

Trumpet Weekly

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U.S. Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power is seen as the other 14 members of the Security Council raise their hands in affirmation of Resolution 2334.

America's 'Shameful Ambush' of Israel at the UN

By Brent Nagtegaal and Kieren Underwood | December 28

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



THIS WAS A STAB IN THE BACK AGAINST THE ISRAELIS." It was the "peak of hypocrisy" and "one of the biggest American rebukes of its long-standing ally in recent memory." With a "dangerous parting shot," the United States "joined the jackals at the

UN." Most of all, it was a "shameful ambush" of an ally.

These were just some of the reactions to the [United States' abstention from United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334](#), which, among other things, *condemns, reaffirms and reiterates*

that Israeli homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are illegal. But on Friday, December 23, when America refrained from vetoing the resolution, these houses were referred to as impersonal “settlements.”

As the U.S. reversed decades of diplomatic precedent to betray Israel, the room erupted into applause.

But didn't President Barack Obama affirm his friendship to Israel? He definitely *said* he would have Israel's back. Here's what the president told the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in March 2012 (emphasis added):

The fact is, my administration's commitment to Israel's security has been unprecedented. Our military and intelligence cooperation has never been closer. Our joint exercises and training have never been more robust. Despite a tough budget environment, our security assistance has increased every single year. ...

When one-sided resolutions are brought up at the Human Rights Council, we oppose them. When Israeli diplomats feared for their lives in Cairo, we intervened to save them. When there are efforts to boycott or divest from Israel, we will stand against them. And whenever an effort is made to delegitimize the state of Israel, my administration has opposed them. So there should not be a shred of doubt by now—*when the chips are down, I have Israel's back.*

On the day after the resolution, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu noted the obvious fact that America's abstention was not mere negligence or a change in position by the U.S. It was a “shameful ambush” engineered by the president.

“From the information that we have, we have no doubt that the Obama administration initiated it, stood behind it, coordinated on the wording, and demanded that it be passed,” Netanyahu said on Sunday. “I told John Kerry [that] friends do not take friends to the UN Security Council.”

Former U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton also believes the United States must have cooperated in the resolutions formation. “The sponsors of the resolution ... obviously had to consult with the Obama administration to tell them what was in the resolution so that it was sufficient for Obama to order an abstention,” Bolton told *Fox News* in an interview. “It was entirely predictable for people in the pro-Israel community in the United States. ... We should've seen this coming.”

In a sort of sick irony, the passing of Resolution 2334 occurred only a day before the beginning of Hanukkah. Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon referenced the historical event in Israel's formal response to the UN. He said:

Tomorrow night, Israel and the entire Jewish community around the world will celebrate the holiday of Hanukkah. Over 2,000 years ago, King Antiochus [IV] banished the Jewish people from our temple in Jerusalem and issued decrees trying to sever us from religion and our heritage, but we prevailed. The Jewish people fought back. We regained our independence and relit the menorah candles in the temple. ...

We overcame those decrees during the time of the Maccabees, and we will overcome this evil decree today. ...

And we will continue to be a Jewish state, proudly reclaiming the land of our forefathers, where the Maccabees fooled their oppressors and King David ruled from Jerusalem.

On the day before the celebration of the Maccabean revolt, it became illegal for thousands of Jews to live in their homes. As analyst Charles Krauthammer put it, the “appalling” resolution “declares that any Jew who lives in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem—the Jewish quarter, inhabited for 1,000 years—is illegal, breaking international law, essentially an outlaw, [and] can be hauled into the international criminal court and international courts in Europe.”

But, as Ambassador Bolton noted, it was “entirely predictable” for those who haven't bought President Obama's pro-Israel rhetoric. In “November 9 and the Onslaught Against Israel,” *Trumpet* writer Callum Wood wrote that “until now, President Obama has kept quiet on the [Israel] issue for fear of shedding negative light on the Clinton campaign. Post-November 8, that no longer matters.”

“But come November 9, the tables could drastically turn. The Obama administration needs do nothing at all—just sit back and allow the anti-Israel resolutions to surge in,” Wood continued. And that's exactly what has happened. The special relationship with Israel is over, and now the rest of the world can see it.

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry pointed to the breaking of the special relationship in his article “[What Inspires President Obama's Relationship With Israel?](#)” In the lead up to Hanukkah in 2015, President Obama hosted Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and his wife for the first of two Hanukkah receptions in the East Room of the White House. Mr. Obama commented that “all of us come together, along with Jews around the world, to celebrate a band of Maccabees who inspire us even today.” Mr. Flurry wrote:

Is that true? Does that history inspire him today? When you look at the diplomatic insults and the hatred the Obama administration has poured on Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, when you look at the pressure this administration has put on Israel to negotiate with people who use terrorism, and when you look at how openly it has enabled Iran to obtain nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, wouldn't you say that a leader like that finds Antiochus more of a model to follow than Judas Maccabeus?

To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between Israel and the United States, read the above-mentioned articles. They show not only what has happened in the past, but what will happen because of the two nations' broken relationship. President-elect Donald Trump says “things will be different” at the UN once he's in office, but long-lasting damage has already been done. The brotherhood between Israel and the United States has been broken—and this was emphasized by Friday's “shameful ambush” at the UN.

