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U.S. deploying carrier, bombers to Middle East to deter Iran



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Southern DAILY

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Trump tariff hike leaves U.S.-China trade deal in limbo as markets fall

WASHINGTON/BEIJING (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to increase tariffs on Chinese goods left prospects for a deal to end a trade war between the world's two largest economies in limbo on Monday, casting uncertainty on plans for more talks this week.

Stocks around the world tumbled and oil prices hit a one-month low after Trump tweeted on Sunday that he would raise tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods to 25 percent from 10 percent by the end of the week, and would "soon" target the remaining Chinese imports with tariffs.

The announcement abruptly ended a five-month truce in a trade war that has cost the two countries billions of dollars, slowed global growth and disrupted manufacturing supply chains and U.S. farm exports.

Trump's comments on Sunday came as a surprise after he and members of his team had repeatedly said the two sides were making progress on a deal.

U.S. says China reneging on trade commitments, talks continue
Explainer: Who pays Trump's tariffs, China or U.S. customers and companies?
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His shift in tone came after U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer told him that Chinese negotiators had pulled back from some prior commitments in talks last week in Beijing, people familiar with the talks said.

Specifically, the Chinese side was seeking to deal with any policy changes through administrative and regulatory actions, not through changes to Chinese law as previously agreed, one person with knowledge of the talks said.

"It undermines the core architecture of the deal," the person said, adding that not codifying the concessions would make it difficult to verify and enforce China's compliance.

Speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the talks, the person said that under China's system in which the Communist Party has ultimate control, changes in law are the only way to get even a small measure of certainty.

Another source familiar with the situation said Trump had reiterated to advisers in recent days that he would walk away from a trade deal with China if it was not strong enough.

This person said that there was "irrational exuberance" about the talks and Trump's move "shouldn't be that big of a shock" as the president had originally planned to raise tariffs on Chinese goods in January. It was unclear on Monday whether Chinese Vice Premier Liu He would travel as planned to Washington for talks scheduled to start on Wednesday — negotiations that some had viewed as potentially leading to a deal announcement.

A Chinese delegation was still preparing to go to the United States for trade talks, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said earlier on Monday in Beijing, without saying whether Liu would be part of it. Queries about the talks to China's embassy in Washington were not answered.

"The atmosphere of the negotiations has changed," said a Chinese official with knowledge of the talks, and how they would proceed was being re-evaluated.

"All that depends on the attitude of the United States," the official said.

A spokesman for the U.S. Trade Representative's office did not immediately respond to a query about the status of the talks in Washington and Liu's attendance.

The United States is demanding sweeping changes to China's economic policies, including better protection of U.S. intellectual property, ending forced technology transfers and cyber theft of American trade secrets.



The United States is demanding sweeping changes to China's economic policies, including better protection of U.S. intellectual property, ending forced technology transfers and cyber theft of American trade secrets.



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U.S. deploying carrier, bombers to Middle East to deter Iran

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration is deploying a carrier strike group and bombers to the Middle East in response to troubling “indications and warnings” from Iran and to show the United States will retaliate with “unrelenting force” to any attack, national security adviser John Bolton said on Sunday.

With tensions already high between Washington and Tehran, a U.S. official said the deployment has been ordered “as a deterrence to what has been seen as potential preparations by Iranian forces and its proxies that may indicate possible attacks on U.S. forces in the region.” However, the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the United States was not expecting any imminent Iranian attack.

Pompeo says U.S. sees activity indicating possible ‘escalation’ from Iran

U.S. carrier, bombers sent to Middle East on ‘credible threat’ by Iran: Pentagon chief

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Bolton - who has spearheaded an increasingly hawkish U.S. policy on Iran - said the decision, which could exacerbate problems between the two countries, was meant to send a “clear and unmistakable message” of U.S. resolve to Tehran.

