The global economic crisis: Capitalist roots and financial shoots

CENTRE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

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OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO ADVANCE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BY DEVELOPING CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT, FOR AND IN DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY THROUGH TEACHING, RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING.

Cartoons by Zapiro

South Africa's 'Social Movements United' march from Alexandra Township to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Sandton, 31 August 2002

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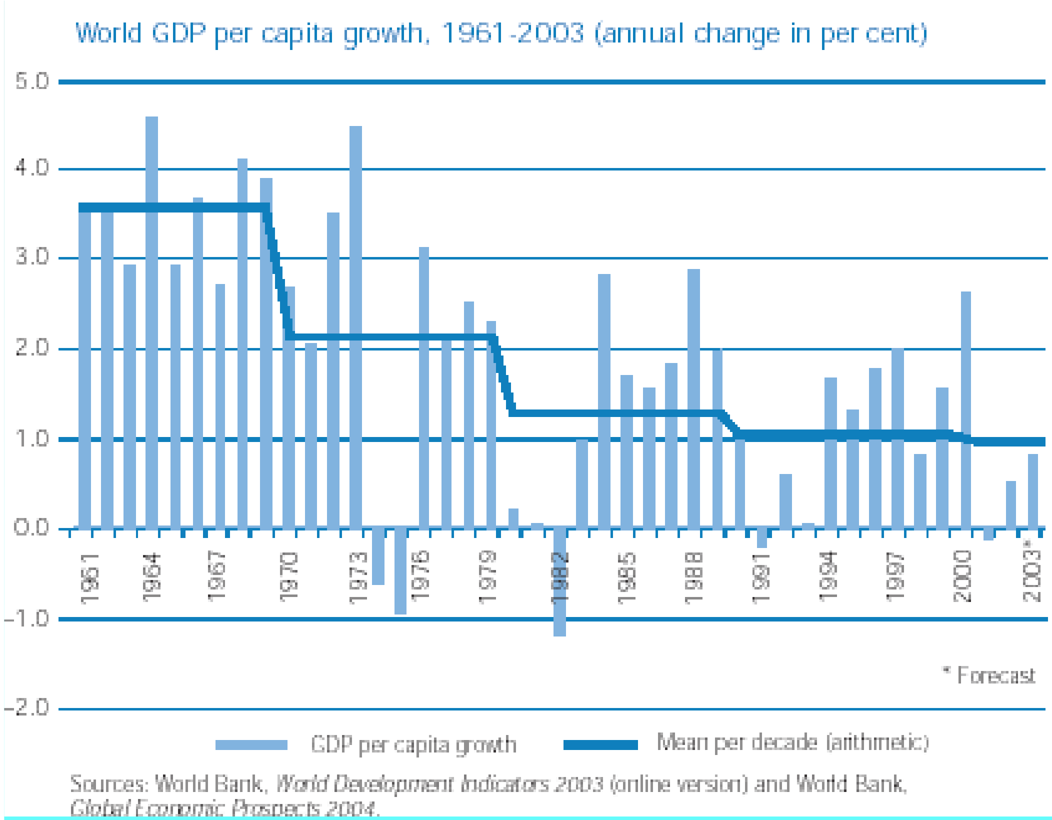
This presentation covers:

1) **Background: causes**
2) **Financial capital ascends**
3) **Real estate speculation**
4) **Financial market volatility**
5) **Stock market devaluations**
6) **Housing devaluations**
7) **Financial losses**
8) **Is inflation a way out?**
9) **Currency movements**
10) **Keep in mind context!**
    - ***a) global accumulation cycle***
    - ***b) global uneven development***

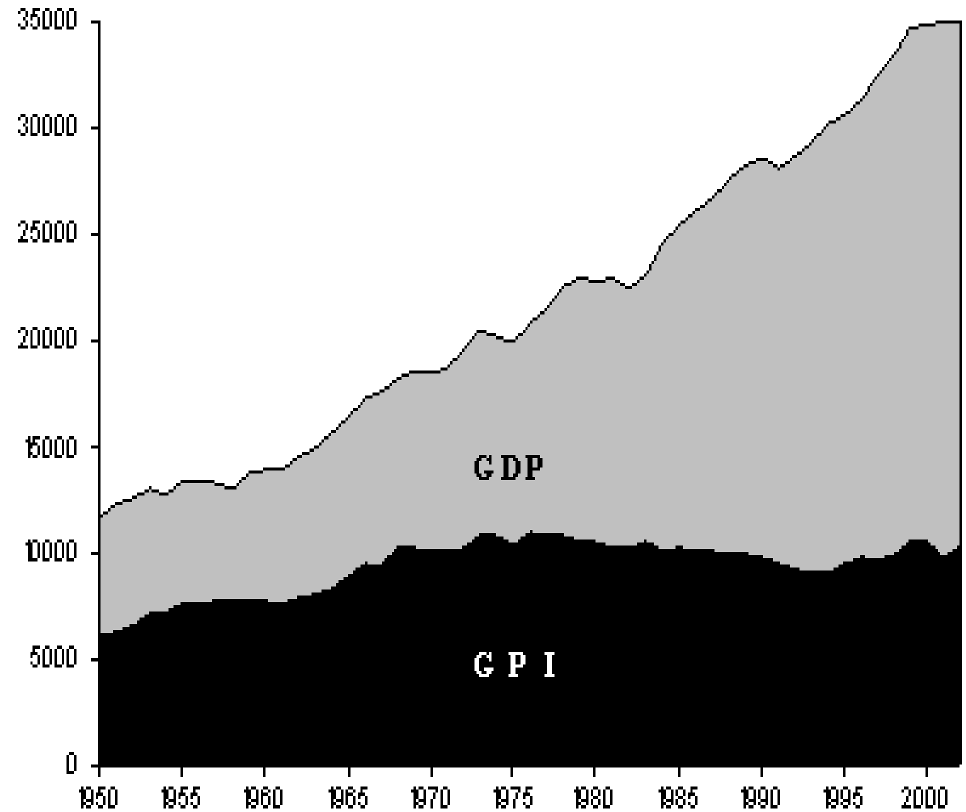
(Most data and graphs are drawn from the International Monetary Fund reports in October 2008 unless otherwise specified)



1) Cause: Declining per capita GDP growth rate, since early 1970s

Correcting GDP for 'genuine progress' makes this trend even more extreme (shown here in absolute terms)

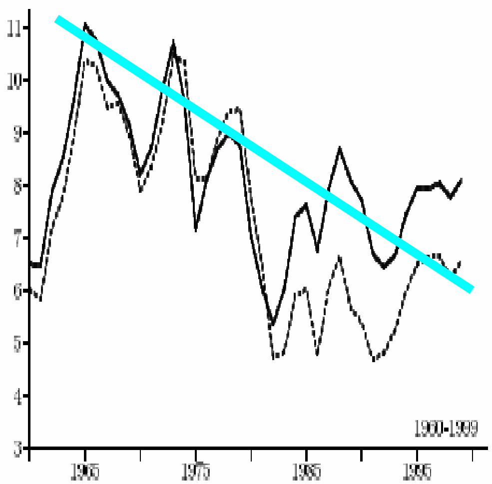
Source: redefiningprogress.org



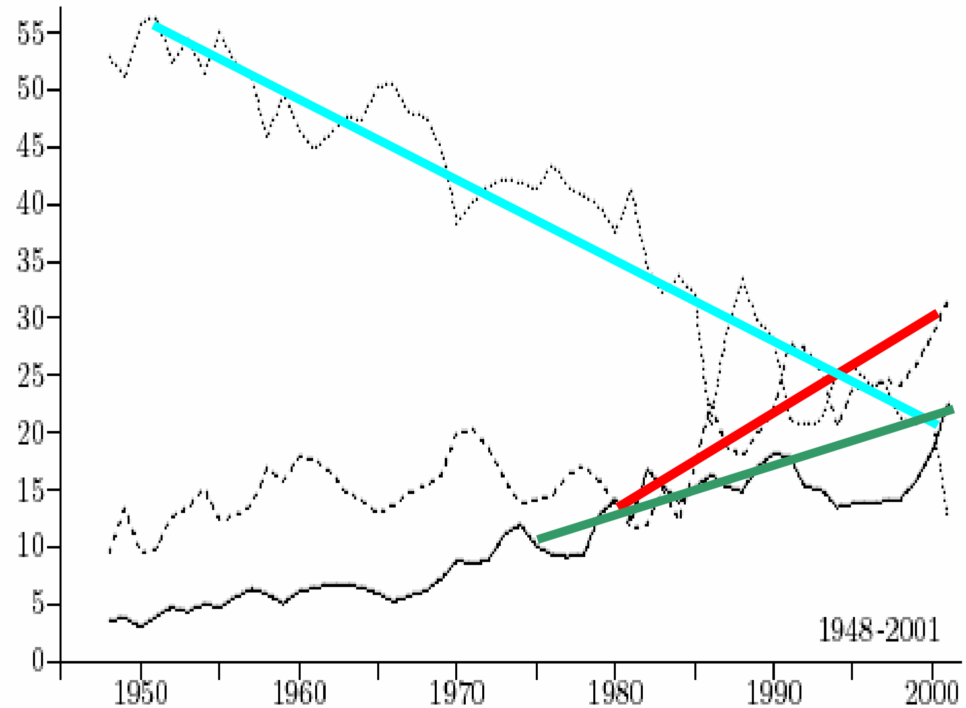
Root ‘overaccumulation’ process: source of declining US profits during globalisation/financialisation era

Bello, Brenner, Dumenil & Levy, Harvey, Wood

US, nonfinancial corporations: Profit rates prior to the payment of real interest (—) and after (-----), %



In the first series, profits are equal to the net product minus the cost of labor, and business and profit taxes. They are divided by the net worth (total assets minus debt). For the second series, real interest is subtracted from profits, *i.e.*, interest minus a correction for the depreciation of debt resulting from inflation.



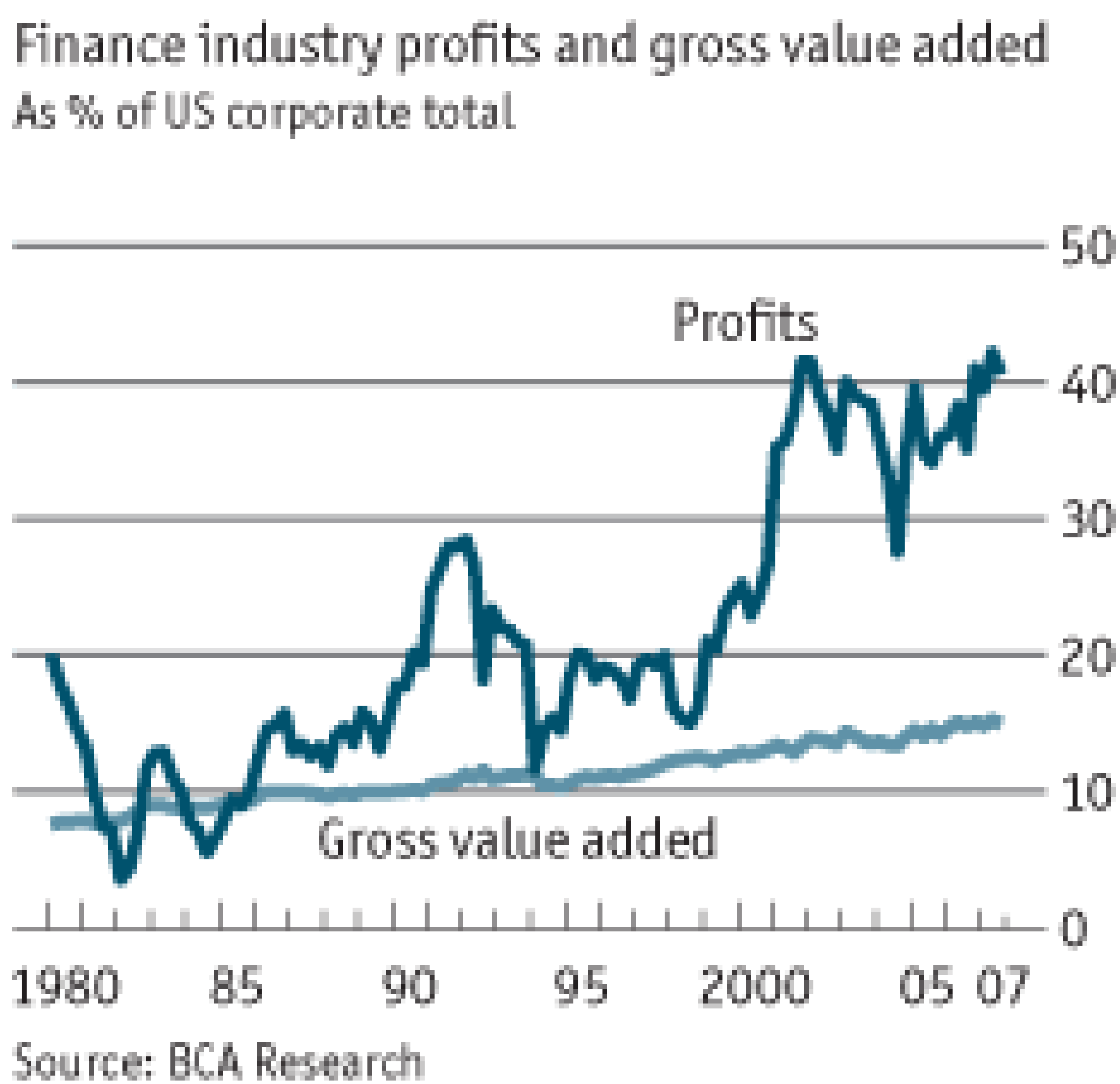
Rest of the world: (——); Financial sector: (-----); Manufacturing: (·········)

Profits are measured before profit taxes. The *rest of the world* corresponds to the excess of profits made on US investments abroad over the profits made by the rest of the world on foreign direct investment in the US. (These profits may remain in the country where the investment is made.) Trade, Contruction, Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications, and services are not represented.
Source: NIPA (BEA).

