

MAY 15, 2015



Pope Francis

## Why Is the Pope Provoking War in Israel?

**F**IRST CUBA, NOW THE PALESTINIANS. POPE FRANCIS IS A MAN ON a mission. But what is his mission exactly? The rhetoric and body language, the gracious gestures, the incessant smiles and compliments give the impression of a selfless leader determined to broker peace, cooperation and tranquility. In Cuba, Israel, and all over this chaotic, disunited planet.



BRAD MACDONALD

But consider the decisions and actions. In both Cuba and Israel, the Vatican is creating tension, disunity and instability that are likely to lead to conflict and war.

Yesterday the Vatican revealed that it had formally recognized the “state of Palestine” in a newly finalized treaty with the Palestinians. (Pope Francis and the Vatican had previously supported the “state of Palestine,” but never formally like this). The treaty defines the Catholic Church’s activities in areas controlled by the Palestinians, and will be signed by both sides this Saturday when Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas visits the Vatican.

Critics of Israel and patrons of Palestinian statehood are

elated. The movement to recognize a Palestinian state has gained momentum in recent years, particularly within the United Nations; an endorsement from the pope and the Vatican is huge. Time will tell, but gaining the support of the most respected and admired leader on Earth could be just what is needed to get the project of Palestinian statehood over the finish line.

For the Jewish state and its declining number of supporters, the Vatican’s decision was an enormous blow. “This move does not promote the peace process and distances the Palestinian leadership from returning to direct and bilateral negotiations,” Israel’s foreign minister said in a text message to the Associated Press.

Indeed. In return for its vital support of Palestinian statehood, the Vatican required absolutely nothing from the Palestinians. There was no requirement of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to sincerely engage in peace talks with Israel, no demand that it recognize Israel’s right to exist, and no demand that it sever its connection with Hamas and publicly renounce Hamas’s ambitions. Nothing.

“The one thing we can be sure it won’t do is to improve the chances for peace,” explained Jonathon Tobin, senior online editor for *Commentary* magazine. “By granting the Palestinians official recognition without first requiring them to make peace with

Israel, *Pope Francis and the church have only made it less likely that this will ever happen*” (emphasis added throughout). Others were more dramatic. Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, released a statement saying that the Vatican’s action “serves to undermine the only real solution to the decades-old conflict.”

Mort Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, warned that the Vatican’s endorsement of Palestinian statehood is a sign of the resurgence of “THE HISTORICAL CATHOLIC ENMITY TOWARDS JEWS.”

That remark by Klein is really worth thinking about. Pope Francis and the Vatican are selling this decision as a routine gesture of goodwill toward the Palestinians, and a decision that could even jump-start the peace process. Don’t buy it. The Vatican’s endorsement of the Palestinian cause will add major momentum to the international movement toward Palestinian statehood. This will pile more pressure on Israel to make more concessions, even to the detriment of its existence. And when and if Israel refuses to concede, it is certain to be held responsible for the inevitable tension and conflict.

The Israeli-Palestinian peace process is destined to end in conflict—and the Vatican’s decision brings that day nearer.

The timing is interesting too. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was recently reelected and just last week finalized a coalition government that could be more hardline than the previous. Going forward, Israel’s government—justifiably, reasonably and wisely—will continue to be extremely cautious about any sort of peace deal with the Palestinians. Israel’s prime minister is trying to slow the momentum toward Palestinian statehood, convince nations that the PA cannot be trusted, and persuade the international community to demand more from the Palestinians in return for statehood. The Vatican’s announcement undermines all this and makes Prime Minister Netanyahu’s job much more difficult. It was a veiled message to Israel’s conservative government: *Don’t get too excited, and don’t get too comfortable.*

Imagine Netanyahu sitting down to discuss the peace process with another world leader. *Pope Francis supports Palestinian statehood without any demands on the Palestinians, why shouldn’t I?* Mr. Netanyahu could hear that refrain from pretty much every world leader he meets. And as long as he refuses to accept a deal in which the other side is not required to alter its genocidal ambitions, *Israel’s* prime minister will be maligned and ostracized.

It’s also worth recalling the Balkan wars, scenes of which dominated our television screens during the early 1990s. The Vatican, together with Germany, played a key role in instigating Yugoslavia’s dissolution and the long and brutal conflicts that erupted. How? By being one of the first to formally recognize—despite strong opposition from the United States, the European Union and the UN—the breakaway regions of Croatia and Slovenia as independent and sovereign states. Most of the international community dutifully followed along. Within months, the Balkan Peninsula was on fire (for more information on this critical history, read our free booklet [Germany’s Conquest of the Balkans](#)).

Will we see similar tension and conflict erupt in Israel as a result of the Vatican’s support of the Palestinians? It seems inevitable.

Consider one last thought. Isn’t it odd that Pope Francis and the Vatican seem to be supporting Muslim control of parts of Jerusalem?

I can’t think of a single moment over the past 2,000 years when the Vatican sincerely endorsed Muslim control of Jerusalem. I can, however, recall multiple occasions when the Vatican riled up Catholic warriors and dispatched them to the Holy Land to wrest control from the Muslims. Why would Pope Francis reject two millennia of Catholic history—even rejecting Catholic doctrine and tradition—and support Muslim sovereignty in the Holy Land? That’s just really odd.

Actually, Pope Francis and the Vatican do not support the presence of Muslims in Jerusalem any more than they do the presence of Jews.

There are two simple reasons the Vatican, *for now*, is making it appear that it supports a Palestinian state and greater Muslim influence over Jerusalem.

First, it undermines Israel’s control over the Holy Land. When it comes to diminishing Israel’s grip on Jerusalem and its holy sites, the Vatican is quite happy for the Palestinians to do the gritty work. An honest assessment of Palestinian leadership and governance, at least up till now, reveals endemic corruption, mismanagement, infighting and internal strife. Can the Palestinians successfully create a stable, prosperous, safe Palestinian state in Israel? Slim chance.

Second, the Vatican’s endorsement of Palestinian statehood provides ideal cover for its own ambition to wrest control of Jerusalem from the Jews and Muslims.

