

Trumpet Weekly

DECEMBER 23, 2016



A man prays at a makeshift memorial on December 20 in front of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin, where a truck crashed into a Christmas market.

Berlin Attack: Was This Germany's 9/11?

Brad Macdonald | December 20

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



JOHN MACDOUGALL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES
BRAD MACDONALD

WOW, THERE IT IS. THE GRUESOME, heart-wrenching terrorist attack on Germany's capital that many expected, and that the West's radical Islamist enemies warned was coming. The question now is, what effect will this attack have on Germany and Europe?

Only time will tell. But there is reason

to think that [this could be a game changer](#). One analyst said Tuesday morning that this could be Germany's 9/11. It's easy to exaggerate in moments like this, but he may be right. The death count isn't nearly as high, but the *symbolism* and more importantly the *consequences*—on Germany and Europe, and even the international community—could be similar.

On Monday, a man in a truck mowed into a crowd in a Berlin Christmas market, killing 12 and injuring 48 others. The attack joins

the already long list of Islamist terrorist attacks on Europe, a list that includes the *Charlie Hebdo* slaughter (12 deaths), the November 2015 Paris attacks (130 deaths), the Brussels bombings (32 deaths), the Cologne sexual assaults (1,200 victims), the Nice massacre (84 deaths), the Würzburg ax assault (5 injured), the Reutlingen attack (1 killed, 2 injured), the Munich shooting (9 deaths), and the Ansbach festival suicide attack (15 injured). But what happened in Berlin is likely to impact Germans more profoundly than these. Why?

For now, three reasons: the timing, the target and the location.

The timing of Monday's attack, *less than a week before Christmas*, resonates powerfully with the German people. Germans have a special, fervent love of this holiday. The Christmas tradition is rooted in ancient Babylon, but was perpetuated particularly well by the Germans. This wasn't just an attack on a crowd of people, a community or even a city. It was an attack on a deep-seated cultural and social tradition. It was an attack on what it means to be German, at least at this time of the year. "During the last months of the year, Germany is extra popular because of its Christmas markets," explains Berlin-Enjoy.com, a popular travel blog. "The German Christmas atmosphere is different from most other countries in the world. The German people simply love Christmas and this can be observed on the streets, in the shopping centers and even around touristic attractions."

Visiting Germany last week, I experienced this unique and deep affection. Last Wednesday evening I wanted to have dinner with a German friend, but it was almost impossible to find a restaurant with a spare table. In the end we found one and sat down, surrounded by happy Germans in red hats opening gifts. "We Germans love Christmas," explained my elderly German friend.

Today this love of Christmas is perhaps more cultural and social than spiritual or religious. Be that as it may, Christmas is obviously a distinctly Christian belief and practice. The radical Islamist terrorists know this, which no doubt adds to the "glory" and success of Monday's attack. But so do the German people, and many will view this as an assault on Germany's Christian heritage. There is already growing momentum in Germany (especially in the conservative, traditional south) and Europe to revive and defend Europe's Christian roots. This trend isn't patently obvious; Europe's churches aren't exactly overflowing. But look at the politicians and parties whose popularity is growing, like François Fillon in France and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands. These and a host of others all seek to revive Europe's Christian heritage.

It will be hard for us foreigners to detect, but Monday's attack will drive home the message to Germans that Germany's Christian culture, its Christian traditions, and its Christian values and morality are under attack. The response, quite naturally, will be for growing numbers of Germans to gravitate toward the politician or political party they believe will best defend them. Hint: That politician is NOT Angela Merkel.

Next, consider the specific target of this attack. One measure of the Germans' love for Christmas is the sheer number of Christmas markets that pop up in villages, towns and city centers across the nation at this time of year. They vary, but many Christmas markets include glitzy lights, a large Christmas tree, street performers, countless stalls selling trinkets and gifts, and plenty of food and beer. "One of the greatest things you can visit in November-December are the Christmas markets," explains Berlin-Enjoy.

com. "Also in the city of Berlin you can visit many great Christmas markets and most of them already start in the end of November."

Some of these Christmas markets are internationally renowned. Tourists travel from all over the world to Germany at this time of year to visit these markets. The market attacked Monday in Berlin, the Weihnachtsmarkt am Gedächtniskirche, is one of Berlin's most popular. Tourist guides place it in the top five in the country; more than 2 million people visit each year. This wasn't a tiny market in some obscure village in east Germany. If you're American, what happened in Berlin is akin to a 50-ton truck thundering down 6th Avenue and plowing through spectators at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

That would be pretty awful, and it would make millions of Americans angry—very angry.

After this attack, it's hard to imagine attendance not suffering at other Christmas markets across Germany. People who do visit the markets will do so anxiously and with an eye out for rogue vehicles. This will sour the festive spirit and national mood of Germany. Stealing Christmas in this way will impact the minds of many Germans in a unique and personal way.

Finally, consider the location of this attack: Berlin. There is much to consider here. Berlin is Germany's capital, and in many respects the capital of Europe. It is home to the Bundestag, most of Germany's intellectual and political leadership, and, of course, the most powerful person in Europe, Angela Merkel. What happened Monday shows that radical Islamist terrorism is not being stopped, not even in Europe's most important city. You can be sure that message will be told over and over and over.

But Berlin is more than just a national capital.

Berlin is Germany's shining city on a hill. It's a symbol of the progress and achievements of postwar and post-unification Germany. Berlin is a glowing testament to Germany's incredible post-unification transformation, and a prophecy—in the eyes of the German elite—of Germany's future.

During the Cold War, Berlin was a divided, dilapidated city. Since 1989, however, it has become one of Europe's most vibrant, wealthy, sophisticated and liberal cities. Berlin is cosmopolitan and multicultural—a city marinating in various cultures, races and religions. *Time* magazine in 2009 called Berlin Europe's capital of "cool."

