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Tesla, Alibaba, Singapore airlines, Exxon mobile

1. Reports of a new virus covid 19 is starting to emerge from china (31 dec)

* Things that start small can reshape the world. Few people noticed when news emerged last December that China had begun monitoring the outbreak of a new pneumonia-like virus, or even on January 11 after China reported its first death from the disease. Nearly a year later, COVID-19 had changed life as we knew it. The World Health Organization estimated in October that as much as 10 percent of the world’s population had already contracted COVID-19; by year’s end some 1.7 million people had died from it. As countries implemented lockdowns to stop the disease’s spread, the global economy sputtered—it may have contracted by more than 4 percent—and poverty rates spiked. Some countries like New Zealand and Vietnam handled the pandemic well, limiting infections while sustaining economic growth. But many countries, most notably the United States, bungled their response and saw soaring caseloads and death rates. Arguments will persist for years over why the crisis was mishandled; expect poor leadership, political partisanship, and distrust of government to figure prominently in explanations. The year closed on a positive note as vaccines were approved in record time. The challenges now are distributing them widely and equitably while preparing to do a better job stopping the next pandemic. The novel coronavirus will not be the last of its kind.

1. Brexit confirmed (dec 2019)
   * The United Kingdom ended 2019 with clarity about Brexit, but it took a turbulent journey to get there. The year started with the country facing a March 29 deadline for leaving the European Union (EU). Prime Minister Theresa May chose that date but couldn’t persuade the House of Commons to approve the deal she struck with the EU. The main sticking point was the “backstop” provision, which avoided creating a customs barrier in the middle of the Irish Sea but saddled Britain with EU custom rules. May was forced to delay Brexit until October 31, and then resigned after the House of Commons voted down her deal three times. Boris Johnson won a Conservative Party vote and became prime minister on July 24. He struck a new deal that swapped the backstop for a customs barrier between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom. He tried a variety of debatable tactics to push the deal through Parliament before the Halloween deadline. None of them worked. Forced to extend the withdrawal deadline to January 31, 2020, Johnson called a snap election. British voters rewarded him; the Conservatives won their biggest victory in more than three decades. On December 20, Parliament voted overwhelmingly to exit the EU by January 31.
2. Us china trade wars continues (300B sept 1 on Chinese goods, 75B augs 23 on us goods)
   * Back in March 2018, President Donald Trump tweeted that “trade wars are good and easy to win.” That hasn’t been the case so far with his trade war with China. In February, Trump delayed imposing a new round of tariffs on Chinese goods in a bid to give negotiators time to strike a deal. In May, he concluded that the talks hadn’t progressed and imposed a new round of tariffs. In June, Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed at the G-20 summit to push ahead with trade talks. In August, however, Trump announced he would place tariffs on $300 billion worth of Chinese goods effective September 1. Twelve days later, he partially reversed course, saying he would delay half those tariffs until December 15. China wasn’t mollified; on August 23 it announced tariffs on $75 billion worth of U.S. goods. Negotiators continued to meet, and on October 11 they reached tentative agreement on a “Phase 1” deal. It took another two months, though, before the details were worked out. Both sides claimed victory. However, the agreement failed to settle the major differences between the two economic superpowers, suggesting that 2020 could be turbulent on the trade front.
3. Tensions flare up in the persian gulf, iran accused of attacking us ships endangering the strait of Hormuz (may 2019)
   * War in the Persian Gulf seemed imminent at several points in 2019. In May, four commercial ships were attacked while anchored just outside the Strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of the world’s oil passes. The United States accused Iran of being “directly responsible” for the attacks, a charge Iran denied. On June 6, Houthi rebels shot down a U.S. drone in Yemen with help from Iran. Two weeks later, Iran shot down a U.S. drone it said had violated Iranian airspace, a charge the United States denied. On July 18, a U.S. Navy ship in the Strait of Hormuz destroyed an Iranian drone that had come within 1,000 yards of the vessel. Then on September 14, drones struck two major Saudi oil refineries, temporarily knocking half the country’s oil production offline. Houthi rebels claimed responsibility for the attack, but the United States and European powers concluded Iran was responsible. In October, the United States announced it was sending 3,000 additional troops and several missile defense systems to the region to protect Saudi Arabia from Iranian aggression. By year’s end, there was talk that as many as 14,000 more U.S. troops might be headed to Saudi Arabia.
