

Trumpet Weekly

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Seduced by *Fifty Shades of Grey*



JOEL HILLIKER

A NAIVE WOMAN IS DRAWN INTO A relationship with a mysterious, alluring, sexy billionaire with a dark side. Against her better judgment, she allows him to seduce her deeper and deeper into his chamber of horrors and to coerce her into degrading acts.

The basic plot of *Fifty Shades of Grey* also serves as a metaphor for what is happening to millions of people who are opening themselves up to its world of dark, abusive, demeaning, perverse sexual practices.

It started in 2012 with a self-published e-book that eventually became a trilogy. Overnight it became the United Kingdom's fastest-selling paperback in history and made millions for its author, a suburban British mom. It has been translated into 52 languages, and has sold over 100 million copies.

Moviemakers rushed to cash in. This past weekend, the *Fifty Shades of Grey* movie smashed box office expectations—in spite of awful reviews. Released in time for Valentine's Day—as if it was the perfect date movie—it raked in more than \$94 million in the United States alone over the four-day weekend. The media joined in: Establishment news programs, respected publications, and popular websites tripped over themselves in the rush for an audience share by reporting on the movie as if it were just another *Star Wars* installment.

If you want a snapshot of the moral climate in America and Britain, look at the frenzy over *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Just don't look too close. This entertainment juggernaut has quite suddenly brought sadomasochism into the morning shows, the newsmagazine on your coffee table, and your local school hallways.

Women are collectively paying millions to absorb its message—a message that on its face is explicitly damaging to women. But in the same sense that the “heroine” of the series finds the

destructive irresistible, so do *Fifty Shades of Grey* fans.

The story sends deeply confusing and toxic signals, glossing terrible evil with an alluring, mysterious veneer. It dusts violence against women with glamour. It entices women to subject themselves to unhealthy relationships and/or to participate in harmful sexual practices. A study published in *Journal of Women's Health* last summer found that readers of the series are much likelier than nonreaders to be in abusive relationships.

Somehow, though, the purveyors of this entertainment have convinced themselves that this is empowering and liberating women. That is ironic, when its overt theme is subjugation and bondage. Ask a woman who has been abused or raped how empowered she feels by it.

In a truly galling segment on its daily news show *This Morning* ([click here to see it](#)), CBS News audaciously conflated the twisted sexual “submission” depicted in *Fifty Shades* with the “submission” wedded wives give to their husbands under God’s laws for marriage in the Bible. As if this satanic sex phenomenon weren’t bad enough, CBS used it to deceitfully slander the Book that stands against it.

The Bible is absolutely contrary to everything *Fifty Shades* represents. This film exemplifies society’s unrelenting stampede away from biblical morality and truth.

In a literal sense, *Fifty Shades of Grey* exposes the true nature of the sexual revolution: It is alluring—and it leads to bondage. It enslaves people to sin. Romans 6:16 says, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Evil is a drug. People become hooked and constantly crave stronger doses. *Fifty Shades* is drawing millions deeper into that dark world. What they don’t see in the movie they can read in the book. And what they can’t read in the book is a click away on the Internet.

The Bible commands men to curb our lusts. It directs us to commit to family. It commands us to protect women and children, to safeguard them from predators. *Fifty Shades of Grey* wallows in lust. It ignores family. It idealizes sexual predation. It sends the message that women want to be dominated sexually. It glamorizes abusive, repugnant selfishness gone wild. The success of this series demonstrates and accelerates society’s efforts to exempt men from our biblically mandated responsibilities

toward women and children, and to encourage us to gratify our appetites, however wicked, without thought to consequences.

The Bible contains the viewpoint of the Creator of sex. He commands that it express nothing but love, outgoing concern and affection between a committed husband and wife. (Herbert W. Armstrong wrote beautifully about this in *The Missing Dimension in Sex*—we strongly recommend this book and will send you a free copy.) *Fifty Shades of Grey* is the exact opposite. This is the war on women.

The husband-wife relationship is a human-level embodiment of the beautiful relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32). The “submission” enjoined in scriptures like Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18 and 1 Peter 3:1 has absolutely nothing in common with the perversions of sadomasochism—and if the people at CBS were honest, they would admit that.

The Bible never permits husbands to abuse their wives or treat them unlovingly. Over and over God commands a husband to love and honor his wife, to give himself in sacrifice for her (Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19 and 1 Peter 3:7). He is to be her self-sacrificing leader, putting her needs before his own. And his authority is not absolute. His wife submits “as is fit in the Lord,” within the bounds of God’s law of love. God is the ultimate authority, and any person’s demands that undermine that authority should be disobeyed (Acts 5:29).

Nothing upholds the honor and dignity of women like the truth of God. Right now, nothing is bruising and staining it quite like *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

Society has discarded God’s absolute morals and embraced a world where everything is a shade of gray. There is darkness in everything, and it holds the world in its thrall. But there is no darkness at all in God (1 John 1:5). He tells us to flee fornication, to come out of evil, and to walk in the light. He wants to break the chains of sin on your mind. He truly liberates the captive, and frees those who are bound (Isaiah 61:1).

This truth should be self-evident: There is such a thing as evil—and *Fifty Shades of Grey* is wretched, dark evil. Don’t be seduced by it. Stay away from bondage. As Jesus said in John 8:32, 36, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. ... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

 Follow Joel Hilliker

MIDDLE EAST



Why You Must Watch Jerusalem

Gerald Flurry,

The Key of David | February 20

NOT ALL CITIES ARE EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE. THE MOST IMPORTANT city on Earth is Jerusalem.





Islamic State in Libya: An Opportunity for Egypt?

