

Trumpet Weekly

MARCH 11, 2016

Houthi militiamen gather to show their support for Hezbollah.



Saudi Arabia's Lebanese Gambit

Brent Nagtegaal | March 4

IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, SAUDI ARABIA HALTED THE TRANSACTION of a \$3 billion arms deal to the Lebanese Army, led the Gulf states to caution their citizens against traveling to Lebanon, and removed some of its diplomats from service in Beirut. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has allowed open speculation that it might be considering banishing the half million Lebanese currently working in the Gulf states back to Lebanon, which would hurt the Lebanese economy to the tune of \$7 billion a year.

Why is Saudi Arabia doing this, and why now?

Lebanon is home to the Iranian proxy Hezbollah. The terrorist group is the most influential and commanding force in the country, rivaling that of the Lebanese Army. And Iran has bankrolled the group since the late 1980s.

Yet Saudi Arabia's gifts to Lebanon have far outstripped Iran's to Hezbollah by tens of billions of dollars.

Looking at the discrepancy in return for investment, one must say that the Saudi riyal has historically bought far less than the

Iranian rial on the streets of Beirut.

This begs the question: If Hezbollah has overpowered Saudi influence inside Lebanon for the past decade, why abandon the state at this moment? Especially considering Saudi Arabia is currently fighting the Iranian-backed Houthi takeover of Yemen and pouring weapons into Syria to support rebels against the Assad regime. Does it make sense for Saudi Arabia to simply roll over and hand Lebanon to the Iranians without more of a fight?

There is more to this decision than just money. There are likely two reasons for Riyadh's recent moves.

First, Saudi Arabia is sending a message to its allies inside Lebanon that they ought to do more to subvert Hezbollah's grip on the nation. According to noted Lebanese commentator Tony Badran, "The overriding message in all of this is, we [the Saudis] are not going to pay for a state that is essentially run by Hezbollah and does what it wants." While it is unlikely Saudi Arabia desires an armed uprising against Hezbollah by its Lebanese supporters,

there are many political steps that could be taken in order to win back Saudi affections.

Second, Saudi Arabia senses that Hezbollah is in a weakened state with its Shiite base inside Lebanon. Until the start of the Syrian civil war, Hezbollah could claim that its existence was entirely necessary to counter the strategic threat posed by Israel at its southern border. Because of this, the Sunni leadership has historically given Hezbollah a bit of a pass. It reasoned that even though Hezbollah was funded by Iran, at least it was protecting the Lebanese people.

That myth was destroyed in 2012 when Hezbollah's leadership answered Iran's call to cross into Syrian territory to support Syrian dictator Bashar Assad. In supporting Iran outside its own territory, Hezbollah exposed itself as a stooge of the ayatollah rather than a

protector of Lebanon. Four years later, Hezbollah is still in Syria, fighting a war on foreign turf that only increases the likelihood that Sunni terrorist groups will cross the Lebanese border and bring bloodshed to Lebanon's streets. Furthermore, with many of their sons dying on foreign soil, some Shiite families in Lebanon are not as ardent Hezbollah supporters as they once were.

Combine these two factors, and it seems Saudi Arabia is not abandoning Lebanon, but rather trying a different, though dangerous, tactic to gain more strategic advantage in its power struggle with Iran.

To see where events in Lebanon are prophesied to lead, and to learn what will happen to Iran and Saudi Arabia, read *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry's article "[Why You Need to Watch Lebanon](#)."

MIDDLE EAST

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Iran Threatens to Walk Away From Nuke Deal After New Missile Test

Washington Free Beacon | March 8

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



IRAN ON TUESDAY AGAIN THREATENED TO WALK AWAY FROM THE nuclear agreement reached last year with global powers, hours after the country breached international agreements by test-firing ballistic missiles.

Iran's most recent ballistic missile test, which violates current UN Security Council resolutions, comes a day after the international community's nuclear watchdog organization disclosed that it is prohibited by the nuclear agreement from publicly reporting on potential violations by Iran.

Iranian leaders now say that they are poised to walk away from the deal if the United States and other global powers fail to advance the Islamic Republic's "national interests."

"If our interests are not met under the nuclear deal, there will be no reason for us to continue," Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, warned during remarks delivered to a group of Iranian officials in Tehran.

"If other parties decide, they could easily violate the deal," Araqchi was quoted as saying by Iran's state-controlled media. "However, they know this will come with costs."

Araqchi appeared to allude to the United States possibly leveling new economic sanctions as a result of the missile test. The Obama administration moved forward with new sanctions earlier this year as a result of the country's previous missile tests.

Iran's latest missile test drew outrage from longtime regime critics on Capitol Hill. ...

"Far from pushing Iran to a more moderate engagement with its neighbors, this nuclear deal is enabling Iran's aggression and terrorist activities," [House Majority Leader Kevin] McCarthy said in a statement. "Sanctions relief is fueling Iran's proxies from Yemen to Iraq to Syria to Lebanon. Meanwhile, Khamenei and the Iranian regime are acting with impunity because they know President Obama will not hold them accountable and risk the public destruction of his nuclear deal, the cornerstone of the president's foreign-policy legacy."

McCarthy went on to demand that the Obama administration step forward with new sanctions as punishment for the missile test.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department had difficulty Monday

explaining why the nuclear agreement limits public reporting by the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, on potential deal violations by Iran.

Yukiya Amano, the IAEA's chief, disclosed on Monday that

his agency is no longer permitted to release details about Iran's nuclear program and compliance with the deal. The limited public reporting is a byproduct of the nuclear agreement, according to Amano. ...

U.S. Reverses Position, Demands Greater Oversight on Iran Nuke Program

Washington Free Beacon | March 9

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION SHIFTED ITS STANCE ON IRAN'S contested nuclear program Wednesday, writing in a letter to the United Nations that it is concerned the international community's nuclear watchdog organization is not fully reporting on potential Iranian violations of the nuclear deal.

