insufficient to handle the number of new daily arrivals. Two, the time will soon come to start returning rejected asylum claimants to Turkey and, given the hardships they have suffered-, & the money they have spent-, to get this far, they are unlikely to go willingly⁹. And finally, in June, as part of the deal, Turkish citizens will have the right to visa-free travel to the EU &, given President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has declared war on his Kurdish compatriots, it would be surprising if this would not induce many Turkish Kurds to go to Europe for 'vacation' &, once there, to disappear into the crowds, and the object of the deal was to stop *the untrammled* mass migration into Europe, not to replace Syrian Arab-, with Kurdish-, migrants. But it may never even come to that; for the deal is structured to automatically collapse once the number of returnees reaches 72,000, i.e. little more than a month's-worth of new migrants; meanwhile Turkey will have collected its upfront US\$3.3BN (although they would forego the second US\$3.3BN instalment).

From the get-go the EU has been deeply divided on how to deal with it and & hence has done so on an ad-hoc, 'lowest common denominator' basis, & 'on the cheap'. There is a lesson here for North America; for poverty, internecine warfare & insecurity, and climate change are likely to prompt a wave of migration in the years to come the likes of which the world has never seen, & anyone who thinks that two of the world's biggest oceans will protect North America from this may be painfully surprised & disappointed in the not too distant future; for millions upon millions of potential migrants will be faced with a simple choice between a near certain death by a thousand cuts at home & a risk of death in seeking a better future for themselves & their children in far away places that compared to what's around them are 'lands of milk & honey'.

LAGARDE SAYS IMF GREEK DEAL FAR OFF AS TALKS ROILED BY LEAKS **(Bloomberg, Kasia Klimasinka)**

- Wikileaks recently leaked a conference call in which top IMF officials overseeing Greece's bailout *purportedly* discussed the idea of putting pressure on Germany to give Greece debt relief. This prompted a letter from Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde questioning if his country could trust these officials & continue dealing with them in good faith, and asking for their replacement. Her response was to rebuff that notion, to hint his government had spied on her officials & itself leaked the transcript of their call, to say "any speculation that IMF staff would consider using a credit event as a negotiating event is simply nonsense¹⁰" and *then for good measure to add* that the IMF is a "good distance away" from an agreement on additional loans to Europe's most indebted state while warning the Europeans "That if it were necessary to lower the fiscal targets to have a realistic chance of them being met,

⁸ Or are already sufficiently to prompt a number of NGO's, incl. Médecins sans Frontières to pull out in protest, thereby increasing the burden on the already overburdened local authorities.

⁹ This return process started on April 4th when a group of 202, mostly Pakistan & Afghan, migrants was taken back to Turkey by boat, but suspended again the very next day since so many of those on the islands have filed asylum applications that will take months to process that there was a 'lack of suitable candidates to ship back'..

¹⁰ A claim that itself has no foundation in truth; for the saying "All is fair & love and war" equally applies to finance especially when it comes to to who is going to take "the hit".

there would be an attendant need for more debt relief ... In the interest of the Greek people, we need to bring these negotiations to a speedy conclusion.”

- The IMF has been at odds with the EC on the fiscal measures Greece must implement to meet its budget targets & reduce its debt while Germany & other Euro Area countries have insisted that the it must get on board for any bailout, *the fourth in six years*, to proceed, while resisting its calls for more Greek debt relief. According to Prof. Nicholas Economides of the New York University's Stern School of Business “The leak and the e-mail exchanges between Tsipras and Lagarde have strengthened the negotiating position of the IMF toward both Greece and the Europeans ... The IMF has made it even more clear that it will not participate in the program without a debt reduction.”

At the time of its first bailout Greece had a debt-to-GDP ratio of 146% whereas at last report it was 182% [largely due to the fact that it has had only three quarters of (marginally) positive growth in the past six years]. Its economy is still in the tank & the unemployment rate, at last report 24.4% is only off modestly from its mid-2014 high of 28%, and well above the 10+% at the time of its first (2010) bailout & 4x the 6% 2008 rate. And it is currently carrying a disproportionate share of the migrant crisis burden. It owes a total of 295BN Euros (in maturities as far out as 2059) broken down as follows : 131BN Euros to the European Financial Stability Facility, 53BN to Eurozone governments, 36BN to private investors , 25BN to the European Stability Mechanism, 20BN to the ECB, 15BN to Treasury bill holders& 15BN to the IMF¹¹. The problem is that the maturity schedule is heavily front-end loaded : almost 20BN Euros mature during the remainder of this year & another 14BN in 2017. Of the current year's maturities almost 70% is in the form of Treasury Bills that could presumably be 'rolled over', provided investors don't lose confidence (which could be shattered overnight if the IMF were unduly uncooperative) & 2.3BN to the ECB that, in a worst case scenario should be amenable to some sort of accommodation. But it is the 1.85 BN Euros owing to the IMF (starting with 448MM Euros due next Wednesday) that could prove more problematic; for it is notorious for expecting its debtors to pay on time & in full.