Reading about the treaty that will be signed this Saturday, one can’t help but wonder: Has the Vatican come to some kind of quid pro quo with the Palestinians? Jerusalem is as important and meaningful to the Catholic Church as Rome itself, probably more so. There are many sites that the Catholic Church considers highly valuable. What has the PA agreed to cede to the Vatican in return for its endorsement of Palestinian statehood? This is conjecture. But this is the way politics, international relations and human nature work. People, nations, even most religions, will feign friendship and peace in pursuit of their goals.

Four years ago, Italian journalist Giulio Meotti, writing for *Arutz Sheva*, explained how Catholic authorities had “increased their political initiatives for Catholic control over some sites in Jerusalem.” He recalled, for example, how the head of the Vatican’s Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, had said that “peace negotiations in the Middle East must tackle the issue of the status of the holy sites of Jerusalem.” According to Tauran, the time had arrived for some of Jerusalem’s holy places, including the City of David, to be put under Vatican charge. After all, “it’s practically *just* the Holy See who is concerned about [Jerusalem],” Tauran stated.

Stories like this are pretty unusual. We don’t often read about the Vatican’s love for Jerusalem and its quest for more control. But it’s there, and it’s thriving. The Vatican is not a non-threatening, neutral third party in this conflict—though so much of the news media believes it is. History shows that Jerusalem is as important to the Vatican as it is to Jews and Muslims. For Catholics, Jerusalem is the birthplace of Christianity and the setting of many important biblical events. The Holy City, as Catholic dogma states, is its universal headquarters.

Does anyone really think the Vatican genuinely wants to cede control of these sites to Muslims?

We need to look past the handshakes and platitudes, and

really think about what is going on here. This decision is part of a Trojan horse strategy by which the Vatican seeks to gain the trust of the Palestinians and international community before more actively staking its claim to Jerusalem and its holy sites. Whatever happens, the last thing we can expect is for the Vatican to stand by and cheer as Muslims assume control of Christianity's holy sites. That is never going to happen.

In fact, putting Jerusalem under "international" control has been the Vatican's strategy for *decades*. In 1949, the British plenipotentiary minister (essentially, the ambassador) to the Vatican, John Victor Perowne, wrote that "the Vatican would have preferred, from the point of view of the fate of the holy places and of Catholic interests in Palestine generally, that neither Jews nor Arabs, but a third power, should have control in the Holy Land. Such a solution it well knew, however, was unattainable, and in the actual circumstances it preferred the Arabs to the Jews."

So here is what is likely to happen, at least in some form. This decision by the Vatican will embolden the Palestinians in their quest for Jerusalem, further ostracize the Jewish state, and increase tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, perhaps to the point of conflict (more terrorist attacks, etc.). As the situation deteriorates, Israel will continue to look for foreign assistance and support. Relations with its traditional allies, America and Britain, are rapidly deteriorating, and these countries have hardly any appetite for supporting Israel, at least in any meaningful way. Russia and China are more on the side of the Muslims than the Jews. Israel will find itself left with one option: crying out to Germany and Europe.

It's true that Europeans and their leaders aren't especially fond of Jews and the Jewish state. Then again, Germany, at least its chancellor, is arguably the closest friend and ally Israel has right now. Expect Israel to cry out to Germany for assistance. **THIS IS PRECISELY THE RESPONSE THE VATICAN IS SEEKING!**

The European Union and the Vatican both have the same official goal for Jerusalem. They want it to be an international city—controlled neither by Jews nor Arabs, but rather by some third party.

Why does the Vatican want this? In his book *Christians and Jews: Faith to Faith*, Rabbi James Rudin wrote that the Eastern Orthodox churches that own the majority of Jerusalem's sacred Christian sites oppose internationalizing the city because it "would give greater control of Jerusalem's Christian sites and institutions to the Roman Catholic Church, which has significant influence in Europe and the Western Hemisphere."

It doesn't take much imagination to see the Vatican being given the chief seat in how an "international" Jerusalem is governed! (After all, Pope Francis just brokered peace between America and Cuba.)

Israel is dead against this right now. But as it becomes more isolated and its situation becomes desperate, its resolve will start to crumble.

Of course, this is just one possible scenario. However it happens, the Vatican's ambitions in Jerusalem are well documented. It desperately seeks greater control over Jerusalem, and every step it takes in its diplomacy with Israel and the Palestinian Arabs is dedicated to this end. [!\[\]\(3e2231b1ad3ca8da8658228c00dd08e0\_img.jpg\) Follow Brad Macdonald](#)

## MIDDLE EAST

### Will Russia Drive Egypt and Saudi Arabia Apart?

Jeremiah Jacques | May 10

**T**HE YEMEN CONFLICT HAS BROUGHT EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA together as partners against a common enemy: the Houthis.

The Houthis are a Shia extremist group backed by Iran. They seized control of Yemen in January after toppling the Sunni president. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey and other Sunni nations are working to expel them from Yemen.

But the *Trumpet* believes that a wedge will eventually drive Egypt away from Saudi Arabia, and position Cairo as a friend of Iran.

Could that wedge be Russia?

It's no secret that Russia sides with Iran in the Yemen conflict, and in several other Middle Eastern matters. Iran's mullahs share Vladimir Putin's goal of ending the era of United States dominance, and the two sides are keen to cooperate toward that end whenever possible. Moscow and Tehran also stand together in offering ironclad support to the regime of Bashar Assad in Syria. Under Assad, Syria is the most valuable ally in the region to both Iran and Russia.

Saudi Arabia, which is a U.S. ally and Iran's primary regional enemy, recognizes Russia's pro-Iran interference in the region

and vehemently disapproves of it.

Russia's relationship with Egypt is also thriving.

The U.S. shunned Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi after he became Egypt's president by ousting the country's first democratically elected leader, Mohamed Morsi. Washington called the ouster a coup, and slashed a fifth of its military aid to Sisi's Egypt. The U.S. also withheld delivery of some armaments to Egypt.

This prompted Sisi to seek out other allies, including Russia.

At present, Sisi appears to be keeping Egypt friendly with both Saudi Arabia and Russia. But if Cairo-Moscow ties continue to warm, it is difficult to see how Egypt could remain aligned with Saudi Arabia. Since Russia is pro-Iran and anti-Saudi Arabia, it is likely that Egypt may soon have to choose either the Russians or the Saudis.

If Russia and Egypt continue gravitating back toward one another, a fault line dividing Saudi Arabia and Egypt could emerge. America's propensity for betraying its allies makes this possibility more likely.

