

Femtosecond IN THE NEWS

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World News

In Washington DC, the big news was the impeachment of President Trump along party lines by the House of Representatives [1]. On the plus side, the outcome did not impact the stock markets as new highs were reached following the impeachment vote [2].

We continue this newsletter with another focus on communist China's expanding military. For instance, China continues to advance its laser weapons program [3]. But for laser weapons to be effective, they must hit their targets. Perhaps this is why we are seeing military aircraft targeted with blinding lasers. Case in point, Australian military continue to be targeted by Chinese fishing boat laser attacks [4]. What is interesting to note is that complaints lodged provide information to China that their lasers are effective in acquiring targets. China now knows its high energy lasers will be able to hit their targets. With the launch of a Type 055 and a Type 052D guided missile destroyers, China launched 24 ships during 2019 [5]. On the nuclear front, China has speed up testing of the JL-3 submarine launched ballistic missile, expected to have a range of 10,000 KM [6].

The Chinese navy buildup is taking place as China tries to forcefully expand into other nation's waters. Case in point, China uses its Coast Guard to enter into Indonesia's exclusive economic zone [7]. Additionally, during 2019, the number of Chinese incursions into Japan's exclusive waters exceeded 1,000 [8].

Another belligerent making news was Iran. The Iranian Government supported an armed group that attacked the US embassy in Iraq [9]. In response, the US launched a strike that killed General Qassem Soleimani, head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force [10].

1. Siegel, Benjamin, et. al., ABC News, *Donald Trump becomes 3rd president in US history to be impeached*, December 18, 2019.
2. Gondo, Nancy, Investor's Business Daily, *Dow Eyes 230-Point Weekly* (Continued on page 2)

Security

With the US 2020 elections getting near, it's worth looking at how foreign governments influence elections. Case in point, Taiwan is facing an onslaught of fake news being generated from China [1]. The purpose of the Chinese disinformation is to alter the elections in Taiwan [2]. In contrast, the US press heavily favors the coverage of Russian activities [3]. With the focus on Russia, China's activities are receiving little notice.

Nevertheless, in the case of China, one report indicates they have repeatedly violated US law by publishing propaganda in main stream publications [4]. At least one lawmaker wants an investigation into the allegations of Chinese activities [5]. However, the Impeachment of President Trump is causing a distraction to other matters including how China attempts to influence the US elections [6].

1. Kuo, Lily, and Yang,

Lillian, The Guardian, *Taiwan's citizens battle pro-China fake news campaigns as election nears*, December 30, 2019.

2. Lee, Yimou, and Blanchard, Ben, Reuters, *Chinese 'rumors' and 'cyber armies' - Taiwan fights election 'fake news'*, December 12, 2019.
3. Ewing, Philip, NPR, *Mueller Report Finds No*

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Special points of interest:

- DJIA, S&P 500, and NASDAQ Record Highs
- Iranian General Qassem Soleimani killed

Security

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Evidence Of Russian Collusion, March 24, 2019.

4. Kakutani, Yuichiro, Washington Free Beacon, *China Violates Disclosure Law to Publish Propaganda in NY Times*, WaPo, December 18, 2019.
5. Kredo, Adam, Washington Free Beacon, *Lawmaker Demands Hearing on Spread of Chinese Propaganda in Congress*, December

23, 2019.

6. Wittes, Benjamin, and Jurecic, Quinta, The Atlantic, *The Serious Silliness of Impeachment*, December 23, 2019.

Joe McCarthy and his Senate hearings were like witch-hunts—Desi Arnaz

World News

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Gain As Stocks Rally After Impeachment Vote, December 19, 2019.

3. Zhen, Liu, South China Morning Post, *8 tactical laser weapons China has recently developed*, May 4, 2018.
4. Greene, Andrew, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *Chinese fishing vessels suspected of increasingly common laser attacks on Australian military*, December 5, 2019.
5. Huang, Kristin, South China Morning Post, *China steps up warship building programme as navy looks to extend its global reach*, December 24, 2019.
6. Chan, Minnie, South China Morning Post, *China nuclear missile development steps up a gear with test of weapon capable of hitting US mainland*, January 4, 2020.
7. Reuters, *Indonesia rejects China's claims over South China Sea*, January 1, 2020.
8. Herskovitz, Jon, The Age, *China maritime incursions near Japan-held islands hit record*, December 8, 2020.
9. Bacon, John, USA Today, *Photos reveal extensive damage to US Embassy in Baghdad as American soldiers rush to region*, January 2, 2020.
10. Harel, Amos, et. al., Haaretz, *Top Iranian General Qassem Soleimani Killed in U.S. Airstrike in Iraq*, January 3, 2020.

Terrorism

In dealing with terrorist organizations, the normal logical rules do not apply. Case in point, 26 peace activists in Afghanistan were captured by the Taliban [1]. So on the surface, a group of people that benefit the Taliban become captives instead. How do you deal with such people?

In the case of China, they established re-education camps to deal with the Uighurs [2]. Information detailing the reeducation program was leaked to the world press [3]. After the people have been appropriately educated, they are released [4]. Another report indicates approximately 100 Uighur graveyards were demolished by China [5].

The Uighurs are Turkic-speaking Muslims and have been a troubling aspect of China [6]. By one estimate, over one million Uighurs are currently in re-education camps [7]. In contrast, since 1950, China has occupied Tibet [8]. The question here is why is China trying to re-educate the Uighurs but not the people of Tibet? Additionally, there doesn't appear to be outrage from the Muslim communities [9].

