

Trumpet Weekly

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Joschka Fischer



Former German Vice Chancellor Expects Global Chaos and War

Brad Macdonald | February 17

FORMER POLITICIANS, ESPECIALLY THOSE NOT LONG REMOVED from office, can be terrific sources of insight. This is why “Welcome to the Twenty-First Century” by Joschka Fischer, once the leader of Germany’s Green Party and a former foreign minister and vice chancellor, is so interesting.

Fischer opens his article with a list of some of the many crises facing the world in 2016, from China’s downturn to plunging oil prices to Europe’s migrants to Russia’s imperial ambitions.

“Wherever one looks,” he writes, “chaos seems to be ascendant.”

Sobering as it is, Fischer’s identification of world problems is not what is most interesting. Rather, it’s his views on the scale of devastation these crises will inflict, and how these crises will ultimately be fixed. “What is not clear is the context in which the response [to these crises] will come—if at all. In which political structures, by whose initiative, and under which rules will these questions be negotiated—or, if negotiation proves impossible,

(RALE JURGENSEN/GETTY IMAGES)

FOUGHT OVER?” (emphasis added throughout).

Fischer recognizes that man today lacks the political structures and institutions, and the collective will and leadership, required to solve his problems. So, with no easy remedies at our disposal, what does Fischer envision happening?

“Today, the *Pax Americana* that ensured a LARGE DEGREE OF GLOBAL STABILITY has begun to fray,” he writes.

As America’s global presence continues to shrink, Fischer believes the world will only grow more dangerous and unstable. He continues: “In fact, the main challenge of the coming years is likely to be managing America’s declining influence. There is no framework for the retirement of a hegemon. While the dominant power can be brought down through a struggle for domination, *voluntary retreat is not an option, because the resulting power vacuum would endanger the stability of the entire system.*” The decline of a dominant power can be as disruptive and transformative as the emergence of a new dominant power.

Fischer concludes by locking in on Europe: “For Europe, this

raises an equally difficult question. Will the decline of *Pax Americana*, which has served for seven decades as a guarantor of Europe’s internal liberal order, *unavoidably lead to crisis, IF NOT CONFLICT?*”

Again Fischer invokes the possibility of “conflict”—not on the geographic fringes of the Western world but in Europe, the heart of Western civilization!

“The bleak prospect of European suicide is no longer unthinkable,” he wrote. “A plunge into the abyss is the most dangerous outcome imaginable, IF NOT THE LIKELIEST.”

Again, consider the source of this analysis. Fischer probably has Chancellor Angela Merkel’s private telephone number. If Fischer is thinking this way, THEN WE CAN BE CERTAIN OTHER GERMAN LEADERS ARE TOO.

Fischer’s article shows that he and no doubt some of his associates expect large-scale chaos, instability and conflict in the imminent future. This begs the question: What are these leaders doing to prepare for this outcome?

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MIDDLE EAST

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Jihad and a Geopolitical G-X: Winning the War and Building the Peace

Daniel J. Arbess and Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, Center for Strategic and International Studies | February 12

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



THE CIVILIZED WORLD IS STILL BEING CAUGHT FLAT-FOOTED BY global jihad What’s needed next is an allied military strategy for reversing the jihadists’ recent shift toward territorial conquest, then, more challenging still, a coherent diplomatic process for stabilizing the Muslim world that offers its populations a path to better economic prospects and more participatory governance alternatives than they’ve enjoyed to date.

Let’s acknowledge that this will be a multi-decade undertaking across the globe. It calls for an unprecedented diplomatic effort to replace over a century of colonialism and self-interested exploitation We call on the G-20 and majority Eurasian Muslim nations to convene an international summit and working group, a “Geopolitical G-X,” with the goal of working toward consensus on the geographic, political and economic arrangements

for restoring stability to the Middle East and in due course the rest of the Muslim world.

[The Islamic State] is by no means a unique adversary; it’s only today’s manifestation of a multi-headed hydra: Decapitate [the Islamic State], like al Qaeda, degrade or even destroy it, and expect to see another known, or as-yet unknown, iteration step up to proclaim itself the leader of the supposed sharia caliphate increasingly impervious to physical and digital boundaries. ...

Powerful Iranian players are more than willing to channel clandestine aid to Daesh so long as it advances its goals of destabilizing Egypt and Israel and its own hegemonial ambitions. ...

A serious allied strategy will have to trace and counter jihad from every identified source, bypassing sectarian and national

boundaries, and without regard to national borders or even historical alliances. ... Does this mean cooperating with “bad” to defeat “worse”? Unfortunately, yes, at least initially. The West will have to work with moderate Muslim nations, counter the adversary’s use of social media with its own message, and find the “least bad” partners in this enterprise, including Russia, and define tactical arrangements for specific goals, including simultaneous joint airstrikes, no-fly zones, and house-to-house clearing. ...

Germany and China, despite their own current domestic economic and political challenges, might play a novel and constructive convening role, coordinating with other G-20 nations, including, of course, the United States and Russia. Germany and China are relatively free of recent adverse experience in the Muslim world and maintain well-established relations with both Sunni and Shiite leaders. ...