All this matters because of the *mentality* and *spirit* behind Berlin's stunning transformation. Berlin was created by German liberals and today is the epicenter of German liberalism. To Germany's intellectual and political class, the city of Berlin—its culture, laws, atmosphere, politics and media—embodies what it means to be a post-unification German. That is, secular, sophisticated, tolerant, nonjudgmental, open-minded, multicultural, environmentally friendly.

Berlin is home to Germany's leaders and trendsetters, the intellectual elite, people working in the mainstream media, members of the mainstream political parties, the nation's top journalists, professors, artists and politicians. And it's from Berlin that these liberal leaders seek to transform the rest of the country into Berlin. From Berlin they beam their message of tolerance, multiculturalism and secularism to the rest of the nation.

This attack in Berlin—a city that supposedly testifies to the countless benefits of being multicultural, progressive and sophisticated—dealt a significant blow to German liberalism. Many

Germans will spend Christmas 2016 pondering this attack and seeing more clearly than ever how it exposes the deep and dangerous flaws of multiculturalism, secularism, tolerance and open-mindedness.

Time will tell, but this could be a milestone event in the evolution of the post-unification German psyche. This attack could mark the moment Germany stopped moving toward being progressive, secular and multicultural and began moving much more quickly toward its more traditional, conservative, nationalist roots.

Berlin today is a city in which altruistic dreams are meeting grim reality. Being open-minded and multicultural can be wonderful and empowering—until an Islamist terrorist hijacks a lorry and plows into innocent bystanders enjoying a Christmas market. Being altruistic and welcoming of migrants may

feel great—until migrants begin waving Islamic State flags and stalking your teenage daughters.

Harsh realities like the Berlin attack will force Europeans to substitute postwar values with basic human urges. Tolerance will be replaced by prejudice, multiculturalism by patriotism, the community spirit with a greater determination for self-preservation and self-advancement.

This is the new reality: Berliners, the German people—and even Europeans in general—are grappling with a choice between who they want to be and who they need to be. The message from Berlin is that while many Germans might want to be progressive, open-minded and tolerant, *they need to be more cynical, more unforgiving and more confrontational.*

And this, you can be sure, is a trend that will affect us all!

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MIDDLE EAST

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Shiite Militias Seeking to Control Iraqi-Syrian Border

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



FOR SOME TIME THE *TRUMPET* HAS REPORTED ON THE RISE OF THE importance of Iranian-directed Shiite militias in the fight against the Islamic State. On November 26, the Iraqi government voted to admit the largest of these, the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), into its own national security forces. Al-Monitor reported this week that the Shiite force is now seeking deployment to maintain the [Syrian- Iraqi border](#).

Mohammed al-Basri, a PMU leader, was quoted in the Iranian Fars News Agency on December 18 as saying, “The PMU’s main goal is to cut supply routes in the western Mosul area and secure the border with Syria.”

Abdoud al-Issawi, a member of parliament for the State of Law Coalition, said in a media statement October 17, “The PMU is an official security institution and is capable of maintaining the Iraqi border, and there is no harm

in cooperation with the rest of the security services [in the country] to this end.”

Issawi’s statements were general, whereas the PMU emphasized that it wants to maintain Iraq’s border with Syria, in particular. This raises several questions. Is this demand part of the plan to secure the route Iran wants to establish from its border with Iraq all the way to the Syrian-Iraqi border? ...

PMU control of the Syrian border would include part of the road Iran wants to build from the eastern Iraqi-Iranian border to the western Iraqi-Syrian border, in addition to facilitating the infiltration of Shiite militants fighting alongside President Bashar Assad in Syria. ...

Several questions must be asked. Can the PMU secure the borders? Does it have the trained forces and the right weapons to control the borderline? Will Iraq’s allies,

including the United States, be OK with the PMU, which is allied with Iran, being in charge of a 600-kilometer [373-mile] border?

Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Abadi must first sign off on the deal in order for the PMU to handle border security. However, the fact that Iran wants to control the Iraqi-Syrian border, as well as connect Iran to Syria with a new super highway, indicates how far Iran has come in its goal of taking over Iraq.

As the United States entered Iraq in 2003, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote a prescient article titled “[Is Iraq About to Fall to Iran?](#)” He wrote, “[T]hough the current U.S. administration is vowing not to allow an Iranian-style theocracy to gain hold in Iraq, there are also signs in the way it is rebuilding the country that show a fundamental lack of political will to see this pledge through. Perhaps it will not be during the term of the current president, but the Bible shows that America will fail to contain Iran the way it hopes to.”



The Middle East's Forgotten Civil War

Anthony Chibarrirwe | December 20

YEMEN HAS BECOME THE NEW SYRIA. “PEOPLE ARE DYING ... THE infrastructure is falling apart ... and the economy is on the brink of the abyss,” warned United Nations official Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Up to 10,000 people have been killed in the current civil war in Yemen. Nearly 37,000 Yemenis have been injured. About 182,000 Yemenis have fled to neighboring countries. Close to 80 percent of the nation’s population—21 million people—desperately need health services. Authorities fear that disease epidemics could further ravage the battered nation.

Yemen has become one of the battlefields of an all-too-common proxy war between regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Iran is the primary agitator of the conflict. It sponsors the Houthis, the main rebel group in Yemen that first revolted against the government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2004. At that time, the Saleh government accused the Houthis of attempting to reinstate the Shiite theocracy that once ruled Yemen.

The government in Yemen feared the Houthis far more than it feared al Qaeda in Yemen!

The Houthis used the Yemeni “Arab Spring” of 2011 to step up its antigovernment movement, and, in what is now called the September 21 Revolution of 2014, Houthi rebels seized the capital, Sanaa.

