THE PHILADELPHIA
Trumpet
MARCH 2026

THE WORLD IS UNITING AGAINST AMERICA

VS.

One way the world can hit back
The end of NATO
The Board of Trump
How to besiege the U.S.

THE PHILADELPHIA
Trumpet

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Germany Unite

Alliances are forming that will change the world.

"THE UNITED STATES IS GOING TO BE LEFT OUT IN the cold as two gigantic trade blocs, Europe and Latin America, mesh together and begin calling the shots in world commerce. The United States is going to be literally *besieged*—economically—frozen out of world trade! (Deuteronomy 28:52)."

This astonishing prediction in the May 1962 *Plain Truth* must have appeared unbelievable to many readers. Almost 64 years later, it may still seem far-fetched. But events are bringing it far closer to fulfillment.

On January 17, after 25 years of negotiations, the European Union signed a major trade deal with the MERCOSUR trade bloc, comprised of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Paraguayan President Santiago Peña called it "the largest free trade agreement in the history of humanity." His foreign minister called it "one of the biggest agreements in the history of our planet."

The EU also has free-trade agreements with Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and—through the Central America Association Agreement—with Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua. It is also working on updating a deal with America's top trading partner, Mexico.

Soon, virtually all of Latin America will be closely tied to the EU.

What is really happening here may also seem far-fetched, but it is true: THIS IS PART OF A WELL-CALCULATED GERMAN STRATEGY TO UNITE THE WHOLE WORLD AGAINST AMERICA!

CHRISTIAN ALVARENGA/GETTY IMAGES

FROM THE EDITOR **GERALD FLURRY**

European and South America officials sign the EU-MERCOSUR agreement on January 17.

s the World Against America

Targeting America's South

T. H. Tetens, in his 1953 book *Germany Plots With the Kremlin,* shared the analysis of "an intelligent American observer" with "intimate knowledge of Germany's sinister political plotting": "South America will be conquered by business agents, not by guns. The plantation owners will be asked by the Germans whether they want to send their meat, cotton and raw materials to Germany in exchange for machinery, industrial material, automobiles, etc, or whether they want to be boycotted … as the chief market of South America is Europe."

Tetens included in his book a letter intercepted by British intelligence in the early 1950s. The letter was on its way from a Nazi underground geopolitical center in Madrid to Argentina. It stated: "[I]t should prove possible for Germany to build up a new political bloc … out of Europe, Africa and Latin America. The economic advantages and political possibilities in such a new power combination would put the United States against the wall."

This is what the latest deal is about. However, to understand its implications, we must examine Bible prophecy.

'Marketplace for the Nations'

Isaiah 23:3 prophesies that Europe will become the "marketplace for the nations" (New King James Version). This deal with MERCOSUR (Spanish initials for Southern Common Market) is a major stepping-stone toward that end.

Herbert W. Armstrong, editor in chief of the *Plain Truth,* long prophesied that the alliance between Europe and Latin America would grow extremely strong. The EU is already MERCOSUR's second-largest trading partner in goods and its biggest foreign investor. The most significant factors that will cement this connection further are religion (Roman Catholicism) and language (Spanish and Portuguese).

But this will not be a union of equals: Latin American countries will become vassal states of Europe! The MERCOSUR countries possess resources Europe needs. In return, Europe is supplying some of Latin America's needs as well. The reality, though, is that by linking itself with Europe in this way, Latin America is contributing to the rise of the final, modern resurrection of the medieval Holy Roman Empire—the prophesied beast of Revelation 17!

Europe is going to use its connection with Latin America to amass the power to cut America out of world trade.

This deal is destined to lead to some dark days for America if we don't heed prophecy and realize what God has to say about it.

With so much happening in the world, most Americans are paying little attention to this trade agreement. But I guarantee they won't be able to ignore it indefinitely. This deal will impact the whole world! It is going to affect your life dramatically.

The seeds are being sown for a trade war and an economic siege that will help destroy America. This trade deal is that important!

Besieged in Your Gates

We must understand the Bible's prophecies about America. These explicitly warn of a coming siege.

Back in Genesis 22:16-17, God prophesied that the descendants of Abraham would "POSSESS THE GATE OF HIS ENEMIES." A "gate" is a strategic choke point in world trade. In practical terms, the possession of those gates means having CONTROL OF WORLDWIDE TRADE.

Clearly this is referring to modern-day *nations* descended from Abraham's posterity. Which nations?

The Jewish people never possessed the sea gates of their enemies. They are only one of the 12 tribes of ancient Israel. But the U.S. and the British Empire did, as Mr. Armstrong's book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* explains. These two nations are the modern descendants of ancient Joseph, on whose sons the birthright promises were bestowed. (Request a free copy of this book, which is crucial for understanding biblical prophecy. We will gladly send you one.)

God blessed these modern-day nations because of Abraham's obedience. Our wealth and power didn't come because of our impressive ingenuity. It came because our forefather Abraham obeyed God!

But God also reveals what happens when we disobey. One specific CURSE He warned about concerns these gates: "AND HE SHALL BESIEGE THEE IN ALL THY GATES, until *thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst,* throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, WHICH THE LORD THY GOD HATH GIVEN THEE" (Deuteronomy 28:52).

America trusts in its "walls" today. We trust in our own power. We don't look to the God who gave us that power. And God takes that *personally!* God gave America and Britain those sea gates. He made Britain the greatest empire this world has ever seen, and He made America the greatest nation on Earth. We ought to acknowledge the source of our prosperity. We ought to ask for forgiveness for misusing these blessings in sinful ways.

The "gates" in verse 52 are the SAME gates as those in Genesis 22 that God had promised Abraham to *give* to these nations. And now we see that most of the world's strategic maritime passageways that America and Britain once controlled have been taken away! (You can read more about this in our free booklet *He Was Right,* in the chapter "Changing of the Guard.")

THIS IS A PROPHECY THAT AMERICA WILL BE *BESIEGED* IN ALL OUR GATES! It refers to *a trade war* that will *devastate* America!

For such a siege to be successful, almost the whole world will need to ally against America. And AMERICA CANNOT TRULY BE BESIEGED UNLESS LATIN AMERICA IS PART OF THE SIEGE.

Look at a map. Naval strategists say the Caribbean Sea is just as important to U.S. security as the Mediterranean Sea is to European security and the South China Sea is to Chinese security. An aspiring superpower that controls the Caribbean could cut the U.S. Navy in two and restrict America's access to vital shipping routes. About half of the U.S.'s total seaborne trade passes through the Gulf of Mexico. This is why the May 1962 *Plain Truth* forecast that "[t]he loss of Latin America would DOOM THE UNITED STATES TO INDUSTRIAL STARVATION."

More than a third of U.S. agricultural imports come from Latin America. But fruits and vegetables are far from the U.S. most important imports; the U.S. has the land and resources to produce its own food if it wants to. What it doesn't have is the developed mineral resources to meets its industrial needs—at least in the short term. The U.S. is 100 percent net import reliant for about 12 critical minerals, and over 50 percent reliant for about 30 more. While China dominates the processing of many rare earths minerals, Latin America provides irreplaceable volumes of raw copper, lithium and molybdenum, which are crucial for electrical infrastructure, batteries and military hardware.

If the world cuts off these exports to America, there will be a sudden shortage of supplies. In theory, a stable U.S. society

How Germany Could Lead the Siege

THE BIBLE REVEALS THAT ONE SPECIFIC nation will lead the attack against America.

Deuteronomy 28:49-51 have this shocking prophecy: "The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you" (New King James Version).

Daniel 8:23 uses the same phrase "fierce countenance" (King James Version) to describe the man who will lead Germany in the end time. (This is explained in our free booklet *A Strong German Leader Is Imminent.*)

Putting these scriptures together with Isaiah 10, Daniel 2 and Revelation 17, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry warns in *Daniel Unlocks Revelation:* "The Holy Roman Empire will besiege modern Israel in all our gates and then destroy us."

Germany is prophesied to lead a resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe.

Like the Roman Empire of old, Germany carries the eagle on its standard—and like a swift eagle, it will fall on America. This is only possible because the United States has come to trust its World War II enemy.

Understanding this prophecy makes recent German activity alarming.

In 2024, Germany was the third-largest foreign investor in the U.S. The top 50 German companies in the U.S. include Aldi, American Rheinmetall Munitions, Bayer, BASF, DHL Inc., SAP Americas, Siemens, T-Mobile U.S.A. and the Volkswagen Group of America. According to the German-American Chamber of Commerce, together they generate hundreds of billions in revenue and employ over half a million Americans.

Companies like Rheinmetall, Bayer, BASF and Volkswagen were critical to Adolf Hitler's war effort. In 1996, the U.S. declassified documents that revealed

could adjust. However, the shortages will exacerbate America's greatest weakness: its lack of social cohesion.

Deuteronomy 28:53 describes just how *catastrophic* this besiegement will be for America. Isolation from the rest of the world will break down supply lines and create major disruptions and dangerous scarcity. Coupled with God cursing America's farmlands, this will cause catastrophic famine. Given the state of our society, we will tear each other apart over what is left. It will inflame riots, societal disintegration and animalistic behavior that is hard to imagine!

We need to wake up and face the horrors of these prophecies!

The Siege of Ezekiel 5

God gave the Prophet Ezekiel some peculiar instructions that give us a vivid image of how America and the other descendants of Israel will be brought down—starting with an economic siege.

God told the prophet to shave off his hair and beard, and divide it into thirds (Ezekiel 5:1). "Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the MIDST OF THE CITY, when the days of the *siege* are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them" (verse 2). Israel's destruction, illustrated by Ezekiel's hair, unfolds in three stages. The first third will be burned with fire. The second will be killed in a nuclear attack (as explained in my free booklet *The Lion Has Roared*). The last third will be taken as slaves and sent all over the world.

But notice: The first third is burned "in the midst of the city," which is under SIEGE. The burning is related to a *siege.*

Verse 12 adds some important detail: "A third part of thee shall die with the *pestilence,* and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee." *Pestilence* is mentioned first. This word in the original Hebrew means destruction or death, not necessarily a physical disease. It could refer to a plague of violence, burning or rioting.

The plague of violence will cause many health problems that lead to famine. Sewage disposal will be disrupted. Gas lines will be broken. Jobs will be lost. Society will unravel and the collective panic will bring economic disaster! It will get so bad that violence and famine will take millions of lives!

Herbert Armstrong prophesied for years that the siege would be the battering of our economy by foreign competition. *Strong's Concordance* says the Hebrew word translated *siege* means "something hemming in ... distress." *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* says the root word can mean "to urge to press upon anyone in pursuit" and "to besiege a city."

Put this together with the "marketplace for the nations" in Isaiah 23. A related passage in Ezekiel 27 mentions ancient names for modern Russia and Japan, showing that they too will join this "mart." The indication is that the German-led European Union will join forces with Russia, China and Japan to shut the U.S. out of more and more markets.

While on the surface all these countries still make an effort to have good relations with the U.S., they are ready at a moment's notice to unite against the superpower.

The Bible contains many prophecies of a united European power attacking America. With a German-led Europe possessing great maritime power, North America is going to be flanked on the east by Europe and on the south by Latin America.

This is where China and the other giants of Asia enter the picture. Considering that China now possesses most of the world's strategic sea gates (at one time held by Britain and America), the German-led Holy Roman Empire will need to form a brief alliance with the Asian powers identified in Isaiah 23: Russia, China and Japan, known in prophecy as "the kings of the east."

If Europe, even for a short period, finds a way to take advantage of key resources and strategic holdings of China, Russia and Japan, then it would have more than enough power to besiege the Anglo-Saxon nations.

This is all building toward the SIEGE that Ezekiel prophesied.

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that these companies were ordered to go underground at the end of the war.

What would happen if these companies suddenly closed business in the U.S.? It could lead to widespread job losses, supply chain disruptions and shortages in manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, logistics and automotive production. Germany could even plant disruptive agents in these companies to cause chaos in America.

One example in particular highlights America's naive trust.

In 2018, Germany's Bayer AG completed the acquisition of Monsanto, a leading producer of chemical, agricultural, and biochemical products. Today Bayer controls around a third of U.S. soybean seed, corn seed and cotton seed. More than 90 percent of the soybeans, corn and cotton planted in the U.S. are genetically modified, and as *Farm Action* reports, Bayer and BASF together control 90 percent of U.S. planted acres with genetically modified traits for corn, soybeans and cotton.

In Nazi Germany, Bayer and BASF were part of the conglomerate IG Farben, manufacturer of, among other things, the Nazis' death gas, Zyklon B. *Handelsblatt* called IG Farben "the company that enabled Hitler's world war."

"These IG Farben criminals, not the lunatic Nazi fanatics, are the main war criminals," said Nuremberg trials prosecutor Telford Taylor. "If the guilt of these criminals is not brought to light and if they are not punished, they will represent a much greater threat to the future peace of the world than Hitler if he were still alive."

What if Bayer and BASF's genetically modified seeds fail to produce in the future? What if their pesticides no longer bring the promised effect? What if the chemical composition of pesticides is changed and they destroy the crop? These and other factors such as God-sent weather curses could greatly diminish U.S. harvests and lead to what is described in Deuteronomy 28:49-51.

If these curses set in during a siege (prophesied in verse 52), the trouble would be compounded. That is exactly what the Bible indicates will happen.

JOSUÉ MICHELS

One Way the World Can Hit Back

President Trump believes the world is powerless against his America-first agenda, but he is overlooking America's crippling addiction. **BY RICHARD PALMER**

"AMERICA WILL RECLAIM its rightful place as the greatest, most powerful, most respected nation on Earth, inspiring the awe and admiration of the entire world," President Donald Trump promised in his 2025 Inaugural Address. "Our power will stop all wars and bring a new spirit of unity to a world that has been angry, violent and totally unpredictable."

There *is* a new spirit of unity in the world, but it is not that one.

Europe, Russia, China and Latin America are unified in their anger over President Trump's reassertion of American diplomatic power, imposition of tariffs on enemies and allies alike, sudden and surprising military strikes on cartels and regimes, threat to take Greenland by force, and tearing up much of the global rule book.

He has his reasons. After all, Europe has taken advantage of American generosity since World War II. Much of that global rule book has been abused by nations that ignore the rules themselves while using them to weaken America.

Whether Trump's actions are wise or foolish, it is clear that the rest of the world is seething with hatred toward an increasingly assertive America.

President Trump is unconcerned. As he sees it, the world is divided. America has the world's mightiest military and a gargantuan economy. What can the rest of the world do against such might?

Well—they do have options. One of the most potent is simply to take advantage of a terrible weapon America has foolishly handed over to them: its terminal addiction to debt.

Economies Are Weapons

"[G]reat powers have begun using economic integration as weapons, tariffs as leverage, financial infrastructure as coercion, and supply chains as vulnerabilities to be exploited," declared Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney at the World Economic Forum in Davos on January 20.

This was a bold declaration regarding an undeniable American vulnerability. Its economy is an asset—but only as long as it receives a constant flow of supplies and an endless supply of loans.

Even when American finances are "good," the United States government must borrow around $2 trillion a

GETTY IMAGES/MELISSA BARRERO/TRUMPET

America has an interest-only mortgage—or rather, 150 million or so interest-only mortgages. Every month, to make ends meet, America borrows more money. But it must also pay back debt that becomes due. It does this by borrowing still more.

year—5 to 6 percent of its gross domestic product—to pay for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and that line item President Trump so loves, the military.

The U.S. is often compared to a household, mortgaged to the hilt yet still borrowing more each year just to make ends meet. But that analogy doesn't fully capture how dire the situation is.

In a regular mortgage, a homeowner pays interest on the debt and pays off the whole thing a month at a time. When the mortgage term expires after 15 or 30 years, the debt is paid off. But it is possible to get an *interest-only* mortgage: Each month the homeowner pays only the interest, and at the end of the term, he must repay the *full amount* he borrowed.

America has an interest-only mortgage—or rather, *150 million or so* interest-only mortgages. Every month, to make ends meet, America borrows more money. But it must also pay back debt that becomes due. It does this by borrowing *still more.*

The U.S. borrowed $2 trillion in *new* debt last year. But as the *Telegraph*'s Ambrose Evans-Pritchard points out, when you include the amount America borrowed to pay back *old debt,* that figure soars to a staggering $30 TRILLION.

If every good and service produced by the U.S. economy—the money from every car made, haircut given or meal served—was added together, it would barely pay off the old debts that had to be repaid in 2025 and cover the new borrowing.

In other words, America's gross financing equates to around 100 percent of its GDP every year.

All economies operate this way, but no other country borrows and pays back on such an enormous scale. For France, that figure is 19 percent; for the United Kingdom, it's 10 percent.

Other sources don't put America's figure as high as Evans-Pritchard (there are different ways of calculating it), but it's still far higher than other developed countries. The International Monetary Fund generally considers any figure above 20 percent to be risky. It's easy to see why. The U.S. government received $5.2 trillion in revenue last year. Without the ability to borrow tens of trillions a year, it would go bankrupt within weeks.

And the situation is worsening rapidly. Interest rates on American bonds are rising. Investors see U.S. debt as becoming more risky, so the government needs to offer higher interest rates to persuade them to buy U.S. treasury bonds, thus lending more cash to the U.S.

Last year, *the U.S. spent $1 trillion on debt interest alone.* That is more than it spent on its military. And over the next decade, that amount is forecast to *almost double.*

To address this crisis, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent is resorting to dangerous short-term tactics, mainly by borrowing still more money.

Debt that will be paid back in 10, 20 or 30 years carries a higher interest rate than debt to be repaid within a year or two. Buy a 30-year treasury bond, and the government won't pay you back until 2056. If the U.S. goes bust, a world war breaks out, or an asteroid wipes out America, you won't get back your money. Because a longer-term bond means taking a bigger risk, the government pays you a higher interest rate.

Short-term debt is less risky. If your money is due to be repaid next year, there's much less time for things to go wrong. So Bessent has been issuing more and more short-term debt. This reduces the interest bill America has to pay. But it means borrowing more and more money to pay back loans that are expiring more and more quickly. With each passing month, America becomes more and more reliant on even greater amounts of borrowing.

This is a glaring vulnerability for America—and the world sees it.

Blood in the Water

"For all its military and economic strength, the U.S. has one key weakness: It relies on others to pay its bills via large external deficits," said George Saravelos, Deutsche Bank's head of global currency research. "[I]t is not clear why Europeans would be as willing to play this part."

President Trump is threatening trade war with the world. The world is planning to strike back. But as Saravelos wrote, "It is a weaponization of capital rather than trade flows that would by far be the most disruptive to markets." Europe could fight Trump's tariffs by levying their own tariffs. But Saravelos is suggesting what he believes is a more effective approach: Refuse to loan America money, and the U.S. will be brought to its knees.

One financial institution, Danish pension fund AkademikerPension, has already taken action. Upset by Trump's threats to take Greenland from Denmark, it announced that it would sell its U.S. treasury bonds.

Bessent dismissed the threat, remarking, "Denmark's investment in U.S. treasury bonds, like Denmark itself, is irrelevant."

