

## World News

The Suez Canal was shut down when a large cargo got stuck sideways [1]. The question here is how did this event happen? While some have suggested the wind was responsible; others cast doubt that 30 Mile Per Hour gusts were responsible [2]. One estimate placed the number of ships waiting to transit the canal at 321 [3]. By March 29, the ships were finally freed [4]. The next day, an inquiry as to the cause of the blockage began [5]. Readers may recall the US Navy 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet ship collisions with commercial vessels [6]. Could the Suez Canal event be a cyber-attack?

On December 15, 1978, President Carter announced the US would recognize Communist China and sever its diplomatic relations with Taiwan [7]. The consequences of the decision are now being played out. For example, China is stepping up war exercises around Taiwan [8]. In response to the continued aggression by China, Taiwan leaders vow to fight to the end if attacked [9]. A question here is had President Carter not severed ties with Taiwan, would the world be a safer place?

China also is using its military and economic power to do as it pleases. For instance, a Chinese research ship is drilling in waters claimed by other countries [10]. Additionally, China has amassed large fleets of fishing vessels that were fishing in waters claimed by the Philippines [11].

The situation within the Ukraine is back in the news. President Biden has assured the Ukraine of his support to that nation [12]. This comes as the Russian military buildup is threatening peace between Russia and the Ukraine [13]. In response, President Biden is heightening the US military presence in that area [14].

1. Aitken, Peter, and Tomlinson, Lucas Y., Fox News, Navy sending team to Suez Canal to help dig out massive ship blocking passage, March 26, 2021.

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## Wuhan Coronavirus

The former director of the CDC announced his belief that COVID-19 originated in a lab in Wuhan, China [1]. As expected the World Health Organization (WHO) team expressed their belief that the COVID-19 virus jumped to humans from animals [2].

This comes after reports indicate the team based their summary on Chinese officials inputs [3].

Prior to examining the final report, we fed the new information into the Artificial Intelligence confidence

assessment. The likelihood of a lab leak remains above 90% with all other likelihoods combined well below 10%.

Meanwhile, in the US, the number of deaths tied to COVID-19 passed 560,000 [4]. Within the US, over 178 million vaccine doses have been administered so far [5]. While the tide is turning within the US, Brazil is experiencing a significant increase in COVID related deaths [6]. Thus far in Brazil, over 345,000 people have died

from COVID-19 [7].

It appears the COVID-19 virus will be with us for the foreseeable future. For example, the variant of the virus ravaging Brazil is also on the rise within the US [8]. Additionally, the UK variant of the virus now dominates the number of new infections within the US [9].

1. Weintraub, Karen, USA Today, Former CDC director Robert Redfield believes the

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### Special points of interest:

- Terror in Colorado
- S&P 500 Closes Above 4,000; DJIA closes at new record high
- Record \$71.1 billion trade deficit for February

## Wuhan Coronavirus

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- coronavirus escaped a lab in China. Scientists are dubious, March 26, 2021,
2. Keaten, Jamey, and Moritsugu, Ken, AP, WHO report: COVID likely 1st jumped into humans from animals, March 29, 2021.
  3. Dunleavy, Jerry, Washington Examiner, WHO investigator admits it took China's word on Wuhan lab leak, March 29, 2021.
  4. Linnane, Ciara, MarketWatch, Coronavirus tally: Global cases of COVID-19 top 134 million

and U.S. death toll above 560,000, April 9, 2021.

5. Reuters, US Administers 178.8 Million Doses of COVID-19 Vaccines: CDC, April 10, 2021.
6. BBC News, Covid - what's gone wrong in Brazil?, April 9, 2021.
7. Simões, Eduardo, Reuters, WHO warns on Brazil COVID-19 outbreak as Bolsonaro blasts Senate inquiry, April 9, 2021.
8. Cunningham, Erin, et al., Washington Post, U.S. cases involving Brazil variant on the rise, according to CDC data, April 9, 2021.

9. Haslett, Cheyenne, ABC News, UK variant has become most dominant COVID strain in US, CDC says, April 7, 2021.

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*It is the function of the Navy to carry the war to the enemy so that it is not fought on U.S. soil.—*  
Chester W. Nimitz

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2. Gambrell, Jon, and Magdy, Samy, AP/ABC News, Massive cargo ship becomes wedged, blocks Egypt's Suez Canal, March 24, 2021.
3. Samaan, Magdy, et. al., CNN, Efforts to dislodge stranded Suez Canal container ship intensify as backlog grows, March 27, 2021.
4. Stevens, Pippa, CNBC, Suez Canal traffic resumes after cargo ship Ever Given is moving again, March 29, 2021.
5. Magdy, Samy, and Gambrell, Jon, AP, With ship now freed, a probe into Suez Canal blockage begins, March 30, 2021.
6. Arkin, Daniel, and Hurst, Daniel, NBC News, 7th Fleet collisions raise questions about U.S. military readiness in the

Pacific, January 18, 2018.