An Iranian member of parliament with close ties to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was quoted by the state’s Rasa News Agency as saying, “Three Arab capitals [Beirut, Damascus and Baghdad] have today ended up in the hands of Iran and belong to the Islamic Iranian revolution.” He reportedly boasted that the fourth was Sanaa.

On March 25, 2015, Saudi Arabia assembled a coalition of Arab nations to rout the Houthis from Sanaa.

However, “the war in Yemen is proving to be costly for the Saudi economy,” noted the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses. “The intervention is all the more problematic because it has failed to resolve the Yemeni standoff while aggravating the humanitarian crisis.”

In some regards, the United States-supported Saudi coalition has committed worse atrocities than Houthis. A third of its air strikes have reportedly targeted civilians, including hospitals, schools, mosques, markets, farms and funeral ceremonies.

On October 8, the Saudi coalition bombed a funeral ceremony

for the father of a politician in the Houthi-Saleh alliance. The air strike killed 140 people and injured more than 500 others. It was the single worst attack on civilians in Yemen. Human Rights Watch called it an apparent war crime. It drew strong condemnation from Saudi allies, enemies and those in between.

The United States said it was “deeply disturbed by reports of [the] air strike on a funeral hall in Yemen.” White House National Security Council spokesman Ned Price said: “In light of this and other recent incidents, we have initiated an immediate review of our already significantly reduced support to the Saudi-led coalition and are prepared to adjust our support so as to better align with U.S. principles, values and interests”

In light of this funeral attack, the U.S. not only hardened its stance toward the Saudi Arabian alliance, but it also softened its position toward the Houthis. On October 15, Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the U.S. had made an arrangement with the Houthis and neighboring sultanate of Oman: The U.S. airlifted some wounded Yemenis to Oman, and the Houthis, in exchange, released two captive Americans. A State Department spokesman referred to the release of the Americans as a “humanitarian gesture by the Houthis.”

The Houthis have seemingly outperformed the Saudi coalition in the art of “positive” and “humanitarian” gestures. But while their most significant attacks have not created a stir on a humanitarian level, they certainly have on a geopolitical level.

During the week before and after the funeral attack, the Houthis fired advanced missiles at transport vessels and American destroyers in the Red Sea waters.

Over the past year and a half, U.S. warships intercepted five shipments of Iranian weapons to Houthi rebels in Yemen. Reuters reported that Iran was using Yemen’s eastern neighbor, Oman, as a transit point for shipping sophisticated weaponry to the Houthis.

The Saudi-led coalition has seized or destroyed multiple boatloads of Iranian weapons and communications equipment.

“The Houthi takeover in Yemen proves that Iran is implementing a bold strategy to control the vital sea lane from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea,” wrote *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry in his April 2015 article titled “[Iran Gets a Stranglehold on the Middle East.](#)” “We need to understand the gravity of this new situation in Yemen!”

Iranian Military Budget Increases After U.S. Payoff

REVELATIONS A FEW MONTHS AGO THAT THE UNITED STATES ONLY received its Iranian-detained American citizens after paying Iran \$1.7 billion shocked many. Now it turns out that Iran's military budget is due to expand by 40 percent next year. *Algemeiner* reported this week that there is [likely a connection](#):

According to former senior MEMRI [Middle East Media Research Institute] analyst Dr. Nimrod Raphaeli, though "money is fungible," and it cannot be established that the \$1.7 billion (originally reported as \$400 million) delivered in two tranches to the Islamic Republic in exchange for the release of American hostages has gone directly to Iran's various military branches and operations, "it, at a minimum, enabled the government to release an equal amount of money for defense purposes. It is noteworthy that the increase in the proposed defense budget for 2017 is approximately equal to the amount transferred by the U.S."

Raphaeli wrote that since mid-2013, when Hassan Rouhani succeeded Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president, the regime's allocations to the military have continuously grown. But ahead of the next fiscal year (March 2017–March 2018), the government submitted a draft budget that sees a sharp increase of 39 percent—amounting to a total of \$10.3 billion—for defense, including a big increase in the budget of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). ...

As the *Algemeiner* reported late last month, in spite of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the nuclear deal signed between Tehran and world powers a year ago in July, dangerous confrontations between American and Iranian warships in the Persian Gulf have increased by more than 50 percent in 2016 as compared with the 2015.

This has been accompanied by months of belligerent statements emanating from Tehran, and actions in the form of ballistic-missile testing and boasts of military advancements—the most recent of which was the entry of two Islamic Republic naval warships into the Atlantic Ocean.

Even before the revelation of the cash transfer, Gerald Flurry wrote "[The Worst Foreign-Policy Blunder in American History](#)," an article condemning the prisoner swap, as Iran clearly got the better end of the deal. He said: "**American officials claimed that the Iranians had initially demanded the U.S. release even more of their people, so the eventual agreement represented a victory for diplomacy. Think about that: America is saying, *This deal could have been even more unfair, if not for diplomatic talks!* How can anyone in his right mind believe this? Iran parlayed several kidnappings into the release of criminals! When America responds to aggression this way, what is stopping Iran from continuing to exploit such weakness?**"

Russia, Iran, Turkey to Guarantee Peace Deal in Syria.

FOR 18 MONTHS, THE UNITED STATES TRIED DESPERATELY TO CORRAL international players to bring an end to the Syrian civil war. Its efforts have largely fallen flat. This week, three of the most important players in Syria—Iran, Turkey and Russia—met to discuss Syria's future. [The United States wasn't even invited](#). The *Telegraph* reported:

The three regional powers most deeply involved in Syria's war met for an unprecedented summit in Moscow, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said they had reached significant agreements.

"Iran, Russia and Turkey are ready to assist in preparing the agreement in the making between the Syrian government and the opposition and to become its guarantor," Mr. Lavrov said. ...