OVERCAPACITY LEADS TO INNUMERABLE TURBINES TO GO WASTED OR CURBED IN CHINA'S WIND POWER PLANTS (People's Daily)

- In 2015 China installed almost half the world's new wind power capacity & in the process surpassed the EU in installed capacity (145,100 MW vs. 141,600 MW). But in some regions, many wind turbines are underutilized; thus in Inner Mongolia wind power plants have been ordered to run at 82% of capacity, in Xinjiang & Jilin Provinces at 68%, and in Gansu at 61%, which the National Energy Administration says led to a direct economic loss of 16BN yuan/US\$2.47BN. The problem is that the national grid is not up to the task of getting power from where it is produced to where it is needed¹², with the State Grid Corporation of China complaining that plans for its expansion have been submitted to the National Energy Administration but that it takes forever to get its approval.

Such excess-, or rather ill-timed-, capacity building is likely to have a dual, medium term 'boat anchor' effect on GDP growth; for on the one hand it constitutes an investment not yielding any return and on the other hand the past super-fast GDP 'borrowed future GDP growth. Be that as it may, 2015 was a banner year for wind power world-wide with new capacity installation, at

¹¹ Amazing how big a hammer the IMF thinks it has, & likely has, with so little money at risk.

¹² Thus in Gansu Province installed capacity is 17,800 MW & consumption just 13,000 MW

63,013 MW, up 22% YoY , bringing total global wind power capacity to 432,419 MW & more countries, like Brazil. India, South Africa & Uruguay, getting more into wind power. But what is really amazing is the extent to which wind power is starting to play a more significant role in the overall energy picture : in China it now accounts for almost 15%-, in the US for 7+%, & in Canada for 10+% of installed capacity.

BANKS BRACING FOR DEBT-EQUITY SWAPS REVIVAL (Caixin)

- China Premier Li Keqiang recently told the National People's Congress a new round of swaps could cut company leverage ratios & mitigate financial systems risks, on March 24th he reiterated the government's interest in the idea at the annual Boao Forum for Asia conference¹³, & the very next day officials in Beijing unveiled a yet-to-be-finalized debt-equity swap program along the lines of a successful 1999-2004 project through which the banks took stakes in 580 companies in exchange for canceling 405BN in overdue loans.
- As of the end of February the nations' banks had an estimated 2TR yuan of non-performing loans on their books, up 35% YoY, *an amount equal to about 3% of GDP*. And while since 2004 banks with bad loans could package them & sell them at a discount to one of the government's four asset management firms (AMCs) which in turned peddled them to investors, as the number of bad loans has surged, & companies have faced more challenges in the form of rising wages, shrinking markets & lessened investor confidence in China 's equity markets, the AMCs have become more reluctant to continue to do so.

Debt-equity stops are typically a final way station before declaring bankruptcy. While the government is gung-ho because it will paper over the cracks & the borrowers because it will provide cost-, & hassle-, free money, , many banks aren't, fearing that it would just mean exchanging one non-revenue producing asset class for another.

MOSSACK FONSECA LEAK REVEALS ELITE'S TAX HAVENS (BBCNews, Richard Bilton)

- 11MM documents were leaked from the files of Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca, one of the world's most secretive companies to Germany's Suddeutsche Zeitung which shared them with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)¹⁴ & now have been analyzed by 107 media entities in 78 countries. While the firm maintains it has operated beyond reproach for 40 years & never been charged with criminal wrongdoing, the documents suggest it has helped clients launder money, dodge sanctions and evade tax. They reveal links to 72 current or former heads of state & the existence of a billion-dollar money laundering ring run by Bank Rossiya (which after Russia annexed

¹³ The brain child in 1999 of former Phippine President Fidel Ramos, former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke & former Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa (to promote the greater coordination of national conomic policies in Asia &between Asia & the rest of the world, it was launched in 2001 & since 2002 has been headquarter in Boao, a town of 10,000 on Hainan Island off China's South coast, where it organizes an annual conference.

¹⁴ An offshoot from the Washington-based Centre for Public Integrity that was founded in 1989 to "reveal abuses of power, corruption, and dereliction of duty by powerful public and private institutions in order to cause them to operate with honesty, integrity and accountability, and to put the public interest first" (*in which case it have long been investigating many politicians?*). It in turn, in 1997, created the Consortium, that today has representatives in 65 countries, to focus on "cross-border crime, corruption and the accountability of power".

