

# Tourism in Hawaii 1776-2076: futurist Jim Dator talks with Ian Yeoman

Jim Dator and Ian Yeoman

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – *Futurist Jim Dator provides a personal insight of how he "sees" the past, present and futures of Hawaiian tourism. This paper aims to present this insight.*

**Design/methodology/approach** – *Ian Yeoman interviews one of the world's most prominent and respected futurists, Professor Jim Dator, from the Futures Research Center of the University of Hawaii at Manoa's Political Science Department.*

**Findings** – *Like a climatologist, futurists discuss long-term futures which are very uncertain, controversial, and often frightening stories. The past tells how the present occurred. Understanding that story is essential before considering the future. The growth of tourism is a fabulous story, dependent on many developments, whose future is uncertain. The tourism industry may want a "more of the same" trajectory of continued economic growth but a number of changes are on the horizon, which Dator calls "The Unholy Trinity", namely the end of cheap and abundant energy; a profoundly unstable environment and a dysfunctional global economic system. Dator concludes that no government now governs satisfactorily and therefore the future of tourism is extremely precarious and uncertain.*

**Originality/value** – *The interview provides both insight into how tourism has evolved and foresight of what could occur in the future. Central to the interview is Dator's identification of the Unholy Trinity, Plus One, that suggests that the future will be neither like the present nor like the future the tourism industry has hoped for in terms of continued economic growth. The originality and value of Dator's frank views are thought-provoking, going beyond present wisdom and comfort.*

**Keywords** *Hawaii, Tourism, Futures, Perspectives, Jim Dator*

**Paper type** *Viewpoint*

## Ian Yeoman

*You sometimes compare economists to weather forecasters and futurists to climatologists. What is that all about?*

## Jim Dator

As you may know, forecasting the weather tomorrow and the next week is pretty easy, but forecasting climate change over the next decade and beyond is much more difficult. If you say that tomorrow's weather will be like today's weather, you will be right about 80 per cent of the time. When you are wrong, then you can still use the new weather to predict tomorrow's weather with fairly good accuracy. So weather-forecasting is not only pretty easy, it is generally non-controversial. But every once in a while, a weather-forecaster can get it spectacularly wrong, and be the brunt of considerable serious criticism. Similarly, economists typically predict the next quarter, the next year, which is comparatively easy to do by extrapolating from the past. But they are often sometimes spectacularly wrong. Their errors can also cause a lot of grief.

Being a climatologist is a much more scary job, since they have to express their views about future global climate change, global warming, and sea-level rise, and what that may mean

for people locally. Climatologists, like futurists, are talking about the long range future, and some of them are telling very controversial and often frightening stories that many people don't want to believe.

I (Jim Dator) have been a futurist for a long time. One thing that I have learned is that before we can think usefully about the future, we need to understand the past. Thus, before we consider some futures that may impact tourism in Hawaii let's consider the past. The point of this historical review is to get us thinking about how and why what we now call "tourism" has emerged and changed in the past, in order to help us begin thinking more usefully about how and why (and when) it might change – or might not change – in the futures.

## Ian Yeoman

*What would Hawaii tourism have looked like in 1776?*

## Jim Dator

Imagine we are among a group of people gathered in Hawaii in 1776. Whoever we would be and whatever we would be doing, we wouldn't be worrying too much about the future of tourism. Neither would we be discussing the ridiculous possibility that our way of life, one million strong, and secure after 2,000 years of spectacular growth and development, was about to come to an abrupt end with the arrival on our shores of Captain Cook and friends in a few years.

Now, let's imagine 150 years ago, with the population in the islands now down to only 80,000 people and no tourists, though, in fact, a kind of tourism is only a decade away, with the first specifically tourist accommodations being built in the 1860's.

Next imagine tourism 100 years ago when the native Hawaiian population was down to its lowest point of about 40,000 people. Now we finally might be talking about the future of tourism. The Moana Hotel had been built a few years earlier. Tourists, few in number – 2,000 a year, and almost all very wealthy people with lots of spare time and money – arrived by coal-powered steamships, themselves a relatively new invention.