Though he cited no specific Iranian activities that have raised new concerns, Iran has recently warned it would block the Strait of Hormuz if it was barred from using the strategic waterway. About a fifth of the oil consumed globally passes through the strait.

“The United States is not seeking war with the Iranian regime, but we are fully prepared to respond to any attack, whether by proxy, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or regular Iranian forces,” Bolton said in a statement.

It marked the latest in a series of moves by President Donald Trump’s administration aimed at ratcheting up pressure on Iran in recent months.

Washington has said it will stop waivers for countries buying Iranian oil, in an attempt to reduce Iran’s oil exports to zero. It has also blacklisted Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guard Corps, taking the unprecedented step of designating it as a foreign terrorist organization, which Iran has cast as an American provocation.

The Trump administration’s efforts to impose political and economic isolation on Tehran began last year when it unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal it and other world

powers negotiated with Iran in 2015.

“The United States is deploying the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and a bomber task force to the U.S. Central Command region to send a clear and unmistakable message to the Iranian regime that any attack on United States interests or on those of our allies will be met with unrelenting force,” Bolton said.

Bolton did not provide any further details.

A U.S. Navy statement issued early last month said the aircraft carrier and its accompanying convoy of ships had steamed out of Norfolk, Virginia, on April 1 “for a regularly scheduled deployment”, but it did not give any destination at the time.

While it is not rare for the United States to have aircraft carriers in the Middle East, Bolton’s language could increase tensions.

The threat late last month from the IRGC to close the Strait of Hormuz followed a U.S. announcement that it would end exemptions granted last year to eight buyers of Iranian oil and demanding they stop purchases by May 1 or face sanctions.

European governments have opposed Washington’s reinstatement of sanctions on Iran.

A senior Trump administration official said at the time that any aggressive move by Iran in the strait would be unjustified and unacceptable.

Iran has made threats to block the waterway in the past, without acting on them.



The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) transits the Strait of Gibraltar, entering the Mediterranean Sea as it continues operations in the 6th Fleet area of responsibility in this April 13, 2019 photo supplied by the U.S. Navy. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Clint Davis/Handout via REUTERS



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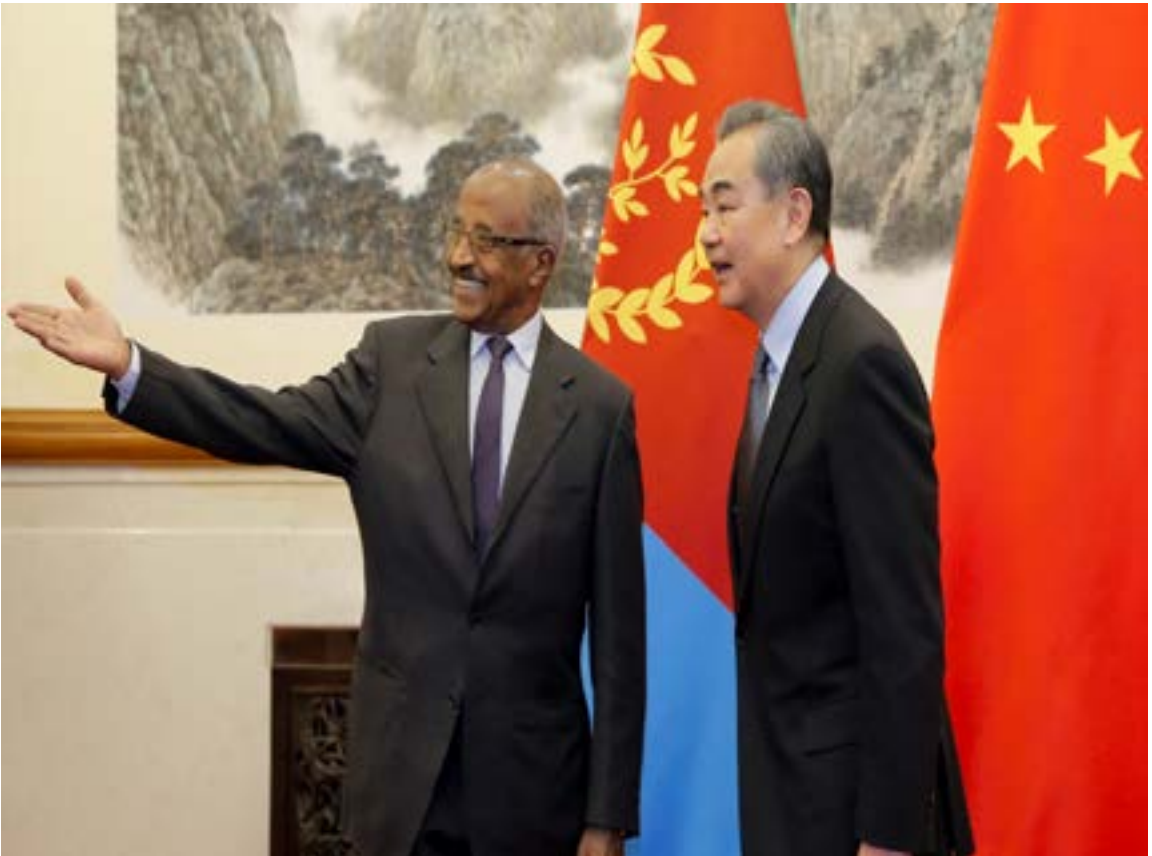
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Editor’s Choice