The administration also renewed concerns about Iran having violated its international commitments by stockpiling too much nuclear-related material. The renewed concerns come after Iran repeatedly test-fired ballistic missiles in violation of current UN resolutions.

Yukiya Amano, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, said earlier this week that the agency is prohibited by the nuclear agreement from publicly reporting on potential violations by Iran.

The revelation prompted criticism from outside nuclear experts, including a former IAEA deputy director general. The limited reporting could prevent the international community from detecting potential nuclear violations by Tehran, according to these observers.

However, the Obama administration initially dismissed these concerns, with officials telling the *Washington Free Beacon* and other news outlets that "there isn't less stringent monitoring or reporting on Iran's nuclear program." ...

By Wednesday morning, this rhetoric had shifted. The

administration now says that the reports on Iran should be more "robust and detailed," according to a letter submitted by U.S. Ambassador Henry S. Ensher to the IAEA's board of governors. ...

Ensher also disclosed U.S. concerns that Iran is currently violating the deal by stockpiling too much heavy water, which is used in a nuclear reactor. ...

Foreign-policy insiders say that the Obama administration's shift on the issue is emblematic of its dealings with Iran. ...

Asked on Wednesday afternoon about its evolving stance on the IAEA, State Department spokesman John Kirby explained that the administration had to do some "homework" before arriving at its current determination. ...

"In the 1930s and '40s, Hitler and the Nazis kept pushing and pushing, yet Britain and America just hoped the problem would go away. They thought Hitler could be appeased with words and treaties. But that did not stop him. Only superior will and power stops a madman. No words will stop this KING of terror because he believes he has a religious duty to bring upon the world a nuclear cataclysm so his messiah can return. ... [Daniel 11:40] reveals that a European power is soon going to be strong enough to deal with Iran in exactly the way America won't."

Gerald Flurry, "Negotiating Human Survival,"

Trumpet, September 2015

Iran Breaks With Arab States, Continues Backing Hezbollah

Washington Free Beacon | March 9

IRANIAN LEADERS PUBLICLY BROKE RANKS THIS WEEK WITH MAJOR Arab Gulf nations in a series of statements criticizing these regional powers for formally designating Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

The Gulf Cooperation Council, or GCC, a regional governing coalition comprised of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain, announced last week that it is formally designating the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

The GCC joins the United States, Israel, Canada and a host of other nations in labeling Hezbollah a terrorist organization. ...

The decision by the coalition of Arab states to go after Hezbollah has sparked outrage in the Iranian government, which is now claiming that "Zionists" secretly orchestrated the GCC's effort. ...

"No doubt the move was made upon an order by the Zionists and the sworn enemies of Islam and Great Prophet Mohammed," said Maj. Gen. Hassan Firouzabadi, the Iranian Armed Forces

chief of staff, according to Iran's state-controlled press.

Iranian leaders vowed to continue its support for Hezbollah, which is responsible for killing Israelis and Americans in terror attacks.

"Despite efforts by the House of Saud [Saudi Arabia] and its regional and trans-regional allies, Hezbollah's deep-seated position will remain intact," Firouzabadi said. "It will not shift the balance of power in the region. It will not help the Zionists extend their grip on the occupied Palestinian territories." ...

"Those who are behind the move are knowingly or unknowingly undermining the interests of the Muslim nations," [said a spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry].

Regional experts described the verbal conflict between Iran and the GCC as a sign that Hezbollah is becoming increasingly toxic on the international stage. ...

"Ironically, had Iran not signed the nuclear deal, it's unclear whether the recent terrorist designations would have taken

place,” [Jonathan Schanzer, a former terrorism finance analyst at the U.S. Treasury Department,] said. “But with Iran set to receive \$100 billion in sanctions relief, one major concern is that Hezbollah will receive a significant portion of those funds for the purpose of terrorist attacks and other activities that would further destabilize the Middle East.” ...

Iran Test-fires Missiles Marked With ‘Israel Must Be Wiped Out’ **Associated Press | March 9**

IRAN REPORTEDLY TEST-FIRED TWO BALLISTIC MISSILES WEDNESDAY with the phrase “Israel must be wiped out” written in Hebrew on them, a show of force by the Islamic Republic as U.S. Vice President Joe Biden visited Israel.

Such phrases have been emblazoned on missiles fired before by Iran, but this test comes as the country recently signed a nuclear deal with world powers, including America, and conducted another test the day before. Hard-liners in Iran’s military have fired rockets and missiles despite U.S. objections since the deal, as well as shown underground missile bases on state television. ...

The semiofficial Fars news agency offered pictures Wednesday it said were of the Qadr-H missiles being fired. It said they were fired in Iran’s eastern Alborz mountain range to hit a target

Editorial note: Meanwhile, deputy commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps reportedly said, “The Zionist regime will collapse in the near future. When Hezbollah has stockpiled over 100,000 missiles, it means Iran has tens of times more than that. Iran is in possession of different classes of missiles, and this power is unstoppable.”

some 870 miles away off Iran’s coast into the Sea of Oman. The U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet, which patrols that region, declined to comment on the test.

Fars quoted Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the head of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard’s aerospace division, saying the test was aimed at showing Israel that Iran could hit it.

“The 1,240-mile range of our missiles is to confront the Zionist regime,” Hajizadeh said. “Israel is surrounded by Islamic countries and it will not last long in a war. It will collapse even before being hit by these missiles.” ...

The firing of the Qadr-H missiles comes after a U.S. State Department spokesman on Tuesday criticized another missile launch that day, saying America planned to bring it before the United Nations Security Council. ...

