



NSF

NATIONAL SECURITY FORUM



NSF Thanks you!

- **Members** (recruit more please!)
- **Friends of the Forum** (we can't do this without you!)
- **Corporate Sponsor MSTs** (our bridge to Southern NV)

Upcoming Programs/Tours



<https://nationalecurityforum.org>

- **Mar 20th** – Breakfast Forum @ Tamarack Junction, “Renewable Energy Resources: Nevada holds the key” Panel discussion with Caleb Cage and the NV Battery Coalition
- **Apr 30th – May 1st** – Tour of NNSS/Atomic Museum/Creech AFB (See signup sheets on tables and coming in email)
- **May 23rd** – WCSD/NSF 2024 Youth Security Forum, “Civil Discourse: Getting Comfortable with Uncomfortable Conversations about the Israel/Hamas War” (We need volunteer facilitators!)
- **July (TBD)** – Joint meeting with MOAA in Incline Village, military readiness in the age of technology speaker series



The Year of Living Dangerously

National Security Uncertainty and Upheaval in 2024

Keith Hansen, Rae Huffstutler & John Woodworth

National Security Forum (Feb 21, 2024)



NSA

NATIONAL SECURITY FORUM

US National Security Challenges - In Three Tiers

Immediate Hot Issues (Burning TODAY)

Festering Issues (May explode this year)

Slow Burn (On the horizon in next few years)

Immediate Hot Issues

- **Middle East** – can we avoid a wider war?
 - Israel – Gaza/Hamas/Hezbollah conflicts
 - Houthis attacks on international shipping
 - Iran’s role in stirring the pot
- **Ukraine Conflict** – can we support Ukraine & contain Russia?
 - US policy debate
 - Cooperation with NATO Europe
 - Settlement, European security & relations with Russia
- **US southern border/immigration crisis**
 - Politics & linkage with other national security priorities
 - Potential entry for international terrorists

Festering Issues

- **China**

- Top long-term policy challenge for Administration
- Economic, political & military competition
- Support for Taiwan vs. Chinese aggression
- Potential conflict in South China Sea

- **North Korea**

- Tensions over military exercises & missile firings
- Impact on US relations with S. Korea & Japan
- Support for Russia in Ukraine
- Continued growth of nuclear & missile arsenals

Slow Burn - Longer-term Challenges

- **Global balance & influence**
 - Russia & China are challenging US/western international dominance
 - Iran is challenging US, Israel & Middle East stability
 - Growing economic instability in several other regions
- **Further spread of nuclear arsenals**
 - Dim prospects for preserving New START provisions
 - Desire of several countries to join the nuclear weapon club
 - Future of Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty questionable