FILE PHOTO: Sequoia Capital China founder Neil Shen speaks at an event of tech incubator Hong Kong X in Hong Kong



Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed meets his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing



An investor walks past a screen displaying stock information at a brokerage house in Shanghai



FILE PHOTO: A Benjamin Franklin U.S. \$100 banknote and a Chinese 100 yuan banknote with late Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong are seen in this picture illustration in Beijing, China



FILE PHOTO: Chinese and U.S. flags are set up for a meeting during a visit by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao at China’s Ministry of Transport in Beijing



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Trump answers a question during an Oval Office meeting with Slovakia’s Pellegrini at the White House in Washington

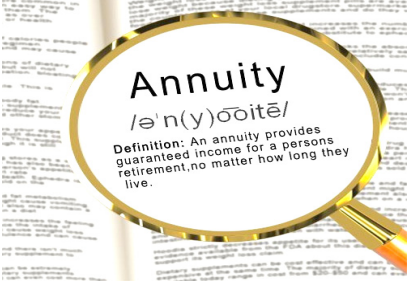


U.S. Energy Secretary Perry speaks during a joint news conference with EU Energy Commissioner Canete in Brussels



Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, and U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad talk after concluding their meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing

A friend of mine, “Mr. H.”, suggested that I write a simple article on annuities. He bought an annuity awhile back which made him enough money that had him worrying about tax-related questions. So let’s see if we can point him to some good resources, since there really is no such thing as a “simple annuity!” Simply and generally speaking, annuities are not investments, but rather more like insurance. Insurance companies started the annuities business as a product and outsourced the sales. I attended several free seminars in the past that were presented by financial advisors, and they almost always wound up suggesting annuities as the central part of any retirement strategy. Why? Because the financial advisors get paid handsomely to sell annuities. According to the Insured Retirement Institute, the 2016 sales of annuities were \$211.4 billion.



At their simplest, annuities offer a guarantee. If invest money in an annuity, you’ll be guaranteed to get a regular check for a certain period of time starting at a certain point. How much of the guaranteed money you receive will depend on which type of annuity you picked; i.e., Fixed, Variable or Indexed, as well as whether the starting point of payments to you are immediate or deferred. The products get confusing and complicated very fast. The website <https://www.investopedia.com/university/annuities/> has an excellent primer on it. For now, let’s tackle some questions. So, when should you consider annuities? If your combined pensions, social security and other income can support your monthly expenses and you have some extra cash laying around to afford one. The website <https://money.cnn.com/2016/11/16/retirement/retire->

What Are Annuities?



