

Trumpet Weekly

MARCH 20, 2015



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivers a speech during an election campaign meeting on February 8.

Netanyahu Wins Israeli Election

Brent Nagtegaal | March 17

IT APPEARS INCUMBENT ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER BENJAMIN NETANYAHU will remain in office and preside over the 20th Israeli Knesset.

With 99 percent of the vote now counted, Likud has won 30 mandates, while the Zionist Union has only 24, making the election a further swing to the right. Official voting data will be released on Thursday, after which Netanyahu will have 42 days to work with the other elected parties to muster the 61 votes necessary to form a government.

Opinion polls leading up to Tuesday's election had Likud trailing the Zionist Union by a few seats. In response, Netanyahu fired up his rhetoric, appealing to right-wing voters to back him instead of rival conservatives.

The most potent promise came when Netanyahu boldly asserted that his government will not accept a Palestinian state side by side with Israel, in the current political climate.

Netanyahu's refusal to move forward with a Palestinian state obliterates the international community's pretext for a formal peace process between Israelis and Palestinians. Thus, the peace

process is unlikely to move forward while Netanyahu remains in office.

As proven by his three terms in office, Prime Minister Netanyahu has been ready to accommodate U.S. peace brokers with confidence-building measures such as the 10-month settlement construction freeze in 2010. However, these measures were not met with any Palestinian reciprocation. Thus, in the current circumstances, a hardened Netanyahu looks to have all but given up on the idea of a two-state solution.

Netanyahu's current position against a Palestinian state is likely to do more than ruffle a few feathers in Washington and Brussels. Until recently, it has been the United States' historic position to veto anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations Security Council. This has traditionally toned down some of the international pressure against Israel to cave in to Palestinian demands. Now, it's likely the Obama administration will do away with its traditional stance.

No doubt, Netanyahu realized his preelection promise would result in further disintegration of relations between Israel and

the Obama administration. However, he was willing to take that risk to ensure he captured the votes necessary to win the election. Plus, with only two more years of President Barack Obama's presidency, and a majority Republican base supportive of Israel inside the United States Congress, Netanyahu believes the current rift can be healed once a new president comes into power.

However, it is possible that Netanyahu has underestimated the damage that the next two years of anti-Israel policy will do. If commentators thought the last six years of relations between the U.S. and Israel were bad, the next two will be worse. It's possible that the next two years will see the complete disintegration of the [brotherhood between Israel and the United States](#).

Netanyahu's stance against the establishment of a Palestinian state is something the *Trumpet* has expected from his

government, and it will eventually lead to the most positive outcome for Jews and Palestinians.

Based on a prophecy in Zechariah, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has long forecast that only a conservative Israeli government, intent on not dividing the city of Jerusalem, will be able to move Bible prophecy forward.

In 2006, Mr. Flurry wrote, "Palestinians 'resolve' by taking [East Jerusalem by force](#). That is why I believe the conservatives could regain control in Israel. They have a stronger will to fight for the land they believe belongs to them."

Netanyahu's toughened preelection stance puts the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy within reach. With another four years in office likely for the prime minister, all [eyes should be on Jerusalem](#).

 Follow [Brent Nagtegaal](#)

MIDDLE EAST



Esther—Used to Continue God's Plan

Gerald Flurry,
The Key of David | March 20

ESTHER'S HISTORY IS THAT OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE facing annihilation.



Saudis Say: Whatever Iran Gets, We Want the Same

Israel National News | March 16

AS U.S. AND IRAN RESUME NUCLEAR TALKS IN LAUSANNE, A SAUDI prince makes clear that the nuclear arms race is on.

A senior Saudi prince told the BBC Monday that if Iran is granted the right to enrich uranium, Saudi Arabia will demand the same right.

"I've always said whatever comes out of these talks, we will want the same," said Prince Turki al-Faisal, who has previously served as head of Saudi intelligence and Riyadh's ambassador to Washington and London. While he is no longer a government official, Faisal's words are widely understood as representing the views of the Saud ruling family.

"So if Iran has the ability to enrich uranium to whatever level,

it's not just Saudi Arabia that's going to ask for that," [he] stated. "The whole world will be an open door to go that route without any inhibition, and that's my main objection to this P5+1 [the six world powers] process." ...

Western sources revealed in early March that Kerry—who was visiting the Gulf states—was offering an American nuclear umbrella to deal with the Iranian nuclear threat. ...

According to the report, the plan essentially would have the U.S. defend the Gulf region from any nuclear attack that Iran might launch, in what appears to be a covert acknowledgement that the deal being struck will allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons as Israel has repeatedly warned.



Saudi Arabia and Egypt Drift Apart

Daryle Hochstetler | March 13

SAUDI KING SALMAN BIN ABDULAZIZ AL SAUD HAS A NEW DIRECTION for his country. According to the Associated Press, Saudi Arabia is working to improve relations with Turkey while laying

Egypt aside.

While the late King Abdullah maintained a close relationship with Egypt, King Salman seems more interested in cultivating a

closer relationship with Turkey, one of Egypt's regional rivals.

Iran's takeover of Yemen, its support for insurgent groups in Bahrain, its virtual takeover of Iraq, and the resilience of the Iranian puppet Syrian President Bashar Assad, have Saudi Arabia worried. And now with Saudi Arabia's American allies indicating they could eventually accept a nuclear-armed Iran, the Saudis are more fearful than ever. Hence, Saudi Arabia is reaching out for new friends, even if such a move threatens to undermine its relationship with Egypt.