US corporate profits derived much less from manufacturing products;
much greater sources of profits came from abroad;
profits also came more from returns on financial assets.

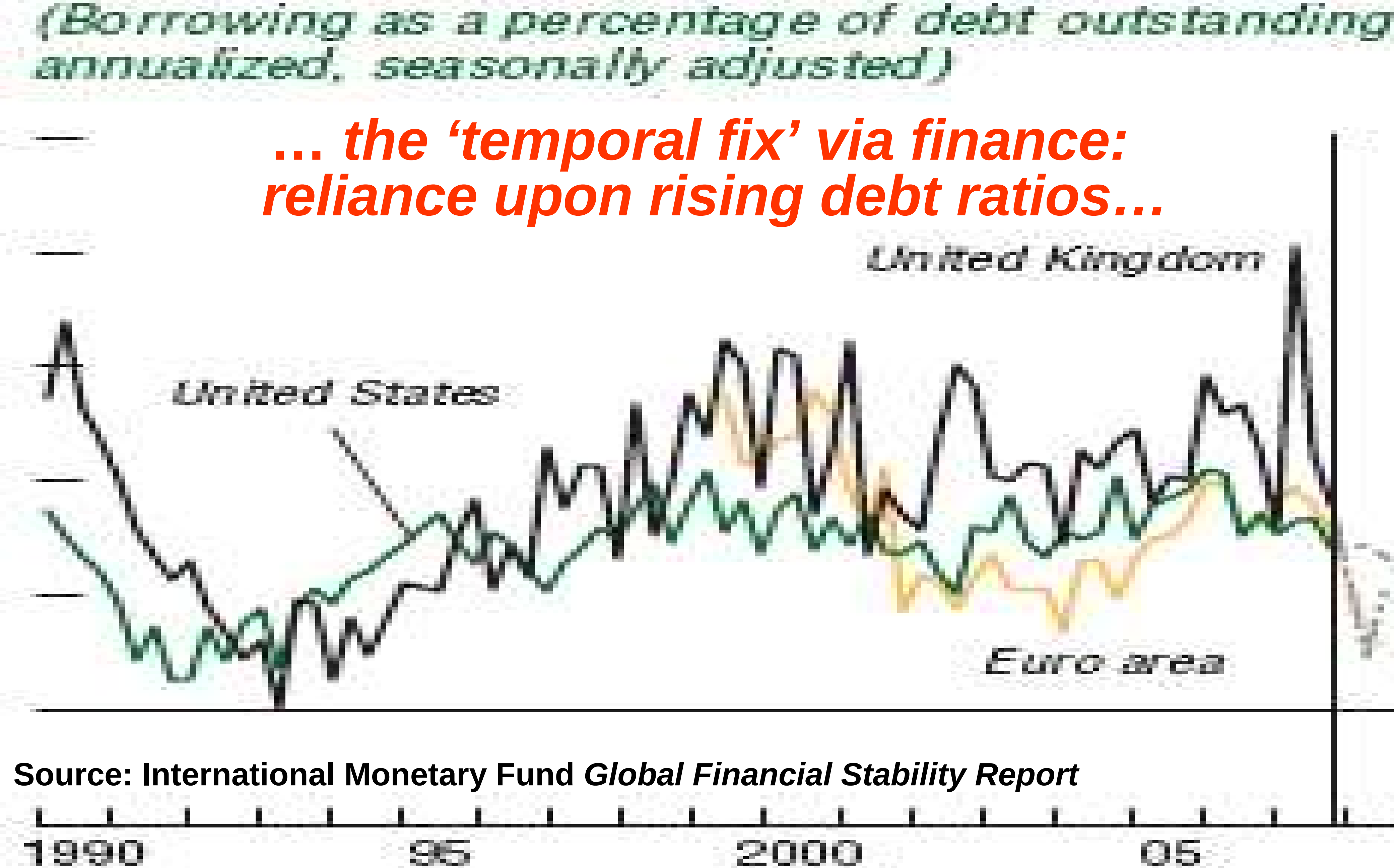
Source: Gerard Dumenil and Dominique Levy

Dani Nabudere's thesis vindicated

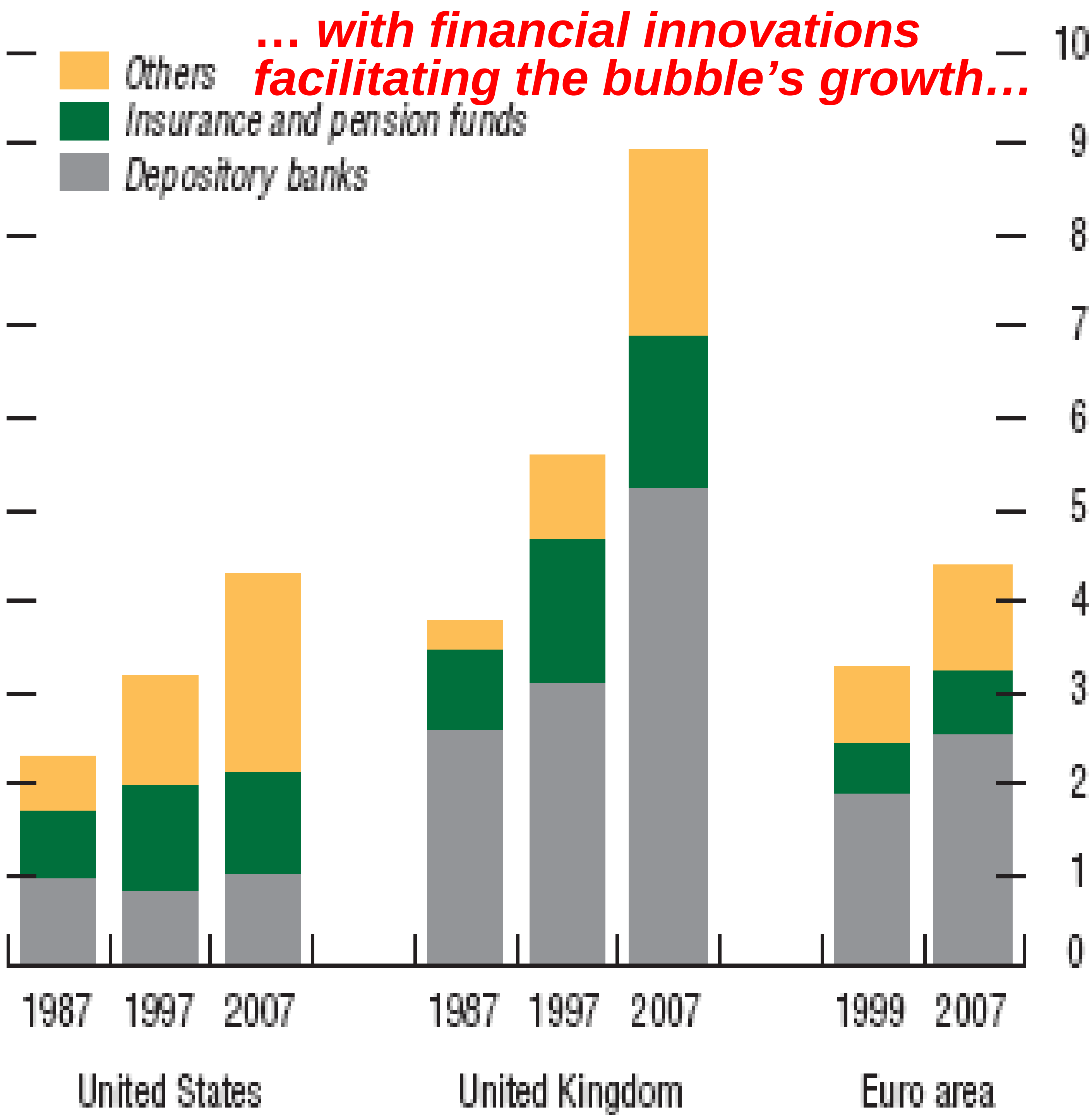


The Crash of International Finance Capital
and
The Rise and Fall of Money Capital

2) In the West, financial capital ascends



Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*



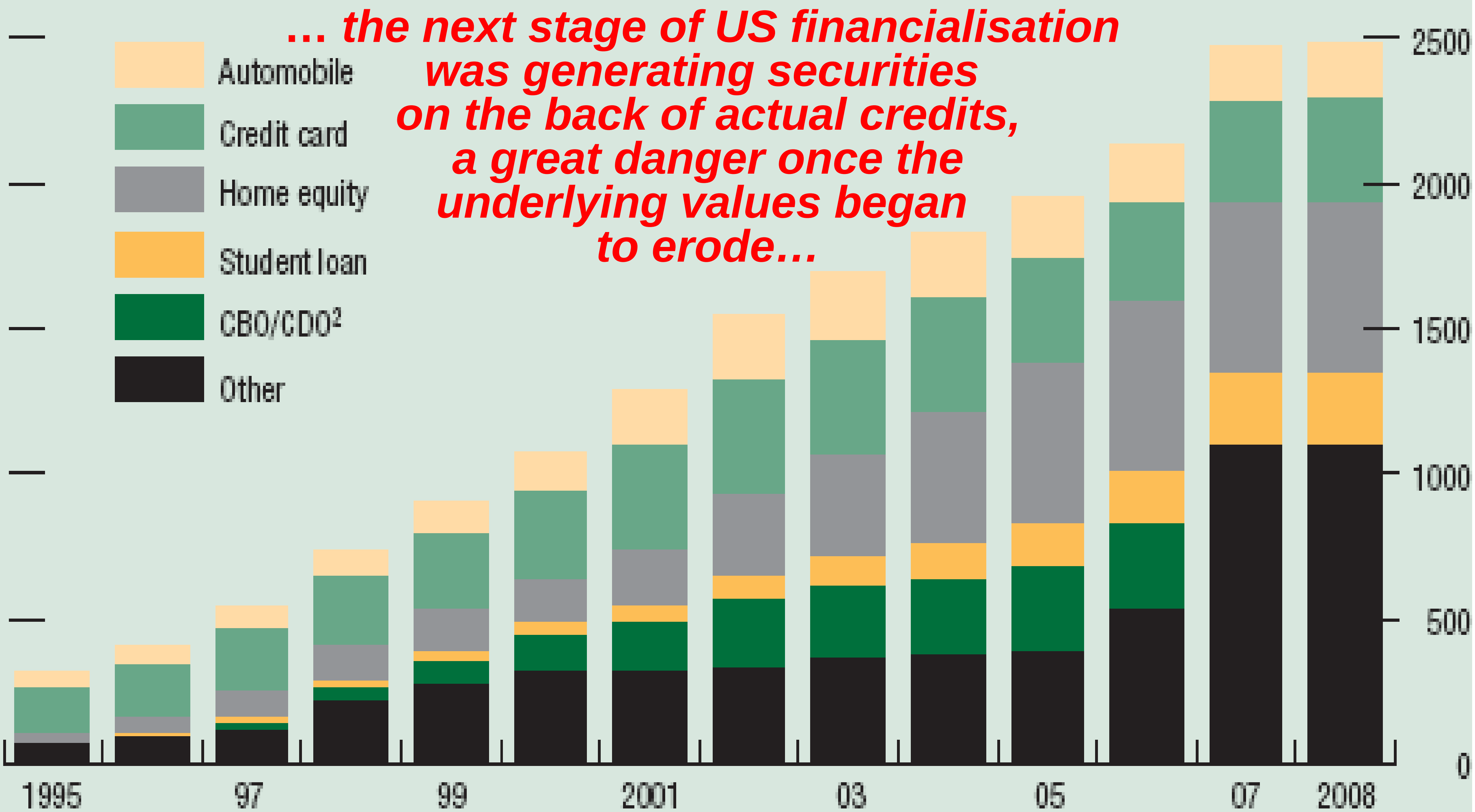
Financial bubbling in the US, UK and Euroland, 1987-2007: financial assets/GDP