Callum Wood | February 18

IN A VIDEO RELEASED ON FEBRUARY 15, 21 EGYPTIAN COPTIC CHRISTIANS were paraded by Islamic State militias along the Mediterranean coast in Libya and soon beheaded with sharp knives.

The despicable act drew immediate condemnation and retaliation from Egypt. President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said that Egypt had every right to respond to the attack. His air force responded with airstrikes on terrorist targets within Libya, reportedly killing 64 Islamic State members. It was Egypt's first foreign strike in 24 years—the last being in the Gulf War of 1991.

This marks an enormous turning point in regional geopolitics. So far, Egypt has received no condemnation from the international community for its airstrikes. With the West so hesitant to reengage, Egypt's involvement will likely get a free pass. After all, the new government in Egypt is viewed as far more moderate than the previous one led by radical Muslim Brotherhood (MB). It has already proved itself effective at rooting out the MB within the nation. Egypt boasts a large and experienced military. To most people, Egypt could appear to be the perfect power to tackle the Islamic State's rise in Libya and bring peace to a destabilized nation.

However, as those who are aware of Egypt's role in Bible

prophecy know, that is not the case. In his booklet *The King of the South*, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry explains Egypt's soon-coming role in the Middle East: "Daniel 11:42 implies that Egypt [and Libya] will be allied with the king of the south, or Iran. This prophecy indicated there would be a far-reaching change in Egyptian politics! We had been saying since 1994 this would occur, and look at Egypt today."

This statement was made in the context of the Muslim Brotherhood gaining control of Egypt. Today the Egyptian government is very critical of Iran, but political change can happen very quickly in this volatile region. Just as with Iran, a year ago no one would have dreamed that Egypt would be conducting airstrikes in neighboring nations.

With both Egypt and Libya prophesied to come under Iranian control, we ought to pay close attention when Egypt starts getting involved in Libya. Even if Egypt goes no further than the airstrikes, it has shown that it is willing to conduct military activity outside its borders where necessary.

The Islamic State has given Iran the opportunity to involve itself in Iraq. Watch now as the terrorists present Egypt with the same opportunity in Libya.



The Islamic State Takes on Egypt, Threatens Rome

David Vejlil | February 17

ON TUESDAY, LIBYAN TERRORISTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ISLAMIC State took over 20 Egyptians hostage. The terrorists claimed this was revenge for Egyptian airstrikes in Libya.

The previous day, Egypt's air force had bombed Islamic State targets in Libya. This was retaliation for the terrorist group's beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians in the Libyan city of Sirte. The Islamic State had released a video of the beheadings on Sunday.

Egypt also called on the United States-led coalition to broaden its efforts to North Africa. The coalition is currently focusing on Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq.

Sunday's video included a boast by the terrorists to "conquer Rome." Libya is less than 500 miles away from Italy's southern tip. And it is now home to the Islamic State's strongest presence

outside of its core territory in Syria and Iraq.

Political support for Italian military involvement is growing. President of the Senate Defense Commission Nicola Latorre warned Monday that Italy must be ready to engage in military intervention to stop the advance of the Islamic State in Libya should diplomatic efforts fail.

The increased terrorist activity is acting as a catalyst for powers in Europe and the Middle East. Iran is using the Islamic State's advances to increase its control of Iraq and reduce resistance to its nuclear program. Europe is bolstering its military capabilities and taking a more active role in the Middle East. The *Trumpet* expects these trends to continue. To learn more about the effects of the Islamic State's rampage, read our *Trumpet* article "[The World's Newest Most Radical 'State.'](#)"

Obama's Iran Policy and Israel's Elections

Jerusalem Post | February 19

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE MANY SOURCES OF TENSION between U.S. President Barack Obama's administration and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government. The main issue of discord is, of course, Iran.

Obama seeks an agreement with the Islamic Republic over its nuclear program, which will allow the president to claim he prevented Tehran from building the bomb. The fact that Iran will maintain the capability to enrich uranium, and will not

dismantle any of its nuclear installations, is simply swept under the rug as insignificant.

Strange as it sounds, it seems Obama is prepared to brand Iran as a U.S. strategic partner in the attempt to bring stability to a region beleaguered by chaos. Part of this realignment involves American capitulation on the nuclear issue, and an apparent carte blanche for stepped-up Iranian activity and influence in the region.

Iran is taking over Yemen (and throwing American diplomats out of the country); carving a sphere of influence in Iraq; continuing to support President Bashar Assad's brutal regime in

Damascus; strengthening Hezbollah's grip over Lebanon; engaging in subversion in Central Asia; and developing its terrorist apparatus. Yet in the context of Obama's "grand bargain," all this seems to be OK. Tehran gets everything it wants, while Washington gets an Iranian promise not to go nuclear as long as Obama is in the White House.

Having made no foreign policy achievements throughout his presidency, Obama—perhaps obsessively—now wants the relationship with Iran to serve as his foreign policy legacy. ...

RELATED: ["IS PRESIDENT OBAMA BREAKING THE BROTHERHOOD?"](#)

If a Renowned Jihadi Cleric Can't Get Through to Islamic State, Who Can?

Christian Science Monitor | February 18

THOUGH THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION IS WORKING HARD TO convince possible [Islamic State] recruits that the group is un-Islamic, emerging evidence makes it clear that Baghdadi's followers aren't listening. That point is driven home by the failed efforts of Abu Mohammed al-Maqdisi, a Jordanian cleric long renowned in al Qaeda and similar circles as a theorist and supporter of what is sometimes called global jihad. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who led al Qaeda in Iraq until his death in 2006, was his former student.