As the Associated Press reported, Saudi Arabia appears to be seeking a new alliance with Turkey to counter the growing Iranian empire.

For the Saudis it seems that the old adage "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" is a truism. And they appear willing to offend their Egyptian allies in order to make a new alliance with Turkey. Such is the fear Saudi Arabia holds for Iran.

A [closer relationship](#) between Saudi Arabia and Turkey seems



almost absurd considering Turkey's oppression of Arabs for centuries up till the lead-up to World War I. However, an [alliance with Turkey is in the making](#). Meanwhile Saudi Arabia's relationship with Egypt is bound to cool.

T **Tikrit: Iran's Strategy in Iraq** **Callum Wood | March 18**

IRAQI MILITARY FORCES, SUNNI TRIBESMEN AND SHIITE MILITIAS entered Tikrit on March 10, marking the start of one of the nation's largest efforts to wrest control from the Islamic State. The Tikrit offensive highlights far more than just the effectiveness of a future attack on Mosul. It highlights Iran's strategy to replace Islamic State jurisdiction with its own.

Since the Islamic State first took control of northern Iraq, [Iran has been slowly upping its activity within the nation](#). Iran has grouped, trained and equipped Shiite forces.

Media reports say "Iraqi forces" took Tikrit, but this could mislead one to think that it was Iraq's American-trained security forces. While they played a part, it was far from crucial. Only 3,000 Iraqi security forces joined the assault, along with 1,000 Sunni tribal militias. But there were 20,000 Shiite militiamen, all from the group called the Popular Mobilization Force—Iranian owned and operated.

This group is led by Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis—a man listed by the United States government as a specially designated global terrorist. He advises Qassem Suleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force—which is also a terrorist group. Suleimani is reportedly visiting the battlefield in Tikrit to oversee the operation



personally. The Quds Force supplied ample manpower for the retaking of Iraq, and it has the generals to control it.

While the U.S. has always striven to create an Iraqi military that can stand on its own, that is not what we see today. What we see is the rise of Iranian militias, backed and sponsored by the world's number one state sponsor of terror. Look at Tikrit. Look at who has been doing the fighting. Look at who is leading the assault. It is not Iraqi security forces; it is not America—it is Iran.

Iran's Seizure of Iraq **Abdulrahman al-Rashed, Al-Arabiya News | March 19**

THE BATTLE TO RID TIKRIT OF THE TERRORIST GROUP [THE Islamic State] has revealed the depth of the Iranian military's role in Iraq, as well as the Iranian Revolutionary Guard leaders' authority over what has been dubbed the "popular mobilization" units—militias parallel to the Iraqi Army.

Iran has sent forces, consultants and arms to Iraq. And its security leaders have reiterated their view that they are the ones who saved the Iraqi regime and Baghdad.

A *New York Times* report said Iran deployed rockets and missiles in Iraq, while several Iraqi leaders spoke about a military

deal struck with Iran worth \$10 billion.

This does not fall into the context of temporary Iranian support for Iraq during its ordeal. It's more a plan by the Iranians to dominate and seize control of their oil-rich Iraqi neighbor, which has a significant geostrategic location.

The process of Iran's seizure of Iraq resembles that of the Syrian model in Lebanon

What changed since September is that Iran no longer settles with counting on the office of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki—who was its close ally—now that he's been constitutionally toppled by the majority of Iraqi forces.

Iran has therefore decided to be present in all Iraqi political, military, partisan and religious posts. ...

Iranian intelligence and Revolutionary Guard forces are currently heavily present inside Iraq, and most of them are deployed under the slogan of confronting [the Islamic State].

However the size of Iranian interference—in my view—confirms that Iran is not present in Iraq for a temporary military cooperation plan.

What enhances these fears is comments from Iraqi leaders that it bought weapons worth \$10 billion.

Since the latter amount of money is huge, and since Iran does not have weapons that are worth this amount, then this proves

several politicians' statements that in the past few years, Maliki's government funded Iranian activities in the region under different excuses, which were either described as financial compensation or as the cost of military purchases.

Truth be told, the amount of money paid by the Iraqis to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard—regardless of how hefty they are—are not the case here.

What's more important is Iran's intentions of this presence in Iraq and of managing Iraqi forces and controlling Iraqi political decisions. So are we ahead of an Iranian seizure of Iraq?

“Can you imagine the power Iran would have if it gained control of Iraq, which was at one time the third-leading exporter of oil in the world? ... I have believed for years that Iran will lead the [prophesied] king of the south and clash with the European Union, the king of the north. ... [Iran is] a very aggressive force that will be stopped only by a superior force! ... Bible prophecy is being fulfilled as you read this article.”

—Gerald Flurry, *Trumpet*, June 2003

EUROPE

Dangerous Propaganda

German-Foreign-Policy.com | March 9

THE GERMAN CHANCELLERY IS ACCUSING NATO'S SUPREME Allied Commander in Europe, Gen. Philip Breedlove, of making “dangerous propaganda,” as the German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* reported in its latest edition. According to the article, Breedlove is completely exaggerating Russia's military activities in eastern Ukraine. Berlin has been internally voicing this criticism since some time, which is also shared by other NATO members. At an internal meeting last week, ambassadors of several NATO countries sharply criticized the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) for his public appearances.