Source: IMF *Global Financial Stability Report*

Debt underlying US asset-backed securities, US$ bn

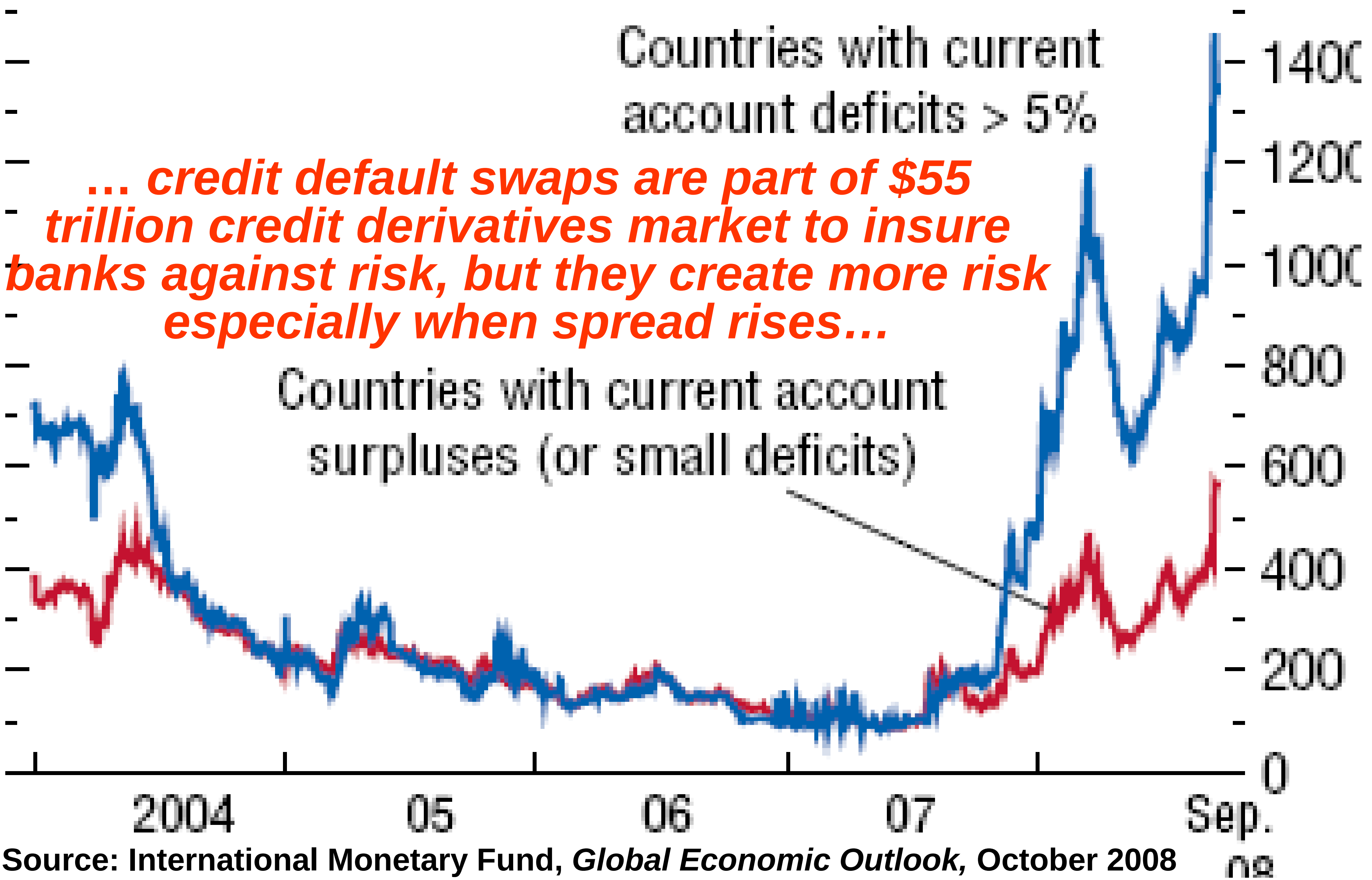
Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*

… the next stage of US financialisation was generating securities on the back of actual credits, a great danger once the underlying values began to erode…



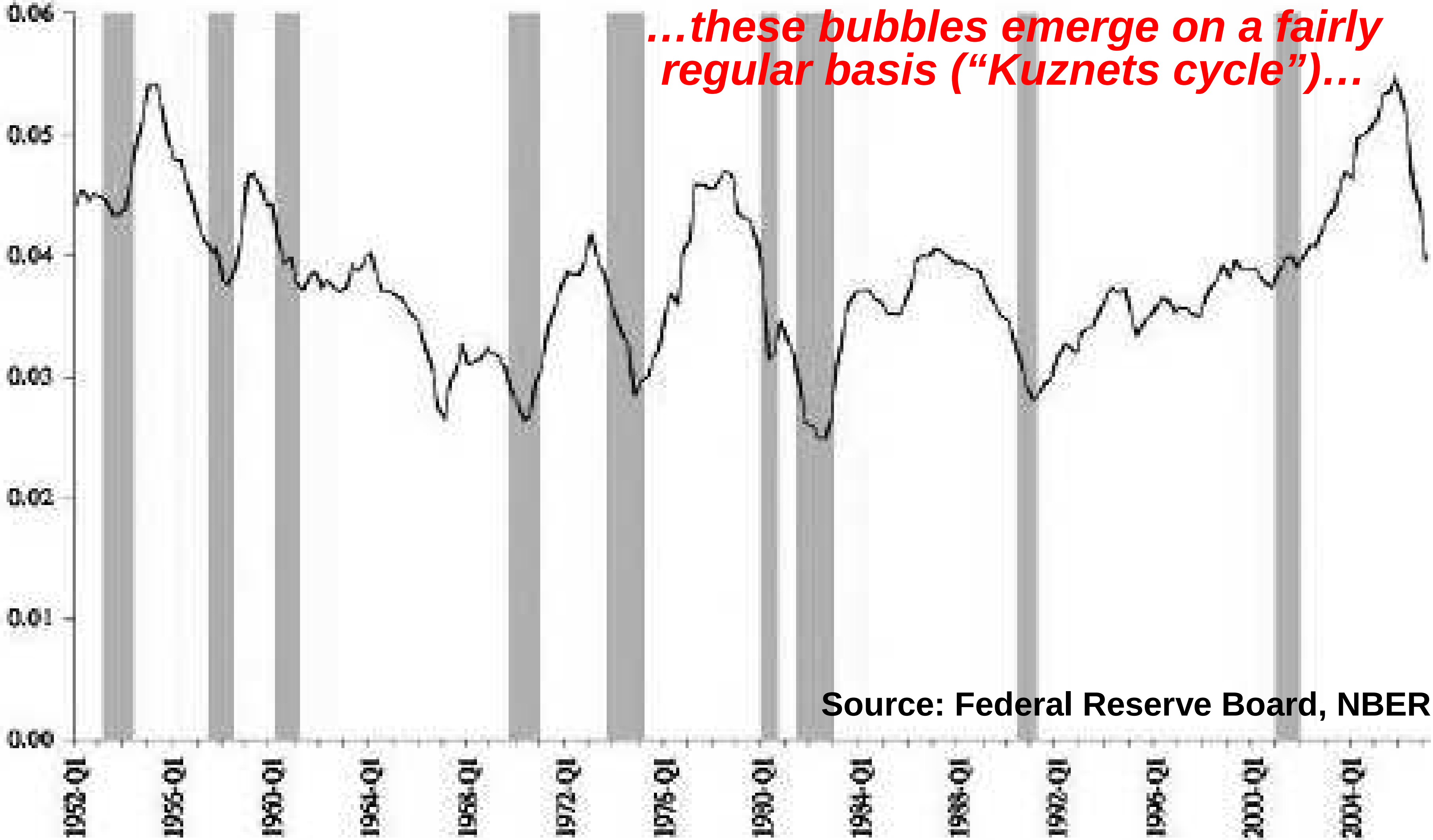
2 Collateralized bond/debt obligations; for 2007 and 2008 Q1, CBO/CDO amount outstanding is included in Other.

Worst threat: credit default swap spreads, 2004-08



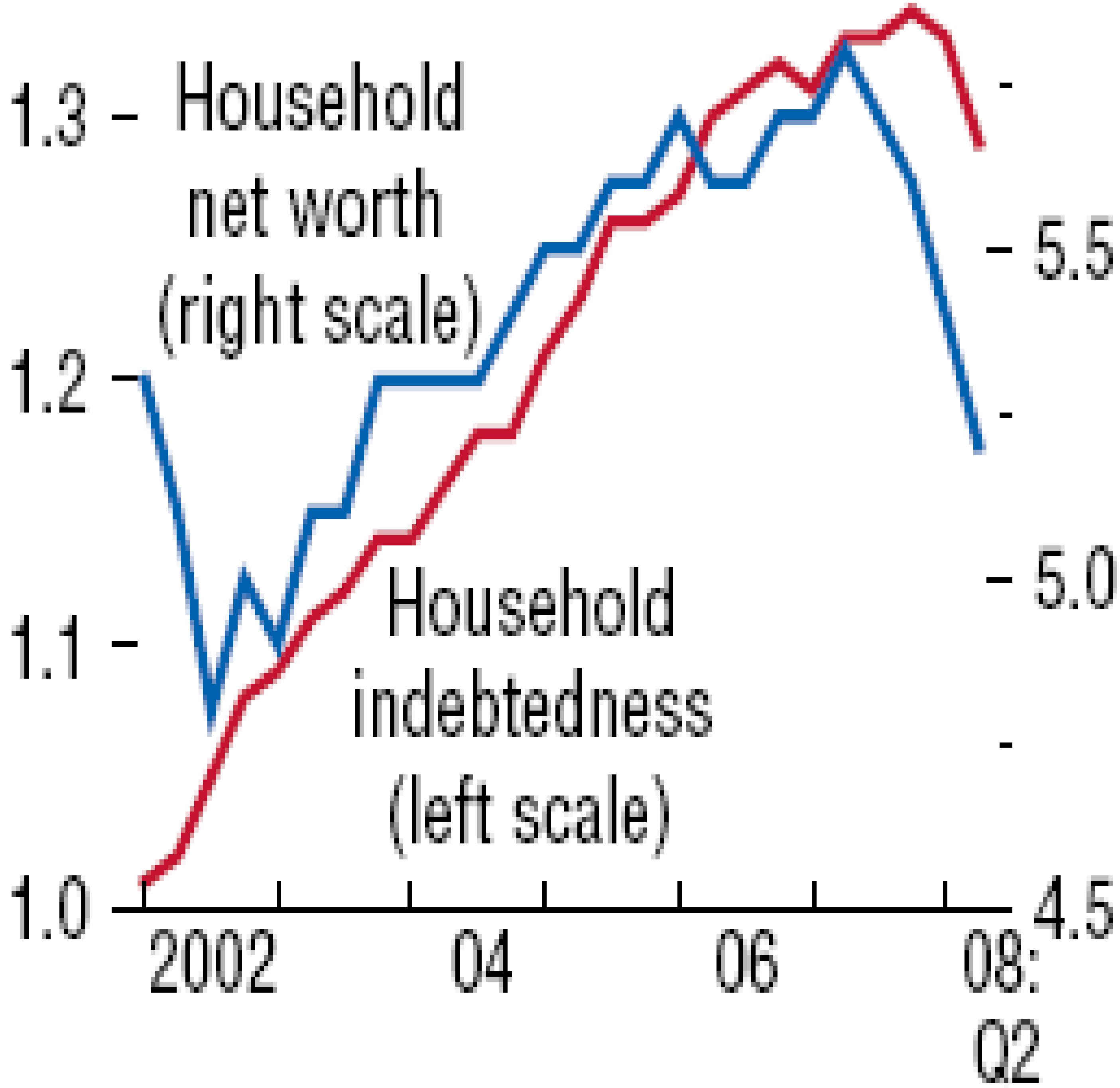
Source: International Monetary Fund, *Global Economic Outlook,* October 2008

