



Germany's former defense minister, Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, and Chancellor Angela Merkel

Germany, Political Crisis and Superman

Brad Macdonald | September 9

SINCE 1982, THE YEAR *E.T. THE EXTRA TERRESTRIAL* WAS RELEASED and the Falkland War occurred, Germany has had only *three* chancellors. The United States has had five presidents in that time; Britain six prime ministers; and Italy 15 prime ministers. Even more remarkable: Since the end of World War II, more than 70 years ago, Germany has had only *nine* chancellors. That's an average of eight years per chancellorship. America, in that time, has had 12 presidents, an average of six years per presidency; Britain 15 prime ministers, five

years per prime ministership; and Italy 45 prime ministers, 1.5 years per prime ministership.

Behind these facts is a fundamental truth: Postwar Germany, *perhaps more than any other modern nation*, is accustomed to political stability and order.

So what happens if this stable, dependent political system breaks down? History provides some insight.

The Weimar Republic (Germany's government from 1919 to 1933) was plagued by instability and disorder and was, in general, deeply unpopular. Extremist parties thrived, while the Weimar government was constantly under threat of collapse (there were 14 national elections in 14 years). By 1933, the Weimar system was so enfeebled



BRAD MACDONALD

GETTY IMAGES

and there was so much systemic instability that the regime didn't stand a chance against Adolf Hitler and National Socialism. Seven years after he exploited the political and social crises to take control of Germany, Hitler and the Nazi Party lit the world on fire.

Germany's postwar political system was built, among other purposes, to prevent another Weimar scenario. And for seven decades this system has successfully (though not perfectly) created political stability, order and consistency; marginalized extremist parties and ideologies; and secured the confidence of the German people. Germany's postwar system has been so successful that few today would consider the notion that Germany could experience Weimar-type conditions. But past success doesn't guarantee future success, and right now, multiple crises are converging to put enormous pressure on Germany's postwar political system. It's still early, but a major political emergency could be imminent.

First, consider the crises Germany currently faces. Most obvious is the migrant issue and the integration of more than 1 million migrants, most of whom are Muslim. This comes with significant sacrifice and cost, economically, socially and culturally. Radical Islam has taken root inside Germany and is bent on inflicting violence and suffering. Tension between Germans and foreigners is mounting, and extreme ideologies and politics are rising. Germany's economic outlook is uncertain and precarious. Deutsche Bank, the nation's largest financial institution, is on the cusp of meltdown, and its struggles are indicative of a larger financial crisis. Outside Germany, a belligerent Russia is pushing and prodding in Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, multiple ailing European countries are counting on Germany for leadership—and money. While the convergence of all these issues is serious, most alarming is the looming political crisis.

Germany's government, and especially Angela Merkel, is proving inadequate—but Germany doesn't have an alternate leader.

Since 2005 *mutti*, or “mother,” Merkel has been a textbook example of Teutonic consistency and steadiness, but there are now clear signs of weakness and vulnerability. The problem isn't that Merkel lacks solutions or leadership; the problem is that rapidly growing numbers of Germans flat-out disagree with Merkel's solutions and are becoming disenfranchised and angry about her persistence in pushing them. The chancellor, her counterparts and the mainstream German media are increasingly out of touch with the average German. In last Sunday's state elections in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, *Merkel's own constituency*, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), came in third behind the Social Democrats (SPD) and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). It was the CDU's worst showing in state elections since World War II. The result was a direct function of Merkel's leadership, specifically her handling of the migrant crisis.

One August poll showed 50 percent of Germans are against Merkel serving a fourth term. An August 4 survey revealed support for Merkel had dropped by 12 points to the lowest level in five years. The same poll revealed that two thirds of voters opposed Merkel's handling of the migrant crisis. The chancellor is taking more and more criticism from her political partners as well. “Angela Merkel has clearly reached her peak,” stated Ralf Stegner, deputy president of the SPD, following Sunday's election. In an interview, Sigmar Gabriel, leader of the SPD, a key partner in Merkel's coalition government, criticized Merkel's optimistic motto, “Wir schaffen das” (“We can do this”), and stated that Merkel had “underestimated” the

challenge of integrating the migrants.

Some of the most intense criticism is coming from Merkel's friends and allies in Bavaria, the heart and soul of German conservatism. Bavaria's Christian Social Union (CSU) has been a stalwart ally of the CDU for decades and is the primary reason for the long-standing dominance of conservative coalition governments. These days CSU officials, including party leader Horst Seehofer, are extremely critical of Merkel. Many politicians are already on record saying they will not endorse her reelection in national elections in 2017. Commenting on last Sunday's state election, Horst Seehofer laid the blame squarely with Merkel and warned that unless something changes soon Germany's conservative parties will be in big trouble. “The situation for the conservatives is extremely threatening,” Seehofer told *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*. The problem, he said, is that voters are sick and tired of “Berlin politics.” Seehofer has yet to endorse Merkel for reelection.

On Monday, Carsten Brzeski, a chief economist at German bank ING-DiBa, warned that Sunday's election was “another shot across the bow for the national government and Chancellor Angela Merkel.” Since Sunday, even Germany's mainstream media, which is generally supportive of Merkel and her migrant policy, has begun to recognize that she may need to step down. On Tuesday, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble in an address in the Bundestag recognized the seriousness of the times. Germany is facing many extreme pressures, he warned, and there “is an increasingly loud call among us for a strongman.” Conditions are ripe, he warned, for the emergence of a “demagogue.”

But who could replace Merkel?

Right now, there is no obvious alternative. It's Angela Merkel or bust. It's really quite remarkable: Despite the obvious souring for Merkel, there's no significant national conversation about who might replace her. Until Sunday's election, it was hard to even find articles addressing the subject of post-Merkel Germany. Even now, this isn't a dominant issue in the German media. Merkel doesn't have an obvious successor. There is no individual, on either the left or right, actively campaigning on a national scale to replace Merkel and lead Germany. Germany doesn't have a Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton; it doesn't have a Nigel Farage or a Marine Le Pen.