Middle East

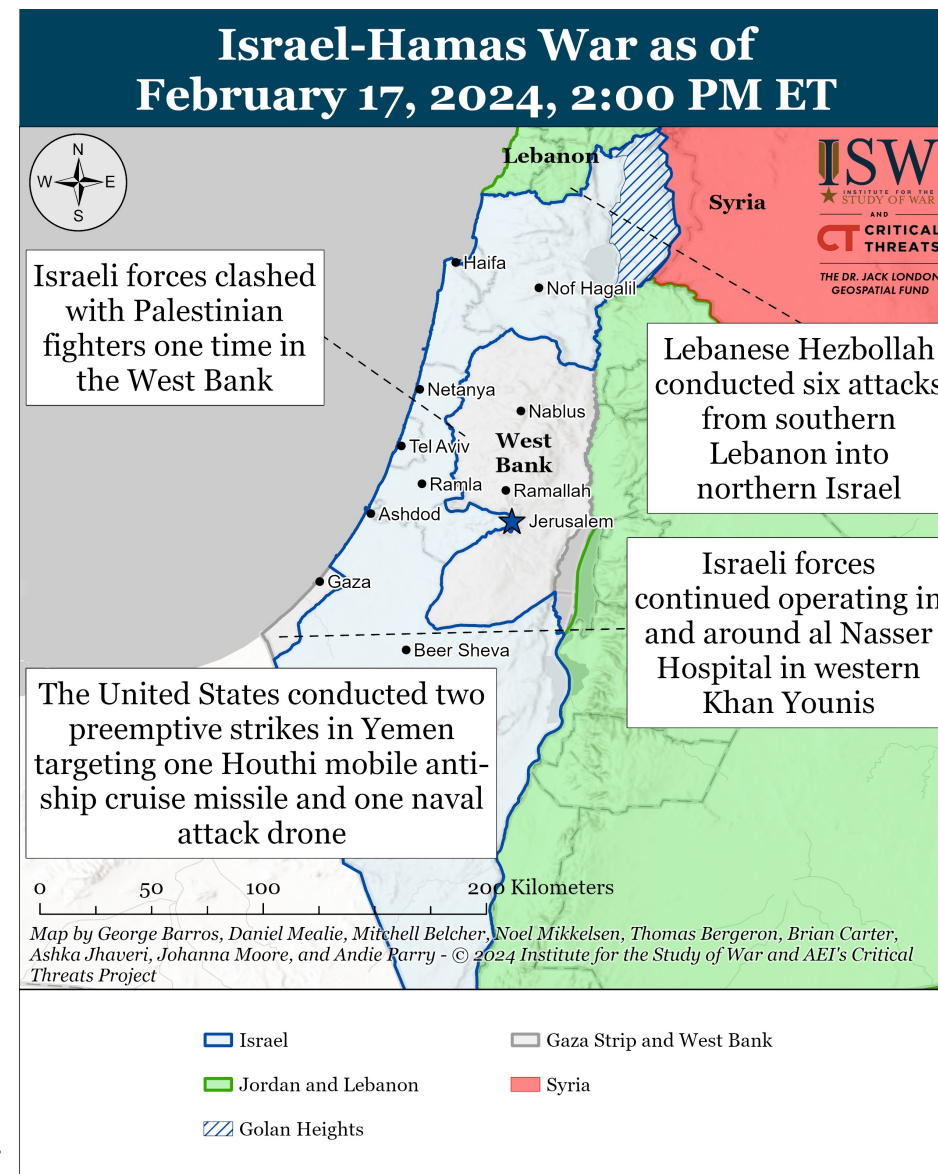


Israel vs. Hamas: A Pressing Issue

- **Limit casualties in Gaza**
 - A basic prerequisite for making progress
- **Contain the war**
- **Find a Palestinian State solution**

ISW Iran Update (Feb 18, 2024)

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-18-2024>



Israel vs. Hamas Conflict

- **Axis of Resistance – Iran’s proxy militias**
 - Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthis & Iraqi groups
- **No evidence of Iranian command role on 7 Oct**
 - Militias trained by Iran
- **Hamas strikes on 7 Oct**
 - 1,200 killed, 240 hostages, retreated to tunnels
- **Hamas shelters behind civilians**
 - 30-40,000 Hamas fighters vs. 300,000 Israeli troops
 - 28,000 civilians killed

Israeli efforts to search and destroy tunnels



Inside the Tunnels of Gaza (31 Dec 23)

- Reuters graphic novel – you must read this!
- <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS/GAZA-TUNNELS/gkvldmzorvb/>



How to End the Conflict?

- **Need realistic plan for Palestinian statehood**
 - Prerequisite demanded by Saudis & Egyptians
 - Must get around Netanyahu's rejection of a two- state solution
- **Reduce intensity of Israeli combat operations**
 - International pressure to disengage
 - Meet humanitarian needs
- **Hostilities will continue as long as there is no solution for Palestinian statehood**



Shipping choke points



The Middle East Conundrum

- **Israel and Hamas are being pressured to create a Palestinian state excluding both Israel and Hamas**
 - US & UN are pressuring to create a moderate Palestinian state
 - Israel wants security that is inconsistent with a two-state solution & Hamas
 - Palestinians want a sovereign state, not Israeli occupation
- **No solution in sight!**



The Ezra Klein Show

Jan. 19, 2024

'I Have No Idea How This Ends. I've Never Seen It So Broken.'

Thomas Friedman takes stock of the war, over 100 days in.

