

# Crypto and Cyber Bank Attacks Lessons Learned Report

## -- Best Barter Items for a Collapse Situation

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This 5<sup>th</sup> Collapse Survivor simulation covered a National Security Agency attack that destroyed the Bitcoin blockchain/cryptocurrency, followed by retaliatory cyber attacks on U.S. banks and some other targets. This Lessons Learned report covers cyber threats, economic collapse, and some basic techniques to deal with loss of the banking system, the best barter items for a collapse situation, and cautions on attending barter sessions during a collapse.



A video that covers some of these lessons learned issues from this simulation is available at:

<https://youtu.be/n8cYPVQqV6c>

The NSA may well be tasked some day to destroy the Bitcoin blockchain and end this leading cryptocurrency. Bitcoin has always been popular as a means of avoiding government discovery of what you're buying, so black market drugs and worst have been purchased using Bitcoin. Some hackers, including North Korea, use Bitcoin as a means for their victims to pay ransom to recover data. This enables North Korea to evade the impact of economic sanctions, and helps fund their nuclear weapons development. That was the reason that in this scenario the NSA took down the Bitcoin blockchain.



### The National Security Agency could destroy the Bitcoin Blockchain

- <https://medium.com/@collapsesurvivor/bitcoin-founder-satoshi-nakamoto-was-probably-an-nsa-employee-and-the-nsa-may-destroy-bitcoin-2767c5c865c5>

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Bitcoin has a huge risk few consider: it can be destroyed overnight

Will the NSA take down the Bitcoin Blockchain?



If interested in reading more about why/how the NSA could destroy Bitcoin, the article below covers this:

<https://medium.com/@collapsesurvivor/bitcoin-founder-satoshi-nakamoto-was-probably-an-nsa-employee-and-the-nsa-may-destroy-bitcoin-2767c5c865c5>

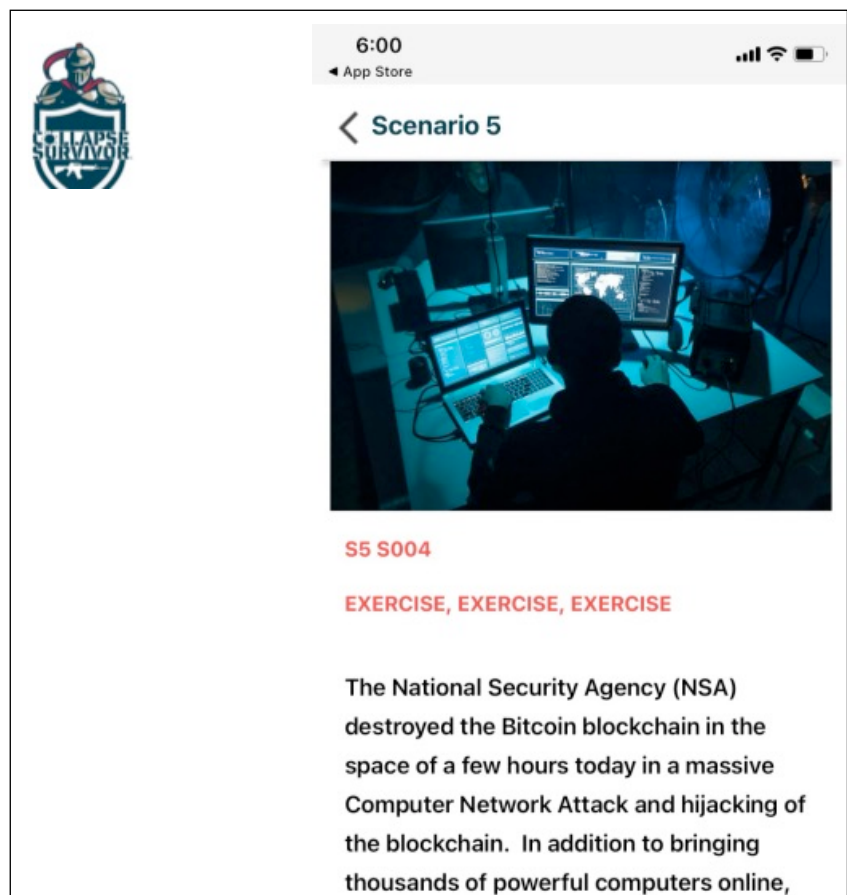
There are other reasons why the NSA could receive this mission tasking to destroy Bitcoin. The Securities and Exchange Commission has been targeting cryptocurrencies as illegal, and some in Government do not like Bitcoin or any cryptocurrency that competes with the dollar. With interest in creating a digital dollar, Bitcoin would be an undesired, popular alternative.