Based on information obtained in German government circles, *Der Spiegel* gives several examples of Breedlove's assertions, which obviously contradict reality. In late March 2014, the top NATO European commander declared, Russia had amassed 40,000 soldiers at the Ukrainian border ready to attack. Intelligence services of other NATO countries, however, reported a considerably lower number of Russian soldiers and that nothing about their composition pointed toward aggressive intentions. ... According to *Der Spiegel*, NATO's European commander's allegations made soon thereafter alleging a presence of Russian tanks and air defense systems in Ukraine have been confirmed neither by the German intelligence services' own satellite data nor by information from its allied U.S. intelligence services. The same applies to Breedlove's most recent statements alleging the presence of Russian combat troops, artillery battalions and more than 1,000 combat vehicles on Ukrainian territory. These allegations

seem purely fictitious.

Berlin's complaints of Breedlove's propaganda, throwing a spotlight on NATO and its member countries' credibility, should not be misunderstood as a rejection in principle of political propaganda. German governments have repeatedly faked allegations to justify political and military aggression. The 1999 aggression against Yugoslavia is a prime example. Just before NATO's attack, the German government dramatized an alleged “ethnic cleansing” in Serbia's Kosovo province—in open contradiction to OSCE findings and those of experts within its own defense ministry. The “ethnic cleansing” allegation was used to justify aggression against Yugoslavia, which was launched March 24, 1999. ... There was absolutely no proof for the alleged Serbian Operation Horseshoe to expel Kosovo Albanians, which had been used by the German government in the spring 1999 to justify NATO's attack on Yugoslavia.

The German government's current criticism of NATO's European commander's presumed lies is due to inner-Western power struggles. Germany is using a “dual strategy” in the Ukraine conflict, based on the Western model of its Cold War approach. Moscow should be put under pressure and at the same time develop ties to the West through certain forms of cooperation. ...

However, this strategy runs counter to plans championed by the war hawk wing of the U.S. foreign policy establishment, which is seeking President Vladimir Putin's overthrow at any price and therefore wants to escalate conflicts with Moscow. Germany sees

its policy toward Russia being systematically threatened and is therefore beginning to confront this wing by exposing manipulations by one of its representatives, SACEUR Philip M. Breedlove. ...

With Breedlove's credibility in doubt, the basis for Sina's report has also collapsed. ...

Similar reports are still being propagated. This not only

includes Breedlove's new allegation, "the Kremlin" has now "moved more than 1,000 combat vehicles, air defense and artillery into the secessionist areas of East Ukraine," a claim Berlin has exposed as purely fictitious. ... An eventual change of course for the German media in the aftermath of the latest *Spiegel* revelations is yet to be noticed.

Pope Not Expecting Many Anniversaries at the Vatican

Agence France-Presse | March 13

POPE FRANCIS MARKED THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ELECTION on Friday by giving an interview in which he says he expects his time at the Vatican to only last for another two or three years.

"I have a feeling my pontificate will be brief," the 78-year-old told Mexico's Televisa channel.

"Four or five years, I don't know. Two years have already gone by. It is a vague feeling I have that the Lord chose me for a short mission. I am always open to that possibility."

The first pope from Latin America has hinted in the past that he could retire, emulating his predecessor Benedict XVI,

who became the first pope to resign in seven centuries when he stepped down in February 2013.

Francis said Benedict had "opened an institutional door," but stopped short of repeating previous hints he could also resign, which drew criticism from some conservative theologians. ...

Francis said he visited and spoke by telephone to Benedict, who lives a monastic life in a former convent inside the Vatican. ...

Intriguingly, when asked if he liked being pope, Francis replies: "I don't not like it," before expanding on his dislike of travelling and his fondness for the comforts and familiarity of home. ...

Stratfor Chairman Straight-Talking: U.S. Policy Is Driven by Imperative to Stop Coalition Between Germany and Russia

Russian Insider | March 17

GEORGE FRIEDMAN, FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN OF STRATFOR, OR what is called by many "private/shadow CIA" for its well-known connections and close cooperation with the CIA, gave a very interesting speech to the Chicago Council of Foreign Affairs on ... "Europe: Destined for Conflict?" in February of this year.

This speech came after another interesting interview where he admits that the overthrow of Yanukovych was "the most blatant coup in history" and among other things the American "payback" for Russian involvement in Syria. ...

I very much respect Friedman for his straight-talk and honesty on how the United States should maintain the role of global hegemon. In his speech he cut out all the nonsense and deceiving buzzwords like "spreading democracy and freedom," "promoting human rights" and also gibberish propaganda talk about "bad Russia," and "Putin, the bloodthirsty invader and dictator." He is the only honest spokesman of the empire.

He recognizes that Russia has legitimate interest for its sphere of influence. However, he doesn't hide that the U.S. is trying to geopolitically defeat and humiliate Russia and limit its sphere of influence.

Even though I fundamentally disagree with him about genuine American national and geopolitical interest in decades to come, his *realpolitik* gives us unique insight. ...

The primordial interest of the United States for centuries

(World War I, World War II and the Cold War) has been to stop a coalition between Germany and Russia.

The U.S. is the only ally Ukraine (the Kiev regime) has. ...

The U.S. will deliver weapons to Ukraine.

In all of this the U.S. acted in the context outside NATO because any NATO member's state can veto any action. ...

The U.S. is preparing a "*Cordon Sanitaire*" around Russia. Russia knows it and believes the U.S. wants to break the Russian Federation. ...

