

World News

In the Sudan, war is causing foreigners to flee the country [1]. Meanwhile, the US is evacuating American citizens still in country [2]. On a positive note, the warring parties are meeting for face-to-face negotiations [3].

Iranian forces seized a U.S.-bound oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman [4]. Then, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard seized a Panamanian-flagged oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz [5]. This comes as estimates indicate Iran has enough Uranium to construct 5 nuclear weapons [6].

The World Health Organization has declared an end to the COVID-19 emergency [7]. In the US, the COVID-19 emergency expires on May 11 [8]. Consequently, COVID-19 requirements for travelers will be lifted on May 11 [9]. The JHU Coronavirus Resource Center stopped recording COVID-19 related US deaths on March 10, when the number dead was 1,123,836 [10].

Regarding the origin of COVID-19, a US Senate report indicates two separate lab leaks may have been the source of the virus [11]. Moreover, it appears the US funded gain of function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology prior to the COVID-19 outbreak [12]. Concurrently, another research paper suggested the origin was racoon dogs located at the wet market in Wuhan, China [13]. However, this finding was contradicted by researchers that examined the source data [14].

1. Winsor, Morgan, *ABC News*, *Sudan conflict sparks mass exodus of foreigners as locals remain trapped in crossfire*, April 14, 2023.

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Ukraine War

After Russia invaded the Ukraine, President Biden imposed economic sanctions against Russia [1]. Now well into the second year of conflict, it appears the sanctions are being bypassed. Case in point, it appears that China and India are purchasing Russian oil and selling it to the West [2]. So, Russia continues to sell its oil while the West pays for it by enriching China and India.

The use of drones is a factor in the conflict. For instance, a Ukrainian drone strike hit a fuel storage facility in the Crimean port of Sevastopol [3]. In another example, Russia has accused the Ukraine of using two drones in a failed attack on the Kremlin [4]. Russia has declared the attack an assassination attempt targeting their President Vladimir Putin [5]. In response, Ukraine officials deny they claim [6]. In sum-

mary, the drone attacks have ratcheted up the war [7].

1. Liptak, Kevin, et. al, *CNN*, *Biden says 'major war crimes' being discovered in Ukraine after he announces new sanctions on Russia*, April 6, 2022.
2. Rosen, Phil, *Yahoo Finance/Business Insider*, *China and India 'launder' Russian oil and*

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Special points of interest:

- First Republic Bank Fails
- \$70.5 billion February US Trade Deficit
- Annual CPI Falls to 6.0%
- 0.25% Fed Interest Rate Hike
- 3.4% April Unemployment Rate

Ukraine War

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- resell it to Western nations that sanctioned Moscow, study says, April 19, 2023.
3. Australian Associated Press, *Russia says Ukraine drones spark Crimea fuel depot fire*, April 29, 2023.
 4. BBC News, *Kremlin drone attack: Russia accuses Ukraine of trying to assassinate Putin*, May 3, 2023.
 5. Seddon, Max, et. al., *Financial Times, Russia accuses Ukraine of attempting to assassinate Vladimir Putin*, May 3, 2023.
 6. Butenko, Victoria. and Cotovio, Vasco, CNN, *Ukraine denies targeting Putin in alleged Kremlin drone strike and accuses Moscow of a "trick"*, May 3, 2023.
 7. Heintz, Jim, AP, *Real or not, reported Kremlin drone attack unsettles Russia*, May 3, 2023.

