

**GLEANINGS II - 718**  
**Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Quote of the week** : “Mr. Trump’s tweets are straight out of ‘MacBeth’ ... ‘a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing’ “ - Anthony Peterson, Peterborough Canada (in **Letters**, on page 16 of the July 8<sup>th</sup> issue of The Economist).

**Another dampener of the longer-term oil price outlook** - In 2013 Mexico de-nationalized its oil industry & in late 2015 put some ‘exploration blocks’ up for public auction (resulting in only two successful bids). But this week, a consortium of Mexican-owned Sierra Oil & Gas (40%), US-owned Talos Energy & UK-owned Premier Oil (25%), one of the two successful bidders, reported that, after drilling a “wildcat well” offshore (the nearest find to date was 20 kms away) it had located 1.4-2.0BN bbls of oil (supposedly ‘the ‘5<sup>th</sup> biggest discovery in the past five years’) - *since last December 18 other offshore blocks have been auctioned off, & more are about to ‘go on the block’; this could prompt a major exploration rush in the Gulf of Mexico even though Juan Carlos Zepeda, the President-Commissioner of Mexico’s National Hydrocarbon Commission, claims as much as 83% of its financial benefits will end up in the Mexican Treasury’s coffers*).

**Bank of Canada raises rates (for the first time since September 2010)** - On Wednesday July 12<sup>th</sup> its ‘overnight rate’ went from 0.50% to 0.75%. Justified because “the economy was stronger than originally expected”, it was sold as “a symptom of an improving economy” & “the economy can handle very well this move” (Canada, *for all it’s worth*, currently is experiencing the fastest GDP growth rate of the G7 countries) - according to StatsCan the First Quarter rate was 2.3% annualized, up from 0.4% in 4Q/15 & the highest since 3Q/14). But Bank of Canada Governor Stephen Poloz waffled on what the future might hold, resorting to central bank baffle-gab in saying that his future decisions would be “data-dependent” & “driven by quarter-to-quarter analysis” (*not exactly a ringing endorsement of his contention the economy can “handle very well this move.”*)

**Canadian hospital wait times** - This is increasingly an issue as the population grows older; according to *StatCan’s* Canadian Institutional Health Information, it’s not unusual for candidates for a hip replacement to have to wait six months, *often in considerable pain*, from the time they first see an orthopedic surgeon until they’re ‘under the knife’. According to the National Post the main reason for this is that governments don’t provide enough funding to keep all ORs (Operating Rooms) working at capacity during normal (0800-1630) working hours, thereby creating excess capacity that some hospitals take advantage of to generate incremental revenue to accommodate paying cosmetic surgery patients - *on the other hand, about two decades ago in Alberta the people involved in the hip transplant process managed to cut wait times from 47 to 7 weeks, without creating a need for additional resources, simply by streamlining the process.*

**Earlier this week a giant iceberg ‘calved’ off the Larsen C ice shelf in Northwestern Antarctica** - This was not unexpected; for as reported a few weeks ago, its link to the shelf had shrunk 99% to just 13 miles. It weighs 1+TR tonnes, holds twice the amount of water in Lake Erie, the smallest of North America’s five ‘Great Lakes’ (although it covers only half as much of the Earth’s surface), measures 5,800 square kilometres, almost twice the size of Rhode Island & Jersey, roughly the same as Prince Edward Island, slightly less than Delaware, & 8x Singapore. On the other hand, it is only about half the size of the B15 iceberg that in 2000 broke off Antarctica’s Ross Shelf & over the next five years broke up into smaller chunks, only then to disappear altogether) - *it makes the “massive” iceberg off St. John’s, Newfoundland, that has been drawing viewers from far & nigh, look like child’s play.*

**US vehicle sales** - The June annualized sales rate was a marginally lower-than-expected 16.5 MM, down 1.2% MoM, 10.4% from December & 13.2% YoY. After record sales for seven years, sales have slowed every month this year. Individual brand sales were Subaru +11.7%, Toyota +2.1%, Nissan + 2% (vs.the -2% expected), GM -4.7%, Ford -5.0%, Fiat Chrysler - 7.4+ (slightly better than expected) & Mazda -14.7% - *Some economists now worry this may be a harbinger of a slowing economy especially since the Atlanta Fed's GDPNow Tracker now stands at 2.6%, down from 4.0% a month ago [although at last report (May) the housing market was still OK].*

