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Weekly Newsletter

Liberty University

Helms School of Government Students



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International News

Terrorism

[U.S. Says Worried About Increase in Attacks by ISIS-K in Afghanistan](#)

- Summary: The Taliban has not changed its desire to be recognized as a government, normalize relations again with the international community, to resume aid efforts, and to “see sanction relief”. The Taliban still faces threats from ISIS-K and al Qaeda within Afghanistan. [“Biden administration has "not made a decision" on proposals to ease the liquidity crisis being considered by U.N. and nongovernmental humanitarian groups.”](#)
- Analysis: Based on [“The 2020 deal that ended the 20-year U.S. military presence in Afghanistan requires the Taliban to bar al Qaeda from recruiting, fund-raising, training or planning attacks.”](#) It’s very unlikely that the United States will break its 2020 deal with the Taliban to recognize the government and grant their requests.

[Iran-Backed Militia Staged Drone Attack on Iraqi PM](#)

- Summary: The general election last month where the Iran-backed paramilitary groups lost most of their power within parliament has added to the tensions that’s come from this drone attack. The Iraqi officials said they see this attack as a message from the militias stating the lengths they will go to in violence in order to maintain a foothold in the government and their areas of influence in the state. Neither the Iran-backed militias nor the Iraqi government gave comment.
- Analysis: The newly elected Iraqi official, Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, is a nationalist who does not like foreign influence such as America or Iran which will create tensions with the Iran-backed groups in the country. [“I don't think Iran wants a Shi'ite-Shi'ite civil war. It would weaken its position in Iraq and allow other groups to grow stronger”](#), as the tensions rise between Iran-backed militias and Iraq, neither party wants a civil war.

[Turkey Launches New Anti-Terror Operation Against PKK in Sirnak](#)

- Summary: Turkey security forces launched Operation Eren Winter-1 (Bestler-Dereleler) against PKK’s structure. The operation was launched in SE Şırnak with 121 teams including commandos from Gendarmerie general command and special operations in addition to rangers. This is part of regular counterterrorism operations in the eastern/southeastern provinces of Turkey to deter PKK infrastructure.

A [recent report](#) states that two PKK members were neutralized in this operation.

- Analysis: the reported success of this operation to neutralize PKK assets may serve as an indicator of further Turkish success in destabilizing PKK leadership and structure. NOTE: source is Turkish pro-government. Comparison with [an Australian source](#) notes that both sources use identical wording in reporting. This operation is not widely covered by English-speaking outlets, so source comparison and details on this operation are limited.

[Ethiopia Descending into Widening Civil War: UN](#)

- Summary: UN political chief Rosemary DiCarlo called for an immediate cessation of hostilities against Tigrayan rebels in support of the Security Council. An OHCHR report concluded that all parties to the conflict committed international human rights violations. The African Union (AU) is engaging with all stakeholders to de-escalate, urging for a peaceful resolution. The Security Council was urged to consider encouraging the Ethiopian government and rebels to engage in dialogue without conditions. U.S. Special Envoy Feltman visited Addis Ababa on Monday as part of diplomatic efforts to end the conflict.
- Analysis: Despite peace pleas, the TPLF and OLA recently [created an alliance](#) with 7 other rebel groups, called the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist Forces. 10,000+ people have rallied in Addis Ababa in solidarity with Abiy-led government. The rebels now have a coordinated front with more manpower as they move towards Addis Ababa. Rebel group representatives say they will remove Abiy, [either by talks or by force](#). These escalations along with TPLF's motivations indicate that civil war in Ethiopia has a medium to high-level risk of occurrence. Additionally, the trend of noncombatant impacts in the conflict indicates that human rights violations will most likely continue in the event of a civil war. *US National Security Implications:* US foreign policy in the Horn of Africa focuses on democratic promotion and a cooperative effort on the war on terror. The Ethiopian conflict has displaced 2 million people in only a year – civil wars historically increase refugee numbers (ex: South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, etc.). Combined with the situation in their neighboring country Sudan, these events could detriment stability in the Horn of Africa. The US could capitalize on a united front with the AU to establish a ceasefire for the conflict's stakeholders (most likely international partnerships in the Horn of Africa to deter this conflict would be bilateral effort with Kenya).

