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THE TRUMPET WEEKLY

DECEMBER 12, 2014

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Iran Air Strikes: A Dramatic Change in Tactics

BY CALLUM WOOD

LATE NOVEMBER bore witness to a dramatic and ominous change in Middle East geopolitics. On November 30, *Al Jazeera* aired video footage purportedly showing Iranian jets conducting airstrikes over Iraq. Pentagon officials stated that they had no reason to doubt the images.

Iran allegedly struck Islamic State targets in the Iraqi province of Diyala. This province has seen the closest fighting to the Iranian border, and is covered in part by Iran's self-proclaimed buffer zone. Iran's aging F-4 Phantom fleet carried out the

see **TACTICS** page 12

An Iranian-made Saegheh (Thunder) and an F-5 fighter jet bomb targets near the coast of Chabahar city, south of Iran, during a military exercise.



Islamic State Claims 'Radioactive Device' Now in Europe

WASHINGTON FREE BEACON | December 8

AN ALLEGED weapons maker for the Islamic State claimed that a "radioactive device" has been smuggled into an undisclosed location in Europe, according to an intelligence brief released Monday by the SITE [Search for International Terrorist Entities] Intelligence Group. ...

The claim by [Muslim al-Britani, comes just days after reports emerged that [the Islamic State] could have in its possession a dirty bomb, the elements of which were obtained via earlier [Islamic State] raids on a university research facility in Mosul that contained uranium. Britani is also responsible for the flurry of reports on the dirty bomb.

Britani, who has disseminated on his Twitter feed "weapon instructions and manuals," claimed on November 23 that the "Islamic State does have a dirty bomb. We found some radioactive material from Mosul University,"

according to the tweets reproduced by SITE.

While it is difficult to assess the veracity of Britani's claims, U.S. officials have expressed concern about [the Islamic State] potentially smuggling nuclear and radioactive material out of Iraq.

U.S. and Iraqi officials inked a pact in September meant to step up efforts to combat this type of smuggling, which the United States deemed a "critical" threat.

"There's always a concern about radiological or radioactive sources," a State Department official told the *Washington Free Beacon* at the time. ...

Iraq reportedly informed the United Nations in July that terrorists had seized nuclear materials being housed at Mosul University. Some 90 pounds of uranium were said to have been stolen, according to reports. ...

Opposition Will Outlast Obama

JERUSALEM POST | December 11

THE UNITED States will continue to oppose Israeli settlement activity even after U.S. President Barack Obama leaves office in two years, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki told reporters in Washington on Wednesday.

"Our opposition—this administration's opposition to settlements is fully consistent with the policies of administrations for decades, including of both parties. So the notion that that would change is not borne out by history," Psaki said.

She spoke in response to a conversation [Israeli] Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon had with male high school pupils in the Makor Haim Yeshiva in the Gush Etzion region of the West Bank on Tuesday.

Ya'alon told the pupils that the Obama administration had pressured Israel to halt the advancement of West Bank settlement plans. He reassured them, however, that the Obama administration was temporary and would soon be over, thereby indicating that future U.S. governments could be more favorable to Israel on this issue. ...

"At present there is a certain

administration in Washington, and it is the U.S. that is setting the tone [for antagonism from other nations]. But this administration won't be [in power] forever," Ya'alon said. ...

"In Zechariah 11:14 is a prophecy that God would 'break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.' This may well refer to a future rift between America (biblical Israel) and the Jewish state (Judah). If America turned its back on the Jews, it would leave little Israel isolated and vulnerable. This may be the scenario that hastens half of Jerusalem being taken (Zechariah 14:2), which will lead to Israel's downfall."

—Trumpet, March-April 2004

Iran Retains Nuclear Capabilities as Sanctions Erode

JERUSALEM POST | December 7

A DAY AFTER U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said in a strongly pro-Israel speech that the Joint Action Plan with Iran has significantly hampered Iran's nuclear march at a small cost

to sanctions relief, National Security Council head Yossi Cohen told the cabinet on Sunday that Iran was continuing its pursuit of a nuclear weapon.

According to a statement put out by the prime minister's office, Cohen said that the extension of the Joint Action Plan with Iran enables it to preserve and even increase its nuclear capabilities while the sanctions are "in danger of collapse. This is something that could lead to a regional nuclear arms race in the Middle East." ...

[T]he current interim agreement—known as the Joint Action Plan—was rolled over for another seven months, during which additional negotiations with Iran will take place. ...

Related: "Iran Wants Nuclear War"

Syria, Islamic State 'Ignoring' Each Other

NBC NEWS | December 11

SYRIA'S MILITARY and [the Islamic State] may be sworn enemies but instead of wiping each other off the battlefield they have been delicately dancing around each other, according

to new data exclusively obtained by NBC News.

Both sides in the bloody conflict appear to be eliminating smaller rivals ahead of a possible final showdown.

Around 64 percent of verifiable [Islamic State] attacks in Syria this year targeted other non-state groups, an analysis of the IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center's (JTIC) database showed. Just 13 percent of the militants' attacks during the same period—the year through November 21—targeted Syrian security forces. That's a stark contrast to the Sunni extremist

group's operations in Iraq, where more than half of [Islamic State] attacks (54 percent) were aimed at security forces.

"In Iraq, it's a very clear insurgency: them against the Iraqi state," said Matthew Henman, head of JTIC. "In Syria, it's a different situation because you have such a proliferation of competing, non-state armed groups in the country in addition to Assad."