By Guest Writer Abraham Mathis

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

ment-savings/index.html suggested in 2016 that a 65 year old man investing \$100,000 would expect to receive \$525 a month for his lifetime. In future articles, we will go into other options. So what happens if I suddenly need some or all of my money back? Remember, there are hefty penalties and fees for withdrawing any amounts. How much commission that the financial advisor receives will partially determine these fees and penalties. See the problem with the sales? Remember Mr. H’s questions about his taxes? Taxes are very complicated and situation- dependent. The website <https://www.ironline.org/government-affairs/annuities-regulation-industry-information/taxation-of-annuities> will get you pointed in the right direction for your questions on taxes. Annuity contracts can also be daunting to read and understand. Some important questions to ask include the following: What are all the circumstances under which I might not get back my money? What part of the contract might limit or change how much money I eventually receive? What can change during the term of the contract?



While inflation is supposedly officially low right now, the dollar store is now \$1.49 from \$1.09 in one year! Is there any possibility that payments could increase with inflation? What are the options of taking the payments? What are tax implications (see link above). The biggest “pro” of an annuity is the guaranteed income stream, but there are many “cons.” Taxes: You will pay more in taxes than on other investment types, especially if you choose a variable annuity. Your heirs will also pay more taxes in any amount left in the annuity at your death. All income is taxed as ordinary income (the link above on taxes has more information). Annuities are also not liquid, remember the penalties and fees? Annuities are a viable financial option if you are not sure you have the skills to manage your retirement portfolio and want to be certain you won’t run out of funds during your lifetime. I have been given slick pamphlets with all kinds of graphs on annuities, but rarely was I given straight answers in simple language. You should demand simple written answers to your questions. For your annuity related questions, you can contact me at moderator@juststreetsense.com with your feedback and questions. Note that I am not a financial advisor sales person, but am rather an academic who has studied the field of finance.

Related
2018 Annuity Sales Up 10%, Beacon, Morningstar Find

“Fixed indexed annuities continue to set

records, providing consumers with an instrument that can help them diversify their portfolios, protect principal, and provide guaranteed lifetime income,” said Beacon Research CEO Jeremy Alexander, “and we expect all fixed annuity product types to continue showing robust growth in 2019 as millions of Americans seek solutions that can help them feel secure during retirement.”

From Staff and Wire Reports
Overall annuity sales rose 9.7 percent in 2018, with the combined sales of fixed and variable annuities reaching \$218 billion, according to the Insured Retirement Institute (IRI), which today announced final 2018 market data for the U.S. annuity industry based on data reported by Beacon Research and Morningstar. The highlights:

- Total Annuity Sales**
 - \$58.8 billion - industry-wide annuity sales in the fourth quarter of 2018
 - o 7.1 percent increase from sales of \$54.9 billion in the third quarter of 2018
 - o 23.5 percent higher versus fourth quarter of 2017 sales of \$47.6 billion
 - \$218.0 billion – full year 2018 total annuity sales
 - o 9.7 percent increase versus 2017 total annuity sales of \$198.6 billion



- Fixed Annuity Sales**
 - \$35.9 billion – 2018 fourth quarter fixed annuity sales
 - o 12.7 percent increase over third quarter sales of \$31.8 billion
 - o 51.6 percent higher versus 2017 fourth quarter sales of \$23.7 billion
 - o \$125.0 billion in fixed annuity sales is an increase of 17.0 percent over 2018 fixed annuity sales of \$106.8 billion



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WASHINGTON (MarketWatch) - The economy generated a stronger than expected 263,000 new jobs in April, helping to drive down the unemployment rate to a 49-year low of 3.6%. The increase in new jobs easily topped the 217,000 MarketWatch forecast. The jobless rate slid from 3.8% in March to hit the lowest level since December 1969. The average wage paid to American workers rose 6 cents, or 0.2%, to \$27.77 an hour. The 12-month rate of hourly wage gains was unchanged at 3.2%. Hours worked each week fell 0.1 hour in April to 34.4. The government revised the increase in new jobs in March to 189,000 from a preliminary 196,000. February's gain was raised to 56,000 from 33,000. The increase in hiring was concentrated at white-collar businesses, construction and health care. The only sector to suffer a big drawback was retail, whose employment fell for the third straight month.

