



The Coming Arab Takeover of East Jerusalem

Brent Nagtegaal | August 18

JERUSALEM—MAHMOUD ABBAS IS QUITE EFFECTIVE AT HOLDING on to power. His official term as president of the Palestinian Authority (PA) ended in 2009. And yet, as the leader of the Palestinian faction Fatah, he still claims the mantle of Palestinian leadership a full seven years later. Since taking over from Yasser Arafat, Abbas has used his political savvy to not only rebuff Israel's overtures of peace but also maintain his own power over the Palestinian people.

Considering his experience, Abbas's decision to hold municipal elections throughout the Palestinian territories on October 8 is completely dumbfounding.

Hamas, the rival Palestinian faction that currently controls the Gaza Strip, also has a broad base of support in the West Bank. Yet Hamas has refused to participate in municipal elections in the past, essentially handing over control of the Palestinian towns in the West Bank to Fatah.

Abbas was led to believe that Hamas would boycott the elections again. In July, however, Hamas announced it would participate in the elections.

Through this miscalculation, Abbas may have brought about not only his own demise, but also that of Fatah in the critical territory of the West Bank.

This development in Palestinian politics should not just be written off as the usual political machinations of a foreign territory. A Hamas takeover of the West Bank could be the precursor to the fulfillment of one of the Bible's most anticipated prophecies.

Municipal elections are typically boring and mundane—but not in the Middle East, and definitely not when the elections are between two groups with such violent long-standing disagreements.

In the weeks following Hamas's surprise announcement, tensions between the rival Palestinian factions have ratcheted up a level. Both groups are in full election mode, which in Middle East terms means arresting each other's potential candidates and members. In the West Bank, where Fatah controls the security apparatus, Hamas members have been arrested and detained.

Hamas has done the same in the Gaza Strip. Hamas has also started a massive social media campaign to promote its cause, accusing Fatah officials of everything from blasphemy and infidelity to profanity.

On top of that, one of Hamas's top religious figures, Yunis al-Astal, has already issued a fatwa (religious decree) effectively banning Palestinians from voting for anyone other than Hamas.

He wrote, "Any person, male or female, who votes for a party other than Hamas will be considered an infidel and apostate and his or her repentance will not be accepted, even if they fasted or prayed or performed the hajj to Mecca." In New Testament terminology, voting for Fatah would amount to committing the unpardonable sin—at least according to Hamas.

The possibility of Hamas taking control of the West Bank has many wondering whether Israel will try to undermine Hamas at the ballot box. The last time Hamas featured in a Palestinian election, in 2006, it took advantage of Fatah infighting and stunned the world with a democratic victory. The year following, Hamas took Fatah members in the Gaza Strip and dropped them off buildings to ensure it stayed in power. Then, in the past 10 years, Hamas has started three separate wars against Israel, lobbing rockets indiscriminately into the sparsely populated regions of southern Israel.

Israelis fear a Hamas takeover of the West Bank would result in the Gazafication of a territory 10 times larger than the Gaza Strip with twice as many Palestinians. Even more daunting than the sheer numbers is that the West Bank borders right up to Jerusalem. Instead of rockets raining down on the small town of Sderot on the Gaza border, the most populous centers of Israel would be under threat, as well as the Holy City.

This is a bit of a simplification since over 300,000 Jews still live in the West Bank and the Israel Defense Force (IDF) is active there, whereas it has completely pulled out of the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, nobody can deny that if Hamas were in charge of the West Bank it would make it far more difficult for the IDF to protect Israelis, especially in East Jerusalem.

There is another reason to believe the elections will go ahead relatively unhindered. Hamas has said it intends to run technocratic representatives in the elections, rather than its hard-liners. "Hamas already said they wouldn't run independently, but coalesce with technocrats and local leaders," commented a worried senior Fatah member to Breitbart News. "[T]hat was always their way to package their merchandise—people can vote for

Hamas policies without thinking they're voting for Hamas."

He continued (emphasis added):

They're experts at it, and they've done it with great success in the previous round of local elections when they won virtually every big city, and only after the coup in Gaza the PA disbanded the West Bank municipalities ruled by Hamas. THESE ELECTIONS WILL BE HAMAS'S TICKET BACK TO THE WEST BANK, UNDER THE CLOAK OF LOCAL LISTS THAT WILL IN FACT USHER IN HAMAS'S RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

The fact that the representatives won't outwardly appear to be Hamas members also means that the international community will likely pressure Israel into allowing the elections to take place. In 2014, the Palestinians tried to form a unity government, which was very similar to this "technocratic" government. The international community welcomed the move, even after the Israeli government asked it not to. The unity government between Fatah and Hamas immediately broke down, but the fact that the international community, including the United States, accepted Hamas's participation indicates it would likely treat these elections the same way.

Israel will not receive any help from the international community to prevent a Hamas takeover of the West Bank.

The *Trumpet* has watched for years for Hamas to maneuver into a position where it would govern the West Bank as it does the Gaza Strip. This is based off a powerful prophecy found in the biblical book of Zechariah.

The prophet Zechariah actually had a role in rebuilding Jerusalem after the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, and yet he wrote that it would be destroyed once again. This was an unpopular message at the time, and some believe it got him killed by his own people.

However, Zechariah wasn't writing about a takeover that was to happen in his time, nor was he writing about the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He was writing about the time that we are living in right now, and it has everything to do with the coming Palestinian elections.

Zechariah 14:2 states: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry explains this verse in *Zechariah—The Sign of Christ's Imminent Return*:

Note the big overview Zechariah gives us. There are three phases to this crisis. Zechariah starts at the Second Coming of Christ, the third phase, and works his way backward chronologically.