This is significant.

America, Britain and France all have obvious candidates vying to replace the incumbent party or leader, or to represent on a national scale the dissatisfied and angry segments of the population. These nations have popular individuals who are publicly discussing the problems, recognizing the public's frustrations, and then fielding their own ideas and solutions. Some of these ideas and solutions (and candidates) are ridiculous. But the point is, dissatisfied Americans, British and French are represented by a national figure and movement. They have someone who shares their concerns, someone who at least appears to recognize their worries. Worried Americans, British and French have someone to rally behind. To Americans concerned about immigration, Donald Trump is superman. And to Americans concerned about Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton is superman. To Britons concerned about immigration or the membership in the European Union, Nigel Farage is superman.

Germany today doesn't have a superman.

There are, of course, politicians in Germany who would put their hand up to do Merkel's job. But no one is actively, enthusiastically

going after the job; and the German public isn't giddy for any particular candidate. So far, no one has developed a national campaign—no one is going on television or writing articles or producing commercials—to reach out to the German people and show them that he understands their concerns, that he agrees with their anxieties, and that he has tangible solutions to Germany's crises. No one has captured the imagination of the people. Germany right now lacks a leader with the personality, the leadership, the style, the policies and the solutions to get the public excited and hopeful.

So, the public's desire for a superman grows by the day.

This is a potentially dangerous scenario. Politics abhors a vacuum. The greater the number and intensity of the crises, the stronger the desire for someone with real solutions. This is exactly the scenario that facilitated the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Compared to his Weimar counterparts, Hitler was energetic, passionate and urgent. He also came along with what seemed like practical, rational solutions. And by 1933, the public's frustration and anxiety was so intense—its hunger for better leadership so acute—that many Germans ignored Hitler the sociopath and, instead, embraced him as a superman who would soothe their anxieties and restore stability and order.

The Merkel administration today isn't the Weimar regime. But what if the Islamist terrorist attacks continue? What if migrants continue raping and attacking Germans? What if migrants continue pouring in? What if the economy slumps? What if the far right continues to rise? It's not unreasonable to expect *all* these trends to continue. What will Merkel's fate be then? Perhaps it will all be OK and the right candidate will emerge at the right time to capture the hearts of the German people and seamlessly replace Merkel. Perhaps Merkel will change her views and side with the German public. But let's be realistic: The most likely scenario is that the crises will continue to converge, Merkel's popularity will continue to drop, and the hunger of the German people for an individual with real solutions will continue to grow.

Germany, like many other Western governments, is headed for a major political crisis. The German people generally tend to be imperturbable and pragmatic, and they have a high tolerance for discomfort and sacrifice. But they dislike instability and uncertainty, and they have a low tolerance for disorder. So far no German leader or political party—including and especially *Angela Merkel*—has emerged on a major scale with a plan to confront and solve Germany's many crises. Germany so far has not experienced any significant improvements in any of these areas. Unless this changes, and soon, Germany is on the path to a major political and social crisis.

As we watch the situation in Germany we need to keep an eye out for potential Merkel replacements. For an individual with the right personality and leadership, GERMANY RIGHT NOW IS AN OPPORTUNITY. There are millions of disenfranchised and angry Germans craving a leader whom they can really get excited about. Multiple major crises are brewing that need solutions, *but they can also be leveraged as political opportunities to assume higher office*. And, at least so far, there is no serious competition for public favor other than Chancellor Merkel. But Merkel's star is diminishing.

And it would fade even quicker if the German people were given another option. If they were presented with a leader who was energetic, eloquent and personable; a leader who wasn't shy about confronting the issues; a leader who wasn't afraid to talk tough, but also make tough decisions; a leader whose personality and politics appeared suitably modern, moderate and sophisticated, but who could also think and speak and act pragmatically, with force, vigor and power. A leader who felt fresh and new, but at the same time was experienced in German politics, tradition and customs. Perhaps a leader with an impressive royal legacy, who would stir the patriotic sentiments of the German people. A leader who could capture the imagination of the German people. A leader capable of filling the role of German superman.

Perhaps someone like [Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg](#).

 Follow [Brad Macdonald](#)

MIDDLE EAST

TrumpetDaily

RADIO SHOW

THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER THAT WILL TURN AGAINST AMERICA AND BRITAIN | SEPTEMBER 9

BRACE YOURSELF FOR EARTHSHAKING EVENTS IN EUROPE | SEPTEMBER 8

A NEW WORLD POWER TAKES SHAPE IN EUROPE | SEPTEMBER 7

WITH BRITAIN OUT, EUROPE AIMS FOR A UNITED MILITARY FORCE | SEPTEMBER 6

NO RED CARPET FOR OBAMA IN CHINA, AND MERKEL'S APPROVAL RATING PLUNGES TO A FIVE-YEAR LOW | SEPTEMBER 5

Iran Renews Ties With Hamas

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



IRAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HAMAS HAS BEEN ON THE ROCKS SINCE the start of the Syrian civil war. This week, however, Yoni Ben

Menachem [wrote](#) for the Jerusalem Center of Public Affairs that Iran is once again looking to support the Palestinian group.

With the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal refused to take the side of President Bashar Assad, and Hamas's political leadership found itself at loggerheads with Iran.

As a result, Hamas was forced to transfer its headquarters from Damascus to Doha, Qatar. Since then Hamas's political leadership has kept a distance from Iran, claiming that it is "neutral" in the struggle between Sunnis and Shiites and that it does not take a side in the Iranian-Saudi conflict over Middle Eastern hegemony, including Saudi Arabia's attempts to check Iranian expansion.

Notwithstanding the deep-seated dispute between Mashaal and the Iranian leadership, Iran has continued to support the Hamas military wing, Izaddin al-Qassam—also at loggerheads with Mashaal since Operation Protective Edge two years ago—with money and weapons.