Abbas Lauds ‘Martyr’ Who Tried to Kill IDF Soldiers **Times of Israel | March 10**

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS THIS week praised as a “martyr” a young Palestinian woman who attempted to kill an IDF soldier with her car.

“We see in her a martyr who watered the pure earth of Palestine with her blood,” he wrote in a letter to the parents of Amani Husni Sabatin, 34, from the Palestinian village of Husan, near Bethlehem, who was killed by IDF troops as she ran over a soldier in the Gush Etzion area on Friday.

The soldier was lightly injured in the attack, which took place at the Gush Etzion Junction south of Jerusalem. A knife was found in the car.

Abbas’s letter marks the second time the Palestinian leader sent condolences to the parents of assailants killed during their

attack since the start of the latest wave of violence in October, Channel 10 reported late Wednesday.

It is signed, “Your brother, Mahmoud Abbas, president of the State of Palestine.” ...

Abbas’s letter came as U.S. Vice President Joe Biden was visiting Israel and the West Bank for meetings with Israeli as well as Palestinian leaders.

On Wednesday, just one day after a Palestinian terrorist stabbed to death American graduate student Taylor Force and wounded nine others, including Force’s wife, in Jaffa, Biden criticized the Palestinian leadership’s “failure to condemn” terror attacks. ...

RELATED: “STABBINGS CONTINUE IN JERUSALEM”

Obama Says Libya Is a ‘Mess’ Due to Europe, Gulf Failure to Help **Bloomberg | March 10**

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA SAID FIVE YEARS AFTER THE U.S. intervened in Libya to topple then dictator Muammar Qadhafi and prevent a bloody civil war that the plan pushed by advisers including Hillary Clinton “didn’t work” and Libya is now “a mess.”

Obama, speaking in interviews with the *Atlantic* magazine published Thursday, blamed lack of support from European and Gulf allies and long-standing tribal divisions within Libya for the failure of the mission intended to stabilize the country and usher in a democratically elected government.

“When I go back and I ask myself what went wrong, there’s

room for criticism, because I had more faith in the Europeans—given Libya’s proximity—being invested in the follow-up,” Obama said. ...

“And despite all that, Libya is a mess,” he said.

The 2011 military intervention in Libya ultimately “didn’t work” and served as a cautionary tale for Obama later as he made decisions about how directly to involve the U.S. military in other Middle Eastern countries. ...

RELATED: “IS LIBYA ‘A THOUSAND TIMES WORSE’?”

Is Iran's Ahmadinejad Ready for a Comeback?

Al-Monitor | March 9

WHEN IRAN'S FORMER PRESIDENT MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD stepped aside in 2013—after eight years in office—it was clear that he had serious plans for his future. In fact, he had indicated this in a TV interview one year before leaving office, by pointing to his possible presence in Iran's next government. The disqualification of his vice president, Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, from the 2013 presidential race, however, prevented this dream from becoming reality. ...

[Groups close to Ahmadinejad] managed to get their own candidates elected into parliament through small towns. In fact, 11 of Ahmadinejad's former ministers, advisers, deputies and high-ranking managers have found their way into parliament's next term through these towns. ...

It is possible that Ahmadinejad is now preparing to enter the 2017 presidential race himself, which could pit him against

incumbent President Hassan Rouhani. ...

Except for Abolhassan Bani Sadr, the first president after the 1979 Islamic Revolution who was impeached by parliament less than two years into his term, all other presidents in the history of the Islamic Republic have served two terms in office. Based on this and the high voter turnout in the recent parliamentary elections—an indication of public satisfaction with Rouhani's performance—it will be somewhat risky for Ahmadinejad to enter the 2017 presidential race, in which he would likely have to run against Rouhani, who has the success of the nuclear negotiations behind him.

Thus, maybe it is best for Ahmadinejad that he wait another four years and instead run in the 2021 presidential vote. However, some analysts believe that Ahmadinejad's actions show that he does not intend to wait. ...

TW IN BRIEF

It's back to jihad for more ex-Gitmo detainees: The number of former Guantanamo Bay prisoners who have returned to jihadi battlefields has doubled in the past six months. The Obama administration announced on Monday that 12 of the prisoners it released have joined Islamic militant organizations. The announcement comes as President Barack Obama is pressing

Congress with his plan to shut down the detention facility before the end of his presidential term. Critics of the president will likely use these numbers to argue against releasing more prisoners and against closing the detention facility. Under President Obama's plan, some of the inmates would be transferred to federal and military prisons in the United States.

EUROPE

TrumpetHour

CANADA'S INCOME PLAN, EUROPE WORKS WITH TURKEY, IRAN'S THREAT TO ANNUL THE DEAL, AND MORE | MARCH 11

AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS, RUSSIAN AUTHORITARIANISM, FIX YOUR BACK TWEAK, AND MORE | MARCH 9

This Turkish Deal Is Illegal and Betrays Europe's Values

Guy Verhofstadt, Guardian Unlimited | March 10

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



OUR INCREASINGLY DIVIDED AND DESPERATE EUROPEAN LEADERS are failing to deliver an effective collective response to the escalating refugee crisis. ...

At the EU-Turkey summit on Monday, the Turkish prime minister, Ahmed Davutoğlu, offered European leaders the illusory “quick fix” they sought, in return for a number of concessions. The basic principle of the “one in, one out” deal on offer is that any economic migrant or Syrian refugee trafficked to a Greek island

will be forcibly returned to Turkey. For every Syrian sent back to Turkey from Greece, another Syrian would be accepted by EU countries and distributed under a quota scheme. It seems that both the EU and Ankara are willing to take the bait and a deal may be concluded next week, but Europe's leaders should be careful what they wish for.

