

# U.S., NATO Must Seek Alternatives to Sanctions

BY EDWARD LOCKE (Edited by Collegian Staff Editor Sorina Szakacs)

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However, on October 13, 2014, Chinese and Russian central banks signed an agreement pertaining to Chinese Yuan-Russian Ruble currency exchange, which allows both countries to bypass US dollars in their trade.

China has developed the Renminbi's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System, an alternative to SWIFT, serving around 100 countries, Russia could use it for foreign trade.

Therefore, U.S. sanctions will not deal a deadly blow to the Russian economy. Instead, it could cause serious collateral damages to the uniquely dominant position of US dollars in international trade.

The sanctions on energy products from Russia can have various possible consequences. The United States is importing only 8%-10% of petroleum. Encouraging other countries such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela to increase production and export could fill the gap.

In the United Kingdom, bypassing Russia's oil could be implemented easily because the UK is a large energy producer. For Germany and France that depend on Russia for more than 40% of natural gas and coal, and more than 25% of petroleum, there is no easy way to find alternative sources within a short period of time. That's why both countries are staunchly opposed to sanctions on energy sources.

Without sanctions on energy sources, one of Russia's principal export products, the effectiveness of sanctions against Russia will be seriously compromised.

Based on statistics from the Trading Economics website, "United States Imports from Russia cost over US\$30.76 billion during 2021." They are mostly low-tech products for which alternative sources could be found without too much difficulty.

For high-tech products, it is harder to find alternative sources. Since Russia's principal exports are weapons and energy products, the impacts of these sanctions are minimal.

To make sanctions work, most countries must sign up. However, only the developed Western nations are interested in these endeavors. China is the second largest economy on Earth today and staunchly opposed to any sanctions.

In fact, China's position on this conflict could be seen as "neutral," refusing to call Putin's "Special Military Action" an invasion, while it provides humanitarian aid to the Ukraine. This position could be based on Beijing's realistic geo-political and commercial calculations and its good relations with both countries. These facts cause China to consider peace between Russia and Ukraine in its best interests. Thus, Russia most likely has a chance to survive the sanctions.

The sanctions so far have caused serious collateral damages to the U.S. economy. Gas prices at the pump and the cost of food have skyrocketed. The above facts clearly show that U.S. sanctions, coupled with strengthening NATO's defense forces, might work to warn Russia not to extend its military campaign beyond the border of Ukraine.

But it could also be inefficient in stopping Russia from imposing its demands on Ukraine ("neutrality" and "no membership in NATO"). Meanwhile, it could damage the economic interests of the United States and its allies.

Therefore, I think imposing sanctions against Russia is obviously not the best way to protect American interests. Encouraging Russia and Ukraine to negotiate a peaceful settlement could be a better way.