 Follow [Brent Nagtegaal](#)

THE YEAR THE WHEELS CAME OFF | DECEMBER 30

HOW TO MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN | DECEMBER 29

BARACK OBAMA'S FITTING FINISH AND THE REMILITARIZATION OF GERMANY | DECEMBER 28

WAS PRESIDENT OBAMA BEHIND THE ANTI-SETTLEMENT RESOLUTION AT THE UNITED NATIONS? | DECEMBER 27

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S LAST ASSAULT ON ISRAEL AND A NATIVITY SCENE THAT PREDATES CHRIST BY 3,000 YEARS | DECEMBER 26

TrumpetDaily

RADIO SHOW

Russia and Turkey Guarantee Syria Ceasefire

RUSSIA AND TURKEY ANNOUNCED ON THURSDAY THEY HAD BROKERED a nationwide ceasefire in Syria where civil war has ravaged the country for five years. The deal, which was made without the United States, sees Russia guaranteeing the Assad regime compliance, while Turkey, the key backer of the Syrian rebels, ensures the rebels don't break it. The ceasefire is set to make way to a permanent deal on Syria's future to be worked out later in January. Reuters reported on the likely aspects of the [final deal](#) on Wednesday:

Syria would be divided into informal zones of regional power influence and Bashar Assad would remain president for at least a few years under an outline deal between Russia, Turkey and Iran, sources say.

Such a deal, which would allow regional autonomy within a federal structure controlled by Assad's Alawite sect, is in its infancy, subject to change and would need the buy-in of Assad and the rebels and, eventually, the Gulf states and the United States, sources familiar with Russia's thinking say. ...

Assad's powers would be cut under a deal between the three nations, say several sources. Russia and Turkey would allow him to stay until the next presidential election when he would quit in favor of a less polarizing Alawite candidate.

Iran has yet to be persuaded of that, say the sources. But either way Assad would eventually go, in a face-saving way, with guarantees for him and his family. ...

Nobody thinks a wider Syrian peace deal, something that has eluded the international community for years, will be easy, quick or certain of success. What is clear is that President Vladimir Putin wants to play the lead role in trying to broker a settlement, initially with Turkey and Iran.

That would bolster his narrative of Russia regaining its mantle as a world power and serious Middle East player.

"It's a very big prize for them if they can show they're out there in front changing the world," Sir Tony Brenton, Britain's former ambassador to Moscow, told Reuters. "We've all grown used to the United States doing that and had rather forgotten that Russia used to play at the same level."

While Russia seeks to bolster its position as peacemaker, Reuters believes that Iran may be the biggest inhibitor to a final deal.

Iran's interests are harder to discern, but Ali Akbar Velayati, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's top adviser, said Aleppo's fall might alter a lot in the region.

By helping Assad retake Aleppo, Tehran has secured a land corridor that connects Tehran to Beirut, allowing it to send arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Russian and Western diplomatic sources say Iran would insist on keeping that corridor and on Assad staying in power for now. If he did step down, Tehran would want him replaced with another Alawite, which it sees as the closest thing to [Shiite] Islam.

Iran may be the biggest stumbling block to a wider deal.

Based on biblical prophecy, the *Trumpet* fully expects Iran to lose out in Syria going forward. It's possible that, in search of a final deal, Russia and Iran's interests will diverge to the point that Iran will no longer have a future in Syria. However, biblical prophecy indicates it will be Germany, not Iran, Turkey or even Russia, that will be the most dominant power in Syria.

Will Iraq's Shiite Militias Cross the Syrian Border After Retaking Mosul?

ON THURSDAY, IRAQI SECURITY FORCES, HEAVILY SUPPORTED BY United States commanders, began part two of their offensive to push Islamic State militants out of the Iraqi city of Mosul. Now into its 10th week, the offensive has so far retaken 25 percent of

Mosul, though up to 1.5 million people are thought to remain in the city. Although the U.S. has refused to use ground forces in the fighting, U.S. commanders are increasingly embedding with Iraqi soldiers in the fight. [According to Reuters:](#)

The battle for Mosul involves 100,000 Iraqi troops, members of the Kurdish security forces and Shiite militiamen in part of the biggest ground operation in Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion of 2003 that toppled Saddam Hussein.

U.S. commanders have said in recent weeks that their military advisers, part of an international coalition fighting Islamic State, will embed more extensively with Iraqi forces. Some of them were spotted on a rooftop behind the front lines on Thursday, advising Iraqi commanders and watching over the operations.

However, it is not just the United States' fighters who look to get more involved. As the *Trumpet* has reported extensively, Shiite militias directed by Iran heavily support the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq. The biggest of these, the Popular Mobilization Units, is supporting the Mosul action from the outskirts of the city, particularly its western edges up to the border with Syria. With about three months left of the offensive, the *Wall Street Journal* asked this week whether the [Iran-backed fighters are going to continue on to Syria](#). Yaroslav Trofimov wrote Thursday:

The Hashed al-Shaabi, or Popular Mobilization Forces, which unite several of Iraq's powerful Shiite militias, were established to combat Islamic State in mid-2014. At the time, the regular Iraqi Army collapsed as the extremist group seized the country's second-largest city of Mosul and advanced all the way to the outskirts of Baghdad, the capital.

While technically under the control of the central government in Baghdad, most of these militias have been trained and armed by Iran and don't hide their close links with Iran's

[Islamic] Revolutionary Guard Corps. On their tanks and armored vehicles, they often fly banners with portraits of the Islamic Republic's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. ...

Some officials of the Popular Mobilization Forces have already said that they won't stop at the border and that they received the blessing of Syrian President Bashar Assad to go after his enemies across the frontier.

Iranian officials, too, have openly spoken about using these battle-hardened Iraqi militias in the Syrian conflict once Mosul is finally freed from Islamic State. ... "We say clearly, if there is a necessity to secure the Iraqi-Syrian border and to prevent terrorists from coming to Iraq, then we may go to Syria to do so," said Moeen al-Kadhimi, a senior leader of Badr, the most prominent Iraqi Shiite militia, and former chairman of the Baghdad provincial council.