Syrian President Bashar Assad has been accused of encouraging the rise of Islamist extremist groups, like [the Islamic State], in order to discredit opposition to his rule. ...

JTIC's data shows that his counterterrorism operations—more than two thirds of which were airstrikes—skew heavily towards groups whose names aren't [the Islamic State]. Of 982 counterterrorism operations for the year up through November 21, just 6 percent directly targeted [the Islamic State].

Henman said the figures suggest [the Islamic State] and Assad's security forces have embraced the "clever strategy" of mostly "ignoring each other." ...

Related: "Syria Is Ready to Explode"

EUROPE

Pope Francis Unifying Church and State

Kiall Lorenz | December 7

ON NOVEMBER 25, Pope Francis became the first pontiff in nearly 30 years to visit the European Parliament. Pope John Paul II was the last pope to address the Parliament in what he described as a "special moment in the history of this Continent." His ecstatic visit in 1988 came as communism was crumbling in Eastern Europe, providing a great opportunity for Europe to unite. Pope Francis, not so jubilant on his recent visit, delivered a somber message to the European Parliament.

"Despite a larger and stronger Union, Europe seems to give the impression of being somewhat elderly and haggard, feeling less and less a protagonist in a world which frequently regards it with aloofness, mistrust and even, at times, suspicion," the pope said.

He said that "the great ideas which once inspired Europe seem to have lost their attraction, only to be replaced by the bureaucratic technicalities of its institutions."

Pope Francis is disappointed at the lack of European influence in the world. He wants Europe to become a major contributor in world politics. Even though Pope Francis is the first non-European pope in the last 1,300 years (and the first Jesuit pope), he still has grand visions

for the Continent. One of them is to dispel the EU's "grandma" image. The pope wants European unity that will lead to a vibrant, robust and forceful conglomeration of nations.

Pope Francis told the European Parliament how it could fix the disconnect with the world. The solution for European sleepiness is to "recover a sense of values and mission, one foundation for which is religious conviction. A Europe which is no longer open to the transcendent dimension of life is a Europe which risks losing its own soul."

Pope Francis's solution is to *embrace religion*, specifically Roman Catholicism. Religion has been sliding in Europe in recent decades and the pope hopes to reverse such a trend. The pope wants the leaders to return to their religious roots. Pope Francis says Europeans must not forget the 2,000-year-old history between Christianity and Europe.

Continue to watch as Pope Francis rallies Europe and the Christian world to unite. Watch as his cries for European unity become louder and more leaders start to take notice. The Catholic Church has held many empires together throughout history. Soon, it will again provide the glue to unite a European superpower.

France's Upper House Urges Recognition of Palestine

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE | December 11

FRANCE'S UPPER house of Parliament on Thursday urged the government to recognize Palestine as a state,

following a similar and highly symbolic vote in the lower house.

The Senate resolution, calling for French recognition of Palestine and an "immediate restarting" of peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis, passed narrowly, with 153 votes in favor and 146 against.

The vote came as European

countries seek alternative ways to restart the stalled Middle East process and followed an unopposed motion in the Irish Parliament to recognize Palestine—the fourth assembly in Europe to do so.

Lawmakers in Britain and Spain have already passed similar motions and Sweden has gone even further,

Germany to Send Troops to Iraq

TELEGRAPH | December 11

GERMANY IS planning to send troops to Iraq in a break with the military policy it has followed since 1945—and one that may even require the constitution to be changed.

Angela Merkel, the chancellor, wants to send a contingent of German soldiers to northern Iraq to help train Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State

German troops have served with international forces in Afghanistan, Bosnia and elsewhere, but only under missions with a clear United Nations mandate or NATO leadership.

A few German military personnel are already in northern Iraq training Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, but Ms. Merkel's government wants to send more than 100 troops, according to *Bild* newspaper.

Under German law, any military deployment abroad requires parliamentary approval, but this mission may require more than a simple vote in the Bundestag. The Defense Ministry fears it may require a change in the basic law, according to an unidentified source quoted in *Bild*.

Josef Janning, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin, said the total deployment was likely to be in the dozens—and a constitutional change was highly unlikely.

"It's a bit of a signal, but these are not combat troops—they are training and support troops," he said. "You could say it's about being a bit more visible. As a deployment, it's more of symbolic than a real one, and it's probably intended as that."

Mr. Janning added: "We're talking about a few dozen people being sent in firstly to train the Peshmergas in the weapons' use, and secondly to get firsthand look at their strategy and what they're doing." ...

When West Germany formed new armed forces, the Bundeswehr, in 1955, the country placed severe constitutional limits on its use.

Lawyers have already raised doubts about the current training mission in Iraq, and senior ministers are reportedly locked in discussions over whether an expanded deployment would be constitutional. A change to the Basic Law would require a two-thirds majority in the Bundestag, and a simple majority in the upper house.

The possible new deployment comes despite equipment shortages so severe that Ursula von der Leyen, the defense minister, has admitted that Germany cannot even meet its NATO commitments. ...

Ms. von der Leyen has led calls for higher defense spending and for Germany's armed forces to take a more proactive role in the world. Under a NATO declaration made in September, all members are supposed to spend at least 2 percent of national income on defense. At present, Germany spends just 1.3 percent.

Related: ["The Whirlwind Prophecy"](#)

officially recognizing Palestine as a state, in a move that prompted Israel to recall its ambassador.