Transcript

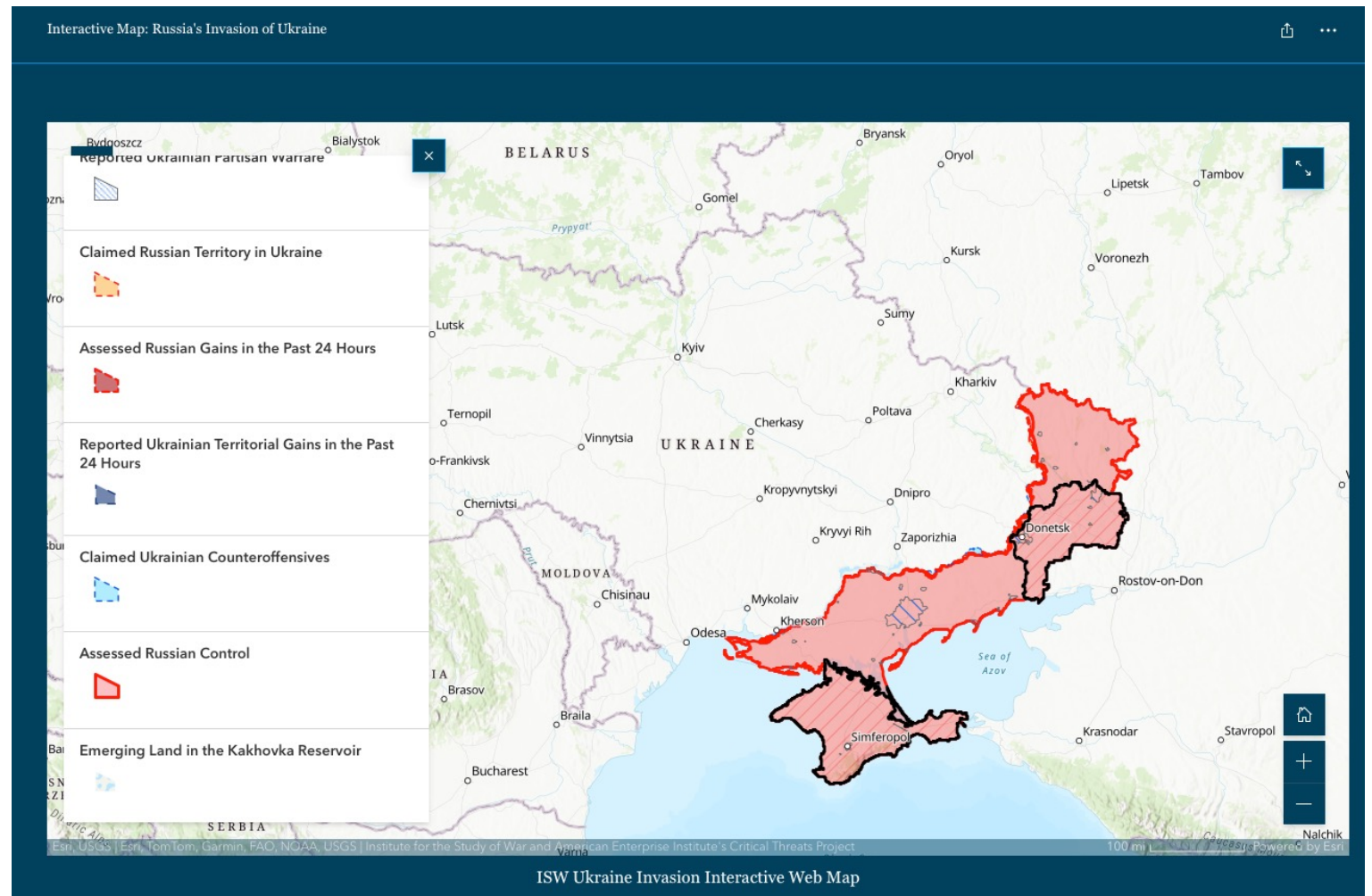
Listen 1:08:27

Ezra Klein (NYT) Interview with Thomas Friedman

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-tom-friedman.html>

Ukraine- Russia

ISW Russian Offensive
Campaign Assessment
(Feb 18, 2024)



<https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-18-2024>

Status of Russia-Ukraine War

- **Uncertainties dominate the outlook**
 - Shift from optimism in 2023 to pessimism in 2024
 - Policy failure will have grave repercussions
- **Now have a war of attrition**
 - Ukrainian counteroffensive did not achieve objectives
 - Now focused on defense
 - Russia now pursuing a winter offensive
 - Relative failure of sanctions
 - Russian economic & industrial resilience
 - Ukraine has been successful in the Black Sea