Details have been coming out since late last year of how Maqdisi, who was jailed by Jordan in 2009, has worked with the authorities there to try to negotiate the release of a string of civilian captives held by [Islamic State], contacting [Islamic State] members in Syria over the WhatsApp messaging system. In each case he failed. Maqdisi likewise sought to dissuade [Islamic State] from kidnapping and murdering aid workers and civilians in general, an effort the group's supporters have scorned.

After Maqdisi was released from prison last summer, his first intervention was to try to save the [lives] of Alan Henning [and] Peter Kassig. ... Those efforts also came to nothing in November, and Maqdisi was re-arrested

Maqdisi was then quietly released again in December, after Jordanian pilot Lt. Muath Kassasbeh crashed over Syria and was captured by the Islamic State. In an interview on Jordanian TV earlier this month, Maqdisi said he reached out to Baghdadi and

Turki al-Binali (an [Islamic State] ideologue who was also a former student of Maqdisi's), urging that the pilot be freed in exchange for Sajida al-Rishawi, an al Qaeda in Iraq member who participated in the massacre of 57 civilians at three hotels in Amman in 2005.

One unnamed [Islamic State] member did respond, and a dialogue ensued about an exchange of Kassasbeh for Rishawi. But while they negotiated, and [the Islamic State] continued to issue public demands, Kassasbeh was already dead, burned alive in a cage in Syria, a fact that would become clear weeks later when [the Islamic State] released its video tape of the grotesque murder. In his TV interview, Maqdisi called the group liars and practitioners of "evil traditions." ...

The Jordanian cleric is not exactly a warm figure. Though he emerged as a critic of al Qaeda in Iraq, the forerunner to [the Islamic State], in the past decade, his criticism was over practical matters. In his opinion, the indiscriminate slaughter of Shiites and Christians was counterproductive to the shared goal of enforcing an extreme version of Islamic law on as much of the world as possible.

But that's why this episode is interesting. If he holds no influence over [the Islamic State], then who could?

RELATED: ["THE WORLD'S NEWEST MOST RADICAL 'STATE'"](#) AND ["THE WHIRLWIND PROPHECY"](#)

EUROPE



A Fight to the Death

Stephen Flurry,

Trumpet Daily | February 18

REMEMBERING CHURCHILL'S DECISION TO FIGHT ON WHEN others were calling on Britain to surrender.

[Follow Stephen Flurry](#)



German Head of Armed Forces Association: If You Want Peace, Prepare for War

Justin Huggler, Telegraph | February 8

GERMANY IS FACING GROWING CALLS TO INCREASE ITS MILITARY spending amid fears severe equipment shortages have left its armed forces unable to respond to the crisis in eastern Ukraine.

"If you want peace you must prepare for war," André Wüstner, the head of the country's influential Armed Forces Association, said on Sunday, calling for defense spending to be increased by €1 billion (US\$1.13 billion).

The call comes just weeks after the German parliament's military commissioner, Hellmut Königshaus, warned that unless military spending is increased, Germany's armed forces will be unable to fulfill their mission.

It emerged last year that equipment shortages are much more serious than was previously thought, and the defense minister, Ursula von der Leyen, was forced to admit that Germany could not meet all its NATO commitments...

The debate in Germany comes against the backdrop of concern that Europe is too reliant on the U.S. for defense.

The U.S. and Germany's other NATO allies have long called for it to increase its defense budget. Under an agreement, NATO

members are supposed to spend 2 percent of [their] GDP on defense, but Germany only spends 1.3 percent

As the United States retreats from the world, Germany is forced to play a more active military role—against the will of most of its citizens. This debate over military spending is a natural consequence of that shift. To take up America's military slack, European nation's militaries will have to work together more closely—an area where Germany is leading the way—or increase spending.

"America is disengaging from Europe to take care of its own regional problems, forcing Europe to militarize. This transformation may require Germany, as well as other European nations, to increase their spending. For more on who will take over as America steps off the world stage, read 'The World's Next Superpower.'" theTrumpet.com, Oct. 1, 2014

Zu Guttenberg Panel Discusses 'New Cold War'

B92.net | February 19

THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND SUSTAINABLE Development (CIRSD) was founded and is led by former Serbian Foreign Minister and former UN General Assembly President Vuk Jeremic. After Belgrade, the organization's magazine, *Horizons*, was also presented in New York on the occasion.

Among the participants in the panel were Russian Ambassador to the UN Vitaly Churkin and former German Defense Minister Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg. They put forward different views about who is responsible for the one-year civil war in Ukraine. ...

Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg said that Ukraine has the right to choose for itself whether to join NATO, but recalled that his country did not in the past support the idea, and was not in favor of sending weapons to Kiev. He, however, stated that Russia was "responsible for what is happening now in Ukraine."

"Many say that the Minsk agreement is already dead, but I think it is not. It's now important that arms are no longer sent to the rebels from Russia. A number of EU states now want the situation to calm down and for talks to take place," said the former German minister. ...

Islamic State 'Planning to Use Libya as Gateway to Europe'

Ruth Sherlock and Colin Freeman, Telegraph | February 17

ISLAMIC STATE MILITANTS ARE PLANNING A TAKEOVER OF LIBYA AS a "gateway" to wage war across the whole of southern Europe, letters written by the group's supporters have revealed.

The jihadists hope to flood the North African state with militiamen from Syria and Iraq, who will then sail across the Mediterranean posing as migrants on people-trafficking vessels, according to plans seen by Quilliam, the British anti-extremist group.

The fighters would then run amok in southern European cities and also try to attack maritime shipping.

The document is written by an Islamic State ... propagandist who is believed to be an important online recruiter for the terror in Libya, where security has collapsed in the wake of the revolution that unseated Colonel Qadhafi in 2011.