Weapons and Technology

[Satellite Images show China built mock-ups of U.S. warships](#)

- Satellite images provided by U.S. based satellite imagery company, Maxar Technologies, have identified the presence of a mock U.S. aircraft carrier in the northwest Xinjiang region of China was first reported on November 7th. United States Naval Institute (USNI) has confirmed that the images provided by Maxar show mock-up naval U.S. carriers as well as U.S. destroyer ships. Against the background of China's recent surprise testing of a hypersonic weapon capable, this development further intensifies the threat level of the PLA to the U.S. Navy in the region and the self-governing state of Taiwan. A second suspected missile target in the shape of a U.S. aircraft carrier in a rural Chinese desert, according to satellite photos obtained by USNI News on November 9th. Unlike the first, however, this target is not full-scale. It is about half the size of a U.S. Nimitz-class carrier at 173 meters, or 568 feet, in length.
- Analysis: from a tactical standpoint it appears the Chinese are appearing adjust to targeting American warships. This is alarming due to the tensions that are present in the South China Sea and may indicate that Chinese troops are preparing to strike and find weak spots that would disable and or sink US Navy aircraft carriers and destroyers

[India's Coming 'Rocket Force'](#)

- Summary: India has made clear its plans to consolidate its ground-launching vector capabilities by forming an Integrated Rocket Force (IRF). The upsurge in tensions between China's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Indian Army (IA) along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has once again revealed the disparities in India's military capabilities compared to that of the Chinese military. New Dehli's desire to form the IRF indicates the shift in military objective that embraces "non-contact" warfare.
- Analysis: The formation of a Integrated Rocket Force by the Indian military shows that tensions between India and China along the LAC are boiling. The fact that the Indian army wishes to produce a Rocket force also shoes that the Indians wish to have an advantage on Chinese infantry. Lastly such a move indicates the Indian military is preparing for anything

[How Taiwan Underwrites the US Defense Industrial Complex](#)

- Semiconductors are a critical operational component for many of the United States' advanced weapons systems. U.S. defense-related semiconductor manufacturing dependencies on Taiwan have decreased as the U.S. has increased efforts to keep semiconductor manufacturing on the domestic front. The top three Taiwanese firms alone account for around 90% of gallium arsenide (GaAs) semiconductor foundry market. Since weapon systems necessitate progressively advanced chips, U.S. reliance on Taiwanese manufacturing is certain to persist.
- Analysis: With the US being dependent on Taiwan for this specific defense related computer chip, it is a evident reason why Taiwan is of strategic importance to the US. If Taiwan would fall to the Chinese, we would lose a supply of chips that would assist the US in defense capabilities.

[North Korean Uranium Mining Picked Up from 2017 to 2020](#)

- Satellite images of North Korea's Pyongsan uranium mine have documented a steady increase in mining activities from 2017 to 2020. Stanford researchers worked in conjunction with a geospatial intelligence company to analyze the changes on forest, grassland, and other natural artifacts on the landscape images using machine learning software.
- Analysis: with a three-year increase in uranium mining activity, it would suggest that the North Korean government is seeking more uranium for a specific purpose. With the North Korean's history of desiring nuclear weapons, one can assume that the North Koreans want to produce a nuclear weapon. The production of a nuclear weapon could make North Korea a bigger threat to the west.

[China Builds Missile Targets Shaped Like U.S. Aircraft Carrier, Destroyers in Remote Desert](#)

- Summary: Satellite images reveal China has built full scale mockups of US warships and aircraft carriers in the remote Taklamakan Desert in north-western China. These outlines are missile targets, and some are merely flat shapes on the ground mirroring aircraft carriers, but others are mounted on a rail system and are engineered to give off the radar signal of a warship.
- Analysis: If the Chinese has constructed mock aircraft carriers with the indication that they will be used for target practice, it implies that the Chinese see the United States as a direct threat. If they are being used for target practice, these mock aircraft carriers can also be used to find

the weak points in these vessels, making a surgical strike from a missile, gun battery, or bomb more effective

[China likely not preparing for military action on Taiwan, but recent actions still ‘concerning,’ experts say](#)

- Summary: While several antagonistic steps have been taken by China, such as missile tests and full-size warship targets being constructed, experts do not believe that these are the steps China is taking to go to war. The article claims that there would be a greater level of “menacing activities including cyberattacks, troop build-ups and ship realignment in the region” if imminent action was expected. China’s actions give cause for concern but does not necessarily denote immediate action.
- Analysis: Chinese movements may not be preparing for military action against Taiwan, however the actions are still concerning.