However, Syria is not Iraq. While Iraq is mostly made up of Shiites, Syria is 74 percent Sunni. Syria's Sunnis fear that the Shiites won't just fight the Islamic State, but will deliberately target them, as they have done to fellow Sunnis in Iraq. Iran has long desired to create a Shiite crescent all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. It has Hezbollah in southern Lebanon; the Damascus regime, another Iran ally, controls western Syria; yet eastern Syria is dominated by Sunnis.

The fact that these Shiite militias are now looking to Syria is a sure sign Iran believes Iraq is already in the bag. Its next move could be to cross the border to carve out a Shiite highway to the sea using these same proxies. However, biblical prophecy reveals that Syria will not go the same way as Iraq. Instead, watch for European powers to get more involved in Syria to halt Iran's advance.

Iranian General: 'Fly Over and We'll Shoot You Down'

TEHRAN WARNED THIS WEEK THAT ANY CIVILIAN OR MILITARY AIRCRAFT straying into its territory would be shot down as it began five days of exercises in southern Iran. The war games, code-named "Defenders of Velayat Skies 7," included air defense drills focusing on the use of missile, artillery and radar equipment. *Fox News* reported:

Speaking Sunday, the commander of Iran's Air Force Brig. Gen. Farzad Esmaili warned foreign aircraft trespassing the airspace covering the drill area would be shot down immediately.

"We are witnessing the presence of a number of trans-regional planes outside the air and sea borders of the country, but we emphasize that these planes should know their limits and know that we will take action in less than one second," he said.

Iran began receiving the advanced missile system last

year when UN sanctions were lifted in the aftermath of the nuclear deal aimed at curbing Tehran's controversial nuclear program, despite objections from the United States and Israel.

The drill features U.S.-made F-4 Phantom II fighter jets and is also set to include test firing of the Russian built S-300 long-range anti-aircraft missile defense system.

The exercises likely have two purposes: To test its newly acquired equipment and also to warn foreign nations, such as Israel, that have proposed future air strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities. Since the U.S.-brokered nuclear deal was implemented in January this year, Iran's defense budget has increased 40 percent, as well as its military exercise. For more analysis on why the Iran deal only promotes Iranian belligerency, read "[The Worst Foreign-Policy Blunder in American History](#)" by *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry.

U.S. Carrier Leaves Middle East, Replacement Still in United States

DEFENSE NEWS REPORTED ON WEDNESDAY THAT FOR THE NEXT month at least there will be no United States carrier strike group operating in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf as the

Dwight D. Eisenhower group returns home from its seven-month mission. According to [Defense News](#):

The Dwight D. Eisenhower carrier strike group chopped out of the European theater of operations December 26, headed home to Norfolk after months of operating in the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, where the strike jets of Carrier Air Wing 3 flew hundreds of missions against [Islamic State] targets in Syria and Iraq. The homecoming is set for December 30—two days shy of the Navy’s stated goal of bringing the group home in seven months.

U.S. carrier groups regularly relieve each other in theater, often handing off duties within sight of the other in the Persian Gulf or Arabian Sea. But this time, no carrier is in the Eisenhower’s wake.

The relief ship, the carrier George H. W. Bush, has yet to leave Norfolk—and is unlikely to do so before the January 20 inauguration of the Trump administration, according to a Navy source. The gap could last as long as two months, sources said, between the time the Eisenhower left the combat theater and the Bush arrives.

And that gap comes at a particularly inopportune

time. Numerous media reports indicate intelligence organizations and analysts are on the lookout for provocative actions by potential antagonists—in particular Russia, China, North Korea, Iran or [the Islamic State]. Terror alerts, according to media reports, are high in many regions, including Europe, the Mideast and North America, due to a confluence of factors—the new year, ISIS’s diminishing power in the face of counterattacks in Iraq and Syria, and a natural tendency to test a new administration.

The ill-timed transition comes at a time that Iran is increasing its offensive actions both in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, as well as announcing that an aircraft carrier of its own is in production. Also, in the past few months, Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov moved into combat mode for the first time off the coast of Syria. For a half century, the U.S. presence in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf has provided the bedrock of stability of the Middle East. However, biblical prophecy indicates that the U.S. will no longer be the dominant power in the Middle East.

EUROPE

Trumpet Hour

U.S. AMBUSHES ISRAEL IN UN, XI’S POWER GRAB, IRAN PRESSES ADVANTAGE, AND MUCH MORE | DECEMBER 30

2016 IN REVIEW | DECEMBER 28

T Austrian Cardinal: ‘We Can’t Accommodate All Refugees’ Andrew Müller | December 27

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



CARDINAL CHRISTOPH SCHÖNBORN, ARCHBISHOP OF VIENNA, admitted on Austrian television last Friday that he was rethinking his stance on the migrant crisis. During a Christmas discussion program with Evangelical Lutheran Bishop Michael Bunker, the archbishop said [an “unbelievable number” of migrants are causing a “feeling of overcrowding” in Austrian society](#). The cardinal pointed to the rise of the anti-immigrant Austrian Freedom Party as a sign that the “country is worried” and said he’s no longer convinced that Austria should accept all refugees.

Instead, he stated that Europe needs to develop a common strategy to support nations in Africa and the Middle East so migrants can live peaceably in their own homeland. In the December 23 discussion, Cardinal Schönborn said (*Trumpet* translation throughout):

Sure, in the beginning, I also said, with [German Chancellor] Angela Merkel: “We can do it!” And many important

experts in Austria said, “We can do it!” ... We then realized that there is another dimension, and we need common European plans; we need more help on the ground. In the meantime, I believe this is clear: We cannot accommodate all refugees. We must first see that they can find and live in their homeland again.