Control of terrain near Donetsk City

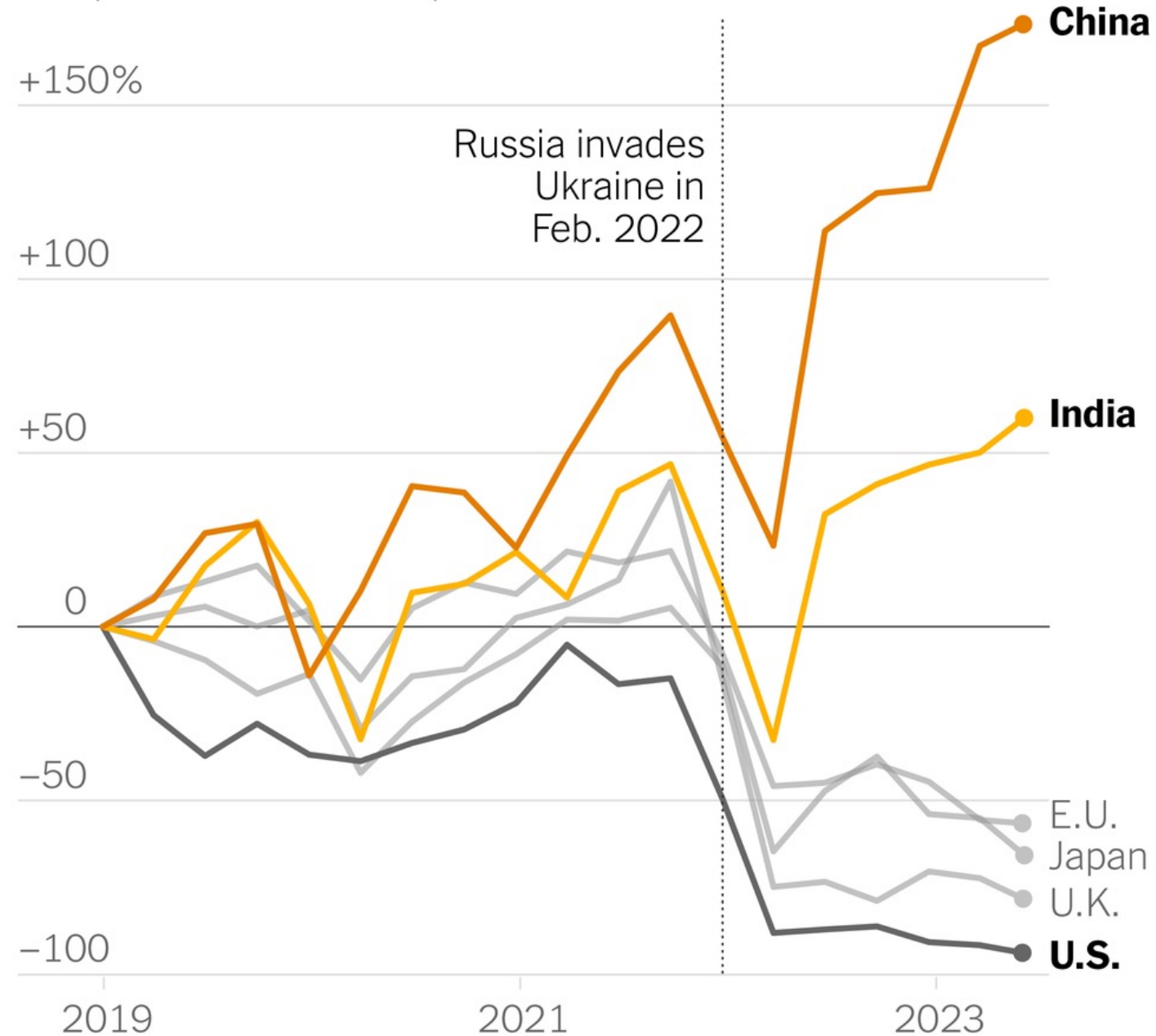
ISW Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment (18Feb24)



Sources: Institute for the Study of War with American Enterprise Institute's Critical Threats Project, videos, Ukrainian officials. - By The New York Times

Change in imports to Russia by country

Compared with the first quarter of 2019





Status of War (*con't*)

Key Issues in 2024 and beyond

- Strategy in the face of stalemate
- Support for Ukraine
- Settlement – how this ends