3) Real estate speculation: US housing investment as % of GDP, 1952-2007



…these bubbles emerge on a fairly regular basis (“Kuznets cycle”)…

Source: Federal Reserve Board, NBER



Household net worth and debt in the US

…artificial housing bubble as US households built real estate empires on debt…

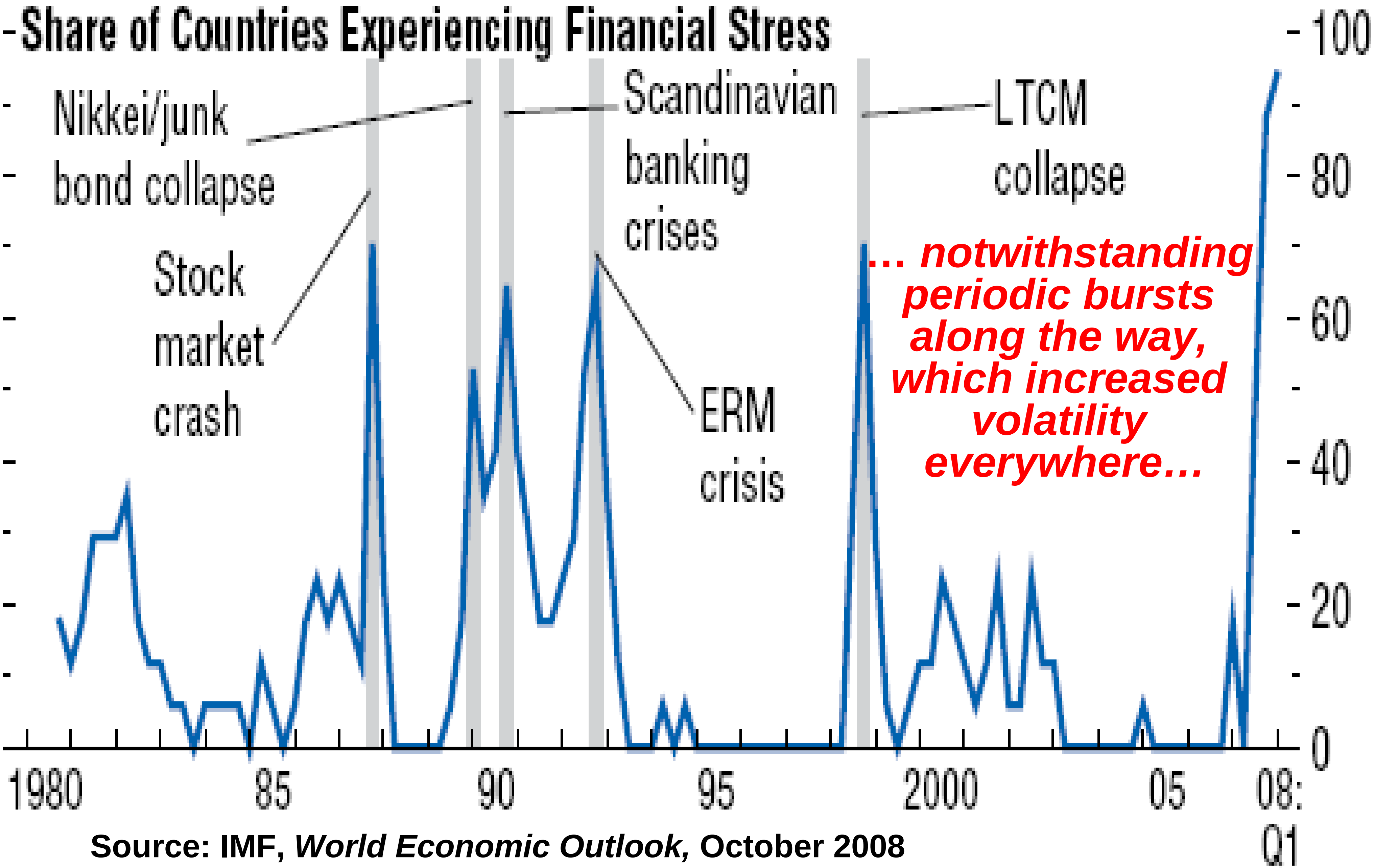
Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook,* October 2008

US & other housing bubbles (2002-06 prices)

… but not only the US, most major economies witnessed real estate speculation…

Source: Federal Reserve Board, NBER

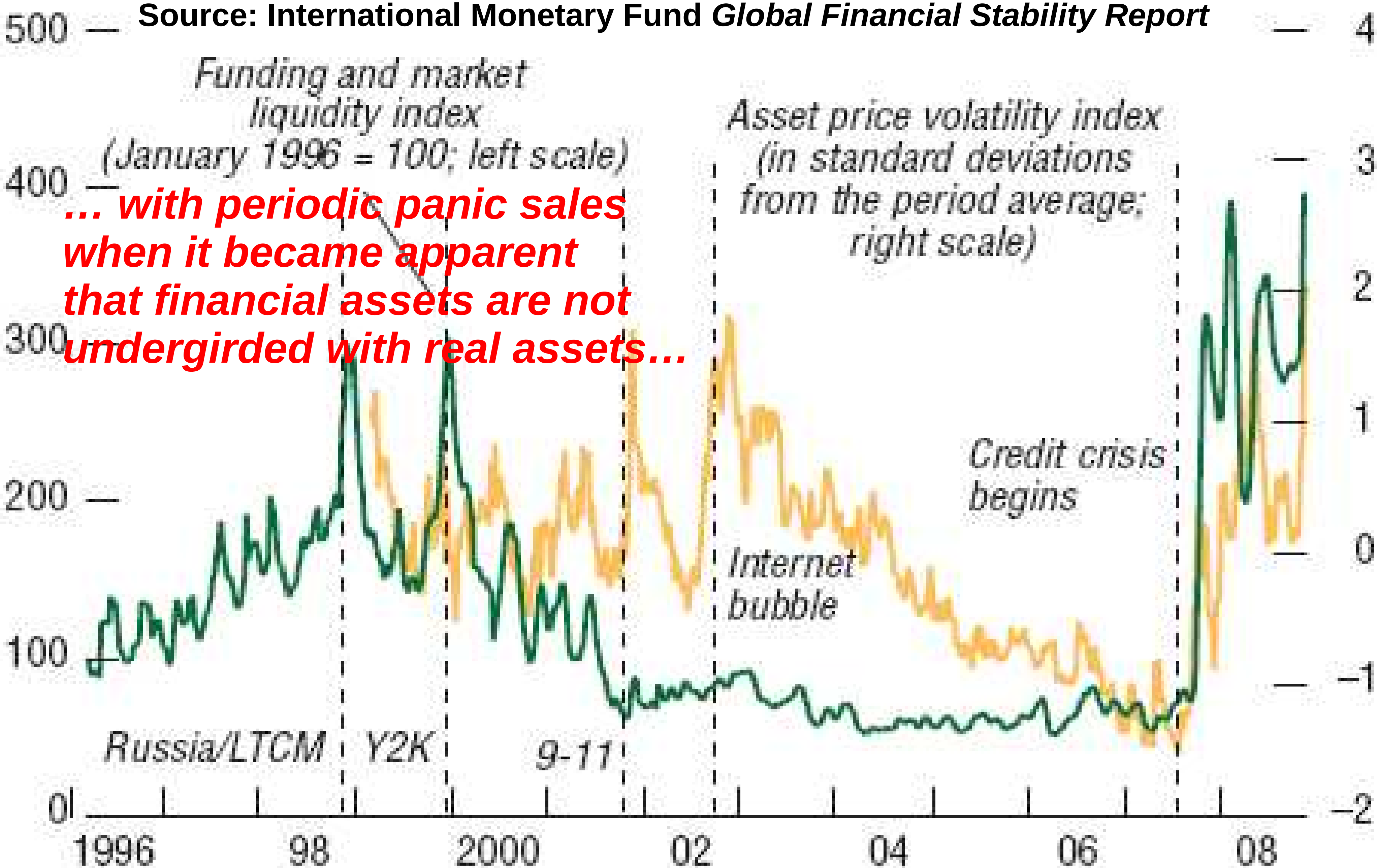
4) Financial market volatility and contagion



Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook,* October 2008

Financial market volatility, 1996-2008

Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*



… with periodic panic sales when it became apparent that financial assets are not undergirded with real assets…

5) Stock market devaluations (since 1994)

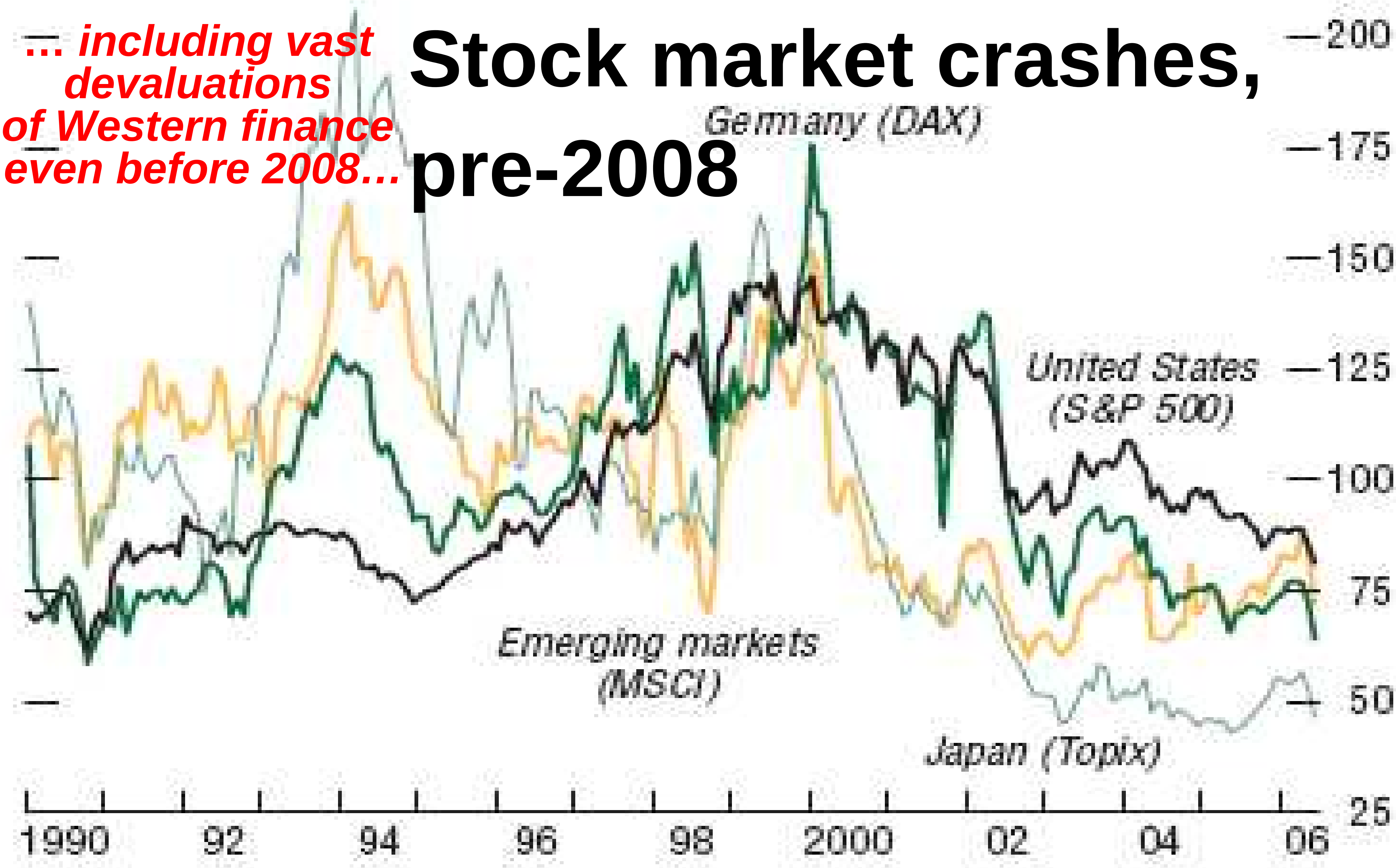
Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*

… huge losses especially in Third World stock markets, e.g. Thailand and Indonesia 90%+ crashes in 1998…

	Peak to trough	Equity Price Index (percent change): Rise to peak	Equity Price Index (percent change): Peak to trough	Equity Market Capitalization/GDP: At peak	Equity Market Capitalization/GDP: At trough	Equity Market Capitalization/GDP: Difference
Emerging markets						
Argentina	Feb. 2000–June 2002	86	–85	23	13	10
Brazil	July 1997–Jan. 1999	134	–69	74	35	39
Hong Kong SAR	July 1997–Aug. 1998	99	–60	337	152	186
Indonesia	Jan. 1997–Sep. 1998	134	–92	42	10	32
Korea	Apr. 1996–Aug. 1998	100	–83	37	14	23
Mexico[1]	Nov. 1994–Feb. 1995	71	–64	28	25	3
South Africa	Jan. 1996–Aug. 1998	188	–64	214	106	109
Thailand	May 1996–Aug. 1998	174	–93	80	16	65
Memorandum item:						
Advanced economies						
Germany	Feb. 2000–Sep. 2002	74	–63	81	31	51
Japan[2]	Dec. 1989–July 1992	928	–52	140	55	85
United Kingdom	Dec. 1999–Mar. 2003	122	–47	200	88	112
United States	Aug. 2000–Sep. 2002	235	–46	180	98	82

Stock market crashes, pre-2008

… including vast devaluations of Western finance even before 2008…



Sources: Thomson Financial I/B/E/S; and IMF staff estimates.

