

Trumpet Weekly

DECEMBER 25, 2015



Saudi Defence Minister Mohammed bin Salman (middle).

Do Not Ignore Saudi Arabia's Islamic Military Alliance

Anthony Chibariwe | December 25

WHEN THE SAUDI DEPUTY CROWN PRINCE AND RELATIVELY inexperienced defense minister, Mohammed bin Salman, announced a military alliance on December 15 to fight the “disease” of terrorism that has “damaged the Islamic world,” the global response was underwhelming at best. At worst, the world treated this new coalition with scorn and ridicule.

One observer determined that the 34-member, Saudi-led alliance of Islamic nation states “makes little sense.” Another bluntly

called it a “joke [that] doesn’t need a punchline.”

“[T]here are many reasons to doubt how effective the [coalition] plan will be,” noted the *New York Times*. Many other commentators questioned the “seriousness” of the newly-formed Islamic federation.

As important as it is to not overestimate the current reality of this coalition, it is also critical to not undervalue its future potential.

Alliance? What Alliance?

Islamic State terrorists, ostensibly the chief targets of the alliance, threatened to fight back: “With permission from Allah, this alliance will be the beginning of the collapse of the governments of the oppressive tyrants in the lands of Islam.” The Islamic State called those nation states “morons and fools” in an article titled “Mohammed bin Salman’s Alliance of Surprised Allies.”

The alliance members include Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinians, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Maldives, Somalia, Sudan, Mauritania, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Gabon, Benin and Togo.

At least three of those nation states—Pakistan, Lebanon and Malaysia—were indeed surprised that they were included in the alliance.

But other nations of more significance welcomed the Saudi-led alliance. Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said the military union was the “best response to those who are trying to associate terror and Islam.” Representing the only NATO member in the alliance, Davutoğlu believes that “this effort by Muslim countries is a step in the right direction.”

How Islamic?

Saudi Arabia’s Islamic military alliance has also been ridiculed for its inclusion of countries that do *not* have majority Muslim populations: Countries like Gabon, Benin and Togo.

However, these nations are members of the Saudi-headquartered Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The populations of their Muslim minorities are significantly high.

This fact takes on greater significance if we consider the viewpoint of some analysts: The Middle East can only be solved by *Muslim* solutions.

That viewpoint is informed by the rationale that a Muslim-versus-Muslim clash—which a Saudi-led Islamic intervention would create—would not incite apocalyptic jihadists with the same extremism that a West-versus-Muslim clash would. The latter “solution,” the analysts believe, would violently inflame those apocalyptic extremists who, from their interpretations of the Quran, already anticipate an epic clash of civilizations—one pitting Muslims against essentially everyone else.

This viewpoint adds more significance (and even legitimacy) to Saudi Arabia’s Islamic military alliance.

Besides, whether apocalyptic or not, the Muslim world has typically responded to Western intervention in the Middle East with a furious determination to humiliate foreign “invaders.”

Just notice Iraq and Afghanistan!

Who Is the Real Target?

Another source of criticism for this Islamic alliance is the exclusion of nations such as Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Oman, Afghanistan and Indonesia. Not including *Shiite* Iran, Iraq and Algeria, in particular, proves that Saudi Arabia’s coalition is less of an *Islamic* coalition and more of a *Sunni* alliance. (The Saudis are mostly Sunni Muslims.)

Saudi Arabia, while indeed wary of the Sunni Islamic State, has sponsored Sunni terrorist groups, including the Islamic

State. For the Saudis, such support has been expedient for countering its own Shiite minority as well as challenging the region’s Shiite powerhouse: Iran.

The Saudis thus recognize Iran as the biggest existential threat in the Middle East, if not the whole world. As Shikha Dalmia wrote for *The Week*, “Saudi Arabia largely tolerates ISIS terror, because unlike the U.S., it has other bigger worries.” Bruce Riedel, a former CIA analyst, wrote, “For Riyadh, the battle against Iran is as important as the battle against al Qaeda and Islamic State—perhaps even more important.”

The West would do well to grasp this perspective.

Where the Alliance Is Leading

“Perhaps the most damning criticism of the alliance,” wrote the *Washington Post*, “is just how vague it is.” Prince Salman said the focus of this new alliance will not just be the Islamic State but “any terrorist organization that appears in front of us.” “[N]othing is off the table,” explained Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir.

However, how vague this coalition is makes it especially significant. This alliance will *not* dissipate after it has fulfilled its specific purpose, because it doesn’t have one! Instead, this Arab grouping will grow and morph into a different kind of alliance.

Consider the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab League, the Muslim World League, the Gulf Cooperation Council or the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. The Arab world has been trying to develop effective military alliances since the 1940s, and one alliance has often led to another.

The *Washington Post* added: “[W]hile this new alliance may appear to target terrorism, it’s not hard to see it as an extension of the Saudi-led coalition currently fighting in Yemen.”

Could this new alliance become something else in the future?

More and more, problems are compelling nations to forge alliances in order to confront foes which otherwise would have been insurmountable. It’s a trend we can expect to continue—a trend that will be shaped by the past, present and future of the Middle East.

This is where Bible prophecy powerfully informs our understanding of these alliances. As the *Trumpet* has discussed for more than 20 years, a prophetically significant coalition of Arab nations will emerge in the Middle East. A prophecy in Psalm 83 shows that that alliance will comprise 10 nation states—not 34! It explicitly *includes* Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinians and Germany, and it just as plainly *excludes* Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. (Request our free booklet of *The King of the South* to understand the specific details of this alliance.)