Earlier this month, French M.P.s voted 339 to 151 in favor of a motion urging the government to recognize the state of Palestine as a way of achieving a "definitive resolution of the conflict."

The Senate vote drew a swift and angry response from Israel, which said it "hinders the possibility to advance toward peace and sends a wrong message to the Palestinians, who do not wish to negotiate."

"Only a solution based on negotiation will bring about peace and the end of the conflict. Israel thanks the many French senators who did not support the decision," added the Israeli Foreign Ministry in a statement.

Neither vote is binding on French government policy toward Palestine and the Middle East. However, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius has said Paris would recognize Palestine if diplomatic efforts failed again and

urged a resolution to the Middle East conflict within two years. ...

Merkel 'Frustrated' With Putin

EU OBSERVER | December 9

GERMAN CHANCELLOR Angela Merkel's top aide on Russia has said she is "frustrated" by Moscow's broken promises, while raising the alarm on Russian air maneuvers.

Gernot Erler spoke to Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* on Monday (December 8), ahead of new Russia-Ukraine peace talks due in Minsk on Tuesday. "What we are seeing is the chancellor's growing frustration with the Russian president. Vladimir Putin has promised her a lot, but so far he hasn't kept his word. That was the case, for instance, with the ceasefire accord negotiated [in Minsk] in September," he said.

"I'm also frustrated. I never thought

the Russians were ready to destroy everything that we'd achieved," he added.

"We treated Russia as a partner ... in vain. There is no way to return to those times."

Delegates from Russia, Ukraine, two self-proclaimed republics in east Ukraine, and the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], are to meet on Tuesday in Minsk to try to revive the September 5 ceasefire accord.

Opinion is divided on whether Putin intends to freeze the conflict, or to launch a new offensive against the city of Mariupol in southeast Ukraine, establishing a land bridge to Crimea, which he annexed in March. ...

He told the Polish daily that EU sanctions are having a smaller effect on the Russian economy than the slump in oil prices.

"[Russia] still has sufficient currency reserves [to prevent an economic crisis]. The sanctions are not making a big impression."

But he noted the Kremlin is surprised it hasn't managed to split the EU on its sanctions regime. "Russia can't understand it. Our show of unity is having a greater effect than the sanctions per se."

"Putin's recent decision to halt the construction of South Stream [a gas pipeline from Russia to Italy] was an attempt to sow discord. Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia—countries which are, to say the least, very accommodating to Russia—will suffer the most from this decision. So maybe the whole point is to mobilize them against Europe's joint policy," Erler noted. ...

Risks of Nuclear War Rising

INDEPENDENT | December 8

URGENT ACTION is needed to minimize the risk of a nuclear war, more than 120 senior military, political and diplomatic figures from across the world have warned.

Ahead of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which starts [December 8], the experts wrote in a letter that the danger of such a conflict was "underestimated or insufficiently understood" by world leaders.

The signatories include people from across the political spectrum

"Tensions between nuclear-armed states and alliances in the EuroAtlantic area and in both South and East Asia remain ripe with the potential for military miscalculation and escalation," says the letter to Sebastian Kurz, Austria's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"In a vestige of the Cold War, too many nuclear weapons in the world remain ready to launch on short notice, greatly increasing the chances of an accident.

"This fact gives leaders faced with an imminent potential threat an insufficient amount of time to communicate with each other and act with prudence."

There should also be better crisis management in "conflict hotspots" and new security measures, warning that stockpiles were "insufficiently secure, making them possible targets for terrorism."

World's Longest Train Journey Ends in Madrid

TELEGRAPH | December 10

THE WORLD'S longest train journey has concluded in Madrid—marking the end of the line for carriages which set off from China 20 days ago to make the 8,000-mile trip.

The train left Yiwu, in eastern China, on November 18 on what is

being described as a test journey to see whether the route is viable. A regular freight service could open up next year.

The carriages then passed through Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany and France, before arriving in Madrid on December 8.

Li Qiang, the governor of China's Zhejiang province—where Yiwu is located—said the route was important to "implement the strategy of developing a new Silk Road."

Regular services already exist between China and Germany—arriving from Chongqing to the city of Duisburg, and from Beijing to Hamburg. But a route down to Spain would, it is hoped, significantly increase trade.

Roughly 80 percent of global trade is shipped by boat as freight train service faces several technical and bureaucratic hurdles which vary according to country. ...

The train's 40 shipping containers carried goods including spinning tops for children and cutting tools. It will return to China in the new year with wine, olive oil and cured ham.

"It's early, but there is no doubt that a German-Chinese alliance is forming. Perhaps some mock us for letting Bible prophecy inform our analysis of world events. But it's getting harder and harder to deny the facts."

—Trumpet, August 2012

ASIA

China's Checkmate

DEFENSE NEWS | December 6

TAIWAN'S F-16s face a growing threat from China's arsenal of surface-to-air missiles (SAMS). The latest and gravest is the Russian sale of 400-kilometer-range (249-mile-range) S-400 Triumf road-mobile SAM systems to China.

The Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation has downplayed recent Russian-language media reports of an agreement and contract, but "as I understand it, it is basically

true," said Vasiliy Kashin, a China military specialist at Moscow's Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies.

Russian media reports indicate China and Russia have signed a US\$3 billion contract to procure an initial six S-400 battalions. The missile is an upgraded variant of the S-300, now fielded by China in battalions based near major cities and scattered along the coast facing Taiwan and Japan.