Some elements of National Security Agency, NSA, cryptography were believed to be used to develop the Bitcoin blockchain, and there is speculation, such as the article above, that Satoshi Nakamoto, the creator of Bitcoin, was probably an NSA employee or contractor. As the article explains, both his expertise and also why he or she or they is not known makes sense if he was an NSA employee or contractor since he/she/they would probably be violating a contract or law to be doing his Bitcoin work. Thus they kept their identity secret.

The NSA could destroy the Bitcoin blockchain, as happened in the simulation.

In this simulation the National Security Agency destroyed the Bitcoin blockchain by first bringing up thousands of computers to compete in the process of solving the calculation problem and adding the next block in the Bitcoin blockchain, which is a legal, OK thing to do. But the NSA also engaged in Computer Network Attack on the big Bitcoin mining farms that also have hundreds of computers. They dominate Bitcoin mining; and the NSA has the skills and capability to disable them; which enabled their Bitcoin processing computers to take over the blockchain and roll it back, remove past blocks and basically pervert and destroy

the blockchain. You could not do this in any fair processing competition, but with Computer Network Attack to disable the big mining farms, the NSA did succeed in this simulation.



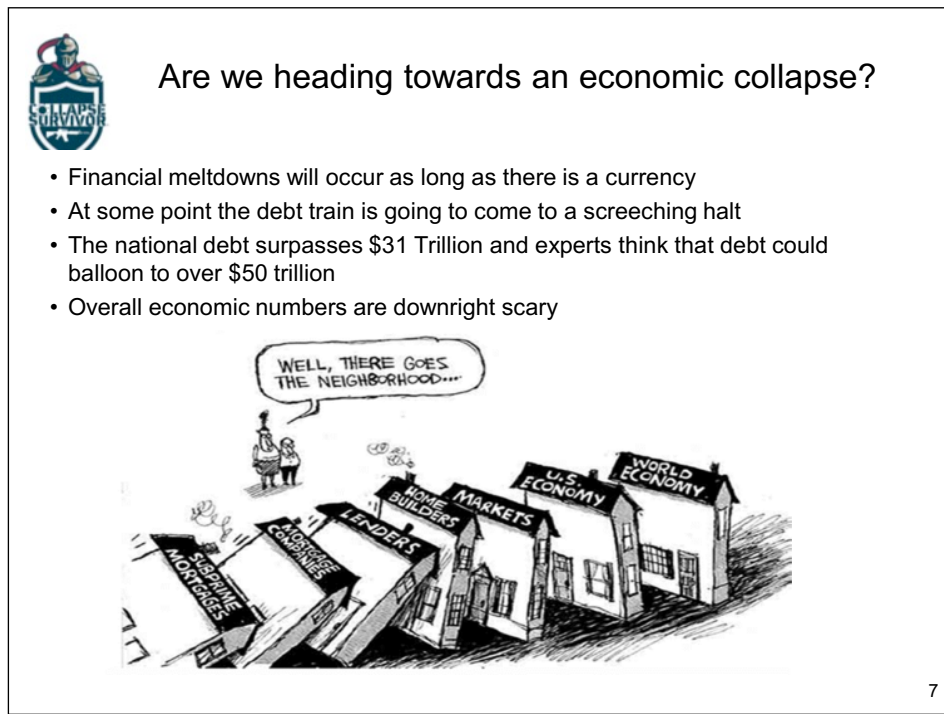
The screenshot shows a mobile application interface. At the top left is the 'COLLAPSE SURVIVOR' logo. The status bar at the top shows the time as 6:00 and the 'App Store' icon. Below the logo is a back arrow and the text 'Scenario 5'. The main content area features a photograph of a person sitting at a desk with multiple computer monitors in a dimly lit room. Below the photo, the text reads: 'S5 S004' in red, followed by 'EXERCISE, EXERCISE, EXERCISE' in red. At the bottom, a paragraph states: 'The National Security Agency (NSA) destroyed the Bitcoin blockchain in the space of a few hours today in a massive Computer Network Attack and hijacking of the blockchain. In addition to bringing thousands of powerful computers online,

There were some other developments on crypto and blockchain in the scenario, but the major collapse threat was the cyber attacks on the banking system.