He's probably right. But other nations'—other *angry* nations'—investments in U.S. treasury bonds couldn't be *more* relevant. If China and Belgium and Canada—all major holders of U.S. debt—were to react in the same way, demand would plummet, the Treasury would be forced to offer even higher rates to get anyone to buy American

debt, and even then the rest of the world could say no. The debt binge would be over, and the most catastrophic crash of the most gigantic addiction imaginable would commence.

Carney threatened this at Davos, reasoning, "[M]iddle powers must act together, because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu."

In December, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that European officials are privately discussing how to coordinate a dump of U.S. treasury bonds for maximum damage to the U.S. and minimum collateral damage to Europe and other economies.

"The way to hold Trump's feet to the fire is for the whole world—Europe, China, Japan, Brazil, central banks, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, insurance companies and banks—to sit out the next auction by the U.S. Treasury and see how easy it is for U.S. domestic capital markets to cover debt sales running at $2.5 trillion a month," wrote Pritchard. "Impossible to coordinate? Yes, of course. But it is time to start floating such ideas in public. The only language Trump understands is money, so let us cut off his global credit card" (*Telegraph,* January 21).

It would be hard for these nations to act in this way without harming their own economies. But Europe and other nations are actively working to change their dependence on and connection to the U.S. economy so they can launch a war against it.

America's GENIUS Response

Bessent and others in the Trump administration may be complacent, but they're not stupid. They see the danger here, and they are proactively working to counter it. Not by reducing spending and paying off debt, but by passing the GENIUS Act.

They're not weening themselves off debt. Instead they've found a new dealer.

The new law, signed on July 18, 2025, is designed to open up a whole *new* market for U.S. debt: cryptocurrency.

Moving money internationally is expensive, with banks charging hefty fees to switch currencies. This is one of the problems that Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies were designed to bypass. They introduced other problems, however, especially the fact that cryptocurrency values fluctuate wildly.

The solution is stablecoins: cryptocurrencies with values that remain pegged to dollars or other traditional currencies or assets. Stablecoins have all of the upsides of crypto and none of the downsides—in theory.

In practice, cryptocurrencies are generally unregulated. Because of this, supposedly "stable" coins have failed catastrophically. Too many people wanted to swap their virtual coin for real currency at the same time, the coin's creators ran out of cash, and people who thought they were investing in a "stable" asset lost everything.

The GENIUS Act is meant to solve this. It allows institutions to issue stablecoins in a way that is regulated by the federal government. To ensure that users can be paid back, each stablecoin must be backed by U.S. dollars, U.S. treasury bonds or another similar liquid asset. Most will choose treasury bonds.

This promises a safe, regulated way to cheaply circulate money internationally. These could be very popular and give foreign investors and governments yet another reason to loan money to the U.S.

"The planned issuance of stablecoins will constitute a large and permanent expansion of U.S. debt and lower interests in the U.S.," wrote Euro-Intelligence. "We think that the recently passed GENIUS Act, which regulates the U.S. domestic stablecoin industry, is one of the economically most consequential piece[s] of legislation in our time. … The big economic consequence is that they will allow the U.S. government to borrow a lot more money" (Nov. 17, 2025).

Extending the Addiction

Problem solved? No. The GENIUS Act does not solve America's addiction to debt; it enables it. At best, it buys America more time. It has also prompted Europe and others to accelerate their own digital currency experiments, which are more and more openly aimed at replacing the dollar (or dollar-backed stablecoins) as the world's reserve currency.

If the GENIUS Act were buying America more time to reduce its spending, pay its existing debts and stop piling on additional debts, perhaps it could be part of the solution. But there's no sign that the U.S. government, led by the man who has called himself "the king of debt," plans to significantly reduce its borrowing.

Meanwhile, investors worldwide are clearly watching the ever rising debt load and looking for alternatives. Gold, for example, briefly reached an all-time high of $5,615.10 per troy ounce on January 29.

U.S. President Trump displays the GENIUS Act (Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for US Stablecoins Act) after signing it in the White House on July 18, 2025.

BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

If government debt becomes unsustainable, a government could go bankrupt. But it's far more common for governments to inflate the debt away; in other words, print more dollars and you can pay $36 trillion in debt more easily. The downside is that the value of each dollar plunges and grocery shoppers have to pay $100 for a carton of eggs. Record-high gold prices are a sure sign that investors fear the U.S. government could start printing dollars.

That fear subsided somewhat after President Trump announced his choice of Kevin Warsh to succeed Jerome Powell

at the Federal Reserve. Warsh is known to oppose inflation and advocate for a strong dollar. But America's all-consuming debt addiction limits what he can do.

After the 2008 financial crisis and during COVID, the Federal Reserve printed money and loaned it to the U.S. government. Warsh wants to do the opposite by selling treasury bonds, then destroying the money. That reduces the number of dollars in circulation, somewhat closer to what it was before 2008, but it inherently makes it more expensive for the U.S. government to borrow money. Can he follow through? President Trump is trying to hound Powell from office because he blames him for, among other things, high interest rates on U.S. debt—the very thing that Warsh's measures would produce. Warsh may have little choice but to go Trump's way.

The GENIUS Act does not solve America's addiction to debt; it enables it. At best, it buys America more time.

President Trump clearly wants to do everything possible to keep the injections of debt coming.

Warnings Ignored

"Central banks are buying gold to back up their currencies," warned economist Peter Schiff on Fox News. "They're getting rid of dollars. They are getting rid of treasuries. We are headed for [an] economic crisis, again, that will make the 2008 financial crisis look like a Sunday school picnic."

"We depend on the world. They provide us with the goods that we don't produce. They loan us the money we don't save. Trump has it backwards. The world economy doesn't work because of us—our economy works because of the world," Schiff warned. "We have a dysfunctional consumer-based credit economy that rests on the foundation of the U.S. dollar's reserve currency status, and the world is now pulling the rug out from under the U.S. The dollar's going to collapse. The dollar is going to be replaced by gold."

"The biggest difference between the crisis that we're about to have and the one we had back then is this one is all in America ," he concluded. "It's not going to be exported to the rest of the world. It's not a global financial crisis. It's an American financial crisis. The rest of the world is actually going to benefit from it."

That is a powerful warning, and it's the same one the *Trumpet* has been sounding for decades.

Proverbs 22:7 warns, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." Donald Trump believes the first part of that verse. America has a lot of wealth, and he wants to use it to dominate the world. But he misses the second part.

There are many creative ways to keep feeding the addiction, but America's massive borrowing cannot continue forever.

In Deuteronomy 28, God lists a number of fearsome curses. One of them says, "He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him" (verse 44). Being indebted to foreigners is a curse. Why? "[H]e shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail," it concludes.

Donald Trump believes he is the head. Soon he will have a rude awakening.

Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in 1984 that a major banking crisis in America "could suddenly result in triggering European nations to unite as a new world power larger than either the Soviet Union or the U.S."

The *Trumpet* has continued that warning. In December 1995 we wrote: "Soon there will be NO ONE to buy our debt and bail us out, and then the United States WILL GO INTO FULL BANKRUPTCY!" That article continues to warn that Europe, led by Germany, "will see to it that not only is our credit card canceled, but also that we do not keep our nation! The United States will be repossessed and taken away from us like an old car that the loan company drags down the street with a tow truck while the 'owner' runs screaming after it but is unable to do a thing about it!"

All of these warnings are based on Bible prophecy. Deuteronomy 28 lists, precisely, the blessings America was given that made it a great nation. And it lists the coming curses. These include besiegement, the U.S. being cut off from world trade (verse 52); and the weaponization of debt by foreign powers (verse 44). You can now read in the daily news about these exact, rapidly approaching curses.

Many will ignore the current developments because they've heard these warnings for decades. The U.S. has certainly experienced financial trouble, but that total collapse has not yet happened. But it will.

In today's interconnected world, many of the nations America is indebted to are themselves indebted to others. The entire system is unsustainable. But America, both uniquely indebted and uniquely hated, is uniquely vulnerable.

Ultimately, all the world's economies are built on debt. The whole system will fail. The Bible prophesies of a time when circumstances get so bad that even gold is thrown into the streets (Ezekiel 7:19). That's what it will take for us to let go of our addiction to debt, and a host of other sins, and to finally build an economy and a world on a sure foundation. ■

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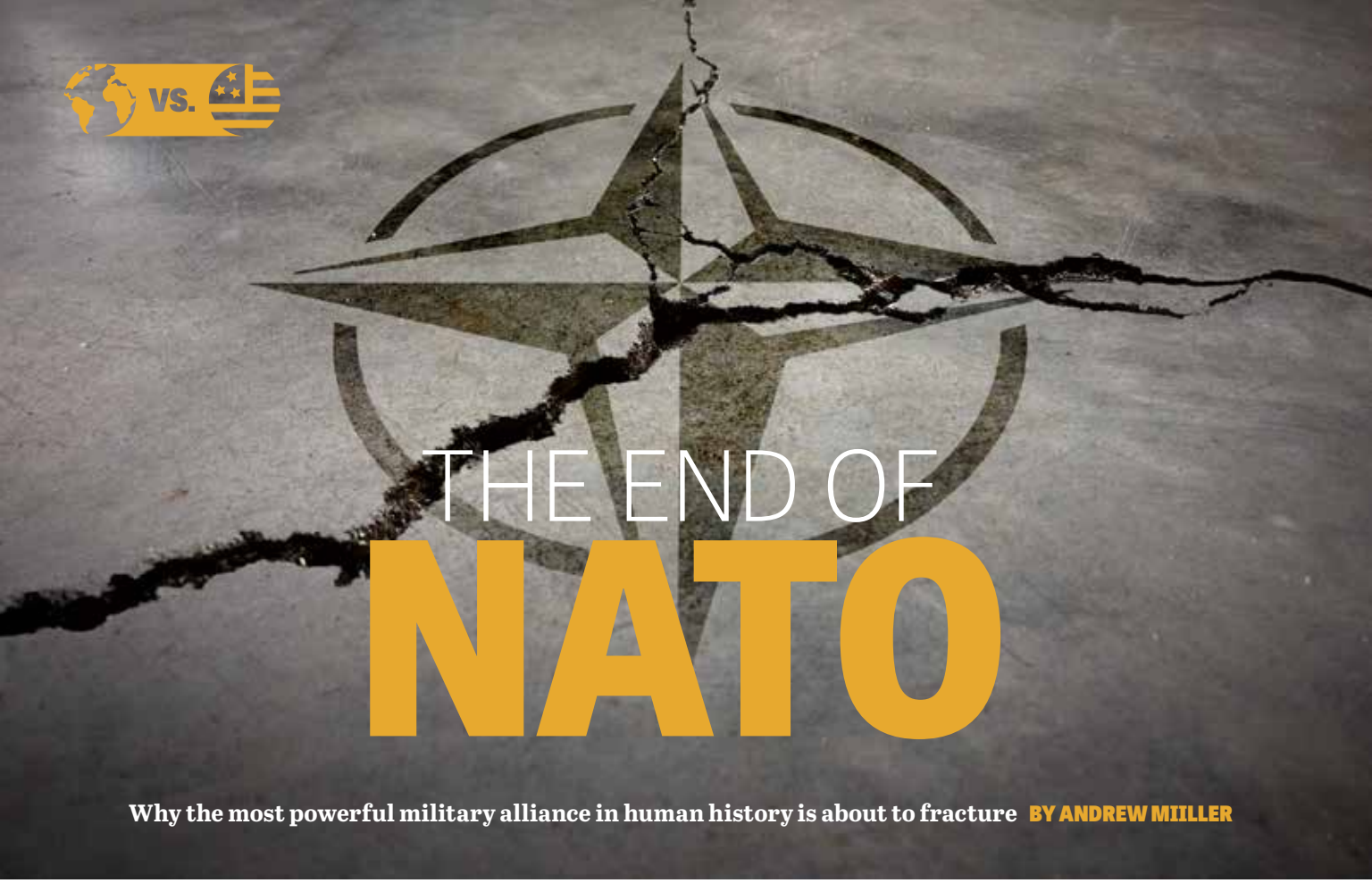


THE END OF NATO

Why the most powerful military alliance in human history is about to fracture BY ANDREW MIILLER

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the most powerful military alliance in human history. Its 32 member states spend $1.6 trillion each year maintaining state-of-the-art military forces and 3.4 million soldiers. That is 55 percent of the planet's military spending and 15 percent of its active-duty soldiers. In addition, the alliance's technological superiority, nuclear deterrence, integrated command structures and unmatched military interoperability make NATO without rival in the world—a global hegemon.

Historically speaking, NATO is vastly more powerful than the Roman Empire at its peak and several times more powerful than the Allied forces that crushed Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan.

Yet despite its unmatched power, it is plagued by the same debilitating weakness that has destroyed many powerful military alliances throughout history: political division among member states.

When NATO was founded in 1949, America's leading generals in Europe warned that rearming Germany was a "calculated risk." At the same time, Herbert W. Armstrong foretold that a German-led "United States of Europe" was prophesied to double-cross the United States and Great Britain. Yet America chose to ignore these warnings and established a strong military alliance with Germany and the nations of Western Europe.

Fast-forward to today. A feud between the U.S. and the European Union over Greenland is exposing rifts in the trans-Atlantic alliance and has led many to predict the end of NATO. A *Guardian* headline read "How a U.S. Takeover of Greenland Would Undermine NATO From Within." The *Telegraph* published "Trump Knows Taking Greenland Would Collapse NATO. He's Threatening It Anyway"; the *Saturday Paper*, "Trump, Greenland and the End of NATO"; the *Wall Street Journal*, "In Trump's Drive for Greenland, NATO Is the First Casualty"; and the *New York Times*, "The End of NATO Is Coming, and That's No Disaster."

This growing enmity between the U.S. and the EU is important to watch. The Bible contains dozens of prophecies warning about the destruction of the U.S. and Britain by a German-led superstate. Mr. Armstrong used these prophecies to forecast Britain's exit from the EU, and we can use them to forecast America's exit from NATO.

Believe it or not, the most powerful military alliance in history is fracturing!

Greenland Crisis

To understand why so much is at stake in the fight over Greenland, you have to look at the world differently—literally. Instead of viewing the globe from the standard equatorial perspective, look at it from the North Pole. You will see that the shortest distance between Eurasia and North America is across the Arctic Circle.

During the Cold War, military planners in Canada, Denmark and the U.S. knew that any future Soviet nuclear attack on North America would likely come via intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) crossing the Arctic Ocean. These three nations worked together to create the RCA 474L Ballistic Missile Early-Warning System at Clear Space Force Station in Alaska and at Site J near Pituffik Space Base in Greenland. This system tracked

Soviet ICBM activity for decades until it was replaced by the Solid State Phased Array Radar System (SSPARS) in 1987.

President Trump wants to leverage the SSPARS radar in Greenland as a key early-warning asset for his new Golden Dome missile defense shield. This is the main reason Greenland is vital to U.S. national security. "For purposes of national security and freedom throughout the world, the United States of America feels that the ownership and control of Greenland is an absolute necessity," he said on Dec. 22, 2024.

He followed up with repeated offers to buy Greenland, which is technically a semiautonomous territory within the kingdom of Denmark. The prime ministers of both Denmark and Greenland said Greenland is not for sale.

The fact that President Trump believes the U.S. needs to "own" Greenland spotlights the distrust between the U.S., Denmark and other NATO nations. After the U.S. defended Greenland from the Nazis in World War II, the 1951 Defense of Greenland Agreement granted the U.S. the right to expand its military presence far beyond World War II levels. This agreement was "pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty," meaning the U.S. has to remain in NATO for it to apply. Thus, Trump's statement that the U.S. needs to own Greenland only makes sense in a world where NATO no longer exists.

"Without my involvement, Russia would have all of Ukraine right now," President Trump posted on January 7. "Remember, also, I single-handedly ended eight wars, and Norway, a NATO member, foolishly chose not to give me the Nobel Peace Prize. But that doesn't matter! What does matter is that I saved millions of lives. Russia and China have zero fear of NATO without the United States, and I doubt NATO would be there for us if we really needed them. Everyone is lucky that I rebuilt our military in my first term and continue to do so."

In other words: President Trump is not convinced that the U.S. should remain in NATO, and his distrust of NATO allies led him to declare that he would acquire Greenland the "easy way" or the "hard way." Yet rather than causing NATO nations to capitulate for fear of a rupture with the world's main military superpower, this bellicose rhetoric strengthened European resolve to hold on to Greenland.

Military personnel from the German Bundeswehr arrive at Nuuk, Greenland, on January 16.

RAMPAZZO / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

On January 16, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom deployed troops to Greenland in a symbolic mission to secure the island from U.S. encroachment.

President Trump pushed back, threatening to increase tariffs on those eight European nations for trying to block his efforts to acquire Greenland. EU leaders then threatened $108 billion in retaliatory tariffs.

This response must have worried Trump. He backed down and agreed to negotiate a deal wherein the U.S. receives joint sovereignty over U.S. military bases in Greenland, as well as mineral rights.

The Greenland crisis seems resolved for now, but Europeans are unlikely to forget President Trump's threat to acquire Greenland the "hard way." If German elites wanted to build "a mighty, German-led superpower" before, they are now more urgent than ever to stand on their own, independent from, resistant to and even *against* their erstwhile ally.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, a former prime minister of Denmark and secretary general of NATO, told the *Financial Times* on January 17, "Since childhood, I have considered the United States as the natural leader of the free world. I've even spoken about the U.S. as the world's policeman. ... Now we see the United States use a language that's pretty close to the gangsters that they should control in Moscow, Beijing, etc."

European Army

Even before Germany sent troops to Greenland, EU Defense Commissioner Andrius Kubilius, a former prime minister of Lithuania, suggested the creation of a permanent, 100,000-strong standing European military force to reduce the EU's reliance on U.S. security guarantees.

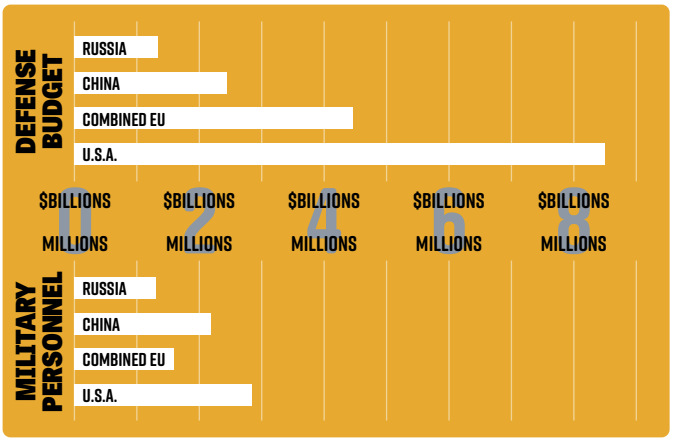
"[H]ow will we replace the 100,000-strong American standing military force, which is the backbone military force in Europe?" he asked on January 10. "Who will form our European standing backbone military force? Germans? A collection of 27 *bonsai armies:* armies that look nice but are clipped, cut down, shrunk? Or as Jean Claude Juncker, Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel already proposed 10 years ago and supported today by experts and Europeans: the creation of a powerful, standing 'European military force' of 100,000 troops."