Iran, however, is not sitting on its hands. It is now resuming its courtship of Hamas in an attempt to add it to the Shiite camp and restore its former ties with the movement.

The courtship of Hamas is part of Iran's attempt to divide the Sunni world, improve its relations with the worldwide Muslim Brotherhood in the context of improving its relations with Turkey, and also to promote the possibility of a temporary political settlement in Syria with U.S.-Russian consent. ...

According to a September 2 report in the Lebanese newspaper *As-Safir*, Iran initiated a meeting between a senior Iranian official and a Hamas representative in Lebanon.

The participants were Mohammed Majidi, senior adviser at the Iranian Embassy in Lebanon, and Ali Baraka, who represents Hamas in that country.

The Iranian message conveyed at the parley was that Iran has not ceased its support for Hamas and for the Palestinian problem, to which Iran assigns the utmost importance.

According to Iranian sources, a large Hamas delegation

is supposed to visit Tehran soon. The Iranians are prepared for the fact that it will include Mashaal, but they insist that it also include Dr. Mahmoud al-Zahar, a member of the Hamas Political Bureau.

Zahar, a senior Hamas official who was one of the founders of the movement along with Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, is in the full sense of the word Iran's representative in the Hamas political leadership. Zahar does not try to hide this fact and is indeed proud of it.

He takes every possible opportunity to praise Iran in the media. In total contrast to Mashaal, who is chairman of the Political Bureau, Zahar thinks the Hamas leadership should clearly side with Shiite Iran despite the fact that Hamas is a Sunni movement, because Iran, not the Arab states, is the main supporter of the Palestinians.

About a month and a half ago, Zahar harshly berated Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas after Abbas met in Paris with Iranian opposition leader Maryam Rajavi. Zahar called Abbas "an agent of the West," exactly as senior Iranian officials have dubbed him.

Zahar's views reflect the Iranian stance, which, because of Iran's opposition to the Oslo agreements, rejects any reconciliation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. Iran also supports Hamas's attempts to expand into the West Bank.

In 2008, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote, "Iran is undoubtedly going to go after the West Bank. The Arabs of the Fatah party currently control the West Bank. However, Hamas terrorists (and weapons) are present throughout the West Bank, and there is little doubt that they are working toward getting control of this strategically located region of Israel. Iran's ultimate goal is to overrun Jerusalem. *The West Bank adjoins the city.* The Iranians believe that if they can conquer Jerusalem, they can unite the Arab world under their control."

Palestinian Court Delays Municipal Elections

THE PALESTINIAN HIGH COURT ON THURSDAY POSTPONED MUNICIPAL elections that had been set for next month," [reported](#) the Associated Press on Thursday. The postponement puts on hold the first democratic elections between Hamas and Fatah, the two rivaling Palestinian factions, since 2006. The Associated Press continued:

The shelving of the vote is bound to stir more tensions between Fatah, the movement of Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, and Hamas, an Islamic militant group.

It will also make it less likely the two sides will be able to end their territorial split, with Hamas entrenched in the Gaza Strip and Abbas in autonomous enclaves of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The rift has undercut Abbas's claim to be a leader of all Palestinians and weakened him in past negotiations with Israel on Palestinian statehood.

The October 8 vote would have been their first electoral contest since Hamas drove Abbas loyalists from their posts

in Gaza in 2007, a year after the group won parliament elections. Since the Hamas takeover, repeated reconciliation attempts have failed while both sides deepened control over their respective territories.

Hamas sat out the last municipal elections in 2012, which were only held in the West Bank, but the group apparently took Abbas by surprise when it agreed to participate in this year's vote. In calling the municipal vote, Abbas had hoped to restore some political legitimacy after overstaying his term for six years.

On Thursday, the Palestinian high court in the West Bank town of Ramallah decided to postpone the election until at least December 21, when it is to hear two appeals, according to the Fatah website. ...

Salah al-Bardaweel, a Hamas spokesman in Gaza, alleged that the high court decision to postpone the election "is a political one dictated to the court by Fatah and President Abbas" to avoid defeat.

The postponement is seen by many as an attempt to ward off a Hamas victory. The *Trumpet* believes that a Hamas takeover of both Palestinian territories in the near future could lead to the

fall of half of Jerusalem. The delay is bound to upset the Palestinian public further since many were to use the election to voice their growing disapproval with the Fatah-led government.

Islamic State Cleared From Turkey's Border With Syria

REUTERS REPORTED ON SUNDAY THAT **TURKISH-BACKED REBELS** have cleared the last remaining Islamic State soldiers along its borders, essentially sealing off the terrorist enclave from heading north.

Turkish-backed rebels on Sunday cleared Islamic State from Turkey's Syrian border, securing a 90-kilometer (55-mile) corridor and marking a substantial gain in Ankara's plan to drive out Sunni militants and stop the advance of Syrian Kurdish fighters.

The rebels, mainly Syrian Arabs and Turkmen fighting under the banner of the Free Syrian Army, took charge of the frontier between Azaz and Jarablus after seizing 20 villages from the Sunni hard-line group, the Turkish military said in a statement.

That puts Turkey in firm control of a stretch of land it sees as a bulwark against the U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish YPG militia. However, that could sharpen tensions with the United States over Syria policy. ...

The advance took place little more than a week after Turkey launched the Syrian incursion, deploying tanks and airpower to support the rebels, who swept into the border town of Jarablus.

On Saturday, Turkey and its rebel allies opened a new line of attack in northern Syria, rolling across the border some 55 kilometers (34 miles) west of Jarablus.

Turkey also announced Wednesday that it would be willing to support an offensive against the Islamic State capital of Raqqa. The *New York Times* reported:

Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan suggested that his country was ready to carry out a joint operation with the United States in northern Syria to fight the Islamic State in its de facto capital, Raqqa, Turkish news media reported on Wednesday.