4. The amazon burns (famers and loggers have been setting 80000fires in 2019 Jan )
   * Mounting evidence that the planet is warming still has not galvanized global action. Brazil is a case in point. For decades, loggers and farmers have been clearing the Amazon rainforest and setting what’s left on fire in order to grow crops and graze cattle. The 80,000 fires set in 2019 were the most in a decade, and they burned an area about the size of New Jersey. As the immensity of the fires became clear, critics blamed the policies of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro for allowing, if not encouraging, the wanton destruction of the rainforest. In August, French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted: “Our house is burning. Literally.” Bolsonaro dismissed Macron and other critics, accused them of assaulting Brazil’s sovereignty, and rejected offers of aid to help fight the fires. In early September, Bolsonaro signed a pact with several other South American countries to establish satellite monitoring of the rainforest. The number of fires in the Amazon fell in October but rose in the Cerrado savanna, one of the most biodiverse ecosystems on the planet. The year ended with scientists warning that deforestation in the Amazon had reached a point where it might become a savanna, which would “release billions of tons carbon into the atmosphere.”
5. The Us house impeaches Donald trump jr. (dec 2019)
   * “Quid pro quo” may be the phrase of the year. Progressive Democrats began 2019 pushing for President Trump’s impeachment. Despite the April release of the Mueller Report, which did not establish that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia during the 2016 campaign but which explicitly declined to exonerate the president on obstruction-of-justice charges, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi refused to open an impeachment inquiry. That changed when an anonymous whistleblower alleged in August that Trump “is using the power of his office” to pressure Ukraine into investigating Democratic frontrunner Joe Biden and his son. On September 24, Pelosi launched a formal impeachment probe. The next day, the White House released a rough transcript of Trump’s July 25 call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Trump saw the call as “perfect,” while Democrats saw it as confirming the whistleblower’s allegation. On October 8, the White House announced it would not cooperate with what it deemed the House’s “illegitimate proceedings.” The House voted on October 31 to hold public hearings, which opened in mid-November. On December 18, the House voted along party lines to approve two articles of impeachment. As 2019 ended, it was unclear when Pelosi would send the articles to the Senate, which looked poised to quickly dismiss them.
6. Hong kong protest takes to the streets. (15 march 2019)
   * Hong Kong’s gained the most attention. The trigger was an extradition bill that critics said violated the one country, two systems pledge that governs the city’s relations with mainland China. Rather than fade, the protests grew into a push for more democratic rule. Pro-democracy candidates swamped pro-China candidates in Hong Kong’s November local elections, setting up a potential confrontation with Beijing in 2020. Protests rattled many other countries as well.
7. The US senates acquits Donald trump of impeachment charges (jan 2020)
   * In most years, a presidential impeachment trial would top the year-end list of biggest news stories. But in 2020, it only just makes the top ten. Donald Trump began the year as the third president in U.S. history to be impeached, joining Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton. The U.S. House had impeached Trump on two charges: abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. The impeachment trial in the Senate opened on January 16, with Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts presiding. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the trial was that after hearing opening presentations by the House managers and Trump’s defense team, the Senate voted not to call witnesses or issue subpoenas. On February 5, the Senate acquitted Trump on both articles of impeachment almost entirely along partisan lines. On Article I, alleging abuse of power, forty-eight senators voted guilty and fifty-two voted not guilty—Mitt Romney of Utah was the only Republican to vote to convict and remove Trump. On Article II, alleging obstruction of Congress, forty-seven senators voted guilty and fifty-three senators voted not guilty. The next day, Trump declared victory, saying that the trial against him was "evil" and Democrats were "vicious as hell."