This prophecy indicates “a massive shift in alliances among the nations of the Middle East,” as *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote in his article “How the Syrian Crisis Will End.” Much of that prophesied realignment of Middle Eastern nations has already happened. Of those changes *soon to occur*, the most significant will transpire in Syria and Egypt—since Syria will be allied with the Saudis and Egypt will not.

As *The King of the South* shows, even the *purpose* of that alliance will change somewhat from what we see today.

Today’s Saudi-led Islamic military alliance is just one step closer to the Psalm 83 alliance.

TrumpetDaily

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EUROPE'S YEAR OF CRISES, AND THE IMPACT OF DAILY RADIO | DECEMBER 21

Iran Nuclear Deal Restricts U.S. More Than Congress Knew

Bloomberg View | December 22

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



MEMBERS OF CONGRESS KNEW THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL CAME with strings attached. They just didn't know how many.

When the administration presented the agreement to Congress, lawmakers were told that new sanctions on Iran would violate the deal. Now the administration is trying to sidestep a recently passed provision to tighten rules on visas for those who have visited Iran.

Since the accord was struck last summer, the U.S. emphasis on complying with its end of the deal has publicly eclipsed its efforts to pressure Iran. ...

In the latest example of the U.S. effort to reassure Iran, the State Department is scrambling to confirm to Iran that it won't enforce new rules that would increase screening of Europeans who have visited Iran and plan to come to America. There is concern the new visa waiver provisions ... would hinder business people seeking to open up new ventures in Iran once sanctions are lifted.

U.S. officials confirmed over the weekend that Secretary of State John Kerry sent his Iranian counterpart, Javad Zarif, a

letter promising to use executive powers to waive the new restrictions on those who have visited Iran but are citizens of countries in the Visa Waiver Program. ...

At issue is a provision that would require travelers who visit certain countries—including Iran, Sudan, Syria and Iraq—to apply at a U.S. Embassy for a visa before coming to the U.S., even if they are from a country for which such visas would normally be waived.

House staffers who spoke with us say Iran was included for good reason, because it remains on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism for its open support for Hezbollah and Hamas. The White House did not object until the Iranian government told the administration last week that the bill would violate the nuclear agreement, according to correspondence on these negotiations shared with us. ...

"If the United States Congress cannot implement a more secure visa procedure for those who travel to state sponsors of terrorism like Iran, then the Iran deal ties the hands of lawmakers to a greater extent than even deal critics feared," Mark Dubowitz, ... an expert in Iran sanctions, told us. ...

Iran Boosts Its Military Aggression

Commentary | December 22

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



ISRAELI MEDIA REPORTED SOMETHING SURPRISING: THE LEBANESE terrorist [killed in Syria this weekend, Samir Kuntar], ... was working directly for Iran, setting up anti-Israel terrorist cells in southern Syria.

In other words, Iran is no longer outsourcing anti-Israel

operations to local terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas; it's now running them directly, thereby increasing the risk of direct Israeli-Iranian clashes.

This isn't the only way Iran's behavior has changed for the worse since it began receiving Western sanctions relief in

exchange for negotiating on the nuclear deal concluded this summer. It has also started recruiting child soldiers to fight in Syria. ...

Altogether, *Haaretz* reported earlier this month, Iran has about 5,000 of its own soldiers in Syria plus another 25,000 under its command, including Hezbollah, Iraqi Shiite militias, and the Afghani and Pakistani refugees it exploits as mercenaries. ... Dr.

Turkey's Kurdish Cities Become War Zones **Wall Street Journal | December 23**

TURKEY'S STEPPED-UP MILITARY CAMPAIGN TO CRUSH KURDISH insurgents has reduced some urban neighborhoods in the southeast of the country to battle zones, raising fears the conflict could escalate and spread elsewhere in the country unless peace talks resume. ...

Turkish officials said Wednesday that about 170 Kurdish militants and at least 11 members of Turkey's security services have been killed since the government's announcement last week. ...

The government's counterinsurgency operation is its most intensive effort to quash young Kurdish militants since the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK, declared an end to a two-year-old cease-fire in July and restarted attacks against Turkey's security forces. ...

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Wednesday said the government was proceeding methodically to wipe out the PKK, which Ankara, the U.S. and the EU have designated [as] a terrorist group. ...

Afghanistan: The Taliban Is Recapturing Helmand Before Our Eyes **Independent | December 20**

IT IS A MEASURE OF HOW DESPERATE MATTERS HAVE BECOME FOR government forces in Afghanistan that when the deputy governor of Helmand wanted to tell his own president that the Taliban was rapidly overrunning his province, he went on Facebook to do so because—in his words—there was no other way to contact him. “I don’t know what else to do,” he wrote.

Whether the outside world will react to this heartfelt appeal looks doubtful. ...

For the relatives of the 453 British soldiers who lost their lives in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014, mostly in Helmand, it must be painful. Many must be wondering whether the sacrifice of their loved ones was made in vain. Some will also remember that when

Taliban Outlast 14 Years of U.S. Combat in Afghanistan **Washington Times | December 23**

THE SUDDEN KILLINGS OF SIX AMERICAN SERVICE MEMBERS ON A foot patrol by a suicide bomber this week is a graphic message back home that the Taliban are durable [and] able to launch a number of coordinated attacks in recent months across Afghanistan, 14 years after the U.S. invasion.