Crimea became subject to US & EU sanctions *for its close links to Putin*) that involved offshore companies owned by close Putin friends, incl. the concert cellist Sergei Roldugin, a friend since their teenage years & godfather of Putin's eldest daughter Maria¹⁵, who on paper made hundreds of millions of dollars on suspicious deals & documents of whose companies state specifically "The company is a corporate screen established principally to protect the identity and confidentiality of the ultimate beneficial owner of the company." Also caught up is Iceland Prime Minister Sigmundur Gunnlaughsson who had millions of dollars invested in his country's bailed-out banks & who with his wife in 2007 bought an offshore company to invest millions of dollars of money she inherited, an interest he didn't declare when he entered politics in 2009 & which he sold, eight months later, to her for US\$1.00, which is now creating calls for his resignation, with him saying he didn't break any rules.

"I didn't break any rules" is usually an admission of having done something not quite kosher. This could become a far bigger story than the 2014 Edward Snowden NSA spy scandal; for, rather than involving secretive spy agencies, it involves real people in high places (incl.. British Prime Minister David Cameron's late stock broker father, Ian Cameron, relatives of Chinese President Xi Jinping & of several current & former members of the CCP's all-powerful Politburo's Standing Committee) And it reminds one of the fact that in 2014, after the Snowden affair, a German manufacturer of old-fashioned manual typewriters reported a pick-up in business as some companies returned to using them for recording sensitive material; for while computers can, & have been, hacked into & sensitive material from them absconded with, and millions of computerized documents can be purloined with a single key stroke, doing so when they're on paper would take a BIG truck.

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BERNIE SANDERS WINS WISCONSIN DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY, ADDING TO MOMENTUM (NYT, Amy Chozick)

- It was his sixth straight win & the latest in a string of setbacks for Mrs. Clinton as she seeks to put an end to a prolonged race against an unexpectedly deft & well-funded *pesky rival on the way to what was supposed to have been a coronation*. Her loss does not significantly dent her lead in the race for the 2,383 delegates needed for the nomination (*Sanders only narrowed the gap in their delegate count by 11*), but it does underscore her problem in connecting with young & white working-class voters who have gravitated to Mr. Sanders' economic message (*he beat her 82-18 among those aged 18-29 & 66-33 among those aged 30-44*), a message that he now, ahead of the April 19th primary there, will take to economically depressed parts of upstate New York State where the local economies have been eviscerated by companies moving jobs overseas.
- As was the case after most of his recent wins, this one is expected to bring on *another* deluge of online donations to his campaign, enabling it to buy *more* TV ads in the expensive media markets in New York & Pennsylvania. Thus in March he raised US\$44MM, mostly from small Internet donations vs. US\$29.5MM by Clinton¹⁶ who often

¹⁵ Who lived in Holland with her Dutch boyfriend until the downing in Ukraine of Malaysian Airlines flight MH 17, many of whose passengers were Dutch.

¹⁶ And YTD Sanders has outperformed Clinton in fund raising US\$109MM to US\$75MM.

must skip campaigning to attend fund-raising events, incl. one in the Bronx on the night of the Wisconsin primary vote at which she asked donors for the maximum US\$2,700.

*The Clinton camp must be worried; for, while the media's delegate count is 1776-1,115 in her favour, the one that **really** counts, i.e. ex-super delegates, is much closer, 1,302-1,083. And once again the Wisconsin primary outcome (her 43.2 vs. his 56.5) was vastly different from what the polls had predicted (44%-43%, with 13% undecided, all of whom seem to have absconded to her rival). She beat him in only three of Wisconsin's 72 counties, most prominently so in Milwaukee, albeit not by a lot (51.7-48.0), helped by the fact that its population is almost half black & apparently seven out of ten Wisconsin blacks had supported her. All eyes are now on the April 19th New York primary which will send 247 pledged delegates to the convention, vs. Wisconsin's 83¹⁷. And there, while the media may be proven right in expecting her to win, 'all that glitters is not gold'. For she ought to be doing much better there than the last poll (53.4-43.0) suggested; it is, after all, her home state & she was one of its two senators from 2001-2009¹⁸. Moreover, whereas in the past year the needle in her level of support in the polls in New York has been stuck around 54-55%, Sanders has in that time gone from a near obscurity 5% to, at least report, 43%; furthermore in the past month his standing in the polls has gone up significantly while hers has eroded slightly, as shown by the following numbers : March 3rd : 55.0-34.0, March 16th : 54.3-38.0, March 29th : 53.6-42.0, & April 1st : 53.4-43.0. This suggests that she has to win BIG to maintain a perception of momentum, while anything over 43% would be enough to do the same for Sanders [which would be helpful for him since one week after New York, there will be a mini Super Tuesday with primaries in three states (Maryland, Pennsylvania & Rhode Island) with 308 delegates at stake and where so far the polls have not been particularly kind to him (with him trailing Clinton by ten points or more)]. After that, May will be a relatively quiet month, with only three primaries scheduled & 145 delegates in play in West Virginia, Kentucky & Oregon, with the Democratic primary season ending in grand fashion on Sunday June 5th with 635 delegates (15.7% of the non-super delegate total) up for grabs in California, New Jersey & New Mexico, in all three of which at last report an above average number of voters were still undecided.*