The unemployment rate, meanwhile, slipped to 3.6% from 3.8% in March, marking the lowest level since December 1969, the Labor Department said. The decline in April stemmed from nearly a half-million workers dropping out of the labor force, but by the any measure, layoffs and unemployment are scraping a 50-year low.

While hourly pay is rising at the fastest pace in nearly a decade, the increase in wages appears to have leveled off. That ought to ease any worries at the Federal Reserve about rising wages triggering a sharp increase in inflation.

What happened: Professional and business services added 76,000 jobs, continuing a torrid streak under which total employment has risen by more than a half million in the past year.

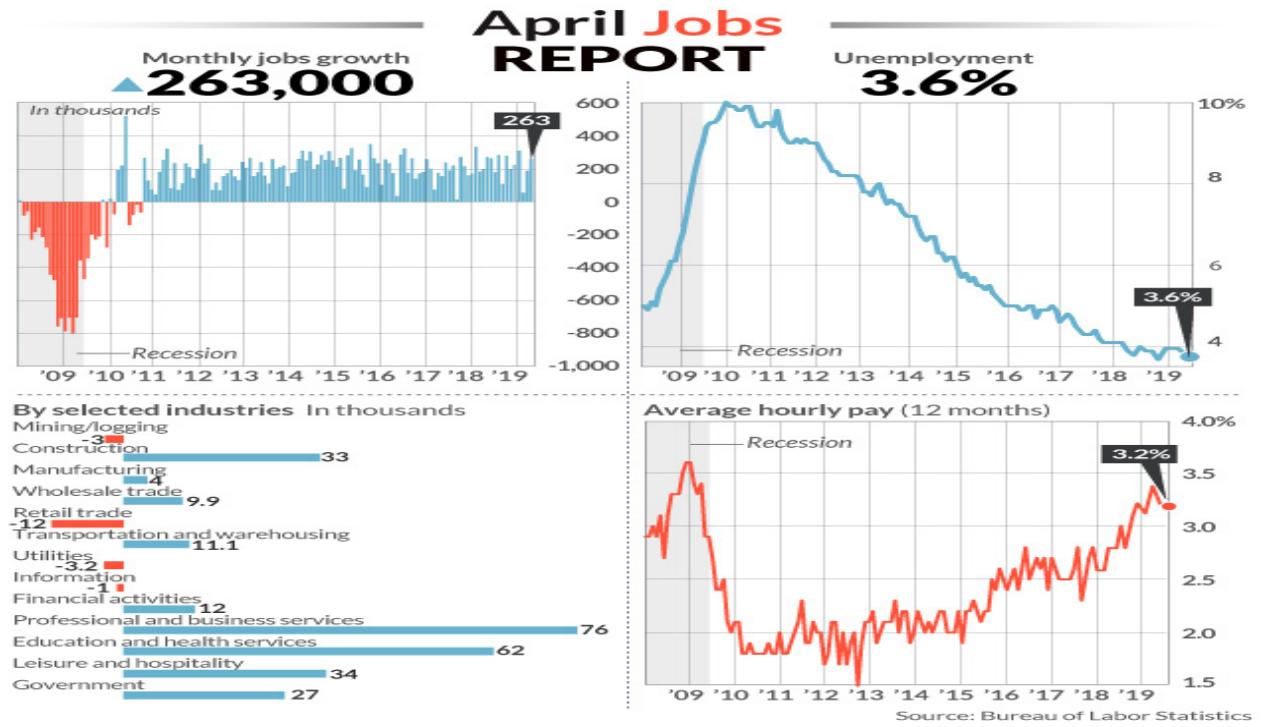
Construction companies boosted payrolls by 33,000, the second straight solid gain. Health-care providers hired 27,000 people and employment in social assistance climbed by 26,000.