Kashin, who attended the recent Airshow China in Zhuhai, said that

with a range of 400 kilometers and fielded in Fujian Province, the SAM system will be able to cover the whole of Taiwan airspace, thus finally solving the "problem of air superiority for the Chinese."

If China chooses to deploy the S-400 in Shandong Province, it will provide coverage of airspace over the Senkaku Islands. "That will be another asymmetric capability, together with antiship ballistic missiles, which will boost Chinese potential in dealing with the local conflicts in East Asia,"

Russia's Military Will Get Bigger and Better in 2015

MOSCOW TIMES | December 8

DESPITE A looming recession, Russia will increase military spending by 30 percent next year to a record post-Soviet high of 3.3 trillion rubles (\$62 billion), cash that will be used to buy more aircraft, submarines, missiles and weapons for an ascendant armed forces.

The increase, which takes Russia's spending on defense to 4.2 percent of gross domestic product, comes amid an ongoing crisis in Ukraine that has seen a return to Cold War-style rhetoric and the reinsertion of military posturing into international politics. ...

With a 20 trillion ruble (\$375 billion) rearmament drive that aspires to replenish 70 percent of the armed forces with modern equipment by the end of the decade in full swing, 2015 looks to be a year of breakneck growth in Russia's military capacity. ...

According to media reports, the Russian military has 4,000 exercises of various types and sizes planned for next year—1,000 more than in 2014.

Several new armored vehicles are expected to be unveiled during Victory Day celebrations on May 9, including new tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers, officials have said. ...

A separate branch of the Russian military—the Strategic

Rocket Forces—is also due for some upgrades next year, with deployment beginning of new Yars missiles. Yars missiles are reported to be an answer to U.S. plans to deploy missile shields in Eastern Europe. Intended to replace the Topol-M missiles currently deployed in the Russian military, the Yars are reported to have 10 independently targeting nuclear warheads, making them harder to halt.

By 2020 ... every missile in Russia's arsenal will be replaced with a new one. ...

By the end of 2015, the Black Sea Fleet will receive a new Admiral Grigorovich-class frigate, two new super-silent improved Kilo-class diesel-electric submarines, and a handful of small Project 21631 missile corvettes.

By 2016, six new Grigorovich-class frigates and six improved Kilo-class submarines will take positions in the Black Sea Fleet. In 2015, the fleet is expected to receive a handful of small Buyan-class missile corvettes, according to RIA. ...

The air force's press service told RIA last week that the state defense order for 2015 includes 150 new airplanes and helicopters. ...

Related: ["Russia Ramping Up Military Aggression"](#)

Kashin said.

"Given its extremely long range and effective electronic warfare capabilities, the S-400 is a game-changing system that challenges current military capabilities at the operational level of war," said Paul Giarra, president, Global Strategies and Transformation. The S-400 will have the "effect of turning a defensive system into an offensive system, and extend China's A2/AD [anti-access/area-denial] umbrella over the territory of American allies and the high seas." ...

Effective air defense systems like the S-400 are consequential because of the cost equation involved, Giarra said. Surface-to-air missile systems are much less expensive than the manned and unmanned aircraft they are designed to shoot down, and the very long range of the S-400 multiplies the advantage.

"Without effective countermeasures, aircraft will be held away from China's coasts, giving teeth, for instance, to China's assertion that surveillance missions in China's EEZ [exclusive economic zone] are not allowed," he said.

China has been adamant that U.S.

military aircraft cease flying within China's EEZ and has harassed U.S. military flights and sea-going vessels since 2001. In August, a Chinese J-11 fighter harassed a U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft near Hainan Island. ...

South Korea to Work With Russia, North Korea

TASS | December 9

THE REPUBLIC of Korea speaks in favor of promoting trilateral projects involving Russia and North Korea, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yury Trutnev said on Tuesday at a business forum underway in Seoul.

"Problems of trilateral relations are raised at virtually every meeting," he said. "South Korean representatives say they will be grateful if the Russian Federation helps organize trilateral projects, helps establish cooperation embracing the [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] and the Republic of Korea, because it's not only the

economy, it also means of stability in this part of the planet."

He stressed the expansive interest in cooperation with Russia shown by South Korean businesses, recalling the presence of more than 600 South Korean companies on the Russian market at present.

"People have genuine interests in the prospects for our cooperation," Trutnev said. "It's important for them to know the Russian government has made development of the Far East a national priority and the areas of sped-up development are being created there." "Also, we attach significance to trilateral cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Trutnev said. ...

Chinese President Urges Faster Military Development

INDIAN EXPRESS | December 5

CHINESE PRESIDENT Xi Jinping has urged faster development of advanced new military equipment to

China is Diminishing the U.S.'s Air Power Superiority

BUSINESS INSIDER | December 8

THE U.S. Air Force's air power superiority over China is rapidly diminishing in light of rapid Chinese modernization of fighter jets, cargo planes and stealth aircraft, according to a recently released Congressional review.

The 2014 U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission recommends that Congress appoint an outside panel of experts to assess the U.S.-Chinese military balance and make recommendations regarding U.S. military plans and budgets, among other things.

The Commission compiled its report based upon testimony, various reports and analytical assessments along with available open-source information. The review states that the Chinese People's Liberation Army currently has approximately 2,200 operational aircraft, nearly 600 of which are considered modern. ...