ECONOMIC MODELS PREDICT GOP WHITE HOUSE, EVEN WITH TRUMP **(the hill.com, Vicky Needham)**

- Two economic models that have accurately called the outcome of presidential elections for decades expect Trump to win the White House, while a third by Moody's Analytics predicts a Democratic win, partially based on President Obama's rising approval rating. But never before have the three been challenged by the presence of candidate(s) who have so shaken up *traditional* politics. Thus according to Dan White, an economist at Moody's Analytics who oversees its election model, "this is a very unusual election and there's a lot more uncertainty introduced this time around that could upset the balance and the historical relationship of how marginal voters vote". Yale Prof. Ray Fair, who launched one of the other models in 1978 (that in 2012 predicted a narrow loss for Obama to Mitt Romney) says that, while all elections include unruly features that an economic model cannot pick up, "this one seems particularly unusual ... If there's any

¹⁷ But where Bernie may benefit from the fact that only one-third of the delegates are allocated on a state wide-, & the other two-thirds on a Congressional district-, basis.

¹⁸ In 2000 she won the Democratic Party Senate Primary with 82% support & the election itself with 55%, with the corresponding numbers for 2008 being 84% & 67%.

time in which personalities would trump the economy, it would be this election.” And, while the third model, that of Emory University’s Alan Abramowitz, has correctly predicted every outcome since 1992 (*i.e. only six times*), is based on the incumbent President’s approval rating by the end of June of the election year, the growth of the economy in the first half of the year & on how long the incumbent has been in the White House, its call is based on a 50% Obama approval rating while it has since ticked up to 52% (significantly above the 47% average of his 87 months’ term in office) and Abramowitz himself told the Atlanta Journal Constitution last week that “all the noise being made by the presidential campaign, especially Republican campaign, has taken attention away from what may be more significant for the general election - Barack Obama’s rising approval rating” (as a consequence of Trump’s rising unpopularity rating?)

Models are like umbrellas : when you most need them, they often fail you.

TRUMP’S GENERAL ELECTION PROBLEM (WP, Philip Rucker)

- Washington Post/ABC News survey found 75% of women view him unfavourably, as do 66% of independents, 80% of young adults, 85% of Hispanics & 50% of all Republicans & Republican-leaning independents. His resultant overall 67% unfavourable rating makes him the most disliked presidential hopeful in the 32 years it has tracked them. And in head-to-head match-ups both Clinton & Sanders beat him, often by double digits.

Support for person or an idea can be ‘a mile wide & an inch deep’; but his is ‘a mile deep & an inch wide’ : for those who believe in him, he can do no wrong, but there ain’t enough of them.

DONALD TRUMP URGES JOHN KASICH TO QUIT WHITE HOUSE RACE (BBC News)

- Ahead of the April 5th Wisconsin primary he told a rally in that state “if I didn’t have Kasich, I automatically win”- & that Kasich should quit because he cannot collect enough delegates to win-, *the nomination*. And if he were to lose the Wisconsin primary *to Cruz*, as the polls suggest, it is far less likely that by the time the convention rolls around he will have the all-important 1,237 needed to secure the nomination (and if he does lose in the kind of state in which he has so far done well, questions arise as to whether his campaign is running out of steam). This came after he told Fox News ; “Was this my best week? I guess not.”; for he had sparked an outcry with his remarks about abortion & US foreign policy, and by standing by his campaign manager after he was charged with assaulting a *female* reporter.

He obviously is becoming (seriously?) concerned that at convention time he won’t have the 1,237 delegates to win in the first round of voting, knowing that in any second round delegates are no longer obliged to vote for the candidate they were elected to support; this also is the reason he has for a couple of weeks been flogging the idea, that was readily picked up by his core supporters, that the nomination should go to the candidate who gets a plurality of votes in the first round.