The group has already established Libyan-based cells, who on Sunday released a video showing a mass beheading of 21 Egyptian Christian guest workers.

The video, which prompted Egypt to launch retaliatory bombing raids on [Islamic State] positions in Libya, included footage of a khaki-clad militant pointing a bloodstained finger northwards, declaring: "We will conquer Rome, by Allah's permission."

The [Islamic State] propagandist, who uses the alias Abu Arhim al-Libim, describes Libya as having "immense potential" for [the Islamic State]. He points out with relish that it is awash with weapons from the Libyan civil war, when large quantities of Colonel Qadhafi's arsenals were appropriated by rebels. Some of those weapons came from Britain, which supplied the Qadhafi

regime with machine guns, sniper rifles and ammunition during his final years in power, when he was seen as an ally against Islamist terrorism.

Mr. Libim also points out that Libya is less than around 300 miles from parts of the nearest European mainland.

He writes: "It has a long coast and looks upon the southern Crusader states, which can be reached with ease by even a rudimentary boat." ...

Nasser Kamel, Egypt's ambassador to London, warned Britain [to] brace itself for "boats full of terrorists" unless action was taken in Libya. He spoke after 2,164 migrants were rescued at sea in a 24-hour period over the weekend in what has been described as an "exodus without precedent." ...

Security in Libya has been on the slide due to the inability of the various militias that helped oust Colonel Qadhafi to agree [on] a shared agenda. ... Whilst the *Telegraph* cannot independently verify the identity of Mr. Libim, the propagandist, analysts believe that his writing on Libya is widely read and influential online. ...

Pope Francis: Beheaded Egyptian Copts 'Belong to All Christians' **Independent | February 16**

POPE FRANCIS HAS DENOUNCED THE KILLING OF 21 EGYPTIAN Copts by [Islamic State] militants, saying they were "assassinated because they were Christian."

The Argentine pope departed from his script during an address to members of the Church of Scotland to address the killings which took place on a beach in Libya and were filmed and broadcast on Sunday by a website that supports Islamic State.

"Their only words were: 'Jesus, help me!' They were killed simply for the fact that they were Christians," Francis said in his native Spanish, departing from the Italian he uses at most formal events.

The leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics, who has said it is "lawful" to stop an unjust aggressor, went on: "The blood of our Christian brothers and sisters is a testimony which cries out be

"The Bible forecasts a final clash between a Vatican-led Europe and radical Islam led by Iran. Now we see a radical Islamic group declaring its will to fight Europe—the 'Romans' and 'crusaders.' Radical Muslims see this clash as a major part of their version of the end of the world and the triumph of Islam, so they are training fighters to attack these crusading states. Such an attack could revolutionize Europe's view of Islam and the Middle East, the same way the 9/11 attack transformed America. This could bring the battle radical Islamists hope for. For more information on the coming clash between radical Islam and a united European superpower, read 'The Crusades Are Critical History.'"
Trumpet, September 2014

heard. It makes no difference whether they be Catholics, Orthodox, Copts or Protestants. They are Christians!"

Francis added: "The martyrs belong to all Christians." ...

"The mother church may have lost its protesting daughters centuries ago, but it has a master plan to ultimately force those daughters back into the fold! This prophecy [Isaiah 47:8] is speaking of a time when the Catholic Church would wield supreme power, boasting that she will not know 'the loss of children,' or daughter churches."

Trumpet, June 2005

Greece Caves In, Germany Plays Hardball **EU Observer | February 19**

THE GREEK GOVERNMENT ON THURSDAY SUBMITTED A REQUEST to extend the current bailout program by six months, but Germany rejected the demand on the eve of a meeting of eurozone finance ministers (Eurogroup).

EU commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker was on the phone over the last few days both with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and the head of the Eurogroup, Dutch Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem, as well as other "actors" in order to get the Greeks to submit the request, Juncker's spokesman said Thursday.

"Juncker sees this letter as a positive sign that could pave the way for a reasonable compromise," EU commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas said, adding that it was now up to the Eurogroup to decide on the extension.

But a spokesman for the German Finance Ministry poured

cold water on expectations for a swift deal on Friday.

"The letter from Athens does not offer a substantial proposal for a solution. In reality, it aims for a bridging loan without meeting the terms of the program," the spokesman said in a statement.

In Brussels, this is seen as tactical posturing before the Eurogroup.

"Of course this is pure tactics. And one might look at the difference between the German Finance Ministry and the German chancellor," one EU source said. ...

Several drafts circulated ahead of the last Eurogroup, which ended in disagreement on Monday. Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis said he would have been willing to sign up to the draft prepared by the EU commission, which spoke of an extension of the "loan agreement," as opposed to the extension of the current bailout program, as demanded by the Eurogroup.

Yet in his letter to Dijsselbloem on Thursday, Varoufakis seems to have backed down from that position and requested an extension of the “Master Financial Assistance Facility Agreement” signed in 2012 and extended for two months in December last year. ...

“Not long ago, whenever Germany wanted to make a strong move, it did so under the cloak of the European Union. That is beginning to change. As Germany becomes bolder, it will become the single driving force behind European unity. That is already happening.”
Gerald Flurry, *Trumpet*, April 2006

ASIA

China and Russia to Show World a United Front

South China Morning Post | February 17

CHINA AND RUSSIA WILL CONSOLIDATE THEIR UNITED FRONT with a series of high-level exchanges in coming months, with a particular emphasis on joint commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Diplomats from both nations outlined their plans for the commemorations yesterday, but stressed they were not targeting Japan in an apparent attempt to avoid provoking the volatile Sino-Japanese relationship.