Such a move could [drive Egypt away from Saudi Arabia and draw it nearer to the Iranian camp](#). [!\[\]\(a25a22d88c5882f4a20f36103df86562\_img.jpg\) Follow Jeremiah Jacques](#)

---

## **T** Arab Nations Fear Iran Action, U.S. Inaction

Callum Wood | May 13

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION HAS MAINTAINED ITS SIX-YEAR infatuation with the idea of an Iran-U.S. reconciliation. The sudden transition from near-frigid relations under the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the temperate relationship now maintained under Hassan Rouhani has sent the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) scrambling.

When Iran was crippled under the weight of sanctions and ostracized by much of the international community, the GCC nations were able to maintain a counterweight to Iran. But with the United States accepting and endorsing Iran as a key player in Middle East politics, the GCC nations are struggling to hold their positions of power.

It is more than just a fear of what Iran may do. It is a fear of what America may not do.

The GCC nations see what happened in Ukraine and wonder whether they may find themselves in the same situation. What if Iran invaded? Would the U.S. honor its agreement to come to their aid? After all, the U.S. promised Ukraine that if it gave up its nuclear weapons the U.S. would defend it. Today, however, Crimea remains

in Russian hands, and war continues along the border provinces. The U.S. promised to protect Georgia too, but that didn't happen. Then there were the broken promises to enforce "red lines" in Syria.

If the U.S. cannot be taken at its word when dealing with Russia, can it be trusted with Iran? That is undoubtedly the question being asked by leaders of the GCC nations.

The GCC nations' displeasure is starting to show as U.S. inaction continues to endanger the region. Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz decided not to attend the Camp David summit, which some analysts consider to be a diplomatic snub. The only national leaders to attend will be from Kuwait and Qatar. The other nations will send only lower-ranked representatives.

Iran is continuing to prove that the GCC nations' fears are well founded.

The relationship between the GCC and the U.S. is a tenuous one. Watch these relations fracture further. The *Trumpet* has long forecast [a change in direction for many of the Sunni Arab nations](#). They still need defense from abroad, but they will increasingly seek it from somewhere other than the United States.

---

## **Nuclear Iran Will Be More 'Risky' Than Cold War**

Charles Krauthammer | May 13

WE ARE SO FAR DOWN THE ROAD OF ACQUIESCENCE THAT IT would be nearly impossible for the U.S. to reverse course unless the Ayatollah puts his foot down and decides that he's not going to do anything with the great Satan, and breaks off negotiations. I think they are not stupid enough to do that. They've been handed the kingdom on a plate, not just a paved road to nuclear weapons, either by simply waiting and they'll have it in 10 years, or by cheating, which there are no real mechanisms for us to stop or to do anything about if we discover it. So they're going to get there one way or another under this agreement. So why would they want to risk anything by walking out?

[U]nless there's a very improbable walkout, I think they are assured of nuclear capacity. And I think we are assured of a truly catastrophic arms race in the Middle East, where the Saudis are going to go nuclear, the U.A.E., probably, Egypt, probably Turkey, and if we thought that two-sided deterrence, we and the Soviets for 50 years, was difficult, risky, and we came within an inch of nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis, imagine what five-sided deterrence is like in a region that's the most unstable in the world. That's what Obama has bequeathed us. But I don't see any other path at the current rate. And I don't know what an American president, of either party, will be able to do when they're sworn in.

---

## **Saudi Arabia Promises to Match Iran in Nuclear Capability**

New York Times | May 13

WHEN PRESIDENT OBAMA BEGAN MAKING THE CASE FOR A DEAL with Iran that would delay its ability to assemble an atomic weapon, his first argument was that a nuclear-armed Iran would set off a "free-for-all" of proliferation in the Arab world. "It is almost certain that other players in the region would feel it necessary to get their own nuclear weapons," he said in 2012.

Now, as he gathered Arab leaders over dinner at the White House on Wednesday and prepared to meet with them at Camp David on Thursday, he faced a perverse consequence: Saudi Arabia and many of the smaller Arab states are now vowing to match whatever nuclear enrichment capability Iran is permitted to retain.

"We can't sit back and be nowhere as Iran is allowed to retain

much of its capability and amass its research,” one of the Arab leaders preparing to meet Mr. Obama said on Monday, declining to be named until he made his case directly to the president. Prince Turki bin Faisal, the 70-year-old former Saudi intelligence chief, has been touring the world with the same message.

“Whatever the Iranians have, we will have, too,” he said at a recent conference in Seoul, South Korea.

For a president who came to office vowing to move toward the elimination of nuclear weapons, the Iran deal has presented a new dilemma. If the agreement is sealed successfully next month—still far from guaranteed—Mr. Obama will be able to claim to have bought another decade, maybe longer, before Iran can credibly threaten to have a nuclear weapon.

But by leaving 5,000 centrifuges and a growing research and development program in place—the features of the proposed deal that Israel and the Arab states oppose virulently—Mr. Obama is essentially recognizing Iran’s right to continue enrichment of uranium, one of the two pathways to a nuclear weapon. Leaders of the Sunni Arab states are arguing that if Iran goes down that road, Washington cannot credibly argue they should not follow down the same one, even if their technological abilities are years behind Iran’s. ...

The members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, a loose affiliation of nations that make the crucial components for nuclear energy and, by extension, weapons projects, have a long list of components they will not ship to the Middle East. For the Saudis, and other Arab states, that leaves only North Korea and Pakistan, two countries that appear to have mastered nuclear enrichment,

as possible sources.

It is doubtful that any of the American allies being hosted by Mr. Obama this week would turn to North Korea, although it supplied Syria with the components of a nuclear reactor that Israel destroyed in 2007.

Pakistan is another story. The Saudis have a natural if unacknowledged claim on the technology: They financed much of the work done by A. Q. Khan, a Pakistani nuclear scientist who ended up peddling his nuclear wares abroad. It is widely presumed that Pakistan would provide Saudi Arabia with the technology, if not a weapon itself.

The Arab leader interviewed on Monday said that countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council, all to be represented at the Camp David meeting, had discussed a collective program of their own—couched, as Iran’s is, as a peaceful effort to develop nuclear energy. ...

“He did go behind the backs of the traditional allies of the U.S. to strike the deal,” [Prince Turki] said of Mr. Obama during a presentation to the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, a South Korean research organization.