Modest advertising of Hawaii on the mainland (USA) had recently begun and steamship lines to Hawaii were being created. A few more hotels were being built or planned, and even though airplanes were just beginning to fly, we certainly would not have planned for them at all, viewing them as merely dangerous toys and not seeing them as being of any consequence to tourism whatsoever.

Indeed, on January 1, 1914 the world's first scheduled commercial flight flew between Tampa and St Petersburg, Florida, across Tampa Bay. The cost of ticket was \$5. The flight took 23 minutes, compared to 2 hours by boat, 12 hours by train, 20 hours by car.

Imagine tourism 80 years ago, in 1934 when I was one year old. In that year, about 350,000 airplane tickets were sold worldwide. However, all tourists are still arriving in Hawaii by steamship, but in the next year, 1935, the first Pan Am Clipper would begin flying between San Francisco and Hawaii and beyond. An airplane ticket, in 1935 dollars, cost \$360 one-way – which is over \$6000 in 2014 dollars. The gruesome flight took almost 22 hours. Nonetheless, the number of tourists increased over the next decade to about 40,000 per year. Would we, in 1934, have anticipated that and planned for that increase?

Imagine this meeting taking place 73 years ago, in October 1941 – well, you know what happened two months later, and we could not be blamed if we did not anticipate the events of December 7, and plan for them. Still, the signs were there for anyone who cared to read them.

So how about almost 60 years ago, 1956, when the tourist count reached well over 100,000 per year? I suppose we were planning on statehood in three years. But how about the arrival of the first passengers by jet plane also in only three years, so that by the early 1960s tourists numbered almost 300,000 and hotels were beginning to grow like mushrooms after a rain storm.

That is also when mass tourism via jet planes took off globally:

- 1960 – 106,000,000 airplane tickets were sold globally.
- 1990 – 1,000,000,000.
- 2013 – 3,000,000,000.

The tourist industry in Hawaii has also progressed greatly, with many ups and downs, to be sure, but with an inexorable rising slope—to the present count of what? – 8 million tourists per year and continuing to rise—so that by 2016 we can expect how many? and by 2050 how many millions more? It is forecasted that 7,000,000,000 tickets will be sold by 2030, and that Hawaii will get its share for sure.

Ian Yeoman

*So will tourism continue to grow as it has in the past?*

Jim Dator

Should it, even if it can? But return to the past for a minute. I have focused overwhelmingly on only one thing in the past that we also need to focus on in the future – the transforming power of new transportation technologies: from voyaging canoes, to sailing ships, to steamships, to propeller airplanes, to jet airplanes, beyond which there have been no major advances since the 1960s. Think of it. That is truly amazing, given the very rapid rate of transportation substitution in the previous 150 years. Except for planes getting bigger and somewhat more fuel-efficient so they can carry more people, and for more airports being expanded and new ones built so as to relieve congestion both coming and going, there have been no major shifts in transportation at all for almost 50 years!

Ian Yeoman

*Have we reached a technological limit at which we can only expect marginal improvements, or can we expect a technological breakthrough as profound as the steamship, propeller airplane, and jet airplane were previously – perhaps true teleportation like Star Trek?*

Jim Dator

Many things made the incredible transformation of transportation possible, but I would say that none was more important than the transformation of energy sources from wind, to coal, and eventually to oil. If humans had not discovered how to access, distil, and distribute oil, few of us would be here today, and our world would be totally different. Indeed, if I were asked what is the single most important development that made the modern world possible, I would say it was cheap and abundant oil, the finest energy source humans have ever had.

But there is much more to the causes of tourism growth in Hawaii than just changes in transportation. One is a series of amazing developments in communication – though also dependent on cheap and abundant oil. Indeed, as transportation in all forms has stagnated, communication technologies have vastly transformed all of life over the past 50 years, including tourism.

One of the most important inventions that electronic communications made possible was the credit card that can now be used almost everywhere in the world. I did a lot of travelling around the world with a wife and three little kids in the early 1960s without credit cards and certainly without cash, and I can't for the life of me figure out how I did it.

Travellers' checks played a role, but that required me to have the money to BUY them before I went travelling. And where did I get the money from? I don't ever recall having much money.

But now, anyone with enough credit cards with some credit left on them can fly now and pay later. Not back then. For most folks then, you no pay, you no go.