There is current concern that the U.S. economy could be headed for a collapse. There have been some recent high profile banks that have gone under.

The far bigger concern is huge, growing, unsustainable government debt. It is not just the government. People are borrowing at record levels as well. When you factor in unfunded liabilities like Social Security, Medicare, government pension plans and

Obamacare, the true debt number is actually much higher. Estimates put the real U.S. debt number somewhere between \$222 trillion to \$250 trillion.



**Are we heading towards an economic collapse?**

- Financial meltdowns will occur as long as there is a currency
- At some point the debt train is going to come to a screeching halt
- The national debt surpasses \$31 Trillion and experts think that debt could balloon to over \$50 trillion
- Overall economic numbers are downright scary

WELL, THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD...

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Bank failures, cyber attacks that take force banks to shut down, loan defaults, stock and crypto market crashes, commercial real estate collapse, food shortages, inflation, other events could trigger an economic collapse. A panic run on banks could trigger an economic collapse, and associated chaos and violence on the streets. An economic collapse may be completely irrational, something you could not predict because of human emotional reactions, often irrational and unpredictable. There could be some relatively minor economic disaster that a political candidate blames on his opponent, and protests start, violence or looting starts, and pent up anger, fears, erupt and a huge break down in society and loss of law and order results.

A cyber attack that takes down banking and the financial system would likely lead to an economic collapse as well as looting and violence if people panic due to no cash to buy food, or concern that food will soon run out. Economic collapse can also lead to massive political protests and disruption. If you look at the causes of World War II, historians blame the Great Depression, the extreme economic hardship in Germany as a result of the Versailles settlement and reparations from World War I, which led to fascism and extremist governments.

An economic collapse can also result in strikes and protests that can get violent. This is largely forgotten in U.S. history, but there was a WWI veteran pension march on Washington DC to pressure Congress to pay them their pensions earlier, tens of thousands of them, and they camped

out near the capitol. They were not particularly violent, but they scared a lot of people, and the Army was sent in to disperse them. Today, our society tends to be a lot more violent.

The more immediate impact of banks closing and not able to dispense cash, or an economic collapse, is looting. As we've seen in recent years, a big protest event often ends up in massive looting, and far worse violence than what happened in the Great Depression.

In this simulation it was a cyberattack with the financial system as it's target. A cyberattack of the US banking system could result in bank runs, panic and defaults across the country. Cybersecurity threats are evolving rapidly, with nation-states (Russia, China, Iran, North Korea) targeting specific industries including banking. Ukraine's banking system was one of Russia's primary cyber targets.

The collapse of just one bank could trigger a domino effect, leading to the collapse of hundreds of others and affecting millions of people with devastating impact. The threat faced by the banking industry is not unique; all businesses face the risk of cyberattacks in the modern digital age.

Preparing for an economic collapse is vital to your survival, especially in today's world, where the global economy is interdependent. Any event, even those in other parts of the world, can have a ripple effect on other countries, and as people react irrationally, overreact, some other political or social issues get added to the flame, violence and looting takes off and you've got a collapse that might quickly end--or might escalate and get out of control, lasting a long time.

When an economic collapse is either starting, or the public fears it is starting, you should expect to see a run on the banks, maybe within hours. People are going to panic and will do everything they can to get their hands on cash to buy extra supplies. Except those who have a good survival plan already in place. If a run on banks or economic collapse happens, it's probably too late to think about preparing and getting your supplies now. A trip to any kind of store to get food or supplies could result in exposure to violence, injury and possibly even death.



## Cyberattack of the Financial System?

- The nation's banking system is facing ongoing uncertainty
- The banking industry has long been aware of the threat posed by cyberattacks, but it may be more vulnerable now than ever before due to the reliance on technology to conduct business in a secure manner
- As history shows, it's not if but when an economic collapse will occur whether it's caused by financial mismanagement or a digital assault on the system



**Cyberattack at a US Subsidiary of  
ICBC Highlights Payment  
Interruption Risks**

This was not a severe collapse scenario, just a Level 2 collapse, some economic slowdown and an uptick in looting, but not a collapse where you likely needed to bug out. However, if you live in a downtown area or place that is just prone to major protests, you could experience a far worse level of violence and collapse. There is a real security risk from living in a place that is a magnet for protests that can quickly turn into opportunities for looting.


