

# Analyst predicts geopolitical volatility

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press



**Peter Zeihan**

Last year, Peter Zeihan predicted an “extraordinarily bumpy” 2021 for trade and agriculture.

That proved to be “a safe assessment,” he says now. “We’re living through the breakdown of the global system right now,” Zeihan told the Capital Press. “We’re going to be seeing a lot more volatility and chaos and breakdown before this gets better.”

Zeihan is an independent geopolitical analyst, author and speaker. Before starting his firm in 2012, he worked for 12 years at Stratfor, a geopolitical intelligence firm and consultancy.

Zeihan has spoken at such events as the Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers’ AMMO workshop and Northwest Farm Credit Services’ Ag Outlook conference.

He sees a lot of uncertainty in China during the coming year.

China’s political and economic system is “imploding” due to deglobalization and because it has devolved into a “cult of personality,” resulting in “catastrophic whiplashes” in its agricultural production, “which is the world’s least efficient,” Zeihan said.

For example, China recently banned exports of phosphate fertilizer. Chinese farmers use five times the amount of fertilizer compared to their counterparts in

the U.S.

Pork production will also continue to struggle, he said. Some 2 million

pork producers in China entered the market in 2021 to take advantage of price spikes due to African swine flu, “but they haven’t gotten rid of African swine flu yet.” Zeihan expects a further outbreak of the disease in China “because these new producers have no idea what they’re doing.”

“Anyone who depends on China for inputs or sales is going to be in for a wild, wild ride,” he predicted. “Just expect shortages for anything that is China-centered.” Zeihan doesn’t expect further movement on the phase one U.S. trade deal with China.

“The Trump administration did an OK job negotiating that but never enforced it,” he said. For Biden, “trade is just not a priority.”

Removing all the “American drama,” Zeihan thinks there’s been very little change between Trump and Biden. He pointed to China, trade, populism, unions and interacting with economic forces as examples where both men are “almost identical.”

The biggest factors to watch are deglobalization and depopulation, with some nations having fewer children as they urbanize and industrialize, Zeihan said.

# Wolf lawsuit targets Idaho trapping regulations

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

Environmental groups claim expanded wolf trapping in Idaho violates the Endangered Species Act by allowing threatened grizzly bears and Canada lynxes to be harmed.

The Center for Biological Diversity and 12 other groups have filed a federal lawsuit against Idaho officials for implementing new rules that allow year-round wolf trapping on private lands and remove tag limits on wolves, among other changes.

“Traps and snares are indiscriminate and are known to capture, injure and kill non-target species at high rates, including grizzly bears and lynx,” the complaint said.

The environmental plaintiffs have asked a federal



IDFG

**A photo of a wolf taken by a remote Idaho Department of Fish and Game camera. An environmental lawsuit opposes Idaho’s new trapping regulations for wolves, alleging they harm threatened grizzly bears and Canada lynxes.**

judge to declare that Idaho’s wolf-trapping rules violate the ESA and to require the state to bring its regulations into compliance with the law.

“Because trapping and snaring of protected species constitute unlawful ‘take’ under the ESA and threatens irreparable harm, state defendants’ contin-

ued authorization and recent expansion of wolf trapping and snaring in grizzly bear and lynx habitat is unlawful and should be enjoined,” the complaint said.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is aware of the lawsuit but hasn’t yet been formally served with the complaint and has no comment on the litigation.

tion, said Roger Phillips, the agency’s public information supervisor.

The habitat for gray wolves in Idaho overlaps with that of grizzly bears and Canada lynxes, whose populations and ranges have been greatly diminished from their historical level in the U.S., according to the complaint.

Even before the new rules were enacted, wolf snares were involved in the deaths of two grizzly bears in the state last year, while five Canada lynxes were trapped over the past decade, the complaint said. Similar incidents have been reported in neighboring Montana.

“Because such incidents are under-reported, the number of grizzly bears and lynx captured by Idaho wolf trappers is likely much higher than these data indicate,” the complaint said.

# Idaho Water Users convention to look at urbanization challenges, infrastructure needs

By **BRAD CARLSON**  
Capital Press

Urbanization-driven challenges and some promising opportunities to add and improve storage and delivery infrastructure are key themes of the Idaho Water Users Association’s annual convention, set for Jan. 17-20 at the Riverside Hotel in Garden City.

Population growth and related development “will be one of the top issues that water users will face in the foreseeable future,”



**Paul Arrington**

Executive Director and General Counsel Paul Arrington said.

While Idaho has been one of the fastest-growing states for many years, growth-related impacts now reach beyond the state’s population centers and into rural areas.

“It’s really starting to impact our smaller water-delivery organiza-

tions, and it’s not going away,” Arrington said.

Development of housing and other uses on farmland can prompt challenges that make it harder for the irrigation districts to keep systems safe and clean, he said.

Meanwhile, the customer count increases.

“We have scenarios in which, instead of one farmer managing 1,000 acres, we now have tens of thousands of homeowners on those properties,” Arrington said. “Just the customer-service aspect of

that is mind-boggling for many.”

Convention speakers and panelists also will address how growth affects water supply and delivery. One panel will discuss efforts to study southwest Idaho hydrology and water quality in the context of changing land uses.

Aging water infrastructure and the state’s need for sustainable water supplies in the future will also be addressed. So will participation in grant, loan and other programs.

# WAWG’s McDonald: We need younger generation to get involved

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

Howard McDonald, the new president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, urges farmers to get involved.

“Especially the younger generation,” he said. “We need them involved. They’re our future.

There aren’t many of us left, but this younger generation is so passionate about farming. It’s fun to see, but they need to get involved. We need their help.”

McDonald got involved because he was impressed by an industry meeting.

“Once I was there, I’m going, ‘Wow,’” he said. “The people

around here — Michelle Hennings, Lori Williams, Glen Squires — we’ve got so many great people. I saw that and I’m going, ‘I want to be involved, contribute a little bit.’”

Hennings is executive director and Williams is outreach coordinator of WAWG. Squires is CEO of the Washington Grain

Commission.

McDonald farms northeast of Coulee City with his son, occasionally getting help from another son and a son-in-law, who are both agronomists. He raises wheat, canola and some sunflowers.

He and his wife have six kids who are either teachers or involved in agriculture, he said.

Upcoming issues such as the next farm bill that Congress will produce, labor issues such as overtime rules and preserving the Snake River dams are priorities, he said.

He hopes to have made progress on at least some of those issues when his term is up at the end of 2022.

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