The highlights of the commemorations will be a military parade in Moscow in May, which will be attended by President Xi Jinping, and a military parade in Beijing in September, to which Russian President Vladimir Putin has been invited.

“Both Russia and China hold responsible positions and are efficient at coordination in the most complicated world issues, and that has made our cooperation an important part of international relations,” the Russian ambassador to China, Andrey Ivanovich Denisov, said. ...

China would continue to promote visits by mainland tourists

to Moscow and Ulyanovsk, the hometown of late Russian communist revolutionary Vladimir Lenin, Deputy Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping said.

Li Lifan, a Russian affairs expert at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said the war commemorations provided a platform for the two nations to display their mutual trust and offset the influence of the U.S.

“Washington has been excluding China and Russia [from the new world order],” Li said. “Jointly commemorating the end of the Second World War could demonstrate the multi-polar order advocated by Beijing ... and serve to counterbalance the West.” ...

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev will visit China at the end of this year, while Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit Moscow in April.

The two nations also vowed to step up energy cooperation, on top of the “East Route” deal in which Russia will export 38 billion cubic meters of gas to China annually over 30 years from 2018.

Pro-Russia Rebels ‘Continued to Fire at Retreating Ukrainian Forces’

Independent | February 19

PRO-RUSSIA REBELS REPEATEDLY LAUNCHED MISSILES AND GRENADES at Ukrainian soldiers as they retreated from the key strategic town of Debaltseve, according to reports from the front-line.

News agency AFP released footage reporting to show rebels loyal to the Russian Federation firing multiple rocket launchers as Ukrainian forces retreated on foot and by truck from the battleground near the besieged town.

That report was backed up by an interview given by a retreating Ukrainian soldier who said he and his men had to run a gauntlet of fire as they left Debaltseve and traveled to the safety of Artemivsk, some 50 kilometers [31 miles] away.

The soldier told *Al Jazeera*, “There are no words to describe it. Along the entire way we were blanketed with shots. They fired at us with machine guns and grenade launchers. They used everything.

“We left Debaltseve around 5 a.m. (on Wednesday) and until

this morning we were constantly under targeted fire.”

Col. Andriy Lysenko, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian Army, said on Thursday that at least 2,745 soldiers had left Debaltseve, with 14 deaths in the last 24 hours. One hundred seventy-two more were wounded and 82 soldiers were still missing.

He added that Ukrainian Armed Forces had repelled insurgents near Pisky and that Ukrainian positions near Shyrokyne had been attacked.

He said that insurgents had violated the ceasefire 253 times from the moment of its introduction and the every Ukrainian soldier has been shelled on average with around 580 kilograms [1,300 pounds] of “deadly metal” during the battle for Debaltseve. ...

Debaltseve, a key strategic town, has witnessed heavy fighting since a ceasefire in the region began at the weekend, with the Russian separatists claiming that the truce did not apply to the railway hub.

The president of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, argued that the fall of the town was carried out “in a planned and organized manner” as he attempted to cling to any benefits from the retreat. ...

“Is it just coincidence that Putin yanked Ukraine away from the EU right after our program was filmed and just around the time that

it aired? Is it a coincidence that Baron Gutenberg responded to Putin's bullying with such eloquence and force so soon after that program was broadcast? Maybe it was. But if you are proclaiming God's prophecies, then God is going to work with that message and bring events into sync to support His messenger.”
Gerald Flurry, Trumpet, March 2014

Putin Looks to Make Friends Across Asia

Bloomberg | February 16

BOXED IN BY THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES, FACED WITH AN UNEASY relationship with China and needing new friends and income, Russia is popping up everywhere in Asia.

A new strategic agreement with Pakistan. A visit by Vladimir Putin to India. Helping search for a plane that crashed off Indonesia. Coaxing Kim Jong Un to venture out of North Korea. In a region where some governments may be less squeamish about events in Ukraine, Putin is surprisingly welcome.

Russia's forays reflect a dual strategy: To find new markets as its economy is crushed by sanctions and last year's tumble in oil prices, and to diversify from its one big ally in Asia—China. Putin is concerned that his relationship with Xi Jinping is becoming increasingly tilted in China's favor. ...

While Russia can't ignore China—it was Russia's biggest trading partner in 2013, the two hold regular military drills, and China is buying Russian gas—the government in Moscow is renewing efforts to find other nations in Asia to act as a hedge. In recent months it has reached out to middle powers like India, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Pakistan. ...

Putin's accelerated Asian focus is a mix of military engagement and efforts to promote trade, the latter starting from a low base. While Russia faces pariah status in Europe, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi told Putin in December that India opposed sanctions. ...

In November, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu visited Beijing and met his counterpart Chang Wanquan. Russia and China arranged to hold joint naval drills in the Pacific and Mediterranean. ...

Russia supplies Vietnam with aircraft and submarines—the third of six kilo-class submarines was delivered last month—and is helping build a nuclear-power station.

Putin capped the year with a visit to New Delhi, where India and Russia pledged to develop their relationship to a “qualitatively new level.” Putin promised to supply oil, weapons and nuclear-power reactors to India. Modi asked Putin to build factories in the country and to supply spare parts and components for Russian military equipment. ...

[Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo] Abe told parliament February 12 that he wanted Putin to visit Japan this year to deepen economic ties and resolve a territorial dispute over islands north of Japan that's kept them from signing a peace treaty since the end of World War II. Deputy foreign ministers from each country met in Moscow the same day and discussed details of the visit, according to Russia's Foreign Ministry. ...

Under Xi, China's Defense Budget Defies Economic Slowdown

Reuters | February 16

PRESIDENT XI JINPING IS EXPECTED TO AUTHORIZE ROBUST defense spending for this year despite China's slowing economy, determined to strengthen the country's armed capabilities amid growing unease in Beijing at Washington's renewed focus on Asia.