And so tourism growth itself – indeed all economic growth in every arena – might have halted in the 1970s in the absence of easy consumer credit being available for almost everything almost anywhere in the world merely by flashing a piece of plastic. A true miracle. And a miracle that depends on the deeper miracle of continued economic growth in order to have the money necessary to pay off past debts – or at least the interest on the debts.

Another revolution that enabled mass tourism was in the electronic ticketing and reservation systems. The front and inner pockets of my coats and shirts were always smudged with red from the carbon copies of handwritten tickets. Electronic ticketing reservation systems like Sabre changed that, but that change would not have been possible without Arthur C. Clarke and the emergence of the space age that put communication satellites into space, making instant global communication possible.

However, it is almost certain that if the USSR had not beaten the USA into space with its launch of Sputnik in 1957, and if President Kennedy had not responded by launching a space race to the moon in 1960, we would not have satellites or any kind of space activities even now. The space race was entirely the product of the Cold War. It was not a “natural” technological development. Space flight was an entirely political decision made way before the technology was mature enough to support it. So if you ever wonder what communism ever did good for you, you should answer “my job” since few of us could work as we do now without satellite communication networks which the communists forced us to develop way before their time.

And remember, space science changed communication. It has not changed transportation at all so far.

#### Ian Yeoman

*Hawaii is one of the most remote spots on the planet (just like New Zealand). So how, why and what did those tourists do to get to Hawaii?*

#### Jim Dator

For people to come to Hawaii, they had to know about Hawaii and to be enticed to come here for tourism to grow. Hawaii is not a place that most people just happen to stumble across while wandering about. As you have experienced, we are the most remote spot on the planet.

So, first newspapers and writers (Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Jack London), then photography – originally only black and white, then in colour – then radio – Hawaii Calls – then the movies – Charlie Chan’s “House Without a Key” and Elvis Presley’s “Blue Hawaii”, then TV – “Hawaiian Eye” and eventually “Hawaii 5-0”, then Hapa Hula and eventually the Beach Boys and many, many more – all of these technologies had to be imagined and invented and diffused in order to carry the story that Hawaii is a paradise on Earth, worth going into debt for and spending many unpleasant hours coming here and returning home to see, while enduring severe jet lag both here and on the return home. All very counter-intuitive.

But, more fundamentally, for all of these things to happen, the world had to transform from being a labour-intensive agricultural society dependent on horse-power and wind-power and water-power and human-power, into an industrial society dependent on oil, electricity, and machines, and then into an information society dependent on most people sitting around in offices writing messages to each other while producing absolutely nothing at all but more messages.

To have mass tourism you first had to have the masses rich and numerous and idle enough to go travelling, which is the most amazing miracle of them all, because we do – or, at least for a while, we did – live in a world of mass abundance and leisure.

If people still really had to work for a living on a farm or in a factory, as most people did until about 75 years ago, none of us would be in the tourism industry, since there would not be such an industry, and I would be, at best, a solitary scholar illuminating manuscripts in some

snowbound college on the mainland. There would be no grand “University of Hawaii at Manoa” pretending to be the Harvard of the Pacific.

A lot of absolutely unbelievable things had to happen to create our jobs – things that were so totally unbelievable that you would have laughed at anyone who told you about them before they came into existence, but which you now take entirely for granted-now, and forever.

The owners and managers of hotels and other tourist attractions went from being essentially mom and pop inn-keepers, to local business magnets, to global corporations, and now to global corporations who care only about making money and don't care at all whether it is via tourism or not. They will drop tourism – and your job – like a hot potato the second that tourism stops making enough money for them. They will gladly change hotels into condos, or homeless shelters, or just tear the damn things down if that is the most economical thing to do. That is the nature of the economic system we live in now. The rulers of the system don't care about its impact on Hawaii at all. The only thing one is loyal to now is to making money – not to how it is made or who helped you make it. While this insanity makes total sense to economists and the managers of industry, it means that tourism, the flagship – as well as most of the flotilla – of Hawaii's economy, is fundamentally very fragile indeed.

Indeed, there probably is no more fragile industry in the world than tourism, so fundamentally dependent as it is on so many incredible things operating together successfully.