There are a number of reasons why this approach is not just immoral but fundamentally flawed. First, compulsory mass

expulsions are, quite rightly, outlawed by the 1951 UN convention on refugees. This treaty has been signed and promoted by the EU. Article 19 of the EU's own charter of fundamental rights specifically states that "collective expulsions are forbidden."... We know Turkey has an appalling human rights record and a non-functioning asylum system. There is even evidence that Turkey has been forcibly expelling Syrian refugees back into Syria. Does Europe really want to be responsible for an expansion of this? ...

Other parts of the draft agreement with Turkey offer a number of concessions, including more money, accelerated accession talks, and a visa waiver from June. These are also hugely problematic, given the deteriorating human rights situation in Turkey and its government's brutal clampdown on the free press.

Just last week, we saw the appalling occupation of Turkey's largest independent newspaper, *Zaman*. The EU's priority should be to bring Turkey back from the verge of becoming an authoritarian regime and using the EU accession process, to which it is

party, to cement human rights values and good governance.

Instead, by offering visa-free travel across Europe's crumbling Schengen zone, we will be complicit in handing Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a domestic political victory. Any agreement must include enforceable commitments from it to reverse its crackdown on media freedom and civil liberties. ...

"Perhaps the greatest effect of the refugee crisis, together with Russia's dramatic resurgence and Europe's rolling financial problems, is the way it is causing Europe to shed this post-war veneer and return to its past. Being tolerant feels good, until hundreds of thousands of foreigners enter your nation and expect you to foot the bill. Being multicultural is wonderful, until Muslims waving Islamic State flags and eyeing your teenage daughter settle in your village. ... Europe right now is a place where dreams are beginning to meet reality."

"Europe's Old Demons Return," Trumpet, November-December 2015

Voters Set to Punish Merkel at Key 'Super Sunday' Election

The Local | March 9

CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL'S PARTY RISKS A DRUBBING AT KEY state elections Sunday as voters punish the German leader for her liberal refugee policy, while the right-wing populist AfD eyes major gains as it scoops up the protest vote.

More than 12 million voters are due to elect three new regional parliaments for the southwestern states of Baden-Wuerttemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, as well as eastern Saxony-Anhalt in the so-called Super Sunday polls.

The elections are the biggest since a record influx of refugees to Germany, and disgruntled voters are expected to seize on the opportunity to hit the ruling coalition where it hurts.

"These elections are very important ... as they will serve as a litmus test for the government's disputed policy" on refugees, Düsseldorf University political scientist Jens Walther told [Agence France-Presse].

Surveys in the run-up to the polls have shown Alternative

for Germany (AfD) steadily gaining momentum, with the latest published Monday by *Bild* daily showing backing reaching double-digit levels in all three states.

Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) was meanwhile bracing for a poor showing, particularly in its traditional stronghold of Baden-Württemberg, with the *Bild* poll showing support sliding by 10.5 percentage points to 28.5 percent—putting it for the first time behind the Greens, while the AfD snatched 12.5 percent.

"These are numbers that really hit us," said Guido Wolf, the CDU's leading candidate in the southwest, adding that Sunday's was the "most difficult election campaign" the party has had to run. ...

In Saxony-Anhalt, where the CDU still has a large lead in the *Bild* poll with 29 percent, AfD has a stunning 19 percent that almost draws it equal with the second-placed Left Party, on 20 percent. ...

Hard Right Stuns With Huge Election Gains in Frankfurt

The Local | March 7

THE ANTI-IMMIGRATION ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY (AFD) stole huge amounts of votes off the established political parties in elections in central Germany, while a small neo-Nazi party won 17 percent in one district.

Confirming polling which shows that the AfD [has] hugely increased [its] share of the vote since Germany decided to open its doors to refugees in late August 2015, the right-wing party won on average 13.2 percent of votes at local election in the central German state of Hesse on Sunday.

This result made the AfD the third-largest party behind Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), who won 28.2 percent and 28

percent respectively, Hessischer Rundfunk reports.

Both of Germany's largest political parties lost a substantial share of the vote from the last elections.

In Hesse's capital Wiesbaden, the AfD scored a particular success, winning 16.2 percent of the vote.

But it is the result in Frankfurt, a global financial center with a cosmopolitan population, which in many ways came as a surprise.

Up until this point, the AfD has largely won votes in economically marginalized areas such as the states of former East Germany.

The AfD's previous best election result was 12.2 percent of the

vote in 2014 state elections in the eastern state of Brandenburg, one of the poorest regions in Germany.

In former West Germany, the AfD had previously struggled to make the 5 percent cut of votes necessary to make it into a state parliament, scoring a best of 6.1 percent in Hamburg in 2015. ...

"It's terrifying," Eva Högl, vice chairwoman of SPD in the national parliament, told broadcaster ARD, saying the AfD [is] following an "unspeakable course."

"If they enter the state parliaments with double digits and maybe even the federal parliament, this will change the whole

German community in a very negative way. ..."

... The success of the AfD was not the only result to send shock waves through the political establishment.

The neo-Nazi NPD party managed to win 17 percent in Leun, making [it] the third-largest party in the 6,000-inhabitant town.

[It] also won 14 percent of the vote in Büdingen, a town of 21,000 people, which also has the largest refugee shelter in Hesse.

At the last local elections, the NPD only managed to win 2 percent of the vote in Büdingen. Statewide, though, the NPD scored a much less impressive 0.3 percent of the vote. ...

German Power Is the Real Key to Europe

Mark Mardell, BBC News | March 10

WE MAY KNOW BY THE WEEKEND IF THE EMPRESS OF EUROPE will be dethroned sooner rather than later, or if her latest deal on the refugee crisis will save her bacon. Either way it raises profound questions about the purpose and direction of the European Union.

The regional elections in Germany will be a good indication if Angela Merkel's plunging popularity among German voters has really been halted. ...