Although “the small print of the deal is still unknown,” he added, it “opens the door to nuclear proliferation, not closes it, as was the initial intention.”

Prince Turki argued that the United States was making a “pivot to Iran” that was ill advised, and that the United States failed to learn from North Korea’s violations of its nuclear deals. “We were America’s best friend in the Arab world for 50 years,” he said, using the past tense.

---

## Five Iranian Boats Fire Shots in the Persian Gulf

CNN | May 14

**F**IVE IRANIAN BOATS FIRED SHOTS ACROSS THE BOW OF A SINGAPORE flagged cargo vessel in the Persian Gulf on Thursday in an attempt to potentially stop the ship, a U.S. official told CNN. For the first time, the incident brought another Persian Gulf nation into the recent rising maritime tensions in the region.

It is not yet clear if any of the rounds hit the Alpine Eternity. There were no U.S. citizens or cargo on board. The Pentagon is still gathering information about the incident.

The incident began when five small fast boats, believed to be manned by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy, approached the cargo vessel just off the coast of the United Arab Emirates but in international water, the official said. ...

The incident began with the Iranians ordering the ship into Iranian waters. When the ship’s master refused, the Iranians

began to fire in a way to try to disable the ship, not just as warning shots, the U.S. official said.

Several shots hit the cargo ship, but did not disable it. The ship went into U.A.E. waters and the Iranians followed it into those territorial waters, continuing to fire, before breaking off. ...

The Pentagon recently stopped escorting commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz and it’s not clear if those operations will resume. ...

**Editorial Note: Last week Iran boarded and commandeered a Marshall Island’s flagged vessel in international waters. The Marshall Islands are a U.S. protectorate, so technically Iran may have conducted an act of war against America.**

## Exclusive: Czechs Stopped Potential Nuclear Tech Purchase by Iran-Sources

Reuters | May 14

**T**HE CZECH REPUBLIC BLOCKED AN ATTEMPTED PURCHASE BY Iran this year of a large shipment of sensitive technology usable for nuclear enrichment after false documentation raised suspicions, UN experts and Western sources said.

The incident could add to Western concerns about whether Tehran can be trusted to adhere to a nuclear deal being negotiated with world powers under which it would curb sensitive nuclear work in exchange for sanctions relief.

The negotiators are trying to reach a deal by the end of June after hammering out a preliminary agreement on April 2, with Iran committing to reduce the number of centrifuges it operates and agreeing to other long-term nuclear limitations. ...

The panel said that in January Iran attempted to buy compressors—which have nuclear and non-nuclear applications—made by the U.S.-owned company Howden CKD Compressors. ...

The UN panel, which monitors compliance with the UN sanctions regime, said there had been a “false end user” stated for the order.

“The procurer and transport company involved in the deal had provided false documentation in order to hide the origins, movement and destination of the consignment with the intention of bypassing export controls and sanctions,” it added. ...

The United States and its Western allies say Iran continues to try to skirt international sanctions on its atomic and missile programs even while negotiating the nuclear deal.

The UN panel of experts also noted in its report that Britain

informed it of an active Iranian nuclear procurement network linked to blacklisted firms.

While compressors have non-nuclear applications in the oil and gas industry, they also have nuclear uses, including in centrifuge cascades. Centrifuges purify uranium gas fed into them for use as fuel in nuclear reactors or weapons, if purified to levels of around 90 percent of the fissile isotope uranium-235.

“Such compressors can be used to extract enriched uranium directly from the cascades,” Olli Heinonen, former deputy director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency and a nuclear expert currently at Harvard University, told Reuters.

“In particular, they are useful when working with higher enrichment such as 20 percent enriched uranium,” he said, adding that precise specifications of the compressors in question would be necessary to make a definitive assessment.

Iran has frozen production of 20 percent enriched uranium, a move that Western officials cite as one of the most important curbs on Iranian nuclear activities under an interim agreement in 2013. ...

## **Saudi Claims Oil Price Strategy Success**

**Financial Times | May 13**

**S**AUDI ARABIA SAYS ITS STRATEGY OF SQUEEZING HIGH-COST rivals such as U.S. shale producers is succeeding, as the world’s largest crude exporter seeks to reassert itself as the dominant force in the global oil market.

The kingdom’s production rose to a record high of 10.3 million barrels a day in April and there is no sign that it plans to reverse its policy at next month’s meeting of OPEC, the producers’ cartel, in Vienna.

“There is no doubt about it, the price fall of the last several months has deterred investors away from expensive oil including U.S. shale, deep offshore and heavy oils,” a Saudi official told the *Financial Times* in Riyadh, giving a rare insight into the kingdom’s thinking on oil strategy. ...

The comments from Riyadh come with the Saudi oil sector facing deep uncertainty in the wake of sweeping changes to the governance of the oil ministry and the state energy company Saudi Aramco by King Salman, who ascended to the throne in January.

Some oil sector observers in Saudi Arabia say that King Salman’s accession increased pressure on veteran oil minister Ali al-Naimi and the advocates of his oil production strategy to reaffirm their position.

**“[T]he Middle East is fracturing into its two prophesied power blocs. The first group is composed of Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, that will ally with Germany. The second is the ‘king of the south,’ which the Trumpet has identified as Iran leading the radical Islamic camp. Low oil prices are devastating Iran’s economy. Will Iran attempt something radical to drive oil prices back up—perhaps launch a nuclear weapon? High oil prices strike directly at the economies of Europe. Daniel 11:40 says the king of the south will ‘push’ at the king of the north, who will respond like a whirlwind. How much will oil as a weapon play in this push?”**

*March 2015, Trumpet*

## **EUROPE**

## **Bankrupt Greece Raids Emergency IMF Funds to Avoid Unprecedented Default**

**Mehreen Khan, Telegraph | May 12**

**G**REECE AVOIDED AN UNPRECEDENTED DEFAULT TO THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund on Tuesday after raiding its emergency cash account at the Fund, in a major sign the country is edging ever closer to stiffing its senior creditor.

Athens tapped €650 million (US\$739.5 million) from its “special drawing rights” (SDR) account held by the Bank of Greece at the IMF, scraping together a further €100 million (\$113.8 million) in cash reserves to avoid going into arrears.