**Yellen's semi-annual report to both Houses of Congress** - *It was basically upbeat, but boring & not helpful.* She postulated the US economy can continue to expand for the next few years (*which seems a hazardous prognostication since the current expansion, the tenth in the post-war period, at 96 months is now the fourth longest, half as long again as the average, and that inflation is 'remaining too low' but that "considerable uncertainty always attends the economic outlook ... there is, for example, uncertainty about when - and how much - inflation will respond to tightening resource utilization"*). And she opined that after a weak First Quarter the economy had become more "vibrant". Freddie Mac's index of average 30-year mortgage rates was exactly where it had been on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (*but up from 3.42% a year ago & it has since upstaged her by going to 4.03% since her notes were written*). While reducing the size of the Fed's balance sheet may start later this year (by **not** rolling over maturing bonds, rather than selling them in the market), she did not rule out the possibility of the Fed might start buying again, if it felt that, *if the economy were to weaken*) cutting the Fed Fund rate would not provide enough stimulus - *with the rumour growing stronger that Trump will replace her with his Chief Economic Adviser & Goldman alum Gary Cohn<sup>1</sup>, she is may, at age 70, and after 23 years in the Fed system as a Governor, San Francisco Fed President, four years as Vice-Chair & the last 3 ½ as Chair, be ready 'to hang her cleats'.*

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## **THE BEAR MARKET IN COMMODITIES (Epoch Times, Daniel Lacalle<sup>2</sup>)**

•In June many people were shocked to see *Brent Crude* oil at 12 months' lows despite the producers' agreement *last December* to cut supplies. But it's not a matter of oversupply, but of a slowdown in Chinese demand (that in the past decade has driven prices *for all commodities* up despite demand in the developed countries slipping due to hikes in efficiency, substitution & technology). China's *strategic* oil reserve now is 511MM bbls., vs. the US's 693MM bbls (*half of which Trump wants to sell*), as its industrial demand weakens under the impact of Beijing transforming its economy from an industrial-, to a services'-, one [*& its air pollution-driven war on the internal combustion engine that prompted last year, for the first time in a long time, a decline in*

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<sup>1</sup> He would be a somewhat unusual choice : unlike most, if not al, previous Fed Chairs in the post-war period he would come to the job without a PH.D. in economics, a background at the Fed, financial policy making or commercial banking. But Trump may see that as an asset, not a liability.

<sup>2</sup> The author (age 49) lives in London, has a Ph.D. in Economics & teaches at Madrid's IE Business School, manages money at 1.5MM Euro,15 months-old Adritza International Opportunities, is a regular contributor to, among others, CNBC & the WSJ, & has authored several books, the latest one, Escape from the Central Bank Trap arguing the central banks' cheap money policy has led to a misallocation of resources, overcapacity & downward pressure on consumer goods' prices (i.e. the deflation they seek to avoid), & upward pressure on asset values/'bubbles' ) they ignore.

*new car sales in China*]. And as its old economy fades, fewer raw materials will be required. In this context weak oil prices are a sign of a more severe illness, China's excess debt & overcapacity from an unsupportable growth model (in the first five months of 2017, China added more debt than the US & UK, EU & Japan combined, *in the process pushing its already high total debt-to-GDP ratio further into the stratosphere*), And while its GDP growth rate *in & by itself still* looks healthy, it seems dangerously high relative to the growth in its money supply.

- Low oil prices have affected oil producers like Saudi Arabia & Mexico that are experiencing brutal reductions in their US dollar inflows (& *government revenues*) at the very time foreign currency debt servicing costs are escalating. And most economic growth estimates for 2017 were based on higher *than present* oil prices, as a result of which there have been major downward revisions in those for, among others, Argentina, Brazil & Russia. According to the ICBC Standard Bank<sup>3</sup> emerging market debt maturities through 2020 will exceed US\$1.4TR &, as US rates rise, capital flows into the emerging markets are, & *will be*, less than in the past decade and, while *the current still low* interest rates may mask this in the short-term as central banks continue pumping US\$200+BN per month into the system, they don't eliminate them. Something else is worrying investors : copper prices, a major indicator of global economic activity also are weak due to oversupply & lower Chinese demand. So market expectations based on higher growth & inflation forecasts for 2017 & 2018 are now at odds with the weaker commodity prices that may be a harbinger of a deeper problem : the US\$20+TR in monetary stimulus has delivered disappointing growth **and** 'contagion risk' as financial imbalances have risen worldwide. And while lower commodity prices benefit users like the US & Europe, they negatively impact weaker economies; so their decline may be the canary in the coal mine for the global economy.