The verse starts with Christ conquering the European and Asian powers that are gathered together for battle. Then there is a semicolon, which means all these events in verse 2 are linked and closely associated.

The first semicolon introduces the second phase of this violent time. The city shall be taken, houses rifled and women ravished. This is when the king of the north

(Europe) conquers the whole city of Jerusalem (also America and Britain), shortly after he conquers the king of the south (Daniel 11:40-41).

But notice how this whole procession of events leading to the return of Christ begins. Mr. Flurry continues, “Then there is another semicolon. This is the first phase, when half of Jerusalem goes into captivity—suggesting some violence in the process.”

Given that the West Bank borders East Jerusalem, it is likely that the fall of half the city is preceded by the West Bank coming under Palestinian control, especially that of the more violent Hamas faction.

In the lead-up to the elections in October, continue to watch

for Hamas to become a more viable alternative to Fatah leadership in the West Bank. Watch for the international community to pressure Israel to allow the elections to take place, even though they will involve a terrorist group that has sworn to bring about Israel’s destruction. Recognize, however, that a Hamas takeover of the West Bank and later East Jerusalem is just the first step of a three-step prophecy.

This is why the *Trumpet* closely watches Jerusalem, specifically events tied to half of the city falling. It triggers a massive chain reaction of world events that culminate in the return of Jesus Christ, an event that will finally bring peace to Jerusalem and the whole world.

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Under Threat: American Nukes in Turkey

THE STIMSON CENTER, A NONPARTISAN WASHINGTON-BASED think tank warned that “terrorists and other hostile forces” could capture dozens of American nuclear weapons from an air base in Turkey close to the Syrian border. The think tank issued a report on Monday about the risk of a potential breach in the wake of Turkey’s recently failed coup. The commander of the air base was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the coup.

The United States stores approximately 50 nuclear weapons at the base, and reports indicate that the U.S. is [preparing to move some of them out](#) of Turkey and into Romania.

“Two independent sources told EurActiv.com that the U.S. has started transferring nuclear weapons stationed in Turkey to Romania, against the background of worsening relations between Washington and Ankara,” wrote Georgi Gotev and Joel Schalit. They continued:

According to one of the sources, the transfer has been very challenging in technical and political terms. “It’s not easy to move 20-plus nukes,” said the source, on conditions of anonymity. ...

Another source told EurActiv.com that the U.S.-Turkey relations had deteriorated so much following the coup that

Washington no longer trusted Ankara to host the weapons. The American weapons are being moved to the Deveselu air base in Romania, the source said.

Deveselu, near the city of Caracal, is the new home of the U.S. missile shield, which has infuriated Russia.

Romania was an ally of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, but it never hosted nuclear weapons during that period. Stationing tactical U.S. nuclear weapons close to Russia’s borders is likely to infuriate Russia and lead to an escalation. The stationing of Russian nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962 was the closest the Cold War came to escalating into a full-scale nuclear war. ...

In the meantime, NATO sent EurActiv a diplomatically worded comment which implies that allies must make sure that U.S. nuclear weapons deployed in Europe remain “safe.” ...

During the failed coup in Turkey, U.S. aircraft were forbidden from flying in or out of Turkey. The Stimson Center report said it is uncertain whether the U.S. could have maintained control of its weapons if civil conflict had erupted.

Russia Fighting From Iran

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



ON TUESDAY, RUSSIA BEGAN USING A BASE IN IRAN TO LAUNCH AIR strikes against Islamic extremists in Syria. This marked the first time Russia has used a base from a nation other than Syria itself during its anti-terror campaign in the Middle East.

The development is a sign of Russia's deepening involvement in the Middle East and its growing ties with Iran. Some observers say this development is the first time that Iran has allowed another nation to use its territory for military operations since it was founded as the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.

The United States has condemned this level of cooperation between the two countries. The [Wall Street Journal](#) reported on Wednesday:

The U.S. ... raised concern over Russia's use of the Iranian base, saying that it may violate UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which forbids the supply, sale and transfer of combat aircraft to Iran without the council's prior approval. On Wednesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov escalated the war of words, denying that operating from Iran violated the resolution.

"There are no reasons to suspect Russia of breaking the UN resolution," he said. "Russia hasn't supplied or transferred Russian military planes to Iran."

Russia's military also responded forcefully to U.S. criticism, saying that the State Department had misinterpreted the resolution.

"First of all, they should check the contents of UN Resolution No. 2231," Russian military spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said. "It says that warplanes are 'sold,' 'transferred' or 'used' inside Iran only with the permission of the

UN Security Council."

"We suggest the representatives of the State Department get out their pencils and trace the lines on the map to discover the fact that Syria is a separate sovereign state," General Konashenkov added.

In Washington, a spokesman for the State Department said it is "still assessing" whether Russia's use of Iranian bases violates the UN Security Council resolution, which was passed last year. ...

Chris Harmer, senior naval analyst for the Institute for the Study of War in Washington, said the basing of Russian planes in Iran represents a doubling down of support for the Syrian president by Tehran and Moscow.

"I really think this is intended to be strategic messaging to the West that Iran and Russia are now completely committed to the survival of the Assad regime," he said.

Mr. Harmer, a former U.S. naval aviator and strike planner, said the basing of Russian aircraft in Iran offers some small military advantages, including good security and better maintenance infrastructure. But the main advantage, he said, was symbolic.

"The message is: We are here for the long haul," Mr. Harmer said.

