

World News

We begin by examining how China responds to international law. In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague ruled against China for blockading the Scarborough Shoal and in favor of the Philippines [1]. So how did China address the ruling? Instead of withdrawing, China has increased the number of ships enforcing the blockade [2]. Perhaps the disregard for international accountability explains why China has rejected World Health Organization's plan for the second phase of a study into the origins of Covid-19 [3].

Elsewhere in Asia, Japan appears to grasp the risk from China's military expansion. For instance, one peace suggests Japan committed to joining the US in defending Taiwan [4]. In response, China's sanctioned press warned China would use nuclear weapons against Japan if it comes to Taiwan's aid [5]. The example is another indicator that China is moving away from its commitment not to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict [6]. Moreover, this comes as one report indicates China is developing means to jam or destroy satellites [7]. Additionally, China was identified by the US and European Union as the source of the large hack directed against Microsoft and others [8]. China has denied responsibility for the successful cyber-attack [9].

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TWA 800

On July 17, 1996, TWA Flight 800, from New York to Paris, exploded off the Long Island coast, killing all 230 people aboard the Boeing 747 [1]. After 25 years, the wreckage from the investigation is now about to be destroyed [2]. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) concluded the most likely cause was a fuel air explosion and any suggestion otherwise is considered a conspiracy theory [3]. Although the final investigation concluded that the most likely reason was faulty wiring; however no ignition source was ever discovered [4].

The seeds for doubt began

early. An Air Force C-130 pilot described what appeared to be a shoulder fired missile, leaving a contrail, as it streaked to the aircraft and then exploded [5]. In total over 100 witnesses described a streak heading into the aircraft just prior to the explosion [6].

The next clue came as traces of Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate (PETN), a high explosive (HE) was discovered on some of the debris [7]. Interestingly, assistant FBI director James Kallstrom, read from a prepared statement, "the PETN could have been brought on the plane by a passenger and was not part of a bomb" [8]. Nevertheless, traces of another HE,

Royal Demolition explosive (RDX), were later discovered [9]. To explain where the explosive residue came from, it was determined that the FAA had used the aircraft to conduct a bomb sniffing exercise [10]. So, we are to conclude the FAA sanctions training that contaminates commercial aircraft so an explosion can never be determined? And this policy was not changed as a consequence of the investigation? As a final point, why would the 747 fleet not be grounded if it had such a wiring vulnerability existed?

There are ways to deal with terrorism. One approach is to deny it and hope another incident does not happen

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Special points of interest:

- S&P 500, Dow, and Nasdaq Record Highs
- Dow closed above 35,000
- Taliban on the Rise

TWA 800

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anytime soon.

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When you're young, you look at television and think, there's a conspiracy. The networks have conspired to dumb us down. But when you get a little older, you realize that's not true. The networks are in business to give people exactly what they want.—Steve Jobs

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nuke policy - US commander's stark warning, September 9, 2020.

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Terrorism

The Taliban continues to gain strength in Afghanistan. This comes as the top US commander in Afghanistan formalized transfer of command back to the US [1]. To be sure, the Taliban appear to fully embrace terrorism in the name of religion. Case in point, 22 Afghan commandos trying to surrender to the Taliban were executed on the spot [2]. What's more, the intelligence community is warning of an accelerating pace for Taliban takeover [3]. By one estimate, the Taliban are in a position of strength not seen since 2001 [4].

In the meantime, the US military continues airstrikes against Taliban targets located in Afghanistan [5]. There are some that suggest the Taliban gains could be reversed [6].

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US commander in Afghanistan hands over command, July 12, 2021.

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*The world is in a constant
conspiracy against the
brave. It's the age-old
struggle: the roar of the
crowd on the one side, and
the voice of your
conscience on the other.~
Douglas MacArthur*

Economy

On the shorten trading day, July 4, both the Nasdaq and the S&P 500 had record high closings [1]. The Nasdaq continued with a new record close on July 6 [2]. Then on July 7, both the Nasdaq and the S&P 500 indexes closed at record highs [3]. The stock market indexes continued into record territory. On July 12, the three indexes (Dow, S&P 500, and Nasdaq) closed at record highs [4]. Finally, on July 23, the three stock indexes closed at record highest with the Dow breaking 35,000 [5].

For the week ending July 3, the number of first time unemployment claims was 373,000 [6]. For the week ending July 10, the number was 360,000 [7]. Finally, for the week ending July 17, the number was 419,000 [8]. However, inflation for June was 5.4% higher than the year before, a rate not seen since August, 2008 [9].

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another round of records, July 5, 2021.

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People love conspiracy theories.~Neil Armstrong