Latin America

[Honduras presidential candidate arrested on murder, drug-trafficking charges](#)

- Summary: Santos Rodriguez, a Honduran presidential candidate, was arrested by Honduran authorities on accusations related to homicide, money laundering and drug trafficking. All presidential candidates running in this election are either accused for corruption or involvement with drug trafficking. The outgoing president has also been accused of drug trafficking, while his brother is currently in a New York prison for his involvement.
- Analysis: Over the past 4 decades, the drug trade has gripped the people of Central and South America. Such recent events only show that the drug war and the fight against corruption and cartels is still prevalent today. It is currently unknown how this would affect US interests. If the accusations are true against Mr. Rodriguez, the evil deeds of the cartels are perhaps perpetrated by members of the presidential office.

[Biden denounces Nicaragua’s “pantomime election”](#)

- Summary: President Biden called the Nicaraguan election a “pantomime election” and stated the election was “neither free nor fair, and most certainly not democratic,” and mentioned the imprisonment of 40 opposition leaders and members as well as seven potential presidential candidates. President Biden has promised to support the Nicaraguan people.

- Analysis: President Biden's claims against the Nicaraguan government will strain ties between the United States and Nicaragua. It is unsure how the Nicaraguan government will respond to the President's accusations. The likely and most realistic approach would be a verbal response denying those accusations

ICC to investigate possible crimes against humanity in Venezuela

- The International Criminal Court will investigate whether crimes against humanity were committed during Venezuela's clampdown on [anti-government protests](#) in 2017, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and ICC prosecutor Karim Khan have announced. After a preliminary evaluation, Khan "has decided to move on to the next phase to seek the truth", Maduro said on Wednesday. Miguel Vivanco, executive director of the Americas division at Human Rights Watch, said on Wednesday evening that the "decision – the first in Latin American history – gives hope of justice to the hundreds of victims of brutal repression by the Maduro regime".
- Analysis: The Investigation into the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Venezuelan government may bring the nation attention from the world stage. Possible condemnation from international groups as well as the United Nations may be likely.

[U.S. Supreme Court wrestles with Puerto Rico's exclusion from benefits program](#)

- Summary: A 67 year old disabled man mounted his constitutional challenge after the government sued him in federal court in 2017. The lawsuit was filed shortly before hurricane Irma, which took off the roof of the man's home in Puerto Rico.
- Analysis: analyst unsure how story affect international relations or US interests internationally as Puerto Rico is a US territory.

Russian Anti-Satellite Testing

[US says it 'won't tolerate' Russia's 'reckless and dangerous' anti-satellite missile test](#)

- Summary: US Space command has confirmed that Russia tested a DA-ASAT missile, a direct-ascent anti-satellite missile, to destroy a Russian satellite. This explosion created 1,500 pieces of traceable orbital debris and likely hundreds of thousands more that are not trackable.

Those on board the ISS had to quickly don spacesuits and enter their spacecraft for a potential escape for about 2 hours in the first few hours of Tuesday morning. The U.S. has criticized this from multiple angles, especially citing that it put both US and Russian cosmonauts in danger, putting satellites and space missions at risk, and forcing more collision avoidance maneuvers. This caused condemnation from the State department, with a spokesperson stating that the U.S. would consult allies on a response. A spokesperson for the pentagon said the biggest threat is the debris that remains and the threat it poses to future space operations.

- Analysis: The direct anti-satellite missile testing further demonstrates Russia's ambitions to gain significant foothold in the space domain. The debris from a Russian satellite will continue on-orbit and threaten ongoing and future space activities of space-faring nations like the United States. The development of counterspace weapons technology will expand the Kremlin's influence on policies regarding future space defense activities of the United States. It is important to U.S. interests that Russia's space activities do not deny access to space and undercut the strategic solidarity among the space-faring nations.

[Russia calls U.S. 'hypocritical' for condemning anti-satellite weapons test](#) [Analysis on the article](#)

- Summary: After US officials said the Russian DA-ASAT test was "reckless" and "dangerous", in a statement from the Russian military responded that "the United States knows for certain that the resulting fragments... did not and will not pose a threat to orbital stations, spacecraft and space activities." The U.S. continues to condemn the action from state, DOD, and Space command, with further condemnation in this article coming from the NASA Director.
- Analysis: Russia's insistence that the anti-satellite (ASAT) missile testing does not threaten orbital stations demonstrates a posture of condescension towards the United States. Russia's justification for the ASAT testing is that the reported 1,500 pieces of debris were not a threat to the safety of individuals on the international space station. This level of irresponsibility displayed by the Russians shows foreshadows the Kremlin's readiness to engage in more serious space activities in the future

[A Russian Anti-Satellite Missile Launch Into Space 'Dangerous And Irresponsible,' State Says](#)

- Summary: Space command said on Monday that Russia's DA-ASAT mission to destroy the Cosmos 1408 has created a long-term risk to low earth orbit. In this article both space command and the UK condemn the action. Previously, Space Command had warned that

space debris in low orbit had increased by 22% with 35,000 traceable items not including the debris from this last event.