While these efforts will preserve the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad, we expect that there will be a dramatic regime change of some sort in Syria. Perhaps this increased cooperation between Russia and Iran is a desperate effort to prevent that otherwise inevitable change, as *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry explained in "[How the Syrian Crisis Will End](#)."

Hamas Cofounder: Hamas Is 'the Devil'

PALESTINIAN TERRORIST AND COFOUNDER OF HAMAS'S MILITANT wing, Mohammed Nazami Nasser, has no regrets for any harm toward Israel. However, he regrets the harm and "destruction" Hamas has inflicted upon Palestinians.

The *Times of Israel* wrote Thursday:

[Nasser] indicated that he now considers the Islamist terror group, which he did not mention by name, to be "the devil," sowing hatred and bringing destruction to the Palestinian people. ...

In an emotional, fierce and at times incoherent Facebook post on Wednesday, Nasser apologized for his activities to nearly all of the various factions of the Palestinian people by name, including "Palestinians within and outside

[Israel]," "the immortal Palestinian President Yasser Arafat," Fatah, the [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] the [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine] and many others. The terror group Islamic Jihad—another militant Islamist group that sometimes cooperates with Hamas—was not included.

Nasser said he was sorry for the "horror of hatred that lived within me toward you [i.e., the political factions]," and for his "relentless work so that you would not have a geographical or political place on the national map."

"I apologize to you for my biggest dream," he continued, "that you would all be buried beneath the ground, dead and motionless."

Yemen conflict continues: Anti-Houthi forces clashed with Houthi fighters in the Yemeni city of Taiz on Thursday. The clashes began after a group of Houthi troops attempted to take control of the headquarters of the 35th Brigade, which is fighting with the pro-government militia. The headquarters has been previously contested by the two sides. The ongoing conflict in Yemen pits an internationally recognized government backed by a Saudi-led coalition against the Iran-backed Houthis. The Houthis captured the capital, Sanaa, in September of 2014. The contested Taiz has seen some of the worst fighting and food shortages due to a double blockade. One layer is enforced on large parts of the country by the Saudi coalition, and another by the Houthis in and around the city itself.

EU wants 'immediate halt' to fighting in Aleppo: European Union Foreign Policy Chief Federica Mogherini said in a statement on Thursday, "The EU and its member states call for ... an immediate halt to the fighting in Aleppo to allow medical evacuations, deliveries of aid, and repairing of essential water and electricity infrastructure." An estimated 1.5 million civilians are trapped inside the city.

Turkey's 'amnesty': Turkey announced Wednesday a penal reform that will release 38,000 people from its prisons. The government did not explain the purpose of the reform. The nation's prison population has tripled over the last 15 years. As of March, Turkey had a total of 188,000 prisoners, which is about 8,000 more than the existing capacity. Some observers say the prison reform is intended to create more space for those involved in last month's failed coup.

U.S. transfers Guantanamo detainees to the Middle East: The Pentagon announced on Monday the transfer of 15 inmates from Guantanamo Bay to the United Arab Emirates. Twelve of the prisoners were Yemenis and three were Afghan citizens. It's the single largest transfer of Guantanamo detainees by the Obama administration. Only 61 prisoners remain at the detention facility. United States President Barack Obama had hoped to shut down the facility during his first term of office. He faced opposition from Republican lawmakers who fear that those released would return to terrorism. President Obama also hoped to transfer some of the detainees to American prisons, but that is prohibited by U.S. law. The president has indicated he might circumvent the law with executive action.

Israel's new security measures: On Wednesday, Israeli officials announced new security measures that will reward 15

Palestinian Authority communities that have maintained good relations with Israel and did not harbor terrorists. The towns that did harbor terrorists will get punished and face stricter security regulations. The new plan has been compared to the carrot-and-stick approach. It aims at preventing terror by presenting a reward while it threatens with punishments for disobedience. Israel's defense minister has promised to "crush the terror wave" and bring security back into Israeli homes.

Turkey silencing the Kurds: An Istanbul court has ordered a pro-Kurdish newspaper to close shop for engaging in what it termed "terrorist propaganda." The court ruled Tuesday that the newspaper behaves as the "media organ" for the prohibited Kurdistan Workers' Party. The ruling comes at a time of rising worries over press freedoms in Turkey and weeks after the government shuttered 130 newspapers, television stations and radio stations following last month's failed coup. The outlets were said to have been aligned with a U.S.-based Muslim cleric, whom the government said orchestrated the coup attempt.

Islamic State in Libya: On Wednesday, a suicide attack using a car was carried out by the Islamic State in Sirte, Libya. It left five people dead and more than 30 wounded. The attack occurred in residential area No. 2, which is the last remaining Islamic State bastion in the city. Meanwhile, militia forces, with the aid of American air strikes, made progress in the drive toward Sirte's center, coming to control some 70 percent of the area formerly under Islamic State rule. Libyan soldiers alongside U.S. air strikes have been pushing the jihadis into ever smaller slices of territory. U.S. Africa Command said that it had carried out the strikes in Sirte "at the request of, and in coordination with," Libya's United Nations-backed government.

UN to send 4,000 more troops to South Sudan: The United Nations Security Council decided last week, with a definitive 11 to 0 vote, to send another 4,000 troops to strengthen a peace-establishing mission in South Sudan. The country is the world's youngest, gaining its independence in 2011, but has been in civil war for the past three years. The increase in troops will extend the mission another three months and represents a 30 percent increase to the 12,000 troops already stationed there. The Security Council threatened to place an arms embargo on the nation if it would not accept the aid. On Wednesday, South Sudan rejected the proposal to introduce 4,000 troops with the reasoning that it would give the UN the ability to "govern the country." UN soldiers and aid workers have been repeatedly harassed, attacked and, in some cases, killed.