Bunker agreed with Schönborn and added that terrorism was both a cause and consequence of the migrant crisis.

While Cardinal Schönborn and Bishop Bunker were vague about what steps Europeans should take to make it possible for migrants to “live in their homeland again,” they both agreed that the long-term solution to the migrant crisis was a united European response to the turmoil currently gripping Africa and the Middle East.

These remarks carry added significance due to the high-profile status of Cardinal Schönborn within the Roman Catholic Church. Vatican watchers have called Schönborn the “spiritual

son” of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and indicated that he has a realistic chance of becoming the next pope. As a member of the Austrian noble family of Schönborn-Buchheim-Wolfstahl, he has deep connections to the aristocracy of the old Holy Roman Empire. In 2011, he conducted the funeral service for Otto von Habsburg, the last crown prince of Austria-Hungary.

Last September, Schönborn spoke on the 333rd anniversary of the Battle of Vienna, when a Habsburg emperor defended Vienna from an invading force of Ottoman Turks. He used this occasion to warn about “a third attempt at an Islamic conquest of Europe” if Europeans don’t return to their “Christian roots.”

The idea that a united Europe should fight against Islamic terrorism so that migrants can “live in their homeland again” heralds the fulfillment of Bible prophecies that the *Philadelphia Trumpet* has proclaimed for over two decades.

In his free booklet *The King of the South*, *Trumpet* editor in chief [Gerald Flurry](#) explains that the king of the south refers to radical Islam led by Iran. The king of the north is a German-led superstate now being built in Europe that will operate under the overarching influence of the Catholic Church.

Schönborn and Bunker highlighted the need for Europe to deal with the problem of radical Islamic terrorism before it can solve the migrant crisis in a way that will allow Germany to maintain a working relationship with pro-European Arabic and Turkish regimes across the Middle East. While this might sound positive, the Bible makes plain that this alliance will ultimately wreak staggering devastation on the nations of end-time Israel in the time just before Jesus Christ’s return.

To understand these world-changing prophecies, study *The King of the South* booklet for yourself.

Europe Cries Out for German Military

GERMANY’S NATO ALLIES WANT THE NATION TO PLAY A BIGGER role in Europe’s defense, Elisabeth Braw reported for the *Times* on December 28 in an article titled “Europe Wants German Boots on the Ground”:

The sometimes pitiful state of the Bundeswehr became known to a worldwide audience last year, when soldiers participating in NATO’s fast-reaction response force substituted a broomstick painted black for a missing ammunition pipe. No wonder that in a survey this June, a paltry 8 percent of Bundeswehr soldiers said they trusted their weapons. But this year the German government announced plans to increase its meager defense spending by 60 percent in the next five years. Ursula von der Leyen, the defense minister, has also vowed to grow the 177,000-troop armed forces by 10,000 soldiers. And from the spring the Bundeswehr, which until 1990 was banned from serving abroad in anything other than humanitarian roles, will lead a high-profile NATO force in Lithuania; of the 1,000 troops involved, 450 will be German.

The Lithuanian mission is part of NATO’s response to Russian aggression in the Baltic Sea region. Estonia, Latvia and Poland will each receive a similarly sized NATO force, with Britain taking the lead role in Estonia. [Former Lithuania Defense Minister Rosa] Juknevičienė has been proved right: Today, German boots on the ground are neither scary nor ridiculous but a feasible option.

In fact, more German boots on the ground are needed. Last year, Angela Merkel revealed that President Obama had told her it was unacceptable for the United States to spend 3.4 percent on defense, which includes defending Europe, while Germany spends only 1.2 percent. President-elect Trump has gone even further Though Britain has cut its armed forces, it could do more within NATO, and so could France. But Germany, with its political power and financial resources, is even better placed to take on more military responsibility.

“The political willingness is there, the money is there, and soon we’ll get new equipment and perhaps more

personnel as well,” said retired Vice Adm. Hans-Joachim Stricker, who commanded the German Navy until 2010. ...

“Every country in Europe would welcome a stronger role for the Bundeswehr,” said Roland Freudenstein, a German who is deputy director at the Martens Center, a Brussels think tank. “Only some Polish nationalists would oppose having German soldiers on their territory. The problem is that we Germans have spent decades hiding behind our history to avoid taking on a military role that would be appropriate for our financial and demographic size.”

While the Bundeswehr’s role in Lithuania will be its highest-profile NATO turn to date, a German admiral is presently commanding NATO’s mission in the Aegean Sea, more than 300 Bundeswehr sailors are serving with the EU’s anti-people smuggling Operation Sophia in the Mediterranean, and almost 1,000 soldiers are on allied duty in Afghanistan. In total, 3,264 Bundeswehr soldiers are deployed on foreign missions. And last year, Germany led NATO’s new 5,000-soldier spearhead force with Norway and the Netherlands.

The fact that other countries are willing to serve under Bundeswehr command and be defended by its soldiers, and that the Bundestag is willing to let its soldiers serve abroad, shows how much has changed. In Germany public opinion has shifted too. Last December, 58 percent of Germans supported the government’s plan to send Bundeswehr soldiers to Syria, compared with 31 percent who supported international Bundeswehr missions in December 2014. What’s more, 56 percent support von der Leyen’s plans to expand the military.

German soldiers are clearly needed abroad. They’ve got international support and foreign missions are becoming a tolerable thought back home. The only thing the Bundeswehr needs now is new boots. Or rather, new equipment.

Fear of Russia is causing Europe to look to Germany. As we wrote in our booklet *Russia and China in Prophecy*:

The Europeans still remember how violent Russia was

in World War II, and Russia is a close neighbor with massive piles of nuclear weapons.