Finally, both China and modern Germany are free of the

history of self-serving exploitation in the Middle East for their own economic and geopolitical purposes. If ... Angela Merkel of Germany and President Xi Jinping of China ... would join or lead in convening a first summit, the invitation would be difficult for others to decline.

It might seem challenging for the United States and Russia to share exclusivity in convening with Germany and China. Then again it might also be demanding for China and Germany themselves to assume the mantle of a larger leadership role on the geopolitical stage: Germany will have to overcome its modern culture of leadership reticence outside of Europe; and China will have to rise to the opportunity to demonstrate diplomatic leadership playing for the indirect payoff of a stabilized global environment, instead of its own tactical economic gain. ...

RELATED: [“Has Germany’s Strongman Finally Arrived?”](#) and [“The Brilliance of Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg”](#)

Nasrallah: Ammonia Plant in Haifa Is My Atomic Bomb

Ynetnews | February 16

HEBZOLLAH LEADER HASSAN NASRALLAH THREATENED ON TUESDAY to fire missiles at the ammonia plant in Haifa, which he claimed would cause an explosion similar to that of a nuclear bomb. ...

“[I]t’s simple mathematics. A few missiles on a few ammonium plants equals the same amount of death as an atomic bomb. ... [Y]ou can destroy Lebanon and Dahiyeh. You have the strongest air force, you have missiles, and you have other means by which to do it. But we can do the same thing to you (Israel) with only a few missiles aimed at a few ammonium plants.”

“Haifa is just one of many examples,” he said. “The leaders of Israel understand that the resistance (Hezbollah) has the ability to cover the entirety of occupied Palestine with missiles. We must keep this capability because it acts as a deterrent for the Third Lebanon War. As I said to you on the anniversary in memory of the victims in Qunietra, we do not seek war nor do we want war. The strategy of the resistance is not to start wars of this type, but we must be prepared for war in order to deter against it, in order to be able to deal and conquer it.”

Nasrallah then quoted an Israeli expert saying that the residents of Haifa are afraid of a deadly attack on the ammonia plant, which contains more than 15,000 tons of gas. An explosion there could kill hundreds of thousands of people in the area. The same expert compared the hypothetical attack to a “nuclear bomb.” ...

The same Israeli expert, according to Nasrallah, criticized the Israeli government by putting the lives of 800,000 people in danger. ...

Nasrallah then charged that Israel’s psychological war regarding the Second Lebanon War was not great, saying, “We will not withdraw, we will not surrender, and we will not fail. We will continue with our preparations, increasing by orders of magnitude our manpower capabilities and our weapons capabilities.”

Nasrallah then went on to analyze Israeli claims that they won the Second Lebanon War, and described why Hezbollah will win the third one. ...

The Hezbollah leader also alleged that Israel was involved in the war in Syria. “Israel, as a participant in this war, has failed. Israel’s goal was to topple the Assad regime, and this goal has not come to fruition.” ...

Afterward, he spoke about a new trend in Israel and in other forums that argues against letting the Assad regime fall, and instead “divide Syria into four countries: an Allawite country, Sunni country, Druze country, and a Kurdish country.” ...

“Today the Arabs live in roughly one half of Jerusalem. They just don’t control it—yet. ... Looking at the ongoing violence in Jerusalem today ... we can easily see HOW one half of Jerusalem shall be taken captive in the very near future. THE PRESENT VIOLENCE IS AN EMBRYO THAT IS ABOUT TO GROW INTO MUCH GREATER VIOLENCE. That is the critical event prophesied in Zechariah 14:2.”

—Gerald Flurry, *Jerusalem in Prophecy*

Syrian Truce Is Dead, and Russia's in Charge

Marc Champion, Bloomberg View | February 15

SYRIA'S CEASEFIRE DEAL WAS BORN IN MUNICH, IN THE EARLY hours of Friday morning—and pronounced dead in the same town within a day, a development that exposed just how little influence the U.S. now has over the conflict.

UK Foreign Minister Philip Hammond probably had the smartest take on the deal, when he divided it into two parts during the annual Munich Security Conference, which began hours after the deal was signed. One part, to deliver humanitarian aid to besieged civilians, will probably happen to some extent and would surely be a worthwhile achievement. The other, a potential truce, is entirely dependent on what Russia wants, Hammond said.

That's a stunning admission in itself: Since when did Russia, rather than the U.S., play the deciding role in any part of the Middle East? Since now. ...

In the short term, at least, there should be no mystery about what Russia wants, according to Fyodor Lukyanov, who heads Russia's Council on Foreign and Defense Policy: Aleppo. ...

"Of course, Russia will not stop supporting Assad until Aleppo is taken, or liberated—however, you choose to describe it," Lukyanov told me ...

... "At a certain point, a full Turkish intervention is inevitable," said Lukyanov, referring to the extreme concern Turkey would have about tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of refugees heading for Turkey ... Indeed, if recent talk from Turkey and Saudi Arabia about sending in ground troops hasn't spooked both superpowers, it should have.