Volatile $ flows into US stock market, 1990-2008

… but also in the North, e.g. $7 trillion devaluation in even New York, 2000-02…

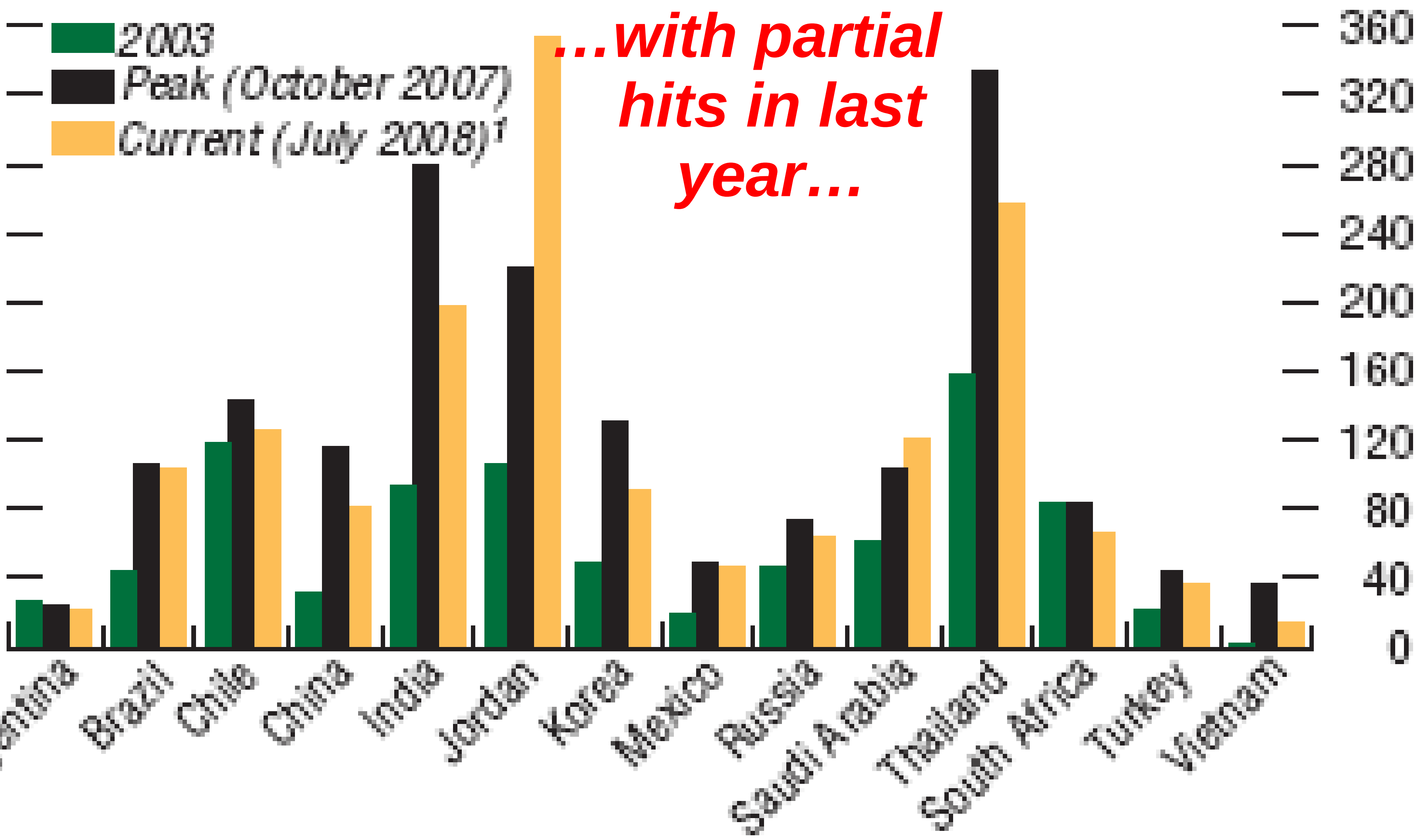
Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*

Stock market volatility: emerging markets

Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*

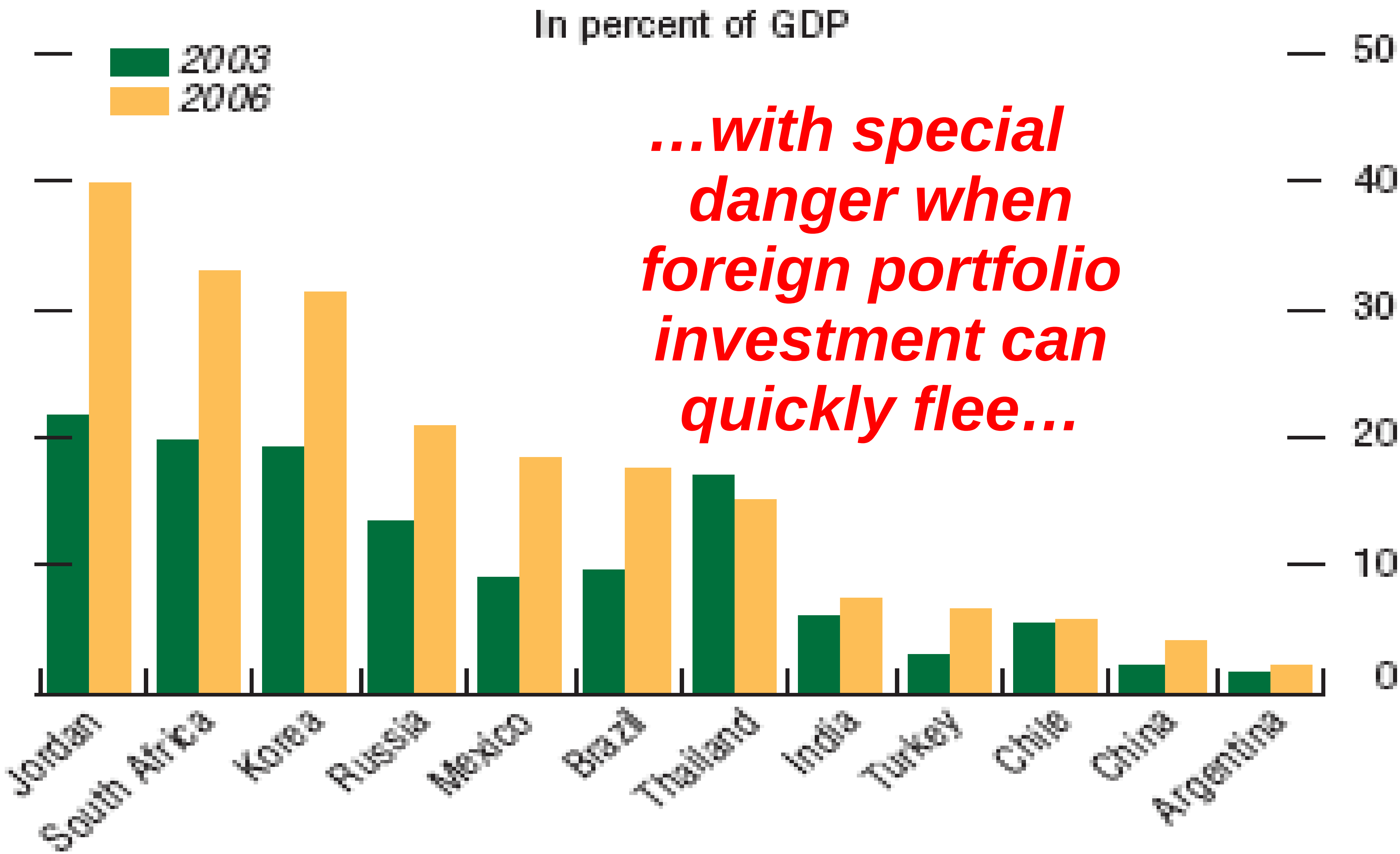
Emerging market share devaluation, 2007-08

Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*



Foreign holdings of equity, 2003, 2006

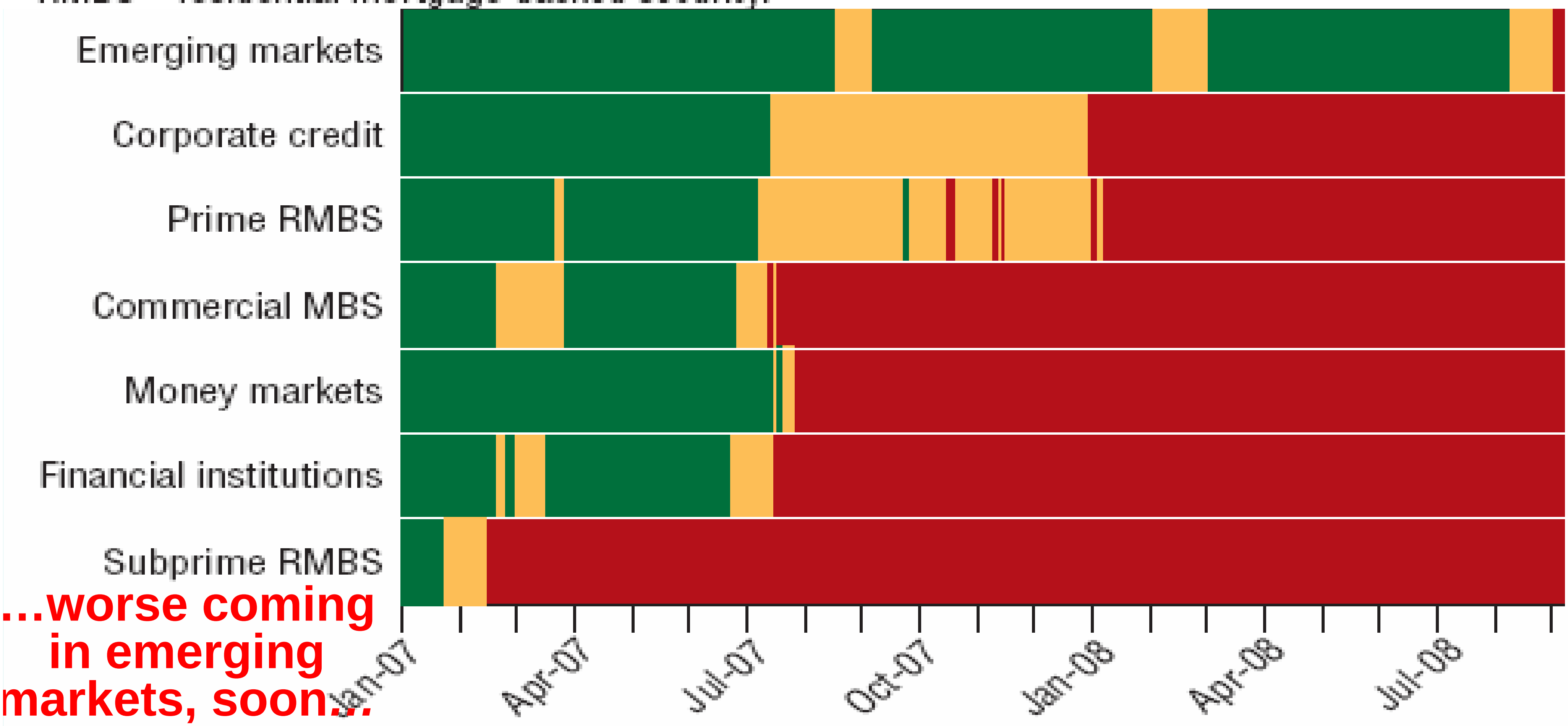
Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*