While China keeps the details of its military spending secret, experts said additional funding would likely go toward beefing up the navy with anti-submarine ships and developing more aircraft carriers beyond the sole vessel in operation.

The military budget will be announced at the start of the annual meeting of China's parliament on March 5. Last year, defense spending rose 12.2 percent to \$130 billion, second only to the United States.

That continued a nearly unbroken two-decade run of double-digit budget increases, although many experts think China's real defense outlays are much larger. ...

Other factors would now keep defense spending high, from the U.S. military and diplomatic “rebalancing” to Asia to Xi's crackdown on corruption in the People's Liberation Army, which has caused some disquiet in the ranks, military experts said.

“Xi has put a premium on the ‘dream of a strong military’ as part of his grand strategy for China's rise, perhaps more than any other modern (Chinese) leader,” said Zhang Baohui, a security specialist at Hong Kong's Lingnan University. “This greater emphasis on the military is very significant.” ...

Many Asian countries are also getting out their checkbooks

India Clears \$8 Billion Warships Project to Counter China

Reuters | February 18

THE GOVERNMENT HAS CLEARED AN \$8 BILLION PLAN TO BUILD India's most advanced warships, defense sources said, just months after ordering new submarines to close the gap with the Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean.

Since taking over last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has signaled his resolve to build a strong military after years of neglect that military planners say has left India unable to fight a two-front war against China and Pakistan. ...

Modi summoned a meeting of the cabinet committee on security on Monday to approve construction of seven frigates equipped with stealth features to avoid easy detection, a Defense Ministry source said.

The *Times of India* said the government had also approved six nuclear-powered submarines for a further \$8 billion. The defense source said he had no knowledge of the nuclear submarine program, which traditionally has been kept under wraps. ...

AFRICA/LATIN AMERICA

'I'm No Racist, Whites Are Welcome,' Says South Africa's Zuma

Agence France-Presse | February 19

SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA ON THURSDAY DENIED that he was a racist and assured white people that they should not fear being "chased" out of Nelson Mandela's "Rainbow Nation."

The president also said that a new law preventing foreign ownership of land in South Africa applied only to agricultural properties and not to private residences.

Zuma was reacting to concerns by some white South Africans after he told a rally of his ruling African National Congress that all South Africa's troubles began when the first whites landed more than 300 years ago.

"South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white," he told parliament, quoting the ANC's Freedom Charter, which was adopted during the fight to end the white racist system of apartheid. ...

[Zuma] said he would never stop talking about history because South Africa's children should know the country's past to ensure that mistakes were not repeated. ...

RELATED: ["THE TRUTH ABOUT NELSON MANDELA AND SOUTH AFRICA"](#)

ANGLO-AMERICA

T Social Breakdown: Massive Mob of Teens Rushes Orlando Movie Theater

Robert Morley | February 19

THE FOUNDATION OF ANY SUCCESSFUL NATION IS ITS FAMILIES—traditional families. Mom, dad, children. Mom and dad married. Children in submission to their parents' authority. That might not be politically correct, but it is increasingly difficult not to see that America's broken families are destroying the country from within.

Consider what happened in Ocoee, Florida, on February 17. Police said around 900 black teens stormed into the mall theater and food court after being refused entry to the R-rated *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Around 100 teens made it past security before doors were locked down.

Mayhem followed. Inside the theater, gunshots rang out. Fights erupted. Panic ensued. Frantic 911 calls lit up switchboards. Moviegoers trying to leave found the exits were locked shut. They were the lucky ones. The "gunshots" later turned out to be firecrackers tossed to terrorize people.

"Everybody just started scattering, ducking underneath the seats," moviegoer Kenny Johnson said. "It was a scary moment."

Outside the gates, police were overwhelmed. More fighting. One gun found. A stolen vehicle retrieved. Drugs.

Then the mob began to move. Before police reinforcements could arrive from surrounding communities, the mob of teens swarmed across the street and into a nearby gas station.

"A whole bunch of kids came in the store and just started stealing stuff," witness Taylor Davis said. "They [were] just taking everything out of the store, and then the kids [were] just trying to fight the owner, and everybody was just trying to fight."

A nearby Taco Bell was also ransacked. More theft, fighting and property destruction.

These kind of flash mobs/random acts of violence are increasingly common. What makes this incident so worrying is that so many of the teens in this mob were middle schoolers.

Where are the parents?!

I think you know the answer. Police said teens were released into their parents' custody. A more accurate description would probably be: released into their custodians' custody.

More than 70 percent of all black births in America are to unmarried women.

Studies have consistently shown that by virtually every quantifiable measure of success, children from intact families

outperform those from broken homes.

So while the evidence tying poverty, academic underperformance, incarceration rates, depression, drug usage, alcohol abuse, abortions and a whole host of other maladies to broken families is preponderous, America's leaders continue to be more concerned about political correctness than the welfare of people and the nation.

Those who value the lessons of history can look to the Roman Empire for precedent. Gerald Flurry writes in "The Modern Romans": "History shows that the strength of any nation depends on the strength of its families. Family is the rock-solid foundation on which a country's superstructure is erected. That was the case for both America and Britain.

"Rome in its heyday was affluent and had the mightiest army on Earth, just like America today. Back then, when people talked about Rome falling, they were scoffed at and scorned. When Seneca, the famous Roman, warned that Rome would fall—even telling people why it would fall—the people ignored him. In the words of Seneca, one of the foundational reasons Rome would fall was the fact that 'they divorce in order to remarry. They marry in order to divorce'" (*Trumpet*, March 2009).

Seneca warned that family breakdown would destroy the Roman Empire!

