

February 1st, 2022



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Institute for
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Alliance for
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Introducing another week of Future Trends — *tracking current global news stories that provide insight into the future.*

CONFLICT

N. Korea tests biggest missile since 2017, US calls for talks. North Korea confirmed it had launched a [Hwasong-12 ballistic missile](#), the same weapon it had once threatened to target the US territory of Guam. North Korea is due to chair the [world disarmament conference](#) in May.

Ethiopia lifts state of emergency. Ethiopia has agreed to lift the current [state of emergency](#) imposed in November 2021. Threats will be addressed through regular law enforcement mechanisms.

New wave of coups against democratic regimes in West Africa, Burkina Faso joins the list. [Burkina Faso is under a coup](#) due to the jihadist security crisis. This is the third country, with Mali and Guinea, to have a coup.

Denmark announces military retreat in Mali. Mali's transitional government suggested the [troops' withdrawal](#) in a public statement. There are similar tensions with other European countries.

Dozens sentenced to death over 2017 murders of UN experts in DRC. About 50 people have been sentenced to death, many in absentia, in connection with the [murders of two UN experts](#) in 2017.

DEVELOPMENT

Direct air capture machines suck carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The [world's first commercial direct air capture \(DAC\)](#) plant is designed to remove thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gas every year and then inject it deep underground.

Physicists create self-burning plasma. Physicists in the US briefly generated self-propagating nuclear fusion reactions in a lab. However, there is still a long way to go to create [fission generators](#) which mimic the sun.

China to allow gene-edited crops in push for food security. China has published trial rules for the approval of [gene-edited plants](#), paving the way for faster improvements to crops as it seeks to bolster its food security.

The slope of Earth's magnetic field helps birds touchdown. Birds sense a specific aspect of Earth's magnetic field, called the [angle of inclination](#), that tells the birds when they have completed their journey north. It functions as a kind of 'magnetic address' or 'stop sign'.

China now has nearly 50% of the world's offshore wind capacity. China can now produce [up to 26 GW of offshore-wind power](#). Between 2015 and 2020 the rest of the world, collectively, added just over 14GW, according to data from the International Renewable Energy Agency.

ECONOMICS

WTO lets China impose tariffs on US in Obama-era case. The WTO authorised China to impose [\\$645 million of compensatory tariffs](#) against the US for tariffs instituted in 2008-2012 by the US on China.

The IMF lowered its global growth forecast for 2022. According to its latest World Economic Outlook, [global GDP growth](#) is expected to fall from 5.9% in 2021 to 4.4% this year and 3.8% in 2023.

Xi offers Central Asian countries \$500 million, announces \$70 billion trade target. The Chinese President pledged to import more quality goods and agricultural products from countries in the region and strive to [increase the trade](#) between the two sides to \$70 billion by 2030.

IMF urges El Salvador to remove Bitcoin as legal tender. The IMF has warned of the [risks the cryptocurrency poses](#) to the country, stressing that it would be difficult to get a loan from the institution in future.

US Fed flags rate hike soon, and plans for significant balance sheet reduction. It is likely that [US interest rates](#) will be raised in March, and the Fed reaffirmed plans to end its bond purchases.

POLITICS

Honduras' new president sworn in amid congressional impasse.

Hondurans saw Xiomara Castro sworn in as their country's [first female president](#). Poverty and a lack of opportunity have driven hundreds of thousands of Hondurans to migrate in recent years.

Trump says he would pardon Jan 6 Capitol rioters if he runs and wins. Trump, who has not said whether he will [run for president](#) again after his defeat by Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 election, was speaking at a rally in Conroe, Texas.

Malawi's president dismisses entire cabinet. The President has announced the [dismissal of his entire cabinet](#) with immediate effect over corruption charges involving three ministers. All parliamentary powers are temporarily with him.

Rwanda to reopen border with Uganda after three years of political tension. The border was closed in 2019 following incursions of [Rwandan troops](#) into Ugandan territory.

Corruption is getting worse in many poor countries. Almost [70% of countries score below 50](#). The average score in sub-Saharan Africa is 33, the lowest for any region. In western Europe it is 66.

SOCIAL

Florida is so cold the iguanas are falling out of trees. Iguanas are cold-blooded. They [slow down or become immobile](#) when temperatures drop into the 40s (4-9 Celsius). They may fall from trees, but they are not dead.

Cash aid to poor mothers improved babies' brain function. The study recruited 1,000 mothers with new-born infants and divided them into two groups: one who would receive cash payments of \$333 a month and another who would receive \$20 a month. After a year, the group receiving the [higher income displayed noticeably more brain activity](#).

Bataclan survivor finds NFT of her X-ray for sale online. A French surgeon faces legal action after he tried to sell an X-ray of one of his patient's injuries as a [digital artwork](#) without her consent.

Mexico: Among the worst countries to be a journalist. According to the [rights group Article 19](#), 24 journalists were killed between December 2018 and the end of 2021.

US diabetes deaths top 100,000 for second straight year. Diabetes-related deaths surged 17% in 2020 and 15% in 2021. That excluded deaths directly attributed to

COVID-19. [About 11% of the population have diabetes](#), and one in three Americans will suffer from it in their lifetime if current trends persist.

PEACEBUILDING

Nearly 100 university students in Lebanon have become [NewGen PeacebuildersSM](#). Despite COVID-19 and local challenges, they completed intensive training and designed team peace projects that addressed social divisions, gaps in mental health services, food insecurity, and gender inequity. The Lebanon project was funded by a Global Grant from [Rotary International](#).

The newly launched Horizons Project aims to develop more effective narratives for generating public support of peacebuilding, social justice and democracy in the US. The project builds on research from the [Reframing Peace Project](#) conducted by [Partners Global](#) together with the [Alliance for Peacebuilding](#) and the research organization [Frameworks Institute](#).

Awards presented at the [Alliance for Peacebuilding \(AfP\)](#) annual conference highlighted a range of peacebuilding efforts in the US and abroad. The Peacebuilding Champion Award was given to U.S. Representatives Grace Meng (D-NY-6) and John R. Curtis (R-UT-3) in recognition of their bipartisan leadership on the [Youth, Peace, and Security Act](#). The recipients of the Melanie Greenberg U.S. Peacebuilding Award of Excellence were Patricia Shafer, whose [NewGen PeacebuildersSM](#) provides training to high school students, and Jesse Morton (posthumously), a former Jihadist extremist whose [Parallel Networks](#) is dedicated to reducing violent extremism. Velma Šarić, President of the [Post-Conflict Research Center](#) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), received AfP's Inaugural Local Peacebuilder Award.

[Peace Catalyst's](#) Rick Love Peace Awards recognize two senior peacebuilders and two Young Innovators who are working among Christians and Muslims. The two senior recipients are Miroslav Volf, Professor of Theology at [Yale Divinity School](#) and Director of the [Yale Center for Faith and Culture](#) and Hurunnessa Fariad, Director of Outreach for [Multi-Faith Neighbors Network](#). The Young Innovators are Haleemah Oladamade Ahmad, Executive Director of [Acres of Peace](#), and Alexander John Paul Lutz who worked with Muslim community leaders in the Republic of Georgia to advance religious tolerance.