The new deal with Turkey is her deal more than the European Union's—the *[Financial Times]* says it was done behind the back of her European allies and left some of them "bruised and angered" by cutting them out in a "brutal" manner.

Even the famously myopic British media now report what Ms. Merkel says as a matter of some note. This partly reflects the fact she has been around for 10 years, longer than any other European leader. But there is another reason, which goes to the forgotten heart of the debate about the European Union.

Who is boss? Who is in charge? Whose word counts? And how to deal with the obvious, the natural answer to those questions ever since the unification of Germany in 1871.

We don't talk about it, but it matters more than most of the froth and flotsam about this debate. ...

When absorbed in the European question, the British aim has usually been balance—to make sure no one other power has sway. ...

You can believe the origins of the European Union were a desire for a country called Europe or a project about creating a superpower to rival the U.S., and you will have a point. But ... [t]he European Coal and Steel Community, the forerunner of the European Economic Community, was founded explicitly to create a

common market in the materials of war, and to keep them out of Germany's hands alone.

This may seem like ancient history—Germany is clearly not going to wage war on the rest of Europe, it is one of the least aggressive nations in the world and any danger has long past.

In one sense that is all true. It might be that German dominance of Europe is rather better for the Continent than, say, if the French or Italians were in such a role.

But the problem, or at least fact, of German preeminence has a new and ever building relevance. Since reunification, Germany is once again the richest and most powerful country in Europe.

Guilt over the war will take a long time to fade, and will perhaps always make the country more thoughtful about conflict than others. But there is an ever growing assertiveness, and more and more Germans now believe that putting the national interest before the interests of the Continent as a whole is no longer sinful and unspeakable.

It was a telling moment when Angela Merkel was first elected that she felt free to tour a submarine, like any other leader of a major power would. It didn't summon up ghosts of the past. ...

German power is at the heart of the two crises facing Europe. ...

[I]f the EU simply went away, it wouldn't erase some serious questions. ... Would Germany unfettered from an organization like the EU be more modest in its ambitions? Is the European Union no longer a restraining order, but the means by which Germany gets its way? Or is it simply the only game in town, the arena in which Germany exercises its power?

Hard questions to ask, let alone answer, but worth pondering at a critical crossroads.

ASIA

EU Wants Deal With Vladimir Putin Over Migrant Crisis

John Stevens, Daily Mail | March 9

BRUSSELS IS SEEKING A DEAL WITH VLADIMIR PUTIN TO STOP Russia fueling the European migrant crisis.

As European Union leaders get ready to hand £4.7 billion (US\$6.7 billion) to Turkey for its help stemming the influx, officials

are preparing to open up a new front.

A sharp rise in numbers entering the Continent from Russia has led senior officials to plead with Moscow for help.

It comes despite warnings that, by bombing Syria and fueling

the flow of refugees, Russia is “weaponizing” the crisis to “overwhelm” and “break” Europe.

At a meeting of European Commission chiefs behind closed doors in Brussels last month it was agreed that they would urgently seek talks with Mr. Putin’s government. According to minutes seen by the *Mail*, the migration commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos “referred to the growing migratory pressure faced by Finland on its border with Russia.”

“[He] supported the idea of establishing a dialogue on migration with the Russian Federation as soon as possible, before the EU was confronted by a new influx of migrants on its Eastern border,” the minutes noted.

Last night the European Commission refused to say whether diplomatic talks had begun. A spokesman said: “The Arctic route and the fact that a number of migrants have been seen coming

from Russian borders is something that we’re aware of.”

The revelation that the EU wants to court Mr. Putin will raise concerns about the kind of deal he could demand in return. ...

“The relationship between Russia and Germany is very tense right now. Germany ignored Russia over Kosovo—but Russia will not be ignored anymore. The presence of a deal between these two nations is not a sign of peace. Like the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and so many others before it, it is a sign of exactly the opposite. Both of these nations are looking to secure their shared border—so they can pursue their imperialistic aims elsewhere!”

Gerald Flurry, “Russia’s Attack Signals Dangerous New Era,” *Trumpet*, October 2008

China’s President Xi Vows to Contain Secessionist Activities in Taiwan

Carlos Castillo, China Topix | March 7

DELIVERING WHAT SOME SAY IS HIS STRONGEST WARNING YET TO Taiwanese pro-independence leaders, China’s President Xi Jinping on Sunday vowed to protect the country’s territorial integrity by stamping out any move to declare Taiwan’s independence from the mainland.

Xi issued the warning during a gathering of delegates at the annual meeting of the Chinese parliament. The yearly conference of Chinese lawmakers opened in Beijing last Thursday.

“We will resolutely contain ‘Taiwan independence’ secessionist activities in any form, safeguard the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and never allow the historical tragedy of the nation being split to happen again,” Xi said in apparent reference to the Japanese takeover of the island in 1895.

China sees Taiwan as a breakaway province to be brought under control by force if necessary. Taiwan’s ruling Democratic Progressive Party, led by President-elect Tsai Ing-wen, considers

Taiwan an independent nation but sees no need to provoke Beijing by making a formal declaration of independence.

Tsai’s stunning landslide victory in Taiwan’s elections in January has been seen by many as a turning point in the island’s bid to break free from the grip of the Chinese mainland—a signal that Taiwan is coming of age as a democracy.

This has disturbed China’s leadership, and ignited fears that Tsai’s presidency—which formally begins this May—could bring instability, perhaps even military confrontation, across the Formosa Strait. ...

“How could anyone fail to see that Taiwan is destined to become a part of mainland China? These 21 million people are going to be FORCED into the Chinese mold; and it is going to happen for one reason: because of a pitifully weak-willed America.”