The 3 major collapse survival lessons learned from this simulation were fairly simple: #1 the most obvious—talk to your kids, friends and relatives and stress to them to be aware of local protests going on and never regard them as something that might be fun to see or participate in. As we’ve seen in the United States in

recent years, gang members and opportunistic bad people will use a protest, an election event that might have counter demonstrators, as an excuse to start looting. Gangs and opportunistic bad people know that police are already tied up in crowd control to keep protestors separated, and with thousands of people around, if a group of 20 start looting, the police can’t get to them, can’t identify them; it’s a great opportunity for bad people to loot.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> key lesson learned from this scenario is to have some plan to deal with a run on banks or a cyber attack that takes banks down. That could mean keeping several hundred dollars of cash on hand if ATMs and banks shut down. But it is important not to rush to a store if a potential collapse disaster is unfolding before considering the risk of looting and violence.

Having goods to barter is a key, important overall collapse practice. In most collapse scenarios, you should expect that cash will be worthless, people will value survival goods.

The podcast video on this scenario explained how to interpret the “Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis” scorecard shown below that was used to assess and rank order the best barter items to stockpile for use in a collapse. We recommend you watch the video for the best explanation of how this multi-criteria decision analysis works.



## Collapse Survival Lessons Learned

Collapse Level							
1	peacetime, all functioning						
2	higher unrest, slowdown in economy, slight uptick in crime, looting						
3	major economic disruption and marauding, insecurity, little police protection						
4	economy shut down, no law enforcement, violent, major marauding						
5	Total collapse, widespread and very violent marauding, "Postman" level of organized violence						

1. Ensure friends/family avoid protests, scenes of looting when police are overwhelmed
2. Have some cash on hand, plan for barter if no currency
3. Be prepared before a collapse starts

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Basically, there are many factors or criteria to consider in assessing what are the best items to stockpile. The most important is the value of the item in the collapse: both value as a trading item, and value to you if you don't have barter opportunities. The ideal barter item is something that will help keep you alive. Cash and gold are not good barter items by this criteria. But there are other factors to consider: safety of storage, maintenance needed, cost of the items, shelf life, how much space they take up, how easy are they to transport to a barter site. A lot of factors to consider, hence the need for multi-criteria decision analysis.

Some items like whiskey may be more valuable for trade than use. You may well need whiskey as a medical disinfectant or pain control in an operation (drunk since no anesthetic). But it's more valuable role may be for use in trade. Unlabeled items, or things that could be counterfeited, will hold far less value in trade, though full value in your use.

The results of this analysis will depend on your location, situation, and preferences. This assessment was done using experts from Fortitude Ranch, a recreational and survival community, with locations in remote areas.



The best items for barter based on this analysis were (from best {1-10} to not so good {items 12-14}):

1. Seeds
2. Vitamins
3. Ammunition
4. Shelf Stable Food
5. Antibiotics
6. Whiskey
7. LED Flashlights
8. Cheap 12 gauge pump shotgun
9. Matches
10. Batteries
11. Chickens
12. Gasoline
13. Paper Currency
14. Gold Coins

Again—the priorities and value of survival supplies will vary greatly by location and situation, and value is inherently personal and varied. You need to assess your situation and preferences in deciding what are best items for you to stockpile for barter in a collapse. Of course, a mixture of items, not just the top few, is likely best.

### **Getting safely to and from a barter meetup in a collapse**

Should you go to a barter meetup in a collapse situation (i.e. unreliable law and order)? A barter meet up in a collapse could be very dangerous; a big marauder group may hear of it and try to ambush folks coming to it or gong from it.



### **If you do go to a barter meeting—assume it's a trap, prepare accordingly**

- Assume a gang, marauders are watching and potential trap
- Have dedicated guards who are watching for threats, looking back too, NOT paying attention to the bartering
- Have more guards behind this in case is a trap, need to fight way out
- Assume dealing with con artists, more they look trustworthy, LESS you should trust
- Armed Guards visible, but not threatening (behind you)
- If a virus (even if not), keep distance, masks, watch the winds (stay upwind ideally)
  - Discuss from distance, set trade items in center, but apart—then you both move towards, circling so not passing and both get and can inspect at same time THEN agree a final deal and pick up and withdraw

