

Iran

The US and Iran were once close allies. For instance, in 1973, the US sold the then advanced F-14 fighters to Iran [1]. Unfortunately, President Carter paved the way for Ayatollah Khomeini to assume power [2]. Some have suggested, President Carter was duped by the Ayatollah [3]. In 1979, Iran seized the US embassy in Tehran and this event is celebrated to this day [4]. Following the embassy takeover; US personnel were held hostage for 444 days [5].

To understand Iran, we must first look to its religious background. Approximately 1600 years ago, Islam split into what is now the Shiite and Suni divide [6]. Today, it is estimated that Iran makes up 40% of the world Shiite Muslim population [7]. What's more, given names are used to identify the person as Shiite or Suni [8]. As it turns out, the given name Hussein is a Shiite name [9]. As a consequence, Barack Hussein Obama, would be identified as a Shiite Muslim based on his middle name. So, when President Obama negotiated a deal with Iran it raised many questions. For instance, \$1.7 Billion in non-US currency was flown to Iran as part of the deal [10]. President Obama got the Iran Deal approved; only to have President Trump stop it [11]. Now President Biden has restarted the negotiations with Iran [12].

Perhaps the biggest regional concern is a possible war with Israel. Consider, Iran appears to be preparing for another rocket into space [13]. This comes as the Tehran Times posted the planned Iranian war targets located within Israel [14]. Coincidentally, on December 4, an explosion was heard near the Iranian Natanz nuclear processing plant that was described by the Iranian government as caused by an air defense drill [15].

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(Continued on page 2)

World News

During the presidential campaign, Candidate Joe Biden called on President Trump to resign over his handling of COVID-19 [1]. Additionally, candidate Biden promised to shut down the virus [2]. When President Biden took office on Jan. 20, the COVID death toll was at 403,596; now the number has passed the 800,000 threshold [3]. As of December 19, the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center showed 806,273 US deaths tied to COVID-19. As a side note, January 20, 2021

was the deadliest day for COVID-19 deaths in the US (4,442). Overall, the trend does not appear to be moving in the right direction. For instance, New York State set a daily record for new COVID-19 infections [4].

During flu season, each year the public has a new vaccine available. It is unclear if similar planning is afforded by the Administrations has with respect to COVID-19. Case in point, during an interview, Vice President Harris said: "We didn't see Delta coming"

and later "We didn't see Omicron coming" [5]. So, it appears the Administration was clueless on COVID-19 variants. Should we not be developing new vaccines that target the new variants as is done for influenza?

Switching subject, one report indicates China has set up an Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) transmitter to communicate with its submerged submarines [6]. This comes as concerns mount that China may be preparing for an attack on Taiwan [7]. Meanwhile,

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Terrorism	3
Economy	4

Special points of interest:

- Inflation Rising
- US COVID-19 Deaths Pass 800,000

*The United States is not,
and never will be, at war
with Islam.—Barack
Obama*

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summary executions in Afghanistan continue [8].

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(Continued from page 1)

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World News

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Iran

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Terrorism

Religious radicalization appears to be a factor in much of the terrorism seen. Case in point, in the Pakistan Punjabi city of Sialkot, a Buddhist factory manager was tortured to death by a Sialkot mob on allegations of blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed [1]. In Mozambique, a Christian pastor was decapitated by Islamic State (ISIS) aligned terrorists [2].

One report blames ISIS and al-Qa'ida for a 10 percent increase in terrorism related deaths this year [3]. In Mali, militants attacked a vehicle carrying people, killing at least 31 [4,5].

The terrorist war in Afghanistan appears to be the Islamic

State (ISIS-K) versus the Taliban. For example, between September 18 and November 30, the ISIS-K fighters conducted 76 attacks on Taliban forces [6].

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*A government big enough
to give you everything you
want is a government big
enough to take from you
everything you have.—*

Gerald R. Ford

Economy

The unemployment rate for November fell to 4.2% with the addition of 210,000 new jobs [1]. However, inflation is on the rise. For instance, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 0.8% between October and November resulting in a year to year increase of 6.8%; the highest since June, 1982 [2]. Meanwhile, another inflation indicator, the Producer Price Index, set a record increase of 9.6% for the 12 months ending November [3]. In response, Federal Reserve policymakers indicated rate hikes could start in March [4].

The economy as measured by employment claims was solid. For example, the week ending November 27, the number of claims was 222,000 [5]. For the week ending December 4, the number reported was 184,000 [6]. Finally, for the week ending December 11, the number reported was

206,000 [7].

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*Prosperity is necessarily the
first theme of a political
campaign.—Woodrow
Wilson*