The purpose of "the invasion of Georgia" was to show how much an American guarantee is worth and it is message to the Ukrainians: Do you want to be American ally? So did the Georgians. ... Enjoy. ...

For Russia the status of the Ukraine is an existential threat. ...

The Germans themselves don't know what to do and haven't made up their mind.

For the U.S., the primordial fear is German capital and technology and Russian natural resources and manpower. This combination for centuries has scared the United States.

Whoever can tell me what the Germans will do, will tell me the next 20 years of the history. ...

"The German question" is coming up again. That's the next question we need to address, and we don't know how to address it, we don't know what they're going to do.

Protesters, Police Clash Near New European Bank HQ in Frankfurt

Reuters | March 18

ANTI-CAPITALIST PROTESTERS CLASHED WITH RIOT POLICE NEAR the new headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt on Wednesday and set fire to barricades and cars, casting a pall over the ceremonial opening of the billion-euro skyscraper.

Some 94 police officers were injured by stones and teargas flung by a violent minority from within the 3,500 protesters, police said. Rally organizers said there were 7,000 protesters, more than 100 of whom were injured by police.

Seven police cars were set on fire, streets were blocked by burning stacks of tires and rubbish bins, and shops were damaged in the city center. Dark smoke billowed in front of the 185-meter high ECB towers and over Frankfurt.

Police used a water cannon to try to make a path through the mass of black-clad protesters to the entrance of the building, blocked off from the street by barricades. A total of 550 protesters were detained. ...

ECB President Mario Draghi addressed the demonstrators in his speech at the opening ceremony, but said they were missing

the point by blaming the ECB.

"European unity is being strained," he said. "People are going through very difficult times. There are some, like many of the protesters outside today, who believe the problem is that Europe is doing too little. ...

"Our protest is against the ECB, as a member of the troika, that, despite the fact that it is not democratically elected, hinders the work of the Greek government. We want the austerity politics to end," Ulrich Wilken, one of the organizers, said.

"We want a loud but peaceful protest," he told Reuters. ...

"However it happens, Germany is prophesied to come out on top in this financial crisis. Social unrest and riots will eventually force Europeans to succumb to a strong united government of Europe, LED ULTIMATELY NOT FROM BRUSSELS, BUT FROM BERLIN."
—Gerald Flurry, *Trumpet*, February 2009

ASIA

T Putin's Nuke Talk Worries European Leader Jeremiah Jacques | March 19

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN SAID IN A DOCUMENTARY broadcast across Russia on March 15 that he was prepared to use nuclear weapons if Western powers had tried to prevent Moscow from seizing Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula last year.

In one segment of the film, an interviewer asked Mr. Putin if he would have considered placing Russia's vast nuclear arsenal in a state of combat readiness, and he answered: "We were ready to do this [Crimea] is our historical territory. Russian people live there. They were in danger. We cannot abandon them. ... That's why I think no one wanted to start a world conflict."

Putin went on to explain why Russia never took any nuclear actions: "Despite all of the difficulties and the drama surrounding the situation, the Cold War is over, and we do not need international crises like the [Bay of Pigs]," he said. "Moreover, the circumstances did not call for such actions." Putin also said in the documentary, titled *Crimea: The Path to the Motherland*, that he was surprised the annexation went so smoothly for Russia.

The comments represent only the latest of many recent instances of nuclear threats from Russia: Several of the nation's latest military drills have included simulations of nuclear strikes; Russian state-run media recently ran a program called "Putin Can Destroy NATO With a Single Phone Call," during which it said Moscow could bomb the United States to "radioactive ash"; and, in recent months, Russian bombers—often equipped with nuclear weapons—have flown forays on the borders of NATO airspace.

The broadcast of the documentary comes during a time of worries that Russia may soon attack the eastern Ukrainian city



A woman watches a documentary on March 15 where Russian President Vladimir Putin said he was ready to put the country's nuclear forces on alert over the Ukraine crisis.

of Mariupol. Conquering Mariupol could help Russia establish a "land bridge" connecting mainland Russia to Crimea.

Reports from the European Union say that if Putin wages such an attack, the EU might impose a new round of economic sanctions on Russia. European Council President Donald Tusk says he is anxious for Europe to begin taking on a greater role in checking Russia's expansionist ambitions. "We have to start to live without illusions," he said over the weekend, adding that Europeans should work toward "a new and more ambitious defense and security policy" and "not only as part of NATO."

Tusk continued: "We have to use this Ukrainian crisis also as something like an education" for all of Europe about "how serious the situation can be." Tusk said taking action against Russia would be difficult for Europe, however, given the lack of unity

among EU nations. “We have 28 different foreign policies,” he said.

At present, deep fractures remain in the EU’s political unity. But Europeans, concerned by Russia’s ongoing nuclear

saber-rattling and the seismic geopolitical shifts underway to their east, are responding. To understand more, read [“Europe Rethinks Its Military After Ukraine Confrontation.”](#)

 Follow Jeremiah Jacques

Obama Humiliated as Allies Join China’s Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

Washington Times | March 19

THE BATTLE OF WILLS BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON OVER a China-sponsored development bank for Asia is turning into a rout, and the Obama administration has found itself isolated and embarrassed as its top allies lined up this week to join the proposed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

In what one analyst dubbed a “diplomatic disaster” for the U.S., Britain became the first major European ally to sign on as a founding member of the Shanghai-based investment bank, joined quickly by France, Germany and Italy, which dismissed public and private warnings from the U.S. about the bank’s potential impact on global lending standards and the competition it could provide to existing institutions such as the U.S.-dominated World Bank.