"That would mean a completely different conflict, with a much larger force fighting on the side of the opposition and the risk of a direct Russian-Turkish conflict," said Lukyanov. Turkey, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization member protected by its collective defense clause, has already shot down a Russian plane, so nothing can be ruled out. The potential for escalation to a Russia-NATO conflict would be real. ...

The Next Immigration Crisis

Spectator | February 13

IT'S ALMOST INCONCEIVABLE HOW MANY SYRIANS TURKEY HAS taken in as refugees—around 2.5 million ... so far. That's almost three times the number who have sought refuge in Europe. This is a serious cause for concern, not just in Turkey but in Brussels too, because if Turkey can't cope, their migrant problem will quickly become ours.

Syria is now the world's biggest refugee generator, and things are getting worse. So it's easy to see why Turkey's ability (or willingness) to accommodate the 2.5 million Syrians is of such intense interest in Brussels: If the Turks decide they have had enough, and enough of their refugees decide to move, we could see a fresh wave of immigration—maybe even larger than last year's. ...

So far the [European Union's] answer has been to bribe Turkey to make the refugees stay where they are. Some €3 billion (US\$3.3 billion) of EU funds has been pledged to Turkey, with more to come. ...

"We can open the doors to Greece and Bulgaria any time,"

[Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan was quoted as saying. "We can put the refugees on buses." This sounded very much like blackmail. ...

The trouble for Turkey (and therefore Europe) is that the root cause of the refugee crisis is the fighting in Syria—which continues to intensify. ...

Turkey has suggested that Vladimir Putin is deliberately trying to increase tension in Europe by creating more refugees. More likely, Putin sees this as just a handy side effect in a bigger plan. If he crushes all those opposed to Bashar Assad—other than Islamic State—he knows that the West will have no option but to accept that the Baathist regime is here to stay. The recent attempt at peace talks in Geneva was abruptly halted after this onslaught. So the chaos in Syria looks set to continue for years. ...

The pace [of immigration] will probably intensify as the weather warms up, just in time for the referendum on Britain's EU membership. The great migration may be just beginning.

Israel Looks Beyond America

Bret Stephens, Wall Street Journal | February 15

TALK TO ISRAELIS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES THESE DAYS AND you will provoke a physical reaction. Barack Obama is an eye roll. John Kerry is a grimace. The administration's conduct of regional policy is a slow, sad shake of the head. The current state of the presidential race makes for a full-blown shudder. ...

As for Israel's own troubles—a continuing Palestinian

campaign of stabbings; evidence that Hamas is rebuilding its network of terror tunnels under the Gaza border and wants to restart the 2014 war; more than 100,000 rockets and guided missiles in the hands of Hezbollah—that's just the Middle East being itself. It's the U.S. not being itself that is the real novelty, and is forcing Israel to adjust.

I've spent the better part of a week talking to senior officials, journalists, intellectuals and politicians from across Israel's political spectrum. None of it was on the record, but the consistent theme is that, while the Jewish state still needs the U.S., especially in the form of military aid, it also needs to diversify its strategic partnerships. This may yet turn out to be the historic achievement of Benjamin Netanyahu's long reign as prime minister. ...

[The] de facto Sunni-Jewish alliance amounts to what might be called the coalition of the disenchanted; states that have lost faith in America's promises. Israel is also reinventing its ties to the aspiring Start-up Nations, countries that want to develop their own innovation cultures. ...

Then there is Europe—at least the part of it that is starting to grasp that it can't purchase its security in the coin of Israeli insecurity. ...

"It appears we are witnessing the prophesied breaking of the historic brotherhood between America and the Jewish state. Zechariah 11:14 states that in the end time, God will 'break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.' Judah is the ancient patriarch of the Jewish people (and the Jewish state). Israel was the ancient patriarch of Judah and of 11 other tribes, one of which ultimately became the United States."

—"Breaking the Brotherhood," *Trumpet*, April 2015

EUROPE

Europe's Convinced U.S. Won't Solve Its Problems

Josh Rogin, Bloomberg View | February 13

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



EUROPE IS FACING A CONVERGENCE OF THE WORST CRISES SINCE World War II, and the overwhelming consensus among officials and experts here is that the U.S. no longer has the will or the ability to play an influential role in solving them.

At the Munich Security Conference, the prime topics are the refugee crisis, the Syrian conflict, Russian aggression and the potential dissolution of the European Union's very structure. Top European leaders repeatedly lamented that 2015 saw all of Europe's problems deepen, and unanimously predicted that in 2016 they would get even worse.

"The question of war and peace has returned to the Continent," German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier told the audience, indirectly referring to Russian military interventions. "We had thought that peace had returned to Europe for good."

What was missing from the conference speeches and even the many private discussions in the hallways, compared to previous years, was the discussion of what Europe wanted or even expected the U.S. to do.

Several European officials told me that there was little expectation that President Barack Obama, in his last year in office,

would make any significant policy changes to address what European governments see an existential set of crises that can't wait for a new administration in Washington.