Gerald Flurry, “Taiwan Betrayal,” *Trumpet*, August 1998

Draconian One-Child Policy Has Left China With Massive Sex-Ratio Imbalance

Olivia Enos, Daily Signal | March 10

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



WITH ALL THE TALK SURROUNDING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S Day this week, it is important to remember the many women of China. Innumerable Chinese women have been denied the right to have children, and many others have been denied the most fundamental right of all: the right to take their first breath and live.

China currently has a population made up of an estimated 33 million more men than women. In fact, 2015 Chinese census data estimates that there are close to 116 boys born for every 100 girls.

The sex-ratio imbalance in China is not natural, but rather is due to China’s draconian one-child policy instituted in 1979. While China transitioned from one-child to two-child policy in early 2016, this is unlikely to remedy the sex-ratio imbalance, and

in fact, may even exacerbate it.

China’s sex-ratio imbalance is almost entirely due to the Chinese government’s population control policies. Mitigating factors such as Chinese cultural preference for boys, and the reality that in old age, there is only one child to care for two parents, lead many Chinese families to abort baby girls in favor of boys. But ultimately, in China, government meddling in family matters is why forced abortion, which has led to the sex-ratio imbalance, occurs in the first place. ...

While the policy most prominently impacts women; depriving baby girls of life, subjecting women to forced sterilization, forced abortion, and exacerbating social phenomena including human trafficking and mail-order brides. It is not solely a women’s issue. ...

As a direct result of the one-child policy, China's annual projected GDP growth rate will likely decline from 7.2 percent in 2013 to around 6.1 percent by 2020. And the sex-ratio imbalance has

led to a phenomenon known as "bare branches," which refers to the notion that Chinese men are increasingly violent, restless and unable to find wives. ...

Japan's Military-Manga Complex

Katherine Chin, Brown Political Review | March 10

MANGA, JAPAN'S INFAMOUS CARTOON CHARACTERS, ARE NOW being employed as something new: military weapons. The display of charming, young comic heroines plastered on war planes may seem like an innocent public art project or advertising campaign, but it is actually an indication of a deep militaristic ethos. At a time of changing power dynamics and instability in the East Asian region, Japan's Self-Defense Force (JSDF), essentially the country's army in everything but name, has launched a massive public relations campaign as it takes steps toward a more aggressive and proactive role in regional politics. However, the campaign looks drastically different from the hyper-aggressive and hyper-masculine Hollywood blockbusters of the United States that typically advance a pro-war agenda. Rather than producing action thrillers such as *Zero Dark Thirty*, Japan's Self-Defense Force [has] instead been painting female caricatures on tactical helicopters and releasing cartoons and manga that depict a diminutive, temperate and cute military. ...

The actions of the JSDF today, by way of the cult of cute, attempt to not only ameliorate public dissent against militarism, but also reconcile the horror and carnage of past aggression with the future need for defense, setting up the stage for possible military engagement in the East China Sea. ...

Public opinion polls have shown that the position of the Japanese people has been consistently pacifist, opposing the use of force other than for defensive purposes and lacking trust in the military to operate offensively for the national interest.

In order to prevent further backlash and protests, the JSDF has had to endear itself to the Japanese public as a nonthreatening force, resulting in a Japanese military-entertainment complex that produces art radically different from Hollywood war and action blockbusters. Instead of massive guns and tanks, the cultural strategy of the JSDF relies on cartoon series and manga, employing a strategy of "cuteness" to emasculate the military and in turn engender public support and help boost recruitment. The manga series *Gate*, which was produced in coordination with the JSDF, casts young, adorable and nonviolent heroines as the main characters who defend the nation with the use of technology. The cover art of the series does not feature any military equipment, instead opting for smiling, doe-eyed young girls.

The juxtaposition of such juvenile iconography with the military, however unsettling to a Western audience, is an attempt by the JSDF to appeal to a familiar Japanese "cult of cute" and consequently normalize the country's changing security strategy. While the number of fighter jets increases, the images of anime characters emblazoned on the jets depict the military as the same weak, harmless and temperate force it was before, existing primarily for show rather than for use. By casting themselves as cute and cuddly, the JSDF uses the art of manga and anime to push the public to reexamine its existing perceptions of the military and war as dangerous and aggressive, engaging in a form of revisionism. The public relations campaign of the Self-Defense Force promulgates the military as an integral, cultural part of society that is friendly, nonthreatening and necessary. ...

TW IN BRIEF

CHINA BLASTS U.S. AT UN MEETING: AT THE UNITED NATIONS Human Rights Council in Switzerland on Thursday, China responded strongly to a joint statement by the United States, Australia, Japan and nine northern European countries. The statement criticized China's crackdown on human rights and its detentions of lawyers and activists. A Chinese diplomat told the council that "the U.S. is notorious for prison abuse at Guantanamo prison. Its gun violence is rampant. Racism is its deep-rooted malaise. The United States conducts large-scale extra-territorial eavesdropping, uses drones to attack other countries' innocent civilians. Its troops on foreign soil commit rape and murder of local people. It conducts kidnapping overseas and uses black prisons." Since last July, Chinese police have detained around 250 human rights lawyers, legal assistants and activists.

NORTH KOREA LAUNCHES MORE MISSILES: NORTH KOREA FIRED two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea Thursday morning, South Korea's Defense Ministry said. The launch is likely

a show of anger at continuing springtime war games by rivals Washington and Seoul. The missiles were fired from a northern province and flew about 310 miles until falling into the water off the country's east coast. The missiles are believed to be Scuds, according to the ministry. Such missile firings by the North are not uncommon when animosity rises. North Korea hates the massive annual military drills staged by Seoul and Washington, calling them invasion preparations.

CHINA BANS DEPICTIONS OF HOMOSEXUALS, ADULTERERS, ETC.
On TV: The Chinese government has banned depictions of homosexuals on television as part of a crackdown on content it determines as "vulgar" and "immoral." The government's new regulations also ban depictions of fornication, adultery, smoking, drinking, suggestive clothing, and reincarnation. The government says such content "exaggerates the dark side of society," and is unhealthy for Chinese citizens. The new regulations are the latest example of increasing cultural censorship in China since 2012, when President Xi Jinping came into power.