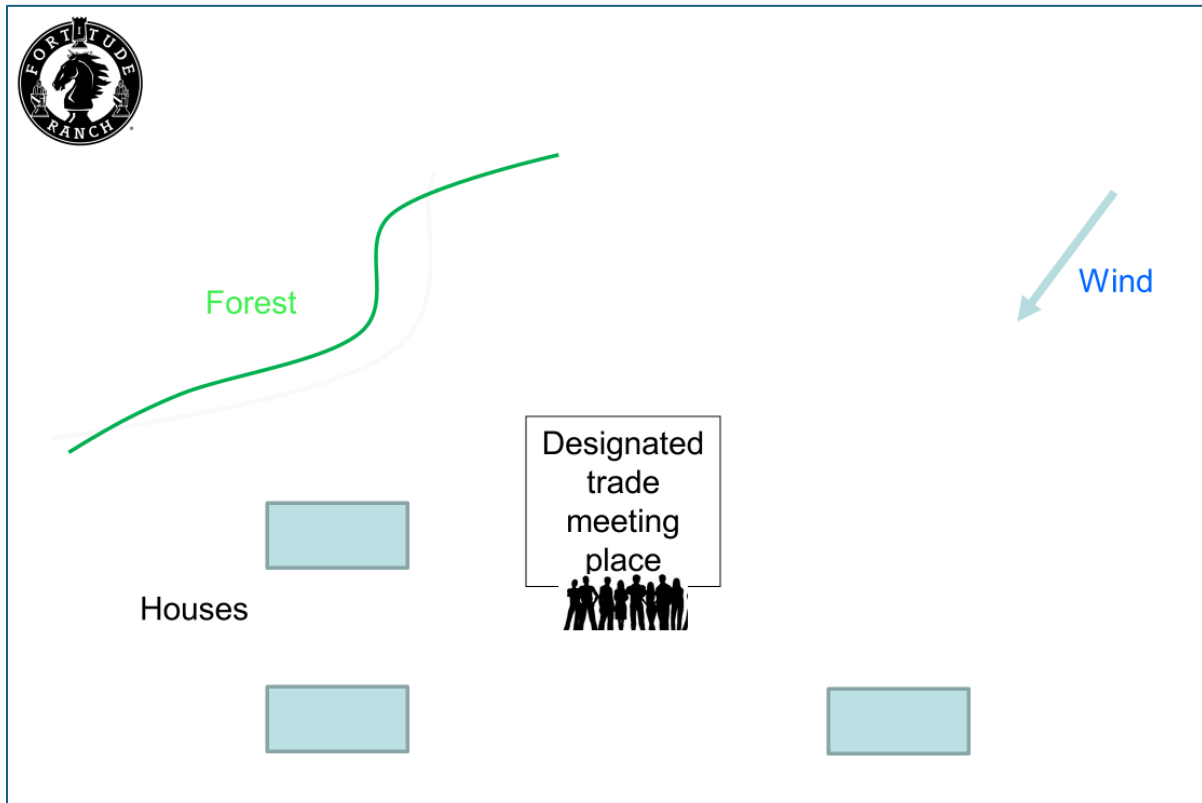
Unless out of a vital item that you believe will be available at a barter meeting, you should probably not go to barter sessions. If a virus is still around, the risk of catching a virus must be considered, and the deployed group may have to be in quarantine for a week after coming back. Fortitude Ranch staff are trained to assume that a community barter event is either a ploy for some clever marauder group, or one will decide to take advantage of it to ambush/steal/kill.

If you do plan to go, carefully plan the route of travel to get there, considering likely ambush points and how you could avoid them or bring a drone or some means of discovering the ambush.



In the map below, if there is a virus risk, you would want to enter up wind, from the top in this diagram. A marauder group might be hiding in the forest, or in houses, so entering thru the forest from the north would be best to discover if there are people there lying in ambush for the barter meetup. Send just one or two people to the barter, keeping an overwatch group in and at the edge of the forest checking 360 degrees for a marauder group, while also watching your people at the barter meeting.

Your traders should try to keep distance from others, transact and leave quickly, and remain wary at all times. Avoid any discussions about your group, location, or supplies, other than stressing a lot of well armed people.



One final consideration in attending a barter meetup in a collapse is to remember the lessons of the first Star Trek series: the “expendable crewman.” You should not send your most skilled, valuable personnel to the barter exchange.