So here we are at the present. After the shocks of 9/11 and then of the Great Recession, tourism has had one fantastic year after another. Tourists and money are pouring in. God or the stockmarket willing, it will never stop.

**Ian Yeoman**

*So what is the future of tourism in Hawaii?*

**Jim Dator**

Most people answer the question of “what's next” by responding, “more of whatever is happening now”. If things are bad, most people assume they will continue to be bad and resist planning for happier days ahead. But if things are good, it is almost impossible for most people to take any warning seriously. Even a good pedagogical disaster like a recession is soon sloughed off and forgotten as a bad dream, rather than learnt from and responded to effectively and consistently.

Most tourism providers want growth to continue. They assume it fundamentally can continue, in spite of occasional dips and set-backs. The long-range trajectory of both your “most likely future” and your “preferred future” clearly appears to be endlessly continued economic growth in tourism – more tourists spending more money and living in more, and more elegant, accommodations. Failing that, you would probably settle for middle-class mass tourism from China and elsewhere in Asia which, with two or three billion people, should provide more than enough sufficiently affluent tourists for tiny Hawaii. Failing that, then a kind of niche, high-class, eco-tourism or health tourism might do.

But whatever else can be said, tourism must continue to grow. That will mean more and bigger airplanes, perhaps many airplanes flying in V-shaped formation to a destination and then peeling off to land in new airstrips built nearby. More and bigger airplanes with more and bigger landing areas means more and bigger hotels and condos, new and bigger attractions, more and bigger ground transportation and more and more – and probably bigger – tourists on our beaches and on our roads, bringing in untold wealth to some and modest income to many more.

Ian Yeoman

*Is there a potential collapse on the horizon?*

Jim Dator

The metaphor that I have been using around town, and over the world, recently to express my concern is "The Unholy Trinity, Plus One." The metaphor comes from the Holy Trinity of Christian orthodoxy which says that God is one – there is only one God – but he has three persons – the Father (or Creator) the Son (or Redeemer) and the Holy Spirit (or Sanctifier and continuing guide). At some times in history one or other of the three persons have been emphasised – we now live in an era when God the Son, namely Jesus, is far more popular than the other two persons. In contrast, the United States was founded at a time, and by people for whom God was the Father and Creator. Jesus was scarcely mentioned in their writing at all.

But all three are persons of the same one God and need to be understood as one in the same.

This is also true of the Unholy Trinity – it is at base all one phenomenon, but it has three manifestations, and most people focus only on one of the three, and not all three. Indeed, we often think that solutions to the problems of one can be found in the other two, and that is not the case at all. They are all dependent on each other.

Ian Yeoman

*Could you describe the Unholy Trinity?*

Jim Dator

The first person of the Unholy Trinity is:

The end of cheap and abundant oil before any equivalent replacement takes over.

Though most are unaware, or unconcerned, recently some people in Hawaii have slowly come to realise how totally dependent we are on oil for everything. In spite of abundant sunshine, wave, wind, geothermal, and OTEC (Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion) potentials, about 90 per cent of our energy comes from imported oil – more than anywhere else in the USA, and perhaps more than anywhere else on the planet. And yet, the era of cheap and abundant oil is over, and can never return. While the daily price will certainly go up and down, in part as the economy goes up and down, and so demand for oil goes up and down with it, oil *per se* is becoming more and more scarce and hence progressively more expensive from now on.

Of course, many energy solutions exist in principle. We have heard about many of them recently, and some solutions have been implemented and are altering the mix of our energy sources, but I can assure you that none is nearly ready to take over from oil. All of the alternative energy sources existing or planned for Hawaii depend on a huge subsidy of energy from fossil fuels. None can show a net energy profit without this subsidy. Moreover, they all rely on materials and fabricating expertise that do not exist in Hawaii. They must be imported from overseas, many from Europe. They cannot be a basis for local energy self-sufficiency in that case.

At the present time, oil prices are extremely high compared to those of the past 30 years, and compared to the cost of other things (which are higher too because of the high cost of oil). The high price of oil is one reason why we are in a prolonged global recession: true growth has slowed in part because the portion of our wealth we pay for oil is draining money away from other purposes.