Regarding stealth aircraft, the review mentions the recent flights of prototypes of the Chinese J-20 stealth fighter, calling the aircraft more advanced than any other air platform currently deployed in the Asia-Pacific region. The Chinese are also testing a smaller stealth fighter variant called the FC-31, according to the report. ...

However, the U.S. technological advantage in weaponry, air and naval platforms is rapidly decreasing, according to

the review. ...

In addition to stealth technology, high-tech fighter aircraft and improved avionics, the Chinese have massively increased their ability with air-to-air missiles over the last 15 years, the review finds. ...

The review also points to the Y-20 aircraft, a new strategic airlifter now being tested by the Chinese which has three times the cargo-carrying capacity of the U.S. Air Force's C-130. Some of these new planes could be configured into tanker aircraft, allowing the Chinese to massively increase their reach and ability to project air power over longer distances. ...

The review also catalogues information related to China's nuclear arsenal and long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles such as the existing DF-31 and DF-31A along with the now-in-development DF-41. ...

Some prominent lawmakers, such as [House Armed Services Committee] Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee chairman Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., have expressed concern regarding the review's findings. Forbes has consistently talked about the U.S. need to properly address the potential threat posed by rapid Chinese military modernization and expansion. ...

"The Chinese seem to recognize the U.S.'s shattered will to use its power. And they may well be preparing to put those tatters on display for the whole world."

—theTrumpet.com, Jan. 29, 2013

help build a strong army, state media reported, as the country steps up an ambitious modernization plan that has rattled nerves across the region.

Speaking at a two-day conference of the People's Liberation Army, Xi said that military reforms should be "guided by the objective of building a strong army," the official Xinhua news agency said late on Thursday.

"Advanced weaponry is the embodiment of a modern army and a crucial support for national security and

rejuvenation," it cited Xi as saying. ...

Xi has been pushing to strengthen the fighting ability of China's 2.3 million-strong armed forces as they project power across disputed waters in the East and South China seas.

China has developed emerging stealth fighter technology, anti-satellite missiles and now has one aircraft carrier in operation and is planning more.

Defense spending this year is set to rise by 12.2 percent to 808.2 billion yuan (US\$131.3 billion), a number many

governments and analysts say is not representative of the country's true defense outlays.

Xi said that new weapons must be "innovative, practical and forward-thinking to meet the demands of actual combat and fill in the weak spots of China's existing equipment." ...

Related: "Will China Call America's Military Bluff?"

LATIN AMERICA/AFRICA

Grisly 'Execution' of Six Men Shocks South Africa

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE | December 11

HARDENED SOUTH African police expressed shock Thursday at the gruesome and mysterious murder of

six men [ages 18 to 30] found with their hands bound and their heads apparently crushed by rocks.

"This is the first case of such a nature," said police Capt. Frederick van Wyk, appealing on radio for the public's help in tracking the killers. An execution of this sort is a startling new development in a country inured

to daily reports of violent crime.

Frightened residents of Kraaifontein, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) northeast of Cape Town, told reporters they had been warned away from the crime scene by police, who said they would not be able to sleep if they saw the bodies. Photographer Sally Lottering told the *South African Times*

newspaper: “There were slabs on top of their heads. I could see their brains coming out. Their hands [were] tied at their back.” ...

Police would not speculate on the motive for the murders, but parts of the Western Cape are notorious for gang violence. ...

Related: “South Africa: Where Corruption, Rape and Murder Are Normal”

ANGLO-AMERICA

Police Officers Increasingly Afraid of the Community

CBS | December 8

ACTION IS needed to bolster public trust in the police in the aftermath of the killings of two unarmed black men by white police officers, two top Philadelphia officials told a national TV audience Sunday.

Mayor Michael Nutter and Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey participated in a panel discussion on NBC’s “Meet the Press” about the continuing demonstrations sparked by the shooting in Ferguson, Missouri, the chokehold death in New York City and the refusal of grand juries in both cases to indict the officers.

Ramsey, whom President Barack Obama recently named

as co-chair of his Task Force on 21st Century Policing that is tasked with recommending ways to shore up public trust, said he is troubled that so many people view the justice system as unfair. ...

“You, in essence, have the citizens who want to be protected, who are now increasingly afraid of the police, and you have some police officers who are increasingly afraid of the community,” the mayor said. “There is a large gap in that context Nutter added, “I support my police officers’ back in Philadelphia. This is a dangerous job. They interact with really bad people.” ...

School: 13-Year-Olds Can Have Sex

FOX NEWS | December 10

STUDENTS AT one northern California high school are learning more than just the birds and the bees.

Along with local area groups, some parents are irate that their children’s sex ed class at Acalanes High School in Lafayette is being taught by employees of Planned Parenthood without their prior knowledge. They are also fuming over the methods and materials being used, including a checklist that asks students if they are “ready for sex” and another worksheet that describes how to give and obtain consent, as well as a diagram that uses a “genderbread” person for lessons in gender identity.

“[Parents] are very concerned,” Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute, a nonprofit legal organization that is assisting the concerned parents, told FoxNews.com. “Planned Parenthood is not exactly the best when it comes to putting young people first.

“They get more grants from the promiscuity of children,” he added. “The material they have provided was

material that mirrored their agenda.” ...

Included in the materials provided to students were documents and worksheets that included a checklist entitled, “Sex Check! Are You Ready for Sex?” in which the 13- and 14-year-old students are asked questions such as if they have water-based lubricants and condoms and if they could handle a possible infection or pregnancy. Another worksheet reads like a how-to on obtaining consent from a possible sexual partner and offers possible statements like “Do you want to go back to my place?” and “Is it OK if I take my pants off?” ...