EUROPE

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Germany Resumes Arming Kurds

GERMANY HAS RESUMED SENDING WEAPONS TO KURDISH FIGHTERS, according to the German media. The *Local* wrote on August 18:

The German Army (Bundeswehr) has delivered a huge shipment of weapons to Kurdish Peshmerga fighters in Iraq after Germany broke off supplies earlier in the year.

Around 70 tons of German weaponry—including 1,500 G-36 assault rifles—arrived on Tuesday in Erbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) reports on information from the Ministry of Defense.

The shipment also included 100 antitank missiles and three armored vehicles.

Deliveries were halted after broadcaster NDR reported in January that German weapons were being sold in gun markets in Erbil and other cities.

The Defense Ministry demanded answers from Kurdish authorities after the weapons had been delivered for the express purpose for fighting terror group ISIS.

The initial weapons shipment itself was controversial in Germany as it was the first time the government had

supplied weaponry to an active war zone.

An investigation on the part of the Kurdish government came to the conclusion that, of the 28,000 weapons Germany had delivered to the Peshmerga, the Kurdish autonomous region's military force, only 30 had been sold off illegally, the SZ reports.

This continued arming of the Kurds continues Germany's return to a militarily "normal" nation. As we wrote in 2015 in "[No More Taboos for the German Army](#)," this is of great importance to the whole world:

The tv news service Tagesschau commented that we're moving into "uncharted territory" for Germany's constitution. But we're also moving into uncharted territory for modern Germany. We've never seen modern Germany with a military free of taboos. One could argue that we need to move into this territory and that Germany deserves another chance. But in that case, surely we should enter this new territory with eyes wide open? Instead, this new Germany is emerging, and Britain and America couldn't care less.

Chancellor Merkel Defends Immigrants, Again

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL ONCE AGAIN DEFENDED her decision to allow immigrants into the country in a speech on August 17. Reuters wrote:

Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Wednesday refugees had not brought terrorism to Germany, adding that Islam belonged in the country as long as it was practiced in a way that respected the constitution.

More than a million people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere arrived in Germany last year. The mood towards them has soured after a spate of attacks on civilians last month, including three carried out by migrants.

Two of those attacks were claimed by the Islamic State militant group.

"The phenomenon of Islamist terrorism, of Islamic State, is not a phenomenon that came to us with the refugees," Merkel said at an election campaign event for her Christian Democrats in the eastern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern ahead of a regional vote on September 4. ...

Merkel's popularity has suffered in the wake of the attacks and 52 percent of Germans think her migrant policy is bad, a poll published last week showed.

The influx of migrants, many of whom are Muslim, has boosted support for the anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD), which is expected to perform well in elections in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Berlin.

Many of the Germans becoming disillusioned with mainstream politics and turning to these groups are not hardcore neo-Nazis. They don't want to persecute the migrants or see them imprisoned, beaten up or killed. They are not extremists seeking genocide. They are regular, sound-thinking, rational people, many of whom have terrific empathy for those suffering in Syria and elsewhere. These people are simply concerned about the impact millions of migrants will have on their nation, its institutions, its infrastructure, its economy, its culture and on the German people. They are concerned about Germany's future. But Angela Merkel's government refuses to give serious attention to these concerns and refuses to tell the truth about the impact the migrants are having and will have on the nation. If she continues to do this, Germany's chancellor risks helping transform the German people—and Germany itself—into something very different and much more frightening than the democratic, peaceful, friendly nation we see today.

"Germany, Migrants and the Big Lie," *Trumpet*, March 2016

The Importance of Gibraltar

IN THE WAKE OF BREXIT, MANY ARE WORRIED THAT SPAIN WILL launch a renewed push to take Gibraltar. But as Luke Coffey points out at [War on the Rocks](#), it isn't just Britain that would be hurt by the loss of this vital sea gate—it would hit America too. He reports in “[As Brexit Looms, Troubled Seas Around Gibraltar Should Have Washington's Attention](#)”:

From America's first major overseas military intervention in 1801 against the Barbary States to today's ongoing military presence in the region, the United States has often relied on a tiny piece of the United Kingdom located in the Mediterranean Sea.

Gibraltar, commonly referred to simply as “the Rock,” is a rocky headland covering just over 2.7 square miles on the southern coast of the Iberian Peninsula. It is strategically located at the western entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, where the strait between Europe and Africa spans a mere 7.7 nautical miles at its narrowest point. ...

Since losing Gibraltar in 1704, the Spanish have sought to take it back. Examples abound through the last three centuries. ...

In light of the recent Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, Spain is redoubling its efforts to regain control of the Rock. The day after the vote, acting Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo quickly pounced, suggesting that the United Kingdom and Spain should agree to “joint sovereignty” over Gibraltar. The implications of this are more than political. There are security implications, especially for the United States. If the Rock becomes Spanish, or even put under joint sovereignty, the United States would not enjoy the same level of cooperation and use of Gibraltar as it has since 1801 under British control.

In 2002, Prime Minister Tony Blair's government came very close to agreeing to joint sovereignty with the Spanish over Gibraltar. There was concern, however, about what this would mean for future use of Gibraltar by the U.S. military. With the rise of ISIL and a resurgent Russia—both of which demand more robust military operations in the Mediterranean littoral—those concerns should be even more acute today.

Gibraltar remains the most accessible and available port for U.S. nuclear-powered submarines in the Mediterranean, due to burdensome security and administrative requirements for such visits in other NATO countries in the region. ...

