

World News

Nearly a year after 6,000 people were infected with brucellosis due to a leak at a Chinese vaccine plant [1]. It is unclear why it took so long to report this incident. Meanwhile, in the US, Pfizer announced clinical trial results showing its COVID-19 vaccine was 90% effective [2]. In contrast, China has been distributing a COVID-19 vaccine well before completion of phase 3 clinical trials [3].

In the past, researchers have warned that small changes in voting software can swing elections [4]. Now among the election issues being challenged are the voting machines and software made by Dominion [5]. While claims of fraud and no-fraud continue; the voting machines and software are critical elements of the voting process that should be examined. For instance, one piece indicates there are no cybersecurity laws tied to voting machines and software [6]. In Congressional testimony, the CEO of Dominion indicated some machine parts were made in China because there is no other option available in the US [7]. Moreover, there were warnings before the election that the voting machines/software had not received the cybersecurity focus needed [8]. Some expressed concern that the product vendors did not believe they needed any oversight [9]. One piece suggests the hand count in Georgia may represent a good audit of the Dominion products [10]. Perhaps we could use approaches from the past to improve overall voting security. Case in point, the Space Shuttle used 5 concurrent computers each fed with the same data in order to detect any variances [11]. Could such an approach where two separate and distinct vendor products, each fed with the same information? Any operational variation between the products would raise a red flag. Too late now for

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Wuhan Coronavirus

It is unfortunate that the COVID-19 virus is not limited to humans. For instance, back in May, Dutch officials determined a mink infected two people [1]. Then scientists began to study animal infections at mink farms in Spain and the Netherlands to determine the root cause [2]. In Denmark, there are minks now carrying a mutated version of the virus that has infected people [3]. As a consequence, Denmark has imposed a lockdown in parts of the country through December 3 and all minks will be culled (approximately 17 million) [4]. It is unclear if the new vaccines will prevent the

new mutated virus.

Returning to the original COVID-19 virus; Mink infections are not limited to Europe. For example, in Wisconsin, a dead mink was found to be infected with the virus [5]. What's more, 10,000 animals died of the virus at mink farms in Wisconsin and Utah [6]. Thus far, COVID-19 has infected minks Italy, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, U.S. and Denmark [7].

Meanwhile, the number of daily new COVID-19 infections in the US continues to set records [8]. This comes as Pfizer has a clinical tested vaccine [9]. But the approval process will

still take weeks [10]. It seems this is a good example where artificial intelligence systems could quickly validate the Pfizer data and get the vaccine to the people in need that much faster.

1. Sterling, Toby, Reuters, *Mink infected two humans with coronavirus: Dutch government*, May 25, 2020.
2. New York Post/AP, *Scientists study virus transmission after COVID-19 outbreaks at mink farms*, August 2, 2020.
3. Nebehay, Stephanie, Reuters, *Mink 'good*

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Special points of interest:

- Denmark Mink Farms Find COVID-19 Mutation
- Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine

Wuhan Coronavirus

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- reservoirs' for COVID-19, Denmark shows courage in cull: WHO, November 5, 2020.*
4. BBC News, *Coronavirus: Denmark imposes lockdowns amid mink covid fears*, November 5, 2020.
 5. Fox 6 (Milwaukee), *Dead mink in Taylor County tests positive for COVID-19*, October 8, 2020.
 6. Mossburg, Cheri, and Ries, Brian, CNN, *10,000 mink are dead in Covid-19 outbreaks at US fur farms after virus believed*

spread by humans, October 9, 2020.

7. Aitken, Peter, Fox News, *WHO reports coronavirus discovered among mink populations in 6 countries*, November 8, 2020.
8. Hutchinson, Bill, ABC News, *Number of COVID-19 infections reaches daily record in US*, November 9, 2020.
9. Reuters, *Pfizer says could apply for U.S. emergency use approval for vaccine in late November*, November 16, 2020.
10. Reuters, *Potential approval of Pfizer vaccine still several*

weeks away: U.S. official, November 9, 2020

If voting made any difference they wouldn't let us do it—Mark Twain

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this election cycle but perhaps not for future elections.

1. Reuters, *Explainer: How thousands in China got infected by brucellosis in one single outbreak*, November 6, 2020.
2. Erman, Michael, and Steenhuysen, Julie, Reuters, *Pfizer vaccine trial success signals breakthrough in pandemic battle*, November 9, 2020.
3. Dou, Eva. Washington Post, *China says it began public use of covid-19 vaccine a month ago, bypassing clinical trials*, August 24, 2020.
4. Di Franco, Anthony, et. al., Yale University, *Tiny Systematic Vote Manipulations Can Swing Elections*, April 2004.
5. Nicas, Jack, Chicago Tribune/New York

Times, No, Dominion voting machines did not cause widespread problems, November 12, 2020.