Congress Quietly Bolsters NSA Spying

DEFENSEONE | December 11

CONGRESS THIS week quietly passed a bill that may give unprecedented legal authority to the government’s warrantless surveillance powers, despite a last-minute effort by Rep. Justin Amash to kill the bill.

Amash staged an aggressive 11th-hour rally Wednesday night to block

passage of the Intelligence Authorization Act, which will fund intelligence agencies for the next fiscal year. The Michigan Republican sounded alarms over recently amended language in the package that he said will for the first time give congressional backing to a controversial Reagan-era decree granting broad surveillance authority to the president.

The 47-page intelligence bill was headed toward a voice vote when Amash rose to the House floor to ask for a roll call. Despite his efforts ... the bill passed 325-100, with 55 Democrats and 45 Republicans opposing.

The provision in question is “one of the most egregious sections of law I’ve encountered during my time as a representative,” Amash wrote on his Facebook page. The tea-party libertarian, who teamed up with Rep. John Conyers in an almost-successful bid to defund the National Security Agency in the wake of the Snowden revelations, warned that the provision “grants the executive branch virtually unlimited access to the communications of every American.”

The measure already passed the Senate by unanimous consent on

America's \$18 Trillion Black Friday Present

THE DAY following Thanksgiving was a very black Friday this year—but for a different reason than you might think. On November 28, the United States' national debt hit \$18 trillion, according to the U.S. Treasury Department. And if projections from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) are accurate, the debt load is set to soar much higher. But is there an even greater debt danger lurking?



ROBERT MORLEY

The national debt grew by a gargantuan \$486 billion during 2014. The good news is that it's the lowest deficit since the 2008 economic crisis struck. The bad news is that the deficit is about to get a lot worse. According to the CBO, the deficit will increase each year from now through 2021, when it will be back at the trillion-dollar level again. That is the CBO's baseline scenario—meaning if everything goes according to plan: America isn't involved in any more wars, the economy avoids recession, the stock market doesn't implode, etc. If things don't go according to plan, which has a history of happening, the budget deficits will be much worse.

It is hard to picture budget deficits this big, but that is what we may be returning to. For context: The U.S. national

debt took 218 years (from 1789 until 2007) to reach \$9 trillion. It only took the next seven years to double the cumulative deficits of all U.S. history. That in itself should be a huge warning sign.

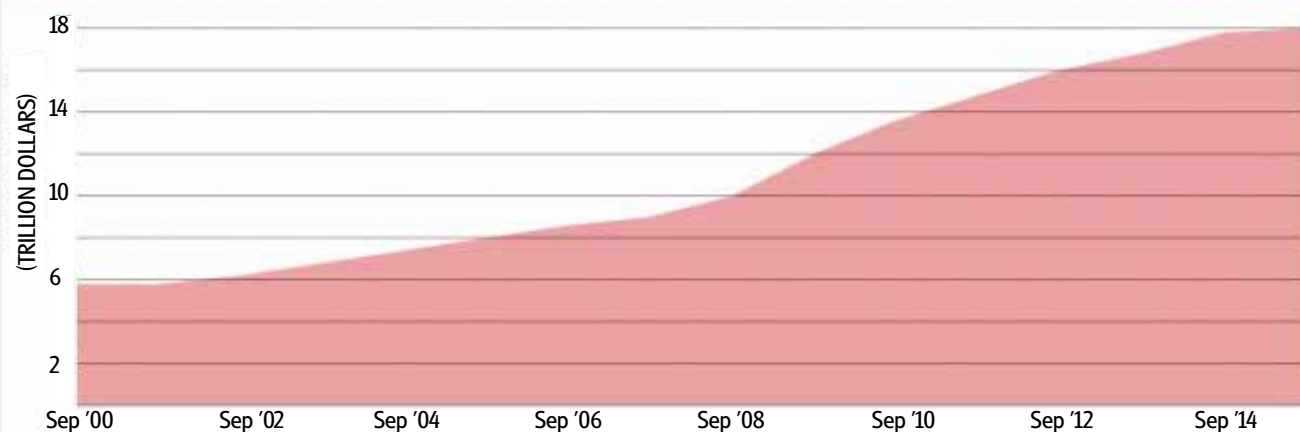
On November 26, the day before Thanksgiving, the Treasury Department revealed that the federal government actually borrowed over \$1 trillion this year—not \$486 billion. The \$486 billion is just the net. It had to borrow an additional \$514 billion in new debt to pay off old debt that was coming due. This too should be a warning that America's debt load may be becoming unsustainable.

Another sign America's federal debt burden may be at dangerous levels is that the debt is now greater than the size of the economy. With a gross domestic product of \$17.55 trillion, America's debt-to-GDP ratio comes in at a startling 103 percent.

Historically, big debt overhangs tend to work themselves out in traumatic ways—kind of like the frenzies that develop at Black Friday sales events. There will be a lot of kicking, biting and gnashing of teeth as debts default, currencies plummet, and massive numbers of jobs are lost, especially coming so soon after the last crisis. That's one Black Friday present that would have been better left at the till.

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2000-2014 UNITED STATES DEBT



Tuesday, and it is now on its way to the White House, where President Obama is expected to sign it.