Luxembourg, a major global financial center, revealed this week that it would sign up. China also is wooing Australia and South Korea, two of America’s closest Asian allies, to join before the March 31 deadline. A South Korean wire service reported Wednesday that Seoul was “seriously considering” the offer.

The reason for the stampede is clear: China’s market and its huge hoard of cash to invest override any concerns voiced by the U.S. Treasury Department and State Department over Beijing’s half-ownership stake in the bank. ...

With 32 countries on board and more expected in the coming days, Chinese state media have begun to gloat about the failure of the Obama administration to rally even its closest allies and trading partners to shun the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. ...

“Welcome Germany! Welcome France! Welcome Italy!” the official Chinese Xinhua News Agency wrote in a commentary published Wednesday.

“Despite a petulant and cynical Washington,” more and more major countries are joining, the commentary noted. “Holding sour grapes over the AIIB makes America look isolated and

hypocritical.” ...

Underlying the public debate was a clear clash between Washington and Beijing over clout in the globe’s leading financial infrastructure, set up largely by the United States in the wake of World War II and still largely dominated in the senior ranks by U.S., European and Japanese officials. ...

Financial Times columnist Gideon Rachman said this week that the saga “is turning into a diplomatic debacle for the U.S.”

“By setting up and then losing a power struggle with China,” he said, “Washington has sent an unintended signal about the drift of power and influence in the 21st century.”

“Bible prophecy shows that Europe and China will form a brief but robust economic alliance called a ‘mart of nations’ (Isaiah 23:1-3). China overtook the U.S. in 2011 to become the EU’s number one trading partner. ... *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has explained that the economic alliance between China and Europe would be underpinned by both sides’ desire to dominate global trade at America’s expense: ‘Two great trading blocs are positioning themselves to control the world. Both power conglomerates are discussed in Daniel 11:40-45 and in Isaiah 23. ... The relationship we see developing between the king of the north [Europe] and the kings of the east [China, Russia, etc.] is exactly what Isaiah prophesied over 2,700 years ago!’”

—theTrumpet.com, Oct. 28, 2013

China Edges Out Germany to Rank Third in Global Arms Exports

SCMP | March 17

CHINA HAS OVERTAKEN GERMANY AS THE WORLD’S THIRD-BIGGEST arms exporter, although its 5 percent of the market remains small compared with the United States and Russia’s combined 58 percent, says a new study.

China’s share of the global arms market grew 143 percent from 2010 to 2014, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in a report released on Monday.

This was up from 3 percent in the 2009-2014 period, when it

was ranked ninth among exporters of warplanes, ships, sidearms and other weaponry.

The data shows the growing strength of China’s domestic arms industry, now producing fourth-generation fighter jets, navy frigates, and a wide range of relatively cheap, simple and reliable smaller weapons. ...

Its advantages included its low prices, easy financing and friendliness towards authoritarian governments, said Philip

Saunders, director of the U.S. National Defense University's Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs. ...

China had also exploited niche markets such as North Korea and Iran that the West would not sell to, said Ian Easton, research fellow at U.S.-based Asian security think tank, the Project 2049 Institute.

Both those U.S. foes appeared to have received satellite-jamming and cyberwarfare capabilities from China, along with

systems to break into private communications and spy on government opponents, he said. ...

China also offers leading-edge drone technology at competitive prices. CCTV quoted retired People's Liberation Army Gen. Xu Guangyu as saying two years ago that one drone model, which can be armed with two missiles, cost \$1 million—about 10 to 20 percent of the price of a comparable U.S. model. ...

Russian Treaty With Rebel Georgian Region Alarms West **Reuters | March 18**

PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN SIGNED A TREATY WITH GEORGIA'S rebel South Ossetia region on Wednesday that almost completely integrates it with Russia, alarming Georgia and the West a year after Moscow took over Crimea.

Tbilisi described the "alliance and integration" treaty as a "move aimed at annexation," and the United States and European Union said they would not recognize the agreement, which the EU depicted as a threat to regional security and stability.

Under the deal, signed in the Kremlin by Putin and South Ossetian leader Leonid Tibilov, a former KGB official, the region's security forces, military, economy, customs service and border guards will be deeply integrated with those of Russia.

Russia won a five-day war with Georgia in 2008 over the fate of South Ossetia and another rebel region, Abkhazia. It formally

recognizes both regions as independent states and signed a similar treaty with Abkhazia last year. ...

Tibilov hailed the agreement, which will make it easier for the people of South Ossetia to gain Russian citizenship, as "the best possible guarantee of state security." He said EU and U.S. officials should mind their own business. ...

The moves to draw in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, an impoverished region with a population estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000, have alarmed the West and Georgia, a former Soviet republic crossed by gas and oil pipelines to Europe. ...

Western leaders fear Russia is becoming increasingly expansionist and may try to take control of other regions in former Soviet states, including separatist-held territory in eastern Ukraine, though Moscow denies this. Russian troops also protect a self-proclaimed independent region in Moldova. ...

Russia and North Korea Rekindle Old Alliance for Strategic Reasons **UPI | March 17**

NORTH KOREA'S TRADE WITH RUSSIA IS GROWING RAPIDLY AND the two countries are strengthening old ties as other relations have frayed, *Yonhap* reported Tuesday. ...

"The bond of friendship runs deeper every day," said one article that featured photos of the two politicians shaking hands.