The move would represent a major escalation in the two countries' interventions in Syria. But there was no immediate comment from United States officials. In the past, the United States and Turkey announced ambitious new joint policies concerning Syria that failed to materialize as disagreements emerged over what had been agreed to.

An operation in Raqqa would entail an expansion of cooperation on Syria between Turkey and the United States, NATO allies whose relations have been strained over Syria policy. ...

"Obama wants to do some things jointly concerning Raqqa," Mr. Erdoğan told a group of journalists during his return flight Tuesday from the G-20 summit meeting in China, local news

media reported. "We said this would not be a problem from our perspective. Our soldiers should come together and discuss, then we will do what is necessary," he said.

Meanwhile, a *Wall Street Journal* article from Thursday, "Pleading With Putin on Syria," claimed that Russia might be preparing to do a deal with Europe and the United States in Syria in return for the removal of sanctions over Ukraine.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Geneva Thursday for more talks on Syria with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and while there might be a deal, no one should expect a durable peace.

At the G-20 summit in China on Monday, Mr. Obama cited "gaps in trust" with Russia as the main obstacle to an agreement. But as the Iran nuclear deal shows, this administration has a way of closing such gaps by agreeing to the opponent's terms, and Mr. Obama is eager to put a bandage on a Syria policy that has midwived a strategic catastrophe.

The problem is that Mr. Obama has little leverage and less credibility. The administration's efforts to fund and train proxies in the fight against Bashar Assad's regime have been inept, creating the vacuum filled by Islamic State and the Nusra Front. White House claims of "progress" in the fight against ISIS can't disguise that the group's capital is in Raqqa. Most of the progress so far in Syria has been achieved by Kurdish—and more recently Turkish—fighters.

Contrary to Mr. Obama's predictions that Vladimir Putin's Syria foray would be a quagmire, the Russians proved that limited military means could turn the war in the Assad regime's favor while enhancing their influence in the Middle East. Russia has created military facts on the ground that now leave the U.S. pleading with Mr. Putin for concessions.

The administration is spinning Mr. Kerry's latest trip to Geneva as another attempt to test Russian intentions, and Mr. Lavrov would no doubt be happy to arrange a ceasefire for the appropriate price. The U.S. has already conceded that Mr. Assad would not have to leave office immediately as part of a political transition. Russia will also want a ceasefire that allows it to attack any target it deems a "terrorist," meaning anyone opposed to Assad.

Russia's larger game is to use its Syrian leverage to shake off the financial sanctions from its invasion of Ukraine. On Wednesday, European diplomats agreed to renew some of the sanctions for another six months, but the wider European Union sanctions will be up for discussion in October. The Kremlin has long played the game of creating problems it can solve for a price, and Syria is such an opportune problem.

Trumpet Hour

PLANS FOR EU ARMY ACTUALLY HERE!, IRAN COURTS HAMAS, MERKEL'S DAYS NUMBERED?, AND MUCH MORE | SEPTEMBER 9

THE U.S. NAVY IN PROPHECY, TERRORIZED BY NON-TERRORISM, A SOLOMONIC DISCOVERY, AND MORE | SEPTEMBER 7

Europe's Plans for an Army Mature

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



THE EUROPEAN UNION TOOK SIGNIFICANT STEPS OVER THE course of the last week to outline concrete proposals for military cooperation. The *Times* first reported on the developments with its article [“EU Parks Its Tanks on NATO's Lawn With European Army Plan”](#) by Bruno Waterfield on September 6:

A timetable setting out steps to create EU military structures, billed by some countries as the foundation of a “European army,” will be announced this week.

Federica Mogherini, the EU's head of foreign affairs, told ambassadors yesterday that she would table the “road map” to take advantage of “political space” opened by the Brexit vote.

Her plans for military structures able “to act autonomously” from NATO have led to fears that the EU is seeking to rival the alliance that has been the primary European defense structure since 1949.

Ms. Mogherini told diplomats working for the European External Action Service that the military plan was the EU's best chance to relaunch itself after the “shocking result” of the referendum on EU membership. “It might sound a bit dramatic, but we are at this turning point,” she said.

“We could relaunch our European project and make it more functional and powerful for our citizens and the rest of the world. Or we could diminish its intensity and power.”

Her planned “global strategy” was drawn up this spring in secret to avoid derailing the referendum because many of her proposals had previously been blocked by British governments.

After the Brexit vote, the European Commission, France, Germany, Italy and countries in central Europe see a new chance to press ahead with deeper EU military integration without British opposition. ...

Last week, the Czech Republic and Hungary backed the plan as the foundation to “setting up a joint European army,” an aim shared by Jean-Claude Juncker, the commission president.

Ms. Mogherini said that her plan would be a “beginning,” and not a blueprint, for a fully-fledged EU army.

“The European army is not something that is going to happen any time soon,” she said. “Now is the time for real stuff, and this is only the beginning.”

The blueprint envisages countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland creating permanent military structures to act on behalf of the EU under a clause in the Lisbon Treaty that has never been used. The proposals will include “tackling the procedural, financial and political obstacles” to the deployment of the EU's battle groups, 18 national battalions available but never used for military missions. ...

A timetable for the plan will be discussed at a meeting of 27 EU leaders—excluding Theresa May—at a summit in Bratislava in 10 days. Diplomats said that Britain had dropped its opposition.

Later in the week, the *Financial Times* outlined more details in [“Brussels to Push for Closer EU Military Unity Post-Brexit”](#) on September 8:

Brussels is advancing an ambitious plan to bolster EU military coordination as European leaders seek to rally the bloc after Britain's vote to leave.

The plan, cast as an effort to fortify anti-terror defenses, includes proposals for a unified command for joint European military operations as well as the deployment of EU battle groups and common investments for military hardware.

It even calls for binding targets for policies such as standardizing military equipment on which member states would be graded by Brussels—much as they already are for their adherence to EU fiscal rules.

The initiative, greeted with skepticism in some member states, forms a key strand of the “State of the Union” address that Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, will deliver next week. The annual rallying cry for European unity and revitalization has taken on added significance for a bloc shaken by the UK's surprise vote to abandon it. ...