Ukraine Strategy Ahead

- **Time is not on Ukraine's side**
 - Need to move from defense to offense
 - Strengthen defenses & prepare for offense in 2025
- **Cannot retake all of occupied Ukrainian territory**
 - Strengthen Ukraine's hand for eventual negotiations
 - Solve issues of lower morale
 - Boost confidence & support

Ukraine Strategy (*con't*)

- **What is needed to gain upper hand with Russia**
 - More artillery, air defenses, armor, airpower, & long-range strike capability
 - Advanced technology is crucial, e.g. drones & electronic warfare
 - Manpower & training
 - Strengthen Ukraine's industrial base
 - Continued US & Western support
 - Control of Black Sea, squeeze Crimea, & conduct strikes inside Russia

Risks of Halt in US Support

- **Failure would put Ukraine in untenable military position**
 - Would demoralize leadership and citizens
- **US credibility & leadership would be shaken in Europe and beyond**
 - Setback for NATO
 - Europe cannot take up slack
- **Broad popular support in US for Ukraine may preserve the needed commitment**
 - Continuing European support is crucial as well

Settlement Issues

- **Battlefield will dictate willingness to negotiate**
 - Political developments in Ukraine & Russia will play a role
- **Three forms of possible end to the conflict**
 - Cease fire, armistice, & broad settlement
 - However, neither Zelensky nor Putin ready to talk
 - Putin expressed willingness to negotiate with the US
 - Zelensky has shown interest in a possible mediator
 - Issue of territory will be critical for Ukraine

Settlement Issues (*con't*)

- **Security guarantees will be critical for Ukraine**
 - Must avoid mistakes of early 1990s
- **Two approaches to guarantees**
 - Long-term bilateral military, economic & financial commitments by the US & European Allies
 - NATO membership
- **Any settlement must provide security & stability**
 - Must address the issue of eventual stationing of US, Allied, and/or NATO forces in Ukraine

Dealing with Russia

- **Must be part of any settlement**
 - Russia wants recognition of its legitimate role
- **US/NATO wants peaceful & prosperous relations**
 - Europeans want assurance against future aggression
 - Assure Russians that NATO is not a threat
- **Will require a new effort to ensure European security & stability**
 - Must avoid mistakes of 1990s
- **Can the current or future Russian leadership be trusted?**

Southern Border Crisis

Travel documents from around the world left on the ground at the border gap.

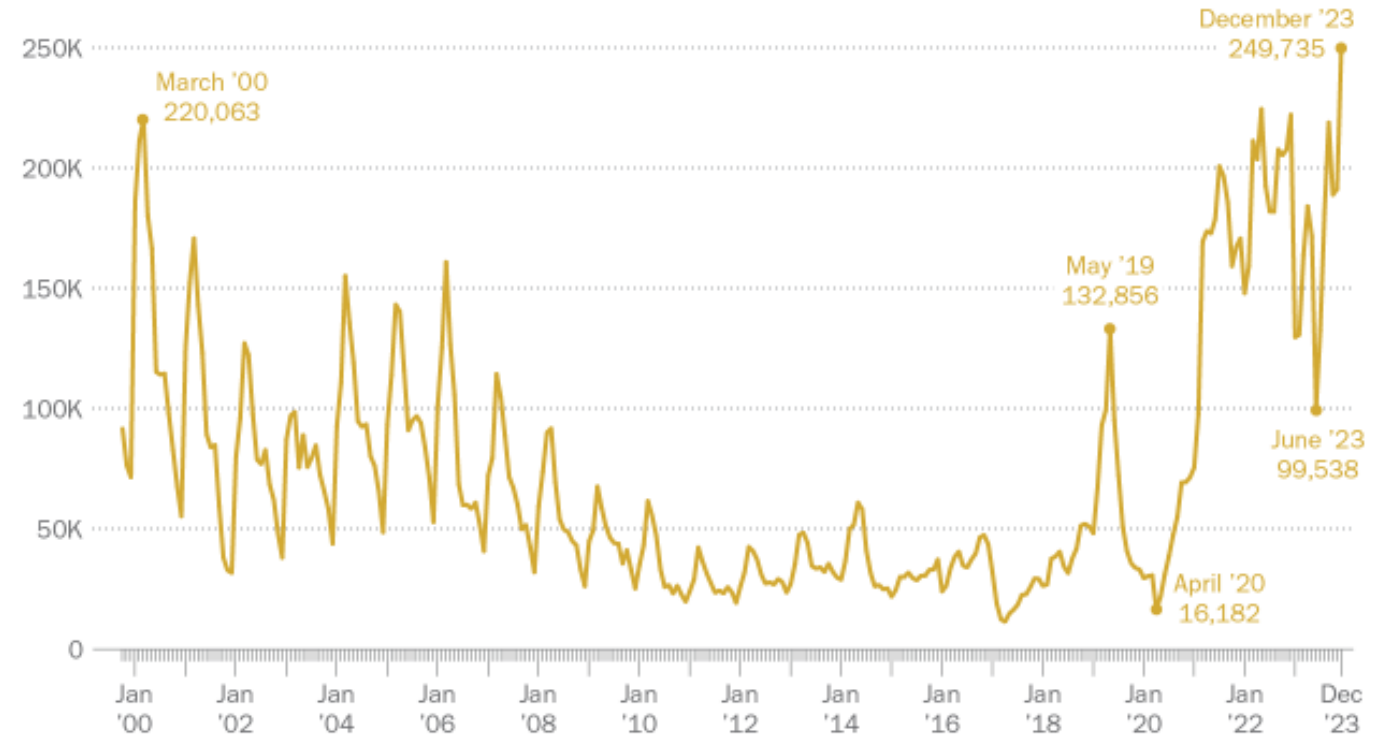
CBS News 60 Minutes (04Feb24):
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/chinese-migrants-fastest-growing-group-us-mexico-border-60-minutes-transcript/>