It stores a type of intermediate fuel oil required by some U.S. Navy ships that is not readily available in other ports in the region. Its deepwater port has provided a secure docking area as well as vast amounts of safe anchorage for U.S. warships. In 1990 and 1991, an estimated 193 U.S. Navy ships used Gibraltar's waters in support of operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield. The topography and geographical location of

Gibraltar makes intelligence gathering a core function there.

Throughout history, many of America's military operations in the region have relied on Gibraltar.

In 1818, during the Second Barbary War against the Regency of Algiers, another U.S. Navy task force was assembled at Gibraltar under the command of Commodore Stephen Decatur. In 1899, U.S. Adm. George Dewey stopped in Gibraltar to resupply his ships after his defeat of the Spanish in the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War. ...

During World War I, Gibraltar was a meeting point for many Allied convoys before crossing the Atlantic. In 1917, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard joined British forces at Gibraltar and operated together as part of the so-called Gibraltar Barrage—an Anglo-American naval squadron tasked with keeping German submarines from passing from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic after the surrender of Austria and Turkey. ...

During World War II, Gibraltar played an even more important role for the United States and United Kingdom. During the war, the Rock became an impregnable fortress: An airfield was constructed; the bay was filled with Allied ships; and at its peak, 37,000 American and British troops were based there. Most importantly, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower used Gibraltar as his headquarters to plan Operation Torch, the 1942 Allied invasion of North Africa. ...

Today, Spain is an important ally and home to several U.S. military installations, but its recent behavior toward Gibraltar is unbecoming of a NATO member. Madrid's shenanigans also have a direct impact on the effectiveness of U.S. military operations in the Mediterranean.

Spain routinely and provocatively violates Gibraltar's territorial waters, making hundreds of illegal incursions each year. Spanish ships from the paramilitary Guardia Civil ... have dangerously harassed U.S. ships entering Gibraltar's port, putting at risk the safety of all those concerned. Most recently this occurred with the submarine USS Florida when the Royal Navy had to fire warning shots at the approaching Spanish vessels. Even though Spain is a NATO member, Madrid bans visits by U.S. ships or planes coming directly from—or headed directly to—Gibraltar. ...

Further, Spain has developed an uncomfortably cozy relationship with the Russian Navy, raising eyebrows across Europe. Since 2011, at least 58 Russian Navy ships have called into the Spanish port of Ceuta just across the strait from Gibraltar.

World War II hinged on these “gates.” They had become not only strategic passes, but the world's greatest fortifications. But today, we have lost most of them, most recently, the Panama Canal—and it appears that soon Gibraltar, too, will be lost.

The United States and Britain in Prophecy, Herbert W. Armstrong



Rocket Launchers in the South China Sea

Callum Wood | August 16

MORE WEAPONS ARE BEING MOVED TO DISPUTED ISLANDS IN THE South China Sea, further escalating tensions between regional powers. Kept hidden from aerial surveillance until August 10, rocket launchers have apparently been moved to the Spratly Island chain. Surprisingly, it is not China moving the weapons in. It is Vietnam—prompted by Chinese expansion in the region.

With more than 2,000 miles of coastline to protect, Vietnam's defenses are stretched thin. Chinese incursions in the Spratly Islands constitute a major threat, particularly to the southern regions of Vietnam.

The United States is undoubtedly happy that Hanoi has chosen to take a stronger stance against China. Needing local support to halt Beijing's advance, the U.S. is looking to strengthen not only U.S. allies in the region but also China's enemies.

But the U.S. is in for a rude awakening. A relationship with Vietnam is coming—not for America, however, but for China.

Despite the current tensions between Beijing and Hanoi, China is Vietnam's largest trade partner and their trade relationship keeps growing. As the *Trumpet* wrote on Jan. 27, 2011:

Asian policymakers recognize that Beijing's contributions are not out of benign generosity, but, as U.S. primacy in the region wanes, and as evidence of China's military might multiplies, they see little choice but to align with Beijing. Historically, nations like Vietnam ... have depended on the U.S. or Australia for military assistance, but as Washington becomes [distracted by pressures](#) in the Middle East and elsewhere, Beijing is stepping into the void. These weaker Asian nations are beginning to read the writing on the wall and are positioning themselves for the inevitable demise of U.S. primacy in Asia.

The Vietnamese rocket launchers in the Spratly Islands might appear on the surface to be a good sign for America, but dig deeper and the truth is quite the opposite.

Hanoi is ignoring America's calls for de-escalation. The U.S. wants diplomacy, but Vietnam is sending rocket launchers. That alone paints a clear picture: The Asian nations don't have faith in U.S. policy.

Washington should certainly be worried, as should the world. China's end game is not in the South China Sea. The way we can know this for sure is the same way we can accurately forecast the

demise of American interests in the Asia-Pacific: prophecy.

Do you know that the Bible speaks directly of the rise of an Asian conglomerate—comprised of multiple “kings”? Do you also know that this power is set to join in a brief alliance with a European power? Your Bible indicates that these powers will lay siege to America! Prophecies in Daniel 12, Matthew 24, Hosea 5 and Ezekiel 4 all point to this climactic point in human history!

Our free booklet [Russia and China in Prophecy](#) explains this all in vivid detail. Read it for yourself. God has recorded this as a warning to the nations—and that includes you and me!

Armed with this knowledge, we can understand why the Asian nations are rallying and why U.S. efforts at diplomacy are failing. And because we can see and prove where it is leading, it should fill us with excitement. After all, if you truly believe the afore-referenced prophecies written in your Bible, then you must believe what comes next!