- Analysis: The debris cloud remnants of the COSMOS 1408 Russian satellite has contributed to the pollution of low Earth orbit. The 1,500 traceable pieces of debris are only part of the fragments that threaten the ISS. The untraceable items are cause for concern in maintaining the structural integrity of U.S. space assets. The accumulation of debris in low Earth orbit endangers satellites and spacecraft travel in the coming years

[Russia defends Anti-Satellite Test amid US criticism](#)

- Summary: Russia has defended their DA-ASAT test on Monday in a Russian language statement as previously mentioned, but Russia's space agency, Roscosmos has joined the conversation on twitter stating that the debris cloud has moves away from the station and that the station is in "the green zone". They also released. A statement that, "Ensuring crew safety has always been and remains our top priority. Commitment to this principle is an underlying condition both in the manufacturing of Russian space equipment and in the program of its operation". They have continued to emphasize safety and promote their defense systems to protect those in the ISS. However, the U.S. and NASA continue to condemn these actions and the danger those on the ISS were put in.
- Analysis: After assessing the statements made by Rocosmos regarding the DA-SAT missile testing on November 15th we have determined that Russia is hardening its position of denial against claims of reckless and irresponsible military activity. It is in the interest of the U.S. to double down on its statements condemning the DA-SAT testing. Maintaining the stability of the space domain is imperative to preserving readiness of the U.S. military its mission to defend against any threat

UN Climate Change Conference

[Countries strike deal at COP26 climate summit after last-minute compromise on coal](#)

- Summary: On Saturday, hundreds of representatives from around the world met in Glasgow, Scotland to agree upon a deal that limits average global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Unexpectedly, India changed its intent to "phase out" fossil fuels to "phase down." UN Secretary General Guterres claimed that promises to cut carbon emissions would not be enough to avoid a future crisis. Although several countries have agreed to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the agreement is not legally binding.
- Analysis: Though not legally binding, the climate summit this week was able to agree on continued limits, however countries, such as India,

were not as strong in their language. Members of the UN and many European nations called for further limitation, but this was pushed back upon by smaller and less financially capable countries

6 takeaways from the U.N climate conference

- Summary: Over 190 countries have agreed to cutting both carbon dioxide and methane emissions by 2030 at the latest climate change conference. World leaders, including President Biden urged India, Indonesia, and South Africa to continue to distance themselves from coal and fossil fuels. However, those countries complained that a lack of financial resources and financial aid has prevented them from doing so. Such complaints come after pledges of \$100 billion yearly for poorer countries have fallen behind by tens of billions of dollars in the years since the original agreement a decade ago.
- Analysis: Many countries pushed for more than these efforts to be achieved, but many countries argued that this would be financially difficult to achieve. Since prior climate agreements, several financially instable or less financially resourced nations have struggled to meet goals due to internal finances, reliance on fossil fuels, or political pushback.

'COP26 hasn't solved the problem': scientists react to UN climate deal

- Summary: Going far beyond the original pledge of \$100 billion in yearly aid for developing countries to fight climate change, India alone is now asking for \$1 trillion by 2030. Other controversy happening during the climate conference includes President Biden presenting the administration's ambitious climate goals, not long after participating in talks with OPEC to significantly increase oil production. Perhaps the most surprising thing to come from the climate conference is the final agreement mentioning fossil fuels for the very first time.
- Analysis: Even countries with more financial ability have tended to over-pledge, often agreeing to ambitious goals that have been difficult to achieve. Some countries, including the U.S., remain outwardly committed to new limitations, but also willing to work with fossil fuel production.

Ethiopian Tigrayan/Civil War Crisis

U.S. Urges Americans to Leave Ethiopia Now – There Will be no Kabul-Style Airlift

- Summary: The continuance and seeming expansion of the Tigray conflict between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) along with eight additional rebel groups including the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) into a full-fledged civil war has led the U.S. government to call for its citizens to vacate the country immediately. The U.S. government warned it will not be

providing the same level of emergency evacuation assistance as it had in Kabul as the scenarios were entirely different and the collapse of the Afghani government unexpected.

