

World News

In 1979, President Carter abrogated the US diplomatic relation with Taiwan and fully embraced Communist China and its policies [1]. This set the stage where today any indication of a warming relationship with Taiwan is met with military threats from Communist China [2]. To back this up, China has been expanding its military for such an invasion [3]. In response, White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien is reported to have warned Taiwan to prepare for a possible Chinese invasion [4]. To counter China's threat, the US approved the sale of 135 precision land-attack missiles to Taiwan [5]. The new missiles, give Taiwan the ability to hit targets located within China [6]. This caused China to issue a warning that it will retaliate if the weapons purchase to Taiwan goes through [7].

But China's threats do not stop with Taiwan. There are indications that Chinese hackers are targeting emails from the Trump campaign [8]. This comes as China is enhancing its ability to influence elections [9]. Perhaps the best example of the disinformation from China is regarding COVID-19 [10,11,12]. The effort appeared to shift the blame away from China [13]. When reports of the disinformation effort emerged; attempts to downplay the effort were exercised [14]. With the US elections looming; the main issue deciding the next president may well be COVID [15]. Has China not already won the disinformation war?

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Wuhan Coronavirus

Since early in the COVID-19 pandemic, reports indicated China was spreading disinformation to instill fear [1]. So with the Presidential election rapidly approaching, the COVID-19 response may be the deciding factor [2]. For instance, the second Presidential debate included a long discussion on the poor handling of the COVID-19 pandemic [3].

Wuhan appears to be the source of much Western pain and agony. Consider, in 2019, synthetic opioids including Fentanyl, resulted in 36,500 drug overdose deaths in the US [4]. The main source for such illegal

drugs is reported to be Wuhan, China [5]. The illicit drug trade appears to have flourished due to shoddy regulations on China's side [6]. The drug producers are using a number of techniques to disguise the drug and then it is mailed to sources within the US [7]. When COVID-19 forced a shutdown, drug dealers were confronted with shortages [8]. However, now that travel has resumed, the DEA has indicated seizures of fentanyl increased 200% compared with last year [9]. A question here is if communist China, with its police oversight, cannot control the manufacture of fentanyl, how could it con-

trol biological pathogen research?

In any case, the virus continues to exact a toll. Worldwide, there have been over 40 million cases infections with 1.1 million dead [10]. It also illustrates how ill prepared we are against biological attacks. If we are attacked with biological weapons containing deadlier payloads; would we allow most people to die in order to conduct clinical testing?

1. Beavers, Olivia, The Hill, *Officials say China amplified disinformation about coronavirus to spread fear*: NYT, April

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Special points of interest:

- China's Role in the US Elections

Wuhan Coronavirus

(Continued from page 1)

- 22, 2020.
2. Reston, Maeve, CNN, *Stark contrast between Trump and Biden on display in dueling town halls*, October 16, 2020.
3. Rossman, Sean, USA Today, *Election 2020 live updates: After a more civil final debate, Trump and Pence head to battleground states, Biden to talk COVID*, October 23, 2020.
4. Johnson, Carla K., AP, *New peak of 71K US overdose deaths in 2019 dashes*

hopes, July 15, 2020

5. Linthicum, Kate, LA Times, *Coronavirus chokes the drug trade – from Wuhan, through Mexico and onto U.S. streets*, April 24, 2020
6. Belmonte, Adriana, Yahoo Finance, *How China flooded the U.S. with lethal fentanyl, fueling the opioid crisis*, February 15, 2020.
7. Nelson, Steven, New York Post, *US sanctions Chinese fentanyl 'kingpin' for mailing lethal drug*, August 25, 2020.
8. Mustian, Jim, and Bleiberg, Jake, AP,

'Cartels are scrambling': Virus snarls global drug trade, April 19, 2020.

9. Houston Chronicle/AP, *Washington residents warned of drug surge, fentanyl dangers*, October 22, 2020.
10. Fox/AP, *Coronavirus cases surge past 40 million infections worldwide*, October 20, 2020.

Remember, it is not about voting for the perfect candidate - there is no such thing. Presidents are human.—Michelle Obama

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2. Xijin, Hu, Global Times, *The more trouble Taiwan creates, the sooner the mainland will teach them a lesson*, October 6, 2020.
3. Chan, Minnie, South China Morning Post, *Chinese military beefs up coastal forces as it prepares for possible invasion of Taiwan*, October 18, 2020.
4. VOA News, *Taiwan Should Prepare Against Possible Chinese Invasion, White House Official Says*, October 16, 2020.
5. Chung, Lawrence, South China Morning Post, *Taiwan's new US arms can reach mainland China: 'a first but just a deterrent'*, October 22, 2020.
6. Betz, Bradford, Fox News, *Trump admin approves more than \$1 billion in new arms sales to Tai-*

wan, angering China, October 21, 2020.