With elections next year in Germany and France, they believe the concrete elements of a “Europe of Defense” plan should be settled late this year.

Mr. Juncker's address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg next Wednesday comes two days before he presents his proposals to the leaders of the 27 remaining EU countries at a special post-Brexit summit in Bratislava.

Under discussion is the establishment of “permanent structured cooperation” that would allow member states that wish to embark on military coordination to do so without being vetoed by objecting countries. ...

The proposals include “joint civilian military planning and conduct capability”—code for a permanent operational headquarters for the day-to-day command of operations. This would provide central support to EU military missions, replacing the national headquarters on which the bloc currently relies.

Another initiative is to make use of EU battle groups for the first time, making use of 1,500-strong military units provided by member states. These were developed more than a decade ago to provide a rapid response to crises but have never been deployed, despite having had full operational capacity since 2007. ...

The main defense and security measures are drawn from a paper developed by Federica Mogherini, EU foreign policy chief, and presented to European foreign ministers at talks last week.

Chancellor Merkel Humiliated in State Elections

GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (CDU) came in a humiliating third place in a vote in Ms. Merkel's home state of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania on September 4. The party won 19 percent of the vote, coming behind the center-left Social Democrats (SPD) and the anti-immigrant Alternative for Deutschland (AfD).

“This election—which was seen as a significant test ahead of next year's general election—was all about her refugee policy,” wrote *bbc*. “For a year she's insisted ‘Wir schaffen es’ (we can do it) but German voters aren't convinced.”

Chancellor Merkel's approval record is at a five-year low, at 45 percent, down from 67 percent a year ago.

“The strong performance of AfD is bitter for many, for everyone in our party,” *cdu* secretary general Peter Tauber said. “A sizeable number of people wanted to voice their displeasure and to protest. And we saw that particularly in discussions about refugees.”

But more than the party, the election is a personal blow for the chancellor. “This was a dark day for Merkel,” a political scientist at Cologne University, Thomas Jaeger, told Reuters. “Everyone knows that she lost this election. Her district in parliament is there, she campaigned there, and refugees are her issue.”

Spiegel Online wrote that “this state election was basically a [vote about the chancellor](#), or more precisely, a Merkel-vote. This makes it very significant” (*Trumpet* translation throughout.)

“[I]t does not matter whether there is economic recovery, new pedestrian zones and many tourists,” wrote *Spiegel Online*. Despite the positives of Ms. Merkel's leadership, “a party succeeds in fanning fears of refugees.”

“[M]any people are worried,” said German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble. “A lot is storming from the outside on us,” he explained.

“Therefore there is an increasingly loud call among us for the strongman,” he warned. “This is a complex situation in which the desire for pithy and easy answers is stronger. Time for demagogues.”

The *Bavarian Merkur* newspaper noted that Schäuble's speech sounded like an address from a wannabe chancellor. With Merkel's numbers falling, has the competition to succeed her already begun?

This political unrest and desire for “the strongman” in Germany will have major implications for Europe and the world. For more on where this is leading, read our article “[Germany, Migrants and the Big Lie](#).”

T France's Burkini Ban of Desperation

Kieren Underwood | September 5

ROMANIA ONCE BANNED PLAYING SCRABBLE BECAUSE IT WAS “overly intellectual.” In Monza, Italy, it's illegal to keep a goldfish in a bowl, and in Iran, gelling your hair into spikes is prohibited. And as of August 2016, about 30 French towns have made it illegal to wear a *burkini* on the beach.

Burkinis are a type of female swimsuit designed to conform with Islamic traditions of modest dress.

Burkinis aren't being banned because they are dangerous. The problem is secularist France saw burkinis popping up on its beaches a month after a [terrorist attack in Nice](#) killed 86 people.

Beginning on July 28, Cannes, a resort town on the French Riviera, banned the burkini. Those caught wearing it would be fined \$42. Approximately 30 towns joined in on the ban, including Nice. Human rights and anti-Islamophobia associations argued the bans breached the French Constitution. In one town, the ban was taken to court.

France's highest administrative court ruled against the burkini ban on August 26, saying it was “a serious and manifestly illegal attack on fundamental freedoms.”

But the majority of mayors who banned the burkini have refused to lift the restrictions. Former President Nicolas Sarkozy called instead for a nationwide ban on burkinis.

For those who look at the burkini case from a localized and legal standpoint, the decision is clear: France protects religious freedom, burkinis are not dangerous, therefore, it should not be banned.

Those who favor the ban don't see burkinis as an isolated incident. To them, burkinis are part of a [clash of civilizations](#).

Jean-Louis Harouel, professor emeritus of the history of law at the University of Paris, summed up the thinking of the growing right-wing movement in France when he [criticized the court's decision](#):

[T]he Conseil d'Etat [the court] failed to take into account the fact that France is now engaged in a clash of civilizations, that just in the past year has cost it hundreds of deaths on its own territory, and which made it necessary to maintain the state of emergency. "Islamism" is now making war on France, and there is no real boundary-line between Islam and Islamism.

The Conseil d'Etat failed to take into account the shock felt by the French people on seeing burkinis deliberately appearing on the beaches so soon after terrible massacres

had been committed in France by Muslims acting in the name of their god. So soon after the carnage on the promenade in Nice and the slitting of the throat of a priest while he was fulfilling his priestly duties, such an increase in the flaunting of Muslim identity is truly indecent.

If you're a safe distance from Europe, you might think the burkini ban is ridiculous. But if your child didn't come back from celebrations in Nice on Bastille Day, you might think differently. You might be, as France is, getting desperate.