"There's a shared assessment that the European security architecture is falling apart in many ways," said Camille Grand, director of the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris. "There is a growing sense that this U.S. administration is focused on establishing a legacy on what has already been achieved rather than trying to achieve anything more. Yet the problems can get much worse."

During the first day of the conference, the U.S. role in Europe was hardly mentioned in the public sessions. In the private sessions, many participants told me that European governments are not only resigned to a lack of American assertiveness, they also are now reluctantly accepting a Russia that is more present than ever in European affairs, and not for the better.

"There's not a lot of talk about how the United States can be part of the solution. We seem to be disappearing from their calculations," said Walter Russell Mead, a historian with the Hudson Institute. ...

There Are Good Reasons Why Europe's Jews Are So Worried

Harold James, Reuters | February 11

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC, GERMANY'S FLAWED EXPERIMENT IN democracy in the 1920s, has become today's paradigm for the failure of state and society. By the end of Weimar, the government seemed to have lost control—vigilantes from the political extremes claimed they were keeping the streets safe while beating up vulnerable minorities, above all Jews. So it is shocking when citizens in Germany and France—and elsewhere in

Europe—increasingly cite Weimar when discussing their society today.

The European Union now does sometimes resemble a replay of Weimar's combination of institutional perfection with violent and nationalist forces aimed at tearing down the "system." ...

The political leaders of France and Germany today deplore anti-Semitism and make striking gestures of solidarity with their

country's Jewish population, but the gestures seem helpless. The number of anti-Semitic incidents, as tracked by such bodies as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, is on the rise. Many Jews in many European countries, but above all in France, are contemplating leaving because they believe their homelands have become so unsafe. ...

At the beginning, Weimar's political institutions were skillfully designed to be as representative as possible. Most Germans viewed their society as remarkably tolerant. ... This misconception about German stability lasted a long time, indeed extending for a time after Adolf Hitler became chancellor on Jan. 30, 1933. Right up until April 1933, when the regime launched a "boycott" of Jews, many German Jews refused to accept that anti-Semitism could be politically serious.

Today, the most obviously violent threats clearly come from Islamic terrorism, from groups affiliated to or imitating Islamic State. That is the story of the attack on the Jewish supermarket in Paris It is also cited to explain the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels, or of some of the many synagogue attacks. ...

Yet the jihadist incidents are—in numerical terms—a minority. There is, however, an intellectual contagion, in which native far-right radicals often use anti-Israel and anti-American slogans that proliferate in the Middle East as part of their anti-Semitic arsenal. In France and Britain the "quenelle," a version of the Hitler salute, popularized by the French comedian Dieudonné M'Elia M'Elia has become popular with the racist right.

In addition, arguments about anti-Semitism have spilled over into the discussion of the refugee crisis confronting Europe. For some, the large-scale inflow ... is ... being blamed for a possible influx of terrorist ideas. Anti-Semitic texts such as *Mein Kampf* or the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are widely available in the countries from which migrants are moving; and anti-Semitism, usually linked to anti-Israelism, is a natural ingredient of the social and cultural milieu that is moving into Europe.

Critics of large-scale immigration use the supposed anti-Semitic culture of many migrants as an argument against migration. They then make a case about the superiority of their native

or indigenous culture—which can also, paradoxically, include hostility to aliens. So Jews feel vulnerable on two fronts: vulnerable because of who is attacking them, and vulnerable because of who is defending them.

The classic liberal answer to the new threat is that the state has an absolute and unconditional duty to protect all its citizens. ... But many people will also ask whether the state can really offer so much security. It is increasingly obvious that the police are overstretched. That was true even before the flood of refugees. ...

As more and more incidents demonstrate police ineffectiveness, new groups will mobilize for self-protection. The incidents on New Year's Eve in Cologne and in other German cities, in which criminal groups, composed largely of migrants from North Africa, stole from and sexually harassed women, have led to the formation of citizens' patrols. In many cases, the personnel of these patrols come from the far right and its sympathizers.

That brings the story back to Weimar. In the last years of the republic, German streets were controlled not by the police but by paramilitary groups, of the left (the communist Red Front Fighters' League) as well as the right (the Nazi Stormtroopers). ...

One lesson of Weimar is that it is very dangerous for the state to give up its legal monopoly of violence. One key feature that makes modern life civilized is precisely that we don't take the law into our own hands. But the existence of threats, real or imagined, creates a great deal of pressure for "self-defense."

There is a second, related lesson. Violent and ostensibly antagonistic ideologies may be quite capable of fusing. Sometimes in Weimar, the far right and far left just fought each other; on other occasions, they joined together in attacking the "system." Today in Europe, there are the same curious blends, sometimes of jihadism with traditional anti-Semitism, or anti-jihadism and anti-immigrant populism with traditional anti-Semitism.

The fusing of dangerous ideologies makes members of small groups vulnerable. They are additionally vulnerable when the state promises protection that it cannot actually deliver. That is why Europe's Jews are so worried.

Will Merkel Pay for Doing the Right Thing?