7. AP/Fox News, *China vows retaliation if US proceeds with Taiwan arms sale*, October 23, 2020
8. Gertz, Bill, The Washington Times, *O'Brien: Chinese hackers targeted emails of Trump family, campaign*, September 30, 2020.
9. Solon, Olivia, and Dilanian, Ken, NBC News, *China's influence operations offer a glimpse into the future of information warfare*, October 21, 2020.
10. Fisher, Christine, MSN, *China reportedly spread COVID-19 misinformation*, April 22, 2020.
11. The Guardian (UK), *EU says China behind 'huge wave' of Covid-19 disinformation*, June 10, 2020.
12. Gertz, Bill, Washington Times, *China ramping up*

coronavirus disinformation campaign on Twitter, State Dept. says, May 9, 2020.

13. Gitter, David, et. al., *Foreign Policy, China Will Do Anything to Deflect Coronavirus Blame*, March 30, 2020.
14. Satter, Raphael, et. al., *Reuters, China pressured EU to drop COVID disinformation criticism: sources*, April 24, 2020.
15. Subramanian, Courtney, et. al., *USA Today, 'COVID, COVID, COVID': Trump complains media too focused on pandemic as US hits record cases – election updates*, October 24, 2020.

Terrorism

Since the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center, there has been a recognition of the rise of Islamic terrorism [1]. For example, in France, in what is called an Islamic terror attack, a school teacher was beheaded [2]. The killer was an 18-year-old Russian refugee of Chechen origin [3]. With that as a backdrop, we explore a larger conflict with religion being a factor.

During World War I, 90% of Christian Armenians living in the Muslim Ottoman Empire (Turkey) disappeared [4]. Of the Armenian people displaced, estimates of 500,000 to 1,500,000 died as a result [5]. When the Soviet Union disbanded, a predominately Armenian region known as the Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence [6]. Meanwhile, Turkey has declared its unconditional support for Muslim Azerbaijan forces seeking to reclaim Nagorno-Karabakh while Russia is backing Armenia [7]. In turn, one basis for the conflict is the opposing religions involved [8]. Moreover, reports indicate Syrian fighters sent to the region are supporting both sides in the ongoing conflict [9].

1. Moore, John, Frontline/PBS, *The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism: an Overview*
2. Ganley, Elaine, AP, *Grisly beheading of teacher in terror attack rattles France*, October 16, 2020.
3. Bairin, Pierre, et. al., CNN, *Teenager of Chechen origin suspected of decapitating teacher in 'Islamist attack' in Paris suburb*, October 18, 2020.
4. Suny, Ronald Grigor, Britannica, *Armenian Genocide*.
5. Salopek, Paul, National Geographic, *A Century Later, Slaughter Still Haunts Turkey and Armenia*, April, 2016.
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7. Broers, Laurence, BBC News, *Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict: Why Caucasus flare-up risks wider war*, September 30, 2020.
8. McKay, Hollie, Fox News, *Death toll soars as Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict escalates: 'This is a fight*
9. McKay, Hollie, Fox News, *Syrian rebels reportedly sent to fight in Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict*, October 4, 2020.

*Voting is the most precious
right of every citizen, and
we have a moral
obligation to ensure the
integrity of our voting
process.—Hillary Clinton*

Economy

The economy is still stuck in the COVID-19 pandemic. For the week ending October 3, the number of first time unemployment claims, reported by the Department of labor, was 840,000 [1]. For the week ending October 10, the number reported was 898,000 [2]. Finally, for the week ending October 17, the number reported was 787,000 [3].

While the US economy remains weak, China is expanding. Case in point, China's third quarter Gross Domestic Product expanded at a 4.9 % rate over last year's [4]. While the overall trade deficit continues to rise, the deficit with China is contracting [5]. This is not the best outcome for the US economy but it does divert funds away from China. To better understand where China is investing its cash, we need to look at their military budget. For instance, for 2020, the budget growth is 6.6% [6].

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2. Department of Labor,

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5. Roberts, Ken, Forbes, *U.S. Deficit With China Lowest Since 2011, Up With Mexico, Rest Of World*, October 22, 2020.
6. Adamczyk, Ed, UPI, *China's 2020 military budget growth slows to 6.6 percent*, May 22, 2020.

Propaganda works best when those who are being manipulated are confident they are acting on their own free will.—Joseph Goebbels