- Analysis: The Ethiopian government along with ENDF (Ethiopian National Defense Force) have much larger military capabilities and experience fighting than the ANA and ANP which was defeated by the Taliban. Put simply, the ENDF will not go down without a fight. The additional rebel groups seizing opportunity to revolt has only put more strain on the TPLF & ENDF as each rebel group has their own ideology and own agenda. The U.S. government, at this time, does not have to take the drastic measures it had to take in Kabul. Ethiopia still has the stability for citizens to evacuate now, rather than later.

[Blinken Heads to Africa as U.S. Tries to Avert Ethiopia Disaster](#)

- Summary: Secretary State Anthony Blinken is on a five-day trip to visit key nations in Africa with hopes of helping ease the escalating conflict in Ethiopia by meeting with regional leaders in Kenya. U.S. analysts fear a repeat of a Rwanda-esque level genocide with the current climate of sectarian hatred and violence. Tensions have been high between Ethiopia and the West in general since its military entered the Tigray region in late 2020, with many nations threatening to and levying sanctions on the East African regional powerhouse.
- Analysis: Secretary Blinken is doing the right thing by doing this. The U.S. & West was fairly criticized for its lack of intervention in the Rwandan Genocide. If action is not taken soon, there is a potential for a much larger scale famine and genocide to occur in Ethiopia if action is not taken soon.

[Can the African Union solve Ethiopia's year-long conflict?](#)

- Summary: The African Union has actively been seeking to negotiate between the Tigrayan conflicts belligerents since the beginning of the year but with little progress to show for its work as the conflagration has only escalated. AU's headquarters is located in Addis Ababa so it must tread a fine line of neutrality to avoid incurring the wrath of its host government. Regional authorities such as the IGAD have also been compromised as Sudan is its leader and that nation is currently suffering from its own civil unrest having undergone a military coup in the last month. Tensions have also been extraordinarily high between Ethiopia and Sudan already due to disputes over the Addis Ababa government's construction of a massive dam on the Blue Nile near Sudan's border.

- Analysis: The African Union similar to the U.N., only able to act if allowed by all countries. With Ethiopia being the host country for the AU, if any peacekeeping operations are held the retaliation from Ethiopia's government would most likely be severe. The AU can only really intervene diplomatically here, and even then, will need to tread carefully in order to keep Ethiopia from disregarding the organization entirely.

Scores of children killed by starvation in Tigray

- Summary: Since the start of the Tigrayan conflict numerous accounts of human rights violations have been reported on either side including mass rapes, ethnic cleansing, and denial of humanitarian aid. The last of these is the most outstanding/self-evident: a report submitted by the Agence France-Presse found that between June and October alone 200 children under the age of five died of starvation in 14 hospitals in across Tigray. Pneumonia and diarrhea claim three to four people every week as they lack the basic medicine needed to treat these common ailments.
- Analysis: The Tigrayan Conflict is far more complicated than the world media and organizations have perceived it to be. The Ethiopian government's denial of foreign and humanitarian aid is an attempt to starve the Tigrayans into submission. Even when aid can be distributed, Tigrayan rebel groups like TPLF use it to fuel their own soldiers, rather than the civilians listed in the article. If the Tigrayan Conflict is not resolved soon, we will see a monumental sized famine begin to take place in the region. With food lines being cut and agricultural production disrupted due to war & governmental policies, Tigray is poised for collapse.

Belarus and Poland Border Crisis

Poland-Belarus border: What you need to know about the crisis

- Summary: An overview of the crisis for the uninitiated. Documents the background leading up to the current crisis. Talks on the Lukashenko-Putin interplay, the energy markets, and other pertinent factors, as well as the international norms being violated by both sides. Facts from the border themselves are outdated but is a good background for the issue as a whole.
- Analysis: EU- Belarussian elations have been in a steady state of deterioration since the European Union began putting pressure on Minsk for the fraudulent election of President Lukashenko. This tension was then amped up by Belarus forcing a Ryanair flight traversing their airspace to land with the goal of arresting Kremlin

opposition journalist on board. These actions brought EU sanctions down on Belarus and Lukashenko vowed to retaliate by no longer enforcing boarder security. This meant allowing contraband as well as illegal immigration to flow freely to Poland from the Belarussian side. Lukashenko then began a campaign to issue tourist visas and travel itineraries to would-be refugees and asylum seekers through the Middle East. Belarus also advertised their proximity to EU member states Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania as a final EU destination. This situation has spiraled and to date over 16,000 immigrants have been stopped by Polish border guards. The EU has just recently passed yet more sanctions on Belarus with the goal of pressuring Minsk to stem the tide of immigrants on their boarder.