Russia's bold moves are triggering a fear that will hasten the uniting of the European Union. This fear will cause

Germany and other European nations to want stronger leadership. Throughout history, Germany has often sought a strong leader. Bible prophecy says it will do so again—for the last time!

Elections to Shake Europe in 2017

EUROPE FACES A SERIES OF POTENTIAL EARTHSHAKING ELECTIONS in 2017, as James Forsyth points out in the December 31 issue of the *Spectator*:

After the tumult of 2016, Europe could do with a year of calm. It won't get one. Elections are to be held in four of the six founder members of the European project, and populist euroskeptic forces are on the march in each one. There will be at least one regime change: François Hollande has accepted that he is too unpopular to run again as French president, and it will be a surprise if he is the only European leader to go. Others might cling on but find their grip on power weakened by populist success.

The specter of the financial crash still haunts European politics. Money was printed and banks were saved, but the recovery was marked by a great stagnation in living standards, which has led to alienation, dismay and anger. Donald Trump would not have been able to win the Republican nomination, let alone the presidency, without that rage—and the conditions that created Trump's victory are, if anything, even stronger in Europe.

European voters who looked to the state for protection after the crash soon discovered the helplessness of governments which had ceded control over vast swathes of economic policy to the EU. The second great shock, the wave of global immigration, is also a thornier subject in the EU because nearly all of its members surrendered control over their borders when they signed the Schengen Agreement. Those unhappy at this situation often have only new, populist parties to turn to. So most European elections come down to a battle between insurgents and defenders of the existing order.

Nowhere is this more the case than the Netherlands. The Dutch will vote on March 15, and the election will essentially be Geert Wilders's Freedom Party versus the rest. Wilders, who was convicted of inciting discrimination earlier this month, is expected to top the ballot. His party, which defined itself by antipathy to "Islamification" and a desire to quit the EU, regularly leads in the polls, often by double-digit margins. Normally, the party that comes top on election day in Holland provides the prime minister. But if Wilders triumphs, few other parties would support him and he won't come to power. For a populist, to come top and then be kept out of office by an establishment stitch-up is almost the perfect result. ...

It is not the Dutch election that causes the most European concern, however, but the French one. There we have a similar story: Marine Le Pen versus the rest. She will probably make the final round in April and face François Fillon, the 62-year-old former prime minister. It won't be

the first time that the Front National has made the runoff, but back in 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen won only 18 percent of the vote. His daughter will run her opponent far closer. ...

She already commands strong support among working-class voters. Like Trump, she will pander to protectionist instincts as well as campaigning on "Islamification" and immigration.

Fillon's economically right-wing views and Catholic social conservatism will make it hard, perhaps impossible, for the left to vote for him. But the *pacte républicain* is surely still strong enough to keep the Front National out. And it is worth remembering that Le Pen has long believed that it is the election after next, in 2022, that offers her best chance of victory.

The election most likely to damage the European project is the Italian one—if it happens. Matteo Renzi's resounding defeat in the recent constitutional reform referendum shows how angry Italians are. By some measures, southern Italy is now poorer than Poland, while manufacturing in northern Italy is struggling to compete because the euro has inflated its costs. ... In these circumstances, one can see why voters there might regard a leap into the unknown as preferable to the status quo.

What makes Italy different from other countries is that there is not just one political party there that opposes the euro. Both main opposition parties are anti-euro, with a third increasingly so. ... [T]o have an anti-single-currency government come to power in Italy would be an even bigger shock to the EU than Brexit. ...

The established order could scrape through this year in Europe. Dutch voters could shy away from Wilders when faced with the reality of voting for him; in France the ceiling on Le Pen's support could turn out to be nearer 35 percent than 50. The Italians, past masters at muddling on, might avoid fresh elections. But the populists will almost certainly end the year in a stronger position: that much closer to winning someday. Le Pen, for example, will almost certainly find her party with a sizeable presence in the National Assembly after the parliamentary elections. ...

If the insurgents in the south are to be kept at bay, then the eurozone must become a full transfer union, with proper burden-sharing on refugees. And that would create perfect conditions for insurgents in the north. Until—or unless—European leaders can resolve this conundrum, they will continue to dread elections.

The euro crisis will indeed keep triggering these kind of elections. For more on why, read "[Why the Euro Is Heading for an Earthshaking Crisis.](#)"

Germany flies almost 700 missions against the Islamic State in 2016: Germany's Operational Command Center reported the figures on Thursday, explaining that the missions mostly entailed reconnaissance. The Germans used six Tornado reconnaissance jets and a tanker aircraft to conduct their

missions. German troops were also aboard airborne early-warning and control aircraft during 10 NATO flights. A poll conducted after the December 19 attacks on a Christmas market in Berlin showed that **53 percent of Germans would be in favor of Berlin expanding its operations in the fight against the Islamic State.**

ASIA

T Japanese PM Visits Pearl Harbor in Historic First

Jeremiah Jacques | January 1

JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER SHINZO ABE MADE A HISTORIC VISIT to Pearl Harbor on December 27, where he expressed his “sincere and everlasting condolences” for the 2,403 Americans and the 64 Japanese killed during the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack.

“We must never repeat the horrors of war again,” Abe said, “this is the solemn vow the people of Japan have taken.”

“To the souls of the U.S. servicemen who lie aboard the USS Arizona, to the American people, and all people around the world, I pledge that unwavering vow,” he said, referring to the servicemen who remain entombed in a battleship sunk by the Japanese sneak attack.

Prime Minister Abe was accompanied by United States President Barack Obama, in what will likely be Mr. Obama's final visit with a foreign leader as president. Mr. Abe praised the U.S. for its postwar work to rehabilitate Japan, calling the resultant relationship between the two nations an “alliance of hope.”