The rise of the Asian nations is forecast to come directly before the return of Jesus Christ. The prophesied destruction is what it takes for God to reach this world! As *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry concludes in [“China Is Steering the World Toward War”](#):

God says three times in Ezekiel 2:6, *Be not afraid! Don't be afraid! Be not afraid!* The people of America, Britain and Judah should be very afraid *if they refuse to repent*. But God tells those who are doing His work that they must not give in to fear. There are reasons why people fear to deliver that message, but God commands us to do it! He promises to give us all the power we need—and to reward us for obeying Him *no matter what happens!* ...

All this prophesied destruction is what it will take for God to reach this world! After this, people will be ashamed—and they will get to know God! Ezekiel repeatedly talked about that inspiring conclusion (e.g. Ezekiel 6:7; 7:4; 11:10; 12:20; 13:9; 23:48-49, etc.). Yes, there is a lot of bad news when you consider what it takes to get people to the point of knowing God. But ultimately, the outcome is spectacularly good news!

Again, if you want to know more about the spectacular events that lead up to the return of Jesus Christ and how those events fit in world events today, be sure to read [Russia and China in Prophecy](#).

China Sides With Russia In Syrian War

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



BEIJING HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL, AT LEAST TO A DEGREE, enter the Syrian fray. Given the robust partnership between China and Russia, it should come as no surprise that Beijing will

be on the same side as Moscow—helping to support the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The *Telegraph* wrote on August 18:

China is to step up personnel training and humanitarian assistance to President Bashar Assad's Syrian government, state media reported on Thursday, in a signal of growing concern in Beijing about the course of Syria's civil war.

Rear Adm. Guan Youfei, who heads China's office for international military cooperation, met Lt. Gen. Fahd Jassem al-Frej, the Syrian defense minister, in Damascus earlier this week, the Xinhua news agency said. ...

"They reached consensus on improving personnel training, and the Chinese military offering humanitarian aid to Syria," the Xinhua report said of the Damascus meeting.

Xinhua said Admiral Guan also met Lt. Gen. Sergei Chvarkov, the Russian general in charge of the

reconciliation center Russia set up earlier this year to monitor a short-lived ceasefire between the government and rebel groups. ...

China shares Russia's view that Assad remains the legitimate ruler of Syria and has joined Moscow in blocking resolutions critical of his regime at the United Nations Security Council, but has not followed its lead in deploying combat forces to the country.

However, the *Global Times*, a paper published by the ruling Communist Party, said advisers are already on the ground in Syria to train regime forces in the use of Chinese-bought weapons including sniper rifles, rocket launchers and machine guns. ...

Forget the South China Sea—Most of China's land reclamation is happening on the mainland

MUCH ATTENTION HAS BEEN CALLED TO CHINA'S RECENT efforts to expand its territory by building artificial islands on submerged reefs in the South China Sea. While that trend certainly deserves attention, a new report says that Beijing is focusing even more on reclaiming land from its mainland.

Writing in *Hakai magazine*, Ilima Loomis explained the trend:

From Holland's famous dikes to the construction of New Orleans on a former swamp, humans have a long history of "reclaiming" flooded coastal lands for their own purposes. But in recent years, as the value of wetlands has been better understood, the trend has been moving in the opposite direction, with increasing protection for coastal zones and efforts to restore wetlands to their natural state. But this is not so in China, where rapid growth of both the economy and the population, especially along the coasts, has led to coastal reclamation projects on a massive scale.

Earlier this year, a team of researchers published the results of a satellite survey that tracked changes in China's coastline between 1985 and 2010. They found that in this period, nearly 7,700 square kilometers of coastal wetlands—about the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined—were lost to land reclamation projects.

"They're completely industrializing the coastal ecosystem," says Chip Fletcher, a coastal geologist at the University of Hawaii who was not involved in the research. "The problems China is experiencing are typical of other places in the world, but it's taking it to a whole new level."

For the last few decades, China's economy has undergone rapid growth, with a great quantity of its urbanization and industrialization happening in coastal regions. And China's firm laws banning arable farmland from being developed only intensify the drive to reclaim coastal wetlands for industrial purposes.

But the environmental costs are high. Loomis continued:

The coastal transformation could result in potentially serious environmental consequences for China. In addition to habitat loss for birds and coastal wildlife, wetlands provide valuable ecosystem services, including coastal protection from extreme events such as tsunamis, hurricanes and storm surges; erosion control; and carbon sequestration

The magnitude of those impacts make it surprising that the Chinese government would support reclamation projects on such a large scale, Fletcher says. ...

TW IN BRIEF

Russia may be violating UN resolutions by using Iranian bases: The United States is assessing whether Russia is violating United Nations Security Council resolutions by using air bases in Iran for strikes inside Syria. The State Department expressed its concern on Wednesday. The State Department spokesman said U.S. government attorneys are looking into whether Russia's actions violate UN Security Resolution 2231, which is part of the Iran nuclear deal. The resolution deals with military actions between Iran and other countries. Russia first started using air bases in Iran for strikes against Syria on Tuesday.

North Korea resuming plutonium reprocessing: The South Korean Foreign Ministry expressed "grave concern and

regret" about North Korea's announcement that it resumed plutonium reprocessing on Wednesday. The South Korean Defense Ministry on Thursday said North Korea's actions are a "violation of UN Security Council resolutions." The ministry's spokesman added that South Korea "will take necessary measures" in cooperation with "major countries and related international institutions." North Korea says it has restarted plutonium production, according to Pyongyang's Atomic Energy Institute. South Korea is planning to discuss the news closely with affected countries and international institutions.