A Pentagon report calls the security situation “fragile” and writes of the Taliban’s “resilience throughout the second

Majid Rafizadeh ... told Al Arabiya ... that, of the more than 200 terrorist groups worldwide, fully a quarter “are funded, trained, or directly recruited by the Iranian government.” ...

In short, far from improving Iran’s bad behavior, the nuclear deal has exacerbated existing wars and heightened the likelihood of more wars to come. If that’s what a foreign policy success looks like, I’d truly hate to see a failure.

In a move that has stirred controversy here, leaders of Turkey’s legal and avowedly nonviolent Kurdish political parties are seeking support from Russia, which is embroiled in a feud with Ankara over the shoot down of a Russian jet last month along the Turkey-Syria border.

Selahattin Demirtas, head of the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party, or HDP, held talks Wednesday in Moscow with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. ...

“Neither Turkey nor Russia want a war that spreads beyond Syria. Both countries have similar sized economies, they are important trade partners, they have modern militaries—and they wield nuclear deterrents. Despite the angry and hostile rhetoric, geopolitical realities suggest a compromise will be reached. Some of the latest posturing is about increasing leverage for a future deal.”

“Will Turkey Fight Russia in Syria?,” theTrumpet.com, Dec. 22, 2015

the last British soldiers left in October 2014, the defense secretary, Michael Fallon, said they were leaving with “heads held high.”

“This orderly transition underlines the progress that we have made alongside our allies,” he declared. Afghanistan was “no longer a safe haven for terrorists.”

Those words seem [laughable] now, when the most reliable estimates indicate that the Taliban controls or heavily influences at least half of the country. As talk grows of putting “boots on the ground” in Syria, we should remember where this got us in Afghanistan—nowhere.

RELATED: “BURIED IN AFGHANISTAN”

half of the year.” ...

The Pentagon report, “Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” this month is warning that the “security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated” because of “an increase in effective insurgent attacks and higher [Afghan National Defense and Security Forces] and Taliban casualties.” ...

Islamic State's Authentic-Looking Fake Passports Pose Threat

Wall Street Journal | December 23

WESTERN SECURITY OFFICIALS ARE STRUGGLING TO RESPOND to the threat that Islamic State can make authentic-looking Syrian and Iraqi passports, which could be used to hide operatives planning attacks in Europe or the U.S. among refugees.

Islamic State has likely obtained equipment and blank

passport books needed to make Syrian passports when the group took control of the Syrian cities of Raqqa and Deir Ezzour, those officials said. It has also gained control of materials to make Iraqi passports when it occupied the Iraqi city of Mosul

U.S. Congresswoman: Jerusalem's Archaeological Discoveries Prove Historic Jewish Ties

Jerusalem Post | December 22

CHALLENGES TO THE INEXORABLE CONNECTION OF JEWS TO Jerusalem have been unequivocally disproved by archeological discoveries, the chairwoman of the U.S.'s House Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa said on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives last Friday.

The comments, made by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, represented a sharp rebuke to increasing international efforts to delegitimize Israel's connection to Jerusalem, despite numerous relics recently unearthed proving an ancient Jewish presence there.

"For quite some time, there has been an effort at the United Nations to delegitimize the Jewish State of Israel, and to try to whitewash the Jewish peoples' historical and Biblical connection to Israel," said Ros-Lehtinen.

"Denying the historic connection of the Jewish people to

Jerusalem is false. Amazing archeological discoveries are frequently made that prove the roots of the Jewish people are in Israel."

The impetus for her address reportedly stemmed from an announcement earlier this month of the discovery of an unprecedented impression of King Hezekiah's royal seal from the First Temple period, dating back to 727-698 B.C.E. ...

"Rarely do science and the Bible converge as dramatically and as tangibly as with the life and work of King Hezekiah of Judah. Dr. Eilat Mazar's most recent discovery is barely the size of your fingertip, but it contains a message of enormous significance."
"King Hezekiah Comes to Life," *Trumpet*, February 2016

EUROPE

TrumpetHour

IRAN: TOP MIDEAST THREAT, GERMANY: SELF-DEFENSE MEASURES, CHINA: SOCIAL CONTROL, AND MORE | DECEMBER 25

EUROPE BUILDS FENCES, SAUDI ARABIA'S NEW ALLIANCE, MANKIND TO MARS, THE RICH FOOL, AND MORE. | DECEMBER 16

T Paris Attacks Reveal the Outlines of a New Europe

Richard Palmer | December 18

"EUROPE WILL BE FORGED IN CRISES AND WILL BE THE SUM OF the solutions adopted for those crises." Those famous words from one of the European Union's founding fathers, Jean Monnet, explain much of what is happening in Europe. The economic crisis is forcing the political union that EU leaders could not get voters to agree to. And now, in the aftermath of the Paris attacks, new, major changes are afoot...

But the most immediate crisis revolves around Europe's borders—how to secure them, how to cope with immigrants crossing them, and how to stop terrorists moving all over Europe's open-border zone.

This puts the Schengen zone—Europe's free-travel area—at

the forefront of this crisis. Since 1985, those living in France, for example, could hop across the German border to do grocery shopping, visit friends, etc. without having to queue up and show their passport.