Kubilius also advocated for the creation of a "European Security Council" comprised of 10 to 12 European nations that can make decisions over European defense quickly. Of course, Kubilius is not the first politician to make such suggestions, but calls for a "European military force" are getting louder.

On January 21, Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares also called for the creation of a combined EU military ahead of an emergency meeting about Trump's Greenland threat. "A joint effort would be more efficient than 27 separate national armies," he told Reuters. He said the bloc should focus on combining military assets before building a joint army.

Subtle advances toward an EU military have been made with multinational commands: EUROFOR; the integration of all three main Dutch combat brigades into German Army divisions; the integration of the Czech 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade with Germany's 10th Armored Division; the integration of the Romanian 81st Mechanized Brigade with Germany's Rapid Response Forces Division. Yet much work still remains if a fully integrated EU military is to be created—a force of 1.6 million active-duty troops and a defense budget of $446 billion.

Such an EU military would have about a quarter of the defense budget of today's NATO and about half as many troops. So in a world where an EU military replaces NATO, the EU would be the second-most powerful military force, with a defense budget roughly twice the size of Communist China's military.



For the time being, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte is reminding European leaders that they are "dreaming" if they think Europe can defend itself without the U.S. This is indeed true, yet European leaders are working furiously to change this reality.

French President Emmanuel Macron hosted the prime ministers of Denmark and Greenland in Paris on January 28 to discuss European security. He said Trump's comments about Greenland needed to prompt an "awakening" in Europe. Such rhetoric shows that NATO is not being held together by love or loyalty. Rather, it is being held together by the knowledge that Russia remains powerful and aggressive, and Europe cannot currently defend itself without the U.S. Secretary General Rutte is doing his best to hold the alliance together long enough for Europe to rearm, but as soon as European nations build strong militaries, NATO will break apart.

Double Cross

NATO's first secretary general, Lord Hastings Ismay, said the alliance's purpose was to "[k]eep the Russians out, the *Americans in,* and the *Germans down.*" Yet prophecy indicates that an ascendant Germany is actually going to invite both the Chinese and the Russians into an economic alliance to besiege the U.S. (article, page 1).

As soon as America began allowing Germany to rearm in 1952, Mr. Armstrong began explaining why the decision was misguided. An article in the April 1952 *Good News,* of which he was the publisher, summarizes the point: "The heart of the German people ... has not been converted to our way of life. If they really would have come to love us since their defeat, *would they now be trying to bargain for domination in Europe* and threatening to *withhold* support from the cause of democracy against Russia? Is that the way *love* is manifested? Can we purchase *love* with money?"

This question about purchasing love with money is poignant.

Shortly before the Babylonians burned down King Solomon's temple in Jerusalem, the Prophet Ezekiel corrected the kingdom of Judah for trusting its foreign allies more than God. Specifically, he compared Judah to "a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband" (Ezekiel 16:32) and noted that while common whores usually receive gifts, Judah gives gifts to all her lovers (verse 33).

The same can be said about America today. Its leaders definitely trust in their NATO allies for protection more than they trust God, and they shower these allies with tremendous amounts of money and gifts. The foolish belief is that we can purchase love with money like a prostitute who pays her lovers instead of receiving payment.

This strategy has more or less worked so far, but the day is coming when America will learn that "[t]he heart of the German people ... has not been converted to our way of life." In fact, Ezekiel 23 specifically warns that the end-time nations of Israel (America and Britain primarily) will be double-crossed by their foreign lovers.

"Bible prophecy warns that a German-led European empire is going to rise up," *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote in 2014. "We have said for over 50 years that it will probably be more powerful than both America and Russia! The age of American global leadership is drawing to a close. While the Germans might not come out and say so, they are reveling in that fact. The U.S. may try and repair relations with its former lover, but irreversible damage has already been done. The breakup ... is going to continue to worsen until one of America's greatest allies since World War II becomes, once again, its greatest enemy! What Germany doesn't realize is that it is only a tool in God's hands to accomplish His purpose of correcting Israel ..." (*Trumpet,* October 2014).

God's purpose is to teach the end-time nations of Israel to rely completely on Him, instead of bribing foreign lovers to defend them. Therefore, the most powerful military alliance in human history has to fracture in a way that allows people to see that "[*c*]*ursed* be the man that trusteth in *man,* and maketh flesh his arm ..." (Jeremiah 17:5).

Europe is rapidly growing independent of the U.S. and is strengthening its position as a world power. This should stir the deepest alarm within the American people, if only they knew where it was leading! ■

America is building a
MONSTER

The Bible reveals what will happen when Europe wakes up. Request your free copy of ***Germany and the Holy Roman Empire***.

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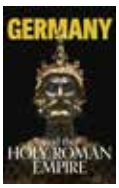


The Board of Trump vs.

Can the Board of Peace succeed where every other international peace effort has failed? BY STEPHEN FLURRY

Flanked by world leaders, President Trump holds the founding charter of the Board of Peace during the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos on January 22.

FABRICE COFFRINI / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

President Donald Trump's Board of Peace is off to a rough start. When he launched this international peacekeeping effort on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on January 22, he said it had "the chance to be one of the most consequential bodies ever created." Yet such proclamations of peace are already being undermined by divisions among world powers pushing us toward the next world war.

Key Western allies like Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom have declined to participate on the board, citing concerns that it could undermine the United Nations' role in global diplomacy. Meanwhile, these same nations are discussing how to maintain European power over Greenland and stonewall the United States.

Canada was invited to join the Board of Peace, yet President Trump retracted his invitation after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney gave a speech at the same conference about how "intermediate powers" like Australia, Canada and the UK, which have lived under American magnanimity, must find alternative alliances. Carney, along with European leaders, has also hinted that America can be attacked economically (article, page 1).

It is concerning that Canada isn't welcome on the Board of Peace because Carney insulted Trump, yet Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese General Secretary Xi Jinping are invited because President Trump wants to negotiate with these tyrants.

But the fact that President Trump can't negotiate peace with Canada is a bad sign of his ability to negotiate peace with Russia and China.

When British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain proclaimed "peace for our time" after signing a pact with Adolf Hitler in 1938 allowing Germany to annex Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland, people applauded. World War II started only 11 months later. His optimistic pronouncement of peace turned out to be a sick joke.

Will future historians look back on President Trump's Board of Peace the same way?

Board of Autocrats

The president keeps referring to his Board of Peace as the "greatest and most prestigious board ever assembled," yet two thirds of the countries who have joined it so far are authoritarian regimes. Its founding members include President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus, frequently called Europe's last dictator; President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, a post-Soviet strongman; Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarch; and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey, an Islamist-leaning autocrat.

Does this sound like the greatest and most prestigious board ever assembled?

Democracy Index data from the Economist Intelligence Unit ranks the average democracy score of the governments on the Board of Peace roughly 4.5 out of 10.

Authoritarian regimes frequently exploit UN bodies, particularly the Human Rights Council, to shield themselves from scrutiny, legitimize their rule, and undermine international human rights. President Trump's Board of Peace is supposed to fix such injustices. But so far, the countries that have joined the Board of Peace are more authoritarian on average than those that comprise the UN.

Compared to the UN, the Board of Peace will be able to make quick decisions because its charter names Donald J. Trump (not whoever the current U.S. president may be) as chairman. Trump is given exclusive authority to modify the board's entities.

However, trusting Donald Trump to hold dictators to account may still be a losing strategy. He has already threatened 200 percent tariffs on French champagne and wine simply because French President Emmanuel Macron said he did not want to join the Board of Peace, while turning a blind eye to human rights abuses by Hamas.

After the president pressured Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu into releasing 1,904 Hamas terrorists last year

in return for a ceasefire, my father, Gerald Flurry, wrote, "President Trump not only betrayed Israel, he disgraced Netanyahu specifically. This is a catastrophe difficult to even describe" (*Trumpet,* March 2025).

Prime Minister Netanyahu submitted and released the hostages—then Hamas broke the ceasefire only six weeks later. But did President Trump learn from his failure? He did not! His new Board of Peace originated as an attempt to oversee future ceasefires with Hamas with a panel of world leaders drawn primarily from autocratic countries that hate Israel and oppress their own people.

Trump is undoubtedly sincere in his belief that his Board of Peace will create both prosperity and tranquility in the Middle East. But future generations will look back on his promises as a "peace for our time" moment!

Dangerous World

When the late Herbert W. Armstrong attended the inaugural meeting of the United Nations in 1945, he contrasted the eloquent public speeches about peace with the bitter arguments occurring off the stage.

"Never in the history of mankind has anything like this taken place," Mr. Armstrong explained. "It is the greatest, most elaborate conference of world leaders ever held. ... In the plenary sessions of the conference we hear beautiful oratory enunciating lofty aims of altruism and world peace—to be printed in newspapers throughout the world for public consumption. But the real sessions are behind locked doors of committee council chambers, and there the savage battle for national interests rages fiercely" (*Plain Truth,* December 1948).

Fast-forward eight decades, and two things have changed. The first is that you no longer have to peer behind locked doors to see "the savage battle for national interests" raging. At the 2026 World Economic Forum, leaders openly discussed their desire to resist the U.S. and create a powerful European bloc. The second is that there is no longer only one nation with nuclear weapons (the United States), but nearly a dozen, plus nuclear-ambitious nations and even terrorist organizations.

None of the 19 leaders who gathered around President Trump to establish the Board of Peace witnessed the deaths of 85 million people in a world war like the generation that founded the UN just had. So what makes President Trump think that his attempts at world peace will work?

The League of Nations, established in 1920; the Pact of Paris, signed in 1928; the United Nations, founded in 1945; and the International Court of Justice, also created in 1945, were all impressive, prestigious efforts led by men who arguably had more talent and ability than President Trump. Yet all of them failed abysmally.

What makes the Board of Peace different? The same selfish human nature

IS GAZA'S NEW ADMINISTRATOR A P

The Board of Peace appointed Ali Shaath as chief commissioner of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza on January 14.

On Oct. 7, 2023, Gaza's last ruler, Yahya Sinwar of Hamas, committed the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. How will Ali Shaath be different? That answer could affect the world.

Shaath was born in 1958 in Khan Yunis, formerly Gaza's second-largest city. He earned a civil engineering degree before becoming a professor in Scotland in the early 1990s. In 1995, he started a career within the Palestinian Authority (PA), the quasi-government established by the Oslo Accords. The PA was led by terrorist Yasser Arafat, and though Shaath was not a member of Arafat's Fatah faction, many members of his family were.

Shaath has worked in various departments relating to construction and land development. If the fighting between Hamas and Israel actually stops and the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza actually begins administering it, Shaath plans to develop the territory, starting with the removal of an estimated 75 million tons of debris and unexploded ordnance within three years, using some of the rubble to reclaim land from the sea.

In 2005, Shaath was a member of the Final Status Negotiations Committee working to implement a two-state solution. The PA would never have placed somebody on that committee who would compromise with Israel for peace.

Shaath may not be a card-carrying member of a terrorist group or a raving cleric, but neither is he looking for neighborly peace and mutual recognition with Israel. He has advertised his opposition to a U.S.-managed Gaza, yet now the United States is trusting him to manage Gaza.

Psalm 83:4 prophesies of an alliance of various Middle Eastern peoples so "that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." "Israel" includes not only the State of Israel but also Britain and the United States. This anti-Israel alliance consists of modern-day countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, the Palestinian Arabs, Lebanon and Germany (verses 6-8).

In *The King of the South,* *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry explains a prophecy in Daniel 11 about a Middle Eastern bloc led by Iran clashing with a European bloc led by Germany. Gaza under Hamas was an Iranian proxy for years. But this prophecy led Mr. Flurry to forecast, decades ago, that Iran would

CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/360/GETTY IMAGES

that scuttled past peace efforts is still present in the Board of Peace. In fact, this selfish human nature has probably gotten worse as leaders like President Trump have forgotten the horrors unleashed by World War II.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists set the time of their symbolic "Doomsday Clock" forward by 4 seconds on January 27, pushing it to 85 seconds until midnight—the symbolic hour of global nuclear destruction (article, page 15). The need for global peace is greater than ever, but our chances of achieving it are narrowing.

Human Nature

After signing the Japanese surrender in World War II, Gen. Douglas MacArthur sounded a strong warning about war and peace to America and the world. He said, "Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. ... Military alliances, balances of powers, leagues of nations, *all in turn failed,* leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we will not devise some greater and equitable system, our Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence, an improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature and all material and cultural developments of the past 2,000 years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."

This message is very different from the one President Trump delivered at Davos!

MacArthur did not deliver an optimistic message about "a brighter day" and a "safer future." Having experienced the worst war in human history, this man of strong character warned us that we need "a spiritual recrudescence" and "an improvement of human character."

The Apostle Paul also recognized that human nature was the main obstacle to peace. He warned that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3).

In an ironic turn, the fact that men like MacArthur were warning about human extinction was a sign that the world was about to experience a respite from the horrors unleashed during World War II. And the fact that men like Donald Trump are talking so much about a new golden age of peace is a sign that "sudden destruction" is about to come upon much of the world.

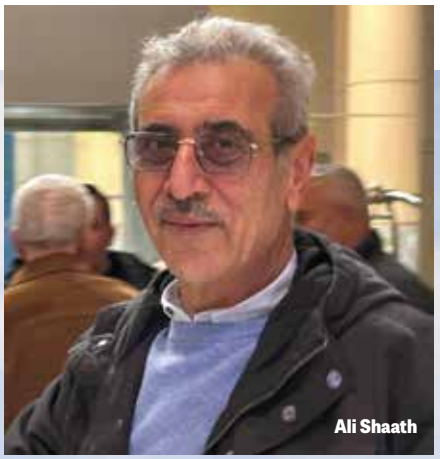
As I wrote in the May-June 2025 *Trumpet* ("The Fatal Flaw in Trump's Foreign Policy," *theTrumpet.com/31304*), the Trump administration's belief that anything can be solved with dialogue is naive. The president has learned nothing from the failures of dialogue to bring peace to Gaza, Ukraine and other conflicts. He feels he just needs to assemble world leaders in a Board of Peace or other forum and talk things out.

This delusional notion reflects a shortsighted view of world history and human nature. The world is more dangerous now than ever. It bristles with more than 12,000 nuclear warheads!

Hosea prophesied that the leaders of end-time Israel (which include America, Britain and Israel) would be "like a silly, senseless dove, crying to Egypt, flying to Assyria; but as they fly, I fling my net on them, and bring them down like a bird ..." (Hosea 7:11-12; Moffatt translation). This analogy well describes America's senseless foreign policy.

God is preparing a net to bring down the American people if they do not heed His warning! ■

EACEMAKER?


Ali Shaath

lose control of Gaza. He wrote in the previous edition of *The King of the South:* "The Philistines—the Palestinians of Gaza and even those in the West Bank—will shift their alliance to Germany as well. ... There may soon be some significant power shifts in Gaza."

"Right now," he writes in the booklet's current edition, "Gaza's immediate future is unclear. But whoever reconstructs the rubble that is the Gaza Strip, it is clear that the main obstacle to Gaza aligning with Germany—Hamas's undisputed stranglehold on the territory—*is now history.* Gaza is no longer a part of Iran's proxy empire."

America is unintentionally laying the groundwork for Germany to fill this role. President Trump has done much to empower many of the Psalm 83 alliance members. He has spearheaded the integration of the new Islamist Syria into the international community.

He has strong ties with Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf monarchies. But Psalm 83:3 says the alliance will take "crafty counsel."

Under Hamas, Gaza was ruled by raving madmen who openly proclaimed their murderous intent. A government led by men like Shaath would not be overtly radical, but will it take "crafty counsel"?

Whoever takes power, America's sponsorship of New Gaza comes at its own peril.

MIHAILO S. ZEKIC

MOHAMMED ABED / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

President Trump BETRAYED the Iranian People

Protesters rally in the streets of Tehran on January 8.

BY MIHAILO S. ZEKIC

This UGC image posted on social media on January 13 shows grieving relatives in Kahrizak searching for their loved ones among dozens of corpses.

"HELP IS ON THE WAY."

Millions of people had been ground into poverty, suffering under a failing economy. Hundreds of thousands finally couldn't take it anymore and started bold, brave street protests. Bold and brave, because these people were Iranians, and the regime they were protesting is a violent, radical tyranny that they knew could ruin—or end—their lives.

That is exactly what it began to do. But they had hope: "Help is on the way."

United States President Donald Trump addressed the Iranian protests on January 2, warning the regime that if it met the protesters with violence, as it had done with previous unrest, U.S. forces were "locked and loaded and ready to go."

A number had already been murdered, but less than a week after Trump's warning, agents of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei committed the worst massacre in living memory: On January 8-9, they killed *tens of thousands* of Iranians.

President Trump posted a response on January 13. It should haunt him as it haunts the Iranians who trusted his words: "Help is on the way."

Help never came.

Why? Multiple explanations flooded the news cycles: insufficient military assets in place; the generals dissuaded the president; Arab governments deterred him; Israel, bafflingly, discouraged him from acting; the tough talk was actually intended to pressure the Iranians into negotiating another nuclear deal.

Whatever the case, Trump publicly promised to save protesters from the violence of the Iranian regime, had the power to dispatch U.S. forces—but didn't.

Hadis, a 36-year-old resident of Tehran, protested because she believed Trump's promise. "Our eyes were fixed on the sky," she told the *Washington Post,* "like something will happen. He'll hit now. We came out [to protest] with fear, but we had hope that Trump will strike now, will kill these guys."

Siavash, a 38-year-old father, also responded to the president's call and joined the protests on January 8. "Siavash hoped until the very end that Trump's help would arrive," his cousin told the *Guardian.* "We told him: 'Don't go, it's dangerous.' But he gave a firm answer: 'Trump said he supports us, I'm going.'"

Now he's dead.

Ahead of the January 8-9 massacres, Iran's authorities used their control of Internet utilities to block service nationwide. Even those who tried to use satellite Internet technologies like Starlink to get the truth out were reportedly jammed with military-grade technologies. So the true numbers of those murdered by the Iranian government may never be known. But two Iranian Health Ministry officials told *Time* magazine there could be as many as 30,000. Dissident group Iran International reviewed information including documents from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and estimates the death toll surpassed 36,500.

Leaked video footage shows rooms stacked with dead bodies. Eyewitness accounts obtained by the *Sunday Times* say gunmen from the IRGC and other government agencies fired into crowds with Kalashnikovs from motorbikes and with machine guns mounted on pickup trucks. They indicate government forces hunted down wounded protesters in hospitals for execution. Images show corpses with medical tubes and other equipment still attached.

The Legacy of a Peacemaker

At his 2025 inauguration, President Trump said his "proudest legacy will be that of a peacemaker and unifier."

Another president who wanted to bring peace to the Middle East was George H. W. Bush. He ordered America's military to evict Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces from Kuwait. He also encouraged Iraq's Kurds to rebel against their socialist dictator. Many answered his call. Hussein responded by gassing them with chemical weapons, murdering thousands, and causing millions to flee as refugees.

At the time, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry called America's failure to respond to Hussein's attacks on the Kurds "the greatest betrayal in U.S. history!" He stated this from a moral position not a political one: "How can these poor wretched people understand 'geopolitical explanations' or 'balance of power' solutions as they hunger, get sick and die?" (*Trumpet,* May 1991).