*Old hands in the market are not surprised at the failure of massive liquidity creation to 'prime the pump'; for they grew up in an era in which "you cannot push on a string" was a market mantra; i.e. while central bank intervention can be very effective in throttling undue optimism & expansion, it has seldom, for a century, been proven very effective in reviving an ailing economy; for if businessmen lack the confidence to **want** to borrow, low rates won't change their minds.*

### **WHEAT PRICES SURGE ON FEARS OF US DROUGHT, AND CROP CONCERNS** **[The Weekly Times (of Australia), Emma Field]**

- New-, & old-, season wheat prices have rocketed in the past two months, spurred by drought *fears* in the US & a dry start to the season in Australia. CBOT (Chicago Board of Trade) near wheat futures have broken through US\$5/bushel<sup>4</sup> to hit US\$5.55 on July 4<sup>th</sup>. The Grains Industry of Western Australia last week forecast a "10 to 12 million tonnes" Australian wheat crop this year, down from the record 18MM tonnes YoY. According to Cargill's AWP pool manager Charlie Brown the 'old crop' price first rose by a record export program but more recently has been pushed by dry conditions in Australia & the US.

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<sup>3</sup> China's ICBC Bank is the world's largest by assets & market cap; a decade ago it bought 20% of South Africa's Standard Bank for US\$5.6BN & four years ago another 60% for US\$765MM.

<sup>4</sup> 60 pounds/27.24 kg.

*In June the World Bank's Wheat Price Index was up 10% over two months. Two months ago, in its initial 2017 crop year forecast, USDA expected 21% lower wheat production due to fewer seeded acres & an average yield off 10% from last year's record. The US drought Monitor shows "severe" to "extreme" drought conditions in the Dakota's<sup>5</sup> & surroundings regions (that appear to have spilled over into Southern Saskatchewan), while in Europe severe drought conditions in France & Ukraine [the world's No. 5 & No. 7 wheat exporters (after the US, Australia, Canada & Russia)] also may impact on global wheat production.*

### **HOW A MINIMUM WAGE BACKFIRED Edmonton Sun, Charles Lammam et. al.)**

- Seattle was among the first North American jurisdictions to commit to a \$15 minimum wage target (in three stages : from US\$9.47 to US\$11.00 in 2015, to US\$13.00 in 2016 & to US\$15.00 in January 2017 for employers not providing medical benefits). But researchers at the University of Washington who studied the economic effect thereof during 2015 & 2016 found it *actually* hurt the most vulnerable workers it was supposed to help; for it led to fewer employment opportunities & fewer hours of work, and thus lower overall earnings for those with jobs (& this was at a time its economy was strong; if it had been weaker, the negative consequences might have been greater). And they found that, while the move in the US\$11 to US\$13 in 2015 was to have **helped** low-wage workers by US\$54/month, they ended up being US\$125/month **worse off** since they ended up working fewer hours. And what's more, this reduction in their total earnings was more severe than that which had resulted from the initial minimum increase in 2015 from US\$9.64 to US\$ 11.

*While this may not bode well for those provinces (Alberta, BC & Ontario) about to engage in similar "politically correct" & well-meaning (but misguided?) experiments, their left-of-centre governments are likely to ignore all this since it doesn't fit their pre-conceived notions & this warning emanates from individuals in the "politically conservative & libertarian", Vancouver-based Fraser Institute.*

### **WORKING PAST RETIREMENT : AMERICANS CAN'T SEEM TO RETIRE (Bloomberg, Ben Steverman)**

- According to the BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics)' US Jobs Report released on July 7<sup>th</sup> in the Second Quarter almost 19% of Americans aged 65 & over were working at least part-time, the highest such ratio in 55 years (while since 1994 the share of Americans aged 65-69 has increased from 22% to 32% & that of those in the 70-74 age cohort from 11% to 19%). Some need to do so since the longer one keeps working the easier it is to live comfortably during an *increasingly* longer retirement during which healthcare is becoming increasingly more costly. But many also don't fully retire because they like their work or just want to stay alert and/or remain useful. And this trend is not unique in the US for, while here 30% of current workers expect to continue working past age 70, according to the Aegon<sup>6</sup> Retirement Readiness Survey 2017<sup>7</sup>, the corresponding

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<sup>5</sup> In North Dakota yields of various grain-, & pulse-, crops are expected this year to be as low as half their long-term average.