Germany to Invest in Turkish Military Base

GERMANY PLANS TO SPEND \$63 MILLION BUILDING A NEW RUNWAY and command center at the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, according to a report by *Speigel* on September 6. The funding is an abrupt change; until recently, Turkey and Germany have been at odds over the base. Turkey banned German leaders from visiting the base in June, after Germany's parliament passed a resolution declaring that the Ottoman's mass slaughter of Armenians in 1914 was genocide. Erdoğan has indicated that the ban will soon be lifted. *Deutsche Welle* reported:

Of €58 million [US\$65 million], €26 million would fund the laying of a new airfield for the Tornados and appropriate Bundeswehr accommodation for soldiers. A further €30 million, awaiting budgetary clearance, would be spent to erect a command center. For this, foundations would be necessary, costing a further €2 million, *Der Spiegel* reported.

A Defense Ministry spokesman added that the transportable command center, comprising sophisticated equipment fitted inside large containers, was a useful purchase anyway, independent of Incirlik.

TW IN BRIEF

'Practice attack' at Paris's Notre Dame Basilica?: Two people were in custody on Wednesday after a car parked near Paris's Notre Dame Cathedral was found with seven gas canisters inside. The vehicle's license plates had also been illegally removed. No detonator was in the car, but police say the owner

might have been carrying out a "test run" for a terror attack. The car's owner was on a watch list of people suspected of religious radicalism. A book written in Arabic was found at the scene. France is on high alert after a deadly spate of jihadist attacks and threats against national landmarks.

ASIA

Great! North Korea Has Outlawed Sarcasm

INTERNET USERS IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD LIKELY BE FAMILIAR with the sarcastic expression "Thanks, Obama!," a phrase often used by the president's critics to facetiously blame personal inconveniences on policies enacted by the administration. But in North Korea, as of Thursday, this kind of sarcasm is against the law. The regime of Kim Jong-un has outlawed sarcasm because of fears that people only agree with the "supreme leader" in an ironic way.

The *Independent* wrote on September 8:

North Korea has forbidden people from making sarcastic comments about Kim Jong-un or his totalitarian regime in their everyday conversations. Even indirect criticism of the authoritarian government has been banned, Asian media reported.

Residents were warned against criticizing the state in a series of mass meetings held by functionaries across the country.

"One state security official personally organized a meeting to alert local residents to potential 'hostile actions' by

internal rebellious elements," a source in Jagang Province told Radio Free Asia's Korean Service. "The main point of the lecture was 'Keep your mouths shut.'" ...

Officials told people that sarcastic expressions such as "This is all America's fault" would constitute unacceptable criticism of the regime. "This habit of the central authorities of blaming the wrong country when a problem's cause obviously lies elsewhere has led citizens to mock the party," an anonymous source said. ...

This news may sound like satire that would be published in *The Onion* or another such source, but it is tragically true. In recent months, media on the Korean peninsula have reported a rise in public acts of dissent in the North. Adolescents are becoming disillusioned about the propaganda the government feeds them, and graffiti mocking the regime has appeared twice in recent weeks. The ban on sarcasm appears to be part of a government crack-down on this uptick in dissent.

Duterte's Insult of President Obama Costs Philippines Stock Market Hundreds of Millions

AFTER PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT RODRIGO DUTERTE INSULTED United States President Barack Obama and threatened to pull the Philippines out of the United Nations, his country's stock market lost hundreds of millions of dollars.

The *Independent* [reported](#) on September 7:

Losses in Philippine stocks are accelerating as foreigners keep pulling money from Asia's most expensive market, amid speculation that the outbursts of President Rodrigo Duterte are hurting investor sentiment.

The Philippine Stock Exchange Index fell 1.3 percent to 7,619.10 in its biggest decline in five weeks. The gauge has dropped 6 percent from a 15-month high on July 21, paring its gain this year to 9.6 percent.

Foreign funds pulled \$58 million from local equities on Wednesday, the most in almost a year, and have sold a net \$333 million in an 11-day run of outflows. The index is down 2.3 percent this quarter, the only decliner among major Asian markets.

Duterte's threat to call U.S. President Barack Obama a "son of a whore" if he criticized an anti-drug campaign that's left around 2,400 dead, and the subsequent cancellation of a meeting between the leaders, "didn't sit well" with overseas investors

Although Duterte later backed away from his insult, his style of leadership could lead to a weakening in the U.S.-Philippines alliance that has helped to stabilize Asia for decades.

Another Round in the 'Great Game' to Soon Begin?

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS, THE VAST TERRITORY OF Central Asia was the trophy to be won in the so-called "Great Game." The Russians, British, Mongols, Turks, Persians and others vied at sundry times for control over this expansive and strategic region. And now, a confluence of factors are eroding the region's stability and placing it, once again, in a precarious position. How will the many powers with an interest in Central Asia respond?

On September 7, [Stratfor's](#) Roger Baker enumerated the factors that could potentially destabilize the region:

In recent months, several events have drawn the world's attention back to Central Asia. A series of small flare-ups have occurred along the contested Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border, and though not all that unusual for the two countries, the dispute has grown more contentious as the competition increases for dwindling water resources. In Kyrgyzstan, too, an apparent Uighur terrorist attack rocked the Chinese Embassy, raising concerns that Central Asian militants who have trained in Syria may bring

their newfound skills home. The Kazakh government, meanwhile, has redoubled its crackdown on militancy—sweeping up its political opponents in the process—following attacks by Islamist militants. And on September 2, longtime Uzbek President Islam Karimov died, leaving his country to undertake its first power transition as an independent state. Despite the fact that the country appears to have a succession plan in place (and that nearby Turkmenistan's first transition a decade ago proceeded relatively smoothly), the new leader will face simmering social problems and clan competition.

Stratfor went on to name Russia and China as high on the list of the "usual suspects" who would likely benefit from the instability. Already, under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Moscow and Beijing exert inordinate influence over the nations of Central Asia. If the nations continue to weaken, the bear and dragon could even more decisively take this trophy of the Great Game.

Here We Go Again: Russian Jet Flew 10 Feet from U.S. Aircraft

U.S. OFFICIALS REPORTED ON WEDNESDAY THAT A RUSSIAN fighter jet flew within 10 feet of an American reconnaissance plane operating over the Black Sea, saying the intercept was "dangerous and unprofessional."