Roger Cohen, *New York Times* | February 14

BERLIN—A FORMER GERMAN CHANCELLOR, GERHARD Schröder, recently called Angela Merkel's decision to open the door to an unlimited number of refugees a "mistake" and offered this verdict: Merkel had a "heart, but no plan." ...

Three important state elections loom next month. It seems inevitable the far-right Alternative for Germany party will surge. Merkel will be blamed. ... She could be vulnerable if her Christian Democratic party turns on her. Europe without Merkel will sink. ...

Merkel's domestic dilemma demands international answers.

She needs the Syrian war, the main source of the refugee outflow, to end, but the latest American-Russian plan for a cessation of hostilities almost looks more likely to unravel in the weeks ahead than hold. She needs Turkey, in exchange for billions of euros, to tighten its borders and stop the refugee exodus. But

Turkey is playing an extortion game

In Russia, she needs President Vladimir Putin's cooperation, but his strategy is the undermining of a united Europe; a "weaponized" refugee flow achieves just that. ...

Merkel needs the United States to exercise its power in a way President Obama has refused to do through the inexorable spread of the Syrian crisis. Unless the United States is prepared to establish a safe area in northern Syria and put pressure on Turkey to turn a chaotic refugee flow into an orderly process, the current untenable situation will persist. ...

The European idea has not been this weak since the march to unity began in the 1950s. ...

Germany is Europe's core, its dominant power. If Merkel's refugee gambit implodes, the reverberations will be felt everywhere. ...

At the Berlin state office for health and social affairs, a sprawling maze of buildings, white tents have gone up. Long lines of refugees make their way through the various bureaucratic hurdles to identity cards. They huddle in the rain, their sneakers muddy, their jackets too flimsy for the cold. ...

I went out to Nauen, a small dismal town near Berlin where unemployment is high. Signs brandished at rightist demonstrations last year said, "Nauen will stay white." In August, a gymnasium that was to have housed refugees was burned down in an unsolved act of arson. ... A new emergency center for several hundred refugees is planned nearby, with a view of this stark symbol of hatred. To say Nauen is combustible would be an understatement. "There will [be] more protests," Volker

Müller, who works to promote intercultural understanding, told me. "In some ways this feels like a bigger problem than German reunification."

The scale of Germany's challenge is evident at Tempelhof Airport in Berlin, built to last by the Nazis, and used in 1948 and 1949 for the Berlin Airlift that, at its height, saw American C-47s landing every 90 seconds to bring the supplies essential for the preservation of freedom in part of the divided German capital. Now the vast 52-foot high hangars are being converted into shelters for thousands of refugees who sleep, 12 to each screened white rectangular bedroom unit, where aircraft were once housed. Already there are 2,600 or so refugees; there may eventually be 7,000. ...

ASIA

China Sends Missiles to Contested South China Sea Island—Taiwan, U.S. Officials

Reuters | February 17

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



CHINA HAS DEPLOYED AN ADVANCED SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE system to one of the disputed islands it controls in the South China Sea

Taiwan Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. David Lo told Reuters on Wednesday the missile batteries had been set up on Woody Island. The island is part of the Paracels chain, under Chinese control for more than 40 years but also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam.

A U.S. defense official also confirmed the "apparent deployment" of the missiles, first reported by Fox News.

China's foreign minister said reports by "certain Western media" should focus more on China's building of lighthouses to improve shipping safety in the region.

"As for the limited and necessary self-defense facilities that China has built on islands and reefs we have people stationed on, this is consistent with the right to self-protection that China is entitled to under international law so there should be no question about it," [Chinese Foreign Minister] Wang Yi told reporters in Beijing. ...

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion in global trade passes every year, and has been building runways and other infrastructure on artificial islands to bolster its title.

The United States has said it will continue conducting "freedom of navigation patrols" by ships and aircraft to assure unimpeded passage through the region, where Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.

Adm. Harry Harris, the commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, said the deployment of missiles to the Paracels would not

be a surprise but would be a concern, and be contrary to China's pledge not to militarize the region. ...

China's increasing military presence in the disputed sea could effectively lead to a Beijing-controlled air defense zone, analysts said.

"(The missile deployment) reinforces the view that China intends to exert growing control in these international waters, including potentially by declaring an Air Defense Identification Zone," said Rory Medcalf, Head of the National Security College at the Australian National University.

"Just when it was beginning to feel like Beijing's territorial claims over parts of Asia were growing a little less belligerent, the Chinese dropped a bombshell: 'China announces the establishment of the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone in accordance with the Law of the People's Republic of China on National Defense.' ... The Chinese know that the people of America are sick of being at war and of being hated by the world for "meddling." Beijing is watching Washington toss its allies under the bus Beijing can see that to most American leaders and people, the idea of being drawn into a conflict with China is simply unbearable, beyond serious consideration. Furthermore, China views the outcome of any potential confrontation a question of will more than of military might. On this front, the war-weary Americans are at an overwhelming disadvantage against the rising Chinese."