7. Glass, Andrew, Politico, U.S. recognizes communist China, Dec. 15, 1978, December 15, 2018.
8. Brennan, David, Newsweek, China's Bet U.S. Is Bluffing on Taiwan War Risks Dangerous Miscalculation, April 6, 2021.
9. AP, Taiwan will fight 'to the very last day' if China attacks, April 7, 2021.
10. Zhang, Rachel, South China Morning Post, Chinese scientists drill in contested South China Sea amid rising tensions, April 9, 2021.
11. South China Morning Post/Bloomberg, Chinese navy ships chase Philippine news crew in South China Sea as US, Manila express concern, April 9, 2021.
12. VOA/Reuters, Biden Affirms US 'Unwavering Support' for Ukraine in Call,

April 2, 2021.

13. Bremmer, Ian, Time, What Happens Next in the Rising Violence Between Ukraine and Russia, April 10, 2021.
14. Starr, Barbara, and Hansler, Jennifer, CNN, US considering sending warships to Black Sea amid Russia-Ukraine tensions, April 9, 2021.

## Terrorism

Domestic terrorism once again hit the United States. In Bolder, Colorado, a gunman entered a super market and killed 10 people [1]. While we don't not know the motive for the crime; one report indicates the FBI knew of this suspect through another person they were tracking [2]. This would suggest some terrorist affiliation. Then there was a man who attacked Capitol Police, killing one officer [3].

In Indonesia, a suicide bomber attacked a Palm Sunday Mass injuring 14 people in the blast [4]. In Mozambique, the Islamic State is claiming responsibility for killing at least 55 people in the northern town of Palma [5].

In Yemen, fighting continues in the city of Marib [6]. Additionally, there was an attack on an Iranian ship believed to be a base for Yemen operation

[7].

1. Hanna, Jason, and Holcombe, Madeline, CNN, *Suspect in Colorado grocery store shooting faces 10 counts of murder, police say*, March 23, 2021.
2. Sorace, Stephen, Fox News, *Boulder, Colorado mass shooting suspect known to FBI: report*, March 24, 2021.
3. Balsamo, Michael, et. al., AP, *Man rams car into 2 Capitol police; 1 officer, driver killed*, April 2, 2021.
4. Fox News/AP, *Suicide bomb hits Palm Sunday Mass in Indonesia, 14 wounded*, March 28, 2021.
5. Meldrum, Andrew, AP, *Rebels leave beheaded bodies in streets of Mozambique town*, March 29, 2021.
6. Gambrell, Jon, and Dobre, Isabel, AP, *Battle for Yemen desert city now a key to Iran, US tension*, April 7, 2021.
7. VOA/AP, *Iran Ship Said to Be Red Sea Troop Base Off Yemen attacked*, April 7, 2021.

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*I believe this government  
cannot endure  
permanently, half slave  
and half free.—Abraham  
Lincoln*

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## Economy

With respect to unemployment and trade deficits, the economy is down. For example, the number of first time unemployment claims reported by the Department of Labor for the week ending March 20 was 684,000 [1]. For the week ending March 27, the number reported was 719,000 [2]. Finally, for the week ending April 3, the number reported was 744,000 [3]. Meanwhile, the trade deficit for February set a new record of \$71.1 billion [4]. In contrast, for March, the unemployment rate fell to 6% as non-farm payrolls expanded by 916,000 [5].

When examined through the prism of the stock market, the economy is robust. For the first time ever, the Standard and Poor's (S&P) 500 index closed above 4,000 [6]. On April 5, the S&P 500 continued into record close territory

[7]. The S&P 500 also had a record high close on April 8 [8]. In conclusion, the Dow and S&P 500 both closed at record highs on April 9 [9].

1. Department of Labor, Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims, March 25, 2021.
2. Department of Labor, Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims, April 1, 2021.
3. Department of Labor, Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims, April 8 2021.
4. Mutikani, Lucia, Reuters, *U.S. trade deficit hits record high as economy gains speed*, April 7, 2021
5. Cox, Jeff, CNBC, *Jobs report blows past expectations as payrolls boom by 916,000 in March*, April 2, 2021.
6. Goldstein, Steve, and Sonenshine, Jacob, *MarketWatch/Barron's, S&P 500 Soars Past 4,000 for the First Time on Biden's Infrastructure Plan*, April 1, 2021.
7. Kageyama, Yuri, AP/Fox News, *US markets lower one day after new records set*, April 6, 2021.
8. Gondo, Nancy, *Investor's Business Daily, Dow Jones Up, Nasdaq Rallies As Powell Speaks; Square, Okta Lead Growth Stocks*, April 8, 2021.
9. Oh, Sunny, *MarketWatch, Dow, S&P 500 close at records to book solid weekly gains*, April 9, 2021.

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*Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former.—*

*Albert Einstein*

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