How President Trump failed the Iranian people is analogous to how President Bush failed the Kurds.

Aanahita, a 45-year-old Iranian woman living in Turkey, told the *Washington Post:* "I kept thinking about how helpless we are that we have to pray for another country to attack us for our salvation and freedom. But today, more than anything, anger is surging through me. I feel like

GETTY IMAGES

Trump has backtracked again and traded the lives of Iran's youth."

"Most Americans seem to accept our betrayal of the Kurds and Shiites," Mr. Flurry's article continued. "That is an attitude that needs to be changed because America, England and modern Israel are all going to suffer that same fate unless we repent of our many sins."

Daniel 11:40 prophesies the rise of "the king of the south" in "the time of the end." Since the 1990s, Mr. Flurry has identified this bloc as radical Islam led by Iran. The aggressive regime leading this Middle Eastern power bloc will provoke a worldwide "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time ..." (Daniel 12:1).

When Mr. Flurry said Iran would lead the king of the south, the nation was unknown to most people. It was the region's newest and least stable regime with the third-largest economy and sixth- or seventh-strongest military. Fast-forward to today, and that same regime has gained massive strength in the region and beyond through its sponsorship of terrorism and its pursuit of nuclear weapons. It wants to wipe the Jewish state off the map. It has violently put down repeated protests and engaged in a seemingly interminable foreign-policy "push" (Daniel 11:40) against its neighbors, Europe and even the American superpower.

Iran's citizens, desperate for freedom, rejected this regime and begged America for help, and America promised to help. America had the power to do *something.* It *promised.*

The blood of tens of thousands is on its hands. And Bible prophecy warns that the killing—in the Middle East and far beyond—is only getting started.

Iran's massacre should wake America up to the state of the world, the nature of the Iranian regime, and the crying need for *righteous* use of words, promises, threats and military power. ■

The future of Iran's terrorist regime—and the role of righteousness and sin in global conflict—is explained in Gerald Flurry's free booklet ***The King of the South***.

GETTY IMAGES

The Unthinkable Will Happen

Does nuclear war seem like a far-off possibility? Bible prophecy warns otherwise. **BY STEPHEN FLURRY**

Over 100 million Americans were introduced to the grim prospect of nuclear war on Nov. 20, 1983. Nearly 39 million households sat in front of their televisions to watch *The Day After,* a film depicting nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The unsettling film left Americans sobered and terrified. Its graphic depictions of instant incineration, nuclear fallout, radiation sickness and humanity's desperate and chaotic response to nuclear crisis sparked national dialogue. Americans stopped to consider how mutually assured destruction could affect their lives, homes and families. Dinner table discussions centered on what must be done to prevent such a crisis.

Cold War-era Americans viewed nuclear conflict with the Soviets as a real and imminent possibility. Many homes had fallout shelters in their backyards. Children practiced nuclear drills as well as fire drills in school. But *The Day After* and other films brought the nuclear threat right into living rooms. It showed Americans a horrifying picture of what this kind of war would look like for them individually.

In the four decades since, Hollywood has created dozens of films and TV shows about nuclear war. Dystopian television and movie plots project what the world could look like in the days after an attack. Such films have become so prevalent that a *New York Times* article in January was headlined "Nuclear Anxiety, That Staple of 1980s Cinema, Is Back." Americans flock to the movie theater to watch *Oppenheimer* and *A House of Dynamite.* They stream the *Chernobyl* series and dystopian drama *Silo* from their living rooms. Nuclear war is today's entertainment.

But instead of frightening Americans into considering what must be done to prevent worldwide nuclear cataclysm, nukes have turned into a plot point. Postapocalyptic films may bring a temporary shudder, but public concern and calls for denuclearization are muted.

In 1983, the United States was shocked into deeply considering the horrors of nuclear war. In 2026, nuclear war is a far more urgent threat than ever—yet Americans yawn.

Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in the *Plain Truth*, "The television movie on nuclear war, *The Day After,* has SHAKEN A WORLD FROM ITS COMPLACENT, INDIFFERENT SLUMBER. Too many people were getting used to violence and war and threats of war" (March 1984; emphasis added throughout).

How much more used to this threat are we today? How much more is the world lulled into a "complacent, indifferent slumber"? If the YouTube comments for the trailers of recent nuclear war movies are any indication, a lot of people consider the nuclear threat an overused trope or even a joke.

If we recognized the true and imminent reality of nuclear war, we would take the threat more seriously instead of viewing it as an unpleasant and impossible fiction.

Increasing Threats

The nuclear arms race is an infinitely more present threat today than it was four decades ago. A new nuclear arms race is underway, and no country wants to be left behind.

There are more than 12,000 nuclear weapons on Earth today, spread across nine different nations. Russia and the U.S. possess between 85 and 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. China's nuclear arsenal is growing steadily. Other powers are working to expand or create their own nuclear armories.

The New START treaty expired on February 5, ending the last nuclear arms control agreement between Russia and the U.S. This was one reason the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the Doomsday Clock forward to 85 seconds to midnight. The U.S. allowed it to expire partially because the treaty didn't limit China's nukes. But calls for new nuclear arms control agreements are being drowned out by the intensifying pursuit of these deadly weapons.

Europe wants to build a nuclear arsenal independent of the United States. Germany has relied on nuclear sharing with the U.S. for decades, but now it is quietly scoping the options for getting its own nuclear bombs. Saudi Arabia is also testing the waters, allying with nuclear nations in the hope that it may one day get its own nuke. Russia is testing its nuclear-capable Oreshnik hypersonic missile in the Ukraine War with nonnuclear payloads. Iran will not give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons despite efforts by Israel and the United States to thwart it.

Ironically, while all this activity is intensifying, President Donald Trump is boasting about solving wars and making deals for world peace. This is a delusion. The world is not on the cusp of peace—it is preparing for war on an unimaginably destructive scale.

The wrecked framework of Hiroshima's Museum of Science and Industry after a nuclear bomb was dropped on the city.

GETTY IMAGES

'No Flesh Saved'

In 1983, most Americans turned off their TVs after watching *The Day After.* Had they kept watching, they would have heard a panel of experts discuss the key questions of the film: What can be done to prevent nuclear war? Is there still time?

These questions are even more relevant today. Nuclear Armageddon is at our door.

Matthew 24:21-22 describe the unthinkable: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, THERE SHOULD NO FLESH BE SAVED: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

These verses describe a time when it is possible to blast all human life out of existence. Only since the advent of weapons of mass destruction has this been a possibility. Without supernatural intervention, NUCLEAR WARFARE WILL EXTERMINATE MANKIND!

The thousands of nuclear weapons at man's disposal *will be used.* My father,

Military alliances, balances of powers, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance.

—Gen. Douglas MacArthur

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry, wrote in our February 2014 issue: "The Second World War *ended* with the development and use of the nuclear bomb. A world war where many nations—some of which sponsor terrorism—*start out* with nuclear weapons is an unparalleled nightmare! We can't even imagine how bad it will be!"

If Western democracies barely survived the war that introduced us to the atomic age, what will happen when the next conflagration begins with nuclear weapons? The magnitude of destruction in this third round will be unlike anything ever seen!

My father continued, "These problems are almost too horrifying to even contemplate. That is why most people *ignore* the potential for nuclear war. But we won't be able to ignore it for much longer. Biblical prophecy makes that plain."

Humanity now has the power to exterminate all human life. THAT IS THE ULTIMATE ACHIEVEMENT OF MAN!

The Day After ended with this disclaimer: "The catastrophic events you have just witnessed are, in all likelihood, less severe than the destruction that would actually occur in the event of a full nuclear strike against the United States. It is hoped that the images of this film will inspire the nations of this Earth, their peoples and leaders, to find the means to avert the fateful day."

But is there any way to "avert the fateful day"? As mankind races toward destruction, is there any hope?

'It Must Be of the Spirit'

Gen. Douglas MacArthur warned America in 1945: "Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. ... Military alliances, balances of powers, leagues of nations, *all in turn failed,* leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. THE UTTER DESTRUCTIVENESS OF WAR NOW BLOTS OUT THIS ALTERNATIVE. WE HAVE HAD OUR LAST CHANCE. If we do not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. *The problem basically is theological* and involves a *spiritual* recrudescence and *improvement of human character* that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature and all material and cultural developments of the past 2,000 years. IT MUST BE OF THE SPIRIT IF WE ARE TO SAVE THE FLESH."

General MacArthur was right. Addressing our spiritual problems is the only way to save humanity from extinction. Unless we repent, terrifying punishment is coming on our nations because of our national and individual sins.

The Bible pronounces *woe* on today's political and religious leaders who are "at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria" (Amos 6:1; Revised Standard Version). Our leaders are not vigilant! They are "at ease"—lulled into a false sense of security. We think we are too advanced, too sophisticated to use these awe-inspiring weapons. But history and prophecy show that nuclear war is certain. It will require divine intervention to prevent man from obliterating human life!

Jesus Christ will return to save humanity from itself, ushering in a new world of true peace. This is the hope that must light our way through the coming crisis.

The Day After made the public aware of the horror of nuclear Armageddon. Bible prophecy makes it clear that the nuclear Armageddon America once feared is now *at our door.* Are you emotionally and spiritually prepared for this staggering turn in world events?

1 Peter 4:7 says, "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." "The fact that Christ's return is so near should CHANGE OUR BEHAVIOR," my father writes in *The Epistles of Peter—A Living Hope.*

It may be too late for our nations, but individuals can still turn to God in repentance. Revelation 12 and Matthew 24 reveal that God will protect His faithful people from the coming nuclear destruction. Only God can lead us out of the coming crisis. The future is hopeless without Him.

As the 10-nation European superstate begins to form, international trade blocs take shape against the United States, and madmen seek to increase their nuclear arsenals, we must face reality. Time is short. Nuclear war is coming.

The unthinkable WILL HAPPEN. How will you respond? ■

Jesus Christ Himself foretold of nuclear war as a sign of the end of the age—and of the greatest event in history. Learn about it in Gerald Flurry's free booklet *Nuclear Armageddon Is 'At the Door.'*

GETTY IMAGES

HOW TO BESIEGE THE U.S.A.

The *Plain Truth* newsmagazine, predecessor of the *Philadelphia Trumpet,* was founded in 1934. That same year it began publishing its forecast that America would be conquered by a revived Roman Empire. The question is: How could the world's greatest superpower fall? The U.S. military outspends the next 10 biggest militaries combined. The Prophet Ezekiel explains that the Great Tribulation will not begin with a military invasion but with a siege.

Ezekiel 4:5 explains that this trade siege will last 390 days, and Ezekiel 5:12 declares that one third of the population will die because of the siege. That equates to 130 million people in the U.S. and Canada alone. Such unparalleled devastation will weaken America to the point where an actual military invasion can succeed.

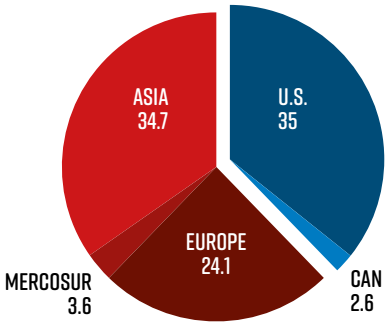
Such tragedies sound unthinkable, but foreign powers are taking steps toward this end.

STEP 1

Build an anti-American trade coalition

TOGETHER the U.S. and Canada form the greatest integrated economic bloc in history. These nations' combined GDP is roughly $33 trillion, well above the European Union's combined GDP of $21 trillion. This is one of the many reasons why Herbert W. Armstrong expected the economic alliance between Europe and Latin America to grow very strong, and why Gerald Flurry expects a temporary alliance between Europe and the giants of Asia. If the EU built an anti-American trade coalition with MERCOSUR and the four greatest powers in Asia, it would have a combined GDP of nearly $55 trillion. That is 165 percent of North America's economic power.

PERCENTAGE OF WORLD GDP

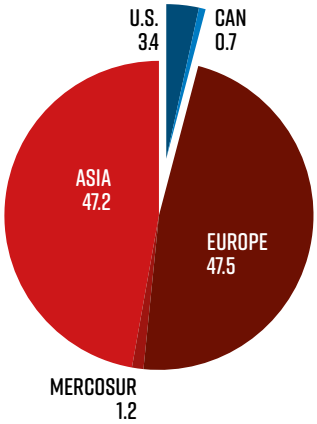


STEP 2

Assemble the world's largest merchant fleet

SINCE Asia, Europe and Latin America are not interconnected with infrastructure like the U.S. and Canada, an anti-American trade coalition would need the world's greatest merchant fleet. Together, the U.S. and Canada own 2,083 oceangoing merchant ships with the capacity to carry 56 million tons of cargo. These numbers are minuscule compared to the combined merchant fleets of the anti-American trade alliance, which has more than 30,000 merchant ships with the capacity to carry a total of 1.3 billion tons.

PERCENTAGE OF MERCHANT SHIPPING TONNAGE



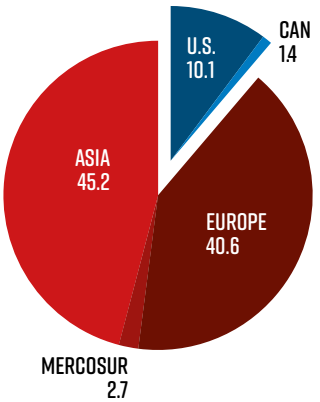
MAJOR MARITIME CHOKE POINTS

STEP 3

Seize control of maritime choke points

ANY trade alliance with a combined GDP of $55 trillion and a merchant fleet of 30,000 ships could challenge the United States. Its next move would be to seize the maritime choke points around the globe and stand against the U.S. Navy. No single nation has naval strength equal to the U.S., but together the EU, MERCOSUR and the major Asian powers field 10 aircraft carriers to America's 11, and about 4,092 warships to the U.S. Navy's 532—such quantity could offset quality in a coordinated strike.

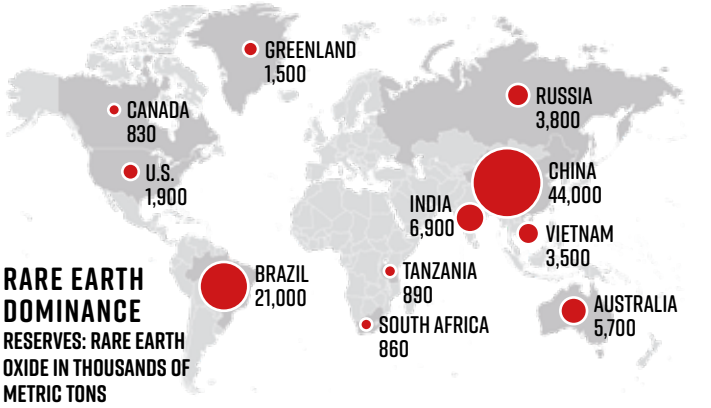
PERCENTAGE OF WORLD TOTAL NUMBER OF WARSHIPS



STEP 4

Dump U.S. treasury bonds

SOWING financial chaos in the Unites States before attacking the U.S. Navy would improve an anti-American alliance's chance of success, so financial weapons may be just as deadly as physical ones. One of the U.S.'s greatest weaknesses is its $38.5 trillion debt. Almost 25 percent of this debt ($9.4 trillion) is held by foreign governments, and roughly 43 percent of this foreign debt ($4 trillion) is held by nations in the anti-American alliance. Dumping these bonds would cause interest rates to spike, inflation to skyrocket, and the stock market to crash—the perfect conditions for a military attack on maritime choke points.



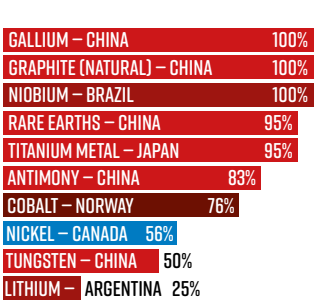
RARE EARTH DOMINANCE
RESERVES: RARE EARTH OXIDE IN THOUSANDS OF METRIC TONS

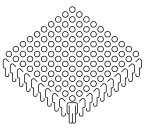
STEP 5

Halt exports to the United States and Canada

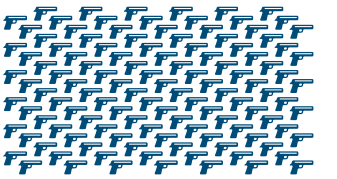
IN a future war between America and an anti-American trade alliance, control over the world's maritime choke points would give the anti-American alliance the ability to cut off vital materials to North America. Both the U.S. and Canada are self-sufficient in energy and food, but they are very reliant on foreign nations for rare earth minerals, semiconductors, battery-related materials and pharmaceutical supplies. The U.S. could fight a war without imports of rare earth minerals in the short term, but it would face severe limitations in a long-term conflict as rare earth minerals are core components in U.S. military hardware.

AMERICA IS 100 PERCENT IMPORT-RELIANT FOR 13 CRITICAL MINERALS AND OVER 50 PERCENT RELIANT FOR 31 MORE. HERE ARE THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT.





CIVILIAN FIREARMS PER 100 PEOPLE



U.S. = 120 GUNS PER 100 PEOPLE

REST OF THE WORLD = 6 GUNS PER 100 PEOPLE

STEP 6

Let civil war destroy America from within

ULTIMATELY, the main way a trade siege would destroy America is by exacerbating the divisions within the country. Nearly 40 percent of the world's guns are owned by U.S. citizens, so an economic collapse that pushes the nation into a second civil war would be particularly devastating. Ironically, the only nation with enough firepower to destroy America is America itself. Economic besiegement is a potent strategy that an anti-American trade alliance could use to intensify the violence within America to consume its cities.

VIDEO GAMES THE HIDDEN DANGERS

There's a lot more behind that kid-friendly Roblox game than you think.

BY RICHARD PALMER

IT WAS JUST TOO MUCH FUN. JOHN began playing games before he was a teenager. Soon Roblox and Minecraft were all he and his friends talked about. Then it was all he wanted to do.

His homework was late, then not done at all. He stopped doing chores. He skipped classes, then dropped out of school entirely.

At that point, the games *really* took over. Confident that Britain's "generous" welfare state would take care of his every need, he didn't pursue education or look for a job. Video games became his life.

For Paul, real life was too stressful.

JULIA HENDERSON/TRUMPET

He was married, with kids, and it was tough to make ends meet. Fed up with arguing with his wife, he retreated to his computer, playing video games for hours a day. He has offloaded money problems and the kids onto his wife and escaped to a virtual reality.

Sue doesn't play games, but most of the 7-to-8-year-olds she teaches do. Having learned to walk and talk during the COVID era, they are used to living life through screens. Many of them can't hold a simple conversation or sit still, but can concentrate on their games. The class's favorite? Call of Duty, a first-person shooter game that is, in theory, available only to players age 17 and above.

These are common, real-life examples. In fact, there are probably *millions* of similar stories around the world.

The entertainment world has gone through a massive transformation in the last few decades. For young people, it no longer means TV and movies. They play games, browse social media, and watch videos on TikTok or YouTube; teachers complain their students no longer have the attention span to watch movies. Yesterday's entertainment is today's chore.

The revolution has transformed adulthood as well. Yesterday's teen gamers are today's parents. Smartphones have put video games in the pockets of billions.