Yonhap reported North Korea's friendly overtures to a key ally are a strategy to move away from a paralyzing dependence on China for trade and investment.

South Korea's overseas trade agency in Moscow said on Wednesday [that] economic exchange between Russia and North Korea has witnessed remarkable growth.

The volume of North Korean exports to Russia, while comparatively small, grew almost 32 percent in 2014 to a total of \$10.2 million.

Of that number, 46 percent consisted of North Korean textiles, while the remainder included machinery, instruments and electronics. North Korea even exported about \$250,000 worth of cars.

Russia, in turn, has exported \$34 million worth of crude oil to North Korea, although North Korea's consumption of Russian oil declined by 8 percent in 2014. ...

The *New York Times* reported Russia's Foreign Ministry designated 2015 the "Year of Friendship" with North Korea. Kim Jong Un, North Korea's leader, is scheduled to visit Moscow on May 9 during the 70th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany, an event that German Chancellor Angela Merkel has declined to attend.

Russia has been carrying out a pivot to Asia. ...

AFRICA/LATIN AMERICA

Latin American Leaders Back Venezuela Over U.S. Spat **BBC News | March 18**

MEMBERS OF THE ALBA REGIONAL GROUP EXPRESSED THEIR SUPPORT for Venezuela on Tuesday in the face of increasing tensions between the U.S. and Venezuela.

At an emergency summit, Latin American left-wing leaders urged the U.S. to repeal an executive order, which declared Venezuela a threat to the national security of the U.S. ...

[In support of Venezuela, Cuban President Raúl] Castro, who announced a rapprochement between his government and that of the U.S. in December after decades of animosity, said that “the U.S. needs to understand once and for all that it cannot seduce or buy Cuba, just as it cannot intimidate Venezuela.”

“Our unity is indestructible,” he added.

Bolivian President Evo Morales said that “the U.S. government must understand we are not living in imperial times of the past.”

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said that it was the U.S.

and not Venezuela which was “a threat to global security; this is not rhetoric, it is reality.”

Ecuadorean Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino questioned what the U.S., a country which he said “has made torture legal and ... developed the most powerful mass surveillance system,” could teach Latin American nations about human rights. ...

RELATED: “THE DEADLY DANGEROUS U.S.-CUBA DEAL”

ANGLO-AMERICA

California Is Turning Back Into a Desert and There Are No Contingency Plans

Michael Snyder, Peak Oil | March 15

ONCE UPON A TIME, MUCH OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA WAS A barren desert. And now, thanks to the worst drought in modern American history, much of the state is turning back into one. Scientists tell us that the 20th century was the wettest century that the state of California had seen in 1,000 years. But now weather patterns are reverting back to historical norms, and California is rapidly running out of water.

It is being reported that the state only has approximately a one-year supply of water left in the reservoirs, and when the water is all gone there are no contingency plans.

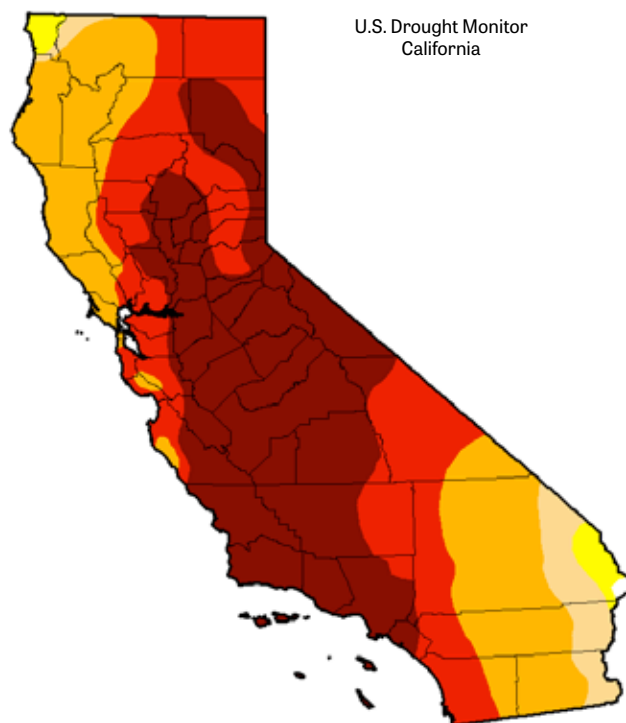
Back in early 2014, California Gov. Jerry Brown declared a drought emergency for the entire state, but since that time water usage has only dropped by 9 percent. That is not nearly enough. [W]e are quickly heading toward an extremely painful water crisis unlike anything that any of us have ever seen before. ...

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Jay Famiglietti “is the senior water scientist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory/Caltech and a professor of Earth system science at UC-Irvine.” What he has to say about the horrific drought in California is extremely sobering:

“As our ‘wet’ season draws to a close, it is clear that the paltry rain and snowfall have done almost nothing to alleviate epic drought conditions. January was the driest in California since record keeping began in 1895. Groundwater and snowpack levels are at all-time lows. We’re not just up a creek without a paddle in California, we’re losing the creek too.

“Data from NASA satellites show that the total amount of water stored in the Sacramento and San Joaquin river basins—that is, all of the snow, river and reservoir water, water in soils and groundwater combined—was 34 million acre-feet below normal in 2014. That loss is nearly 1.5 times the capacity of Lake Mead, America’s largest reservoir.