China launches first quantum satellite: China successfully launched the world's first quantum satellite early on Tuesday

morning. The satellite will be dedicated to quantum science experiments, according to Chinese state media agency Xinhua. The satellite may be the first to achieve quantum communication between space and the Earth, which would be difficult to hack. The satellite may also explore quantum teleportation for the first time, the Chinese Academy of Sciences said. The satellite is called

the Quantum Experiments at Space Scale satellite. It has been designed to establish “hack-proof” quantum communication in its two-year mission by transmitting “uncrackable” signals from space to the ground. China is planning to launch even more of these satellites with the aim of establishing a global hack-proof communication network around 2030.

AFRICA/LATIN AMERICA

TW IN BRIEF

Venezuela’s war on guns: Venezuelan police destroyed nearly 2,000 shotguns and pistols in a Caracas city square on Wednesday as part of a new gun-control campaign. Interior Minister Nestor Reverol said this campaign is designed to disarm Venezuelans through a combination of seizures and a voluntary program to swap guns for electrical goods. Venezuela has the world’s third-highest murder rate, after Honduras and El Salvador. While the Venezuelan Interior Ministry is touting its gun-confiscation campaign as its latest move in a war against crime, this move also comes as people are rioting against the regime of President

Nicolás Maduro.

Guzmán’s son abducted: The son of incarcerated Mexican drug lord Joaquín “Chapo” Guzmán was among the half-dozen men abducted by gunmen at a restaurant over the weekend. Mexican authorities made the confirmation on Tuesday. “Chapo” Guzmán headed the multibillion-dollar Sinaloa Cartel before he was arrested in January. Some analysts fear that the abduction of Guzmán’s son might lead to a wave of intra-cartel bloodshed in Mexico.

ANGLO-AMERICA



The Two Anointed Ones

Gerald Flurry,
The Key of David | August 21

The book of Zechariah pinpoints two leaders WHO GOD USES in this end time. To receive the precious golden oil of God’s truth, you need to understand who these men are.



Britain’s Labour Party Skews to the Far-Left

SIMILAR TO HOW UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HILARY Clinton had to track left to beat her socialist rival Bernie Sanders to the Democratic Party nomination, British politician Owen Smith is tracking further left in a bid to unseat Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party Leader.

As a *Wall Street Journal* article titled “[Britain’s Immoderate Labour](#)” reports:

The leadership contest in Britain’s Labour Party doesn’t wrap up until next month, but everyone might as well admit that Jeremy Corbyn has won. This is true even if the far-left leader is unseated by his rival Owen Smith. Mr. Corbyn has moved his party so far left that the supposedly moderate Mr. Smith has become anything but moderate.

Witness Mr. Smith’s howler in a debate Wednesday, when he argued that negotiations for a peace deal in Syria should include Islamic State (ISIS). Not even Mr. Corbyn goes that far, and he’s the guy who once referred to

representatives of Hamas and Hezbollah as “friends.” Mr. Smith later said he meant he’d negotiate with ISIS only in the unlikely event that the group renounces violence. Sure. More likely he was trying to curry favor with the extreme pacifist element of Labour’s base that Mr. Corbyn has so successfully mobilized.

Mr. Smith is also promising a £200 billion (US\$260 billion) public-works blowout in a “New Deal for Britain,” a lifting of the salary freeze on government jobs, and a boost to government health spending of 4 percent per year. To pay for it all, he’d raise the top personal-income tax rate back to 50 percent from 45 percent, reverse former Chancellor George Osborne’s corporate tax-rate cuts, roll out a new wealth tax—and balloon the national debt. Oh, and Mr. Smith will somehow build 1.5 million new homes in five years, compared to the measly million Mr. Corbyn promises.

It’s all different in degree but not in kind from Mr. Corbyn’s agenda. ...

America Prepares to Hand Over Control of Internet

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION SEEMS DETERMINED TO HAND OVER control of the Internet to an international agency before the next U.S. presidential election.

According to an article from watchdog reporter Rudy Takala in the [Washington Examiner](#):

The Department of Commerce is set to hand off the final vestiges of American control over the Internet to international authorities in less than two months, officials have confirmed.

The department will finalize the transition effective October 1, Assistant Secretary Lawrence Strickling wrote on Tuesday, barring what he called “any significant impediment.”

The move means the Internet Assigned Numbers

Authority, which is responsible for interpreting numerical addresses on the Web to a readable language, will move from U.S. control to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers [ICANN], a multi-stakeholder body based in Los Angeles that includes countries such as China and Russia.

Critics of the move, most prominently Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz, have pointed out the agency could be used by totalitarian governments to shut down the Web around the globe, either in whole or in part.

Subjugating ICANN to an international board would likely result in an Internet controlled by foreign dictators and European Union-style micromanagers. The free medium for communication now known as the World Wide Web could be changed forever.

Race Riots Erupt in Milwaukee

VIOLENT RIOTS ERUPTED IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, LAST SATURDAY night after a black police officer shot a 23-year-old black man who refused to lay down the stolen semi-automatic handgun he was carrying. The police officer followed proper procedure and turned on his body cam to record the entire incident. Yet rioters still burned down half a dozen businesses in Milwaukee, prompting Gov. Scott Walker to call on the National Guard for support.

An August 15 [Vanity Fair](#) article by Tina Nguyen described the events:

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker declared a state of emergency and called on the National Guard to restore order amid two nights of intense rioting in Milwaukee, where protesters took to the streets after an armed African-American man was shot and killed by police.