Since the Paris attacks, Schengen has unraveled. The combination of the attacks and the refugee crisis has led to the reintroduction of border controls in Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, France and Malta.

Many now are wondering if those border controls will ever go away. Border fences are even going up between Schengen members—something that goes far beyond a temporary suspension of border measures.

Now even top EU officials are talking about suspending Schengen for two years—which in practice means putting Schengen's problems in the “too hard” bin and hoping a solution comes up later.

But Schengen is a core part of the EU and greatly loved by pro-Europeans. They won't let it die easily. How can their dream of a European superstate be realized if a passport is needed to travel within that state?

Just like the euro crisis, instead of giving up on the whole project, they'll push for the opposite—fixing the problem through closer integration.

The solution capturing the headlines right now is a thinly disguised European army. Called the European Border and Coast Guard, the force would be armed and have its own ships, helicopters and drones. Most importantly, it could deploy anywhere in Europe *without* the target nation's approval.

Such a dramatic expansion of EU power is a hard sell. Which is probably why the plans put forward by the European Commission call for such a small force—around 2,000. But even such a small force would be a huge step. A Europe where a central government can send in armed forces—even if they're called “border guards”—to another sovereign state is not a Europe of nation states. It's a single superstate.

Another alternative to a total Schengen collapse is the “mini-Schengen” plan. First circulated by the Dutch, this would see Schengen shrink down to a handful of nations—Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg—a group that “bears a remarkable resemblance to the Holy Roman Empire in the late 18th century,” as Stratfor put it.

This idea has gained traction very quickly. The Dutch, who take over the EU's rotating presidency in January, floated it in November. Both the Netherlands and Germany have confirmed that they've held talks on the idea. Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem said, “If we do not do it in the external borders of the EU's 28 members, or in the Schengen zone, then maybe we will

have to do it on the level of a mini-Schengen zone.” In December, EU leaders began threatening to kick Greece out of Schengen—a move that would also begin the process of shrinking Schengen.

Though it may not look like it at first glance, a mini-Schengen would also be a big step for Europe.

“If the spirit leaves our hearts, we will lose more than the Schengen,” said European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. “A single currency does not exist if the Schengen fails.”

He may be exaggerating a little, but the consequences of such a shrink go far beyond the common border zone. Until now, Europe has always moved forward and expanded. But if you can kick people out of Schengen, why not the euro? This reverses the direction for the whole EU. For the first time it would establish the principle that a group of European nations can shrink in the face of a crisis. If a small group of nations is a better fit for the Schengen zone, then why not shrink the euro too?

A practical force would push in this direction. It would be odd to have a zone with one currency but many borders. A common currency works best when goods, people and capital can move freely. The more obstacles there are to free movement, the more imbalances build up and the more unstable the whole thing becomes.

Just like a proto-army, this idea is not going away. If the crisis continues, it will continue to be floated.

Both these solutions to the Schengen crisis match exactly what the *Trumpet* has been forecasting for Europe—a smaller, more closely integrated group of nations. In these proposed solutions, we can see the outlines of what this new Europe will look like.

Regardless of whether these measures are adopted this time around, they reveal Europe's instincts—the ideas they look to when a crisis hits. As these crises keep hitting, this smaller, more tightly knit group is the clear destination.

For more on why the *Trumpet* has been making this forecast, read “[Is a World Dictator About to Appear?](#)” from our free booklet *He Was Right*.

 Follow [Richard Palmer](#)

Germans Stock Up on Weapons for Self-Defense

Soeren Kern, Gatestone Institute, December 21

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



GERMANS, FACING AN INFLUX OF MORE THAN ONE MILLION ASylum seekers from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, are rushing to arm themselves.

All across Germany, a country with some of the most stringent gun-control laws in Europe, demand is skyrocketing for non-lethal self-defense weapons, including pepper sprays, gas pistols, flare guns, electroshock weapons and animal repellents. Germans are also applying for weapons permits in record numbers.

The scramble to acquire weapons comes amid a migrant-driven surge in violent crimes—including rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults—in cities and towns throughout the country.

German authorities, however, are going to great lengths to

argue that the German citizenry's sudden interest in self-defense has nothing whatsoever to do with mass migration into the country, despite ample evidence to the contrary.

In recent weeks, German newspapers have published dozens of stories with headlines such as: “Germany Is Afraid—And Grabs for the Weapon,” “Germans Are Arming Themselves: The Demand for Weapons Explodes,” “More and More People Are Buying a Weapon,” “Security: Hands Up!” “The Need for Security Increases,” “Boom in Weapons Stores,” and “Bavarians Are Arming Themselves—Afraid of Refugees?”

The German daily newspaper *Die Welt* recently produced a video report about Germany's surge in sales of self-defense

weapons, which was titled “The Weapons Business Is Profiting from the Refugee Crisis.”

Since Germany’s migration crisis exploded in August 2015, nationwide sales of pepper spray have jumped by 600 percent, according to the German newsmagazine *Focus*. ...

According to KH Security, a German manufacturer of self-defense products, demand is up by a factor of five, and sales in September 2015—the month when the implications of German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s open-door migration policy began to dawn on many Germans—were the highest since the company was founded 25 years ago. The company says there is an increased demand not only for self-defense weapons, but also for home alarm systems.