Turkey has been a longtime backer of Syrian rebel groups while Russia and Iran have strongly supported the

Assad regime throughout the five-year Syrian war.

But Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has recently dropped his demand that Syrian president Bashar Assad step down from power and muted his criticism of Russian bombing in Syria. ...

It remains to be seen if Russia and Turkey can pull off the more ambitious goal of a nationwide ceasefire and eventually full peace talks.

But the summit in Moscow vividly illustrated the new power dynamics around Syria, as former rivals Russia and Turkey sat across the table from each other while the U.S. was not even invited to the talks.

The talks were conducted in the shadow of Monday's assassination of Moscow's ambassador to Ankara by a Turkish police officer. However, even that couldn't derail warming Turkish and Russian ties.

TW IN BRIEF

The Islamic State hits Jordanian tourist site: A popular tourist destination in Jordan became a death trap on Sunday after gunmen began firing on law enforcement and passers-by. Ten people were killed and at least 34 wounded in the attack at a Jordanian Crusader castle. A statement on Sunday said four gunmen were killed. Large amounts of weapons had also been seized.

The attack was part of a series of attacks against Jordanian police. The Islamic State claimed responsibility on its official media arm Amaq, saying the attack killed apostates and a "female crusader"—referring to a Canadian tourist. This is the fourth attack this year targeting Jordan's security forces, believed to be due to Jordan's close military relationship with the United States.

Trumpet Hour

BERLIN ATTACK, CHINA'S DRONE THEFT, IRAQ CONCEDES TO IRAN, AMERICA SIDELINED IN SYRIA, AND MUCH MORE | DECEMBER 23

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Europe: United in Terror

Josué Michels | December 22

THE NEWS OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN BERLIN NOT ONLY SENT shock waves throughout Germany, but it prodded all of Europe to the edge of its seat in anticipation of Germany's reaction. Suddenly, and at least for the moment, differences are being laid aside as Europe forgets its incongruities and becomes more unified to face the heartless monster of terrorism. "Europe will bond more than ever to prevent attacks on our society," said Austrian Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka (*Trumpet* translation throughout).

The horror in Berlin shows that it's not just Germany, France, Belgium, Austria or any individual European country that is under attack. Europe as a whole is faced with the escalating threat of terrorism.

French President François Hollande, who faced a similar situation last year, has expressed grief and compassion: "The French share in the mourning of the Germans in the face of this tragedy that has hit *all of Europe*."

Former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis expressed his feelings in the fashion of a Greek philosopher: "Pain and anxiety about our world and our soul—that is what we share today throughout Europe with Berliners."

Top European Union officials also see it as a problem that affects Europe as a whole. EU Commissioner Jean-Claude Juncker said, "My thoughts and those of the entire European Commission are with the families and relatives of all those who were killed and

injured in Berlin. This news shook us all the more because they had gathered there to celebrate the pre-Christmas season, which many associate with contemplation and peace. We are connected with the victims in deep sorrow."

Europeans from around the Continent are coming together in the aftermath of this terror. They are promising support for Germany in the fight against the rising evil in their midst.

After the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks, Hollande took drastic measures in an effort to protect his people; he even ordered air strikes on the Islamic State in Syria. He also asked for support from his European neighbors. The whole world is now looking to the German government for a similar response.

They are looking to Germany to act, but German Chancellor Angela Merkel hesitates. She stands shocked in front of a growing and heartless monster. She is losing the people's trust—not only among Germans, but all Europeans. The Continent is groaning for bold leadership.

How then will Europe respond? Who will protect Europe's values? Who will defend Christianity in Europe and in the Middle East? Europe can't unite unless it has a leader—Merkel won't do it. As Europe grows more horrified and as its children become more terrified, they will cry out for a strongman. And Bible prophecy tells us that they will get one. For more about the impact of this attack in Berlin, read *Trumpet* columnist Brad Macdonald's article "[Berlin Attack: Was This Germany's 9/11?](#)"

World's Oldest Bank Edges Toward Bankruptcy

THE BANCA MONTE DEI PASCHI DI SIENA HAS BEEN GIVEN UNTIL the end of the year to raise extra funds by the European Central Bank. In the wake of the Italy referendum, the bank is struggling to raise those extra funds on its own—and it's looking increasingly likely that the Italian government will have to help it out. Bloomberg News reported:

Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena SpA will probably fail to lure sufficient demand for a €5 billion (US\$5.2 billion) capital increase, leading to what would be the country's biggest bank nationalization in decades, said people with knowledge of the matter.

The Italian cabinet may meet as early as Thursday

evening to approve a bank decree that will include measures to cover any funds missing in Monte Paschi's recapitalization, a senior official said, asking not to be identified before the decree is presented to cabinet.

On December 21, Italy's parliament approved a €20 billion bailout. The fund is designed to be there for several banks, including Monte dei Paschi. However, as Emily Tamkin noted in *Foreign Policy*:

But the Italian crisis isn't quite averted. There are still two fear factors for the new government in Rome.

First, while 20 billion is hardly chump change, it may

not be enough. Ipek Ozkardeskaya, senior market analyst at London Capital Group, said Italian banks will require €52 billion to be saved. That is a good deal more than Italy's lawmakers just approved.

Second, even before the referendum, economists feared that a "bail in" would force retail investors to shoulder the burden of a state solution. Bondholders are apparently already girding for losses. Under EU rules, government funds can't be used if bondholders haven't first taken a hit.