2023 ended with more migrant encounters at U.S.-Mexico border than any month on record

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Monthly migrant encounters by U.S. Border Patrol at U.S.-Mexico border



Note: Beginning in March 2020, monthly totals combine apprehensions and expulsions into a new category known as encounters. Monthly totals before March 2020 include apprehensions only. Some migrants are encountered more than once. Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

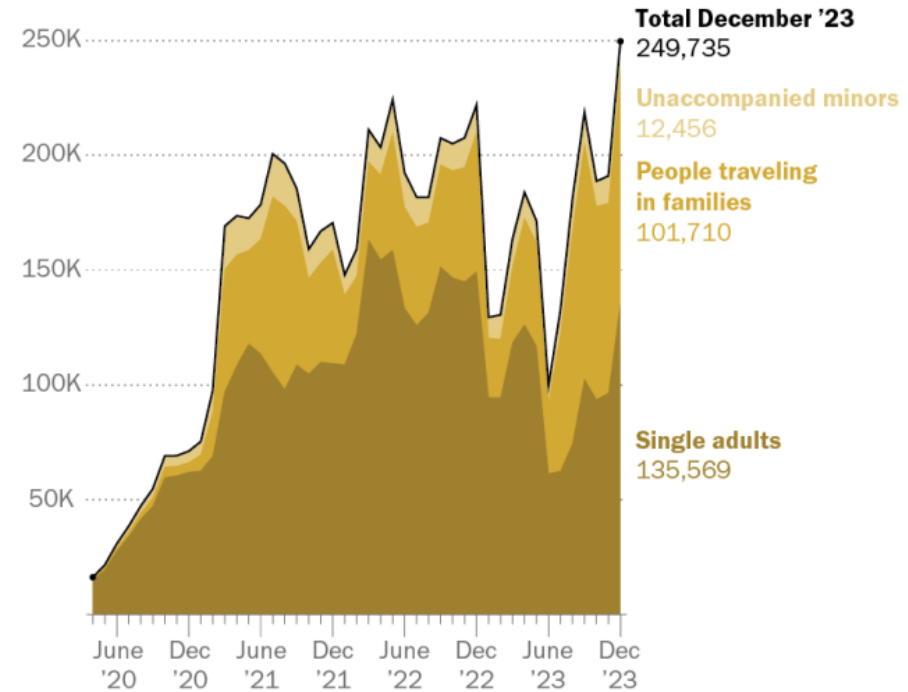
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/02/15/migrant-encounters-at-the-us-mexico-border-hit-a-record-high-at-the-end-of-2023/>

A growing share
of migrant
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Monthly migrant encounters by U.S. Border Patrol at U.S.-Mexico border involving ...