—"China's New Air Defense Zone Tests U.S. Resolve," theTrumpet.com, Dec. 2, 2013

China Says Its Students, Even Those Abroad, Need More 'Patriotic Education'

New York Times | February 10

CHINESE STUDENTS, ALREADY IMMERSSED IN CLASSES AND textbooks that promote nationalist loyalty to the Communist Party as a bedrock value, must be made even more patriotic and devoted to the party, even when they are studying in universities abroad, according to a new directive sent to education officials.

The directive, issued by the Communist Party organization of the Ministry of Education, calls for "patriotic education" to suffuse each stage and aspect of schooling, through textbooks, student assessments, museum visits and the Internet, which is the chief source of information for many young Chinese. ...

The document demands that university and college students be instructed more thoroughly to "always follow the party" and be "clearly taught about the dangers of negativity about the history of the party, nation, revolution and reform and opening up, as well as of vilifying heroic figures."

Already, students are coached that the Communist Party has been the sole engine of progress in modern Chinese history, rescuing the country from humiliating subjugation to foreigners and

restoring their nation to a position of respect and power on the global stage. Since students led the 1989 protests that occupied Tiananmen Square in Beijing, party leaders have made a priority of inoculating them against liberal values.

But the new document shows how President Xi Jinping is taking demands for party proselytizing even further than his predecessors did, including beyond China's borders. ...

"While students in South Korea, Japan and other nations grow more nationalistic toward their countries, American students become more resentful toward theirs. These converging trends—the resurgence of historically aggressive powers and the deterioration of America's pride—will soon lead to a time of trouble darker than any the world has ever endured. But the Bible says this darkness will break to the brightest dawn in all of history: the return of Jesus Christ to usher in an age of truth and peace!"

—"The Power in the Hand Holding the Pen," *theTrumpet.com*, Oct. 19, 2015

China's Young Reporters Give Up on Journalism: 'You Can't Write What You Want'

Guardian | February 12

DAVID BANDURSKI, AN EXPERT ON CHINESE JOURNALISM FROM the University of Hong Kong, said an exodus was now under way from the country's newspapers as talented young journalists decided there was no future in the profession. ...

Experts say two key factors are driving the hollowing out of Chinese newsrooms. One is the increasingly bleak financial situation facing newspapers as they struggle to adapt to the digital age. The other is the ever greater constraints being placed by President Xi Jinping's increasingly authoritarian Communist Party on what can and cannot be reported. ...

Since Xi became leader, Beijing has launched an all-out assault on freedom of expression, jailing journalists, bloggers and outspoken civil rights lawyers ...

China fell one place in last year's Reporters Without Borders press freedom ranking and now occupies 176th position out of 180 countries. ...

Before the Xi Jinping era, editors at least had the autonomy to choose their own headlines, the journalist complained. Now newspapers and websites were forced to conform to a tedious monotony of praise for China's Communist leaders. ...

First 'Silk Road' Train Arrives in Tehran From China

Agence France-Presse | February 15

THE FIRST TRAIN TO CONNECT CHINA AND IRAN ARRIVED IN TEHRAN on Monday loaded with Chinese goods, reviving the ancient Silk Road, the Iranian railway company said.

The train, carrying 32 containers of commercial products from eastern Zhejiang province, took 14 days to make the 9,500-kilometer (5,900-mile) journey through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. ...

According to Iranian media, more than a third of Iran's

foreign trade is with China, which is Tehran's top customer for oil exports.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani agreed last month to build economic ties worth up to \$600 billion within the next 10 years.

It came during a visit to Iran by Xi, the first by a Chinese president in 14 years, and just days after sanctions against Tehran were lifted under a historic nuclear deal with world powers. ...

UN Expert: Kim Jong Un Could Be Held Accountable for Crimes Against Humanity

Voice of America | February 15

A UNITED NATIONS EXPERT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH Korea is warning [that] the country's supreme leader, Kim Jong Un, could be held accountable for alleged crimes against humanity.

Marzuki Darusman, the UN special rapporteur on human rights in North Korea, issued the warning in a report made public Monday. ...

Darusman was the head of a special UN investigation into North Korea's human rights abuses, which are considered to be among the worst in the world. The so-called Commission of

Inquiry accused the North of committing atrocities not seen since the Nazi era.

The panel also called for North Korean leaders to be prosecuted at the International Criminal Court. But that would require action by the UN Security Council. China and Russia, which are veto-wielding members of the council, oppose such a move.

The secretive North Korean government is accused of running a massive network of political prisons, as well as carrying out murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence. ...

Turkmenistan President Rewrites Constitution to Let Him Rule for Life

Guardian | February 16

A COMMISSION LED BY TURKMENISTAN'S PRESIDENT KURBAN-guly Berdymukhamedov has drafted a new constitution that extends the presidential term to seven years from five and removes the upper age limit on candidates for presidency.

The move solidifies Berdymukhamedov's already sweeping powers

His predecessor, Saparmurat Niyazov, had ruled as president for life until his death in 2006, becoming the center of a bizarre personality cult. ... Berdymukhamedov has gradually dismantled Niyazov's cult, only to replace it with his own. ...

Other Central Asian leaders are also looking to strengthen their grip on power as economies across the region struggle with a drop in commodity prices and the spillover from Russia's recession.