<sup>6</sup> Aegon N.V. is a The Hague, Netherlands-based life insurance-, pensions-, & asset management company with assets in the 420+BN Euro-, & annual revenues in the 13+BN-, ranges that, among others, owns the Cedar Rapids, Iowa-based TransAmerica financial services holding company.

numbers in Japan are 34%, the UK 30%, Canada 25%, Germany & China 10% & 2% respectively, and globally 17%.

- There is only one problem, *many* employers are not interested in older workers; thus Ruth Milkman, a sociology prof at CUNY (City University of New York) told a conference last month that “Although age discrimination has been illegal for 50 years, *many* employers continue to see older workers as a liability ... Frozen out of standard employment, older workers turn to more precarious (and less well-compensated) employment.

*The latter consideration may well not be a major consideration for retiree workers who want to continue working for non-financial reasons while employers who do employ them often sing their praises since they tend to be more conscientious.*

### **CANADA SHOULDN'T DONATE TO CLINTON FOUNDATION (Postmedia Editorial)**

- Prime Minister Trudeau has been vocal on women's issues & *rightly* praised for that at home & abroad, and has been particularly effective in advocating that the UN & other governments do more to help women living in violent or oppressive conditions, especially those living where female genital mutilation (FGM), and child-, & forced-, marriages are commonplace. We couldn't be more supportive thereof but have concerns about the plans announced July 11<sup>th</sup> to give the Foundation \$20MM to “support projects that will provide critical sexual and reproductive health (SRH) around the world”. For the Clintons have done well by ‘their’ foundation through speaking fees from-, & first class travel expenses paid by-, donors to it, and it was at the heart of the cash-for-access scandal dogging Hillary during her bid for the Presidency (*and their have been persistent allegations, based on Wikileaks emails, that Chelsea's purportedly US\$3MM 2010 wedding had been 'on the Foundation's tab'*). So we take no issue with Trudeau showing leadership on women's issues but question the wisdom of him using Canadian taxpayer cash to get in bed with the Clintons.

*Initially the fire this lit under Canadian taxpayers was made to burn brighter than it should have by ineptitude; for as initially reported the amount involved was said to be \$241.5MM [because the source hadn't appreciated this number related to a number of proposed government expenditures of which the Clinton Foundation one was only a (small) part] & by the fact this news came on the heels of the news that the government had settled out-of-court with Omar Kadr for \$10.5MM (which has not sat well with a vast majority of Canadians). But the Clinton Foundation has ‘too many flies on it’<sup>8</sup> to justify using it to channel taxpayers' hard-earned money into worthy causes abroad, apart from which it may not be the most efficient way of doing so. I have a daughter who has worked in the foreign aid “biz” for over two decades & have learnt from her that there are legions of NGOs willing, able & ready, to help governments fulfill their foreign ‘do-good’ wishes, and she spent at least part of her career responding, in competition with*

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<sup>7</sup> That it conducts each January & February, with the Los Angeles-based TransAmerica Center for Retirement Studies & White Plains, NY-based Cicero Consulting, among 16,000 people (90% of them still working) in 15 countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Turkey, UK & US) that between them account for 86% of the world's funded pension assets, ranging from 0.9% of GDP in China to 160% in the Netherlands

<sup>8</sup> Incl. the fact that its 2013 IRS form 990 showed that of its US\$149MM total revenue for the year, ‘charitable grants’ had accounted for just US\$9MM (due to the fact that, as noted elsewhere, most of the Foundation's charitable work is done by its 2,000+own employees?).

other entities with similar mandates, to governments' RoPs (Request for Proposals) as to how they might implement such wishes & at what cost, with proper "after-action" accounting for the money spent. Moreover, the well for the Clinton Foundation has been poisoned in Canada by its association with the Vancouver-based Clinton Giustra Enterprise Partnership that was founded in 2007 to "alleviate poverty in the developing world" under an Agency Agreement with the Foundation but may largely failed in that endeavour since in 2013 in its report to Revenue Canada it revealed that for two years running only 22% & 28% of its disbursements had gone to alleviate poverty in the developing world.

