

Femtosecond IN THE NEWS

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 3

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

World News

As the world focuses on the conflict in Gaza, what is Iran up to? One piece suggests that Iran is constructing four new nuclear power plants [1]. Will they be used for peace or weapons? Another piece indicates Iran has provided Russia with 400 ballistic missiles capable of hitting targets 450 miles away [2].

Meanwhile, on February 5, the Houthis from Yemen launched ballistic missiles striking two ships [3]. A Belize-flagged ship traveling through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait was struck during a Houthi missile attack forcing the crew to abandon ship [4]. This cargo ship carrying 41,000 tons of fertilizer, the M/V Rubyma, that was struck on February 18, and is sinking [5]. A Palau-flagged, British-owned cargo ship was damaged by two missiles fired on February 22 [6].

The Ukraine-Russia conflict continues. One report indicates Russian forces struck an oil depot located in Ukraine's north-eastern city of Kharkiv [7]. As the war concluded the second year of conflict, the Ukraine announced an attack directed against a Russian steel mill [8].

China is known to have a sophisticated cyber-warfare capability. For instance, the FBI claims to have disrupted an effort to plant malware targeting the critical infrastructure [9,10]. Then a leak from a Chinese tech firm is being examined to see how China outsources hacking [11].

1. The Times of Israel/AP, *Iran begins construction of four new nuclear plants*, February 1, 2024.

2. Fox News/Reuters, *Iran gives Russia 400 powerful ballistic missiles capable*

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Israel War

On February 4, Hezbollah fighters launched a missile barrage directed at towns in Northern Israel [1]. Then on February 8, Hezbollah fired 30 rockets at Israel [2]. This was followed by a second Hezbollah attack that included dozens of rockets [3].

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) struck Syria just north of Lebanon [4]. The attacks were later followed on February 14 by bombing strikes [5].

Meanwhile, strikes against Hezbollah targets along the Lebanon border are on

increasing [6]. This comes as rockets fired by Hezbollah are hitting Northern Israel [7]. As this newsletter concludes, Israel IDF forces are attacking targets in Southern Lebanon and Hezbollah is firing rockets into northern Israel [8].

1. Bob, Yonah Jeremy, Jerusalem Post, *Hezbollah rocket barrage leads to 33 sirens in largest recent attack*, February 4, 2024.

2. Fabian, Emanuel, Times of Israel, *Hezbollah fires 30 rockets at*

Israel in retaliation for reported hit on top of ficer, February 9, 2024.

3. Fabian, Emanuel, The Times of Israel, *Hezbollah fires dozens of rockets at northern towns, 2nd such barrage in as many days*, February 9, 2024.

4. Jackson, Patrick, BBC News, *Syria says Israel bombed targets in Homs area*, February 6, 2024.

5. Zaatari, Mohammed, & Mroue, Bassem, AP, *Israeli airstrikes killed 10 Lebanese civilians in a*

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Special points of interest:

- S&P 500, and DJIA indexes close at record highs
- CPI 3.1% Rate
- Wars

Israel War

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- single day. Hezbollah has vowed to retaliate, February 15, 2024.
6. Fabian, Emanuel, The Times of Israel, *IDF strikes Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon*, February 23, 2024.
 7. The Jerusalem Post, *Rockets fly into northern Israel, IAF pounds Hezbollah*, February 23, 2024.
 8. The Jerusalem Post, *IDF strikes in Lebanon as Hezbollah rockets rain on Israel's North*, February 24, 2024.

Judicial abuse occurs when judges substitute their own political views for the law.—

Lamar S. Smith

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- of striking targets nearly 450 miles away, February 21, 2024.
3. Gambrell, Jon, AP, *Yemen's Houthi rebels target 2 ships in Red Sea and Gulf of Aden with ballistic missiles*, February 6, 2024.
 4. Gambrell, Jon, AP, *Houthi rebels' attack severely damages a Belize-flagged ship in key strait leading to the Red Sea*, February 19, 2024.
 5. Britzky, Haley, et. al., CNN, *Sinking ship hit by Houthi missile leaves 18-mile oil slick in Red Sea*, US officials say, February 23, 2024.
 6. BBC News, *UK-owned ship damaged in Houthi missile attack off Yemen*, US says, February 22, 2024.
 7. Lukiv, Jaroslav, BBC News, *Kharkiv: Seven 'burned alive' as Russian drones hit oil depot*, February 10, 2024.
 8. Reuters, *Ukraine says it struck big Russian steel plant on invasion anniversary*, February 24, 2024.
 9. Tang, Didi, et. al., AP, *US says it disrupted a China cyber threat, but warns hackers could still wreak havoc for Americans*, January 31, 2024.
 10. Gertz, Bill, Washington Times, *Beijing engaged in 'critical buildout' of offensive cyber tools*, FBI Director Wray warns, February 19, 2024.
 11. Lyngaas, Sean, CNN, *US officials combing leaked documents from Chinese tech firm for clues about Chinese hacking campaigns*, February 22, 2024.

World News

Terrorism

In a run up to elections, Pakistan experienced terrorism. For example, at least 10 police were killed in a militant attack [1]. Then at least 30 people were killed in explosion on the day before elections [2].

In Houston, Texas, a shooter opened fire at the Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church. Injuring several people [3]. The shooter was a trans woman that had a free Palestine message on the rifle stock [4].

1. Jerusalem Post/Reuters, At least 10 police personnel killed in attack on police station in Pakistan

– police, February 5, 2024.

2. Khan, Asim, et. al., CNN, *At least 30 dead in Balochistan explosions, day before Pakistan election*, February 7, 2024.
3. Gamboa, Suzanne, NBC News, *Texas neighbors said they tried to sound the alarm about Houston church shooter for months*, February 13, 2024.
4. Cann, Christopher, et. al., USA Today, *Police identify Genesse Moreno as shooter at Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church: What*

we know, February 12, 2024.

*Nothing is more
destructive of respect for
the government and the
law of the land than
passing laws which cannot
be enforced.—Albert
Einstein*

Economy

The stock indexes continued to set records. For example, on February 7, both the DJIA (Dow) and the S&P 500 closed at record highs [1]. On February 9, the S&P 500 set a new record high and for the first time, closed above 5000 [2]. On February 12, the DJIA closed at a new record high [3]. The Dow and S&P 500 indexes hit new record highs on February 22 [4]. Finally, on February 23, the S&P 500 and DJIA indexes closed at record highs [5].

However, inflation remains an area of concern. For example, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) came in at a 3.1% year to year rate [6].

1. Chen, Vivien Lou, MarketWatch, *Dow and S&P 500 score record closing highs after fresh batch of earnings*, February 7, 2024.
2. Wall Street Journal, Stock Market News, Feb. 9, 2024: *S&P 500 Closes Above 5000 for First Time*, February 9, 2024.
3. Ferré, Ines, & Friar, Karen, Yahoo Finance, *Stock market today: Dow hits fresh record as stocks close mixed before key inflation update*, February 13, 2024.
4. Friar, Karen, et. al, Yahoo Finance, *Stock market today: S&P, Dow hit record highs as Nvidia ignites global stock rally*, February 22, 2024.
5. Friar, Karen, & Shaban, Hamza, Yahoo Finance, *Stock market today: S&P 500, Dow hit fresh records as Wall Street ends Nvidia-fueled rally week*, February 23, 2024.
6. Cox, Jeff, CNBC, *Prices rose more than expected in January as inflation won't go away*, February 13, 2023.

*That old law about 'an eye
for an eye' leaves everybody
blind. The time is always
right to do the right thing.
—Martin Luther King, Jr.*