Close to half the global population—3.6 billion people—play video games, according to market research agency Newzoo. That includes a grandmother playing Candy Crush on her phone, a father gaming on his work computer, a teen on his handheld, a child playing on his console. The average video game player is 34 to 36 years old. Thirty percent are over age 50.

The revolution has brought once taboo subjects into the mainstream. Games about demons and the occult, or robbing banks and killing the cops, are now normal—hundreds of millions play them. Horror movies rarely break into the top of box office charts, yet games with horror themes are among the best performing.

Video games are transforming childhood, family life and interpersonal relationships. Yet too few are awake to the dangers this has brought. With 212 million Americans playing, and 96 percent viewing them as beneficial, it's been called America's favorite pastime.

Is it really beneficial? Could you or your family be exposed to the dangers inflicted by this pastime? You have to know the answer.

3.6
BILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO PLAY VIDEO GAMES

8.6
PERCENT AGES 9 TO 21 WHO ARE ADDICTED TO VIDEO GAMES

A World Addicted

Many video games promote poisonous themes: violence, horror, pornography and criminality. They also bring "stranger danger" into the homes of millions of kids—opening them up to sexual exploitation in the comfort of their bedrooms. These risks are real and must be dealt with.

There are popular games that avoid many if not all these risks. But even these fail to avoid the greatest video game danger of all: the theft of time.

A 2024 Pew survey concluded that on average, each 15-to-19-year-old American spends 80 minutes per day gaming. A separate study found that for boys, this figure is close to three hours per day.

Over the course of their teenage years, 80 minutes a day amounts to more than 3,400 hours—three hours a day adds up to *more than 7,600 hours.* Considering that most boys start gaming *before* age 13 and continue *after* age 19, the *average* young man has probably spent *more than 10,000 hours* gaming. You can easily see how, if he continues to play into his 30s and beyond, as many do, the average teen could end up spending 20,000 or 30,000 hours of his life on these games.

Malcolm Gladwell famously observed that 10,000 hours of focused practice is roughly the required time to achieve world-class mastery in a skill. Think what we could be producing instead.

There's clearly something very addictive about even the most seemingly benign games. It has led to a new global pandemic.

Analysis of hundreds of studies conducted worldwide suggests around 2 to 3 percent of the global population has a "gaming disorder": so addicted to games for at least 12 months that other activities, including sleeping, eating, personal hygiene, work and time spent with others, are pushed aside. Generally they are playing at least 8 to 10 hours a day. Another study estimates 8.6 percent of those ages 9 to 21 are addicted.

Similar numbers of boys and girls say they play video games—but boys spend more time playing and are 2 to 3 times likelier to become addicted. In 2022 the World Health Organization warned that around 1 in 6 school-age boys worldwide shows signs of "problematic gaming."

If anything, these figures may be too low. They generally rely on people to give honest answers about their behavior. Studies repeatedly show that addicted gamers significantly underestimate the time they're playing and how much it's affecting their life.

These studies all put a high bar on what they consider a "disorder" or "addiction." Millions more play hours a day but aren't included in their count. In America, 41 percent of teen gamers say they experience sleep problems due to their gaming but they are not counted. This is becoming a major problem for *most* teenage boys and a great many young men.

A Whole New Ball Game

As gaming is growing more popular, the world of video games is changing. A couple of decades ago, video games were largely one-off purchases: Spend $50, and you had your game. Today there are more options. You can play free games, funded by ads. Many will try to entice you with a small sample each day, but payment is required to unlock more content. Others work on a subscription model. Microtransactions, where just a dollar or two will unlock in-game bonuses, are common. Even the traditional buy-a-game approach now uses expansions and game passes to generate more cash.

A game is less a fixed product and more an ever changing experience. It makes life harder for parents. Vetting a game once is no longer enough, because later updates could make it a whole new game.

But the biggest result of the shift has been to increase the addictive effect of the games. With revenue coming from ads, subscriptions or microtransactions, more time playing brings in more cash. Developers are more incentivized than ever to keep you hooked.

"The video gaming industry has transitioned from a group of backyard innovators to an industry of multibillion-dollar companies, hiring psychologists, neuroscientists and marketing experts to turn customers into addicts," wrote *The Conversation* in 2017. "The latest trend is the creation of 'whales,' people so addicted to games that they spend their entire life savings to keep playing."

In fact, law professor Allison Caffarone argued in the *Duke Law and Technology Review* that video game companies have worked so hard to make their games addictive that they could be guilty of civil battery. She argues that game companies are no better than cigarette manufacturers that work to keep their customers addicted while hiding the research from them.

"It is an 'open secret' in the gaming industry that video game developers are hiring scientists and behavioral psychologists to engineer games that trigger physiological changes in the brain (a concept known as neuroplasticity) with the purpose of addicting the games' users," she wrote. These techniques usually aim to overstimulate dopamine production in the brain to levels that rival powerful stimulant drugs and can "nearly shut down the prefrontal regions."

Every few years, new mechanisms, often based on the gambling world, are brought in to raise the likelihood of addiction. The right technique can generate billions.

90
MILLIONS OF ACTIVE ROBLOX DAILY USERS

40
PERCENT OF USERS UNDER AGE 13

ROBLOX
Stranger Danger

Now that most devices are connected to the Internet, gaming is becoming a less solitary affair. Voice or text chat is built into most games. A growing number of teens no longer meet up with friends after school; they get together virtually. Players ages 7 to 70 from around the world chat within multiplayer games.

The shift to social gaming may look positive. But for many, it adds to their addiction. Kids fear becoming virtual pariahs if they don't join in.

The anonymity or lack of face-to-face contact in chatting through a headset tends to bring out the worst in people. Researchers from Offenburg University in Germany studied the chats in 120 games of the online shooter game Valorant: 80 percent contained profanity; 26 percent, general verbal abuse; and 14 percent, sexual comments or sexual insults. The harassment of women in these gaming platforms has become a major problem.

But the greatest danger is to children. "In many ways, the gaming environment provides an ideal setting for grooming," warns the United Nations Children's Fund. "Offenders often use multiple platforms simultaneously to contact young people, starting chats on public platforms and moving to more private or encrypted platforms later."

In September 2023, the FBI published a bulletin that warned of the 764 network, a group that is "deliberately targeting minor victims on publicly available messaging platforms to extort them into recording or live streaming acts of self-harm and producing child sexual abuse material. These groups use threats, blackmail and manipulation to control the victims into recording or live streaming self-harm, sexually explicit acts, and/or suicide; the footage is then circulated among members to extort victims further and exert control over them." The FBI says the group has caught thousands of children in its net. The United States is conducting 250 investigations into the 764 network; people connected to it have been arrested across eight countries.

This is just one twisted organization. How many loners are out there looking to prey on kids?

One of the biggest chat dangers comes from one of the most innocent-looking games: Roblox.

This game is especially popular, with nearly *90 million* active daily users. The developers claim that HALF of all American kids under age 16 play Roblox every month; 40 percent of its users are under age 13. It is marketed as being safe for kids, and millions of parents trust it.

Roblox is a platform that allows users to design their own games and sell them to other users. It also allows children as young as 5 to wander around virtually and chat to anyone they encounter.

Would you allow your 5-year-old to roam around town and talk with any stranger who approached without you being there or able to hear the conversation? Nearly every parent would know better than to allow that. Yet millions

permit exactly that in this virtual world.

A report last year from Revealing Reality found that strangers accessing Roblox could talk publicly with 5-year-olds and chat *privately* with those 13 and older. The authors set up an account as a 10-year-old, and their game character could visit rooms designed to mimic hotel rooms, with characters dressed in sexually suggestive outfits, gyrating on a bed. They said age-verification measures were "easily circumventable."

The *Guardian* reached out to its readers about Roblox. The stories it received "include that of a 10-year-old boy who was groomed by an adult he met on the platform, and a 9-year-old girl who started having panic attacks after seeing sexual content while gaming." Last year, U.S. authorities arrested six people on charges of using Roblox to sexually exploit children.

grand theft auto

Pinnacle of Human Achievement?

While many start with innocent titles, gamers can quickly be drawn into darker games—and there are ample options.

Minecraft, the most profitable game of all time, is rated as appropriate for players as young as 10 in the U.S. for its cartoonish violence and blockish monsters. Number three on the list is Wii Sports, rated as suitable for all ages, and there is almost nothing objectionable about its actual content.

Second on the list is Grand Theft Auto V. Rated for ages 18 and older in the U.S., it offers players an immersive world—and prompts them to rob banks, fight the police, murder rivals, hire prostitutes to regain health points, and

THE SCOURGE OF STREAMING

At any given time in North America, an average of *2 million people* are watching something *live* on Twitch. This streaming platform enables content creators to broadcast live video of anything and to interact with viewers through live chat.

1,400,000,000,000

Hours of live content watched on Twitch in November 2025 created by 6.5 million streamers

= 2 MILLION lifetimes

Rising numbers of people are replacing television viewing with Twitch. If they have jobs, when they come home from work, they will sit down with a meal to watch live streams—often for several hours. Consider these statistics:

- In November 2025, a total of 1.4 trillion hours of live content created by 6.5 million content creators were watched on the platform.
- Every day, on average, 1 million streamers broadcast, and close to 52 million hours of content are consumed by 2 million viewers (often viewing multiple streams at once).

Every day, on average, 1 MILLION streamers broadcast, and 52 MILLION hours of content are consumed by 2 MILLION viewers (often viewing multiple streams at once).

Some of the most popular content consists of people streaming themselves playing video games, especially Counter-Strike, Minecraft, League of Legends and Grand Theft Auto.

But the most popular category is "just chatting," where streamers host guests and talk on live chat. Hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions, watch others talking about life, sports, news—anything.

The most-watched Twitch stream of all time in North America was on June 10, 2024, when Kai Cenat had 720,000 viewers at once. Streaming from his basement, Cenat sat and talked with comedians Kevin Hart and Druski, and had a FaceTime call with Lebron James. It was a "sleepover" live stream, which broadcast them sleeping in the basement. This is the future of entertainment.

The largest Twitch event ever was the La Velada amateur boxing event, where streamers boxed against one another. The 2025 event had 9.4 million viewers on Twitch.

Other examples of popular Twitch content include sleep streams (people broadcast themselves sleeping, which attracts thousands of viewers), hot tub streams, video reactions (people stream themselves reacting to other videos), people playing party games or online trivia games together, and people live streaming their life as they travel, walk around and perform routine tasks.

Twitch can be lucrative. Creators receive donations from viewers, charge for subscriptions, receive advertising revenue, or are sponsored to display a new product. In 2024, Twitch made $1.8 billion. Kai Cenat raked in over $8.5 million that year.

One former hip-hop artist said he made more money playing video games on Twitch than producing music. He claims he can earn $50,000 to $60,000 an hour playing games while being sponsored by big corporations to advertise their products.

These are truly disturbing trends. How we spend our time determines how we shape our minds. How far removed this is from God's way of life outlined in the Bible!

ABRAHAM BLONDEAU

kill them to get their money back. When the game was released in 2013, it became the fastest-selling entertainment product in human history, earning $800 million in its first day. It has earned an estimated $10 billion total, including hundreds of millions annually for its online version (and not including the hundreds of millions made by previous versions of the same game).

Many more games revolve around shooting opponents, themed in the Wild West, World War II, modern era or in space. Fantasy, magic, monsters and demons are common themes. Elden Ring was the second-bestselling game of the year in 2022 and has won many awards. In this game, players fight undead monsters, cast spells and summon spirits to help them. In 2023, Hogwart's Legacy, set in the wizards-and-magic universe of Harry Potter, was the bestselling game in the U.S.

The games are designed to draw people gradually toward the darkness. Minecraft looks like an online version of Lego—yet popular editions of the game allow players to build a portal to "the Nether," a burning, hell-like dimension populated by ghosts, skeletons and fire spirits. But it's all still in a childish blocky style—perfect to guide young people gradually toward games like Elden Ring.

These are all popular mainstream games. Dive into the world of niche games, and you can find just about anything: a "tormented soul within the depths of hell"; a grieving father sadistically killing girls to re-animate his daughter's corpse; a worker in a morgue trying to trap demons in the correct body before incinerating them. A surprising number of games have you play as a deranged mass shooter trying to kill as many people as possible. Another common theme is players discovering that the world they know is not real. There are lots of pornographic or sexual games out there as well.

Darker games are not the only temptation that chronic players of more innocent titles could be drawn to. Computer gaming means lots of time spent on the computer—and they can be a portal to a host of dangers. A 2021 study found individuals with problematic gaming habits were more likely to also have problems with online gambling, shopping and pornography. A 2015 study also found that those with video game addiction are much likelier to compulsively view pornography—though some become so obsessed with games that they lose interest in everything else, including pornography.

COUNTER-STRIKE: Gateway to Gambling

The gaming-to-gambling pipeline is well paved and a powerful example of how video games can draw people more deeply into other online addictions.

One way developers have learned from the gambling world is through mechanisms known as "loot boxes." In Roblox and many other games, players are awarded with virtual containers that open to reveal some kind of in-game reward. Opening them is generally accompanied by animation that mimics a slot machine. Often the virtual boxes are available for purchase with real cash.

The Counter-Strike series of multiplayer shooters was one of the pioneers of this technique, enabling players to buy loot boxes containing unique "skins" or decorations for guns. Valve, Counter-Strike's owner, promised players "all the illicit thrills of black-market weapons trafficking without any of the standing around in darkened warehouses getting knifed to death." They also set up a store for people to trade these skins, with Valve taking a cut of the transaction. By one estimate, Valve sold *1.9 billion* of these loot boxes.

So this virtual slot machine gives a reward that could be worth pennies or thousands. Isn't this gambling?

Not according to U.S. regulators, because Valve doesn't provide a way to trade these skins for real-life cash. A gamer has to go to third-party websites for that. Outsourcing that simple step allows Counter-Strike to sidestep gambling restrictions in most countries.

Now, actual online casinos have sprung up where these skins can essentially be used as poker chips.

Turns out, piggy-backing off video games is a great way to get kids addicted to gambling. And that is a wildly profitable thing to do. Kids may not have much money, but they also don't have as much life experience or self-control—and often they can access Mom's credit card. It's easier to turn kids into problem gamblers than it is adults—and casinos make most of their money from addicts.

Seventy percent of those involved in Counter-Strike gambling got started underage. You generally don't need an ID to get started. These casinos often do not check, or check only when someone tries to withdraw his money.

How profitable could such a niche gambling scene really be? One rough estimate concluded that the combined revenue from all Counter-Strike casinos was twice the revenue of the biggest mainstream online casino. And that's the casino ecosystem for just *one game.* Other casinos cater to other gamers. "Kid-friendly" Roblox, though not as lucrative as Counter-Strike, has the same loot box mechanism and the same third-party casinos.

That money feeds a network of "streamers" and "influencers." These are people who not only play video games for hours but stream or record videos of themselves playing video games for hours—and millions of people watch (sidebar, page 23). Most do it for fun. Some do it and make a little extra spending money. But some are approached by online casinos and offered life-changing amounts of money—as in hundreds of thousands of dollars a month. Why? So kids who tune in to get some tips on how to beat their friends in Counter-Strike are persuaded to sign up for casinos.

Surely encouraging gambling addiction in kids is so obviously evil that it would be a line most would refuse to cross. But some influencers have admitted to being paid around *$5 million a year* to advertise casinos. These are ordinary people, often struggling to afford rent, suddenly tempted with enough cash to buy houses outright. Most of them overcome their moral qualms.

How bad is video gaming actually? This is just *one example* from *one game* you've likely never heard of, and it has

hooked huge numbers of people, young and old, watching people's videos about a video game, then spending much more time playing and getting addicted to the gameplay, continuously spending real money on loot boxes within the game, and learning to gamble through online casinos based on the game.

Fake Accomplishment

For most people, the more mainstream games are the most dangerous. Parents are put at ease by the family-friendly content. In-game chat is more limited than in some other games, so they consider them safe. But the game starts users down a road that often leads them to addiction and, in many cases, to more extreme games.

After decades in development, video game addiction has become multigenerational. Fathers want to share with their kids the games they grew up playing. Limiting the kids' gaming would limit their own prized hobby, which they don't want to do.

Consider the fruits of a society addicted to video games. These games can seem more fun than anything else. Yet a generation saturated in this "fun" is more depressed than ever. In 2023, 40 percent of U.S. high schoolers said they were persistently sad or hopeless. Nearly a third said they had felt "so sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row" that they stopped their regular activities. A quarter of British 16-to-24-year-olds have a mental health disorder.

With online chats and team video games, today's young people are the most connected generation in history. They're also the loneliest. A 2018 survey of 55,000 young people ages 16 to 24 found that 40 percent said they were lonely often or very often.

A study published earlier this year tracked 5,000 U.S. adolescents for four years. It found that those who showed signs of video game addiction were at greater risk of suicidal behavior and thoughts and symptoms of depression.

Not all the problems among young people are the result of video games. Social media has also played a major role. Both boys and girls have been caught up with both of these modern addictions, but in general, social media is harming more women than men, while video games are harming more men.

Video games are a mirage, promising virtual fun and virtual friendship. They provide constant thrills, immersive entertainment and the illusion of accomplishment: You've just stormed a beach at Normandy, become a mafia kingpin in Los Angeles, saved the world or gotten the girl, all from the comfort of your bedroom at 2 a.m. And you can do it again, and again and again. Real accomplishment is much more rewarding, but far harder. Finishing a book, playing Chopin's *Prelude in A Major,* or learning how to sketch a hand without it looking weird takes a lot more time. Why bother?

Yet the virtual accomplishment never fills that desire in the long run.

The result is thousands of hours of wasted potential, and a generation of depressed, lonely teens.

The Architect of Addiction

Video games have proved to be a perfect trap for millions. A wide range of seemingly child-friendly games draws them in when they're young. And they then spend tens of thousands of hours on worthless pursuits that provide no long-term satisfaction.

The idea of "gaming in moderation" becomes a trap for many. *I can use this to relax a little—just like I would any entertainment.* For parents, video games are the easy way to keep kids quiet. Surely a little gaming can do no harm?

But other recreational activities have more benefits and come with fewer downsides. Sports, for example, benefit health, mind and character. Some will insist you can learn skills, even about academic subjects, from games. For some that may be true. But there is much more harm and much less benefit in that mix than with other activities.

But the big danger is that for many, video games are so addictive that they can't keep it "in moderation." In so many cases, they take over and become the only thing a person finds enjoyable.

A little bit of gaming can seem innocent, but the evils are abundant: the thousands of hours wasted; the millions of people pulled away from positive, productive activities; the millions robbed of ambition, the desire to succeed and real accomplishment in life; the relationships destroyed and those never begun; the millions drawn into violent and demonic games, pornography or online gambling. The kids neglected. The lives wasted.

There is a critical, hidden reason for all these negative fruits from video games.

Regardless of game designers' intentions, there is another entity that knows the human mind better than anyone else, and he is *thrilled* to addict millions of children, men and women to video games.

The Bible describes a very real spirit world. Satan the devil is identified as this world's god (2 Corinthians 4:4). Ephesians 2:2 calls him "the prince of the power of the air," influencing minds through moods, attitudes and emotions.