The objections from Amash and others arose from language in the bill's Section 309, which includes a phrase to allow for "the acquisition, retention and dissemination" of U.S. phone and Internet data. That passage will give unprecedented statutory authority to

allow for the surveillance of private communications that currently exists only under a decades-old presidential decree, known as Executive Order 12333.

"If this hadn't been snuck in, I doubt it would have passed," said Rep. Zoe Lofgren, a California Democrat who voted against the bill. "A lot of members were not even aware that this new provision had been inserted

last-minute. ..."

Lofgren said she believed the Senate Intelligence Committee was the source of the language. The panel did not respond to requests for comment.

Lofgren also said the language was "the exact opposite of what the House passed this summer." She was referring to an amendment she championed that would have required the NSA to obtain



GERALD FLURRY

The Unknown Prophet

THE KEY OF DAVID | December 14

The Bible describes an end-time spokesman for God called 'that prophet.'



a warrant before reading Americans' private messages that were collected through a program intended to target foreigners. "Congress is authorizing something very questionable constitutionally," Lofgren added. ...

"Executive Order 12333 contains nothing to prevent the NSA from collecting and storing all such communication—content as well as metadata—provided that such collection occurs outside the United States in the course of a lawful foreign intelligence investigation ... No warrant or court approval is required, and such collection never need be reported to Congress. None of the reforms that Obama announced earlier this year will affect such collection."

In September, four House Democrats asked the Obama administration to make public "all current and future legal opinions or interpretations" concerning 12333, a request that thus far has gone unheeded. In their letter, Reps. Conyers, Lofgren, Alan Grayson and Rush Holt join with a number of privacy groups to express concerns about the order, saying that "secret law is a threat to democracy." ...

President Obama in January promised to reform the NSA's mass domestic spying

California Drought, Not Climate Change

LIVESCIENCE | December 8

NATURAL TEMPERATURE swings in the ocean, not global warming, are driving California's extreme drought, according to a new government study.

Researchers said sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean set up an atmospheric roadblock off the West Coast that diverted winter storms away from California. The state relies on winter rain and snow for most of its yearly water.

The roadblock is a persistent ridge of high pressure that first formed in 2011 during a La Niña event. Even though La Niña broke down after the 2011-2012 winter, the western equatorial Pacific Ocean remained a warm water bull's-eye, a pattern known to trigger droughts in the Southwest and California, the researchers report.

In the new study, scientists determined that the high-pressure system, dubbed the "ridiculously resilient ridge" by a California forecaster, continued through the 2013-2014 winter because of these favorable ocean temperatures. The pool of warm water

generates atmospheric winds that form patterns of high and low pressure (called planetary waves) that can get stuck off western North America as a high-pressure ridge.

The ridge and its accompanying drought are opposite the conditions that climate models predict under global warming, lead study author Richard Seager, a professor at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in New York, said [December 8] during a news briefing. Climate models project low-pressure systems off the West Coast, with wetter winters and drier springs for central and northern California, he said. "Overall, it's a shorter, sharper rainy season," Seager said. ...

According to the new report, which measures drought by precipitation, last winter was California's sixth-driest since 1895, and the state's three-year drought is second only to the historic 1974 to 1977 dry spell, which sparked California's first big water conservation movement.

But if one measures drought by soil moisture, an indicator of both precipitation and temperature, then California's drought is the worst in 1,200 years, according to a study published last week (December 3) in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters*.

President Seeks Sweeping Power to Expand War

WASHINGTON TIMES | December 9

SECRETARY OF State John F. Kerry told Congress Tuesday that President Obama wants expansive war powers to pursue the Islamic State terrorists wherever and however he deems necessary, stunning lawmakers by requesting a war authorization that would even allow the Pentagon to commit American combat troops to the fight.

Though Mr. Obama doesn't want combat troops, he won't have Congress tie his hands against unforeseen directions the war could take should the Islamic State evolve, expand its fight to other countries or prove more difficult to rout, Mr. Kerry said.



25 Years of Spiritual Warfare

THE TRUMPET DAILY | December 10

STEPHEN FLURRY The PCG passes a quarter century of fighting for truth.



"I don't think anybody wants to get into a long-term ground operation here. But we also don't want to hamstring the generals and the commanders in the field and the president, who's commander in chief, from their ability to be able to make some decision they need to make," Mr. Kerry told the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. ...

Australian Recruits as 'Cannon Fodder'

BBC | December 8

AT LEAST 20 Australians have been killed fighting alongside militants in Iraq and Syria, the Australian government has said.

Several of them died around the Syrian border town of Kobane, Attorney General George Brandis [said].

Mr. Brandis said Islamic State militants were using Australian recruits as "cannon fodder."

About 70 Australians are still believed to be fighting in the Middle East, while another 20 have returned home.

Australia has introduced legislation

to combat the threat from those fighters who come back home.

Propaganda had fooled Australian recruits who believed they were playing an important role in a religious crusade, Mr. Brandis said. "They are simply using them as frontline cannon fodder, suicide bombers and propaganda tools." ...

Big Banks Will Take Depositors Money in Next Crash

Greg Hunter, USAWATCHDOG | December 10

THE G-20 met recently in Australia to make new banking rules for the next financial calamity. Financial reform advocate Ellen Brown says these new rules will allow banks to take money from depositors and pensioners globally.

Brown explains, "It became rules we agreed to actually implement. There was no treaty, and Congress didn't agree to all this. They use words so that it's not obvious to tell what they have done, but what they

did was say, basically, that we, the governments, are no longer going to be responsible for bailing out the big banks. These are about 30 international banks. So, you are going to have to save yourselves, and the way you are going to have to do it is by bailing in the money of your creditors. The largest class of creditors of any bank is the depositors."