Mr. Obama called the harbor a sacred location and said that “even the deepest wounds of war can give way to friendship and lasting peace.”

Abe's visit follows President Obama's historic trip in May to Hiroshima, where the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb in 1945 in hopes of bringing an end to [Japan's military fanaticism](#).

While Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor is being widely celebrated as a victory for diplomacy and for the U.S.-Japan alliance, it is noteworthy that Mr. Abe's statement was not an actual apology. Instead of saying, “I'm sorry that our government killed these people,” he basically said, “I'm sorry that these people—both the

Americans and the Japanese—died.” His failure to ascribe the blame to Japan hollowed his statements.

Abe's carefully chosen words allow him to demonstrate to the increasingly belligerent China that the U.S.-Japan alliance remains robust, while also allowing him to avoid upsetting hawkish factions of Japanese society who believe Japan has nothing to apologize for.

Among such factions is Hiromichi Moteki, the acting chairman for Japan's Society for the Dissemination of Historical Fact. Moteki said he was “relieved” that Abe did not apologize. “Why should Abe apologize? For the prime minister to apologize would be a distortion of history, because Japan's view of history is still strongly influenced by the outcome of the Tokyo War Trials, that Japan was the aggressor and in the wrong.”

Moteki is among the conservative Japanese who insist that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was not a “sneak attack,” nor was it the beginning of the war between the U.S. and Japan, since it was preceded by America imposing economic sanctions on Imperial Japan. He also insists that China instigated the Sino-Japanese War, and denies both the Nanjing Massacre and the Japanese Imperial Army's use of “comfort women” during the war.

Moteki and other Japanese conservatives deny any Japanese wrongdoing in the lead up to and during World War II. Abe's reluctance to confront such dangerous historical revisionists exposes the worrying underpinnings of his leadership.

To understand more about the dangers of this leadership, read [“Why the Trumpet Monitors Japan's March Away From Pacifism Toward Militarism.”](#)

 Follow Jeremiah Jacques

WSJ: ‘Xi’s Power Play Foreshadows Historic Transformation’

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



ELITES IN THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP ARE CONCERNED THAT Chinese President Xi Jinping could take a page out of Putin's playbook and change the Communist Party rules to extend and expand his grip on power.

Wall Street Journal analyst Jeremy Page wrote on December 26:

China's Communist Party elite was craving a firm hand on the tiller when it chose Xi Jinping for the nation's top

job in 2012. ... The party's power brokers got what they wanted—and then some.

Four years on, Mr. Xi has taken personal charge of the economy, the armed forces and most other levers of power, overturning a collective-leadership system introduced to protect against one-man rule after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. ...

[M]any party insiders say Mr. Xi is trying to block promotion of a potential successor next year, suggesting he wants

to remain in office after his second term expires in 2022

There is a constitutional two-term limit on the presidency. There also are party rules saying no leading official can stay in the same post longer than 10 years, or at the same level of the party for more than 15. Some party insiders say the latter rules don't apply to the Standing Committee.

Mr. Page concluded saying that some authorities believe Mr. Xi could alter some of these rules. Alternatively, he could take a page out of Russian President Vladimir Putin's playbook and "switch roles."

Taiwan Warily Watches China's Aircraft Carrier Enter South China Sea

THE TAIWANESE LEADERSHIP WATCHED WARILY ON DECEMBER 26 as China's aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, along with a group of five Chinese warships passed by Taiwan and headed into the South China Sea.

Reuters wrote:

The move comes amid renewed tension over Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own, ineligible for state-to-state relations, following U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's telephone call with the island's president that upset Beijing.

The Soviet-built Liaoning aircraft carrier has taken part in previous exercises, including some in the South China Sea, but China is years away from perfecting carrier operations similar to those the United States has practiced for decades.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said the carrier ... passed southeast of the Pratas Islands, which are controlled by Taiwan, heading southwest. The carrier group earlier passed 90 nautical miles south of Taiwan's southernmost point via the Bashi Channel, between Taiwan and the Philippines.

Taiwan's Johnny Chiang said the Liaoning excursion was Beijing demonstrating to America that it has broken through the "first island chain," a region that includes Taiwan and Japan's Ryukyu Islands.

China's state-run *Global Times* published an editorial saying the exercise will soon be followed by more ambitious operations, designed to push at America: "The Chinese fleet will cruise to the Eastern Pacific sooner or later. When China's aircraft carrier fleet appears in offshore areas of the U.S. one day, it will trigger intense thinking about maritime rules."

In the July issue of the *Trumpet*, editor in chief Gerald Flurry said 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. ... 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 Regains Almost 10,000 Acres of Okinawa From U.S. Military

THE UNITED STATES MILITARY RETURNED ALMOST 10,000 ACRES on Okinawa to the Japanese government on December 22, in the largest return of land on the island since 1972. The land returned is over half of the Jungle Warfare Training Center—about 17 percent of the U.S.'s total land on the island—and has been held by the U.S. since 1945. While the return was agreed upon in 1996, it was conditional on the completion of relocated helipads elsewhere in the training area. The helipads were completed this month, and the transfer was made official at ceremonies in Tokyo and on the island on December 21 and 22.

U.S. military bases on the Japanese island have been the subject of protests for some years. Okinawa is less than 1 percent of Japan's land area at 466 square miles but supports about 26,000 U.S. troops—half of the total 52,000 stationed in the country. The behavior of some U.S. servicemen on the island has infuriated local residents: a 20-year-old Japanese woman was

murdered by a veteran and base employee in April, and there have been multiple other incidents of Japanese women being raped by U.S. troops. A June protest against U.S. presence in the island's capital, Naha, attracted over 60,000 participants. There is also concern about the safety of the Osprey aircraft the U.S. forces operate in the area: The fleet was grounded after one crashed earlier in the month. Okinawa's governor, Takeshi Onaga, was elected in 2014 based on his opposition to the presence of U.S. troops on the island and has called for their total removal ever since.