Another manufacturer of self-defense products, the Frankfurt-based company DEF-TEC Defense Technology, has reported a

600 percent increase in sales this fall. According to CEO Kai Prase: “Things took off beginning in September. Since then, our dealers have been totally overrun. We have never experienced anything like this in the 21 years of our corporate history. ...”

The same story is being repeated across Germany. ...

“Germany is gripped by deep social and political upheaval and is experiencing a transformational identity crisis. ... As Europe’s old demons return and the basic urges of self-preservation and nationalism once again take hold, Germans will increasingly look for a leader and political party willing and able to lead Germany (and even Europe) through this transformation.”

“Europe’s Old Demons Return,” *Trumpet*, November-December 2015

Self-righteous Germany Has Left Guilt Behind **Edward Lucas, The Times, December 23**

GERMANY HAS HAD A GROTESQUE PAST AND, UNTIL RECENTLY, A guilt-ridden present. Since the Federal Republic was founded in 1949, Germans of all generations have worked assiduously to purge the crimes of the Nazi era. ...

For allies and neighbors, putting pressure on Germany was easy: Murmuring “historical responsibility” was usually enough to open wallets and silence objections.

Not anymore. Europe is now facing a new Germany, self-confident to the point of self-righteousness. It dominates Europe and is happy to do so. It enforces rules because it believes them to be right—and in Europe’s best interest.

The biggest example of this is migration. Germans feel they have done the right thing by taking a million asylum-seekers this year, a bold humanitarian gesture made on principle. ... Having taken the lead, Germany is now firmly asking (some would say telling) the rest of Europe to help to share the short-term costs of housing, feeding and integrating migrants in their societies too.

Recalcitrant countries can expect to pay a penalty—for example in losing access to EU payments for infrastructure and regional development. Germany is also promoting what is in effect an EU army—a border guard for the Schengen zone which can be deployed over the heads of a failing national government

(read: Greece).

It is a similar story with the eurozone. Germany has bailed out the indigent south Europeans. ... But it expects laggards (read: Greece) to become competitive, by introducing the budgetary discipline and efficient public administration that they lack.

Germany runs European foreign policy too: It dragged reluctant eastern and southern European governments into supporting sanctions on Vladimir Putin’s Russia. In an even more startling diplomatic somersault, it is pushing for a rapprochement with Turkey—a country that it once shunned. ...

Yet modern Germany is something quite different. It is not burdened by Kaiser Wilhelm’s grievances about lack of colonies, far less is it licking the wounds of Versailles. It is not militaristic. ...

But the big point is that Germany wants to make the EU work. This is hard for Britons to grasp at a time when we are obsessing about leaving it. We see the EU as shackles, to stop us [from] doing the right thing. Germany sees it as an enforcer, to make sure other countries behave kindly, thriftily and responsibly. We simply cannot grasp the unstinting money and effort Germany is willing to devote to this. ...

As Germany’s new Europe takes shape, we are not part of it. ...

TW IN BRIEF

Dutch riot over plan to build housing for Muslim refugees: Dutch citizens in the town of Geldermalsen rioted on December 17 to protest plans to build a housing complex for Muslim refugees. The plan calls for building a facility to house 1,500 asylum seekers in the town of a population of only 27,000. More than 2,000 Dutch citizens are thought to have participated in the protests. Videos on social media showed rioters tearing down fences, throwing objects at police, and chanting anti-immigrant slogans. Police said they had made numerous arrests in connection with the unrest.

Pope wins Charlemagne prize: Pope Francis has been named the winner of the International Charlemagne Prize, awarded annually by the German city of Aachen for contributions to European unity. The prize committee said yesterday that the pontiff has sent “a message of hope and encouragement” at a time in which “many citizens in Europe are seeking orientation,” the news agency DPA reported. However, this year, the prize will not be awarded in Aachen; but rather, it will be handed over in Rome.

One million migrants, one record-breaking year: More than one million people entered Europe in this record-breaking year, migration experts said on Tuesday, reaching a symbolic milestone capping a mass movement of people that has challenged the concept of European unity. With just days left in 2015, the Geneva-based International Organization for Migration said 1,005,504 people have entered Europe as of Monday, more than

four times as many as last year. Almost all came by sea, with nearly 4,000 drowning in the crossing. Most people entered Europe via Greece, which took in 820,000 people, nearly all of them crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey. From Greece, hundreds of thousands of migrants have been making their way through Balkan nations such as Macedonia and Serbia, with the aim of reaching more prosperous, Western European countries.

ASIA

China Just Launched the Most Frightening Individual Ranking Program Ever—And Soon It Will Be Mandatory

Anti Media | December 21

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



OCEANIA, CHINA—AS IF FURTHER PROOF WERE NEEDED Orwell's dystopia is now upon us, China has now gamified obedience to the State. Though that is every bit as creepily terrifying as it sounds, citizens may still choose whether or not they wish to opt-in—that is, until the program becomes compulsory in 2020. “Going under the innocuous name of ‘Sesame Credit,’ China has created a score for how good a citizen you are,” explains Extra Credits’ video about the program. “The owners of China’s largest social networks have partnered with the government to create something akin to the U.S. credit score—but, instead of measuring how regularly you pay your bills, it measures how obediently you follow the party line.”