Manufacturers added a scant 4,000 jobs after no increase in March. Hiring has been very weak this year as companies struggle with stagnant exports and the effects of U.S. trade tensions with China.

Government jobs rose by 27,000. The federal government is already starting to hire

Hiring Strengthens In The Spring, Points To Rebounding Economy

U.S. Creates 263,000 Jobs In April, Unemployment Falls To 3.6%



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

workers for the 2020 Census. Retailers, on the other hand, cut 12,000 jobs as traditional brands continue to lose ground to internet rivals. Although the economy is still pumping out plenty of new jobs, the rate of hiring has slowed. The U.S. added an average of 169,000 jobs in the past three months, down from a three-year high of 232,000 in January. Still, the U.S. is on track to add 2 million new jobs for the ninth straight year.



Big picture: The economy got off to a rocky start in 2019, but growth appears to have picked up with spring underway. The most muscular labor market in arguably half a century is the chief reason why. The record number of people working has supported a steady increase in demand for goods and services, giving businesses little reason to cut staff, especially with skilled workers so hard to find. Open jobs exceed the number of Americans classified as officially unemployed by more than 1 million. The result is a steadily expanding economy that will set a record for longest expansion ever at the end of June despite some pockets of weakness. At the same time, inflation remains under control even as wages rise, perhaps because of a long-sought increase in productivity. What they are saying? "Another astonishingly strong month of jobs growth shows the continued strength of this recovery,"

said Martha Gimbel, director of economic research at Indeed Hiring Lab. "That being said, we shouldn't expect eye-popping jobs numbers like this to continue throughout this year. "The bottom line is effectively unchanged," said Jim Baird, chief investment officer at Plante Moran Financial Advisors. "Job creation remains solid, and should provide continued support for consumer spending sufficient to keep the economy on a solid growth path."

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Subject: Statement by U.S. Secretary of Labor Acosta on April Jobs Report

News Statement
U.S. Department of Labor | May 3, 2019

Statement by U.S. Secretary of Labor Acosta on April Jobs Report

> WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta today issued the following statement regarding the April 2019 Employment Situation report: "Today's jobs report announced a 3.6% unemployment rate, the lowest unemployment rate since 1969. "America's economy added 263,000 jobs in April and a net 16,000 additional upward adjustment in February and March. This brings the total to 5.4 million jobs added since January 2017. "America's workforce continues to see their paychecks grow, with year-over-year wage growth reaching 3.2%. The year-over-year average hourly earnings have grown at or exceeded 3.0% for nine straight months. Wage growth has not risen this fast since 2009. "For 14 consecutive months, the unemployment rate has remained at or below 4.0% and this month included widespread good news: the unemployment rate reached record lows for Hispanic-Americans, Americans with disabilities, and Gulf War II veterans, and matched record lows for Asian Americans and all veterans. "Both adult men and adult women saw declines in their unemployment rate with adult men at 3.4% and adult women at 3.1%, which was the lowest rate for adult women since 1953. "We continue our work toward increasing labor force participation and this month's report further underscores the importance of the administration's efforts expanding skills training so that more Americans can find family-sustaining career opportunities." U.S. Department of Labor news materials are accessible at <http://www.dol.gov>. The Department's Reasonable Accommodation Resource Center converts departmental information and documents into alternative formats, which include Braille and large print. For alternative format requests, please contact the Department at (202) 693-7828 (voice) or (800) 877-8339 (federal relay).

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