The land return highlights the strain on the Japan-U.S. relationship. The strain is exacerbated as the U.S. withdraws from its allies and as Japan begins to rely more on its own military might. For more information on Japan's changing priorities, read "[Japan's Place in the Future](#)" from our booklet *Russia and China in Prophecy*.

Russia Gifts Fighter Jets to China on Christmas Day

IN NORTH KOREA, KIM JONG-UN ANNOUNCED THIS YEAR THAT Christmas is banned. North Koreans should instead celebrate his grandmother on that day, he said. But the spirit of the holiday seemed alive and well in the relationship between Russia and China, with Moscow delivering four Su-35 fighter jets to the Chinese military on Christmas day.

The *Diplomat* wrote:

The People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) took delivery of its first batch of four [Russian-made Sukhoi Su-35 multirole fighter jets](#) on December 25, according to various media

reports. A picture circulating on a Chinese social media website reportedly shows the landing of a Su-35 coated in the bluish-gray camouflage pattern of the Russian Air Force. ...

The PLAAF plans to induct a total of 24 Su-35 fighter aircraft over the next two years with four fighter jets delivered in 2016, 10 in 2017 and the remaining 10 in 2018. ... The first deliveries were initially scheduled for 2017. It is unclear why the delivery schedule has now been sped up.

The jets will bolster China's military strength in the South China Sea where Beijing has grown increasingly aggressive in recent years.

TW IN BRIEF

Sao Tome turns to China: China and Sao Tome and Principe officially resumed diplomatic relations on Monday in a victory for Beijing over its rival across the Taiwan Strait. Sao Tome and Principe is a small island off the East African coast, which recently broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan after United States President-elect Donald Trump received a phone call from the Taiwanese president. Beijing and Sao Tome and Principe agreed to uphold the one-China principle as the prerequisite and basis for the growth of their bilateral relationship. The move is a win for Beijing, which considers the self-governing island of Taiwan to be part of China's territory. China has been outraged by suggestions by Mr. Trump that he could rethink this traditional U.S. policy.

Typhoon Nina: The Philippines has been hit with a heavy typhoon that has killed at least four people. At least 218,000

people evacuated as Typhoon Nina made landfall on Bicol Peninsula over the weekend. Winds reached 115 miles per hour, with gusts of up to 158 miles per hour. One man died when a tree fell on him. Another three victims were swept up in flash flooding.

Putin to scale back Russian presence in Syria in light of ceasefire: Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his military on Thursday to scale down its presence in Syria. The Russian military has provided vital support to Syrian government forces for over a year. In light of a ceasefire brokered this week by Russia and Turkey, Putin said Russia's presence could be reduced. Putin didn't say how many troops would be withdrawn but said Russia will keep fighting terrorism and supporting government forces. Putin also said that Russia would maintain its military presence at an air facility in Latakia and the naval base at the Port of Tartus.

ANGLO-AMERICA



The Prophesied Prince of Russia

Gerald Flurry, *The Key of David* | January 1

The Bible foretells of an end-time prince of Russia—and a messenger who prophesies against this powerful prince. These two men will impact your life directly. Find out who they are.



President Obama Sanctions Russia Over Alleged Hacking

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



UNITED STATES PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA PLACED SANCTIONS against top Russian government intelligence officials on Thursday and announced the expulsion of Russian diplomats from the U.S. Both these moves were responses to Russia's [alleged use of cyberattacks](#) to interfere with the U.S. presidential election.

According to a *Wall Street Journal* article by Carol E. Lee and Paul Sonne:

The targets of the sanctions include Moscow's top intelligence services, the Federal Security Service and the Main

Intelligence Directorate, as well as three companies and a handful of individuals. Among the individuals are top officials from the Main Intelligence Directorate, or GRU.

The State Department expelled 35 Russian operatives from the Russian Embassy in Washington and the Russian consulate in San Francisco on Thursday. The officials and their families were given 72 hours to leave the U.S.

The State Department also notified Russia that as of Friday Moscow would be denied access to two Russian government-owned compounds—one in Maryland and one in New York.

Mr. Obama said the steps were “in response to the Russian government’s aggressive harassment of U.S. officials and cyber operations aimed at the U.S. election” and followed repeated warnings to Moscow.

“These data theft and disclosure activities could only have been directed by the highest levels of the Russian

government,” Mr. Obama said in a statement.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment. The Russian Embassy in Washington declined to comment.

Russia previously has denied involvement in the hacks.

When President Obama announced that he believed Russia was behind the hack into Democratic National Party headquarters earlier this month, geopolitical strategist George Friedman wrote that the public nature of the announcement was unusual given that the Central Intelligence Agency usually handles such matters covertly.

Friedman then alleged that Mr. Obama’s move was partially driven by a desire to delegitimize the presidential election.

After appeasing Russian imperial ambitions for eight years, President Obama’s “change-of-heart” about the Putin regime is likely more of an underhanded attempt to sabotage his successor than a legitimate concern about Russia’s rise to superpower status.

Number of Police Killed in Ambush Attacks Doubles in 2016

GUNFIRE ACCOUNTED FOR ALMOST HALF OF ALL POLICE DEATHS IN 2016. So far, 64 officers have been killed in shootings this year, compared to only 41 shot to death at the same point last year, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

According to a [Washington Post](#) article by Mark Berman and Kevin Uhrmacher:

Nearly 1 in 3 officers fatally shot was killed in what the group called ambush attacks, including the high-profile assaults in Dallas and Baton Rouge that left eight officers dead and shook law enforcement nationwide.