Allies of Tajik President Imomali Rakhmon have called a referendum on constitutional changes that would allow him to run for an unlimited number of terms.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev called a snap parliamentary election last month that will make it easier for his Nur Otan party to retain control over the legislature.

Taiwan Earthquake: Search Ends as Death Toll Reaches 116

CNN | February 14

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS AFTER A 6.4 MAGNITUDE earthquake that struck southern Taiwan ended Saturday as the death toll rose to 116, Taiwan's Central News Agency reported.

The last trapped person was rescued alive on Saturday afternoon, the city's disaster response office said. A total of 289 people were rescued, 96 people remain in hospital. ...

LATIN AMERICA

IN BRIEF

Venezuela raises gas prices 6,000 percent: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced a currency devaluation and gasoline price hike on Wednesday. The decision is an attempt to shield Venezuela's oil-dependent economy from collapse and fend off mounting calls for his ouster. Gas prices will be increased by about 6,000 percent. Yet drivers will still be able to fill their tanks for pennies in this South American country where gasoline has

long been so heavily subsidized that it is virtually free. The price of regular gasoline will rise from .097 bolivars a liter to 6 bolivars per liter. In contrast, a beer costs around 300 bolivars while a basket of strawberries goes for 800 bolivars. Maduro said the increased gasoline revenue will finance the government's social programs.

Trumpet Hour

SCALIA'S LEGACY, THE VACANCY, THE POLITICAL EFFECTS AND MORE | FEBRUARY 17

GUTTENBERG'S WAR PLAN, THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING COUNTRY, CHINA'S MISSILES AND MORE | FEBRUARY 19

The West Is Repeating the Mistakes of the 1930s

Victor Davis Hansen, National Review | February 18

WORLD WAR II BROKE OUT WHEN NAZI GERMANY INVADED Poland on Sept. 1, 1939. A once preventable war had become inevitable—and would soon become global—due to three fatal decisions.

Most infamously, the Western European democracies had appeased Hitler during the late 1930s in hopes that he would quit gobbling up his neighbors. Unfortunately, the Nazis considered Western appeasement as weakness to be manipulated rather than magnanimity to be reciprocated. ...

Yet Western appeasement did not alone guarantee the outbreak of World War II. The Germans invaded Poland only after a guarantee from Josef Stalin that the Soviet Union would soon join in attacking the Poles from the east. The two dictatorships could then divvy up the country. Stalin's Communist Russia had foolishly gambled that by making a deal with Nazi Germany, Hitler would leave the Soviets alone. ...

Due to Stalin's collaboration, almost 30 million Russians would die on the Eastern Front over the next four years. But it was more than Western appeasement of Hitler and Soviet collaboration that made World War II inevitable.

Nazi Germany still remained relatively weak in 1939. The populations, economies and territories of its likely enemies were collectively far greater than those of the Third Reich and its allies.

A third, fatal decision was necessary to ensure a war.

The United States had entered World War I late in April 1917,

and it revived the sagging Allied effort, helping to crush the German Army and win the war But by 1919, America had rapidly disarmed and forgotten its key role in World War I. Americans had tired of the Europeans. They were sick of the endless horse-trading that had led to the post-war Versailles Treaty.

By the start of the Great Depression in 1929, America was mostly unarmed and determined never to get involved in European feuding again. ...

Had the U.S. kept its military strong after World War I, and had it entered into a formal alliance with its former World War I partners, Germany never would have risked a second war against the combined strength of a fully armed Britain, France and United States. Instead, Hitler assumed the U.S. either could not or would not offer much military help to his intended European targets.

Why, then, did a relatively weak Nazi Germany between 1939 and 1941 believe that it could take on much of the world, and inspire Axis partners such as Italy and Japan to follow its suicidal lead? The answer is obvious. British and French appeasement, Soviet collaboration, and American isolation had together convinced Hitler and his Axis allies that the victors of World War I were more eager to grant concessions at any cost than were the defeated.

The world of 2016 is eerily beginning to resemble the powder keg of 1939 Europe. ...

Negative Interest Rates Are a Calamitous Misadventure

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, Telegraph | February 17

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



THE WORLD'S CENTRAL BANKS SHOULD TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND step back from the calamitous misadventure of negative interest rates.

Whatever theoretical profit can be mined from this thin seam, it is entirely overwhelmed by the slow ruin of the banking system.

Huw Van Steenis, from Morgan Stanley, calls negative rates (NIRP) a "dangerous experiment" that undermines the mechanism

of quantitative easing rather than reinforcing it, and ultimately induces banks to shrink their loan books—the exact opposite of what is intended. ...

"Financial markets increasingly view these experimental moves as desperate," said Scott Mather, from the giant bond fund Pimco.

The policy blunder is creating a false fear that central banks

have run out [of] ammunition. It is distracting attention from the real failings of the global policy regime: lack of willingness to launch a New Deal and inject money directly into the veins of the real economy through fiscal stimulus when needed, and arguably to do so with turbo-charged effect through central bank transfers rather than debt issuance. ...