Many have recognized his evil influence behind games focused on death, crime, zombies and evil spirits. Yet can you recognize it within games that seem benign?

We live in a world where few people "have time" to go to church, pray or study the Bible. There is so much else to do. Video games not only consume time, they consume attention. They draw addicts into a fake world that becomes all they can think about. It robs them of the potential to succeed in the real world and to succeed spiritually.

"Man's potential is so stupendous," wrote *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry. "Satan is very jealous of our future and will do anything to prevent us from fulfilling our potential" (*Trumpet,* November 1992).

VIDEO GAMES PAGE 32 ►

GIVE YOUR CHILD A FAR GREATER FUTURE THAN WHAT A VIDEO GAME WORLD CAN OFFER.

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A True Christian Cannot Believe in Evolution

But a false Christian can. **BY GERALD FLURRY**

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT subject you could study if you were just beginning a relationship with God? It is the subject of THE GREAT BEGINNING OF GOD AND HIS CREATION.

In 1926, a century ago, Herbert W. Armstrong encountered what he called "dual challenges" that would fundamentally change the course of his life.

One day, his wife, Loma, visited a neighbor lady who handed her a Bible and had her read scriptures about God's Sabbath commands. Mrs. Armstrong realized those scriptures meant that the seventh-day Sabbath is still binding on God's people today. She went to her husband and told him what she had learned.

"I was aghast!" Mr. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*. "I was angry. To me that was religious fanaticism! What would business contacts think? But she claimed to have found this teaching in the Bible."

Mrs. Armstrong challenged her husband, "If you can show me where the Bible commands Sunday observance, I'll go back to it."

Soon afterward came the second challenge. In a conversation with his sister-in-law, Hertha Dillon, Mr. Armstrong mentioned he was not convinced that evolution was true.

"Herbert Armstrong," she accused, "you are simply IGNORANT! One is uneducated, and ignorant, unless he believes in evolution. All educated people now believe it" (*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*).

These two challenges were the genesis of Mr. Armstrong's calling into God's truth and His work. There is an important reason WHY God challenged him on the Sabbath first of all! And there is also an important reason why the challenge on evolution came right after that.

A Memorial of Creation

Why did God challenge Mr. Armstrong to prove the Sabbath day first? Because if you don't understand the Sabbath, you cannot understand God's purpose for mankind! (To prove whether the seventh-day Sabbath is still binding for New Testament Christians, request a free copy of Mr. Armstrong's booklet *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*)

In Genesis 1, God reveals how He renewed the Earth for man. On the first day, He separated light from darkness. On the second day, He divided the bodies of water from Earth's atmosphere. On the third day, He raised dry land up from below the water and planted vegetation on it. On the fourth day, the sun, moon and stars became visible from Earth. On the fifth day, God created aquatic animals and birds. On the sixth day, God created land animals and man.

Then, on the seventh day, by resting from His labor of the previous six days, God instituted the Sabbath day (Genesis 2:1-3).

The Sabbath day is a MEMORIAL of God's creation!

Everything began with God creating all these things, culminating in man and in the Sabbath, the seventh day of this inaugural week of this new world. Genesis makes it clear that this was a literal week, not a metaphor for some lengthy or undefined span of time.

Exodus 31 records a special covenant God made with His people regarding the seventh-day Sabbath. Verse 14 reads: "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people."

God takes the Sabbath day very seriously. People lose their physical and spiritual lives when they know God's Sabbath command yet refuse to keep it! The ancient nation of Israel was ENSLAVED numerous times for breaking it!

The Sabbath memorializes the very beginning of mankind! It is the FOUNDATION of God's way of life! If we reject the Sabbath, everything else in our lives will go off track.

The Sabbath points to the renewing of the face of the Earth in preparation for the creation of man's body and mind on the sixth day and spiritual creation on the seventh day. It points to the awesome master plan of God!

Satan hates this and has substituted a counterfeit explanation for man's origin. This counterfeit is EVOLUTION. It is, in fact, Satan's *deadliest weapon.*

This is why God challenged Mr. Armstrong at the start of his conversion with BOTH subjects, the Sabbath and evolution, at once.

KASSANDRA VERBOUT/TRUMPET

Believing in Evolution and God

The people who created the theory of evolution were atheists and agnostics. Evolutionists claim that you are ignorant if you have faith in God and don't believe in their theory. But now, even people who are religious say they believe in evolution *and* God. Many people who supposedly believe the Bible accept notions of creation being the product of evolutionary forces rather than the work of the Creator.

People have come to believe ideas like "theistic evolution" or "evolutionary creationism." They say God used evolution to create man, that God created the universe and life through natural processes, including evolution.

Some say the Genesis creation account is metaphorical. They say that "day" doesn't mean "day," but rather "epoch"—an indefinite period, or a literary device—meaning they could have added up to billions of years. But that doesn't agree with the Bible, which says God divided the light from the darkness and called the light "day" and the darkness "night," and said "the evening and the morning were the first day" and the same for all seven days.

Pope Benedict XVI said there were "many scientific proofs in favor of evolution" and that "the term *evolution* is appropriate" to describe God's creation. The United Methodist Church states, "We find that science's descriptions of cosmological, geological and biological evolution are not in conflict with theology." Prominent 19th-century Jewish theologian Samson Raphael Hirsch wrote that Judaism "can accommodate even this 'theory of the origin of species.'"

That is false! A true Christian lives "by every word of God" (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4), and Genesis 1 explicitly says God made every kind of animal to "reproduce after its own kind" before He made man after the God kind.

"Theistic evolution" is an attack on this biblical truth. It twists Scripture to make it sound like God used the evolutionary process as a tool to slowly transform amoebas into His own image and likeness over billions of years. Christians who believe this are usually too weak in faith to believe what the Bible says. So instead of choosing between the Bible and Darwin like Mr. Armstrong did, they try to marry biblical creationism with evolutionary agnosticism. The result destroys their understanding of God's ultimate purpose, which is to reproduce Himself in mankind.

God did not make monkeys to slowly evolve into humans over millions of years. Mankind is not of the monkey kind—he is of the God kind!

"Theistic evolution" is a satanic attempt to convince people that they are nothing more than animals!

When the premise is wrong, all that follows is wrong.

If you don't believe the seven-day re-creation week of Genesis 1, then you do not believe the Bible: You do not believe you were created by God!

That doesn't mean that Earth is only 6,000 years old, however, as some literal Bible interpreters believe.

The events of Genesis 1, beginning in verse 2, are a "re-creation" because the original creation of the Earth and the universe (described in verse 1) had occurred prior (see also Job 38:4-11). This could have taken place millions of years before the events detailed in the rest of the chapter. The rebellion of Lucifer and one third of the angels (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28; Revelation 12, etc) wrecked the universe and caused the surface of the Earth to *become* "without form, and void" (Genesis 1:2). God then embarked on a plan even greater than the angelic plan! (This truth is thoroughly explained in Herbert W. Armstrong's free book *The Incredible Human Potential*.)

Many Christians reject evolution and say they have faith that Genesis 1-2 explain the origin of life on Earth. But their faith is weak because they don't *fully* believe what God says: They reject the seventh day, the Sabbath, the very *memorial* of that creation! (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11). They think it does not

Arguing in a Circle

The following is an excerpt from the *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong* concerning the result of his intensive study into the question of origins and the foundation of the theory of evolution:

I CAME TO SEE that there was only one possible proof of evolution as a fact. That was the assumption that, in the study of paleontology, the most simple fossils were always in the oldest strata, laid down first; while, as we progress into strata of later deposition, the fossils found in them become gradually more complex, tending toward advancing intelligence.

That one claim, I finally determined, was the trunk of the tree of evolution. If the trunk stood, the theory appeared proved. If I could chop down the trunk, the entire tree would fall with it.

I began a search to learn how these scientists determined the age of strata. I was months finding it. None of the texts I searched seemed to explain anything about it. This trunk of the tree was carelessly assumed—without proof.

Were the oldest strata always on the bottom—the next oldest next to the bottom, the most recent on the top? Finally I found it in a recognized text on geology authored by Prof. Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin. No, sometimes the most recent were actually below the most ancient strata. The age of strata was not determined by stages of depth. The depth of strata varied in different parts of the world.

How, then, was the age of strata determined? Why, I finally discovered in this very reputable authority, their age was determined by the fossils found in them. Since the geologists "knew" their evolutionary theory was true, and since they had estimated how many millions of years ago a certain fossil specimen might have lived, that age determined the age of the strata!

In other words, they assumed the age of the strata by the supposition that their theory of evolution was true. And they "proved" their theory was true by the supposition of the progressive ages of the strata in which fossil remains had been found! This was arguing in a circle!

The trunk of the evolutionary tree was chopped down. There was no proof!

matter which day you keep. But as we will see, keeping the Sabbath is crucial to being a true Christian and to understanding the question of origins.

Christ Confirmed Creation

Jesus Christ confirmed that the Old Testament is accurate. He quoted from 24 different books! He confirmed the lives of Zechariah, Daniel, Elijah, David, Moses, Israel, Isaac, Abraham, Abel, Eve, Adam—and the creation.

Christ also kept the Sabbath, the memorial of creation. He believed in the Genesis creation account! In Matthew 19:4-5, He quotes the creation of man (Genesis 1:26-27), when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ...." Christ asked the religious people of His day—*and our day*—"Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

God created us male and female. We didn't evolve from an ape or any other animal kind. And there aren't more than two genders, either! We are made in God's likeness. WE ARE OF THE GOD KIND!

God made us male and female, and it is "for this cause" that God instructs a young man and woman to leave their parents, to marry and build their own family. They are to become "one flesh"—physically and spiritually. That is a deep closeness and unity. Matthew 19:5 quotes Genesis 2:24. Christ definitely believed the Genesis account of creation. He certainly should, since the Father created all things through Him! (Ephesians 3:9). How can anyone who claims to be a Christian reject the Genesis account?

If you don't believe Genesis 1, then you don't believe any of the Bible.

Most educators and scientists don't know the origin of marriage because they reject God as the Creator of man as stated in Genesis. That book contains the record of when marriage and family began. Many of these scholars see only "human evolutionary history." They contemptuously and arrogantly include the word *evolutionary.* They assume they know more than the great God! They close their mind to God's truth. They have never known God, and they probably never will until God plunges them into the worst suffering ever. Then, thankfully, most of them will be humble enough to heed God's Word and repent.

Higher Education?

When Mr. Armstrong started studying into evolution, he thought it seemed plausible. When he got deep into his studies, he discovered that evolution is a FARCE (sidebar, "Arguing in a Circle").

"Actually, this is simply the study into the TWO possibilities of origins," he wrote in his autobiography. "It threw me directly into an in-depth research of what is perhaps the most BASIC of all knowledge—the very *starting point* in the acquisition of knowledge—the search for the correct *concept* through which to VIEW all facts."

The concept through which scientists view all facts flatly excludes everything that is non-material. They have no real explanation for consciousness, intuition, creativity or beauty. They can't explain moral questions or spiritual matters. Scientists confine their research entirely to the physical realm. They reject the slightest possibility of the spiritual, the supernatural, the miraculous.

They deny the "spirit in man" (Job 32:8) that God gave human beings, which gives us mind power that far exceeds anything animals can understand (1 Corinthians 2:11; request a free copy of Mr. Armstrong's booklet *What Science Can't Discover About the Human Mind*). Of course, they also deny the Holy Spirit, the power through which God saves us. And even though evidence of the Master Designer and Creator is all around us—the exquisite universe, our planet and our very lives are His superb handiwork—they deny God altogether!

Such thinking produces profound *blindness.* People's faith is completely DESTROYED by the theory of evolution!

Yet the whole system of higher education promotes that thinking. Professors basically DEMAND that their students accept the theory of evolution without thinking deeply about it at all. Maybe a student enters college believing in God, but after being indoctrinated in secular teaching, he finishes college as agnostic or atheist. The highly educated of this world—nearly all of them agnostics or atheists—ridicule anyone who dares have faith in God!

This is Satan's way of discrediting the Bible's account of re-creation week. Students are taught that Earth as it is today came into existence through a process that took millions of years. God says He renewed the face of the Earth in SIX DAYS!

Blind Faith

Is faith really just an unseemly quality of ignorant people?

Evolution is nothing but a BLIND FAITH! Scientists believe the precisely ordered, law-abiding universe came into being because of a spontaneous "big bang" or some other insane idea. They reject the existence of a Creator, even though the scientific law of biogenesis states that life comes only from life. They have never found a "missing link" fossil of a half-man, half-monkey or anything else, yet they wholeheartedly believe in evolution.

King David used a strong word to describe anyone who scoffs at the notion of God. He called that person a FOOL (Psalm 14:1).

God wants us to understand who He is: our Creator. He created us physically, but He is also creating us spiritually to become members of His Family. That is why God looks like a MAN (Ezekiel 1:26). We look like God! Animals do not.

God created man! We all have a human spirit that can connect with God's Holy Spirit. Without that connection, we would have no concept of our future. God cannot convert a dog. Not even the brilliant angels have the opportunity to become God beings like we do! (Hebrews 1:5). Our incredible human potential is to build the very MIND and CHARACTER of God. That's our purpose for living on Earth, our testing ground.

Satan uses evolution to DIRECTLY ATTACK THIS UNDERSTANDING.

A TRUE CHRISTIAN CANNOT BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION! The idea that God used evolution as a means to create man is NONSENSE! He created man in ONE DAY. We must believe the inspired words of the Holy Bible. ■

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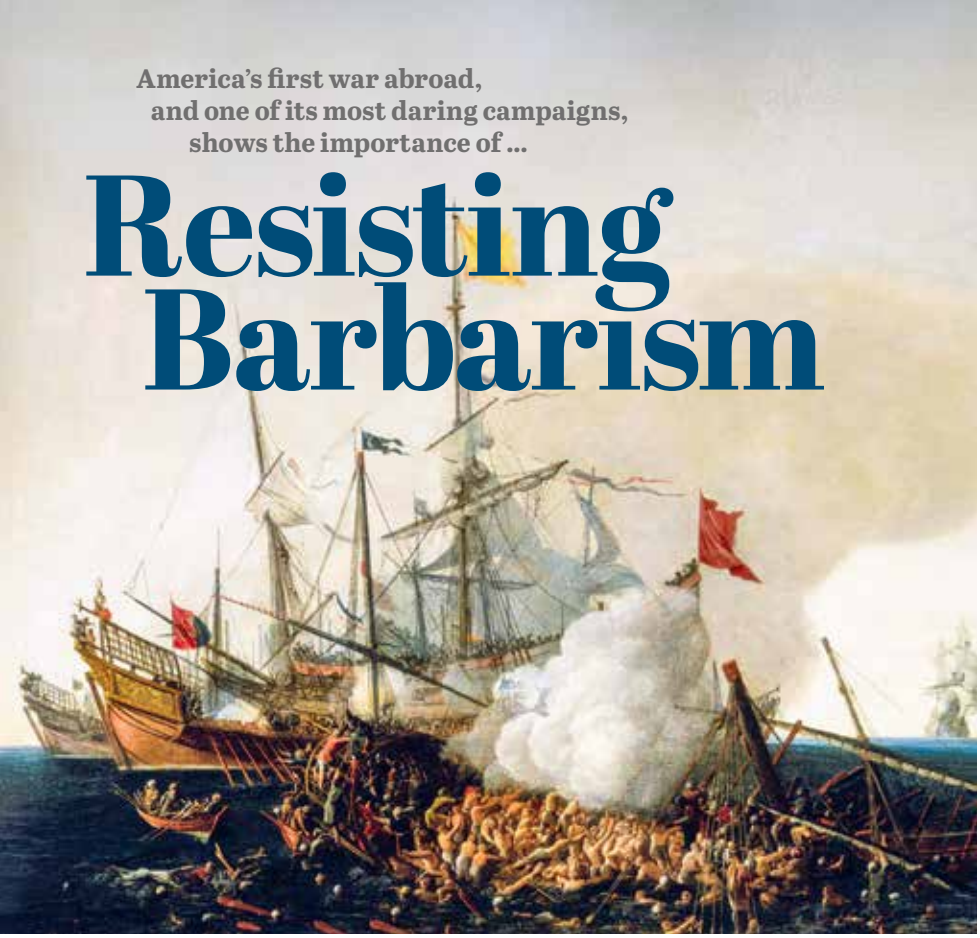


CORNELIS HENDRIKSZ VROOM THE YOUNGER

BY JEREMIAH JACQUES

For centuries, the Barbary pirates terrorized much of the world. Operating from what is now Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco, these Islamic corsairs were active in great force by the 1400s and remained a brutal menace for hundreds of years. Any ship navigating the Mediterranean or the North African Atlantic coast sailed under constant threat.

Victims were killed or, more often, enslaved. The scale was staggering. *Holy War and Human Bondage* author Robert Davis shows that between 1530 and 1780, Barbary pirates enslaved as many as 1.25 million people, mostly Christian Europeans. Some captives were forced to work for and kill for the pirates. Most were sold in slave markets in Algiers or Tripoli to become laborers or concubines. Captives from wealthier families were sometimes ransomed. Most died in bondage.

This was a dark and pernicious evil that needed to be confronted.

Barbary Barbarism

The danger was not limited to those out at sea. Barbary corsairs also carried out *razzias*—raids on coastal towns, mainly in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain, and sometimes as far as Britain, Ireland and even Iceland. Backed by North African Islamic governments and the mighty Ottoman Empire, this was not furtive, sporadic crime perpetrated by ragged, skittish misfits but rather a vast, sustained enterprise.

The scourge not only afflicted Europe but powers trading with the Europeans, including those in North America. Before the United States won its independence, American colonists enjoyed the protection of Great Britain's Royal Navy. But that safeguard ended abruptly in 1776, leaving American vessels to fend for themselves against the numerous, well-established and well-armed Barbary pirates. And after all the tea the Americans spilled into Boston Harbor, the Brits even spilled some of their own, spreading word to the pirates that U.S. ships were no longer under protection.

To make matters worse, many Barbary pirates believed they were waging holy war against Christian Europe. Theirs was an Islamic naval jihad. This religious conviction intensified their zeal and ruthlessness. Their violence and enslavement were viewed not merely as justified but righteous.

"Now I have got you, you Christian dogs," an Algerian slaver told American seaman John Foss and his crew upon capturing them in 1793. "You shall eat stones."

After three years in captivity, Foss enumerated the punishments he and his fellow "Christian slaves" suffered at the hands of the Barbarys: "[I]mpalement upon an iron stick thrust up through his posterior, having one's head chopped off, castration, being cast off the walls of the city upon an iron hook, and nailed to the gallows by one hand and opposite foot. Of course these were the worst of the punishments, and often floggings and random beatings were the everyday form of punishment."

Some nations attempted to protect their citizens from this nightmare by paying tribute. But the Barbarys' prices kept going up, and their promises were little more than wind and spray. Tribute reduced attacks and enslavements but never eliminated them.

The pirates terrorized the seas year after year, decade after decade, century after century. But as the calendar page turned to the 1800s, on the opposite end of the Atlantic, currents were shifting.