EDITORIAL

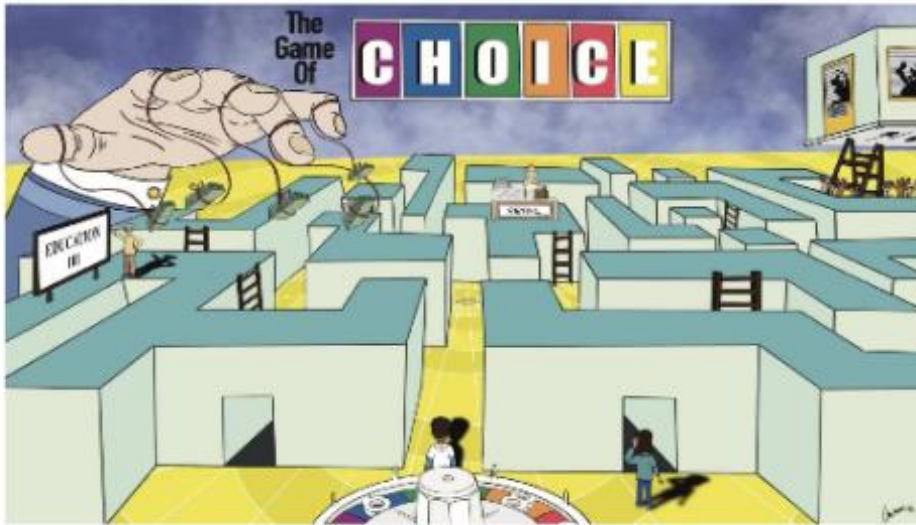


ILLUSTRATION BY CECILIANA MENDEZ

# Income Disparity Grows as Enrollment Decreases

BY KATHARINE FORD

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) enrollment is decreasing. Current enrollment in LAUSD schools is approximately 600,000 students lower, down from 737,000 students 20 years ago, according to *LA Times* [last article](#) on Feb. 10, 2022.

While these statistics include enrollment in all grades from kindergarten to high school, we can imagine the decrease in graduating high school students. If the number of Los Angeles high school graduates decreases, then the number of students available to enroll in Los Angeles Community Colleges also decreases.

What will this mean for community college enrollment, as we witness lower enrollment in our colleges. What will this mean for Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) colleges' enrollment of minority students? LACCD tells us that by far, the largest minority group enrolled in its nine campuses is the Latinx population at 58.6%, while White enrollment is 14.9%, and African-American enrollment is 8.8%.

We know that ethnic minorities, like the Latinx population, rely on community colleges for education to improve their employment opportunities.

If lower minorities are getting certificates for

vocational training, associate degrees, or transferring to four-year universities through community colleges, how will that impact the vast income disparity we already see in the United States?

The adage, "The rich get richer while the poor get poorer," is a fact of life in the United States. How will the United States economy fare as the low-income population continues to increase and the middle-class population decreases?

We already see how the inflation problems caused by the pandemic, and the war in Ukraine affects all Americans.

If more people opt to enter the workforce rather than attend community colleges to im-

prove their quality of life, we will see income disparity increase even more.

While many people may prefer to enter the workforce now rather than advance their education, they may be able to weather the current economic woes.

However, without advancements in education, the prospect of a better income in the future is unlikely. This only perpetuates the problem of income disparity if only everyone in all socio-economic groups would see the advantages of improving the economy with education, we could see how the economy would grow more robust and weather storms like the pandemic.

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## Not So Fast, Let's Keep on Our Masks

BY BEATRICE ALCALA

It is very hard to understand why anyone would be against wearing something that protects oneself and someone near.

It is extremely hard to understand why anyone would be against a policy designed to protect the individual and others.

To wear or not to wear a mask is not a political affiliation. It is simply stupid not to wear one. It shows the person does not care about others. This does not associate anybody to any particular party.

Not much scientific evidence is needed to see how many times wear-

ing one saved. A study late last year from the CDC reported that masks made a difference.

"Both masks not only effectively block most large droplets ... but they can also block the exhalation of fine droplets and particles (also often referred to as aerosols) ... which increase in number with the volume of speech," the December 2021 report stated.

I would like to present more evidence. By early April of this year, 6,201,796 people had lost their lives worldwide during the pandemic, according to "Worldometer," a site that tracks COVID-19 deaths.

There did not have to be so many deaths. Then inside the White House, Jen Psaki, the press secretary tasked positive for the virus, she is often seen at the podium during press briefings without a mask. Is this what we should imitate?

New Zealand, one of the cleanest

affies to the U.S., kept a tight lid on COVID-19 until Jan. 28, with only 23 deaths reported. Such, today New Zealand has reached its highest point of 67 deaths. The country keeps educating its citizens of all ages, encouraging them to wear masks and sanitize their hands and surfaces that people would come in contact with.

Instead of debating about "freedoms" that have nothing to do with our rights, but protect a population health, we should follow the New Zealand model to protect one another.

Because of the emergence of new variants, such as Omicron and its variants, New Zealand is spending tremendous time and energy informing their citizens about how contagious these variants are. Let's be conscious and kind to our neighbors by wearing a mask. We can stop the spread of this virus.



## Whatever Happened to Film Criticism?

BY CHRISTIAN CHAVEZ

What movie did you watch last weekend? Was it an intimate drama on a streaming site, an international flick at your local cinema or was it the newest mega block-buster at the multiplex?