The news came after reports in Spanish paper *El Mundo*

said the IMF was ready to pull the plug on the debt-stricken country.

Fund officials reportedly told European finance ministers they had grave concerns about Athens willingness to slash spending, raise tax revenues, and implement a raft of structural reforms, ruling themselves out of a fresh rescue which could be worth €30 to €50 billion.

The move to effectively shift funds from different accounts at the IMF signals Greece has all but run out of cash to meet its

international and domestic obligations. According to estimates, Greece only has a paltry €90 million in spare cash reserves after paying out its monthly wage and pensions bill of €1.4 billion for May. ...

Figures from April showed the debt stalemate continued to spook ordinary Greeks, who pulled more than €7 billion out of the financial system last month, sending bank deposits to fresh 10-year lows ....

The Fund is reported to be pushing for a debt write-off for Athens, as its liabilities have topped 180 percent of GDP. Greece owes the IMF a total of €9.7 billion this year and will need to repay a further €2 billion over the course of June and July. ...

## **The Surprising Story Behind Israel's Complicated Love Affair With Germany**

**Haaretz | May 12**

**W**HEN 16 EUROPEAN UNION FOREIGN MINISTERS SIGNED A LETTER last month effectively endorsing a boycott of products from Israel's settlements, there was one notable absentee: Germany.

It was an act that underscored Germany's status as Israel's best friend in Europe and the very special relationship that has developed between the two countries since they first established diplomatic relations 50 years ago this month.

Of course, any postwar relationship between Germany and Israel was always going to be complicated. And while the country responsible for the greatest tragedy of the Jewish people is now one of Israel's staunchest allies and its top trading partner in Europe, there are still Israelis who boycott all things German.

As well as being a long-standing supplier of military aid to Israel, Germany is also credited in some foreign media reports with helping fund the country's alleged nuclear program. ...

Today, although Germany disagrees with Israeli policy on settlements and toward the Palestinians, and personal relations between Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are "terrible," as [former Israeli ambassador to Germany and the EU Avi] Primor puts it, both sides are committed to the relationship, and Berlin is fully committed to Israel's security.

In 2008, Merkel—the first German chancellor to address Israel's parliament—reiterated that Israel's security was "part of Germany's Reason of State. ... It means that for me, as a German chancellor, Israel's security is never negotiable."

The problem is that Israel relies too heavily on this special relationship, says Dr. Sharon Pardo from the Center for the Study of European Politics and Society at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He believes Israel allows its relationship with Germany to skew its view of the rest of the Continent.

"Israeli foreign policy doesn't attach much importance to Europe," says Pardo. "Israel believes it can always depend on Germany, but this is a mistake. In recent years, there's been a shift even in Germany, and while Germany may be an important player in the European Union, it does not run it."

Despite the pressures, can the relationship survive—and thrive—for another 50 years? According to a January poll by the Bertelsmann Foundation, 68 percent of Israelis have a good opinion about Germany, while 24 percent have a poor opinion. ... In contrast, the poll found that only 36 percent of Germans see Israel favorably, with 48 percent having a "poor opinion" of Israel.

Seen as the "lender of last resort" for even the most war-torn and financially stricken nations, the fact that IMF could withdraw its participation in a bailout indicates the depths of Greece's woes. Should the IMF pull the plug, this would shift the entire burden of a fresh Greek program onto Europe. ...

Athens has already fallen into arrears with its suppliers, while the country's hospitals, universities and pension funds are struggling to make their obligations ....

European finance ministers convened in Brussels on Tuesday to further discuss the Greek question, but failed to make any substantive progress towards sealing a bailout extension ....

This figure was 54 percent among 18-to-29-year-olds.

There is certainly less and less understanding in Western Europe for Israeli policies, notes Primor. ...

Israel and Germany reached a deal this week regarding the sale of four new missile boats from Germany after Berlin agreed to slash about \$382 million off the total cost, officials on both sides said. Israel's purchase of the vessels to protect its offshore gas rigs is being underwritten by a cool \$128 million from the German government.

The deal is the latest in the long-running German policy of providing Israel "what it needs to maintain its security," as former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated in 2002.

Arms exchange between the two countries goes back all the way to the 50s. ...

Though the full extent of these exchanges over the years is not known, German aid is believed to have been crucial in key Israeli battles, including the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War. After German unification in 1990, Berlin also provided arms and funds during the 1991 Gulf War, according to a 2007 U.S. Congress report. That report also claimed that, during the Cold War, Israel passed intelligence to Bonn on Soviet weapons captured in the Mideast. ...

In recent years, German aid has mostly come in the form of discounts—tantamount to grants—such as in this latest missile boat deal, and on submarines. And there has been other aid: Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon said this week that Germany gave Israel four Patriot missile batteries as part of a military aid program at some point during the last few years.

The high-profile, controversial deals for six dolphin submarines started in the 1990s. According to a 2012 *Der Spiegel* report, these subs were intended to give Israel a second-strike capability in case of nuclear attack. In fact, according to foreign media reports, Germany is thought to have provided funding for Israel's alleged nuclear weapons arsenal. ...

The Hebrew University's Prof. Moshe Zimmermann, an authority on Israeli-German relations, notes that Israelis are much less likely to boycott Germany than are Diaspora Jews. "Israelis believe in the discontinuity of German history, which isn't true of Jews in the United Kingdom and the United States," he states. ...

Professor Zimmermann ... uses the term "schizophrenia" to explain the Israeli fascination with Germany. "You can be cynical

and say that Israelis admire people who are so efficient,” he muses, “even in the way they carried out the Shoah.”

Zimmermann notes another irony: While the Holocaust has

come to loom larger in the Israeli psyche over the years, Israelis have at the same time grown increasingly more sympathetic toward Germany. ...

## WORLDWATCH

### EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROPOSES REFUGEE QUOTAS FOR EU:

The European Commission forged ahead Wednesday with a controversial plan to introduce refugee quotas within the European Union. According to the plan, the EU executive proposed taking in 20,000 refugees over two years and distributing them across Europe. It would see maximum refugee levels set for each country based on population, GDP and employment levels. Britain, Ireland and Denmark would receive an option to not accept any new immigrants. Assuming Britain does not take part in the proposal, Germany would take in the most migrants followed by France and Italy. The EU's executive Commission sees the quota plan as key to forcing the EU countries to show solidarity with frontline partners like Italy, Greece and Malta.