[Poland turns water cannon on migrants, crisis strokes East-West tension](#)

- Summary: Yesterday's big events, border escalation happened, and stones and stun grenades presumably given by the Belarusians were used by the migrants. Poles used water cannons, which are quite effective, and partnered with the fact that the temperatures are quite cold, pose a credible deterrent.
- Analysis: In an effort to further discourage Middle Eastern asylum seekers from rushing the Polish border to enter the EU illegally, Poland has deployed water cannons and tear gas to their boarder forces. The refugees are growing impatient of the limbo they are living in, not able to enter the EU or stay in Belarus and are becoming violent through throwing stones at boarder forces. This crisis that is dominating the European media is seen by many Western observers as a diversionary tactic by Russia to focus attention away from Eastern Ukraine where Russia has been building its military forces. While Moscow has dismissed these accusations NATO continues to report a Russian military buildup near the war-torn Donbass region of Ukraine. It is estimated that there are now over 100,000 Russian soldiers on the boarder. It is also relevant to note that total Ukrainian military forces amount to 255,000 soldiers (however, Russian military spending and weapons capabilities dwarf Ukraine's).

[Poland faces months of migration pressure frOm Belarus](#)

- Summary: Despite being down to only 2000 migrants at the crossing, the Poles believe the crisis will last months. The article also discussed how effective the migrants were, as German police reported a massive uptick in Belarussian migrants, almost 6000 in October alone, compared to 26 over the first 6 months of 2021.

- Analysis: The EU has sent nearly 800,000 dollars in relief funds in an effort to ease the suffering of would-be asylum seekers on the Belarussian-Polish border. However, they are using other measures to coerce Belarus into halting the flow of immigrants. The EU has imposed sanctions, on President Lukashenko and others involved in the crisis as well as talked to Putin to put pressure on Belarus as well. Moscow has, to this point, claimed that they have no control over Belarus's actions, but the West claims that this crisis is likely being pushed by the Kremlin. It seems that Russia has shown the true extent of its influence over Belarus through its confidence in assuring Russian energy deliveries will continue to be met despite President Lukashenko's threats to the contrary. Two major pipelines run from Russia through Belarus and into Poland yet there is little doubt that Russia will allow these to close no matter the rhetoric of President Lukashenko.

[Poland says Belarus is taking migrants away from border camp](#)

- Summary: The situation at Kuznica seems to be deescalating as the Belarusians were taking migrants away in buses. Speculation has it that they are simply moving to a less defended border spot, but there were much fewer people in Kuznica than in previous days, which had up to 4000 at one point. Despite fewer people being there, there have already been 161 crossing attempts today (Wednesday).
- Analysis: It seems that international pressure has caused Belarus to relent and provide some basic care for the refugees on its boarder. Due to the cold climate Belarussian authorities have trucked asylum seekers to nearby heated warehouses and began providing food. Furthermore, it the first repatriation flights were due to take off from Minsk to Iraq on Thursday 11/18. While the border conflict with Belarus has forced the EU to engage and, in some sense, accept legitimize President Lukashenko, further sanctions have resulted from his actions.

Yemen Update

[Yemen's Houthis re-enter Hodeidah after gov't-allied forces leave](#)

- Summary: This past Saturday, November 13, 2021, the Houthi rebels took advantage of the UN-agreed ceasefire of 2018 and seized control of the port of Hodeidah. This situation resulted from the actions Riyadh's Joint Force fighters, who removed themselves from the port area in a show of good faith to uphold the ceasefire of 2018. This decision, though made in

the interests of peace, allowed the Houthis to secure Yemen's most important port for access to outsourced supplies.

- Analysis: This step by Saudi forces has enabled Houthi rebels to consolidate their efforts in Yemen and connect themselves better with outside supporters. This port will allow more ease of access and ease of receiving support from abroad. While this move by the Saudi-led coalition is in accordance with the 2018 ceasefire, it is unlikely to lead to a lasting peace especially with better supported and equipped Iran-backed rebels.

