

Femtosecond IN THE NEWS

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World News

With the election fast approaching, US counter-intelligence is warning that China, Russia, and Iran are trying to alter the election [1]. With that as a backdrop, we must wonder if foreign actors are involved in ongoing riots seen in US cities. Consider, the riots in the US are continuing to exact a toll on law enforcement. As an example, rioters in Portland, Oregon, used high energy lasers to permanently blind three law enforcement officers [2].

In other news, China and India are continuing to build along their mutually disputed area in Ladakh [3]. This includes an estimated 35,000 troops that India plans to deploy [4]. India is also challenging China in the Indian Ocean. Additionally, India deployed most of its navy to secure control of the crucial Malacca Strait [5].

Meanwhile, China continues to include new capabilities to its military forces. For instance, an undisclosed number of Chinese warships were upgraded to include 20-megawatt generators, necessary for high energy weapons [6].

One consequence of China's aggressive posture is that foreign industry is leaving the communist state. For example, Samsung is halting production at its last factory in China [7]. (Continued on page 2)

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Wuhan Coronavirus

One forensics issue; investigators looking at a pathogen would not necessarily be able to tell if gene-editing techniques had been used [1]. However, one way to identify the source is through espionage. To this end, the US ordered the Chinese Consulate in Houston closed [2]. A contributing reason may have been how US officials were treated when trying to leave Wuhan. One piece indicates Chinese authorities refused US officials from leaving Wuhan with pouches without first searching them; an aggressive move in violation of the Vienna Convention [3]. A question here is what was China worried about in Wuhan that diplomatic protocols had to be violated?

To understand the work done at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, we consider an example from Canada. There, deadly pathogens were sent to the Wuhan Institute of Virology where dangerous gain of function experiments were conducted [4]. Moreover, gain-of-function techniques were used for at least five years at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, effectively turn viruses into human pathogens [5]. Another source indicates a COVID like virus was sent to the Wuhan Institute of Virology back in 2013 [6]. So is it unreasonable to assume the research lab applied gain-of-function modifications to the COVID-like virus received seven years ago? Additionally, there are indications the Wuhan Institute

of Virology was shut-down between October 7 and October 24, 2019 [7]. So why did the Institute close just prior to the outbreak in Wuhan? This comes as one piece suggests Google is banning advertisers that claiming COVID-19 originated in a China bioweapons lab [8]. Yet China's Foreign Ministry accused the U.S. Army of bringing the virus to Wuhan [9]. The Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, through re-tweets, implies the US military germ laboratory in Fort Detrick, Maryland, may have been the original source of the virus [10]. It appears this Chinese source is suggesting COVID-19 was a bioweapon but blamed the U.S. for

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Special points of interest:

- Second Quarter GDP falls at 34.6% Annual Rate
- Nasdaq Composite breaks 10,500 level
- First time unemployment claims on the rise

Wuhan Coronavirus

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its design. This comes as the number of US deaths from COVID-19 passed 150,000 [11].

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11. CBS News, *U.S. hits 150,000 coronavirus deaths*, July 29, 2020.

The way of the pioneer is always rough.—Harvey S. Firestone

(Continued from page 1)

The overall impact of China's aggression is seen as helping the U.S. [8]. One question here is, why is China trying to distract attention away from COVID-19 and toward its aggressive actions?

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3. Jakhar, Pratik, BBC, *India and China race to build along a disputed frontier*, July 30, 2020.
4. The Straits Times/Bloomberg, *India to add 35,000 troops along China border as tensions simmer: Report*, July 29, 2020.
5. Asia Times, *Indian Navy deployment sends 'message' to China*, July 29, 2020.
6. Zhen, Liu, South China Morning Post, *China adds turbo generators to warships to power high-energy weapons, state media says*, July 30, 2020.
7. Reuters, *Samsung Electronics to halt production at its last computer factory in China*, August 1, 2020.
8. MSN/Sky News, *China's increasing aggression is pushing Asian nations towards the US*, July 29, 2020.

World News

Terrorism

In Afghanistan, a 15-year old girl killed two Taliban fighters after they killed her parents [1]. Additionally, it appears the Taliban is allowing Al Qaeda training camps to operate [2].

Meanwhile, the Islamic State remains active in terrorism. For instance, the group claimed responsibility for killing five aid workers in Nigeria [3]. Separately, U.S. airstrikes hit pro-Islamic State militants in Somalia [4]. Elsewhere, Turkish police arrested 27 people with alleged links to the Islamic State [5]. In Northern Mozambique, two attacks by men hooded with Islamic handkerchiefs left 9 people dead, including eight who were beheaded [6].

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News, *Afghanistan teenager's husband was among Taliban attackers she killed when family was targeted: report*, July 24, 2020.

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Most people spend more time and energy going around problems than in trying to solve them.—

Henry Ford

Economy

We start this cycle with the only good news to report. On July 20, the Nasdaq closed at its 28th record close for 2020 [1].

It is being called the First Global Economic Depression of Our Lifetimes [2]. Now for the dismal news tied to the COVID-19 pandemic. The employment numbers along with economic collapse highlight this new normal. For the week ending July 11, the number reported was 1,300,000 [3]. For the week ending July 18, the number was 1,416,000 [4]. Finally, for the week ending July 25, the number reported was 1,434,000 [5].

However, the big negative was the second quarter Gross Domestic Product shrank at a 34.6% annual pace [6]. Finally, the credit-rating firm, Fitch, revised its credit outlook for the U.S. from stable to negative [7]. Clearly, these indicators are going in the

wrong direction.

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virus ravaged the economy,
July 30, 2020.

Archimedes was my ideal.

*I admired the works of
artists, but to my mind,
they were only shadows
and semblances. The
inventor, I thought, gives
to the world creations
which are palpable, which
live and work.—Nikola*

Tesla