**BRITISH REFERENDUM ON EU:** BRITISH PRIME MINISTER DAVID Cameron may hold a referendum on European Union membership earlier than the end of 2017. According to his spokesman speaking on Tuesday, the referendum will take place as soon as a deal is reached with the EU that satisfies Conservative demands for major changes in Britain's relationship with the bloc.

The comments coincide with a meeting of EU finance ministers in Brussels.

Speaking to journalists on arrival at the meeting, British

Finance Minister George Osborne insisted that his recently reelected Conservative government would try to reform the European Union ahead of a planned referendum on British membership of the bloc. “I’m here with a very clear mandate to improve Britain’s relationship with the rest of the EU and to reform the EU so that it creates jobs and increases living standards for all its citizens. I don’t think anyone is now in any doubt, we will hold that referendum on British membership of the European Union, having conducted these negotiations,” Osborne said. A referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU by the end of 2017 was a key plank of the Conservatives’ winning manifesto in the British general election last week.

**EU SEEKS TO PATROL LIBYAN WATERS:** THE EUROPEAN UNION IS seeking a United Nations mandate to patrol Libyan waters in an effort to curb the surge of migrants to its southern coast. EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini is due to present the draft to the UN today. In its current form, the mission would allow EU naval forces to penetrate Libyan territorial waters and neutralize identified trafficking ships. The draft is also believed to call for the use of all means necessary to destroy the business model of the traffickers. Six EU nations have committed to taking an active role in the mission. All 28 member states support the proposal.

## ASIA

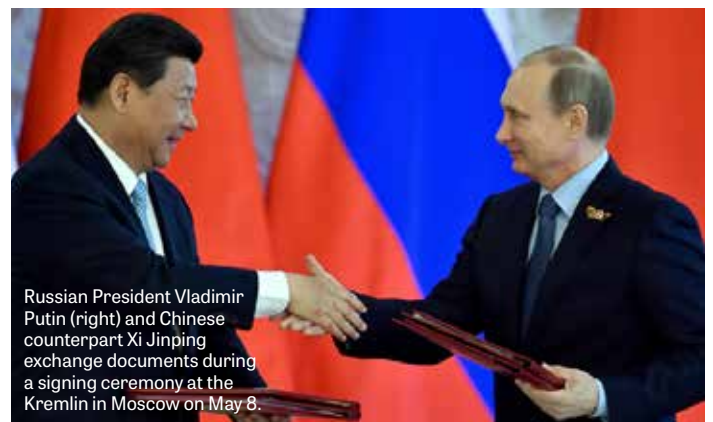
### T Russia and China Vow Not to Hack Each Other Jeremiah Jacques | May 11

RUSSIA AND CHINA SIGNED A CYBERSECURITY AGREEMENT ON May 8, saying they will not conduct cyberattacks against each other. The deal also said the two would work together to counteract technologies they perceive as destabilizing to their internal affairs.

The text of the agreement is posted on the Russian government's website. It says the two nations also agreed to share information between law enforcement agencies. In addition, they will freely exchange technologies and work together toward security of their information infrastructure. Oleg Demidov, a cybersecurity consultant at the PIR Center, said the deal was an “important step” for the two nations. He said it accelerates Russia’s “pivoting to the East.”

This cybersecurity deal is only the latest indication of a Russia-China axis that is congealing fast. This axis is reorienting 21st-century geopolitics—and tilting the advantage away from the West.

“The two longtime foes have drawn increasingly close together because of a confluence of geostrategic, political and economic interests—all of which have a common theme of diminishing,



subverting or displacing American power,” wrote Douglas E. Schoen and Melik Kaylan in their new book, *The Russia-China Axis*.

To understand why the blossoming relationship between Russia and China is important, read [“The Russia-China Axis Is Here.”](#)

Follow Jeremiah Jacques

---

## China, Russia Vow to Promote Military Ties

Xinhua | May 11

CHINA IS WILLING TO WORK WITH RUSSIA TO DEEPEN THEIR PRAGMATIC military cooperation so as to make new contributions to the in-depth development of bilateral relations, a visiting senior Chinese military official has said. ...

Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed during their talks to strengthen military exchanges between the two countries, [Fan Changlong, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, said Sunday when holding talks with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu] adding that China is willing to work with Russia to implement the significant consensus reached by the two heads of state.

Fan also congratulated the Russian side on the success of Victory Day celebrations and welcomed Russian military leaders and parade units to come to China for the celebration commemorating the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Anti-Japanese War in September.

For his part, Shoigu thanked China for sending servicemen

to participate in the Red Square parade, and spoke highly of the well-disciplined military manner and high morale of China's guards of honor.

Russian and Chinese leaders attach great importance to military exchanges, he said. ...

The defense minister noted that strengthening military cooperation between Russia and China is conducive to safeguarding world peace and stability under the new circumstances.

Russia will stay committed to deepening military exchanges and advancing military ties with China, Shoigu said.

**"The Trumpet and its predecessor have forecast it for more than five decades, but now the world is catching on to this undeniable trend—and realizing the massive implications. ... The Russia-China axis is no longer merely a forecast. It is here, and it is changing the world."**

Trumpet, January 2015

---

## Philippines, Japan to Hold Joint Naval Exercise in South China Sea

Agence France-Presse | May 10

THE PHILIPPINES' NAVY CHIEF SAID SUNDAY IT WOULD HOLD A joint exercise with Japan in the South China Sea, but emphasized the collaboration was unrelated to China's land reclamation efforts in the disputed waters.

Two warships from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) will take part in the exercise with a single Philippine ship after making a port call in the Philippines this month, said Vice Adm. Jesus Millan. ...

Millan said Japanese and Philippine sailors would have an opportunity to "compare notes" during the exercise, but stressed it had nothing to do with the Philippines' territorial dispute with China over conflicting claims to large parts of the sea.

The Philippines has been seeking closer ties with regional allies amid what it sees as Chinese aggression in pressing its territorial claims. ...

Millan said that practicing with the Japanese force would help with modernizing the poorly-equipped Philippine military, one

of the weakest in the region. ...

Earlier this month, Japanese and Philippine coast guards held anti-piracy drills in the Philippines, the first such joint exercise between the two countries following a brutal occupation by Japanese forces during World War II. ...