The surge in officers killed by gunfire this year is the largest on record, up 56 percent over last year, the memorial fund’s data shows. That highlights a stark fact that has come into shape in recent years: Guns are increasingly the cause of line-of-duty deaths, according to an analysis of the memorial fund’s data. Nearly half of all officers slain in the line of duty were killed with guns, the highest percentage of deaths in more than two decades.

Officials in the Obama administration have been distorting facts and making many false accusations against America’s

police in an effort to convince people that America’s local law enforcement officers need to be brought under federal control. This sharp increase in ambush attacks against police officers is a tragic side effect of this agenda. Such rhetoric is inciting evils that are quickly becoming far worse than those it purports to solve!

In the August 2015 issue of the *Trumpet*, editor in chief Gerald Flurry warned of this dangerous trend. In “[Police Under Attack](#),” he wrote:

Here is some more *truth*: The president has people moving into cities and taking over police departments in order to straighten them out! The federal government is getting more and more control. It has a *stranglehold* on the police even now. The Obama administration seems to view each new prominent race-related police story that explodes into the news as an opportunity to seek more control.

They are tearing down the police, the nation’s last line of defense. They have already torn it down to a great extent. Do you know what comes after that? [O]ur cities will be burned with fire (Isaiah 1:7). That nightmare is already starting and could break out and spread throughout the nation overnight!

Big City Mayors Unite Against President Trump

EVER SINCE ELECTION DAY ON NOVEMBER 8, THE MAYOR OF AMERICA’S largest city has been pressing for last-minutes executive actions from the White House before President Barack Obama leaves office.

In particular, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has led a coalition of mayors—including the mayors of Atlanta, Los Angeles and Chicago—to press the Obama administration for action on immigration before January 20. This group has urged the White

House to renew deferred action status for immigrants and to formally end a Bush-era registration program for nonimmigrant visitors for high-risk nations.

According to a [New York Times](#) article by J. David Goodman:

Those requests included a call for early renewal of protected or deferred action status for immigrants who have it temporarily because of their countries of origin or because

of Mr. Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

The group also urged the White House to formally end a special registration program for nonimmigrant visitors that grew out of the September 11 attacks and that could provide a way to create a so-called Muslim registry, an idea endorsed by Mr. Trump during the campaign. Amid pressure from the mayors, Democrats in Washington and civil rights groups, the Obama administration moved last week to dismantle the program.

"If you combine the power of America's cities, that could really be a game changer in terms of moderating that agenda," Mr. de Blasio said during the interview, in which he spoke broadly of plans that include unified lobbying and legal action. "That's the shape that people are talking about. Maximum coordination. Maximum simultaneous activity."

Mr. de Blasio, who is running for reelection next year, is not alone among mayors who see a coalition of cities as a potentially powerful bulwark against drastic changes in Washington.

In conference calls and informal meetings, mayors from Seattle to New Orleans have been discussing how to best position their cities as a kind of bloc of island nations, with

shared concerns over the prospect of diminished federal support for urban centers, and of major shifts in policy on immigration, public safety and climate change.

This type of opposition is aimed at positioning major cities across America as a kind of bloc of island nations opposed to the agenda of the incoming Trump administration. Many political analysts are saying the ideological divide in America is now wider than at any point in U.S. history since the Civil War.

Unlike the lead-up to the Civil War, however, the division in the United States today is not between a Republican North and a Democratic South. The divide is between urban and rural areas. In many ways, this urban-rural ideological divide is more dangerous than the North-South divide that resulted in the Civil War.

America's metropolitan areas cannot secede from the union like a state can. This means that unless something is done to heal the deep ideological differences in America, this type of gridlock and infighting can only intensify.

President Abraham Lincoln famously quoted Jesus Christ when he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." History shows that when a nation falls into division and infighting, it quickly becomes consumed by internal crises that leave it vulnerable to attack by foreign enemies.

TW IN BRIEF

Fights break out at malls across America: Fights broke out at malls around the United States Monday night, sending shoppers scrambling for the exits. No one was seriously injured in the mall melees, which, during the panic, also prompted numerous false reports of gunfire. Police in Ohio said that officers used pepper spray to disperse a large crowd, following a fight at an expensive shopping mall just outside of Cleveland. A report of shots fired was later determined to be unfounded. One male juvenile was arrested for allegedly trying to hit an officer during the incident, which police said appeared to have been "loosely organized on social media." There were similar disturbances at malls around the country, including in New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee, Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Indiana and Connecticut.

NYPD to allow beards and turbans: The New York City Police Department announced on Wednesday it would allow South

Asian Sikh officers to wear beards and turbans on the job. But the turbans must be blue to match the police uniform. The decision puts the nation's largest police force among a small group of law enforcement agencies that allow members to have facial hair and wear turbans, often as a religious exception. While the department has become more diverse, many activists say the policies have hurt the agency's goal of being more inclusive.

President Obama says he could have won third term: President Barack Obama said in an interview released Monday that he could have beaten Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump "if I had run again." Mr. Obama also critiqued Hillary Clinton's campaign, saying that she acted too cautiously. "If you think you're winning, then you have a tendency, just like in sports, maybe to play it safer," the president said. Mr. Trump replied to the comments, saying there was "No way" President Obama would have won against him.



Whatever Happened to the Church Jesus Established?

Stephen Flurry, Trumpet Daily | December 30

The growth of the first-century Church stopped within 30 years of its beginning.

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