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2. New York Post/AP, *US conducts 1st evacuation of its citizens from Sudan war*, April 30, 2023.
3. Arias, Tatiana, et. al., CNN, *Sudan's warring military factions to meet face-to-face for first time since conflict began*, May 6, 2023.
4. CBS News/AFP, *Iran airs video of commandos descending from helicopter to seize oil tanker bound for Texas*, April 28, 2023.
5. Gambrell, Jon, AP, *Iran's Revolutionary Guard seizes tanker in Strait of Hormuz*, May 3, 2023.
6. Times of Israel, *Gallant: Iran has amassed enough uranium for 5 nuclear weapons*, May 4, 2023.
7. Tin, Alexander, CBS News, *COVID global health emergency is officially ending, WHO says, but warns virus remains a risk*, May 5, 2023.
8. de Jesús, Erin Garcia, et. al., Science News, *The U.S. COVID-19 public health emergency is ending. What does that mean?*, May 4, 2023.
9. Kim, Chloe, BBC News, *US to end Covid vaccine air travel requirements*, May 3, 2023.
10. Coronavirus Resource Center, Johns Hopkins, coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/united-states, March 10, 2023.
11. Nelson, Steven, New York Post, *Senate GOP report raises possibility of two lab leaks triggering COVID*, April 17, 2023.
12. Lucas, Fred, Fox News, *US funded research to create 'mutant viruses' at Wuhan lab ahead of COVID-19, records show*, April 27, 2023.
13. Lewis, Tanya, Scientific American, *What New Evidence from the Wuhan Market Tells Us about COVID's Origins*, April 12, 2023.
14. Knapton, Sarah, The Telegraph, *Raccoon dogs in Wuhan 'did not spread Covid to humans'*, April 27, 2023.

Wars spring from unseen and generally insignificant causes, the first outbreak being often but an explosion of anger.—
Thucydides

Terrorism

Since the US withdrew from Afghanistan, there has been conflict between the Taliban and Islamic State (IS). Case in point, the IS leader of the suicide attack that killed 13 America servicemen was killed in an exchange with the Taliban [1].

A mass shooting in Texas illustrates how an illegal alien can enter the US, get firearms, and practice shooting in residential neighborhoods with impunity [2]. The shooter was arrested less than 20 miles from the crime scene [3].

1. Singman, Brooke, Fox News, *Taliban kills ISIS terrorist who directed attack that killed 13 US troops during Afghanistan withdrawal*, April 25, 2023.
2. Drenon, Brandon, BBC News, *Texas shooting: Suspect had been deported four times*, May 1, 2023.
3. Schuppe, Jon, et. al., NBC News, *Texas man-hunt ends after suspect accused of killing 5 neighbors found hiding in laundry pile*, May 3, 2023.

*A bad peace is even worse
than war.—Tacitus*

Economy

The US banking sector continues along a rocky road. For instance, last month, the First Republic Bank survived when 11 banks deposited \$30 billion into troubled financial institution [1]. Now, the bank reported it lost 40% of deposits during the first quarter and its stock was under renewed pressure [2]. Then the First Republic bank was seized by regulators and taken over by JP Morgan [3]. This is the third large bank (after Silicon Valley Bank and Signature) to fail in under two months [4].

The Commerce Department reported the US trade deficit for March was \$84.6 billion [5]. The Commerce Department also reported the Gross Domestic Product for the first quarter was at a rate of 1.1% [6]. In contrast, China's rate of increase was 4.5% [7].

Meanwhile the Federal Reserve increased interest rates by 0.25% [8]. Finally, the unemployment rate for April was 3.4% [9].

1. Gura, David, NPR, *First Republic becomes the latest bank to be rescued, this time by its rivals*, March 16, 2023.
2. Pound, Jesse, CNBC, *First Republic's dramatic slide continues, stock falls 20% as bank looks for rescue deal*, April 26, 2023.
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4. Reuters, *US regulator seizes First Republic Bank, to sell assets to JP Morgan*, May 1, 2023.
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7. Yicai Media Group, *Foreign Banks Raise China Annual GDP Forecasts After First-Quarter Data Beat Expectations*, April 27, 2023.
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9. Cox, Jeff, CNBC, *Job growth totals 253,000 in April, beating expectations even as the U.S. economy slows*, May 5, 2023.

*The most successful war
seldom pays for its losses.-*

Thomas Jefferson
