

IN THE NEWS

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World News

China continues to display advanced technology. Case in point, the Asian giant launched a lunar rover to become the third nation to achieve a soft landing on the moon [1]. After traveling the distance, the rover successfully made a soft landing on the moon [2]. Readers should note, if China can deliver a lunar rover, it can deliver a nuclear warhead anywhere. The technical advances are due to China's newfound wealth. Much of this wealth comes from the US in the form of unfair trade practices. For example, China has a poor record of identifying domestic food products contaminated by pollutants. However, the communist giant just banned shellfish from the US West coast because Chinese government inspectors claim to have found high levels of arsenic [3]. Couldn't the US apply the same tactic and hire an army of inspectors to check every Chinese good coming into the US?

In meetings with Chinese officials, Vice President Biden expressed concern over the new East China Sea air defense zone [4]. However, China refused any concessions and will keep the zone in place [5]. What's more, a Chinese ship tried to stop the USS Cowpens, a US Navy missile cruiser [6]. Getting reliable news out of China is difficult. Case in point, when Bloomberg and New York Times reporters wrote unflattering news articles, China withheld their visas [7].

While there is much talk of man-made global warming; we are seeing signs that the world is a much more dynamic environment. As the debate continues, the sun's solar activity is the weakest in a century [8]. In turn, lower temperatures are starting to be observed. For instance, snow covered Cairo, Egypt for the first time in 112 years [9]. Additionally, a NASA satellite recorded the coldest temperature ever recorded on Earth, over the Antarctic during 2010; 135.8 degrees Fahrenheit below zero (93.2 degrees below zero Celsius) [10]. Those who have worked differential-equation problems relating to temperature will recognize the paradox in defending global warming concurrent with record breaking cold temperatures. It is unclear how other factors may be impacting global climate change. For instance, for years the north magnetic pole has been shifting toward Siberia [11]. In order for science to be legitimate, it must holistically examine all variables that could impact the results. That we do not understand the mechanics behind change does not eliminate the need for further research and analysis.

1. MacLeod, Calum, USA Today, *China launches its first moon rover*

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Security

One common type of cyber-attack uses key loggers that capture key stroke entries. While this is not a new attack method, it is still common. Case in point, nearly 2 million login credentials for Facebook, Twitter, Google, Yahoo, and others were stolen by hackers [1]. Elsewhere, a cyber-attack against the Department of Energy re-

sulted in over 100,000 compromised identities [2].

Keeping commercial software patched against exploits continues. For instance, this month's Microsoft patch Tuesday corrects 24 bugs including a TIFF file format zero-day vulnerability [3].

It is difficult to ascertain just how much damage is

done by cyber-attacks to stock exchanges. However, one clue is the world exchanges have agreed to exchange intelligence to combat cyber-attacks [4].

1. Eversley, Melanie, USA Today, *Mass hack affects almost 2 million Internet accounts*, December 5, 2013.

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Special points of interest:

- China launched a Moon rover
- Coldest temperature on Earth ever recorded over Antarctica
- China navy ship tried to stop a US missile cruiser
- 24th financial Institution Shuttered

*Here men from the planet
Earth first set foot upon
the Moon. July 1969 AD.
We came in peace for all
mankind—Neil Armstrong*

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partment Cyber Attack, December 13, 2013.

3. Walker, Danielle, SC Magazine, Patch Tuesday update addresses 24 bugs, including exploited TIFF zero-day, December 10, 2013.

4. Stafford, Philip, Financial Times, World's stock exchanges move to combat cyber attacks, December 11, 2013.

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mission, December 2, 2013.

2. USA Today/AP, China safely soft-lands rover on the moon, December 14, 2013.

3. Ahearn, Ashley, KUOW, China Imposes First-Ever West Coast Shellfish Ban, December 12, 2013.

4. Pearson, Michael, et. al., CNN, Biden tells Chinese president of 'deep concerns' over air defense zone, December 5, 2013.

5. MacLeod, Calum, USA Today, Biden in Korea after no bend from China on air zone, December 5, 2013.

6. Gertz, Bill, Washington Free Beacon, Chinese Naval Vessel Tries to Force U.S. Warship to Stop in International Waters, December 13, 2013.

7. AP/ABC News, China Withholds Visas for NYT, Bloomberg Reporters, December 9, 2013.

8. Wall, Mike, Space, Sun's Current Solar Activity Cycle Is Weakest in a Century, December 11, 2013.

9. Amira, Dan, New York Magazine, It Snowed in Cairo for the First Time in Over 100 Years, December 13, 2013.

10. Borenstein, Seth, AP, Cold discomfort: Antarctica set record of -135.8, December 9, 2013.

11. Vastag, Brian, National Geographic News, North Magnetic Pole Is Shifting Rapidly Toward Russia, December 15, 2005

Terrorism

Iraq is reverting to a terrorist battleground. For instance, of the 659 people killed during November, most were due to bombs; moreover, execution style murders are increasing [1]. Then dozens were killed in terrorist bombings around Bagdad [2]. What's more, it appears al-Qaeda terrorists have carved out Western Iraq and are in the process of developing a separate state [3].