Note: Migrant encounters include apprehensions and expulsions; some migrants are encountered more than once.

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Who is crossing?

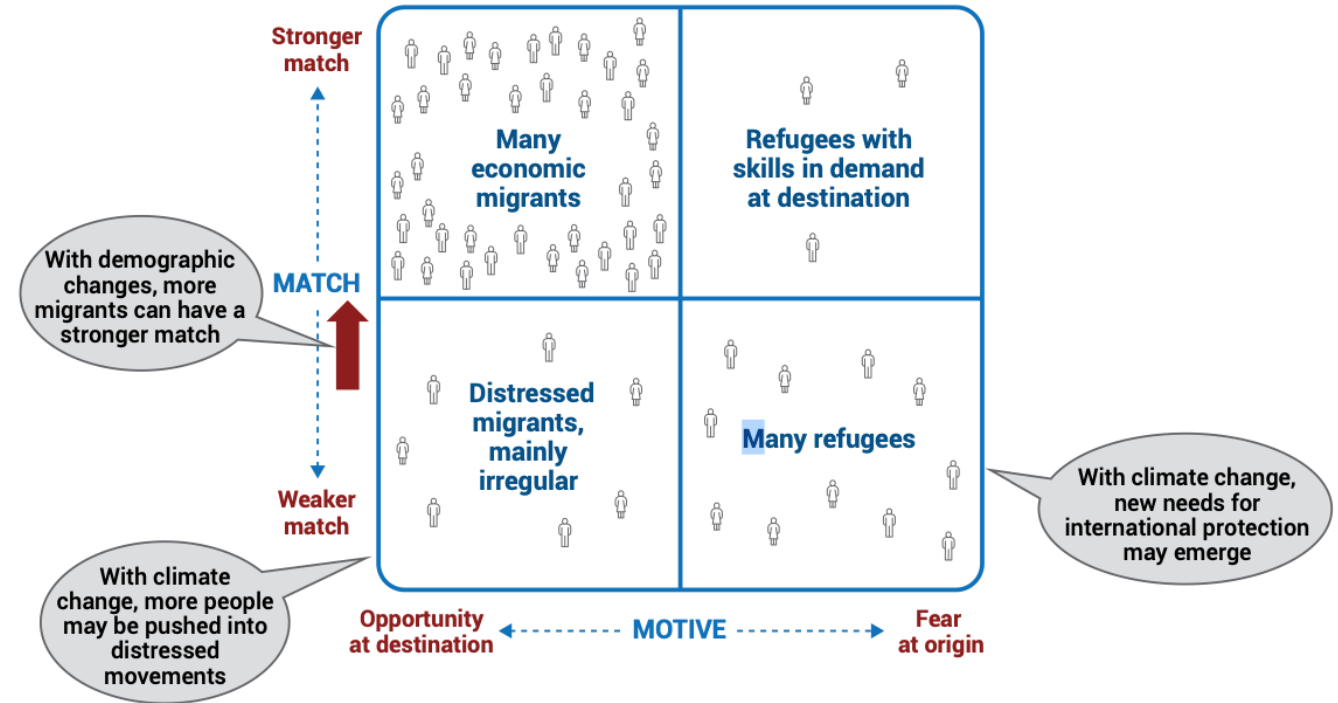
A few more stats from Pew Research Study Report (15 Feb 24)

- Historically, most encounters were from Mexico or Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras)
- In Dec 2023, 54% involved citizens from other countries
- In Dec 2023, Nearly 47,000 Venezuelans crossed (up from 6,000 in Dec 2022)
- In Dec 2023 56,000 were from Mexico
- Sharp increase in encounters with citizens of China – 6,000 in Dec 23 (up from 900 in Dec 2022)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/02/15/migrant-encounters-at-the-us-mexico-border-hit-a-record-high-at-the-end-of-2023/>

We are not alone
 - Global migration is on the rise with changing demographics and climate

Figure 3.1 Demographics and climate change are transforming migration patterns



Source: WDR 2023 team.

Note: Match refers to the degree to which a migrant's skills and related attributes meet the demand in the destination country. Motive refers to the circumstances under which a person moves—whether in search of opportunity or because of a "well-founded fear" of persecution, armed conflict, or violence in their origin country.

World Bank Report: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2023>



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Your Thoughts
&
Questions?