### **CHINA SENDS TROOPS TO ITS 'SUPPORT BASE' IN EAST AFRICA** **(The Telegraph, Neil Connor)**

- One year ago, in the wake of a decision that according to Xinhua "made by two countries after friendly negotiations", China started building a military-, but what it said was a 'logistical support'-, base in Djibouti<sup>9</sup>, a few miles from Camp Lemonnier<sup>10</sup>, the US base there since 2003, its only one in Africa<sup>11</sup>. After a ceremony at a naval pier in the South China port of Zhanjiang, ships carrying military personnel are now underway to Djibouti to staff it. While according to Xinhua its function will be to "ensure China's performance of missions, such as escorting *ships through pirate-infested waters*, peace keeping and humanitarian activities in Africa & Western Asia", and according to a Foreign Ministry spokesman it is part of Beijing's "ongoing efforts to bring peace & security to the region", others aren't so sure; and their cynicism appeared substantiated when the Global Times, a Chinese Communist Party mouthpiece, stressed its importance to China's military because it will enable the PLA navy "to go farther ... so it means a lot" (although it then hastened to say in an editorial that it was "not about controlling the world.")

*Djibouti has long had a June 27<sup>th</sup> Independence Day parade. This year its government invited foreign participation; so members of the locally based US 39<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team participated in the parade, its 40<sup>th</sup>, for the first since there has been a US military presence in the country, along with contingents from France, the former colonial power, & the newly-arrived Chinese PLA units.*

### **CHINA GOES GLOBAL (Russia Defense Forum)**

- The state media reported on June 24<sup>th</sup> that China will widen the latest draft of its controversial national security law (that has been criticized by foreign business groups &

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<sup>9</sup> Strategically located at the Northern extreme of the Horn of Africa on the Bab el Mandeb Strait that connects the Gulf of Aden with the Red Sea not only because of the 25mile/40 km narrowness of the Strait but also because the Eastern 'Channel' through it is just 2 miles wide & 30 meters deep while the Western Channel on the Djibouti side is 16 miles wide & 300 meters deep. It's a country with a land area of 24,000 sq. kms. slightly larger than New Jersey & one-fifths larger than Wales, with a population of one million & a GDP of US\$2.045BN (US\$1,908 per capita, better than Pakistan - US\$1,428 and neighbouring Eritrea (US\$823) & Ethiopia (US\$795), placing it 138<sup>th</sup> out of 186 in the World Bank GDP per capita ranking (presumably in part due to the fact that in 2013, when the land area of the camp was increased from 97 to 500 acres) the Djibouti government doubled its rent to US\$70MM annually).

<sup>10</sup> Named after a French general from the colonial era.

<sup>11</sup> A former French base, it had to be extensively refurbished since it had been stripped of everything of value after the French had turned it over to the local government two decades earlier.

diplomats for being “too broad and too vague”) to include assets & activities in space, the deep sea, and the Polar regions. And according to Xinhua “some Standing Committee members (*the seven member top decision-making body in the country, that President XI wants to stack with his supporters in September*), participants and departments believe that in space, the deep sea, polar regions and other strategic new frontiers China has real and potential national interests and faces security threats and challenges ... and that therefore China would peacefully explore & exploit space, international sea bed areas and polar regions, and strengthen the security of “activities, assets and other interests” there, and will also ramp up its activities in the Arctic and Antarctic (where it says important research and energy interests lie.”

*Beijing’s definition of “peaceful” may not quite fit Western standards. And its No. 1 target cannot help but be Canada’s long-neglected claims in the Arctic!*

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### **TRUMP AIDES LEARN THE PERILS OF SPEAKING FOR A PRESIDENT WHO CHANGES HIS STORY (Power Post<sup>12</sup>, James Hohman)**