'Chastise Their Insolence'

Struggling with economic fragility and political division, the newly launched United States was still finding its sea legs and trying to establish its position in the choppy waters of international relations. Its earliest administrations experimented with paying Barbary tribute. But with the tolls ever rising and the guarantees never truly guaranteed, the patience of many Americans had run aground.

"The more you give the more the Turks will ask for," U.S. Army officer William Eaton wrote. It was a reality he understood firsthand. From 1797 to 1801, he worked as consul general to Tunis, in modern Tunisia, with the goal of negotiating better terms for American commerce. As Barbary demands and barbarity increased, Eaton became one of the loudest critics of the tribute system. For the young United States of America, he warned, it was a course with no safe harbor.

Thomas Jefferson agreed with this view, labeling the payments a "humiliation." When he became president in 1801, he resolved to meet Barbary terrorism not with treasure but with the cut of steel.

On May 13, 1801, Jefferson deployed a small squadron from the nation's 25-year-old navy to the Mediterranean Sea. Their orders: "Chastise their insolence—by sinking, burning or destroying their ships and vessels wherever you shall find them."

EATON

The Barbary pirates by this point had been operating for more than 300 years. They had nearly 100 battle-hardened crews, sailing expertly designed ships, calling on robustly fortified bases, and enjoying cover from the Islamist-ruled, Ottoman-aligned regencies.

The Americans had three frigates and a schooner, and no ground troops to support maritime operations. Though some battles were won, the outcomes were mixed. The frigate USS Philadelphia was lost in 1803, its crew captured.

The decisive victory that Jefferson and the rest of America sought remained a figment on the horizon.

But in 1804, Eaton returned to the Mediterranean, this time with the commission of a navy lieutenant. And he brought with him an audacious plan.

Restore a Ruler, Earn an Ally

Ruling over Tripoli and other parts of modern-day Libya was a man named Yusuf Karamanli. Yusuf had seized power in the early 1790s first by killing his oldest brother Hasan, in front of their mother no less, and then by exiling his second-oldest brother Hamet, who was next in line, to Egypt. Yusuf then established himself in Tripoli as a major perpetuator and powerbroker of the Barbary slave system.

In this dark sibling rivalry, Eaton saw an opportunity for America: If the U.S. could restore Hamet Karamanli to power, the Americans would have a major ally in the region and weaken or eradicate piracy at one of its strongest ports. The trouble was that a battle against Yusuf Karamanli's fortified coastal cities could not be won from the sea alone. The Americans would also need boots on the ground.

If the plan failed, not only would the ships and crews of America's fledgling navy be in jeopardy, but the land troops supporting Hamet would be stranded deep in hostile territory.

Eaton requested that a contingent of 100 marines join him to "place the success beyond the caprice of incident." Jefferson authorized the mission, but Eaton was given just seven marines. With this modest detachment, he entered Egypt and met Hamet in Alexandria. Hamet required little persuasion to rally behind the plan, and he helped Eaton recruit Greek and Arab mercenaries.

They determined that the city of Derna on Libya's coast would be the place to first confront Yusuf's forces and to install Hamet. The plot was coming together. But seizing Derna was only half the battle. Reaching the city on foot would be just as treacherous.

A Miracle March

On March 6, 1805, Eaton, Hamet and the seven marines began walking westward from Alexandria. With them were nearly 400 Arab and 67 Greek mercenaries, as well as 190 camels bearing supplies. Their destination was 500 miles of cruel desert away. And the trek happened to coincide with Khamsin season, when a scorching Saharan wind whips sand northward across the desert, relentlessly battering anyone unsheltered.

In these conditions, the motley crew managed fewer than 20 miles each day.

Not even a fortnight into the journey, supplies were dwindling and rations had to be reduced. Eaton wrote in his journal: "We have marched a distance of 200 miles through an inhospitable waste of world without seeing the habitation of an animated being, or the tracks of man, o'er burning sands and rocky mountains. ... Our only provisions [are] a handful of rice and two biscuits a day."

They slaughtered every camel they could spare without losing the means to carry the weaponry they would depend on in Derna and other supplies. Still, the hunger of so many men burning through endless calories raged on.

Locating water proved to be a constant battle. One marine described a long-belated drink from a putrid puddle as "more delicious than the most precious cordial." Several days later, the group found a cistern contaminated by the rotting corpses of two apparently murdered men. "We were obliged nevertheless to use the water," Eaton wrote. At another point, they went 47 hours without a drop.

The weary, sand-pelted, desiccated column trudged on, toward the opportunity to face gunshot, cannon fire, slashings, capture, torture and death.

On one occasion, hunger and thirst and concerns about their pay compelled a number of the Arab mercenaries to raid the group's supply wagon. The marines, backed by the Greeks, narrowly beat them back. In the aftermath, many Arabs left the group to return to Egypt.

Eaton faced two more attempted mutinies, and Hamet himself even packed up his tent at one point, demoralized and vowing to return to Alexandria. Eaton persuaded him to press ahead.

In late April, after almost seven weeks of crushing slog, the group reached the port city of Bomba. Their bodies were gaunt, stomachs empty and strength nearly gone. According to National Museum of the Marine Corps curator Kater Miller, completing the march "was a miracle itself."

At this location a few dozen miles east of Derna, the men spotted three faint shapes floating on the horizon: The American warships Hornet, Argus and Nautilus sailing their way toward shore with food and water.

"Language is too poor," Eaton wrote, "to paint the joy and exaltation."

The American sailors provided Eaton's men food, water, pay for the mercenaries, hope and a promise spoken like fair wind: They would join in the battle ahead and provide offshore bombardment.

'To the Shores of Tripoli'

Much refreshed, Eaton's group left Bomba on April 23 to walk the final miles to Derna. Two days later, they were upon the city. Several sheikhs came out to the American camp to swear their loyalty and that of two thirds of the city population to Hamet Karamanli. Yet they also brought grim news: The city's governor, Mustafa Bey, was staunchly aligned with Yusuf Karamanli.

REMBRANDT PEALE

Mustafa commanded 800 soldiers and formidable artillery and would soon be reinforced by a force from Yusuf that was fast advancing from Tripoli.

Eaton sent a message to Mustafa. "I want no territory. With me is advancing the legitimate sovereign of your country. Give us a passage through your city; and supplies of which we shall need you shall receive fair compensation. Let no differences of religion induce us to shed the blood of harmless men who think little and know nothing."

Mustafa was unimpressed. His reply wasted no words: "My head or yours."

At this reply, many of Eaton and Hamet Karamanli's remaining mercenaries took action. "The Arabs mutinized," Eaton wrote, and "took up a retrograde march."

But Hamet and his entourage along with the Greeks remained. And at dawn on April 27, what was left of the group awoke to the reassuring sight of the three U.S. warships afloat off of Derna, prepared for combat. At the same time, Eaton received word that Yusuf's reinforcements were just over two days away. The time to strike was now.

After delivering two field pieces to Eaton's forces "with much difficulty," the crews piloted the warships near the Derna shoreline. Favorable winds allowed them to anchor remarkably close. At the same time, the Americans and Greeks—perhaps as few as 80 men—took up forward positions, readying for one of the first joint-force strikes in U.S. military history.

"Assaulting a fortified coastal city, with a handful of marines, bolstered by a mercenary army against numerically superior defenders was a tremendous gamble," Miller wrote.

But however long the odds, Eaton's crew would see their mission through—or die in the attempt.

Against the Odds

Around 1:30 in the afternoon, Mustafa's forces opened fire on the anchored U.S. ships, and the Americans thundered back, bombarding the town with cannon fire. Eaton and 1st Lt. Presley O'Bannon led the marines and Greeks, delivering coordinated fire on Mustafa's men from positions along the town's perimeter.

Within 45 minutes, the U.S. cannons had silenced Mustafa's city batteries. His artillerymen abandoned their positions to turn their attention and rifles toward the marines. With heavy musket fire pinning them down, and with the field pieces moving too slowly, Eaton gave a desperate order: Charge!

CHARLES WATERHOUSE

The Battle of Derna is famously celebrated to this day in the *Marines' Hymn,* a verse of which says: "From the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli, we fight our country's battles in the air, on land and sea."

"We rushed forward against a host of savages," he wrote, "more than 10 to our 1."

Seconds into the charge, a Barbary bullet mangled his wrist. But he and the men he led charged on, and the defenders were left with a grim choice: Stand and fight, or flee for their lives.

The unyielding resolve of the advancing men broke their nerve. They chose flight.

The Americans captured the Barbary's main battery overlooking the port as Mustafa Bey fled the city alongside what was left of his forces.

By 4 p.m., United States Marines held the city of Derna. O'Bannon tore down the Barbarys' flag from the ramparts and, for the first time in history, raised an American flag over a conquered city on foreign soil.

The triumph was spectacular. But they had paid for it in blood. Marine Pvt. John Wilton was killed in the assault, and Pvt. Edward Stewart was mortally wounded. Along with Eaton, Corporals David Thomas and Bernard O'Brian were wounded, as were nine Greeks.

But the Battle of Derna was an improbable and awesome victory against wicked terrorism. And it is famously celebrated to this day in the *Marines' Hymn,* a verse of which says: "From the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli, we fight our country's battles in the air, on land and sea."

Jefferson's decision to fight the pirates rather than paying them also signaled that America was ready to stand up to foreign threats, strengthening national pride and establishing the nation as an emerging naval power.

The Barbary pirates and their brutal slavery would not be fully defeated until years later. But the victory forced Yusuf Karamanli to sue for peace and free many of his American captives, and it put a decisive end to the U.S.'s annual tribute payments. Analysts agree that this battle marked a turning point for the overall Barbary operation, dealing it a history-altering blow that set it on a course that would end in wreckage.

It was a pivotal success, not merely because of tactics or strategy, but because a few men of integrity refused to compromise with evil. Their steadfastness carried the day. It delivered victory where lesser courage would have certainly failed. As Psalm 119:1-3 declare, "Joyful are people of integrity .... They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths" (New Living Translation).

In the refusal of Jefferson, Eaton and his men to yield to wickedness, their honor became their weapon, and their conviction, a force more decisive than any cannon could be. ■

Confront the evil in your life.

We all war against evil. Win your spiritual war with the help of Gerald Flurry's ***How to Be an Overcomer***. This booklet is a type of field manual to guide you through to victory. Request your free copy today.

▶ **VIDEO GAMES** FROM PAGE 25

Video games may be one of Satan's most powerful attacks on young men right now.

Dousing the Spark

God created man physical but with an incredible spiritual potential. This physical life is designed to allow man to build character to prepare for his spiritual future. One aspect of physical character that God can use for spiritual success is something Herbert W. Armstrong called a spark of ambition, "the vital ingredient that has been missing in most human lives."

Someone may have ambition only for worldly success. Yet Mr. Armstrong wrote, "Such ambitious fellows, of course, may not have right goals—they may not know the real PURPOSE of life, or the true *way* of life, and they may be energetically pressing on only toward more vanity and 'a striving after wind,' as Solomon puts it. But at least they are mentally ALIVE and not dead! And once circumstances do shake them and bring them to themselves, and humble them and open their minds to the true values, they are already in the *habit* of exerting enough energy so that, turned at last in the right direction, something is REALLY accomplished" (*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*).

Video games prevent people from developing ambition, exerting energy and experiencing the thrill of real achievement. Achievement in business, sports, academics or anything in the world is empty without God. But God plans to offer salvation to all those currently ignorant of or uninterested in the Bible. He can use those experiences and attributes to develop holy, righteous character in them once He calls them. There is little or nothing He can use from a life consumed with video games. These aim to prevent men from coming close to their full potential, physically or spiritually.

Video games can be immensely appealing. They promise entertainment more intense than anything man has ever developed. Yet they rob people of what is most valuable and fulfilling: their time, their relationships, their accomplishments, and their spiritual potential. Can you see the danger?

As the world embraces these games, be different. Take a stand for yourself and the young men in your life. Resist the pull of video game addiction. ■

▶ **AGAINST AMERICA** FROM PAGE 3

It is the beginning of THE CRISIS OF CRISES—THE GREAT TRIBULATION, THE TIME OF THE WORST SUFFERING EVER ON EARTH!

Already in America today, rioting and burning are occurring more frequently, often associated with racial hatred. This is a tiny prelude of the violence that is going to overtake all of America's large cities! As the siege intensifies, blood will fill the cities. Ezekiel's mind-shattering prophecy shows that ONE THIRD OF AMERICANS ARE GOING TO DIE IN THE HORRIFYING VIOLENCE!

Ezekiel 5 also reveals that this is only the start of an uncontrollable chain reaction of destruction. The flames of riots in American cities will be FOLLOWED BY THE FLAMES OF NUCLEAR BOMBS!

Right now—even as division and violence increase in American cities—European leaders are working to build their independent nuclear capabilities.

Prophecy shows that these nuclear weapons will be fired without warning on American cities!

In fact, Ezekiel's prophecy reveals that ONE THIRD OF AMERICANS ARE GOING TO DIE IN A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST!

Not only is America unprepared for such a nightmarish scenario, OUR LEADERS ARE COMPLETELY BLIND TO WHO WILL UNLEASH THIS SHOCKING ATTACK!

God thunders to Britain and America, "I AM AGAINST YOU" (Ezekiel 13:8). THESE ARE THE MOST TERRIFYING WORDS A NATION COULD HEAR!

God's Timing

In January 2019, I gave a *Key of David* program, "America Is Being Besieged Economically," referring to the MERCOSUR trade agreement and the prophesied siege of America. At the time, it appeared that the deal could be finalized that year. However, it took SEVEN MORE YEARS to be concluded, a total of 25 years. Even now, Europe is still too divided to fully implement it.

I believe this roadblock will lead to the emergence of a STRONGER CORE EUROPE. This too is prophesied in your Bible.

But the fact that this trade deal is now being finalized after all these years, and that it was signed on January 17, underscores its importance.

Mr. Armstrong, who prophesied about this coming siege of America, died 40 years ago on January 16. Ever since, we have seen important events occur on January 16 and 17, both significant dates (as I explain in my free booklet *January 16: God's Miracle Day*).

Mr. Armstrong prophesied precisely what we see happening today! This union between Europe and Latin America will grow stronger than Russia and China. It will be stronger than the U.S.

Already in America today, rioting and burning are occurring more frequently. This is a tiny prelude of the violence that is going to overtake all of America's large cities.

IT WILL INSTIGATE A MASSIVE TRADE WAR—AND AMERICA WILL BE FROZEN OUT!

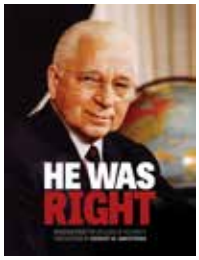
Europe is going to become the world's number one superpower. It is already equipped with nuclear bombs. You can be sure that once it gains the economic clout, it will terrorize the world. And America will be its primary target.

Understand what a momentous event has just taken place—and on a very important date. And remember the man it points to, the man to whom God revealed this prophecy and all the foundational truths of the Bible: Herbert W. Armstrong. Study his teachings and turn to the God who taught and empowered him, the God who is bringing these mighty prophecies to pass! ■

Herbert W. Armstrong forecast this 60 years ago.

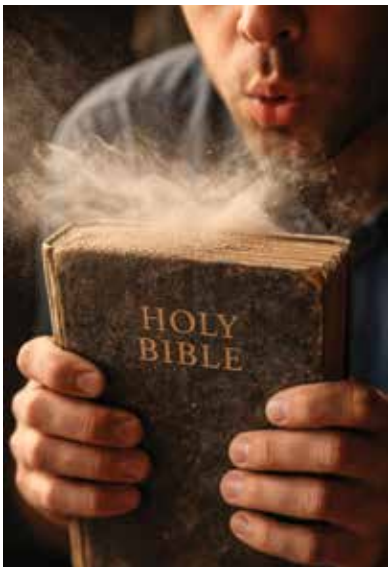
Knowing America is about to lose a trade war is remarkable. What is more extraordinary is that God revealed this to one man long ago. Study Herbert W. Armstrong's predictions in ***He Was Right*** to understand what God is doing. Request your free copy today.

See back cover to order.



Blow the Dust Off Your Bible

And prepare to be stunned!



Why do Christians believe what they believe? It's because they believe Jesus Christ and what He said in the Holy Bible, right?

Look into it! Have the courage to blow the dust off your Bible. You will find that Christians believe many things that are the *opposite* of what the Bible says!

The word *Christian* implies a follower of Christ. Yet Christians are following traditions and customs—practices that are very different from those Jesus Christ followed.

Don't believe me. Don't believe traditional Christians. Believe the only reliable source of information regarding Jesus Christ and His teachings: the Holy Bible.

Scripture is given by the inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16). Teachings, traditions and customs have no authority compared to the Word of God. The Bible was divinely inspired through 40 authors over the course of roughly 1,500 years with a single, consistent, beautiful message.

This is the most important book there is, and God gave it to us as an instruction manual. Yet even those who say they believe the Bible don't read much of it! They don't know it, don't believe it, and don't obey it.

Jesus Christ Himself warned against this. In Luke 6:46, He asked many of His supposed followers, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

John 8:31-32 record, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The New Testament, including the words of Christ Himself, repeatedly warns against not only false religion but false Christianity specifically—people who *claim* to follow Christ but who do not follow the Bible (e.g. Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24; Luke 21:8; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Revelation 16:13). There are *not* many true prophets, but rather many *false* prophets.

But here is Christ's promise to you: "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock" (Luke 6:47-48).

Those who don't *hear and do* are building on sand! (verse 49). Their faith might look good, but they are deceiving themselves (James 1:22). False Christians are guilty of worshiping a false Christ and interpreting the Bible to match their beliefs, rather than the other way around.

You need to get into the Bible! Put the Bible to the test. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 challenges you, "Prove all things ..."! 2 Timothy 2:15 urges you to *work* at it: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Acts 17 describes true Christians as those who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (verse 11).

How to be a Christian is not up to you. It is defined by God's commands in the Bible. *You must look into the Bible.* You must search the Scriptures daily. Study the Bible every day.

How do you go about that? How can you make this a principle you live by? The most important thing is to *start today.* "Blow the dust off your Bible," as Herbert W. Armstrong used to say, and begin to read it—each day.

Christ said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). You can only live by these words of God if you *read* them, *study* them and *understand* them.

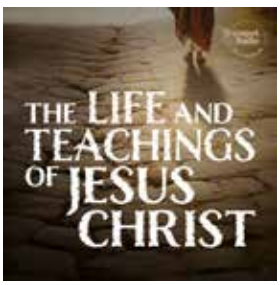
Work at it! Take on that workman-like attitude, dig into the Bible, search the Scriptures, and you will be amazed at the truths they open up to you. You will be stunned by how many "Christian" teachings and traditions conflict with what you read. There is an avalanche of information about Jesus, but if it's not based on Scripture, it is futile.

Mr. Armstrong emphasized that the Bible is hard to understand. In fact, you *cannot* understand it on your own! It's like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, with the related pieces scattered "here a little and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10; see also Daniel 12:9-10; Proverbs 25:2; Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7-14; Matthew 13:10-11; John 16:12).

To understand the Bible, you need to approach it with an attitude willing to be reproved, corrected and instructed (2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12).