Europe Continues to Talk Up Combined Military

EU HEADS OF GOVERNMENT SIGNALLED THEIR CONTINUED PUSH for EU military cooperation at an informal meeting on December 15. [German-Foreign-Policy.com summarized the latest events](#) the next day:

The EU's heads of states and governments' decision yesterday raised the past few months of campaign for the further militarization of the EU to new heights. It began last summer with Berlin's initiatives, which first resulted in a catalog of demands jointly formulated by the foreign ministers of Germany and France. The EU needs a common "security agenda" to enable it to execute its political "policymaking,"—not just in its "immediate neighborhood" but "worldwide"—was one of their demands. This was followed, among other things, by another joint catalog of demands, formulated this time by the defense ministers of Germany and France, advocating a "European strategic autonomy," which was followed, September 16, by an informal EU summit resolution explicitly envisaging closer military cooperation among individual EU member countries. The campaign continued with the EU defense ministers reaffirming the decision to promote the establishment of joint European forces, on November 14. A resolution on the establishment of a European Defense Union was subsequently adopted by the European Parliament November 22.

On November 30, the European Commission also published a "European Defense Action Plan," which includes the creation of a European Defense Fund, which should allocate around €90 million (US\$94 million) annually for weapons research within the EU, until 2020. Thereafter, the allocations should be increased to a half-billion euros. ...

Wednesday, the European Parliament followed up with another resolution pleading for the EU's resolute militarization, in which the parliament "deeply regrets" the limited budget of around €320 million (0.2 percent of the EU budget), for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. The parliamentarians highlight the EU's alleged "immense potential as a diplomatic superpower," while urging the union to "strengthen its security and defense capabilities," because it can "only use its full potential as a global power if it combines its unrivalled soft power with hard power." Therefore the parliament calls on "the member states to increase their defense expenditure"—to meet the NATO capacity goals of 2 percent of GDP. In addition, "the EU's rapid reaction tools" must be enhanced, "notably by

Over 2 billion of Monte dei Paschi bonds are held by retail investors—that is, the proverbial little guy.

And those were the very people allegedly championed by the populist, euroskeptic Five Star Movement, which led the campaign against the referendum.

Those EU rules almost guarantee that any banking crisis will become a political crisis—and will lead to an outpouring of anger against the EU.

further improving the usability of battle groups, ... and by strengthening and making greater use of eurocorps" for EU missions. Moreover, the common financing of combat missions must be allowed from the EU's collective funds. Ultimately, "the creation of a permanent civilian and military headquarters" must be achieved, "with a Military Planning and Conduct Capability" and a "Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability ... to enhance civil-military cooperation and improve the EU's ability to react speedily to crises."

Based on the militarization campaign of the preceding months—culminating in European Parliaments resolutions, such as that from last Wednesday—the EU heads of states and governments reiterated, yesterday, their will to militarize the EU and strengthen its military cooperation. We will continue to "cooperate more in the future—continually and structurally" in "defense and external security," according to the German government, following the summit meeting. There will also be "more joint civilian missions," as well as more "military operations." The summit gave "a clear impulse" in this regard. The EU Commission's "European Defense Action Plan," has also been explicitly confirmed.

The official creation of an EU army, which cannot be realized until Great Britain has left the EU, remains the long-term objective. "Every mission, in which Bundeswehr soldiers are currently involved" is "multinational," according to the Bundestag's Commissioner for the Armed Forces, Hans-Peter Bartels (SPD). "We must work with the partners in the alliance." Bartels claims, "it may be helpful, if we would adopt the principle, 'train as you fight'"—in other words, if the armed forces, in peacetime, would be "organized ... as they later would be in combat." That is why "a European army ... the vision ... is the long-term objective," explains the social democratic politician. All future steps of the "Europeanization and integration" of the armed forces in the EU should "be compatible with this objective." The German-Dutch military cooperation could serve as an example. Bartels also names the benchmark for assessing the EU's military cooperation: "We have 1.5 million soldiers in Europe, which is more than the U.S.A." The reason why the EU is still lagging behind the U.S.A. is the "European small state patchwork mentality."

For more on Europe's latest push for a military, see our article ["EU Unveils Plans for Big Defense Spending Boost."](#)

China Seizing All It Can Before January 20?

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



ON THURSDAY, A CHINESE NAVAL VESSEL SEIZED AN UNDERWATER United States drone that was operating in the South China Sea. The Pentagon said the drone was operating lawfully, conducting tests on temperature and salinity levels in the waters some 50 nautical miles from the Philippines. Officials in Beijing said the drone was engaged in “reconnaissance and military surveillance,” and that China seized it in order to ensure the safety of passing ships.

Early Saturday, President-elect Donald Trump waded into the matter via his Twitter account: “China steals United States Navy research drone in international waters—rips it out of water and takes it to China in unprecedented act.”

After China said it planned to return the drone to America, Mr. Trump tweeted again: “We should tell China that we don’t want the drone they stole back—let them keep it!”

Writing for the *National Review* on December 20, the Hudson Institute’s Arthur Herman said the incident suggests that “Beijing is seizing all the territory it can—while it can.” He wrote:

It’s not often that China commits an aggressive, provocative act like this, in full view of the U.S. naval vessel that launched the drone But China’s thievery, and our humiliation in doing nothing about it except uttering feeble protests and politely waiting for them to return the drone, is only part of a much larger strategy China has been unveiling over the past seven years. In effect, [China is annexing the entire South China Sea](#) and eliminating any claim by other countries—including the United States to navigate its waters or fly through its airspace without China’s permission.

The centerpiece of this effort was also revealed last week Satellite pictures show that China has built a series of airstrips and hardened structures for military aircraft on three islands in the contested Spratly Islands where just three years ago there were no islands at all: Fiery Cross Reef, Mischief Reef and Subi Reef. China’s ongoing dredging operations to build its Great Wall of Sand on those sites have now created enough space for full military installations. Also, on four other nearby artificial islands, China is putting anti-aircraft batteries and close-in-weapons systems that can target and shoot down cruise missiles. ...

... China will probably be able to keep anyone China doesn’t like—particularly the United States—out of South

China Sea airspace. ...