8. Tensions flair between us and iran (jan 3 us drone strike killed Qasem Soleimani)
   * Bad blood between Tehran and Washington still persists after four decades. On January 3, a U.S. drone strike killed Qasem Soleimani, the leader of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, shortly after he arrived in Baghdad. Iran retaliated over the next two months with rocket attacks on U.S. bases in Iraq, injuring dozens of U.S. troops and killing many Iraqis. Tensions flared again in April when several Iranian speedboats harassed U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf, prompting Trump to tweet that he had issued orders “to shoot down” Iranian gunboats if the harassment continued. Iran responded by threatening to destroy U.S. warships. Amidst this spat, Iran launched its first military satellite, intensifying U.S. concerns over Iran’s improving long-range missile capabilities. While the threat of direct military confrontation eased over the summer, the United States imposed new sanctions on Iran as part of its “maximum pressure” campaign, ignoring calls from European allies countries to ease its economic pressure in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tensions rose again in late November when Iran’s top nuclear scientist was assassinated, likely by Israel. Iran responded by moving even further away from the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal. The potential that Iran could soon leave the deal entirely set the stage for high stakes diplomacy early in 2021.
9. Oil prices tanked (due to covid outbreak oil prices dropped to $47/barrel april 2020)
   * Two thousand twenty was not a good year for oil producers or oil companies. The COVID-19 outbreak sent economies around the world into a tailspin, depressing the demand for oil. But the bad news for oil producers didn’t stop there. At a March meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Saudi Arabia proposed that OPEC members and aligned oil-producing countries known as OPEC+ cut their joint oil production by 1.5 million barrels per day to help stabilize falling oil prices. Russia, an OPEC+ country and the world’s third largest oil producer after the United States and Saudi Arabia, rejected the plan, thereby ending six years of Russian-Saudi cooperation on production policy. Riyadh responded by cutting its export prices and boosting production. That sent oil prices plummeting. In April, the U.S. oil market had its worst day in history. By that time, a deal had been cut among OPEC and OPEC+ members to cut global production by 9.7 million barrels to end the price war. Oil prices climbed later in the year, briefly reaching $47 in late November, their highest level since March. Even with this bounce, oil prices were still 30 percent below where they started the year, meaning that most oil-producing countries faced tough economic times going into 2021.
10. Fed cuts rates to 0
    * The Federal Reserve, saying “the coronavirus outbreak has harmed communities and disrupted economic activity in many countries, including the United States,” cut interest rates to essentially zero on Sunday and launched a massive $700 billion quantitative easing program to shelter the economy from the effects of the virus.The new fed funds rate, used as a benchmark both for short-term lending for financial institutions and as a peg to many consumer rates, will now be targeted at 0% to 0.25% down from a previous target range of 1% to 1.25%.
11. The killing of Geroge Floyed (may 25 2020)
    * Racism has been called America’s original sin. But it is a sin that extends beyond the United States. On May 25, George Floyd, a forty-six-year-old Black man, was arrested in Minneapolis for allegedly passing a counterfeit $20 bill. One of the arresting officers kept his knee on Floyd’s neck for eight minutes and fifteen seconds, killing him. Floyd’s death at the hands of officers whose mission is to “protect and serve” followed on the heels of literally hundreds of similar police killings of Black Americans, including Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and Breonna Taylor. Video of Floyd’s killing triggered protests across the United States and sparked a long overdue national conversation about systemic racism. But the protests and conversations about justice and equality went far beyond America’s borders. From Paris to Nairobi to Rio de Janeiro, people took to the streets to protest Floyd’s death and to highlight their own countries’ racial inequalities. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that “Racism is real. It’s in the United States, but it’s also in Canada.” But the same could be said of most other countries, including those like China and Iran that seized on Floyd’s death as evidence of U.S. hypocrisy on human rights issues. Injustice and inequality remain a global challenge.
12. Climate dispute continues (austrailian wild fires burns on, since June 2019)
    * Welcome to the new climate normal: catastrophic wildfires, bigger and more frequent storms, and more intense droughts. The year began with Australia experiencing its worst fire season on record, with some six percent of the country in flames and nearly three million animals killed.