- Aiming to satisfy a hard-to-please boss who routinely changes his story has caused many senior administration officials to sacrifice their personal reputation by making dubious, or even false, statements, only to be undercut by President Trump himself. Last Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup> brought three new examples thereof in a matter of hours :
- After the Trump-Putin meeting, Secretary of State Tillerson said the President had told Putin that members of Congress are pushing for more sanctions on Russia over its interference in the 2016 election, only to have Trump tweet the following day that “Sanctions were not discussed at my meeting with President Putin.”;
- After the NYT had reported on its front page that Donald Jr, son-in-law Jared Kushner and Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort last June had sat down with a Russian lawyer with ties to the Kremlin who had promised them dirt on Hillary, White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus dismissed this on Fox News Sunday as a “Big Nothing Burger” that had been all about adoptions & nothing out of the ordinary, only to have Donald Jr. acknowledge a few hours later that the reason for the meeting had been that she had claimed to have information politically damaging to Hillary although it “became clear to me” that this had just been a pretext to get a meeting to talk about the adoption of Russian children & the Magnitsky Act<sup>13</sup>; and
- Treasury Secretary Stephen Mnuchin was hung out to dry when, after Trump had tweeted that “Putin and I discussed forming an impenetrable Cyber Security unit so that election hacking, and many other things, will be guarded”, & had defended this on ABC’s This Week as “ a very significant accomplishment for President Trump ... This is a very important step forward”, only to have the President tweet, *after the idea ran into a firestorm of criticism, ridicule & mockery,*

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<sup>12</sup> A Washington Post service purporting to provide “essential intelligence for DC decision makers”.

<sup>13</sup> A US law *passed in the twilight days of the Obama Administration* that blacklists suspected Russian human rights abusers.

"The fact that President Putin and I discussed a Cyber Security unit doesn't mean I think it can happen ... It can't."

*The article may not be quite fair to Trump's officials; take for instance the first example above; if Tillerson's & Trump's stories differ, their track records suggest that it would be a safe bet that the former is telling the truth & latter bending it.*

### **TRUMP JR's LOVE AFFAIR WITH MOSCOW (Politico, Michael Crowley)**

"Buzzing the tree tops outside Moscow at 100 knots ... below the radar and in closed airspace", thus he tweeted in June 2011 while on a business trip to Moscow, where he had become a regular visitor since at least 2006 (when Felix Sater, a Russian-born real estate developer & Trump business partner<sup>14</sup>, had taken him & Ivanka (aged 35 & 31) to Moscow to introduce them to potential business partners). And a few years earlier he had told an audience "I really prefer Moscow over all cities in the world", having become such a regular visitor there that he had a favourite landmark there, St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square<sup>15</sup>. He has spent more time in Russia than his father, developing personal ties there that continue to this day; thus his meeting last year with Natalia Veselnitskaya, *the Russian lawyer with ties to the Kremlin who had promised dirt on Hillary but failed to deliver* was arranged by Robert Goldstone (*a British publicist who is in Moscow so often that he calls Russia "his second home"*) who is the agent of Emin Agalarov, the Russian popsinger son of a Moscow real estate mogul), whom Trump Jr. had met & befriended during the November 2013 Moscow Miss Universe Pageant (when it was still a franchise owned by Trump Sr.) And at a September 2008 real estate conference in Manhattan Donald Jr. displayed a deep familiarity with the Moscow real estate market & the Russian economy, and was quoted as saying "We see a lot of money pouring in from Russia ... There is indeed a lot of money coming in for new-builds and resale, reflecting a trend in the Russian economy and, of course, the weak dollar vs. the ruble." And three weeks before Election Day Trump Jr. Flew to Paris to attend a conference at the Ritz-Carlton on ending the Syrian civil war hosted by an obscure French think tank, whose founders have worked closely with the Russian government, that later nominated Putin for the Nobel Peace Prize on the grounds he was "a peacemaker<sup>16</sup>". But he does not appear altogether naive about the nature of Russian society, for even as he bragged at the September 2008 conference about the money the Trump Organization was making off wealthy Russians, he noted that in Russia "it is a question of who knows who, whose brother is paying off who, etc. ... It's really a scary place."

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<sup>14</sup> Who started out life as a stock broker, in 1991 (at age 25) was involved in a bar fight with a competitor during which he stabbed him in the neck & face with a wine glass stem (for which he spent one year in jail & was banned from the securities trading business) although he nevertheless was able to plead guilty in 1998 (at age 32) to being involved in a US\$40MM stock scam but got off easy by agreeing to become an informant for the FBI (which resulted, according to Obama AG Loretta Lynch, in more than 20 people ending up behind bars.

<sup>15</sup> Another one of his tweets during his June 2001 visit was that St. Basil's Cathedral Moscow "is one of the coolest structures I know ... have 2C this each time here."

<sup>16</sup> Who had started the second war in Chechnia, invaded Georgia, seized the Crimea & continues to be actively involved in the insurrection in Eastern Ukraine?