China’s hope is that its military assets there will now make it impossible for anyone to propose demilitarizing the Spratlys—the first sensible move toward defusing the international tensions there—and gradually force its neighbors to accept as a fait accompli China’s claims to sovereignty over the South China Sea. ...

So far, China has been lucky as well, in dealing with an American president ... ready to trade away virtually anything to get China’s cooperation on climate change. Beijing’s luck is about to run out. President-elect Trump suggested that the Chinese keep the drone they stole. They returned it, but perhaps they should have followed his advice. They may not get another chance to get something for free from the United States for a very long time.

In the July issue of the *Trumpet*, editor in chief Gerald Flurry explained that China’s increasingly belligerent behavior in the South China Sea is “[Steering the World Toward War](#).” He wrote:

This should alarm the world! ... Each year, \$5.3 trillion of trade passes through the South China Sea. That is roughly one third of the world’s maritime commerce! Since Japan’s defeat in World War II, America has protected this vital trade route and brought peace to this part of the world. Now the American military is retreating, and other great powers are coming in to fill the vacuum. This is going to dramatically affect trade around the world, and U.S. trade especially. A trade war often precedes a shooting war. ... The Bible contains many prophecies of that European power attacking America. This is where China and the other giants of Asia enter the picture. Considering that China now possesses most of the world’s strategic sea gates ... the German-led Holy Roman Empire will need to form a brief alliance with the Asian powers identified in Isaiah 23 (Russia, China, Japan—the “kings of the east”). If Europe finds a way to take advantage of key resources and strategic holdings of China, Russia and Japan—even for a short period—then it would have more than enough power to besiege the Anglo-Saxon nations. This is why China’s moves to militarize the South China Sea should be so concerning.

Japan to Expand Coast Guard

AMID A TERRITORIAL ROW WITH CHINA, JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER Shinzo Abe has announced plans for his nation to shore

up its coast guard. The move is the latest step in Japan’s march toward remilitarization.

Reuters reported on Abe's plans on December 21:

Japan has long been at odds with China over the disputed islands, controlled by Japan but claimed also by China. They are called the Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China.

Coast guard vessels from both countries routinely shadow each other near the uninhabited islets, stoking concern that an accidental collision or other complications could trigger a clash.

Japan's coast guard budget for the year starting next April will exceed ¥210 billion (US\$1.8 billion) to help add five new large patrol ships to its fleet and increase the maritime law

enforcement agency's personnel by more than 200, Abe said.

The coast guard's initial budget for this fiscal year, to March 2017, was ¥187.7 billion. "Since the fall of 2012, Chinese government vessels have sailed near the Senkaku almost daily, and have entered Japan's territorial waters around the islands a few times a month," Abe told a meeting of relevant ministers.

As China's incursions and belligerency continue to increase, and as America continues to demonstrate to the world that it is an unreliable ally, we should expect Japan and other Asian nations to keep making strides in bolstering their own military capability.

India's Economy Has Overtaken the UK's

INDIA HAS ECONOMICALLY SURPASSED ITS FORMER COLONIZER, several years earlier than experts had projected it would. The shift has occurred both because of India's fast growth over the last quarter of a century and due to the recent economic troubles besieging the United Kingdom.

Forbes wrote on December 16:

Once expected to overtake the UK GDP in 2020, the *surpass* has been accelerated by the nearly 20 percent decline in the value of the pound over the last 12 months, consequently UK's 2016 GDP of £1.87 trillion converts to \$2.29 trillion at exchange rate of ~£0.81 per \$1, whereas India's GDP of INR 153 trillion converts to \$2.30 trillion at exchange rate of ~INR 66.6 per \$1. Furthermore, this gap is expected to widen as India grows at 6 to 8 percent per annum compared to UK's growth of 1 to 2 percent per annum until 2020, and likely beyond. Even if the currencies fluctuate that modify these figures to rough equality, the verdict is clear that India's economy has surpassed that of the UK based on future growth prospects.

This marks a significant landmark in India's economic history, whose story over the last 150 years can be split into three parts: a period of divergence, of relative stagnation and a period of convergence with respect to the economy of the UK. Divergence begins with the UK's industrial revolution in the 18th century to India's independence in 1947 when the UK's growth significantly outpaced India's.

Forbes pointed out that this *surpass* is significant largely because "it highlights India's arrival on the global stage and a significant change in power dynamics between India and the West" and because "it should give India the ability to shed any residual notion of colonial inferiority and enable it to have a more open mind-set and look at alternative nations to emulate." However, India's per capita GDP is still less than one fifth that of Great Britain's, so a substantial gap in individual productivity remains. Additionally, India's wealthiest 1 percent own roughly 55 percent of the nation's wealth, and poverty remains a formidable obstacle for much of the population.

Philippines President Threatens to End U.S. Military Pact, Burn Down UN Headquarters

IN A BURST OF BLUSTER THAT HAS COME TO BE EXPECTED FROM the firebrand Philippine president, Rodrigo Duterte said on December 17 that he would end Manila's military treaty with America. He also threatened to raze the headquarters of the United Nations in New York to the ground.

"Bye-bye, America, and work on the protocols that would eventually move you out from the Philippines," he said. "Prepare to leave the Philippines. Prepare for the eventual repeal or the abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement."

The remarks came after the U.S. decided to rescind its multimillion-dollar funding to Philippine antipoverty programs because of concerns about "the rule of law and civil liberties" in connection with Duterte's drug war.

"We will not go hungry without the American aid," Duterte said. "We are not that desperate." He added: "You go and file a complaint in the United Nations. I will burn down the United Nations if you

want. I will burn it down if I go to America."

Duterte said China had offered "50 billion" in financial aid to the Philippines, though he did not specify whether that was in pesos, yuan or dollars. He added that Russia has also offered to assist Manila.