13. China asserts itself (april 2020 china asserts itself using wolf warrior democracy)
    * “Strategic engagement,” the idea that economic engagement would lead to Beijing becoming “a responsible stakeholder” in world politics, might have met its demise in 2020. China threw its weight around across the globe throughout the year, seemingly not minding whom it offended. Early in 2020, Chinese officials escalated their “wolf warrior” diplomacy, aggressively (and undiplomatically) attacking countries and individuals they believed had slighted China. In April, China retaliated against Australia’s call for an inquiry into the origins and spread of the coronavirus by launching a trade war. In mid-June, days after a deal was struck to deescalate a border standoff with India, Chinese troops initiated clashes that killed twenty Indian soldiers. Weeks later, Beijing imposed a new national security law on Hong Kong designed to crush the pro-democracy movement. China was aggressive as well in its dealings with Taiwan as the Trump administration strengthened its ties with what Beijing regards as a renegade province. China also continued its systematic repression of its Uighur minority with surveillance, imprisonment, and forced labor. By year’s end, China’s relative success in handling the pandemic and stimulating its economy had seemingly convinced Beijing that it was winning its contest with the West. Rather than fearing calls by U.S. officials for a decoupling of the two economies, China embraced steps designed to decouple from the West on its own terms.
14. The covid 19 pandemic rages on (oct 2020)
    * The United States hit a record high number of confirmed daily coronavirus cases Friday, recording more than 83,000 new cases, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. The number surpasses the previous record of more than 77,000 cases in mid-July.The U.S. also recorded 943 deaths due to COVID-19 on Friday. More than 8 million people in the U.S. have been infected with the virus, and more than 223,000 people have died from the disease since the pandemic began, according to Johns Hopkins University. More than 42 million cases have been reported worldwide.One day earlier, 71,671 new coronavirus cases were reported in the U.S. on Thursday. Cases have been rising sharply in the U.S. since mid-September, with new outbreaks picking up in several states. Hospitalizations have also been on the rise. The COVID Tracking Project reports 41,485 coronavirus patients were hospitalized as of Friday. The number is more than half of the highs recorded during the coronavirus surges in the spring and summer.Unlike past surges, where a few states drove up case numbers, the current high is being propelled by many states. Texas currently has the most recorded cases, followed by Illinois, Wisconsin and Florida.Despite the rise in cases, there has been some good news. Two peer-reviewed studies recently showed a drop in mortality among patients hospitalized with COVID-19, suggesting health care workers have gotten better at helping patients survive the disease. One study found that the mortality rate among hospitalized patients dropped from 25.6 percent to 7.6 percent.
15. Joe Biden wins the presidential election (nov 2020)
    * Joseph R. Biden Jr. was elected the 46th president of the United States. Mr. Biden defeated President Trump after winning Pennsylvania, which put his total of Electoral College votes above the 270 he needed to clinch the presidency.
16. Morderna vaccine gets approval (dec 2020)
    * On December 18, 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine for the prevention of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in individuals 18 years of age and older.Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine is available under EUA as a two-dose primary series in individuals 18 years of age and older, as a third primary series dose for individuals 18 years of age and older who have been determined to have certain kinds of immunocompromise, and as a single booster dose in people 18 years of age and older.The Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine is also authorized for use as a heterologous (or “mix and match”) booster dose following completion of primary vaccination with a different available COVID-19 vaccine. For example, Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and Janssen COVID-19 vaccine recipients 18 years of age and older may receive a single booster dose of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine.
17. Storming of capital hill (6 jan 2021)
    * On January 6, 2021, a mob of supporters of President Donald Trump attacked the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. They sought to overturn his defeat in the 2020 presidential election by disrupting the joint session of Congress assembled to count electoral votes that would formalize President-elect Joe Biden's victory. The Capitol Complex was locked down and lawmakers and staff were evacuated, while rioters assaulted law enforcement officers, vandalized property and occupied the building for several hours. Five people died either shortly before, during, or following the event: one was shot by Capitol Police, another died of a drug overdose, and three succumbed to natural causes. Many people were injured, including 138 police officers. Four officers who responded to the attack died by suicide within seven months.