In the works for years, China’s “social credit system” aims to create a docile, compliant citizenry who are fiscally and morally responsible by employing a game-like format to create self-imposed, group social control. In other words, China gamified peer

pressure to control its citizenry; and, though the scheme hasn’t been fully implemented yet, it’s already working—insidiously well. ...

Rick Falkvinge pointed out a startling comparison:

“The KGB and the Stasi’s method of preventing dissent from taking hold was to plant so-called agents provocateurs in the general population, people who tried to make people agree with dissent, but who actually were arresting them as soon as they agreed with such dissent. As a result, nobody would dare agree that the government did anything bad, and this was very effective in preventing any large-scale resistance from taking hold. The Chinese way here is much more subtle but probably more effective still.” ...

As Creemers described to Dutch news outlet, *de Volkskrant*, “With the help of the latest internet technologies, the government wants to exercise individual surveillance. The Chinese aim [...] is clearly an attempt to create a new citizen.” ...

Zimbabwe Becomes Beijing’s First African Colony With Adoption of Chinese Yuan

ZeroHedge | December 24

[A]FTER ITS DISASTROUS ADVENTURES WITH HYPERINFLATION denominated in its own currency, Zimbabwe decided to entirely abandon its reserve currency and shift to the dollar. ...

[A]s ... reported early in 2015, China ... announc[ed] it planned to set up a modern high-tech military base in Zimbabwe’s diamond-rich Marange fields.

The news of the agreement to set up the first Chinese military airbase in Africa comes amid increasing bilateral cooperation between Zimbabwe and China—notably in mining, agriculture and preferential trade. China is the only country exempted from the indigenization laws which force all foreign investors to cede 51 percent of their shareholding to carefully selected indigenous Zimbabweans.

China could be positioning itself for future “gunboat

diplomacy” where its military presence would give it bargaining power against superpowers like the U.S. It would also be safeguarding its significant economic interests in Zimbabwe and the rest of Africa. ...

[L]eaked confidential Central Intelligence Organization documents suggested that China had played a central role in retaining President Robert Mugabe in the country’s most recent elections, indicating that high level military officers had worked closely with the local army in poll strategies while Beijing bankrolled the ruling party, Zanu (PF). ...

The Asian country has supplied Zimbabwe with military hardware, including MiG jet fighters, tanks, armored vehicles and rifles, since independence. In other words, while nobody was looking, China just took over one more nation without spilling a

drop of blood.

And then, on Monday, all of our confusion was laid to rest when Zimbabwe announced that this small, economically devastated country would officially make the Chinese yuan its legal tender as it seeks to increase trade with Beijing. In exchange for becoming not only a military but also financial colony of China, \$40 million of its debts to Beijing would be canceled.

China was delighted it cost it only a \$40 million debt write-off to acquire its first official African colony. ...

Adoption by a struggling economy has been a privilege previously reserved for the U.S. dollar, which is officially used by almost a dozen other countries. ...

And while Zimbabwe may be the first official Chinese colony in Africa, it will hardly be its last. ...

China's 'War by Algebra' Strategy to Bury America **National Interest | December 22**

OVER THE COURSE OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE, THE ARGUMENT that “America vastly outspends China” will likely be used to discount any possibility of an emerging China threat. ...

China's reported annual military expenditures are rapidly heading beyond \$200 billion, the United States still spends more than three times that. Moreover, China's military spending consumes only about 2 percent of its gross domestic product annually while the U.S. number is closer to 4 percent.

This “America outspends China” argument must, however, be tempered by several considerations. [W]hile America projects its force globally, China focuses regionally. ...

As a further consideration, one dollar of Chinese defense spending goes much farther than a like U.S. dollar for at least two reasons: Chinese military personnel earn wages and benefits far less than their American counterparts. It is also demonstrably cheaper for China's sweatshops to churn out weapons systems. ...

China's military does not have to spend anywhere near as much on research and development. One key reason: the vaunted ability of Chinese hackers to steal America's latest weapons. Another reason: the equally vaunted ability of China's scientists to reverse-engineer the foreign weapons systems China buys. ...

For all these reasons, it would be wrong to discount China's

military threat based on budget metrics alone. ...

[W]ill China be able to use its superior manufacturing might to overwhelm America on the battlefield? ...

“The U.S., as a military power, is in rapid decline. This sobering deterioration of America's military resolve was forecast decades ago by Herbert W. Armstrong. Just after the Bay of Pigs fiasco of 1961, Mr. Armstrong pinned the blame for America's loss not on the nation's military, or even on President Kennedy, but on the American people: ‘Unless or until the United States as a whole repents and returns to what has become a hollow slogan on its dollars: “In God we trust,” the United States of America has won its last war! ... [T]he God America has deserted gave it its most humiliating defeat! What does the Cuban debacle mean? It means, Mr. and Mrs. United States, that the handwriting is on your wall!’ (Plain Truth, October 1961). ... The Chinese seem to recognize the U.S.'s shattered will to use its power. And they may well be preparing to put those tatters on display for the whole world.”

“Will China Call America's Military Bluff?,”
theTrumpet.com, Jan. 29, 2013

Kremlin-Owned Russia Today ‘Helps’ Readers with Western Media Guide **Breitbart | December 17**

RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA SITE *RUSSIA TODAY* (RT) IS OFFERING ITS readers a brand new site to navigate the Western media, detailing the biases and shortcomings of American media outlets from the eyes of the Kremlin.