The United States, like Rome, was built on a foundation of strong, stable families. At its founding, divorce was hardly heard of. Single motherhood by choice was unheard of. As recently as 50 years ago only 5 percent of white households were headed by a single mother. For black families it was only one quarter of families.

Now 70 percent of black children are born to unwed mothers. Additional others born to intact families, unfortunately, eventually experience the ravages of divorce. Families must be fixed if America is to survive.

Far more than any other factor—including white racism—broken families are the source of the problems facing black communities.

And more than any other factor, the breakdown in America's families, which is a symptom of America's eroding morals, is the cause of America's economic, social and geopolitical problems. History shows the foundational reason for the fall of the Roman Empire. We ignore this history at our peril.

For more lessons from the Fall of Rome, read "[The Modern Romans](#)."

 Follow [Robert Morley](#)

Our Dangerous Historical Moment

Victor Davis Hanson, *National Review* | February 19

WORLD WAR II WAS THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE WAR IN HISTORY. What caused it?

The panic from the ongoing and worldwide Depression in the 1930s had empowered extremist movements the world over. Like-minded, violent dictators of otherwise quite different Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Imperial Japan, and the Communist Soviet Union all wanted to attack their neighbors.

Yet World War II could have been prevented had Western Europe united to deter Germany. Instead, France, Britain and the smaller European democracies appeased Hitler.

The United States turned isolationist. The Soviet Union collaborated with the Third Reich. And Italy and Japan eventually joined it.

The 1930s saw rampant anti-Semitism. Jews were blamed in fascist countries for the economic downturn. ... The only safe havens for Jews from Europe were Jewish-settled Palestine and the United States.

Does all this sound depressingly familiar?

The aftershocks of the global financial meltdown of 2008 still paralyze the European Union while prompting all sorts of popular extremist movements and opportunistic terrorists.

After the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, America has turned inward. The Depression and the lingering unhappiness over World War I did the same to Americans in the 1930s.

Premodern monsters are on the move. The Islamic State is carving up Syria and Iraq to fashion a fascist caliphate.

Vladimir Putin gobbles up his neighbors ... in crude imitation of the way Germany once swallowed Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Theocratic Iran is turning Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon into a

new Iranian version of Japan's old Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

The Western response to all this? Likewise, similar to the 1930s.

The NATO allies are terrified that Putin will next attack the NATO-member Baltic states—and that their own paralysis will mean the embarrassing end of the once-noble alliance.

The United States has now fled from four Middle Eastern countries. ...

America has convinced its European partners to drop tough sanctions against Iran. In the manner of the Allies in 1938 at Munich, they prefer instead to charm Iran, in hopes it will stop making a nuclear bomb.

The Islamic State has used almost a year of unchallenged aggression to remake the map of the Middle East. President Obama had variously dismissed it as a jayvee team

Then we come to the return of the Jewish question. Seventy years after the end of the Holocaust, Jews are once again leaving France. They have learned that weak governments either will not or cannot protect them from Islamic terrorists.

In France, radical Islamists recently targeted a kosher market. In Denmark, they went after a synagogue. ... A Jewish prosecutor who was investigating the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center in Argentina was found mysteriously murdered.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is being blamed for stoking Middle Eastern tensions. Who cares that he resides over the region's only true democracy, one that is stable and protects human rights? Obama-administration aides have called him a coward and worse. ...

Putin, the Islamic State and Iran at first glance have as little in common as did Germany, Italy and Japan. But like the old Axis, they are all authoritarians that share a desire to attack their neighbors. And they all hate the West.

The grandchildren of those who appeased the dictators of the 1930s once again prefer in the short term to turn a blind eye to the current fascists. And the grandchildren of the survivors of the Holocaust once again get blamed.

The 1930s should have taught us that aggressive autocrats do not have to like each other to share hatred of the West.

The 1930s should have demonstrated to us that old-time American isolationism and the same old European appeasement will not prevent but only guarantee a war.

And the 1930s should have reminded us that Jews are usually among the first—but not the last—to be targeted by terrorists, thugs and autocrats.

Britain Says It Sent Warplanes to Intercept Russian Bombers off Cornwall

New York Times | February 19

THE BRITISH ROYAL AIR FORCE SCRAMBLED WARPLANES TO intercept two Russian bombers off the coast of Cornwall in southwest England, the Defense Ministry said on Thursday, as a government minister sounded alarms about the Kremlin's intentions elsewhere in Europe.

The episode magnified concerns about the possibility of further moves by President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia that could draw in the NATO alliance after advances by pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Typhoon warplanes took off from an air base in eastern England and escorted the two Russian airplanes in international airspace "until they were out of the UK area of interest," the Defense Ministry said in a statement. The encounter happened on Wednesday.

"At no time did the Russian military aircraft cross into UK sovereign airspace," the statement said. During the Cold War, Russian bombers routinely tested Western defenses by flying toward

the coast, and there have been reports that the practice has been resumed as tensions have mounted over the conflict in Ukraine.

The number of intercepts of Russian military aircraft approaching Western airspace has tripled compared with 2013, British researchers said in November, citing NATO officials.

"I suspect what's happening here is that the Russians are trying to make some sort of a point," Prime Minister David Cameron said during a visit to eastern England, "and I don't think we should dignify it with too much of a response."

The Russian flights came as Britain's defense minister, Michael Fallon, said Mr. Putin could replicate the tactics used in Ukraine on the Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, former Soviet bloc countries that are now members of NATO.

"NATO has to be ready for any kind of aggression from Russia, whatever form it takes," Mr. Fallon said, adding that he was worried about Mr. Putin's exerting "pressure on the Baltics, the way he is testing NATO." ...