Of course you probably have heard a lot recently about America soon becoming the new Saudia Arabia – that we are now, or could be, net oil and gas exporting, because we have so much of it, compared to demand. A highly problematic technique called fracking is – or was

– touted as the savior. But it is already obvious that fracking is a very expensive and severely environmentally-damaging flash in the pan. Though promoters continue to promote it, and while money for fracking is still flowing in, though at a slower volume, the era of cheap and abundant conventional oil is already over – we are past so-called “Peak Oil” – and the days of unconventional oil, such as what is produced from tar sands and fracking and ocean-bed sources, are severely limited. The USA will not become the new Saudi Arabia as near as I can see.

Thirty years ago, many of us concerned about the future of energy here thought that warning people in Hawaii about the end of oil in the early twenty-first Century – as we did – would cause decision-makers to use the time between then and now to transit smoothly from oil to other sources. In fact, we did have a brief spurt of concern and experimentation in the late 1970s, and then gave up because we let the fantasies of the neo-liberal economic system we adopted in the early 1980s determine our energy decisions instead of exercising responsible foresight. So we let our developments in alternative energy lapse and relied on cheap and abundant imported oil.

Again, while it is true that we are now developing new energy sources, these things take a long time to mature, and our efforts are much less extensive and energy self-sufficient than they should be, in my opinion. In the meantime, oil from all sources will continue to get more and more expensive, and then in effect “run out” for us.

A gap of uncertain duration awaits us before other energy forms take over – if they will be able to take over at all within our lifetimes since it takes energy to produce new energy supplies, and so far all new sources consume more net energy than they produce.

This is a huge challenge for Hawaii – tourism of course, seems destined eventually to plummet. While alternatives to petroleum as the basis of airline fuels are being developed, I believe it simply will be too expensive, and then almost impossible, to travel to and from Hawaii as quickly, cheaply, and conveniently as we do now. More seriously, almost all of the food and material we in Hawaii currently consume is flown or shipped in. We can only survive on what we grow here for a few days.

It is absolutely essential that we become as self-sufficient as possible as quickly as possible in agricultural production. Conservation and efficiency is important, but learning how to farm for ourselves without oil is much more important.

As I suggested above, there is the “net energy” problem that few of us seem to appreciate: it takes money, time, and energy itself to create new energy sources. Ultimately, we must get more energy out of a process than we put into it or else we are just wasting energy. So far, there is nothing that is even close to being net energy producing in sufficient quantity and price to take over from oil. No one is investing sufficiently in new energy sources to make them net energy-producing soon enough to avoid a chasm.

All of the alternative energy projects I am familiar with here in Hawaii are heavily dependent on a huge energy subsidy from fossil fuels and on imported materials and expertise now, and for the foreseeable future. They are not locally sustainable now, and I don't see they ever will be.

It will take a lot of money and time to solve our energy problems. Where will that money come from? Do we even have the time we need?

The second person of the Unholy Trinity is the environment.

The primary focus of life, globally and locally, will switch from the production and consumption of goods, to addressing long-neglected – and exacerbated – environmental issues: Climate change, sea-level rise, water shortages, food shortages, new and renewed diseases, environmental refugees. All of these will very seriously impact on us in Hawaii.

We were warned about this 30 years ago as well, but ignored these warnings also. Now it is too late to prevent a transformation of the environment. It cannot be stopped now. Nature – in the sense of processes uninfluenced by human activity – is dead. We live in an increasingly artificial environment for which humans must take responsibility and control.



Geologists are saying we have moved from the Holocene Epoch, in which humans first evolved about 12,000 years ago, into a new geological epoch called the Anthropocene Epoch that humans have unwittingly created. Humans are now the major geological force on the planet. From now on, it will take more and more money, time, energy, intelligence, and luck to address the consequences of this shift of Epochs. We should start addressing them now with extreme urgency. For example, we had our chance thirty years ago, but we are no longer able to prevent sea-level rise in Hawaii. We must learn how to live effectively with it.

Where will the money, energy, and time come from to adapt effectively to climate change? Some recent activities sponsored by the State Office of Planning and other state and federal agencies have made a good, if timid, beginning, and some weak legislation has been passed, but much more is required, and soon.

The third person of the Unholy Trinity is the collapse of the global neoliberal economic system.