The unrest began Saturday night, shortly after 23-year-old Sylville Smith was fatally shot by a police officer, who was also black. According to body-camera footage, Smith and another person had fled when pulled over by officers on Saturday afternoon. Smith was carrying a handgun, which police officials said had been reported stolen months earlier. When he did not comply with police orders to put down the gun, he was reportedly shot in the arm and chest.

Hundreds of people responded Saturday night by protesting against police violence, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported, with some confronting officers, rioting, and setting fires. The chaos continued throughout the night, as gunshots rang out, resulting in several local businesses being torched.

Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke responded to press questions about the riots by pointing out that the shooting of a black criminal by a black police officer was really just the spark that ignited

a much bigger problem. He pointed to family breakdown, fatherlessness and government welfare policies as the root causes behind the burning and rioting across the city. As an August 15 article in the [Daily Caller](#) reported:

Appearing on Fox News’s “America’s Newsroom” with Martha MacCallum, Clarke said, “Saturday night the social order totally collapsed in a part of the city of Milwaukee. And when that happens, tribal behavior takes over and tribal behavior leads to your law of the jungle replacing the rule of law.”

Clarke went on to explain, “All a police shooting does was act as an igniter ... here is what causes riots. We have inescapable poverty in the city of Milwaukee. Milwaukee is sixth-poorest city in America. You have massive black unemployment, I think at 32 percent. You have a failing K-12 public education system. It’s one of the worst in the nation. You have questionable lifestyle choices. Some of this is self-inflicted. All the kids with no fathers around, father-absent homes. When fathers are not around to shape behavior of young men, they often times grow up to be unmanageable misfits.” ...

Clarke later argued that the “growth of the welfare state” encourages the violence as seen in Milwaukee over the weekend.

He said, “These are underclass behaviors. Seventy percent of the kids born in Milwaukee, at least for the last decade or so, are born without an engaged father in their life. So, I look at the progressive policies that have marginalized black dads. They push them to the side—said you’re not needed. Uncle Sam is going to be the dad. He’s going to provide for kids. He’s going to feed the kids ... but Uncle Sam has been a horrible father. Uncle Sam does not like the kids.

He keeps a little food in their mouth and that's about it. But we all know the importance of an intact family, what it can do to shape behavior of kids."

Numerous studies have shown that family breakdown is the surest predictor of poverty and crime. Approximately 85 percent

of youths in prison come from fatherless homes. The same is true of 80 percent of rapists, 71 percent of high-school dropouts, and 63 percent of teen suicides. The anti-family culture and the anti-family policies America has adopted, especially over the course of the past 60 years, are indeed the root cause behind the violence engulfing Ferguson, Baltimore, Milwaukee and other cities.

Overdose Deaths from Prescription Painkillers Quadruples Since 1999

MORE AMERICANS ARE DYING FROM DRUG OVERDOSES THAN ANY time in history, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over 47,000 people in the United States died in an overdose in 2014—almost as many as died in the Syrian civil war that year. Opioids continue to be the most deadly drug, accounting for about two thirds of all drug overdose deaths. Perhaps more shockingly, prescription opioid painkillers (like oxycodone) kill almost twice as many as heroin (which is also derived from opium).

While 10,574 Americans died of a heroin overdose in 2014, 18,893 died of an opioid pain medication overdose. These statistics are linked in that 75 percent of new heroin users report first using prescription opioids first.

According to an [Associated Press report](#) from August 17:

More Americans are dying from opioids than at any time in recent history, with overdose deaths hitting a peak of 28,000 in 2014. That amounts to 78 Americans dying from an opioid overdose every day

It's not just the use of illicit opiates like heroin that is on the rise—overdose deaths from prescription painkillers

have quadrupled since 1999, tracking a similar increase in the amount of these drugs being prescribed by doctors. ...

Experts now believe the sharp increase in prescribed painkillers is to blame. People are quick to share stories of being prescribed dozens of pills for pain relief following procedures as simple as wisdom teeth removal. The strength of these medications can easily cause addiction, forcing many people to turn to a cheaper alternative—heroin—when their prescriptions run out.

American doctors wrote 207 million prescriptions for opioid painkillers in 2014. One of the ripple effects of prescribing opioid-based painkillers for procedures as simple as wisdom teeth removal is that 2.1 million people in the United States are now addicted to these painkillers. This addiction has led about 350,000 people down the path to heroin addiction.

As America heads into its 2016 election, the Democratic Party is touting marijuana legalization as a solution and the Republican Party is touting a wall along the Mexican border. Until Americans get a handle on their addictions to both legal and illegal drugs, however, the ripple effects will continue to be felt in their daily lives.

TW IN BRIEF

Wildfires in California: A Southern Californian wildfire spread through canyons and engulfed numerous homes this week, forcing thousands of people to flee. Some had to run for their lives just ahead of the flames. The wildfire had a ferocity never seen before by local firefighters. By Wednesday, a day after the fire ignited in very dry conditions, the blaze had spread across nearly 47 square miles and was raging out of control. The flames advanced despite the efforts of 1,300 firefighters. Authorities could not immediately say how many homes have been destroyed, but they warned that the number would be significant.

The cause of the fire is yet unknown.

Historic Louisiana flooding: Historic flooding hit the state of Louisiana last weekend. The federal government declared a major disaster in the state. More than 24 inches of rain fell over a large area of southeastern Louisiana and southern Mississippi. Eleven people were killed and more than 40,000 homes were damaged by the flooding in Louisiana. Officials say over 5,000 people are currently staying in shelters.



Inside the British Museum

Stephen Flurry,
Trumpet Daily | August 19

Blow the dust off your Bible—literally!

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