It gets worse, as Brown goes on to say, "Theoretically, we are protected by deposit insurance up to \$250,000 in the U.S. and 100,000 euros in Europe. The FDIC fund has \$46 billion, the last time I looked, to cover \$4.5 trillion worth of deposits. There is also \$280 trillion worth of derivatives that the five biggest banks in the U.S. are exposed to, and under the bankruptcy reform act of 2005, derivatives go first. So, they are basically exempt from these new rules. They just snatch the collateral. So, if you had a big derivatives bust that brought down JPMorgan or Bank of America, there is no way there is going to be collateral left for the FDIC or for the secured depositors. This would include state and local governments. They all put their money in these big banks. So, even though we are protected by the FDIC, the FDIC is not going to have the money. ... This makes it legal for these big 30 banks to take our money when they become insolvent. ... This was supposed to avoid too-big-to-fail, but what it does is institutionalizes too-big-to-fail. They are not going to go down. They are going to take our money instead."

Part of the coming financial calamity will involve hundreds of trillions of dollars in unbacked derivatives. Brown contends, "If the derivative bubble pops, nobody knows what is going to happen, and it's obvious it has to pop. It can't just keep growing. Depending on who you read, some people say it is up to \$2 quadrillion. It's virtual money, and it cannot keep going on."

When a financial crash does happen, you can forget about getting immediate access to your money. Brown says, "The banks will say, well, we don't have it. All the money goes into one big pool since Glass Steagall was repealed. They are allowed to gamble with that money, and that's what they do. ...

TACTICS from page 1

raids. These American-built planes come from the days of the shah of Iran, when the country was one of the United States' closest allies in the region.

Now these planes fly openly in Iraqi skies, showing that Iran is moving beyond its usual tactics.

For decades now, Iran has worked from the shadows. It backs Hezbollah in Lebanon and Bashar Assad's regime in Syria. In Yemen, the Houthis are armed by Iran. Bahrain's riots are stoked by Iranian protesters. All across the Middle East, Iran's instigating presence can be felt. But Tehran has used subterfuge and proxy wars, keeping its activities quiet and at arm's length, giving itself a degree of plausible deniability for its involvement.

What is happening in Iraq today is something different. Iran's campaign in Iraq has been anything but covert. Tehran has done little to hide that its Revolutionary Guard Corps are working alongside Iraqi soldiers. It has also made no bones about arming Shia militias within the nation. Under the guise of stemming the march of the Islamic State, Iran now wages open military missions within Iraq.

Then there is Iran's Gen. Qassem Suleimani. The mysterious general is responsible for orchestrating numerous attacks on U.S. military targets, as well as overseeing Iran's role in Lebanon and Syria. Until recently, the man had been little more than a ghost. Today, however, he is living larger than life in Iraq. Suleimani has been seen leading troops in eastern Iraq, and has already gained a string of victories against Islamic State forces.

Following closely on Suleimani's heels has been the airstrikes on Islamic State targets. Put these developments together and you clearly see the dramatic change in Iran's tactics. Iran is fighting in the clear light of day.

Even more remarkably, the United States has endorsed Iran's aggressive military campaign within Iraq. Secretary of State John Kerry called Iran's actions "positive," saying that if Iran was targeting Islamic State and having an impact, it was a good thing. If Iran needed Washington's stamp of approval, it got it.

Such an endorsement cements the effect of this policy change on the Middle East. A nation with an aggressive foreign policy being given the nod of approval by the U.S. is certain to have an impact on other nations in the region.

Consider Saudi Arabia. The Saudis are the key regional counterweight to Iran. The two nations wage proxy wars against one another throughout the region. The Saudis are putting out fires all along their southern and eastern borders as Iran stirs up unrest in neighboring nations. Now they are faced with Iran's air force operating next door in Iraq.

Iran has one of the largest standing armies in the region with about 545,000 active personnel. It is an aggressive nation; it is the world's number one state sponsor of terror. Its desire to dominate the region is no secret. Look at its already vast area of influence. It is working to establish control through weakening and destabilizing other nations. Now that it has been unofficially approved to have a military presence in Iraq, what will its next frontier be?

And once there are troops in Iraq, where else will Iran look? Will it offer military support in other unstable regions where other Shiites are threatened? Syria? Lebanon? Yemen? Bahrain? This is the threat now posed by Iran. The Iranian military is no longer fighting cloak-and-dagger—it is fighting out in the open.

Watch Iran make the most of this opportunity to grow its presence in the Middle East. Iran has pushed the boundaries of its influence, and it has received America's endorsement. Watch Iran try again, pushing further to dominate the region. But also be aware of where this pushy foreign policy will lead.

Bible prophecy indicates that Iran's policy of pushing at other nations will not be wholeheartedly endorsed for long. Iran, as the *Trumpet* has often pointed out, is the prophesied king of the south. (See our article "Three Reasons Why Iran Is the 'King of the South' of Bible Prophecy.") In Daniel 11, this king is prophesied to push one too many times, bringing on a horrifying backlash from another rising world power.

Read *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry's article "The Whirlwind Prophecy," and you will see that Iran's military expansion in the region won't go unchecked. Iran is growing bolder, changing its tactics and pushing harder than ever. How long will this continue before Daniel 11:40 is fulfilled?

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