As I already hinted, our global and local economy is built very largely on debt, not on human labour and productivity, and has resulted in greater and greater economic inequity among people. Over the past 75 years, the world has faced a series of economic crises that we have “solved” each time mainly by inventing new and ever-compounding debt instruments—thus placing the day of inevitable reckoning into the future for our children and grandchildren to deal with. We did not try to solve the crises by inventing a sustainable and fair economic system.

You must understand that the USA is not a free market economy. For at least the last 75 years the USA has been a command economy. The economy is controlled from the top: from the federal government by its taxing, purchasing, and debt policies. Preparing for and fighting wars and “terrorists” constitutes most discretionary federal government expenditures, research, and production. There is a tiny free market that is basically just the frosting on the top of a mammoth command-economy cake.

But most Americans are in total denial of that. We have been told over and over that we are – or should be – a free-market economy. We have been convinced that we should leave all major economic decision to the natural operations of this free economy. We seem unwilling to do anything collectively as a people but to go to war. So, as a consequence whenever the USA is faced with an economic crisis, we try to solve it by declaring war on something so that we can engage in deficit-financing to address it:

The policies of the New Deal did not fundamentally solve the Great Depression of the 1930s, WWII did (1940s). We “won” that war, and had a huge pent-up demand that produced economic prosperity for a while. Then, when recession threatened, we invented “The Cold War, Part One” (1950-1974) and began deficit-spending for weapons and weapons research (with a huge number of people in the military and thus out of the market) in order to keep the economy going. But what was called “détente” began winding down the Cold War, so after an era of “stagflation” exacerbated by the oil crises of the 1970s, we issued a growing flood of consumer credit cards to keep demand up, wages low, and factory output growing.

When that was not enough, the voodoo solutions of Reaganomics and the renewed “Cold War, Part II” (1980-89) reduced the USA from being the number one creditor nation to being the number one debtor nation in the span of the first three years of the 1980s, where we remain, mired further in public and individual debt with each passing second. By stealing from the future, we were able for a while in the 1980s to have “morning in America” while pretending that nighttime would never come.

As a consequence, there was the Savings and Loan bubble, crisis, and bailout of the 1980s. Followed by the Dotcom bubble and crisis, in the 1990s, followed by the invention of new debt instruments, especially hedge-funds, derivatives, collateralized debt obligations, and auction-rate securities of the early twenty-first century.

More recently we have the bottomless debt-funded money pit of the War on Terror and the so-called, but mis-named, “subprime mortgage crisis”, still unfolding after it all began falling apart in 2007, as we search frantically for new debt instruments.



For almost a century we have prevented economic collapse by extending hyper-expanding debt farther and farther into the future until we will be able to do so no more.

On top of all this, human labour, whether manual or mental, has steadily become less and less necessary for the production and distribution of all of the goods and services we can possibly consume. There are no longer enough real jobs that need human labor any more, and, if automation, robotisation, and artificial intelligence continue at their current pace, as they may or may not, then the only achievable goal for employment must be full unemployment. That would be my pledge if running for governor: I pledge to bring full unemployment to the state, since anything reasonably approaching full employment is unattainable under the present economic system.

And that may be good for tourism – with almost nobody working, and yet goods and services continuing to spew out of automated factories, and with the advent of passenger-flying drone airplanes and ground transportation – almost everyone in the world will be unemployed, having lots of spare time to come to Hawaii as a tourist – even though there will be only a literal handful of jobs available for humans in the tourist industry then.

The current economic system continues to produce greater and greater inequities of wealth and access to fundamental goods and services between many rich people, and many, many more and growing poor people. There is no good reason for this. There is material abundance already without much human labour. Why not sever the old relationship between human labor – and then consumer debt – and access to abundant goods produced without much human labor?

**Ian Yeoman**

*So that is the Unholy Trinity: the end of cheap and abundant energy, fundamental climate and other environmental changes, and economic collapse. They all seem interrelated. They all demand an interrelated response, and soon. So, what does this mean?*

**Jim Dator**

We can't solve one by making the others worse. We certainly can't solve the end of oil by using ever-more polluting energy sources, as we are currently doing. We can't solve climate change by throwing money at it because we don't have enough money – and now enough credit – to throw anything at it but hard work and prayer.