In Somalia, at least 78 people were killed in a suicide car bombing [10]. In response, the US launched drone attacks on

Al Qaeda-linked Islamic terrorist group Al-Shabab targets [11].

Meanwhile, France continues to experience religious terrorism. Case in point, a 22 year old terrorist used a knife to kill at least one person [12].

Finally, domestic terrorism directed at the Jewish population is in the news. For instance, 5 people were wounded at a Hanukkah event by a machete-wielding man [13].

1. AP/New York Times, *Afghan Official Says Taliban Abducted 26 Peace Activists*, December 26, 2019.
2. BBC News, *Data leak reveals how China 'brainwashes' Uighurs in prison camps*, November 24, 2019.
3. Lehen, Andrew W., NBC News, *Woman in Netherlands says she leaked secret Chinese documents on Uighur 're-education' camps*, December 7, 2019.
4. BBC News, *China Uighurs: Detainees 'free' after 'graduating', official says*, December 9, 2019.
5. Rivers, Matt, et. al., CNN, *More than 100 Uyghur graveyards demolished by Chinese authorities, satellite images show*, January 2, 2019.
6. Tharoor, Ishaan, Time, *A Brief History of the Uighurs*, July 9, 2009.
7. AP, *The man behind China's detention of 1 million Muslims*, November 25, 2019.
8. BBC News, *Tibet profile*, April 26, 2019.
9. Mazrieva, Eva, VOA, *Silent on Uighurs, Leading Indonesian Clerics Deny Report of Chinese Influence*, December 18, 2019.
10. Assunção, Muri, New York Daily News, *Suicide car explosion in Somalia kills at least 78*, December 28, 2019.
11. Miles, Frank, Fox News, *US launches drone strikes in Somalia after deadly car bombing*, December 29, 2019.
12. Allen, Peter, and Ibbetson, Ross, Daily Mail, *Terrorist knifeman, 22, wearing a fake explosive vest and 'shouting Allahu Akbar' is shot dead in Paris after stabbing three people and 'killing a 56-year-old man who was trying to protect his wife'*, January 3, 2020.
13. Calicchio, Dom, Fox News, *New York machete stabbings at Hanukkah event in rabbi's home result in 5 wounded: reports*, December 29, 2019.

Witchcraft is one of the most baseless, absurd, disgusting and silly of all the humbugs—P. T. Barnum

Economy

The news cycle started with a strong results from the stock markets. On December 16, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA); Standard and Poor's 500 (S&P 500); and the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (NASDAQ) composite stock indices closed at record highs [1]. On Tuesday, December 18, the three indices again inched higher and closed at record highs [2]. However, on December 18, only the NASDAQ closed at another record high [3]. The day after the Democrat controlled house voted to impeach President Trump; the three stock indices closed at fresh record highs [4]. Then again on Friday, the indices closed at fresh record highs [5]. On Monday, December 23, the three indices continued to set new records [6]. On the day before Christmas, only the NASDAQ closed at a new record high [7]. Not only did the record closing continue on December 26; the NASDAQ closed above 9,000 [8]. Then on January 2, the three indices resumed record closes [9]. However, following the drone strike that killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, the stock indices fell [10].

The unemployment rates remained strong. For the week ending December 14, the

number of first time unemployment claims was 234,000 [11]. Then for the week ending December 21, the number of claims was 222,000 [12]. Finally, for the week ending December 28, the number of claims was 222,000 [13].

1. Imbert, Fred, CNBC, *Stocks rise for a fourth straight day, hit record highs*, December 16, 2019.
2. Imbert, Fred, CNBC, *Here's what happened to the stock market on Tuesday*, December 18, 2019.
3. Riquier, Andrea, and Oh, Sunny, Market Watch, *Nasdaq ekes out record to log fifth straight record close; S&P 500 and Dow winning streak ends*, December 18, 2019.
4. Klebnikov, Sergei, Forbes, *Dow Jones and S&P 500 Hit Record Highs Day After Trump's Impeachment*, December 19, 2019.
5. Gondo, Nancy, Investor's Business Daily, *Dow Closes Impeachment Week At New High; 2 Key Stocks In Buy Range*, December 20, 2019.
6. Matthews, Chris, Market Watch, *Dow, S&P close at records for third-straight session as Boeing management change boosts blue-chips*, December 23, 2019.
7. Li, Yun, CNBC, *S&P 500 closes little changed, Nasdaq inches higher to a record in shortened session*, December 4, 2019.
8. Li, Yun, CNBC, *Nasdaq crosses 9,000, Dow and S&P 500 notch new highs as year-end rally rolls on*, December 26, 2019.
9. Chung, Heidi, et. al., Yahoo Finance, *Stock Market Live Updates: Stocks close at record highs, Dow jumps 300 points to kick off 2020*, January 2, 2019.
10. Egan, Matt, CNN Business, *Stocks were on a runaway train. Then Iran happened*, January 3, 2020.
11. Bartash, Jeffrey, Market Watch, *Jobless claims fall back in mid-December after spiking to a more than two-year high*, December 19, 2019.
12. Department of Labor, *Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims*, December 26, 2019.
13. Department of Labor, *Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims*, January 2, 2019.

Although the most acute judges of the witches and even the witches themselves, were convinced of the guilt of witchery, the guilt nevertheless was non-existent. It is thus with all guilt.—Friedrich Nietzsche