6. Popken, Ben, et. al., NBC News, *Chinese parts, hidden ownership, growing scrutiny: Inside America's biggest maker of voting machines*, December 19, 2019.
7. Cassidy, Christina A., US News/AP, *Voting Machine Vendors Get Scrutiny at Congressional Hearing*, January 9, 2020.
8. Foreign Policy, *Cybersecurity and U.S. Election Infrastructure*, October 27, 2020.
9. Wilkie, Jordan, The Guardian, *'They think they are above the law': the firms that own America's voting system*, April 23, 2019.
10. Murdock, Corinne, The Tennessee Star, *IT Professional, Software Expert*

Explains How Dominion Is Hackable – and How Georgia's Voting Systems Are Vulnerable, November 13, 2020

11. Sklaroff, J. R., IBM .I. Res. Develop., *Redundancy Management Technique for Space Shuttle Computers*, August 15, 1975

Terrorism

Overseas, terrorism continues to exact a toll. For example, in Pakistan, a bomb detonation at an Islamic seminary left at least 7 students dead [1,2]. Then there was another terrorist knife attack at a church in Nice, France, that left three people dead [3]. In Vienna, Austria, a terrorist attack left at least 5 people dead, including the attacker [4]. The Islamic State (IS) took responsibility for the Austrian terrorist attack [5]. In Afghanistan, IS terrorists stormed Kabul University resulting in the death of at least 22 people [6]. In northern Mozambique, militant Islamists beheaded at least 50 people [7]. In Saudi Arabia, IS claimed responsibility for a bombing at a World War I cemetery [8].

1. AP/Fox News, *Bomb at seminary in Pakistan kills 7 students, wounds 112*, October 26, 2020.

2. Saifi, Sophia, and Sherazi, Zahid Shah, CNN, *At least 7 dead, more than 120 injured after blast at religious school in Pakistani city of Peshawar*, October 27, 2020.

3. Aaro, David, and Wallace, Danielle, Fox News, *Macron declares France 'under attack' after church beheading, bolsters security at schools, religious sites*, October 29, 2020.

4. Fox News/AP, *5 dead in Vienna attack, including assailant who had previous conviction*, November 3, 2020.

5. Fox News/AP, *ISIS claims responsibility for Vienna terror attack; assailant had previous conviction*, November 4, 2020.

6. Faiez, Rahim, and Gannon, Kathy, Military Times/AP, *At least 22*

dead, 22 wounded in ISIS attack on Afghan university, November 2, 2020.

7. Aaro, David, Fox News, *Militant Islamists behead at least 50 people in Africa: reports*, November 9, 2020.

8. El Deeb, Sarah, AP, *Islamic State group claims attack at Saudi WWI ceremony*, November 12, 2020.

Regardless of who wins, an election should be a time for optimism and fresh approaches—Gary Johnson

Economy

The economy continued to improve but remains below pre COVID-19 days. Case in point, while the Gross domestic product (the broadest measure of goods and services produced across the economy) surged by a 33.1% rate, it remained 3.5% smaller than at the end of 2019 [1]. Moreover, the unemployment rate fell to 6.9% [2].

However, the economy is still stuck in the COVID-19 pandemic. For the week ending October 24, the number of first-time unemployment claims, reported by the Department of labor, was 751,000 [3]. For the week ending October 31, the number reported was 751,000 [4]. Finally, for the week ending November 7, the number reported was 709,000 [5].

On November 9, Pfizer announced phase 3 clinical trials show its vaccine to be 90% effective against COVID-19 [6]. As a consequence, stock indices briefly reached new inter-day record highs [7,8].

1. Henney, Megan, Fox Business, *US economic growth shatters record at 33.1%, but fails to snap*
2. Cox, Jeff, CNBC, *Job growth stronger than expected in October, unemployment rate slides to 6.9%*, November 6, 2020.
3. Department of Labor, *Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims*, October 29, 2020.
4. Department of Labor, *Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims*, November 5, 2020.
5. Department of Labor, *Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims*, November 12, 2020.
6. Erman, Michael, and Steenhuysen, Julie, Reuters, *Pfizer vaccine trial success signals breakthrough in pandemic battle*, November 9, 2020.
7. Fox, Matthew, Business Insider, *Dow closes 835 points higher after hitting intraday record on Pfizer vaccine enthusiasm*, November 9, 2020.
8. Nasdaq/RTT News, U.S. *Stocks Pull Back Off Record Highs But Still See Substantial Strength*, November 9,

2020.

*People never lie so much as
after a hunt, during a war
or before an election—Otto
von Bismarck*