**Ian Yeoman**

*Therefore. . . . .*

**Jim Dator**

This is our Plus One? It is the fact that no government anywhere in the world can govern any more and that no other processes exist ready to take the place of government. Some concerned liberal economists say, "the government, by deficit-spending, should fund new energy, infrastructure, and environmental research, and prevent total economic collapse." Unfortunately, that won't work because of the other two persons of the Unholy Trinity that most economists ignore or marginalise. Have you heard Paul Krugman talk about how profound climate change and energy exhaustion figure in these theories and plans? No, because he focuses only on the fiscal economy, and ignores the real economy based on supplies of energy and other natural resources.

But even if this were not so, government can't help, because of 20 years of bad-mouthing government (the mantra that all government is bad and that we should each take care of ourselves entirely), resulting in under-resourcing, downsizing, privatising, outsourcing, and debt, each of which has been intended to drive nails into the coffin of effective government.

The end of progressive taxes in the 1980s was one of the most irresponsible acts Americans have ever committed. The deregulation of banks was another.

And while massive national debt is the final nail in the coffin of effective government, please understand, as the Tea Party Republicans and their supporters have made completely clear, that this is the purpose of our huge national debt – to cripple and kill all government functions. The huge debt has not been an unfortunate consequence of certain policies. It has been the fundamental intent of those policies.

We drove government and ourselves deeper and deeper into debt not so much to solve old problems but rather to make it harder and harder for people to act collectively through government in the future. The intent was to destroy effective government and leave everything up to private and not public forces. As a consequence, the USA has become a strong nation with a weak state. We pledge our allegiance to the nation's flag and constitution, but prevent the government (the state, in this sense) to function. We are expected to remain loyal to the symbols of a government that can no longer function on our behalf. I don't think that can last much longer.

It is far too late to prevent the consequences of the Unholy Trinity, Plus One. We can only deal with them, which means, as far as Hawaii and tourism is concerned – we need rapid depopulation, with those remaining here becoming excellent farmers, fishers, and craftsmen who can enjoy Hawaii's empty beaches, uncertain weather, and rising seas in their spare time.

**Ian Yeoman**

*What are you saying?*

**Jim Dator**

Hawaii is faced with an extraordinary opportunity for creativity and innovation. The Unholy Trinity, Plus One, is sweeping aside all recent ways and means of doing things, giving us the unprecedented opportunity of an almost clean slate so we can start all over again, almost certainly initially if not forever based on self-sufficient hunting, gathering, and farming. Thus, we need to preserve our land, and, equally importantly, agricultural knowledge and practices appropriate for a self-sufficient Hawaii. Do you know how to farm? Do you have the wherewithal to do it? How about your children? I don't. I live in a condo on the ninth floor in Waikiki, the heart of the industrial district of Hawaii, and I love it there.

But I also love to eat, and I can't possibly grow enough on my lanai to feed anyone.

What to do? Well, for one thing, my son's girlfriend has a fine farm on the Big Island and he has been there once or twice to learn how to slop the pigs. That works for me.

**Ian Yeoman**

*What is the plan for the future?*

**Jim Dator**

Now, I said at the outset that no one can predict the future, and I have purposely been sounding like I have been predicting it, but in truth, I have not. I have been laying out the case for what I think is one very plausible alternative to continued economic growth for tourism in Hawaii, and ask you to consider it seriously, and to prepare for it. What if I am wrong, and the continued economic growth of tourism continues forever? Then no harm done, even if you prepare for collapse and there is no collapse, it will be OK. What if I am right and collapse occurs without our being prepared for it? Then we and our children are in for a very precarious and possibly violent future.

Ian Yeoman

*What is the better path to take? To ignore, or to prepare?*

Jim Dator

I once saw a poster in the office of the Australian Commission on the Future. It was largely in blue, with the so-called "sails" of the famous Sydney Opera House almost covered by rising waves. On it were written these words:

If we act as if it matters  
And it doesn't matter,  
Then, no matter.  
But if we act as if it doesn't matter  
And it matters,  
Then it matters.

Let's make it matter. Let's prepare to surf those tsunamis of change, with or without tourism.

Ian Yeoman

*Great words. Thank you so much Jim*

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