And you need God's help! Like Jesus explaining His parables specifically to His disciples but not to everyone else, God can and must *help you* understand His Word.

The Holy Bible is the Word of God. Humble yourself. Open your Bible. Read it. Study it. Work at it. Search it. Believe what you find there—over what any man or any church or any tradition says. Begin your habit of daily Bible study *today.* ■



Adapted from *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, with Stephen Flurry. Watch this episode at *theTrumpet.com/go/LTJ2*.

See back cover for viewing options and order information, and request:

- "The Authority of the Bible"
- *Mystery of the Ages*
- *The Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course*

WorldWatch

TOPSHOT North Korean leader Kim Jong-un participates in

AFP PHOTO/KCNA VIA KNS

EUROPE

The European Union wants to get real in its response to United States President Donald Trump's threats against **Greenland**. On January 11, EU Defense Commissioner **Andrius Kubilius** called for the creation of a "powerful, standing 'European military force' of 100,000 troops" to replace U.S. troops on the Continent. He also wants a new European security council "composed of key permanent members, along with several rotational members; in total, around 10 to 12 members, with the task of discussing the most important issues in defense."

The EU took a step toward this type of "core Europe" structure on January 28 with a virtual meeting between Europe's major E6 economies—**France**, **Germany**, **Italy**, the **Netherlands**, **Poland** and **Spain**. Defense News wrote that the six countries aim to "bypass the bloc's traditional consensus-based decision-making to accelerate defense cooperation and industrial competitiveness amid mounting geopolitical pressures."

Manfred Weber, leader of the European People's Party, called for a smaller group to "go forward with a special sovereignty treaty" to make the EU smaller and stronger. He is also pushing to merge the presidency of the European Commission with the presidency of the European Council to create what *Politico* called an "all-powerful president."

Revelation 17 prophesies that "ten kings" will emerge in Europe, temporarily unifying into a powerful, decisive, aggressive empire, submitting to one all-powerful leader. Europe is openly discussing the formation of this kind of empire.

The EU is also fighting for control of the Internet. French government agents raided the Paris offices of X on February 3 as part of a criminal investigation of the U.S.-based social media platform. The Paris public prosecutor's office also asked X's owner, **Elon Musk**, to attend a voluntary interview. On the same day, the U.S. House Judiciary Committee issued the European Censorship Files on X documenting the ways in which the EU blocks free speech for Americans on social media. EuroIntelligence argued that this war over online content is actually a "far more important breaking point than Greenland" for the EU and U.S., with "no foreseeable solution."

"Germany's ambitions for the Internet should concern everyone, even those who don't have a computer," wrote *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry in 2019. "The EU's behavior on this issue exposes the dictatorial nature of this German-dominated entity. Really, we are witnessing the manifestation of the spirit of the Holy Roman Empire in the tech world. The biblically prophesied seventh and final resurrection of this empire wants to control the Internet!"

Meanwhile, Germany is holding "highly confidential" negotiations to share France's nuclear weapons, German government spokesman **Stefan Kornelius** confirmed on January 30. *Handelsblatt* wrote, "In the future, Germany could participate in French nuclear maneuvers and provide fighter jets or even submarines equipped with French nuclear missiles" (February 1). Germany has fighter jets capable of carrying American nuclear weapons. It also produces submarines that have been exported to Israel and are capable of carrying nuclear-armed cruise missiles. Germany could help hold up France's nuclear umbrella, even without creating nuclear bombs itself. France's nuclear arsenal lacks smaller tactical nuclear weapons, which Germany could help make.

Isaiah 6:11 prophesies that cities will "be wasted without inhabitant," referring to an end-time nuclear disaster. Other prophecies clearly describe the effects of an all-out war in which weapons of mass destruction are launched on cities. ■

THETRUMPET.COM/MORE/EUROPE

MIDDLE EAST

Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem **Pierbattista Pizzaballa** and other religious leaders in a January 17 open letter attacked "Christian Zionism" as an example of "damaging ideologies" that "mislead the public, sow confusion, and harm the unity of our flock." The "Christian Zionism" label is applied to Christians who believe the Bible teaches them to support Jewish sovereignty and nationhood in the Holy Land. Pizzaballa's statement suggests this "ideology" is contrary to the Vatican's position.

The New Testament states that even after the ending of the Old Covenant, the people of Israel are still God's people (see Romans 11). Yet Pizzaballa and many Christian leaders claim that God fully rejected Israel and replaced it with Christianity generally and the Catholic Church specifically. This assumes the Catholic Church is the descendant of the Church Jesus Christ founded. But as Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in *The United States and Britain in Prophecy**, the Catholic Church actually has its origins with "one Simon, the sorcerer of Samaria in the time of the original apostles ... started what is today called 'Christianity.' How astonished the world will be to discover that it is *not,* and never was, the outgrowth of the *Church of God,* founded by Jesus Christ and His apostles!"

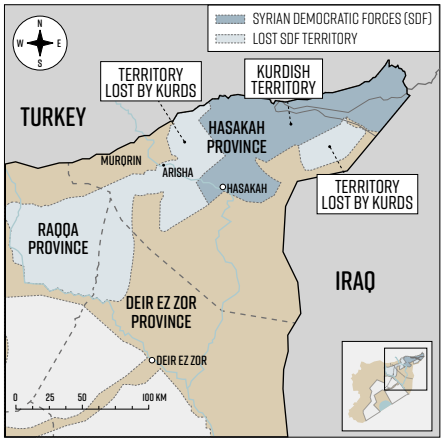
The government of **Syria**, led by former terrorist **Ahmed**

Find links to freely access all the articles and booklets referred to in WorldWatch at theTrumpet.com/go/ww2603.

a commemorative photo session with soldiers in North Pyongan province.

al-Sharaa, reached a deal with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Syria's main Kurdish militia, on January 18. This followed devastating Kurdish losses to a lightning offensive by Sharaa's forces and amounts to a surrender in which the Kurds will come under Sharaa's government.

The United States, which backed the Kurds for years and pressured Sharaa not to destroy them, reacted to the offensive and the deal by saying it no longer intends to protect the Kurds and may pull out its troops. U.S. Special Envoy **Tom Barrack** posted on social media, "The U.S. has no interest in [a] long-term military presence .... [T]he original purpose of the SDF as the primary anti-[Islamic State] force has largely expired." U.S. officials meanwhile told the *Wall Street Journal* that the U.S. is considering withdrawing all of its roughly 1,000 troops in Syria. On February 12, the U.S. confirmed its withdrawal from the al-Tanf military base, handing it over to Syrian forces. This leaves the Kurds at the mercy of Sharaa's army of legitimized terrorists.



In 1991, when America betrayed its Iraqi Kurdish allies by not backing them against Saddam Hussein, Gerald Flurry said this was symptomatic of a curse in Leviticus 26:19, of God breaking the pride of America's power because of the nation's sins. America betraying its Syrian Kurdish allies when it could have pressured Syria to stand down reflects the same curse.

The EU branded **Iran**'s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a terrorist organization on January 28. Responding to Iran's massacre of tens of thousands of its own citizens (article, page 14), EU top diplomat **Kaja Kallas** stated: "[I]f you act as a terrorist, you should also be treated as a terrorist." Iran responded by classifying all EU militaries as terror groups.

Daniel 11:40 prophesies that Europe, "the king of the north," and Iran, the "king of the south," will clash, so watch for the tension between these two powers to increase and ignite a major war. Europe and Iran designating each other's forces as terrorist groups is a step in that direction. ■

THETRUMPET.COM/MORE/MIDDLE-EAST

ASIA

North Korea's alliance with **Russia** has transformed it into East Asia's most "combat-ready" force, Gen. **Xavier Brunson**, commander of U.S. Forces Korea, told reporters on January 12. North Korea has given significant support to Russia's war in **Ukraine**, including millions of artillery rounds and thousands of troops. In return, Russia has given North Korea advanced weapons technology and training, as well as battlefield experience. The alliance has brought North Korea's military power to a "no limits" level, Brunson said.

NORTH KOREA'S MILITARY POWER

NUCLEAR POWER	50 NUCLEAR BOMBS
MILITARY STRENGTH	31ST IN WORLD
DEFENSE BUDGET	$4.5 BILLION
ACTIVE PERSONNEL	1.2 MILLION
RESERVE PERSONNEL	600,000
ARMORED VEHICLES	38,944
TOWED ARTILLERY	5,000
ROCKET PROJECTORS	2,920
TANKS	11,645
FIGHTER JETS	572
SUBMARINES	35
PATROL VESSELS	169

The Bible prophesies of a colossal multinational Asian force, led by Russia, that will include **China**, **India** and several smaller Asian countries such as North Korea. Learn more in *Russia and China in Prophecy*.

Although Russian ally **Nicolás Maduro** was ousted from **Venezuela**, Russian influence in the nation remains robust, according to a January 14 Radio Free Europe report. For two decades, Russian President **Vladimir Putin**'s regime cultivated relationships with Venezuelan military, political, energy and business leaders, connections "unlikely to disappear overnight," the report states. The United States' capture of Maduro on January 3 left Maduro's vice president, **Delcy Rodriguez**, in power. She has warm relations with the Kremlin and received Russia's prestigious "Order of Friendship" from Putin himself in 2024. Though the U.S. operation was a blow to Russian power in Venezuela, deep Russian roots remain. Expect Russia to deepen those roots and to continue projecting power into the Western Hemisphere in any way it can. It is one of the powers "Preparing to Storm America's Castle."

Chinese Communist Party officials held a forum with members of **Taiwan**'s Kuomintang party in Beijing on February 3, the first formal talks between the two sides in nine years. The dialogue focused on improving China-Taiwan relations through industrial cooperation, tourism and joint environmental efforts. A meeting later this year is planned between Chinese General Secretary **Xi Jinping** and Kuomintang party chief **Cheng Li-wun**. Though the relatively pro-China Kuomintang has not ruled Taiwan for a decade, it remains a potent political force and staunchly opposes military conflict with China. Doubts are growing among the Taiwanese about whether the U.S. would back them in the event of a Chinese invasion. The *Trumpet* maintains that America's lack of resolve will enable the Chinese Communist Party, whether by negotiation or war, to bring Taiwan under its control. ■

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ANGLO-AMERICA

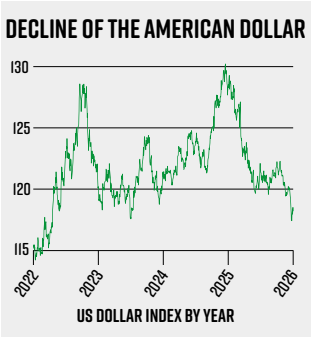
The controversial issue of enforcing immigration law in America became a crisis in January after citizens and agitators disrupted operations and attacked federal agents in Minneapolis, Minnesota—agents who shot and killed two protesters, **Renee Good** and **Alex Pretti**, in two separate incidents. The killings sparked nationwide protests.

President **Donald Trump** had threatened to use the Insurrection Act to forcibly stop rioters from attacking federal agents. After Pretti was killed on January 24, however, the president called Minnesota Gov. **Tim Walz** and retreated by signaling that he might reduce the number of ICE agents in Minnesota, reassigning the officials in charge, and sending in White House border czar **Tom Homan**.

Surrendering to left-wing agitators, politicians and the surprisingly organized resistance they put up in Minneapolis is sure to have consequences, including future protests and riots. **Dale Wilcox**, who heads an immigration policy group, told Fox News, "If the Trump administration accedes to Minnesota's unreasonable, unlawful demands, it will have surrendered the rule of law to thugs and brigands."

Isaiah 1:7 prophesies, "Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners" (English Standard Version). We see this being fulfilled in Minneapolis. The rioting will intensify unless the nation changes its attitude toward the rule of law and, more importantly, toward God.

The dollar's exchange rate against a basket of major currencies dropped to its lowest value in four years. President Trump said on January 27 that he was unconcerned, and the value dropped even further. The president has long argued that a weaker dollar has advantages in manufacturing, energy and exports. Yet Bible prophecy indicates that the U.S.'s downfall will be triggered by a financial crisis. Deuteronomy 28:44 says debt problems will plague America if its people disobey God.



As trade relations between the U.S. and Britain deteriorate, **Keir Starmer** became the first British prime minister to visit Communist China since the onset of the COVID pandemic in 2019. Accompanied by 50 business leaders, he encouraged British companies to seize opportunities in China. "It doesn't make sense to stick our head in the ground and bury it in the sand when it comes to China: It's in our interests to engage," he said. Britain has considered the ruling Chinese party an adversary due to its oppression of Hong Kong, support of Russia's war in Ukraine, spying on British political and business leaders, and other actions. But Starmer's visit is helping to change Britain's relations with China. ■

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Correction: "Why the Mystery of the Trinity Is So Inscrutable" (January 2026) stated, "The Greek word translated 'spirit' is masculine, and this led some translators to refer to the Holy Spirit as 'he.'" This should have been worded: "The Greek word translated 'comforter' is masculine, and this led some translators to refer to the Holy Spirit as 'he.'"

Please tell Joel Hilliker that he hit the ball out of the park with that article ["Why We Must Develop AI, (Even If It Kills US)"]! It's really good, which is why I want to order *What Science Can't Discover About the Human Mind,* to learn more about it.

Jerry Holsworth VIRGINIA

I thank you for my January *Trumpet* and for when I'm able to view the *Key of David* TV Sunday programs. These have changed, deepened and enhanced my Bible study, prayer time and daily personal prayer.

Janie Watson FLORIDA

I appreciate you all for this free subscription. It brings a blessing to me. I learn so much from reading it. You don't get the Bible headlines in the regular news.

Terry Kropog LOUISIANA

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'Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick'

A lesson in leadership from one of America's greatest presidents

After years of timid foreign policy under Barack Obama and Joe Biden, United States President Donald Trump is flexing geopolitical muscle and asserting American power against adversaries and even allies.

After U.S. Delta Force troops captured Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro on January 3, President Trump told reporters that the presidency would once again enforce the Monroe Doctrine of keeping Asian and European powers out of the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine lasted from President James Monroe in 1823 to President Barack Obama in 2013. President Trump has re-dubbed it the "Donroe Doctrine" and called for the U.S. to reclaim the Panama Canal and formally annex Greenland.

These statements prompted many news outlets to compare President Trump with President Theodore Roosevelt, who famously used "gunboat diplomacy" in Latin America. The two presidents, both larger-than-life personalities from New York, share important similarities. Like Roosevelt, Trump loves the "bully pulpit," opposes the political establishment, and intends to increase American power. Yet in one important way, President Trump differs from President Roosevelt and could learn a crucial lesson from his example.

On Sept. 2, 1901, less than two weeks before an assassination unexpectedly elevated him into the presidency, Roosevelt explained an important truth about diplomacy. "A good many of you are probably acquainted with the old proverb, 'Speak softly and carry a big stick—you will go far,'" he told his audience at the Minnesota State Fair. "If a man continually blusters, if he lacks civility, a big stick will not save him from trouble. And neither will speaking softly avail, if back of the softness there does not lie strength, power. In private life, there are few things more obnoxious than the man who is always loudly boasting; and if the boaster is not prepared to back up his words, his position becomes absolutely contemptible. So it is with the nation. It is both foolish and undignified to indulge in undue self-glorification and, above all, in loose-tongued denunciation of other peoples. Whenever on any point we come in contact with a foreign power, I hope that we shall always strive to speak courteously and respectfully of that foreign power."

A year later, a crisis emerged that put this to the test.

From December 1902 to February 1903, Italy, Germany and Great Britain imposed a naval blockade on Venezuela after it refused to pay its debts to these countries. President Roosevelt did not oppose this, as long as these European powers didn't seize Venezuelan territory or try to establish military bases.

When Roosevelt learned that Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany intended to seize a Venezuelan harbor and establish a permanent German military base, however, he privately threatened to send a U.S. fleet to Venezuelan waters to attack the German ships. Germany backed down and, alongside Great Britain, formally invited the U.S. to arbitrate their claims against Venezuela. In an effort to spare Kaiser Wilhelm's pride, Roosevelt didn't tell the public what happened until 14 years later, when he called for the United States to enter World War I as an Allied power to fight the German Empire.

President Roosevelt would have certainly looked more powerful if he internationally shamed Kaiser Wilhelm for trying to seize land in Venezuela and gloated about his diplomatic victory. But he knew that such bluster against a megalomaniac like Kaiser Wilhelm would hurt America's relationship with Germany and possibly invite retaliation. So Roosevelt spoke softly, carried a big stick, and allowed the kaiser to save face and take the easy way out. This strategy worked brilliantly.

President Trump could learn from this example. He is facing similar circumstances with both Russia and China trying to infiltrate Latin America and the Arctic. Yet rather than standing up as a protector, he has humiliated the Danes and others. He has demanded that Denmark sell him Greenland, slapped tariffs on the nations that said it was not for sale, and reminded the world that using the U.S. military was an option.

None of this was necessary. A 1951 treaty with Denmark grants the U.S. extensive rights to establish and operate military bases in Greenland, build infrastructure, and freely move military assets. So if President Trump wanted to speak softly and carry a big stick, he could have politely offered to protect the Arctic from Russia and China before proceeding to move U.S. military resources into Pituffik Space Base.

Instead, President Trump chose to spew forth continual bluster, self-glorification and loose-tongued denunciation of other peoples. When reporters asked him why he could not defend Greenland from Russia and China under the 1951 Defense of Greenland Agreement, he said, "You need the ownership to defend it. You can't defend it on a lease. Who ... wants to defend a license agreement, or a lease?"

Such comments prove to the world that America does not honor its treaties. Because the U.S. military is currently stronger than all the militaries of the European Union combined, President Trump may end up getting what he wants in Greenland. But the cost of his lack of civility will be European hostility.

Already, EU officials are considering using their $8 trillion in U.S. bonds as a weapon against the U.S. economy. So America's big stick may not save it from trouble much longer.

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1; English Standard Version). President Trump is pouring forth "harsh words" and making enemies all over the world.

Time will prove this to be a most ill-advised strategy. ■

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UNITED STATES

American Crimes Network	10:30 ET/9:30 CT/8:30 MT/7:30 PT
BUZZR	6:30 ET, 5:30 CT 4:30 MT, 3:30 PT, Sun
CHARGE	6:30 ET/PT, 5:30 CT, 7:30 MT, Sun
COMET	8:00 ET, 7:00 CT, 6:00 MT, 5;00 PT, Sun
CW PLUS	9:30, 6:30 ET/PT, Sun, 8:30 5:30 CT/MT, Sun; 5:30, ET/PT, Mon-Thurs 4:30 CT/MT, Mon-Thurs
FAMILY	7:30 ET, PT, 6:30 CT, 8:30 MT, Sun
GETTV	6:30, Sun
NEST	7:00 ET/PT, 6:00 CT, 9:00 MT, Sun
RETRO	8:30 ET, PT, 7:30 CT, 9:30 MT, Sun
ROAR	8:30 ET/PT, Sun
This TV	6:30, Sun

AUSTRALIA **Channel 10** 6:30, Sun
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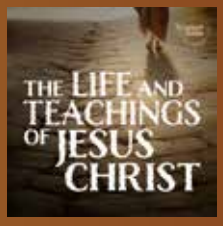

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