Marie Banaag, assistant secretary to presidential communications, said on Sunday that Duterte's threats to end the Visiting Forces Agreement was merely "a warning." This was not "really something the president said he will immediately revoke," Banaag said.

Separately on Thursday, Duterte made threats on the lives of some executives of his country's Anti-Money Laundering Council, saying: "You know, I'm going to charge all of you there, criminally. I'll count one to three, and if you don't resign, I will treat you as a drug addict. ... Better prepare there 'cause I'll give you a whack."

Putin: Russia Has the Mightiest Military on Earth but We Need More Nukes

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN GAVE A SPEECH ON THURSDAY recapping his country's 2016 military accomplishments, saying it is the most powerful on Earth, but urging the nation to boost its nuclear arsenals. He said:

We can say with certainty: We are stronger now than any potential aggressor. Anyone!

We need to strengthen the military potential of strategic nuclear forces, especially with missile complexes that can reliably penetrate any existing and prospective missile defense systems.

We must carefully monitor any changes in the balance of power and in the political-military situation in the world, especially along Russian borders, and quickly adapt plans

for neutralizing threats to our country.

The Syrian Army received considerable support, thanks to which it carried out several successful operations against militants.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu offered details about [Russia's progress in Syria](#), saying the military "liquidated 725 training camps, 405 weapon factories and workshops, 1,500 pieces of terrorist equipment, and 35,000 fighters, including 204 field commanders. In general, the operation has allowed [Russia] to solve several geopolitical problems. We have considerably damaged international terrorist organizations in Syria, stopped their expansion [and] prevented the breakup of Syria."

TW IN BRIEF

Taiwan's president to visit the U.S., angering China: Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen plans to meet members of the United States Congress during a visit to America in January, a senior Taiwanese official said on Thursday. The visit will take place despite heavy opposition from the Chinese government. In the days since President-elect Donald Trump reached out to Taiwan, the Chinese have increased military activity in the international territory near Taiwan. State-run media outlets have said China should be prepared to take Taiwan by force.

Russia-Turkey relations after assassination: The assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey will not undermine Turkish-Russian relations, according to statements by some Turkish experts. The top leaders of Russia and Turkey had a conversation via telephone immediately after the incident, with both sides expressing willingness to jointly investigate the assassination and intensify their cooperation in fighting terrorism. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called the assassination a "provocation" aimed at ruining Turkey-Russia ties.

ANGLO-AMERICA



Great Again

Gerald Flurry, *The Key of David* | December 25

Donald Trump has promised to make America great again. Can he succeed? The Bible says America will return to greatness—but not because of any man.



Donald Trump Says Berlin Attack 'Proves Him Right'

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



AFTER A TERRORIST RAMMED A TRUCK INTO A CROWD IN BERLIN, Germany, killing 12 and injuring 48 others, President-elect Donald Trump stood by his plan to ban immigrants from high-risk countries from entering the United States.

Speaking outside a resort in Florida on Thursday, Mr. Trump was asked by a reporter if the attack had caused him to "rethink or reevaluate [his] plans to create a Muslim registry or ban Muslim

immigration to the United States?"

"You know my plans all along," Mr. Trump responded. "I've been proven to be right. One hundred percent correct."

Last December, Mr. Trump said he wanted a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on." After both Republicans and Democrats raised concern about the

legality of such a proposal, however, Mr. Trump removed the religion-specific language, saying he would suspend “immigration from any nation that has been compromised by terrorism.”

Senior Trump aide Kellyanne Conway, clarified his comments on Thursday, saying that the Trump administration wouldn’t seek an immigration ban based on religion, but would ban immigration from “countries where we know they have a higher propensity of training and exporting and in some cases harboring terrorists.”

CNN Fans Hatred Toward Police

AMERICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS BEEN UNDER INTENSE SCRUTINY for the past few years. Many influential politicians and media officials are accusing law enforcement of racism and heavy-handedness. While it would be overstating it to say there is no racism among America’s law enforcement officers, there are people who are scrutinizing and magnifying this issue for selfish purposes.

In an article published by the [National Review](#), political commentator Heather MacDonald wrote:

CNN is making a desperate pitch to further enflame the ideological war on cops while it still has a sympathetic ear in the White House. The CNN website is promoting a laughably incomplete study of police use of fatal force under the headline “Black Men Nearly 3 Times as Likely to Die From Police Use of Force, Study Says.” Utterly ignored in the study and in CNN’s write-up is any mention of violent-crime rates, which vary enormously by race and which predict officer use of force. Absent such a crime benchmark, analysis of police actions using population data alone, as this latest study has done, is worse than useless; wielded as a bludgeon in the current anti-cop crusade, it is dangerously irresponsible.

By presenting incomplete data, without any mention of crime rates, CNN is making it look like American police are gunning down innocent blacks just because the melanin concentration in their skin cells is too high. Yet, as Heather MacDonald extensively

Concerned that a Trump administration might revive a Bush-era national registry program for visitors from countries with active terrorist groups, President Barack Obama has approved the dismantling of this dormant registry.

According to the *New York Times*, “The registry, created after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, has not been in use since 2011, so the move is largely symbolic and appeared to be aimed at distancing the departing administration from any effort by the new president to revive the program”

documents in her book *The War on Cops*, the incidence of violent crime is what is driving the incidence of police interactions that can lead to officer use of force.

Heather MacDonald continued in her *National Review* article:

In New York City, blacks commit 75 percent of all shootings, though they are only 23 percent of the population. Add Hispanic shootings to black shootings, and you account for between 97 percent and 98 percent of all shootings in New York City. Whites commit at most 2 percent of all shootings, though they are 34 percent of the population. This means that virtually every time a New York City cop is confronting a suspect in another mindless drive-by shooting, with the attendant risk that the officer will himself use lethal force, he is confronting someone black or Hispanic.