There We Are in Bible Prophecy (Habakkuk)

Gerald Flurry, *The Key of David* | March 11

The Prophet Habakkuk discusses three end-time catastrophes that show where we are in biblical prophecy.



Now Canada Is Trying a Basic Income, Britain Can Ignore It No Longer

Independent | March 9

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



IF HE LIVES UP TO HIS PROMISES—AND THE EARLY SIGNS ARE good—Justin Trudeau is shaping up to [be] one of the most ambitious liberal premierships in modern history. ...

The province of Ontario, we learn this week, is set to become the first region of the country to test a “basic income,” a social support system that does away with means-tested welfare and replaces it with a single, universal payment that every citizen is entitled to. It is the ultimate leveler—and, as such, is the latest fad in leftish circles. And, apparently, Trudeau and his party are interested in extending this idea further.

First suggested by such figures as the philosopher Bertrand Russell in the inter-war years, the idea of a universal basic income—a monthly income, just enough to cover essential bills, paid as a benefit of citizenship, and which prevents any one resident in a wealthy economy falling needlessly into poverty—has gained popularity in recent years, since the welfare systems of developed nations have begun to crack under pressure, leading to calls from the right to dismantle them altogether. ...

Detractors are easy to find. Critics warn that giving away “free

money” will lead a laziness pandemic, a general outbreak of fecklessness that will steadily destroy any economy. ...

The only way to find out if it works is to try it and see what happens. So far, trials of such schemes have been relatively small, taking place in individual Indian villages and in some parts of South America—all successful

So all eyes are now trained on Ontario and Trudeau’s Canada, for what happens here could place us at the cusp of the biggest overhaul of the welfare state in a century. Few formal details about the policy have emerged to date, but Premier Kathleen Wynne said her local government would “test a growing view at home and abroad that a basic income could build on the success of minimum-wage policies and increases in child benefits by providing more consistent and predictable support in the context of today’s dynamic labor market.” ...

Meanwhile, in Britain the welfare system has become unaffordable, creaking under the weight of housing benefit paid to even the moderately paid to cope with the costs imposed by a broken housing market. The appetite for a huge shift of perspective is growing. ...

OECD: In Terms of Debt, the Situation Is Way Worse Than 2007

Financial Sense | February 24

WILLIAM WHITE, CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT Review Committee at the OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] and former chief economist at the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), says the risks posed by global debt levels are greater today than they were in 2007 and that central banking monetary policy has lost its effectiveness. He also explains the crucial ... lessons this has for policymakers, both fiscal and monetary. Here’s a portion of his recent interview

“If you think about a crisis period as a period of deleveraging,

in fact this has not happened and we’ve gone in the very opposite direction. Now, on the household side, clearly there have been some improvements made but on the corporate side in the U.S., things have gotten significantly worse—the debt ratios for corporations have gone up very substantially as has government debt. ...

“More importantly—again, when I say the situation is worse today than it was in 2007—in 2007, this debt problem was essentially confined to the advanced market economies. Since then, the debt ratios—the private debt ratios in particular—have

exploded in the emerging market countries and so we now have in a sense a global problem, whereas in 2007 you might say we had a regional problem with the advanced market economies. But now it's basically everywhere so, yes, I do think that the situation is worse than it was then. ...

"When I first came to the BIS in 1994, we started warning about the credit flows. ... The story that we were telling then was really one of the Greenspan put starting in 1987 and every time there was a problem, the answer was to print the money or ease monetary conditions and the debt ratios ratcheted up and up and up. ...

"So we had this problem in '87 and the answer was easy

money; then we had this problem in 1990–1991 and, again, the answer was easy money. The response to the Southeast Asian crisis was don't raise rates even though all sorts of other indicators said you should. Then it was easy money again in 2001 and, of course, in 2007 ... every time the headwinds of debt have been getting higher and higher, and the monetary easing required to overcome that has had to get greater and greater, and the logic of that takes you to the point where you say, well, in the end monetary easing is not going to work at all and ... that's where I am today. ... Unfortunately, we are still, as far as I can tell, both the BIS and myself are still talking to a brick wall. ..."

We're in the Eye of the Financial Hurricane

Casey Dispatch | March 1

TWO WEEKS AGO, WE POINTED OUT THAT GIANT RETAILER Walmart just had its worst year since 1980. Sales fell for the first time in 35 years. The company plans to close 269 stores.

Since then, retailers have announced a flood of ugly results, *The Wall Street Journal* reports. "On Thursday, Kohl's Corp. said it would close 18 stores after reporting weak sales, while Sears Holdings Corp. is looking to sell \$300 million in assets after reporting yet another loss. Best Buy Co. warned of weak demand for electronics, and shares of Restoration Hardware Inc. plunged as much as 29 percent Thursday after it blamed poor sales on a 'pullback by the high-end consumer.'"

Earlier this month, Kohl's (KSS), another major retailer, reported that its profits fell 20 percent last quarter. Profits for clothing company Ralph Lauren (RL) fell 29 percent. Profits for

The Gap (GPS), another clothing company, plunged 33 percent.

Dispatch readers know retail stocks can give advance warning of economic problems. Consumer spending accounts for 67 percent of the U.S. economy. When folks start to cut back on buying clothes, furniture and televisions, these companies feel it first. ...

Industrial conglomerate General Electric (GE) lost \$6.1 billion last year. Profits at Exxon (XOM), the world's largest oil company, plummeted 58 percent. Profits for Caterpillar (CAT), the world's biggest machinery maker, plunged 43 percent.