“The world of mainstream media can be difficult to navigate, with countless outlets and various agendas offered on a 24-hour basis,” wrote the editors. “With that in mind, RT has created a

roadmap of the major players across the globe.”

The propaganda site breaks down each popular outlet, naming the CEOs and key people. ...

“RT hopes this roadmap will inspire viewers to ‘Question More’ when it comes to MSM, by providing them with a valuable tool that will enable them to make up their own minds regarding the current media landscape,” concluded the editors. ...

Modi Seeks Russian Crown Jewel in Decade's Biggest Defense Deal **Bloomberg Business | December 22**

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI HEADS TO MOSCOW after approving what's set to be his nation's biggest weapons deal with Russia since 2001, reaffirming a military partnership that newer suppliers like the U.S. will find difficult to dislodge.

The S-400 air defense missile systems, which India plans to

buy, are among the “crown jewels” of Russia's defense capability, according to Jon Grevatt, Asia-Pacific defense-industry analyst for IHS Jane's. The two-day visit, starting December 23, will also include a private dinner with Russian President Vladimir Putin and an event at the Kremlin with Russian and Indian chief

executives. ...

India's defense acquisition panel last week approved the purchase of five S-400 systems ... likely to cost about \$4.5 billion

About \$7 billion worth of deals will be agreed during the visit, according to Konstantin Makienko, deputy director of the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, which advises

Russia's defense ministry. ...

"The Trumpet has long said that India—with its population of more than 1.2 billion people—is almost certain to join the Asian bloc that the Bible says will congeal in the end time."

"The Other Asian Powerhouse: India," theTrumpet.com, Oct. 22, 2015

Human Rights Group: North Korea Slave Force Earns Kim Jong Un Regime \$300M

UPI | December 23

NORTH KOREA DEPLOYS AT LEAST 50,000 PEOPLE OVERSEAS IN ITS force of involuntary laborers who earn up to \$300 million for the Kim Jong Un regime.

The numbers released Wednesday by the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, a South Korean think tank, include a list of companies that have exploited North Korea's slave labor force

126 companies in 14 sectors outside North Korea, including in Russia, Mongolia and Poland, employ North Korean slaves as a form of cheap labor.

Yonhap reported in the case of workers deployed in Poland and Mongolia, 90 percent of their earnings are remitted to the North Korean authorities. ...

China Accuses U.S. of Serious Provocation by Flying Bombers

Associated Press | December 19

CHINA'S DEFENSE MINISTRY SAID SATURDAY THAT THE U.S. COMMITTED "a serious military provocation" by recently flying two Air Force B-52 bombers over a Chinese-controlled man-made island in the South China Sea, a mission that the U.S. appeared to indicate had strayed off course.

The Defense Ministry accused the U.S. of deliberately raising tensions in the disputed region, where China has been aggressively asserting its claims to virtually all islands, reefs and their surrounding seas. It also reiterated that it would do whatever is necessary to protect China's sovereignty. ...

AFRICA/LATIN AMERICA

Somalia Bans Christmas and New Year Festivities

Agence France-Presse | December 23

Somalia's government has banned celebrations of Christmas and New Year in the Muslim majority country, saying the festivities might attract Islamist attacks.

"All events related to Christmas and New Year celebrations are contrary to Islamic culture, which could damage the faith of the Muslim community," the director general of the religious affairs ministry told reporters on Tuesday.

Sheikh Mohamed Khayrow said security forces had been ordered to break up any such celebrations. "There should be no activity at all," he said.

Sheikh Nur Barud Gurhan, of the Supreme Religious Council of Somalia, said that non-Muslim festivities might provoke the ire of [Al-Shabaab], East Africa's al Qaeda branch, which is

headquartered in Somalia.

"We are warning against the celebration of such events which are not relevant to the principles of our religion," Gurhan added, saying it could provoke [Al-Shabaab] "to carry out attacks." ...

Somalia is at least the second Muslim majority country to ban Christmas this year

"The trouble is, it seems religion is more often intent in wreaking vengeance rather than seeking peace. Hans J. Morgenthau wrote in *Politics Among Nations*, 'The wars of religion have shown that the attempt to impose one's own religion as the only true one upon the rest of the world is as futile as it is costly.'"

"Return of the Religious War," *Trumpet*, May 2004



Hidden Danger in Keeping Christmas?

Gerald Flurry,

The Key of David | December 25

Family time together and the life of Jesus Christ are both wonderful. But does God want us to celebrate these things by keeping Christmas?



U.S. Bows to Russia, Again

Stephen Flurry | December 23

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



“ASSAD’S DAYS ARE NUMBERED.” “ASSAD NEEDS TO GO.” “I’m confident Assad will go.” These are all crystal clear statements from United States President Barack Obama. Over the past five years, he and his administration have made these statements repeatedly.

“The United States and our partners are not seeking so-called regime change.”

That is an equally clear and completely contradictory statement from U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, made just last week. America just completely reversed its position over Syrian President Bashar Assad. Why? In order to appease Russia.

“The U.S. stands ready to work with Russia,” Kerry told reporters in Moscow on December 15, adding that the world is better off when “the United States and Russia pull together in the same direction.” In other words, the United States will let Russia have its way. The Associated Press reported the flip-flop as, “Assad can stay, for now: Kerry accepts Russian stance.”