As the *Trumpet* has reported repeatedly, executive overreach is a serious problem in America’s government today. Many self-serving politicians are trying to use accusations of racism against local police as an excuse to centralize all policing authority, thus taking more power to itself. Such political posturing in no way helps the black community.

As editor-in-chief Gerald Flurry wrote in the April 2015 edition of the *Trumpet*, “The results are inciting evils that are quickly becoming far worse than those they purport to solve! The nation’s police are being undermined in ways that will prove devastating to our cities in particular.”

Why Vladimir Putin Sympathizes With Donald Trump

UNITED STATES PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP HAS EXPRESSED fondness for Russian President Vladimir Putin. During his presidential campaign, Mr. Trump said, “I think I’d get along very well with Vladimir Putin,” and indicated that he believed the U.S. could deal with Russia based on common interest.

Many media sources have been claiming that Mr. Trump only won the election because Russia hacked the headquarters of the Democratic National Convention to expose Hillary Clinton’s corrupt dealings. While other media sources denounce this claim as a conspiracy theory, it’s becoming hard to understand what is true and what are the real issues that exist between the U.S. and Russia.

Leading intelligence expert and founder of Geopolitical Futures George Friedman explains that the heart of this matter

revolves around Ukraine. In an article published by [Mauldin Economics](#), Friedman wrote:

Putin’s interest in Trump stems from Trump’s lack of interest in foreign matters as well as his indifference to creating liberal democracies around the world. Trump’s view is that the U.S. needs an overriding interest in an area to engage.

Given this view, Trump would likely agree that Russian hegemony over Europe is unacceptable. At the same time, Trump would not plan to engage so early and so deep in a region of Russian interest.

For Trump, a neutralization of Ukraine would be acceptable. The personal dimension, Putin hoped, would eliminate Obama’s desire to see him fall.

Beneath the jabber of the U.S. election and the public charges and countercharges, the situation between the U.S. and Russia can be seen. The basis for a mutual agreement comes from those facts.

President Barack Obama held very sympathetic views toward Russia at the beginning of his presidency, and even sent Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Russia to negotiate a “reset” in Russo-American relations after Putin invaded Georgia in 2008. Yet Putin used this “reset” to shore up the strength he needed to invade Ukraine in 2014. President Obama was humiliated by Russia for eight years and shown to be an extremely weak spectacle before the whole world.

It appears Mr. Trump learned almost nothing from this very recent history. His selection for secretary of state, ExxonMobil

CEO Rex Tillerson, received the Russian Order of Friendship and has been a tireless advocate for lifting U.S. sanctions against Russia so that U.S. companies can conduct business in the Russian Federation again. Such actions would greatly strengthen the Russian economy and abandon the peoples of Eastern Europe to fend for themselves against Russian imperialism.

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry recently wrote in the February 2017 issue of the *Trumpet* that “Vladimir Putin is setting a deadly trap for President Trump. Just as he did for Barack Obama. ... America should not even be negotiating with Putin until he stops his fighting with the world’s worst terrorists. These terrorists are dedicated most of all to destroying America and the Jewish state and anybody else who gets in their way.”

The fact that the U.S. is cozying up to such murderous tyrants says a lot about modern American values!

TW IN BRIEF

Electoral College votes for Trump presidency: The United States Electoral College voted to officially select Donald Trump as the next U.S. president on Monday. At meetings held in every U.S. state, 538 electors cast a ballot for the president and vice president. Donald Trump finished with 304 votes to Hillary Clinton’s 227 votes. A joint session of Congress is scheduled for January 6 to certify the results of the Electoral College vote. Once the result is certified, Donald Trump will be sworn in as president of the United States on January 20.

Facebook fights ‘fake’ news: Facebook announced on Thursday last week that it is taking new measures to curb the spread of “fake” news on its influential social network. According to Facebook vice president John Hegeman, the organization will partner with outside fact-checkers to sort honest news reports from made-up stories that play to people’s preconceived notions. Five fact-checking and news organizations are working with Facebook on this: ABC News, Associated Press, FactCheck.org, Politifact and Snopes. Stories that flunk the fact check won’t be removed from Facebook, but they’ll be flagged as “disputed,” which will force them to appear lower in people’s news feed. Critics of this new strategy worry that Facebook will start acting as a censor of controversial news stories.

Internet powerhouses sued over Orlando shooting: The families of three victims from the Orlando nightclub shooting are

suing Facebook, Google and Twitter. The lawsuit was filed Monday in Michigan. It targets the popular Internet services providers for allowing the Islamic State to spread its propaganda too easily. Facebook released a statement in response to the lawsuit, pledging to more quickly delete Islamic State propaganda when notified. Similar lawsuits have been struck down, but this suit takes a unique angle. It accuses Facebook, Google and Twitter of profiting from the propaganda by pairing it with advertising meant to appeal to viewers. By doing so, the Internet services providers and the Islamic State supposedly benefit monetarily from each other. The Orlando nightclub shooting in June was the deadliest shooting spree in American history. Omar Mateen pledged allegiance to the Islamic State before killing 49 patrons and injuring 53 others.

Scotland could stay in the European Economic Area: Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon offered a proposal on Tuesday to protect Scotland’s place in Europe after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union. Even though the UK voted to leave the EU in June, 62 percent of voters in Scotland voted to remain. Sturgeon, who backs Scottish independence, says it’s possible to keep Scotland in Europe’s single market even after the rest of the UK pulls out. Under her proposals, Scotland would stay in the European Economic Area by means of special arrangements. She also proposed a transfer of new powers to the Scottish Parliament in order for Scotland to pursue its own relationship with Europe.



Knowing the Spirit

Stephen Flurry, *Trumpet Daily* | December 23

Get to know God through the Spirit.

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