As of Friday, 96 percent of the companies in the S&P 500 had reported quarterly earnings. Based on those results, S&P 500 earnings are on track to drop 3.3 percent for the fourth quarter. This would mark the third straight quarter of declining earnings for the S&P 500. That hasn't happened since the 2009 financial crisis. ...

And Then There Was None: Canada Sells Its Gold

Bullion Management Group Inc. | March 10

CANADA, BUCKING AN INTERNATIONAL TREND THAT HAS SEEN central banks become net buyers of gold since 2010, has sold off all its official gold holdings. Canada's official international reserves last released by the Bank of Canada (BoC) on February 23 showed gold reserves at zero. This is unprecedented.

Canada now stands as the only G-7 nation that does not hold at least 100 tons of gold in its official reserves. According to statistics from the World Gold Council (WGC), Canada's current holdings would now rank it dead last out of 100 central banks, behind Albania at number 99. A footnote says that the BoC still holds 77 ounces of gold, primarily in gold coins. ...

Between 1999 and 2002, the United Kingdom, under the auspices of the Bank of England (BoE), sold roughly 395 tons of gold, representing over half of the UK's gold position. The UK pre-announced the sales and held 17 auctions during the period. The era became known as "Brown's Bottom," named after Gordon Brown, the chancellor of the exchequer at the time. The immediate reaction was a 10 percent decline in the price of gold. ...

While gold prices are up 335 percent since 1999, the U.S. dollar and the euro, the two prime currencies that the BoE would have

substituted for its gold holdings, have declined in value.

Will Canada's sale of its gold become known as "Poloz's Bottom," named after BoC governor Stephen Poloz? ...

Canada held some 1,023 tons in 1965. That was the zenith. By 1985 Canada's holdings had fallen to 500 tons. Throughout the 1990s and up to 2002, Canada kept selling its gold. Canada has now reached its nadir in gold holdings. None. ...

Former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan may have framed gold best with some salient observations. Greenspan said, "In the absence of the gold standard, there is no way to protect savings from confiscation through inflation. There is no safe store of value." He also said, "Gold is a currency ... by all evidence, a premier currency. No fiat currency, including the U.S. dollar, can match it." Finally, Greenspan said, "Gold still represents the ultimate form of payment in the world. Fiat money in extremis is accepted by nobody. Gold is always accepted."

Greenspan may have been one of the most forward thinking of all Fed chairmen. He is still revered today.

Since 2010, central banks have been net buyers of gold. In 2015, official purchases were 588 tons. The prime buyers have

been Russia and China, but other central banks have also purchased gold Gold purchases by central banks have moved from less than 2 percent of world demand for gold in 2009 to over 14 percent today.

Central banks have purchased gold in order to diversify their reserve portfolios, especially away from U.S. dollar-denominated assets, with which gold has a strong negative correlation. Others have purchased gold to hedge against tail risks, or because of inflation hedging characteristics, because gold has maintained its purchasing power over a long period of time. ...

Unlike the Western nations, China and Russia have been building up their gold reserves, even as China understates its current

position of gold held by the People's Bank of China (PBOC). Chinese gold has also been purchased through its sovereign wealth fund, which does not report its holdings, and will at some point be transferred to the PBOC. Meanwhile attempts by some Western banks, such as Germany's, to repatriate their gold holdings held in foreign central banks, primarily in London and New York, have been met with stalling. Others, such as the Netherlands, have been successful in repatriating their gold. The unanswered question, however, is where is the gold?

Despite all that, no central bank has openly admitted that it has sold all of its gold, as Canada has announced. ... Canada will likely regret that decision at some point in the future.

TW IN BRIEF

Why is gold not sinking like a brick?: Electronically traded gold bullion funds experienced record investor buying in February. Investors bought \$7.9 billion worth of the securities, which was the highest monthly inflow in eight years. According to data company Markit, the amount of assets under management in these funds increased by 14.6 percent for the month, which was at a rate only surpassed during the height of the Financial Crisis in 2009. Barron's blamed a number of factors, including stagnant economic growth, turbulent markets, worries about negative interest rates, and a weaker dollar as reasons more investors appear to be investing in gold.

WHO worried about rising rates of children using antidepressants: The rising rate of children using antidepressant drugs is a growing concern for the World Health Organization (WHO). A new study showed that between 2005 and 2012, the number of children prescribed the drugs in the United Kingdom increased by 54 percent. In the same time frame, the United States saw a 26 percent increase, Germany a 49 percent rise, and Denmark a 60 percent increase. WHO's director of mental health said the rising rates are worrying because experts don't know if the drugs could cause harm to children. Since the drugs have not been tested on young people, there are many unknowns regarding what the long-term effects might be.

Cuba's grievances with the U.S.: Cuba said it would welcome President Barack Obama to Havana later this month, but the Communist government had no intention of changing its policies in exchange for normal relations with the United States. In the Communist Party newspaper *Granma* and other official media, Cuba has demanded that Washington cease interfering in its internal affairs. The nation also thinks that the president could do more to change U.S. policy. Grievances with the United States include the comprehensive trade embargo and the offer of U.S. support for Cuba's political dissidents.

Department of Justice 'discussed' action against climate change deniers: United States Attorney General Loretta Lynch testified at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Wednesday that the Justice Department has "discussed" taking legal action against those in the fossil-fuel industry who deny the "threat of carbon emissions" when it comes to climate change. During Lynch's testimony, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse pointed out that under President Bill Clinton, the Justice Department brought and won a civil case against the tobacco industry for denying scientific studies showing the dangers of using tobacco. The Department of Justice has already asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to evaluate whether or not ExxonMobil has violated federal laws by publicly denying climate change.



The Crisis at the Close

Stephen Flurry, Trumpet Daily | March 11

The prophesied events leading up to the end of man's rule on Earth

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