“Statewide, we’ve been dropping more than 12 million acre-feet of total water yearly since 2011. Roughly two thirds of these losses are attributable to groundwater pumping for agricultural irrigation in the Central Valley. Farmers have little choice but to pump more groundwater during droughts, especially when their surface water allocations have been slashed 80 to 100 percent. But these pumping rates are excessive and unsustainable. Wells are running dry. In some areas of the Central Valley, the land is



Intensity:

D0 - Abnormally Dry
D1 - Moderate Drought
D2 - Severe Drought

D3 - Extreme Drought
D4 - Exceptional Drought

sinking by one foot or more per year.”

Are you starting to understand why so many experts are so alarmed? ...

“God does punish us with ‘natural’ disasters. ... God is allowing it or sending it! How much we suffer is in our own power to control. God help us to repent soon. Only then can we avoid the far greater curses that are prophesied to strike very soon!”

Gerald Flurry, *Trumpet*, December 2003

At the White House, There's Nobody Home

Victor Davis Hanson, *National Review* | March 19

THE ABSENCE OF TRUE LEADERSHIP HAS CREATED CHAOS AT HOME and abroad. What has gone wrong with the U.S. government in the past month?

Just about everything, from the fundamental to the ridiculous.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the United States to warn Congress about the dangers of a nuclear Iran. He spoke without the invitation of an irritated President Obama, who claimed that he did not even watch the address on television.

Obama declined to even meet with the Israeli prime minister, announcing that it would have been improper for him to have such a meeting so close to Netanyahu's re-election bid.

But if Obama was so concerned about not influencing the Israeli elections, why, according to some news accounts, is a Senate panel launching an investigation into whether Obama's State Department gave grant money to a nonprofit organization, the OneVoice Movement, that sought to unseat Netanyahu with the help of several former Obama campaign operatives?

Then, 47 Republican senators signed an unusual letter to the Iranian theocracy, reminding it that any agreement on Iran's nuclear program negotiated with the Obama administration would have to first clear Congress. Obama shot back that the senators' letter was undue interference that aided the Iranians. Former secretary of state Hillary Clinton agreed Secretary of State John Kerry concurred. ...

Sen. Robert Menendez (D., N.J.) bucked the Obama administration and expressed doubt about administration concessions to the Iranians. Other Democrats could join him. But almost immediately after weighing in on Iran, Menendez found himself the target of a federal investigation into purported corruption.

Meanwhile, the aforementioned Hillary Clinton is bogged down in another trademark Clinton scandal. Clinton never used a standard government e-mail account while secretary. And rather than submitting her actual e-mails to the State Department back in December, Clinton submitted 55,000 printed pages of e-mails—making it much harder for those e-mails to be searched. Apparently, Clinton also wished to decide which of her private-server communications to release to the government—but only when demanded by congressional investigators and watchdog groups well after her tenure ended. ...

Abroad, Syria, Iran and the Islamic State are battling for what is left of the Syrian-Iraqi borderlands after the United States

abruptly pulled out all its peacekeepers from Iraq. ...

The administration has also expressed a willingness to meet with Syrian President Bashar Assad, after not long ago declaring Assad an illegitimate leader who should step down. Obama had issued red-line threats to Assad over the gassing of his own people.

Back home, two apparently inebriated Secret Service agents crashed their government car into a security barrier near the White House—in the midst of an active bomb investigation. ... This is after the Department of Homeland Security launched an investigation into the culture of the Secret Service following a 2012 scandal in which a dozen agents hired prostitutes during an alcohol-fueled night in Colombia.

Meanwhile, in the midst of nightly demonstrations at Ferguson, Mo., a young demonstrator on parole allegedly shot two police officers. "Whoever fired those shots shouldn't detract from the issue," the president editorialized. But trying to gun down a policeman should amount to something more than a "detraction." ...

All this chaos has taken amid ongoing IRS and VA investigations, the Supreme Court's impending decision on the constitutionality of Obamacare, and Saudi Arabia arranging to buy from South Korea nuclear expertise to counter Iran.

The common thread in all this chaos? More than the usual partisanship at home and barbarism abroad. No one seems to be in charge at the White House. And that has terrified America's supporters and emboldened its enemies—with another two years to go.

"For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them."

—Isaiah 3:1-4

Ray Dalio: This Is Just Like 1937, and the Fed Could Drive Us Into a New Recession

Business Insider | March 18

RAY DALIO, THE FOUNDER OF THE HEDGE FUND BRIDGEWATER Associates, thinks the Fed will raise interest rates soon—but history tells us it may be too soon. ...

In a note last week, Dalio wrote that the economy is eerily

similar to that of 1937. The Fed raised rates eight years after the 1929 financial crisis, following accommodative monetary policy to boost the economy, and it still ended up being too soon. The Dow lost half of its value between 1937 and 1938. ...

He lists six market conditions around the 1929 financial crisis that mirror the most recent one (the follow is quoted directly from Dalio):

Debt limits reached at bubble top, causing the economy and markets to peak (1929, 2007).

Interest rates hit zero amid depression (1931, 2008).

Money printing starts, kicking off a beautiful deleveraging

(1933, 2009).

The stock market and “risky assets” rally (1933-1936, 2009-2014).

The economy improves during a cyclical recovery (1933-1936, 2009-2014).

The central bank tightens, resulting in a self-reinforcing downturn (1935, 2015?).