U.S./China Summit Update

[U.S.-China Summit Produces Little More Than Police Words, but They Help](#)

- Summary: On Monday of this week, President Biden and Xi Jinping held a virtual call to discuss current relations between the United States and China. This meeting touched on a variety of subjects, from human rights to the continuing tensions regarding Taiwan. Concerning Taiwan, the Chinese leader made clear his intent to place Chinese interests above US/ Chinese relations if the US intervened in the China/ Taiwan conflict and noted the possible outbreak of another Cold War if the U.S. aided Taiwan. The meeting concluded with no concrete solutions decided upon, except the recognition by both parties that tensions must ease for the sake of economic and global stability.
- Analysis: The virtual meeting between President Biden and Chairman Xi Jinping yielded little in the way of achieving an agreement between the two world powers. We have assessed that China prioritizes its ambitions to take control of Taiwan over interests of stability in the region; however, U.S. military presence in the Indo-Pacific appears to be an effective deterrent against Chinese military aggression against Taiwan. Human rights abuses committed by the Chinese government are still a major point of contention between the two nations. It appears, at least for the moment, that the U.S. and China are at an impasse.

Xi, Biden wrap up 'virtual' meeting amid rising tension

- Summary: The friendly remarks exchanged between President Biden and Xi Jinping rest upon shaky foundations. Both countries openly recognized the current strains pulling at the growth of foreign relations between the US and China yet stressed the need for a continuation of open communication and friendly, economic competition. However, the United States' stance concerning political engagements with China has grown increasingly wary, as China has proved itself a powerful contender on the world stage and a threat to Taiwan's independence.

- Analysis: We assess that both the U.S. and Chinese are open to peaceful discussion about conflicts, but that the Chinese would react in force to any U.S. direct involvement within the conflict. The Chinese military has continued to build-up its capabilities and conduct exercises within proximity to Taiwanese boundaries. Despite these efforts, the Chinese government has outwardly downplayed the outcome of an invasion of Taiwan. Through this call between leaders, the Chinese government is sending a strong message that the U.S. should not get involved in aiding the Taiwanese, whether preemptively or in response to action from the PRC. On the other hand, both nations appear open to continued conversation about the issues.

*shouldn't be what we ought to do, but what we can do" –
Rory Stewart*

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Domestic News

Economy

[Federal Reserve Chair Powell's five measuring sticks on inflation aren't holding up very well](#)

Starbursting for Context

Who:

Federal Reserve and Federal Reserve chairman. Involves U.S. economy, which is largest and most influential economy in the world

What:

Federal Reserve Chairman has had to backtrack remarks concerning inflation, inflation has consistently risen despite government attempts at intervention.

Where:

Low paid high-touch sectors (think fast food, etc) are highest affected and likely to be most influential to correcting economy

Why:

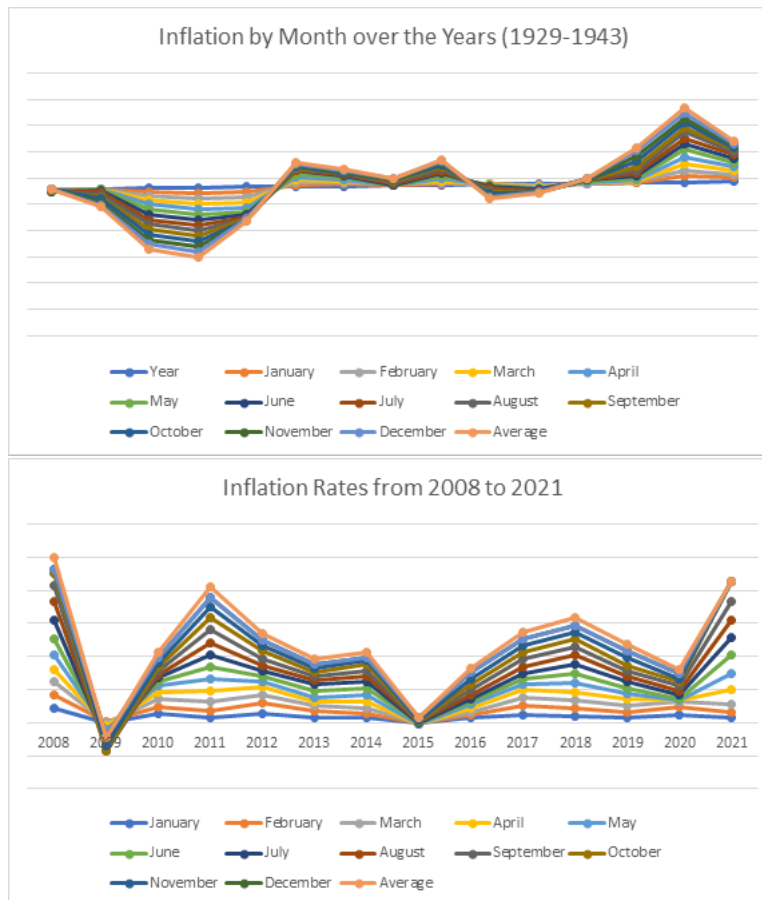
Much of the inflation drive is due to collective expectation. The covid-19 pandemic is still varying in degrees of consequence and sectors are trying to keep themselves profitable, as well as secure given the precedent set in 2020

