

## World News

Another victory for China. Honduras has severed relations with Taiwan in favor of China [1]. This leaves only 13 countries recognizing Taiwan. Honduras gave Taiwan 30 days to vacate its embassy and leave the country [2]. Additionally, it appears China is learning from the Ukraine war. Case in point, China is expanding its military conscription laws for a potential invasion of Taiwan [3]. This comes as one report indicates Taiwan's air force is ill prepared to stop a China invasion [4].

Conflict between Israel and its neighbors is in the news. Rockets originating from Syria and Lebanon were fired into Israel [5,6]. In response, Israel struck targets in Syria, Lebanon, and the Gaza [7,8,9].

Meanwhile, North Korea showcased its newest nuclear warhead and the leader there called for the production of more nuclear weapons [10]. The threat from a North Korean first use nuclear attack and the fear the US will not assist has South Korea considering developing their own nuclear arsenal [11]. The north also launched a new intermediate range ballistic missile that appears to use solid fuel (instead of liquid) [12]. This capability would allow quicker launch times. North Korea is also testing its neighbor to the south. For instance, South Korea fired warning shots on a northern vessel that crossed the maritime border [13].

1. PBS/AP, *Honduras establishes ties with China after ending recognition of Taiwan*, March 26, 2023.
2. Palencia, Gustavo, *US News/Reuters, Taiwan Told to 'Pack up and Leave' Honduras After Ties Severed*, March 27, 2023.

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### Special points of interest:

- \$70.5 billion February US Trade Deficit
- Annual CPI Falls to 6.0%

## Ukraine War

Former President Clinton has indicated he regrets his role in getting the Ukraine to get rid of its over 1,900 nuclear warheads [1]. Meanwhile, the US is sending so much military aid to the Ukraine that supplies are low. Case in point, South Korea is lending the US 500,000 of their 155mm artillery shells [2]. This comes as Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, urged the US to stop encouraging war in the

Ukraine [3].

Sweden's investigation is pointing to state actors as the culprit for bombing the Nord Stream pipeline [4].

One report indicates the Ukraine suffered heavy losses during February and has a manpower shortage [5]. Another, report suggests the Ukraine conducted drone attacks inside Belarus [6]. The leaked documents also indicate the Ukraine lacks the armor and air defense for a suc-

cessful counter-attack [7].

1. Nava, Victor, *New York Post, Bill Clinton admits regret for having Ukraine give up nuclear weapons*, April 5, 2023.
2. Shin, yonhee, *Reuters, South Korea to lend 500,000 rounds of artillery shells to US - report*, April 12, 2023.
3. Zhuang, Sylvie, *South China Morning Post/AFP, Brazilian president*

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*The corruption of the best  
things gives rise to the  
worst—David Hume*

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- wraps up China visit by telling US to 'stop encouraging' war in Ukraine, April 15, 2023.*
4. Tanner, Jari, AP, Sweden: *State actor likeliest culprit for pipeline sabotage, April 6, 2023.*
  5. O'Grady, Siobhán, and Khudov, Kostiantyn, Washington Post, *As spring offensive nears, Ukraine is drafting reinforcements, April 10,*

## Ukraine War

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6. Mitchell, Ellen, The Hill, *Leaked US docs show Ukraine pursued attacks inside Belarus, Russia: report, April 11, 2023.*
7. Bryen, Stephen, Asia Times, *Ukraine's spring offensive a likely death trap for US, NATO, April 12, 2023.*

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3. DeAeth, Duncan, Taiwan News, *China prepares for Taiwan conflict with updated conscription law, April 14, 2023.*
4. Dpa, South China Morning Post, *US leaks say Taiwan's air force is ill-prepared for China attack: report, April 16, 2023.*
5. Fabian, Emanuel, Times of Israel, *34 rockets fired from Lebanon at Israel in worst barrage in years; Hamas blamed, April 6, 2023.*
6. CNBC, *Israeli military says 3 rockets fired from Syria toward Israel, April 7, 2023.*
7. Mackenzie, James, Reuters, *Israel hits Syria after rockets fired towards Golan Heights, April 9, 2023.*
8. Sackur, Leila, NBC News, *Violence erupts in Israel as tensions simmer after rare airstrikes on Lebanon, April 8, 2023.*
9. BBC News, *Israel strikes Lebanon and Gaza after major rocket attack, April 8, 2023.*
10. Moore, Mark, New York Post, *North Korea's Kim Jong Un unveils new tactical nuclear warhead, March 28, 2023.*
11. Ahn, Jennifer, Asia Times, *South Korea's hot and risky nuclear weapon debate, April 6, 2023.*
12. Reuters, *North Korea launches new type of ballistic missile, Seoul says, April 13, 2023.*
13. New York Post/Reuters, *South Korea fires warning shots after North's boat crosses sea border, April 16, 2023.*

## Terrorism

The Russian referred to as the Merchant of Death for arms dealing (Viktor Bout) is warning that President Trump will likely be convicted and then eliminated [1,2]. Mr. Bout suggests the Biden Administration may be behind efforts to eliminate former President Trump [3].

In Burkina Faso, at least 44 people were killed in two attacks [4]. The killings were conducted by armed terrorist groups [5].

1. Reynolds, Nick, Newsweek, *Russia's 'Merchant of Death' Warns Donald Trump His Life Is in Danger*, April 7, 2023.
2. The Telegraph, *'Merchant of Death' Viktor Bout urges Donald Trump to seek ref-*
3. Loh, Matthew, Business Insider, *Viktor Bout, the 'Merchant of Death' arms dealer exchanged for Brittney Griner, says he fears for Trump's life and urged him to flee to Russia*, April 14, 2023.
4. Armstrong, Kathryn, BBC News, *Dozens killed in 'barbaric' Burkina Faso attacks*, April 8, 2023.
5. VOA/AFP, *'Terrorist' Attacks Kill 44 in Burkina Faso*, April 8, 2023.

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*Fighting corruption is not  
just good governance. It's  
self-defense. It's patriotism.*

*—Joe Biden*

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## Economy

It seems like the price of oil is going up. Case in point, OPEC+ announced plans to cut oil production by 1.15 million barrels per day starting in May [1].

For the month of February, the trade deficit increased 2.7% to \$70.5 billion [2]. Additionally, the US unemployment rate for March fell to 3.5% [3]. Meanwhile the Consumer Price Index continued to fall in March to a 6.0 annual rate [4]. In another sign of potential trouble; according to the Mortgage Bankers Association, US banks lost an average of \$301 on each mortgage loan they originated in 2022 [5].

1. Revell, Eric, FOX Business, *OPEC+ announces surprise oil production cut that could lead to higher prices at pump*, April 2, 2023.

2. Reuters, *U.S. trade deficit widens in February as goods exports fall*, April 5, 2023.
3. Mutikani, Lucia, Reuters, *US job growth strong in March; unemployment rate falls to 3.5%*, April 7, 2023.
4. MSN/Reuters, *US March CPI comes in on the cool side*, April 12, 2023.
5. Ramaswamy, Swapna Venugopal, USA Today, *In shocking reversal, mortgages proved poor investment for banks that lost money on home loans*, April 13, 2023.

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Communism has never come to power in a country that was not disrupted by war or corruption, or both.

—John F. Kennedy

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