In a press conference last month, President Obama stressed the urgency of defeating the Islamic State, adding that “we’re not going to be able to fully succeed in eliminating their safe havens until we have a political settlement of some sort in Syria.” Less than a month ago the president stuck to his commitment that Assad must go! Now his secretary of state has essentially said, *I guess Assad can go ahead and stay for a while.*

The Syria situation is proving to the world once again that the American president cannot stick to his word.

“Today, I want to make it absolutely clear to Assad and those under his command, the world is watching,” Obama famously said back in 2012. “The use of chemical weapons is and would be totally unacceptable, and if you make the tragic mistake of using this weapons, there will be consequences, and you will be held accountable.”

Assad has crossed that red line again and again. America has responded by hedging. Nothing happened. America was reduced to threatening an “unbelievably small, limited” military intervention (Kerry’s own words). More than two years later, Assad is

still in power, and Obama and Kerry are happy to let him remain there. He has faced no consequences. Those “red lines” became the most talked about symbol of American weakness—of many such symbols—in recent years.

It was this weakness that gave Russia an opening in the Middle East in the first place. After America started wavering and hedging over the red lines, Russia swooped in with a sham agreement on removing Assad’s chemical weapons, and America came out looking foolish.

And Assad is *still* using chemical weapons! Earlier this year the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) reported several incidents between March and May of 2015 which “likely involved the use of one or more toxic chemicals.”

“Witnesses reported hearing helicopters overhead at the time the chemical munitions exploded,” a U.S. State Department spokesman noted. “Only the Assad regime has helicopters.”

Rafael Foley, the U.S. representative to the OPCW, said, “The sad reality is that chemical weapons use is becoming routine in the Syrian civil war.”

“Nearly everyone I talked to in the administration considered the ‘red line’ aftermath to be a diplomatic fiasco,” David Remnick wrote in the *New Yorker*. “The administration, which started out saying that [Assad] must step aside, is now willing to see Assad play a transitional role in a political settlement. ... As one abashed U.S. official told me, ‘the meaning of “Assad has to go” has evolved.’”

Yet even as America hands leadership of Syria over to Russia, Mr. Obama maintains that the U.S. is still in charge.

When told that Russia was challenging America’s leadership on *60 Minutes* in October, President Obama scoffed. But over and over again, Russia keeps getting its way.

But this is a problem that goes far beyond America’s leadership. When Obama backed down over his own Syria red lines, most of the country was relieved. At the time only 28 percent of American’s supported a strike against Assad. At the time, *Trumpet* managing editor Joel Hilliker wrote:

“Nearly two in three now say that the U.S. should be extremely reluctant to [use military power worldwide](#), a September 9 CNN/ORC International survey found. Only 34 percent say America should be ready and willing to wage military campaigns.

The mood of the American public is clear. What American politician would go against that in order to commit the nation to any but the lightest intervention?”

Most Americans could probably care less about Assad—the

Islamic State is now seen as the more pressing threat. But a world in which America’s word is no longer reliable is a recipe for disaster.

When a red line is so easily erased and “Assad needs to go” evolves into “Assad can stay,” it means the United States has lost the pride in its power. And the rest of the world has taken note. Just look at Russia.

 Follow [Stephen Flurry](#)

9 Arrested After Black Lives Matter Activists Shut Down Southbound 405 Fwy Near LAX

KTLA | December 23

NINE PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED AFTER BLACK LIVES MATTER activists demonstrated on the 405 Freeway near LAX on Wednesday afternoon, temporarily shutting down all southbound lanes of the busy roadway, according to police and the *Los Angeles Times*.

The incident began shortly before 1:30 p.m. on the 405 between Manchester and Century boulevards, according to CHP Officer Peter Bishop.

The demonstration lasted about 25 minutes before the roadway was fully reopened, according to CHP Officer Ramberto Salcido. He confirmed the arrests but was unsure of the charges they faced.

It was not immediately clear how many people were involved in the incident, but Bishop initially estimated that five people were blocking the southbound lanes. ...

7,000 Syrian refugees to be relocated from Turkey to Canada

Albawaba News | December 23

CANADA WOULD RECEIVE ABOUT 7,000 SYRIAN REFUGEES from Turkey by the end of February, the head of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said.

In total, Canada will resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February, the largest group coming from Jordan, followed by

Lebanon and Turkey, William Lacy Swing, director general of the International Organization for Migration, told Anadolu Agency in Geneva.

Compared to Canada, the U.S. plans to admit 10,000 refugees from Syria during the 2016 fiscal year. ...

TW IN BRIEF

Winter tornadoes in the United States: A storm system killed at least six people as it swept across the United States yesterday. Tornadoes touched down in the states of Indiana and Mississippi and spring-like storms packed strong winds in Tennessee. One tornado damaged or destroyed at least 20 homes in the northwest part of Mississippi. In the city of Clarksdale, planes

at a small airport overturned and an unknown number of people were injured. Footage filmed by a local volunteer group showed a dark twister travelling through Clarksdale at high speed. Interstate 55 was closed in both directions as the tornado approached, the Mississippi Highway Patrol said.



Remembering Herbert W. Armstrong

Stephen Flurry,

Trumpet Daily | December 25

One of the best-known, most prominent religious leaders of the 20th century

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