When:

This has played out over the course of 2021 and namely the Biden presidency. Economies tend to retract and then surge under presidents (outside events notwithstanding). The Fed. Reserve chairman expects levels to get back to 2% after five criteria were passed. These measures failed and yield was pushed a "quarter percentage point." Please note, the *yield* is the returns on investment from debt incurred by the U.S. government. This is essentially the interest rate the government pays on loans.

How:

This is the big question. Large amounts of blame lay with the Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainties that follow. A potential shutdown or even constraints to mitigate to cause many businesses and corporations to burn through profits and cash stores.



Essentially, each point followed downward indicates a year's worth. Each color represents a month over time. The main point to take from this data (and there is a ton of input into it) is that inflation gain in a sustainable pattern following the great depression. From 2008 to 2021, inflation has gone back and forth wildly, and namely decreased between election years. 2015 is the most considerable point of contention, besides the current year. The current year shows a steep upward trend in *most* months. April is when the inflation rate really began spike upward and out of control. Coincidentally, this is also when the "great resignation" began to unfold. November exhibits the most concerning rate of inflation. Again, compare to the prior graph. There is a greater *rate* of inflation now than in the WW2 spending. PLEASE NOTE, this does not mean inflation is higher now. It means that the rate of growth is higher.

- The main takeaway from this graph is twofold. Higher volatility than during the great depression and FDR spending
- Faster growth rate for inflation than during New Deal spending

Indicators

Possible Indicators that inflation rate growth is Covid-19 related

- Rate slows down when positive scientific research is made
- Rate increases when negative scientific research is made
- Pattern sustains as pandemic measures repeal

Indicators that China is involved

- Chinese assets consistently short U.S. stocks with a considerable success rate
- Chinese currency grows in an abnormal pattern of value as U.S. decreases
- Chinese interests in the U.S. resist overall patterns

	Chinese assets consistently short U.S. stocks with a considerable success rate	Chinese currency grows in an abnormal pattern of value as U.S. decreases	Chinese interests in the U.S. resist overall patterns
Rate slows down when positive scientific research is made	UHL	UHL	UHL
Rate increases when negative scientific research is made	UHL	UHL	UHL
Pattern sustains as pandemic measures repeal	U	U	L

	Biden admin. announces other legislation	Biden admin. Passes infrastructure deal	China makes public statement	OPEC increases prices
Chinese assets consistently short U.S. stocks with a considerable success rate	C	U	H	C
Chinese currency grows in an abnormal pattern of value as U.S. decreases	C	UHL	H	C

Chinese interests in the U.S. resist overall patterns	U	U	H	H
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Indicators to deepen results

- Biden admin. announces other legislation
- Biden admin. Passes infrastructure deal
- China makes public statement
- OPEC increases prices

What these tables show

If inflation rate growth is from Covid related causes, the indicators would be *very* identifiable and the measure ticks set by the Fed reserve chairman can be monitored with confidence.

What these tables *do not* show

This table was not designed to answer if China was involved in the inflation increase. The inclusion of China was to show to the volatility of assessing a foreign adversary's involvement in this problem, as opposed to assessing the effects of covid consequences. The tables indicate that Chinese involvement is very difficult predict in such a broad sense. Each letter grouping has an assigned value (UHL = 5) and so forth. The higher attained value, the more likely. Chinese indicators performed much lower than Covid indicators. To reiterate, China *may* be involved, this analysis does not answer that. What this analysis *does* answer is that Covid is likely the catalyst for an already volatile U.S. economy. The likely culprit is consumer expectation and general weariness in the U.S. political system. Covid more than likely acted as a propulsion system for fears and worries surrounding money. More analysis should be done assessing the likelihood that political polarization in recent years contributed to the growth rate

Final Statement: Covid is the most likely reason for continued growth rates of Inflation. As covid decreases, inflation should reach sustainable patterns. Inflation numbers themselves are not at too worrisome. They are substantially lower than WW2 numbers. What is troubling is their rate of growth. The highest recorded number for inflation in this analysis was in May 1942 at 13%. The highest rate of growth was this year. Look for inflation to stabilize but not necessarily decrease to the 2% the reserve chairman seeks, at least until next election.

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge” – Proverbs 18:15