The BBC reports:

Russia is currently carrying out military exercises in

the Black Sea. Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis said the U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft had been conducting routine operations in international airspace when the Russian fighter made the unsafe maneuver. "These actions have the potential to unnecessarily escalate tensions and could result in a miscalculation or accident," he said. A U.S. defense official quoted by Agency France-Presse news

agency said the Russian plane had flown within 30 feet of the P-8A before closing to just 10 feet. ...

This is the latest of many confrontational acts by Russian forces against American personnel. Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, relations between the two sides have been strained. Shortly after that annexation, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry explained that Russia's brazen move is having its greatest effect not on America, but on Europe:

The move shocked the world. Most of all, it shocked Europe. In a stroke, Russian President Vladimir Putin redrew Ukraine's borders. ... Note the amount of fear Russia's attack generated. ... This terrifies Eastern Europeans. It is the kind of action that many assumed had ended forever once the Soviet Union fell. ... Ukrainians

and Eastern Europeans have lived through brutal occupation. Their countries were pulverized during World War II. They know what Russia can and will do—and they fear it in a way that is hard for us in the West to even imagine. ... We have been prophesying for around 70 years that Eastern Europe would become a vital part of a new European superpower—a resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. This prophecy is directly related to the Crimean crisis! The fear you see in Europe because of events in Crimea is going to cause 10 leaders in Europe to unite in a sudden and dramatic way—and in precise accordance with the Bible's description of that European empire!

To understand more, read Mr. Flurry's article "[The Crimean Crisis Is Reshaping Europe!](#)"

TW IN BRIEF

Historic flooding in North Korea: Sixty North Koreans were killed and 44,000 were left homeless after the Tumen River experienced its worst flooding ever recorded. The United Nations said Tuesday that the flooding was the result of unusually heavy rainfall that began four days earlier. Nine thousand buildings were destroyed in the affected area, and 5 percent of the population is now homeless.

Half a million young Japanese too socially dysfunctional to leave home: A survey found that some 541,000 Japanese people, age 15 to 39, avoid social contact and shut themselves in their homes. The *Japan Times* wrote about the reclusive individuals—known as *hikikomori*—on Wednesday: "The Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry defines *hikikomori* as people who have stayed at home for at least six months without going to school or work, or going out to interact with others."

ANGLO-AMERICA



A Secret Whirlwind Destroys Iran

Gerald Flurry,
The Key of David | September 11

Iran is focused on America and the Jewish nation of Israel, unaware that a rising German-led superpower already has it surrounded.



Why Russia Is Tampering With the U.S. Election

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



RUSSIAN HACKERS TARGETED VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEMS IN Illinois and Arizona last June, according to an August 29 statement from a spokesman for Arizona Secretary of State Michele Reagan. While the hackers didn't compromise the state system, they did steal the username and password of a single election official in Gila County, Arizona.

While the FBI hasn't specified if these hackers were Russian criminals or Russian officials, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton told journalist on Monday that she is "really concerned about the credible reports about Russian government interference in our elections." While Clinton speculated that this hack might be an attempt by the Kremlin to help Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump win the U.S. election, security

analysts are stating that Russian hackers might have a different objective: *to undermine the idea of liberal democracy.*

According to a September 7 article by Jack Watling in [Haaretz](#):

There are good reasons to believe that the electoral hacks are ... designed to sow distrust and panic, to erode people's confidence in the process, rather than to commit fraud. The hack of the Democratic National Committee, for example, released e-mails that suggested the DNC had prejudiced the Democratic Primary in favor of Hillary Clinton. This reinforced the view, already advocated by some on the far left of the party, that the system was rigged against their candidate Bernie Sanders.

The hack on the electoral computers achieves a

similar function. Republican nominee Donald Trump has for months been warning that the election could be rigged and even started to organize “election observers” to ensure that there was no tampering at polling stations.

There were previously few reports of electoral fraud, but the Russian hack confirms that it is possible on a large scale, and gives credibility to those who already feared that it could happen. ...

It would not be surprising if on election day “irregularities” at polling stations, highlighted by Trump’s election observers, are given disproportionate attention by Kremlin-affiliated news organizations Russia Today and Sputnik International, amplified by the Olgonauts. This precise tactic was carried out in the United Kingdom during the Scottish independence referendum. When it became clear that the Scottish Nationalists had lost the vote to leave Britain, Russian “electoral observers” began to cite irregularities in the count, and the story ran on Russia Today. Most people in Scotland did not believe these reports, but for those who

already thought there might be an “establishment stitch up,” it confirmed their fears.

What better way to weaken American power than to convince other nations that the United States is hypocritical in its condemnation of rigged elections? And to convince Americans themselves that their democracy is corrupt?

The administration of Vladimir Putin has been increasingly resorting to tactics of hybrid warfare in recent years. Russian-controlled media outlets have already been caught publishing doctored stories about Europe’s migrant crisis in an attempt to undermine German Chancellor Angela Merkel. It isn’t much of a stretch to think that the Kremlin would try to reduce America’s influence in Eastern Europe by sowing seeds of discord in America’s domestic political landscape. To do this, Moscow doesn’t actually need to steal the upcoming presidential election by hacking into voting machines; it just needs to cast doubt on America’s electoral process.



Could World War III Start With a Currency War?

Robert Morley | September 7

WHEN BRITAIN VOTED TO LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION IN JUNE, the one asset impacted most was the United Kingdom’s most important—its currency. The pound plunged by 15 percent against the United States dollar. Only one other time since 1792 has the pound fallen so low.

The pound is one of the world’s most important currencies. Prior to June 24, a loss of such magnitude in a tier 1 currency was almost unheard of.

This could have serious consequences—the more so because it is part of an already dangerous narrative.