The Philippine military has also cited escalating Chinese efforts to drive off Philippine aircraft from a disputed island garrisoned by Manila, which have sparked dangerous confrontations.

Japan in turn has called for international law to be observed in the South China Sea dispute and has previously promised to help in the modernizing the Philippines' maritime assets.

**"Increasing concern at Chinese and Asian instability is at the root of this heightened effort to pull Japan into a stronger military role in the region."**

Trumpet, June 2001

---

## Nepal Hit by New Earthquakes

Wall Street Journal | May 12

FRESH EARTHQUAKES STRUCK NEPAL ON TUESDAY, KILLING MORE than 40 people as the Himalayan nation was still mourning its dead and just beginning to recover after a massive temblor last month left more than 8,000 dead.

A magnitude-7.3 quake hit at midday in a mountainous area east of Kathmandu, near Nepal's border with China, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. That was followed by a magnitude-6.3 about 30 minutes later around 15 miles to the south, and

a number of smaller aftershocks. The epicenter of the April 25 earthquake, which registered a 7.8 magnitude, was west of the Nepalese capital.

Forty-one people have been confirmed dead and 1,261 injured in Kathmandu and other areas, said Kamal Singh Bam, a spokesman for Nepal's national police. In the capital, homes, guest-houses and at least one school have collapsed.

In India, at least 17 people died and 39 were injured on Tuesday ....

Tremors on Tuesday were felt as far as New Delhi and Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital. No people were at Mount Everest's base camp .... Last month's earthquake triggered a deadly avalanche at Everest base camp and landslides that buried an entire village in Langtang.

The latest destruction came as search-and-rescue operations related to April's earthquake were winding down. ...

The additional damage from Tuesday's quake means that large aftershocks are likely to continue for days or even weeks. That may further weaken buildings and cause landslides and avalanches, according to Sandy Steacy, head of the school of physical sciences at the University of Adelaide in Australia.

**Editorial Note: Why is so much violent weather assailing the nations of the world? Those personally affected by the earthquakes in Nepal need answers. You need answers. These answers can be found in our free booklet *Why 'Natural' Disasters?***

## **How China and Russia Are Teaming Up to Erode American Dominance**

**Telegraph | May 12**

**C**HINA HAS DISPATCHED A CONVOY OF WARSHIPS FOR ITS FIRST ever naval exercises in the Mediterranean, together with a Russian flotilla.

The drills demonstrate a strengthening bond between Moscow and Beijing, who—despite having no formal military alliance—see their combined might as a counterbalance to U.S. power.

Both countries have been modernizing their armed forces, and while their equipment still lags behind top-end Western technology, experts say they are closing the gap.

Xi Jinping came to power in 2012 vowing to dedicate his presidency to building the “Chinese Dream” of the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”

Part of that dream involves a major overhaul of China's 2.3 million-man military which is three-times the size of Russia's but which critics say has become bloated, corrupt and unfit for battle. ...

The People's Liberation Army Navy, now the largest in Asia with more than 300 vessels according to the Pentagon, will receive a hefty chunk of those funds.

Beijing currently has at least 25 destroyers and is building China's second aircraft carrier at a shipyard in its northeast—part of ambitious plans to build a “blue water navy” that can give Beijing greater control of the high seas.

China is also seeking to increase its fleet of submarines,

currently comprised of 59 diesel submarines and nine nuclear power ones, according to a recent United States' Office of Naval Intelligence report. ...

While Russia's total active military manpower is a third of China's, it is rich in tanks and artillery. ...

This year the military will receive 50 new intercontinental ballistic missiles with nuclear payloads and 200 new aircraft. The new Armata tank and the Koalitsiya self-propelled artillery unit were shown off at Saturday's Victory Day parade in Moscow to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. ...

As China and Russia upgrade their weaponry, such drills are likely to become an increasingly frequent reminder of their shared intent to erode U.S. supremacy. ...

**“God tells us that China will be one of the leading nations in this great Eastern army. Groundwork for this army is being laid right now! On the scene is a China cleverly gaining influence and control of its East Asian neighbors and growing closer to its northern neighbor Russia. ... Continue to watch this region! The fact that the prophecies about America's demise and China's rise as an Asian hegemon are coming to pass not only proves the validity of God's Word, it also tell us that Jesus Christ is about to return.” *Trumpet, January 2004***

## **Pentagon Report: Chinese Ballistic Missiles Can Target Nearly the Entirety of the U.S.**

**Business Insider | May 11**

**C**HINA NOW HAS DOZENS OF NUCLEAR-CAPABLE MISSILES THAT could target almost the entirety of the U.S., according to the Department of Defense's 2015 report on the Chinese military.

The annual report to Congress focuses on China's military modernization, possible invasion plans for the self-governing and U.S.-allied island of Taiwan, advances in space technology, and Beijing's rapidly advancing missile capabilities.

China's conventional capabilities are improving. But Beijing also now has what could be considered the ultimate military asset for a rising superpower: the ability to deliver nuclear warheads nearly anywhere on Earth (outside of South America, at least). ...

The longest-ranging of the missiles, the CSS-4, can target almost the entirety of the U.S. (except for Florida).

The CSS-4 has the largest range of any Chinese ICBM. The missile is nuclear-capable, according to the DoD report, and is housed in silos across the Chinese countryside. Beijing is estimated to have between 50 and 60 silo-based ICBMs.

The DF-31A has the second-longest range of any Chinese missile. It is capable of hitting the majority of the U.S.'s Pacific coast in addition to portions of the Midwest. Unlike the CSS-4, the DF-31A is a road-mobile missile. This means Beijing can move the ICBM to various points throughout the country to better target various locations and avoid possible incoming strikes. ...

## Cuban President Tells Pope He May Return to Catholicism

Jeremiah Jacques | May 13

CUBAN PRESIDENT RAÚL CASTRO VISITED POPE FRANCIS AT THE Vatican on May 10 for a 55-minute private meeting. The Vatican correspondent for *America Magazine* said this was an “unusually long time” for a private meeting with the pope.

During the visit, Castro praised the pope for playing a crucial role in brokering the breakthrough thaw in United States-Cuba relations last year.

Castro also told Francis that he has been so inspired by his pontificate that “if the pope continues this way, I will go back to praying and go back to the church, and I’m not joking.”