In Yemen, an attack believed to be the work of Al Qaeda, used a car bomb and small arms fire to kill at least 20 people [4]. What's more, one piece indicates the Yemini terrorists are working on

bombs designed to bypass airport security in order to bring down Western commercial aircraft [5].

More bad news comes to us from Syria. For instance, one article indicates a brigade of foreign fighters has completely come under control of an al-Qaeda linked organization [6].

1. Capelouto, Susanna, CNN, *Execution-style killings surge in Iraq*, U.N. says, December 2, 2013.
2. Adnan, Duraid, New York Times, *Bombings Kill Dozens Around Baghdad*, December 8, 2013.
3. al-Salhy, Washington Free Beacon, *Al Qaeda Tightens Grip on Western*

Iraq in Bid For Islamic State, December 12, 2013.

4. Arrabyee, Nasser, and Cowell, Alan, New York Times, *Assailants Launch Two-Pronged Attack on Yemen Defense Ministry*, December 5, 2013.
5. Gardner, Frank, BBC News, *Yemen bomb-makers 'working on new devices'*, December 3, 2013.
6. BBC News, *Former French fighter in Syria: 'We are all al-Qaeda'*, December 9, 2013.

*The moon and other
celestial bodies should be
free for exploration and
use by all countries. No
country should be
permitted to advance a
claim of sovereignty.—
Lyndon B. Johnson*

Economy

The number of federally insured financial institutions fell to 6,891; the lowest number ever recorded (since federal regulators starting tracking the number back in 1934) [1]. Meanwhile, the Texas Community Bank became the 24th financial institution closed by regulators this year [2].

For October, the US trade deficit was reported at \$40.6 Billion [3]. In contrast, China reported its largest November trade surplus in four years [4]. As America enjoys the benefits of one sided trade agreements, there is a long term price to pay. For example, there are fears that more cities will follow Detroit into bankruptcy [5]. With ever increasing jobs exported; there are fewer bill payers and this can-

not have a happy ending.

For the week ending November 30, the number of first time unemployment claims reported by the Labor Department was 298,000 [6]. For the following week, the number rose to 368,000 [7]. Then, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the US unemployment rate fell to 7.0% during November [8].

1. Tracy, Ryan, Wall Street Journal, *Tally of U.S. Banks Sinks to Record Low*, December 3, 2013.
2. ABC/AP, *Regulators Close Bank in Texas*, December 13, 2013.
3. Crutsinger, Martin, AP/Time, *U.S. Trade Deficit Drops to \$40.6 Billion in October*. December 5, 2013.
4. Bloomberg News, *China Trade Surplus Hits Four-Year High as Exports Rise*, December 8, 2013.
5. John W. Schoen, CNBC, *Detroit is the wake-up call for American cities*, December 4, 2013.
6. Sparshott, Jeffrey, Wall Street Journal, *U.S. Jobless Claims Fall to 298,000 in Latest Week*, December 5, 2013.
7. Stilwell, Victoria, Bloomberg News, *Jobless Claims in U.S. Surge in Week After Thanksgiving*, December 12, 2013.
8. CNBC, *Unemployment drops to 7%; 203,000 jobs added in November*, December 6, 2013.

China Pollution

The colder weather is accompanied by increasing air pollution. For instance, schools in two Chinese cities were closed and the sun was described as looking like a salted egg yolk [1]. What's more, when it comes to restitution due to pollution, the communist giant insists that the US and European Union should pay based on past (not current) pollution [2].

As pollution continues to be a problem for China, how might the communist government appease the people? One peace suggests conflict in the South China Sea might be used to focus attention away from pollution [3].

It is unclear how far China will go in order to control pollu-

tion. However, the state run media is advertising the benefits of toxic air, such as bringing the people together and making everyone equal [4]. Similarly, one Chinese newspaper claims the smog could thwart a missile attack [5]. Finally, China will require domestic pilots flying into Beijing to be trained on landing in heavy smog [6]. These reports are indicators that China is planning on smog for some time to come.

1. Reuters, *Schools close in smog-enshrouded eastern China*, December 5, 2013.
2. Hill, Patrice, Washington Times, *China and other heavy polluters contribute little to restitution fund for emerging markets*, December 8, 2013.
3. Perrett, Bradley, Aviation Week & Space Technology, *Building a Buffer*, December 9, 2013.
4. Rauhala, Emily, Time, *China: Here Are Some Great Things About Toxic Air*, December 9, 2013.
5. Washington Free Beacon, *Chinese Newspaper: Smog Bolsters Military Defense*, December 11, 2013.
6. Tang, Didi, AP, *China asks pilots to master low-visibility landing*, December 12, 2013.

*Here I am at the turn of
the millennium and I'm
still the last man to have
walked on the moon,
somewhat disappointing.
It says more about what
we have not done than
about what we have done.*

—Gene Cernan