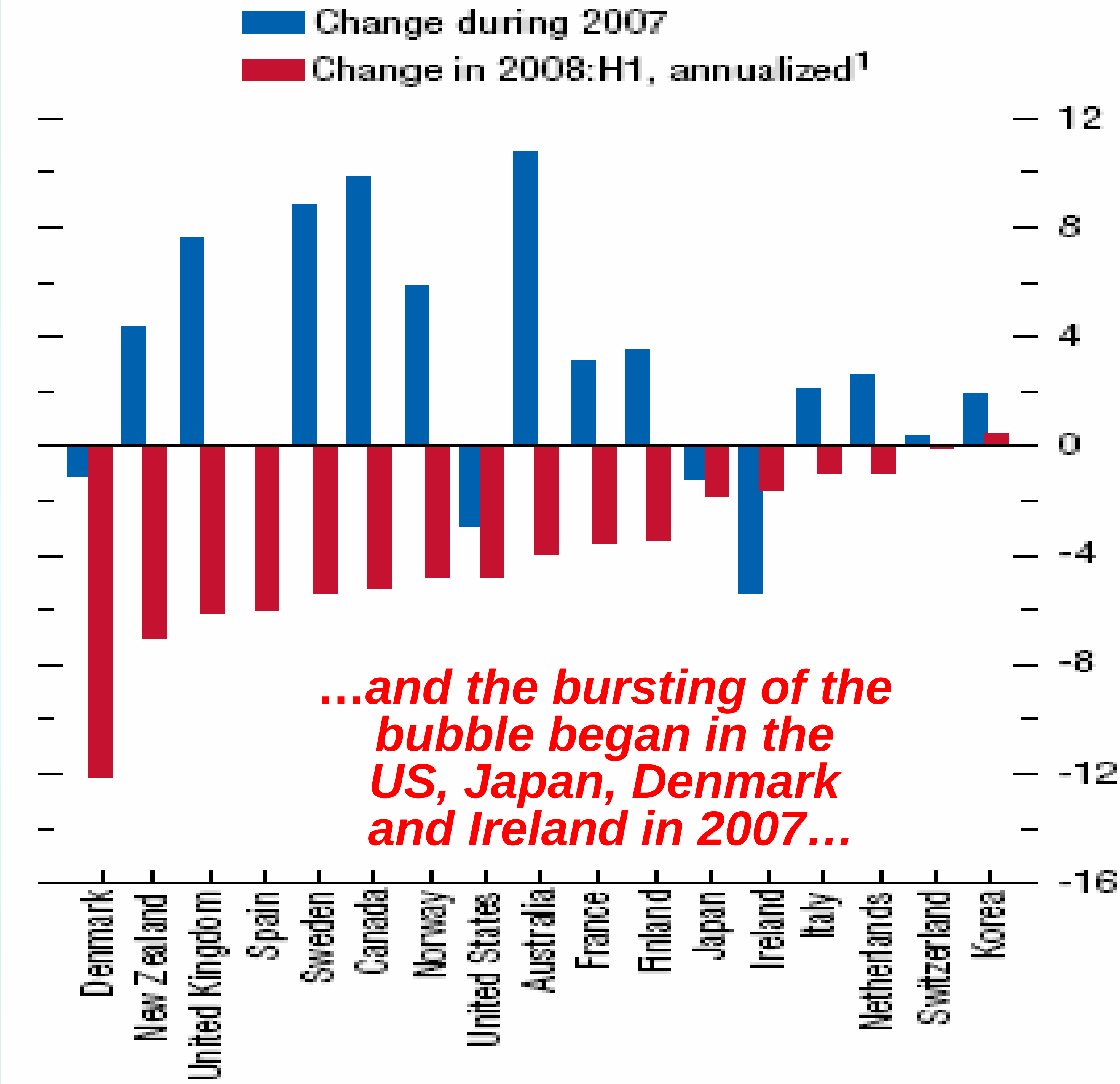
…with special danger when foreign portfolio investment can quickly flee…

Bursting the bubbles: IMF 'heat' indicator

Note: The heat map measures both the level and 1-month volatility of the spreads, prices, and total returns of each asset class relative to the average during 2004–06 (i.e., wider spreads, lower prices and total returns, and higher volatility). That deviation is expressed in terms of standard deviations. Green signifies a standard deviation under 1, yellow signifies 1 to 4 standard deviations, and red signifies greater than 4 standard deviations. MBS = mortgage-backed security; RMBS = residential mortgage-backed security.



…worse coming in emerging markets, soon…

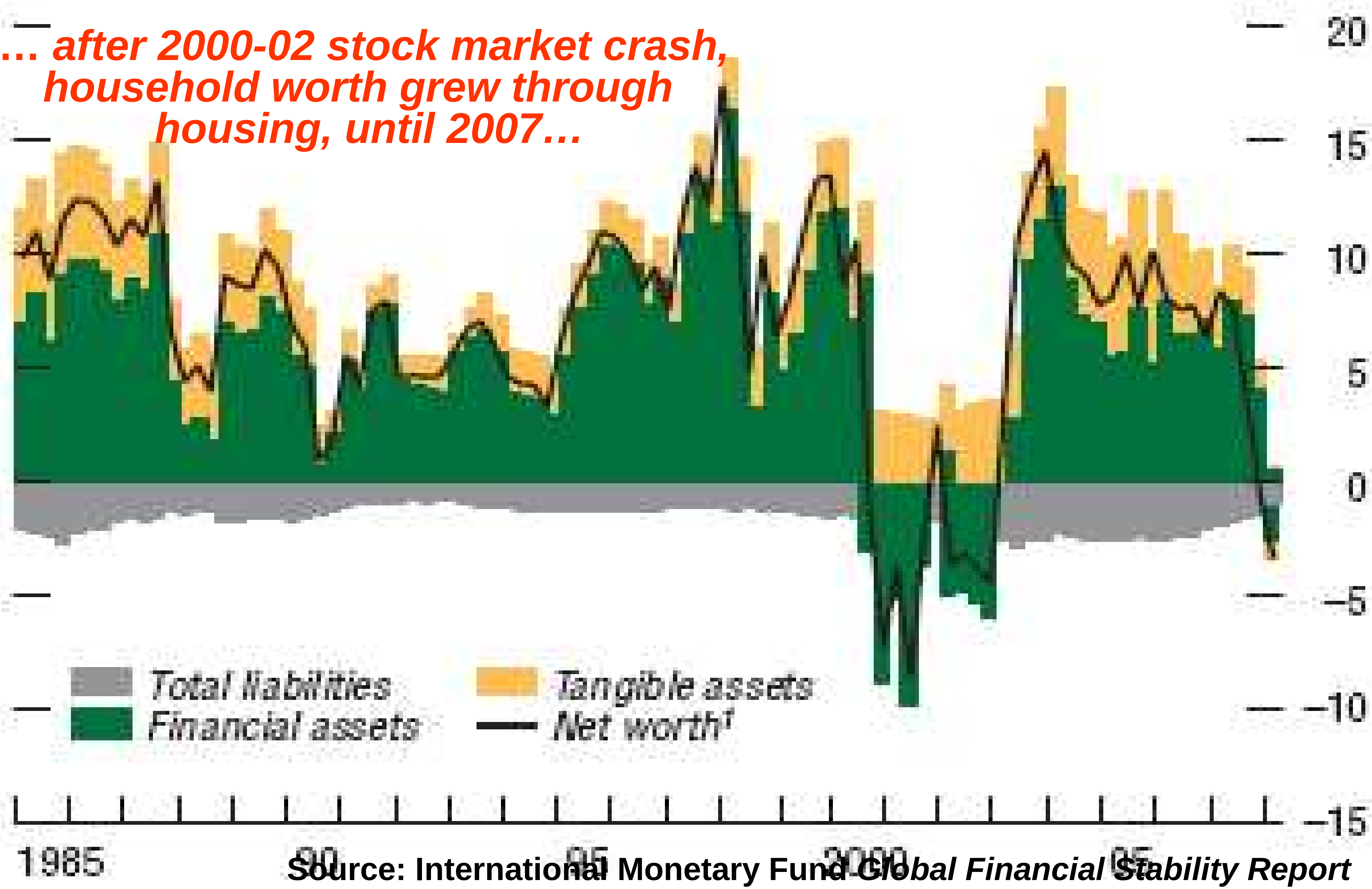


6) Housing devaluations:

Change in prices, Jan 2007-July 2008

Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook*, October 2008

Writing off US household net worth (%/year)



Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*

7) Financial losses: IMF estimates of devalued US loans ($bn)

Source: IMF *Global Financial Stability Report*

	Outstanding	Estimated loss April 2008 GFSR	Estimated loss October 2008
Subprime residential	300	45	50
Alt-A residential	600	30	35
Prime residential	3,800	40	85
Commercial real estate	2,400	30	90
Consumer loans	1,400	20	45
Corporate loans	3,700	50	110
Leveraged loans	170	10	10
Total for loans	12,370	225	425

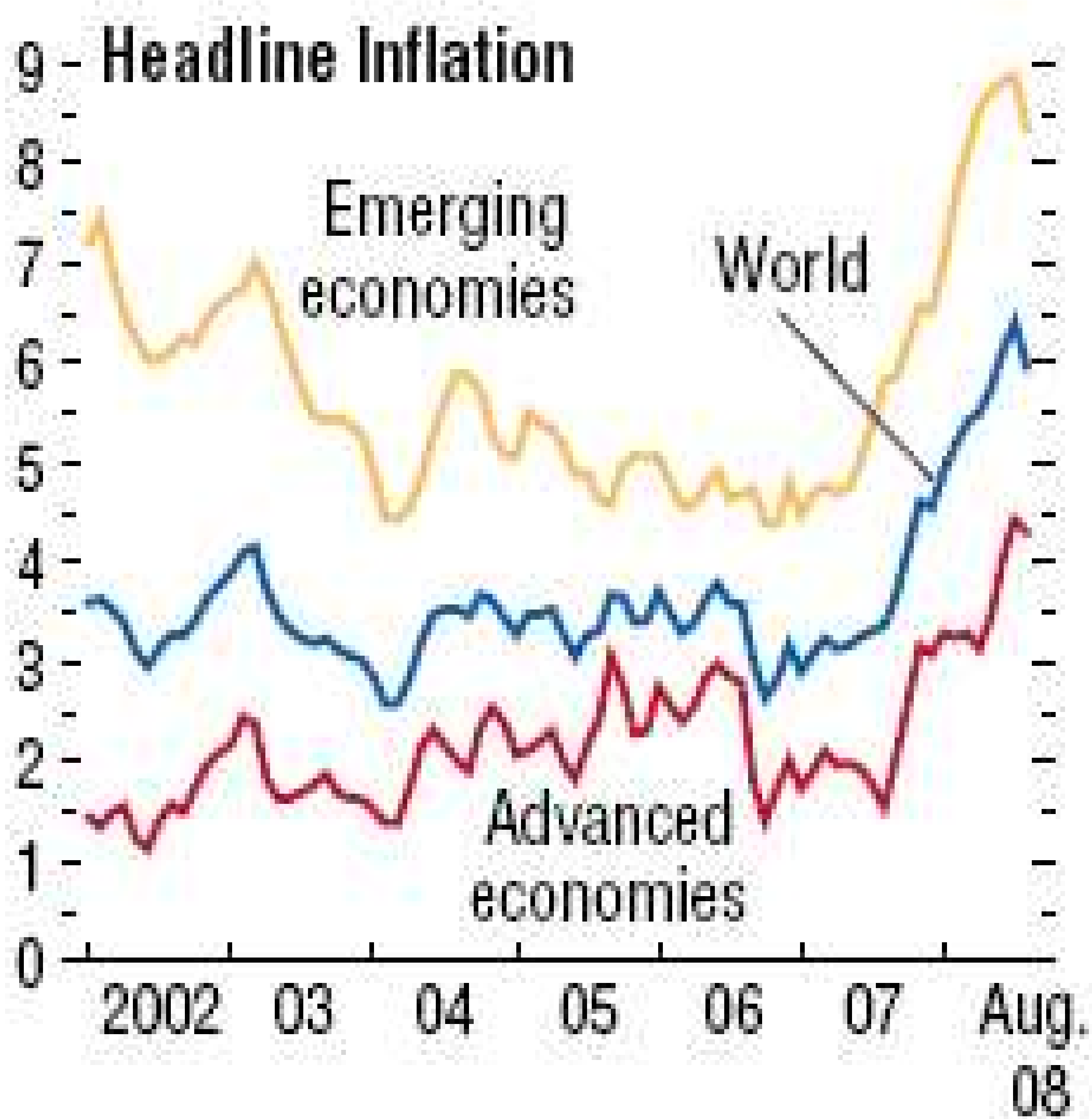
…has IMF correctly estimated size of devaluation? $425bn…

IMF estimates of devalued US financial assets: securities ($bn)

Source: IMF *Global Financial Stability Report*

	Outstanding	Estimated mark-to-market loss April 2008 GFSR	Estimated mark-to-market loss October 2008
ABS	1,100	210	210
ABS CDOs	400	240	290
Prime MBS	3,800	0	80
CMBS	940	210	160
Consumer ABS	650	0	0
High-grade corporate debt	3,000	0	130
High-yield corporate debt	600	30	80
CLOs	350	30	30
Total for securities	10,840	720	980
Total for loans and securities	23,210	945	1,405

Note: ABS = asset-backed securities; CDO = collateralized debt obligation; CLO = collateralized loan obligation; CMBS = commercial mortgage-backed security; MBS = mortgage-backed security.