Since the 2009 economic collapse, a quiet economic war has been simmering. As Brazilian Finance Minister Guido Mantega warned in September 2010, America’s efforts to jump-start its economy by driving down the dollar’s value through money printing had set off an “international currency war.”

Since then, in an effort to fix economic problems, increasing numbers of countries have enacted similar beggar-thy-neighbor fiscal policies by actively devaluing their money. When the currency of a nation loses value, it becomes cheaper for foreigners to buy products from that country. This causes an increase in exports from the country that devalued, which in theory translates into more industry, manufacturing jobs and lower unemployment.

On August 4, Britain did it again—and this time at least, it was purposeful. In what the *Telegraph* called a “forceful response” to the Brexit vote, the Bank of England slashed its lending rate in half. It was the first interest rate cut in seven years.

Britain’s short-term economic prospects may temporarily improve due to its economic posturing, but how much of it will come at the expense of other countries?

As Mantega warned, economically this kind of action can be interpreted as an act of war—and can easily escalate!

When one country devalues its currency, the easiest way for other countries to regain their competitive edge is to react by

devaluing their own currency.

This is the dangerous cycle the world has been locked in since the 2008 economic crash. Once currency devaluations lose their effectiveness because everyone is devaluing, then nations look to more drastic measures.

Global trade trends are “flashing warning signs,” warned Stephen Roach, former chief economist at Morgan Stanley. The latest annual report from Global Trade Alert was its most negative since it began publishing in 2009.

When Britain voted to leave the EU, it added force to an already alarming currency war, which could easily become a trade war. Whether it is 1913 or 1933, history is disturbingly clear about what comes next. It is hard not to think of the old free-trade slogan attributed to Frédéric Bastiat: “If goods don’t cross borders, armies will.”

But it is not just history crying out about the risk of war.

Over and over, Herbert W. Armstrong warned about the CONNECTION BETWEEN TRADE WAR AND WORLD WAR. As far back as 1960, he said that trade war would be the first blow of the biblically prophesied nuclear World War III.

In a March 1971 *Plain Truth* magazine article titled “Trade War Looming to Trigger World War III,” Mr. Armstrong warned that American businesses were increasingly moving operations to Asia due to greedy union demands. He warned that the result would be the erosion of well-paying jobs and economic decline. He said political pressure would inevitably build to “start raising high-tariff barriers against other countries.”

But if we engaged in the drastic protectionist policies needed to protect America’s high-cost labor, he warned, IN TIME IT WOULD INEVITABLY TRIGGER NUCLEAR WAR.

Mr. Armstrong based those predictions on prophecies in Ezekiel 7, Deuteronomy 28 and elsewhere. He said the siege God prophesied in Deuteronomy 28:52 symbolized America’s

economy being battered by competition from foreign powers.

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote about this in our December 2014 issue: “America’s enemies are going to cause economic problems and bring on destruction in many ways ‘until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee’ (verse 52). The real pressure is coming from without. ‘In all thy

gates’ refers to a trade war. The enemies of America, Britain and the Jews will attack their currencies, their financial markets, and their economic might.”

Fast-forward to today. That prophesied worldwide trade war has begun.

As history and prophecy both show, world war is next.

 Follow [Robert Morley](#)

Most Violent Month in Chicago in 19 Years

THIRTEEN PEOPLE WERE SHOT DEAD IN CHICAGO OVER LABOR DAY weekend. These deaths brought the city’s gun-homicide total up to 512 since the beginning of the year. At this pace, Chicago is set to have its deadliest year since 1998, when 704 people were shot to death. This August was the city’s deadliest month since June 1996, when 90 people were killed and another 382 wounded in gun violence.

According to a September 7 article in the [National Review](#):

Chicago is perhaps the most obvious example to date of the “Ferguson Effect,” the previously mocked hypothesis that, in the wake of the hostility toward law enforcement that sprang up following events in Ferguson, Mo., in 2014, police in minority neighborhoods have backed off interacting with residents when not absolutely necessary. Last year saw homicide rates spike in cities with aggressive anti-police movements—St. Louis, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Chicago,

etc.—and even Ferguson Effect-skeptics such as Richard Rosenfeld of the University of Missouri-St. Louis were forced to change their minds. Rosenfeld has declared that the Ferguson Effect is “the only explanation that gets the timing right.” In October 2015, even Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel said that police in his city were going “fetal.”

In the August 2015 *Trumpet*, editor in chief [Gerald Flurry](#) discussed the problems that naturally result when the nation’s law enforcement—instead of the criminals—is handcuffed. That result, in short, is that violent crime will increase. “We must see what is happening in America today as God does,” he wrote in [“Police Under Attack.”](#) “We have to recognize the cause and see the spiritual dimension. Then we can look at Bible prophecy and see exactly where it is leading. ... But in the end, these nation-destroying problems are actually *correction from God* to help us see our sins and repent of them.”

TW IN BRIEF

Commander-in-Chief Forum: Republican nominee Donald Trump praised Russian President Vladimir Putin again on Wednesday in front of the Commander-in-Chief Forum, calling him a “leader” and saying Putin has “great control over his country.” Trump offered more praise for Russian strongman Vladimir Putin than America’s own military leadership, which he described as “embarrassing.” Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton was again questioned from the outset about her handling of classified information and the military intervention in Libya that she supported in the Obama administration.

President Obama nominates first-ever Muslim federal judge: United States President Barack Obama nominated a Muslim judge for the U.S. District Court for Washington on Tuesday, becoming the first president to nominate a Muslim to a federal judge position. Mr. Obama said he was “confident he will serve the American people with integrity and a steadfast commitment to justice.” It is unlikely that the Republican-controlled Senate will schedule the confirmation process. The Republicans have refused to consider Mr. Obama’s judicial nominees for several months now, including one nominee to the Supreme Court.



The Father's Indispensable Role

Stephen Flurry,
Trumpet Daily | September 9

The vital responsibility of the Christian father in the home

 Follow [Stephen Flurry](#)