Missouri Lieutenant Governor: ‘There Is More Racism in the Justice Department’ Than in the St. Louis Area

Breitbart | March 15

MISSOURI’S LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR LASHED OUT AT THE Justice Department on Monday, accusing U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and the Obama administration of racism in the wake of the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, in Ferguson last year.

“There is more racism in the Justice Department than there is in anywhere I see in the St. Louis area,” Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder said in an interview with NewsMaxTV Monday. “We are making progress. We’ve come an enormous way in 50 years. That’s not to say we don’t ... still have more to do. But it is the left—it is the Eric Holder and Obama left—and their minions who are obsessed with race, while the rest of us are moving on beyond it.”

Kinder, a Republican, criticized the administration for “[inciting] a mob” during the protests that followed Brown’s killing.

“The whole blowup of this protest movement was based on the lie that never happened of ‘hands up don’t shoot,’” Kinder said in remarks that were first reported by BuzzFeed. “It’s bad enough the protesters were behaving that way, but we have a right to expect much more from the attorney general, the head of the Justice Department of the United States, and the president of the United States. And instead, what we got too often from them was incitement of the mob, and, uh, encouraging disorder in Ferguson and disrupting the peaceable going-about of our daily lives in

the greater St. Louis region.”

He added: “Many of them have spent most of their careers defending Black Panthers and other violent radicals.” ...

Kinder is something of a controversial figure in Missouri. In February, he made headlines for requesting a daily allowance from the state legislature to cover his expenses when he is working in Jefferson City. Kinder, who lives in Cape Girardeau and maintains a second home in the state capital, said he’s experienced “gradual impoverishment” during his decade in public office. He receives an annual salary of about \$86,000, according to public records.

“If Eric Holder has this warped racist view of some American political leaders, what does he think of many white Americans? The big issue is, what motivates the attorney general Mr. Obama has expressed no disagreement with what the attorney general has said and done The president’s silence is deafening! And extremely dangerous! He must agree with what his attorney general said.”

—Gerald Flurry, *Trumpet*, March 2012

DHS Released Another 30,000 Criminal Aliens Onto Streets

Washington Times | March 18

FEDERAL IMMIGRATION OFFICERS RELEASED ANOTHER 30,000 immigrants with criminal records last year, following the 36,000 it released in 2013, the government announced Wednesday—though it promised to take steps to cut down on the problem.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency that handles detention and removal of illegal immigrants, said it will no longer allow overcrowding to be the main reason a dangerous illegal immigrant is released ...

Overall, ICE released 30,558 criminal aliens in fiscal year 2014, which is down from the 36,007 criminals released a year before.

The 2013 releases prompted an outcry, and the latest news

that the releases continue is likely to renew the calls for ICE to get a handle on its actions. ...

ICE said it had little discretion over most of the criminals it released. The agency said that under a previous court decision, immigrants whose home countries won’t take them back cannot be held indefinitely, so they have to be released after a period of time.

Republicans in Congress have proposed rewriting the law to allow for longer detention of serious criminals, and they have called on the Obama administration to use existing powers to deny visas to leaders of countries that refuse to take their citizens back.

But the administration has declined to take those steps. Those released from custody are generally supposed to be monitored ICE didn't release a breakdown of criminal offenses of the new

30,000 on Wednesday, but among the 36,000 released in 2013 were 193 homicide convictions, 426 sexual assault convictions, 303 kidnapping convictions, and 16,070 convictions for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. ...

Study: Being Alone as Bad as Smoking, Excessive Drinking

CBS | March 16

MORE AMERICANS ARE CHOOSING TO LIVE ALONE THAN EVER before. And while it's healthy to have "down time" by yourself, one study says too much alone time may shorten your life.

Researchers at Brigham Young University studied 3 million people.

They found people who said they were lonely, felt socially isolated, or lived alone had a 30 percent increased likelihood of death.

The study says loneliness and isolation are as damaging as obesity. The impact of loneliness has also been likened to smoking 15 cigarettes a day or excessive drinking. ...

OTHER NEWS

Fridge Caught Sending Spam E-mails in Botnet Attack

CNet | January 19

IN THE FIRST DOCUMENTED ATTACK OF ITS KIND, THE INTERNET OF Things has been used as part of an attack that sent out over 750,000 spam e-mails.

With the rise of the Internet of Things comes a lot of convenience, such as smart fridges that let you access the internet and call for service in the case of malfunction, or devices that can monitor your energy usage and send you Twitter updates.

It also comes with a new problem: Many of these Internet-connected devices don't have malware protection. And it's now been documented that someone is taking advantage. Security company Proofpoint has discovered a botnet attack—that is, a cyber-attack whereby the attacker hijacks devices remotely to send spam—incorporating over 100,000 devices between December 23 and January 6, including routers, multimedia centers, televisions and at least one refrigerator.

The attack sent out over 750,000 spam e-mails, in bursts of

100,000 e-mails at a time, three times a day, with no more than 10 e-mails sent from any one IP address, making them difficult to block. Over 25 percent of the e-mails were sent from devices that weren't conventional computers or mobile devices. It is the first documented case of common appliances being used in a cyber-attack—but that doesn't necessarily mean it was the first time it occurred, and it certainly won't be the last.

Most of the devices, Proofpoint found, weren't subject to a sophisticated attack. Instead, misconfiguration and the use of default passwords had left them open on public networks and therefore vulnerable to this kind of attack. ...

With the International Data Corporation predicting that over 200 million devices will be connected to the Internet by the year 2020, this could prove to be a significant problem, particularly since they are not routinely monitored for malicious activity.