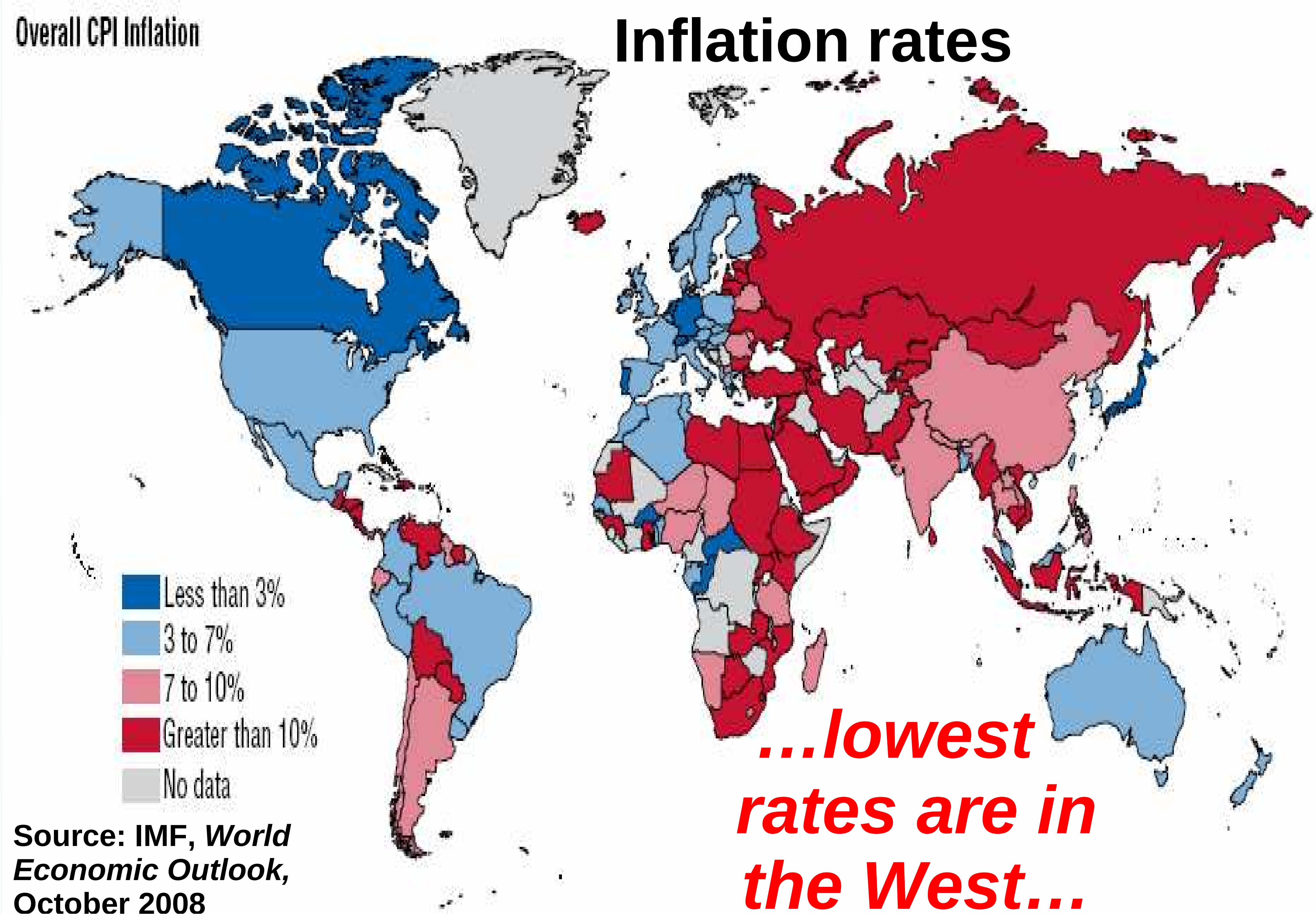
8) Is inflation a way out?

Devaluing financial assets through inflation

…a viable strategy for deflating debt?…

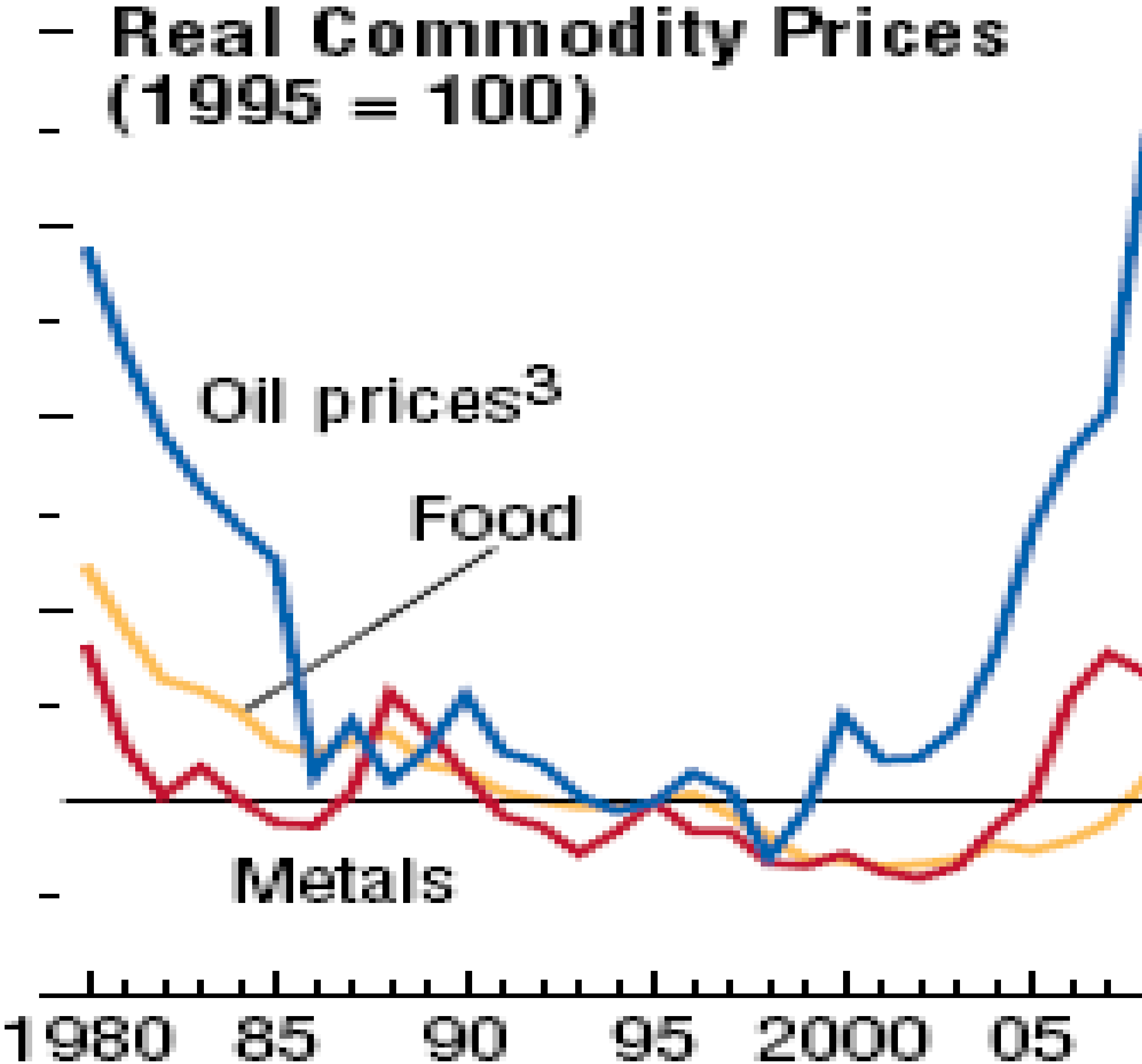
Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook,* October 2008

Inflation rates



…lowest rates are in the West…

Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook,* October 2008



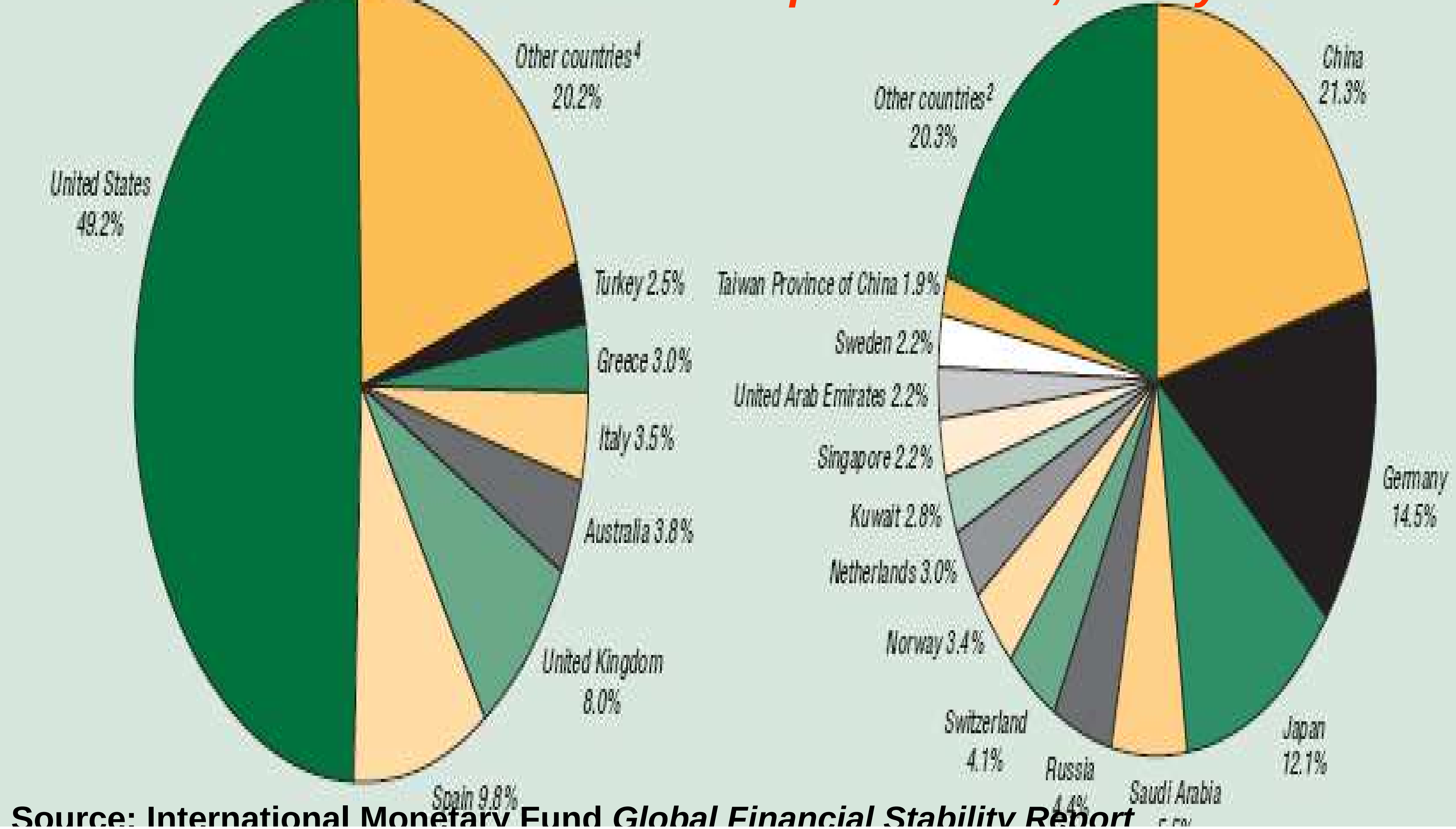
Price rises for oil, food, metals, 1980-2008