W h e n we watched, chances are there's a review for that.

There is also a possibility of someone on the Internet saying about that movie review. It is a fundamental part of the cinematic ecosystem.

Deciding what to watch is often a hassle in the modern era of Netflix and other streaming sites. The menu is endless, and often the content looks appetizing. What happens when you finally choose what to watch, and it ends up giving you food poisoning?

The role of the critic is without bias, to review each new film with a sharp eye. It is not a perfect system. Film criticism is not subjective. It is the view of hundreds of reporters for different publications.

It has a storied past that includes Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel of the famed television show, "The Movies." They pioneered the "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" review that declared a movie worth your time or not.

Nowadays, the metric to measure a movie's worth is based on an algorithmic be-

tween 0-100 in many aggregate sites. "Rotten Tomatoes" is a website that rates movies "fresh" or "rotten" using the algorithmic scale.

What "Rotten Tomatoes" is not, contrary to popular belief, is a singular individual or organization that reviews movies. Audiences are tired of hearing what is labeled good or bad when it comes to content that they like.

With the advent of the Internet, and especially sites like Twitter, audiences and critics have been at each other's throat regarding new movie releases.

Critics are tired of singular IPs encroaching the box office while audiences are only interested in a good time. It's also problematic when a movie studio becomes a monopolized media machine that cranks out new content every other week.

The saturation of superhero cinema has created a bubble cap for those who wish for a wider screen. There's the hope of audiences who believe that critics are out to tarnish their favorite movies. Not impossible, but it is unlikely because it's not art in the traditional sense. The solution is to treat movies as something other than just entertainment. Too often, movies are bandied off as pop fiction when cinema has a rich, storied history.

Finally, learning to talk about and critique films as serious art is essential. LACCC has a relationship with the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. There should be a class that speaks to this issue.



## U.S., NATO Must Seek Alternatives to Sanctions

BY EDUARDO LOPEZ

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# OPINION & EDITORIAL

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## CITY VIEWS

How do you feel about remote finals? What will it take for students to return to campus in August?

COMPILED BY ENLIX GALVEZ

PHOTOS BY GABRIEL NARCIA AND ENLIX GALVEZ



**CHRISTINA HUBSKAYN**  
Major: Media Arts

I think it is nice to have remote finals. I feel like there is not going to be that much pressure on students. That will make their life a little more bearable and easier. I do not think it is something bad.

I feel like people want to go outside and start socializing with friends. The events and workshops on campus tempt students to go outside of their comfort zone and be less scared. Everything will be getting back to normal eventually.



**JUAN NARCIA**  
Major: Baking

The students who don't like the online classes will be happy to return to campus. Online, they do not get the same help with tutoring.

Professors need more accommodations to help them. Students have to come back to campus because they don't do anything at home, they just sleep and play video games. They should come back to campus to study more.



**GABRIEL NAVARRO**  
Major: Kinesiology

I feel like the finals are not going to be too tough for me. I am currently enrolled in swimming and physiology 101.

I'm taking two eight-week classes, statistics and ... English 102. I am not too worried about the finals of those two classes because they just started last week. As for physiology, it is a little harder.

I have to put a little work into it. Swimming does not have anything to do with finals. In August, if students do hope to come back, I think people are going to have an issue with getting back into the routine of having to do in-person lectures. Students are getting used to being at home.

I think people should come back on campus next semester because it is a great way to get out of the house.



**JOSUE CUADRA**  
Major: Kinesiology

I think the majority of students are taking Zoom and online classes because at this point into the pandemic, they got accustomed to staying at home.

They don't want to wake up early, drive to school, and spend money on gas.



**KENNY UMARA**  
Major: Theatre

In my opinion, finals are pretty good. I try to study everything. Remote finals are convenient but I have to tell myself to get up from bed and just do it.

I don't think students returning to campus in the schools have had the country issue, as long as mask [mandates] are not lifted. I think students would definitely come if that changes, as they are really big on safety.

## INK STYLE



ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL SIMS

FROM "WU" PAGE 2

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