18. Didis ipo faces serious backlash from Chinese gov (June 2021)
    * Didi Chuxing, China’s largest ride-hailing firm, is gearing up for its blockbuster IPO in the US that could come as soon as next month. The highly anticipated flotation could become one of the biggest tech listings this year, which already include Chinese short video app Kuaishou’s $5.3 billion float in Hong Kong, and dating app Bumble’s $2.2 billion US listing, both in February. Didi will be seeking a valuation above the $62 billion it was valued at in its funding round in 2019. However, Didi’s upcoming IPO could now be overshadowed by China’s expanding antitrust scrutiny of its tech giants. China’s top market regulator, the State Administration for Market Regulation, has opened an investigation into whether the firm has used any unfair competitive practices against smaller rivals, according to a Reuters report today (June 17). In addition, the regulator is also looking at the firm’s pricing mechanisms for its ride-hailing services, according to the report. A company spokesperson said Didi does not comment on “unsubstantiated speculation from Reuters’ unnamed sources.” Ever since then, Beijing has tightened its oversight of the once high-flying tech sector, which it worries has become too powerful. In April, Alibaba was fined $2.8 billion, which amounts to around 4% of the e-commerce giant’s China revenues in 2019, for its monopolistic practices including the so-called “pick one from two” tactic that sought platform exclusivity from merchants. Meanwhile, Alibaba rival Tencent could also face an around $1.5 billion antitrust fine from regulators, according to Reuters.
19. Us rejoins the paris agreement (feb 2021)
    * The United States on Friday officially rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change designed to limit global warming and avoid its potentially catastrophic impacts.Nearly 200 nations have signed on to the landmark accord and committed to limit their greenhouse gas emissions in an attempt to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius - preferably below 1.5 degrees Celsius - compared to pre-industrial temperatures." The Paris Agreement is an unprecedented framework for global action. We know because we helped design it and make it a reality," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. "Its purpose is both simple and expansive: to help us all avoid catastrophic planetary warming and to build resilience around the world to the impacts from climate change we already see."
20. Russian amass troops around the ukrane border (April 2 2021)
    * Russia has warned NATO against deploying troops to Ukraine, saying such a move would escalate tensions nears its borders, amid renewed fears over the region’s long-simmering conflict.Moscow’s comments came after NATO voiced concern on Thursday over what it said was a large Russian military build-up near eastern Ukraine, with leading member the United States pledging to stand by Ukraine in the event of any Russian “aggression”.
21. Space x crew enters the iss (may 2 2021)
    * A SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule soared back from outer space Sunday morning and made a parachute landing in the Gulf of Mexico, returning four astronauts from a record-setting mission to the International Space Station. The astronauts — NASA's Michael Hopkins, Victor Glover, Shannon Walker, and Soichi Noguchi, an astronaut with Japan's space agency — had boarded their Crew Dragon capsule Friday afternoon, and they spent all night aboard the 13-foot-wide, fully autonomous capsule as it conducted a series of engine burns and manoeuvres to prepare itself for re-entry. The spacecraft fired up its engines to slice back into the Earth's thick inner atmosphere around 2 am ET, and the capsule deployed a series of billowing parachutes to slow its descent before splashing down off the coast of Panama City, Florida at 2:56 am.
22. The g7 agrees to global min cooperate tax 15% (June 2021)
    * Finance leaders from the Group of 7 countries agreed to back a new global minimum tax rate of at least 15 percent that companies would have to pay regardless of where they locate their headquarters. The agreement would also impose an additional tax on some of the largest multinational companies, potentially forcing technology giants like Amazon, Facebook and Google as well as other big global businesses to pay taxes to countries based on where their goods or services are sold, regardless of whether they have a physical presence in that nation. Officials described the pact as a historic agreement that could reshape global commerce and solidify public finances that have been eroded after more than a year of combating the coronavirus pandemic. The deal comes after several years of fraught negotiations and, if enacted, would reverse a race to the bottom on international tax rates. It would also put to rest a fight between the United States and Europe over how to tax big technology companies.
23. Fed holds rates near 0 (nov 2021)
    * Even though the Federal Reserve didn’t raise its benchmark rate Wednesday, the days of low rates are clearly numbered. Reports of hotter-than-anticipated inflation have paved the way for the central bank to unwind last year’s bond buying. While the Fed said that interest rates will stay near zero for now, the tapering of bond purchases is seen as the first step on the way to interest-rate hikes. That will inevitably impact the rates consumers pay.