T America: In the Cybercrosshairs

Daryle Hochstetler | February 19

OVER A DECADE AND A HALF AGO, *TRUMPET* EDITOR IN CHIEF Gerald Flurry warned that the United States' Achilles' heel is its dependence on computer technology.

And America's dependence on such technology then was not nearly as great as it is today.

America's utilities, refineries, military systems, water treatment plants and other facilities' manual switches, gauges and knobs have been heavily replaced by digital switches, computer programs and monitors—all accessible via network. This makes it possible for foreign aggressors to enter U.S. infrastructure and wreak havoc. America's great leap forward in innovation has also become one of its greatest weaknesses.

The *Trumpet* and others have repeatedly warned of the danger of such dependence. But many people push the warnings aside due to the intangible nature of the threat. People normally can't actually see enemies hacking into American facilities or business, so it remains out of mind.

Now, however, you can see the invisible battlefield of

cyberattacks. Invented by Norse, IP Viking is the world's first cyberrisk intelligence system able to monitor cyberattacks—in real time, anywhere on the planet—and then stop them within minutes. IP Viking uses "honeypots" to lure in attackers who then reveal information about themselves.

In merely five minutes, the website tallied 1,104 attacks on America. This averages to more than 85 percent of all cyberattacks being directed toward the U.S. The map shows a constant stream of attacks on America coming from all around the globe. At present, the U.S. is preventing most of these attacks, but how long will its defenses be able to counter the barrage?

As Gerald Flurry highlighted in his 2005 article "America's Achilles' Heel—and Germany": "RiskCenter, a news service devoted to economic, political and financial stories, wrote this in an article titled 'Energy Risk—Grid Systems Vulnerable to Cyber Attacks': 'When federal energy regulators met with cyberexperts recently, they learned just how vulnerable the nation's grid systems could be to such attacks. Regulators viewed simulations in

which hackers were able to penetrate Internet security guards and subsequently cut off the fuels needed to spin turbines.”

The danger associated with cyberattacks and cyberwarfare

has increased substantially over the past 10 to 15 years. It is only a matter of time before America suffers debilitating cyberattacks rendering incalculable damage.

Obama: ‘Islam Has Been Woven Into the Fabric of Our Country Since Its Founding’

CNS News | February 19

WE HEAR A LOT ABOUT THE UNITED STATES’ JUDEO-CHRISTIAN heritage, but according to President Obama, “Islam has been woven into the fabric of our country since its founding.”

That’s what the president told a White House conference on “countering violent extremism” on Wednesday.

Obama has said similar things in the past:

“I also know that Islam has always been a part of America’s story,” Obama said in a June 2009 speech in Cairo, Egypt. “Islam has always been part of America,” he said in a 2010 statement marking the start of Ramadan. And in a 2014 statement marking Eid, Obama said the holiday “also reminds us of the many achievements and contributions of Muslim Americans to building the very fabric of our nation and strengthening the core of our democracy.”

In his speech on Wednesday, Obama was making the point that Western nations must show that they “welcome people of all faiths,” at a time when “extremists” are saying that Western nations are “hostile to Muslims.”

“Herein America, Islam has been woven into the fabric of our country since its founding. Generations—(applause)—Generations of

Muslim immigrants came here and went to work as farmers and merchants and factory workers, helped to lay railroads and to build up America.

“The first Islamic center in New York City was founded in the 1890s. America’s first mosque, this was an interesting fact, was in North Dakota.” (It was established in 1929.)

Both of those milestones happened well after America’s founding, however. In fact, the new nation’s first dealings with Islam were tense and unpleasant.

According to a Heritage Foundation paper, shortly after America’s founding, the United States “was dragged into the affairs of the Islamic world by an escalating series of unprovoked attacks on Americans by Muslim pirates, the terrorists of the era,” who looted American ships and captured American sailors, holding them for ransom or selling them as slaves.

The paper notes that America’s struggle with Muslim pirates from the Barbary States (modern-day Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) began soon after the 13 colonies declared their independence from Britain in 1776 and continued for roughly four decades. ...

Same-sex Couple Marries in Austin Despite Texas’s Ban on Homosexual ‘Marriage’

MySanAntonio | February 19

A SAME-SEX COUPLE IN AUSTIN LEGALLY MARRIED THROUGH A court order Thursday despite a statewide ban on [homosexual] “marriage.” Suzanne Bryant and Sarah Goodfriend ... wed Thursday morning at the Travis County Clerk’s Office after State District Judge David Wahlberg ordered Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir to issue a license to the couple.

The court order issued by Wahlberg only applies to Bryant and Goodfriend and any other marriage licenses for same-sex

couples in Travis County must be court ordered, the clerk’s office tweeted on Thursday. ...

The newlyweds “want to open the door for all LGBT families to have the right to marry in Texas,” Bryant said in the release.

“We were both born in Texas, came back to Texas after we met to build a family and establish our lives here,” Bryant said. “We plan to die here, and we have waited to get married because, as proud Texans, we want a Texas marriage license.” ...

U.S. Falls to 49th Position for Press Freedoms

Reporters Without Borders | February 12

THE UNITED STATES IS RANKED NO. 49 OUT OF 180 COUNTRIES IN THE 2015 World Press Freedom Index with a score of 24.41. In the U.S., 2014 was marked by judicial harassment of *New York Times* investigative reporter James Risen in connection with the trial of Jeffrey Sterling, a former CIA officer charged under the Espionage Act

with giving him classified information. U.S. journalists are still not protected by a federal shield law that would guarantee their right not to name their sources or reveal other confidential information about their work. Meanwhile, at least 15 journalists were arbitrarily arrested during clashes between police and demonstrators