… and it appears oil price is due to specu-lation…

Source: IMF *Global Financial Stability Report*

9) Currency movements are a key variable: Importers and exporters of capital, 2007

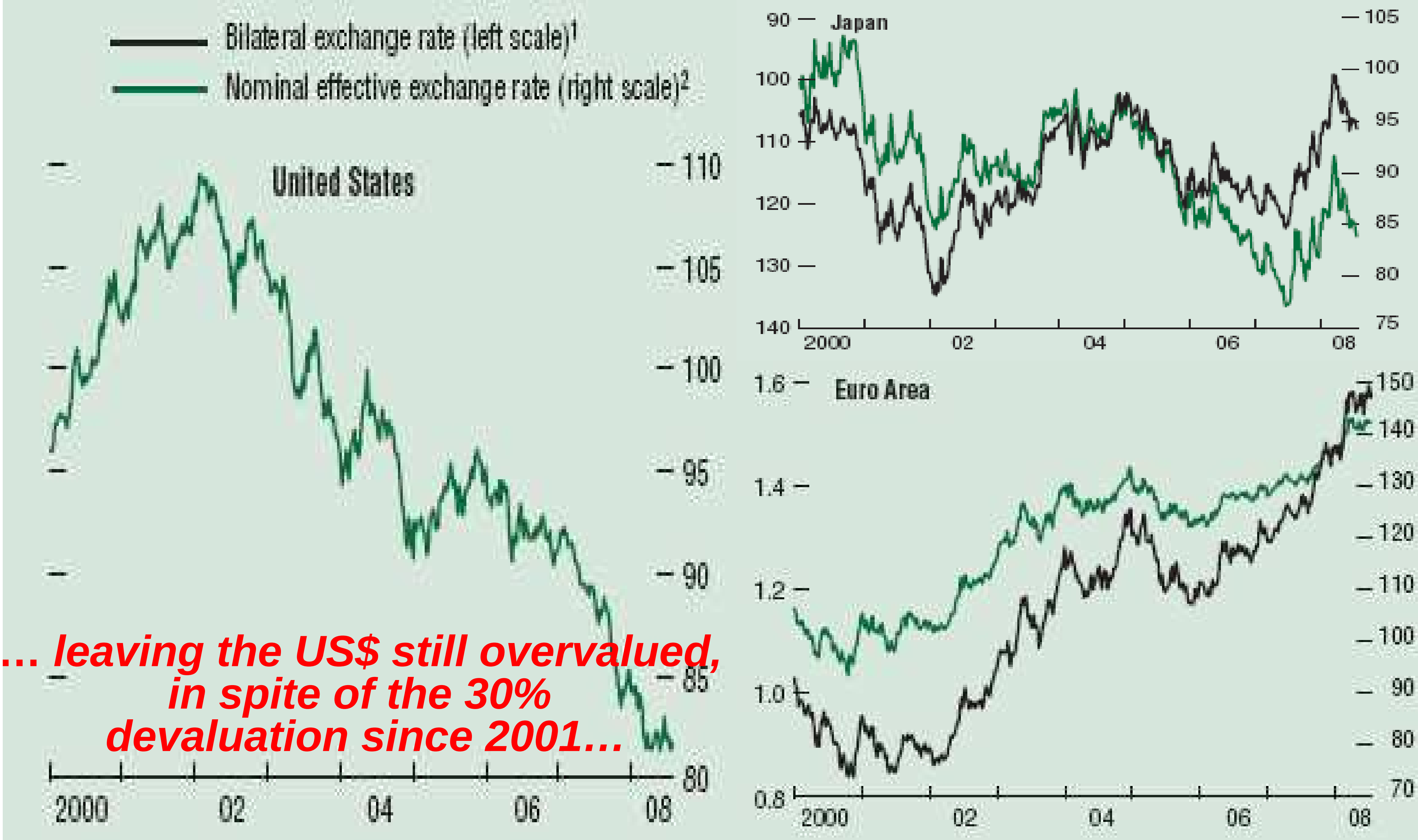
.. the US still takes in the world's surplus finance, mainly from Asia..



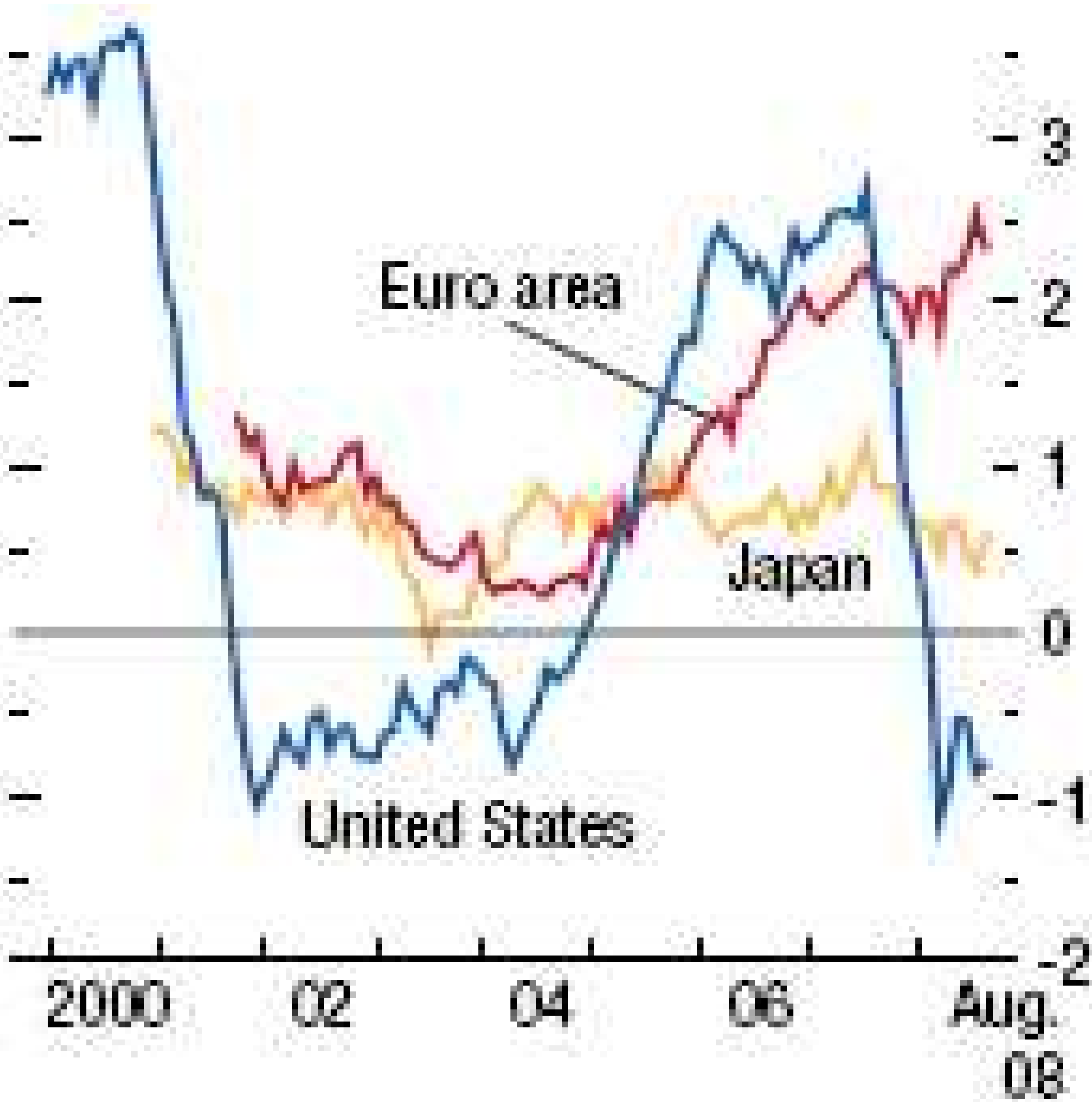
Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*

G3 currency value changes, 2000-08

Source: International Monetary Fund *Global Financial Stability Report*



… leaving the US$ still overvalued, in spite of the 30% devaluation since 2001…



G3 short term (real) interest rates

…compelling the US to raise rates from 2004-06, but can it continue?…

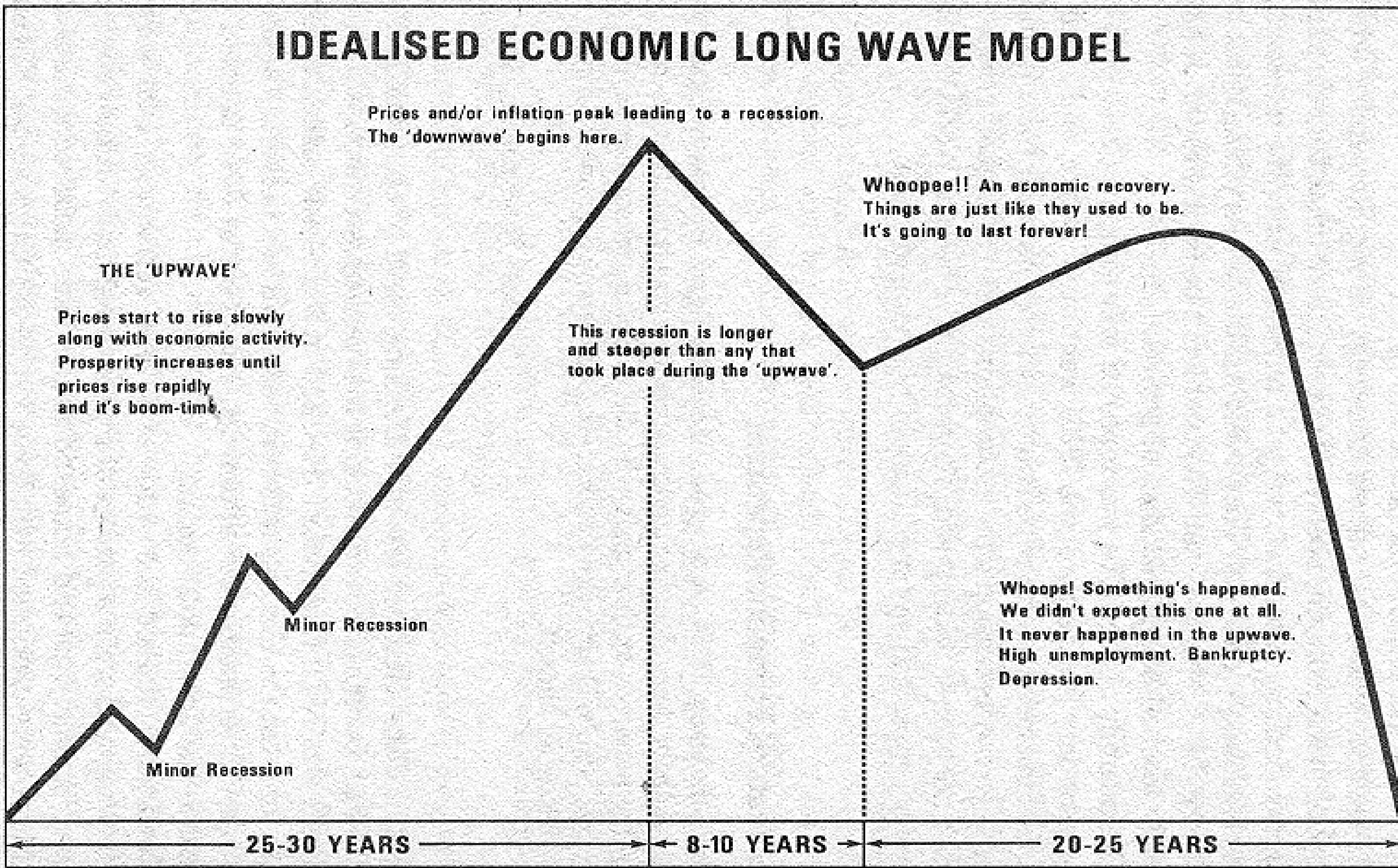
Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook,* October 2008

10) Context! 1: the accumulation cycle

Long-wave analysis (Bernstein/Nicholas)

trough	peak	trough	duration	hegemonic power	technology
1790	1814	1848	58	Britain	canals
1848	1872	1893	45	Britain	railways, steam (steam engine)
1893	1917	1940	47	Britain	steel, combustion engine, electricity, chemicals, telephone
1940	1975	2000?	60	United States	electronics, plastics, aerospace, nuclear energy
2000	2030	2050	50	United States	computers, biotechnology, robotics

Long-wave analysis (Kondratief/Bernstein/Nicholas)



Context 2: uneven global development

(see next presentation for Africa analysis)

GDP, 2007

($ trillions)

World: $54.3

US: $13.8

Europe: $12.2

Africa: $1.1