Narayana Kocherlakota, ex-head of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, reluctantly backs NIRP as deep as -3 percent but calls it a “gigantic fiscal policy failure” that central banks must resort to such absurdities.

Roughly \$7 trillion of debt is trading at negative rates. Western states can borrow for next to nothing until the 2030s, yet they refuse to repair their crumbling infrastructure and invest in their future dynamism from fear of fiscal deficits.

Mr. Kocherlakota wants it done by old-fashioned borrowing. If you are worried about high debt ratios it can equally be done by “helicopter money,” a plan proposed by Adair (Lord) Turner at a forum of the International Monetary Fund in November. ...

The German Council of Economic Experts said negative rates are devastating for German savings banks, Landesbanken and credit cooperatives, which rely on interest income for almost 80 percent of total earnings.

Morgan Stanley said that once negative rates fall below 0.2 percent, the damage to bank earnings goes “exponential” and ultimately endangers the whole system of free banking in Europe that we take for granted. ...

Worse yet, negative rates are a creeping threat to civil liberties since the only way to enforce such a regime over time is to abolish cash, for otherwise people will move their savings beyond reach. Mao Zedong briefly flirted with the idea during the Cultural Revolution in his bid to destroy every vestige of China’s ancient culture, but even he recoiled.

The eurozone already plans to eliminate the €500 note—allegedly to hurt organized crime—and from there it is a slide down the scales to notes in daily use and then to curbs on quasi-money.

It is a step to Franklin Roosevelt’s gold embargo and Emergency Banking Act of 1933, when Americans were ordered to hand over their bullion or face 10 years in prison.

One policymaker in Davos this year let slip that drastic action to scrap cash would be needed to fight a decade-long war against “secular stagnation” once rates test the limits of -1 percent or -2 percent. ...

Thankfully, those of us with our own currencies, central banks and fully sovereign governments always have the means to prevent the collapse of nominal GDP and to avert debt-deflation. We can run out of wit: we can never run out of monetary ammunition.

Editorial note: Central bankers are showing desperation. You can run out of money. It happens all the time, and the results are not pretty.

What Do You Mean Kingdom of God?

Stephen Flurry,

The Trumpet Daily | February 19, 2016



The world of traditional Christianity CAN’T AGREE ON what the ‘Kingdom of God’ is.

 Follow Stephen Flurry



Obama Is About to Become the First American President to Visit Cuba in 88 Years

Reuters | February 17

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA WILL VISIT CUBA IN THE COMING weeks, a senior administration official said on Wednesday, making a historic trip in the final year of his presidency that will mark a turning point in U.S. relations with a long-time Cold War foe. ...

The Cuba stop will be part of a broader trip to Latin America.

The visit to Havana by Obama would cap what administration officials see as one of his legacy foreign-policy achievements: normalizing relations with Cuba and taking steps toward expanded commercial relations after a 54-year freeze.

Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro shocked the world in December 2014 by announcing the former adversaries would move to normalize relations.

The Republican majority in Congress has defied Obama’s call

to rescind the five-decade-old embargo, so he has used his executive authority to relax trade and travel restrictions.

Republican presidential candidates Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, both sons of Cuban immigrants, have been sharply critical of his opening to Cuba in the absence of political change there.

A visit by Obama to Havana in late March would correspond with the finalization of a peace deal for Colombia that was encouraged and sponsored by Castro.

The Colombian government and the FARC rebel group are expected to finalize a peace deal by March 23 in Havana that would end a 50-year civil war in the South American nation. ...

Washington and Havana restored diplomatic ties in July but commerce remains limited by the U.S. trade embargo, which includes a ban on American tourism to the island.

On Tuesday, American and Cuban officials signed an arrangement to restore scheduled air services between the two countries after half a century. ...

The last and only sitting U.S. president to visit Cuba was Calvin Coolidge in 1928.

IN BRIEF

Obama filibustered Supreme Court nominee Alito: United States President Barack Obama “regrets” filibustering the nomination of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito in 2006, his top spokesman said Wednesday. Despite the admission, White House press secretary Josh Earnest also told reporters that Republican opposition to the president’s effort to replace Justice Antonin Scalia is unprecedented. Earnest said Republicans are going further than Obama because some have pledged to not consider any nominee the president puts forward. He argued that the president’s 2006 filibuster of Alito was just symbolic because Democrats didn’t have any real hope of blocking him.

Man changes in women’s locker room, says its legal under new law: A man undressed in a women’s locker room at a Seattle park last week, citing a new state rule that allows people to choose a bathroom based on gender identity. Seattle Parks and Recreation is beginning to face its first challenges since adopting the new rule. The man entered the women’s locker room and began to undress. Women alerted staff, which asked him to leave. The man said “the law has changed, and I have a right to be here.” The man returned a second time to the locker room while young girls were changing for swim lessons. The problem with trying to enforce the new rule is that employees have to rely on verbal identification or physical appearance. Meaning the man only has to say he is a woman to be allowed in the locker room. The incident highlights the dangers of this new rule and the abuses that are likely to follow.