The surprising nature of the statement was not lost on Castro, himself: “I am from the Cuban Communist Party, that doesn’t allow [religious] believers, but now we are allowing it,” said Castro. He called the new allowance of some religious practice “an important step” for his nation.

At the end of the visit, Francis presented Castro with a copy of his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*). As the pope handed the document to the Cuban president, he said: “There are here some declarations that you will like!”

What “declarations” might Communist Castro like in Francis’s

document?

When Francis first released *Evangelii Gaudium* back in 2013, it drew criticism for its calls to end the “tyranny” of capitalism and for its espousal of extreme leftist economic policies.

After reading the document, Andrew Napolitano, a former judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey, wrote: “The pope seems to prefer common ownership of the means of production, which is Marxist, or private ownership and government control, which is fascist, or government ownership and government control, which is socialist. All of those failed systems lead to ashes, not wealth.”

Some passages of *Evangelii Gaudium* read as though they could have been written by Castro himself.

Castro’s meeting with the pope, his contemplation of returning to Catholicism, and his plan to host Francis in Havana this fall show that Vatican influence in Cuba is rapidly growing. To understand the significance of this, read Gerald Flurry’s article “[The Deadly Dangerous U.S.-Cuba Deal](#).”

 Follow [Jeremiah Jacques](#)

## ANGLO-AMERICA



### Isaiah 1:7

Gerald Flurry, *The Key of David* | May 15

HOW RIOTS IN FERGUSON AND BALTIMORE ARE FULFILLING BIBLE prophecies



## T Moody's Cuts Chicago Bond Rating to Junk Status

Robert Morley | May 13

CHICAGO’S FINANCIAL HEALTH TOOK A SHARP TURN FOR THE worse today.

Bond ratings agency Moody’s cut the city’s credit rating to junk status following a ruling by the Illinois Supreme Court. In a decision yesterday, the court ruled a 2013 state-pension overhaul plan unconstitutional for cutting benefits promised to current workers and retirees.

The downgrade affects over \$8 billion worth of general obligation bonds, which were already the second-lowest rated among the 90 biggest American cities. Only Detroit debt is rated lower.

The heart of the problem facing the United States’ third-most populous city is a \$30 billion pension and public schools

underfunding crisis.

With the cut to junk status, investors can now demand \$2.2 billion in accelerated payments and penalties, putting further pressure on Chicago finances.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel called the decision to cut Chicago’s credit rating irresponsible. But analysts say that if unsustainable benefits cannot be cut, Chicago’s tax base may not be able to handle the increased taxes needed to cover the liabilities. This means debts won’t get paid regardless of Supreme Court rulings.

Chicago currently has the second-highest property taxes of any major city in the U.S. Meanwhile, Illinois corporate tax rate is the fourth highest in the developed world. And it has the 12th

highest combined state and average local sales taxes in America.

Moody's still has its outlook for Chicago set at negative, which indicates the agency expects Chicago's financial situation to deteriorate further.

Investors now worry about contagion. If it is unconstitutional for Illinois to modify pension benefits, other states may be viewed as a greater credit risk as well. This could push up the


borrowing costs for many states struggling to balance budgets—pushing them further into the red. For an economy dependent on debt financing to fuel growth, this is not good news. But neither is the alternative: pensioners forced to live on less—and consequently spend less—than promised. Expect [more economic trouble ahead](#).

 Follow [Robert Morley](#)



## Is There A Real Spirit World?

**Stephen Flurry,**  
**Trumpet Daily | May 6**

**T**HE FACT THAT HOLY ANGELS AND EVIL SPIRITS ARE INVISIBLE does not negate their existence.  Follow [Stephen Flurry](#)



## **Sexting and Online Bullying Are Fueling Teenage Depression: Admissions for Anxiety up by 50 Percent in Just Four Years** **Daily Mail | May 11**

**S**EXTING AND ONLINE BULLYING ARE FUELING A SURGE OF ANXIETY disorders in teenagers, experts warn.

The problem is particularly severe for girls who fall victim to cruel remarks about their appearance and weight.

Figures from the Priory Group, the country's largest organization for mental health hospitals and clinics, show admissions for anxiety in teenagers has risen by 50 percent in only four years. ...

Separate figures from the Office for National Statistics show that a fifth of teenagers and young adults suffered some degree of depression and anxiety last year, a higher proportion than in other generations.

Psychiatrists blame sexting, in which youngsters text explicit photos of themselves to friends who then comment. They say some see it as a "form of courtship" and the chance to be noticed by the opposite sex.

But the photos can provoke extremely unkind comments, particularly if unflattering images of someone are sent round behind their backs.

They are also worried about online bullying on websites such as Facebook, Twitter and Ask.fm—often by anonymous "trolls" they have never met.

In 2012 and 2013, the Ask.fm website was directly blamed

for the deaths of four teenagers in England and Ireland. These included Hannah Smith, who hanged herself, aged 14, after months of taunting by anonymous users over her weight, the death of an uncle and her self-harming.

Hannah, from Lutterworth, Leicestershire, received messages ... [l]ess than a fortnight before her body was found in 2013, she had begged her tormentors to stop.

Ask.fm encourages its 60 million users worldwide to ask a question which is then answered by everyone else, anonymously. Teens often post pictures of themselves and these can provoke spiteful comments. ...

Dr. Natasha Bijlani, consultant psychiatrist at the Priory Hospital Roehampton, Southwest London, said: "This relatively new phenomenon of sexting—where explicit texts and pictures are sent between smartphone devices—seems to have become endemic, and we are not sure of the long-term consequences.

"However, coupled with online bullying, we can expect an increasing number of people suffering issues of trust, shame, and self-loathing, sometimes manifesting itself in self-harming."

She said sexting was now seen as the "new courtship" but often had "nightmare consequences." ...

## **WORLDWATCH**

**O**FFICER MORALE LOW AFTER JUSTICE DEPARTMENT PERSECUTION: Anti-police sentiment is taking its toll on law enforcement officers, according to the Daily Caller. It is resulting in a police less focused on engaging bad guys. One source at Washington, d.c.'s annual Police Week conference told the Caller

that officers have stepped back from engaging in proactive policing. Fear of legal and political backlash—and the perception that the Justice Department engages in witch hunts—is crushing morale. For more on where this is leading, read [America Under Attack](#).