

Trumpet Weekly

FEBRUARY 3, 2017

People march to the Massachusetts State House in Boston on January 29 to protest President Trump's executive order banning people from several Muslim countries from entering the U.S.



Hysterical Reaction to Immigration Order Further Divides Two Americas

January 30 | Trumpet Staff

UNITED STATES PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP SIGNED AN EXECUTIVE order on Friday temporarily [restricting the immigration of refugees](#) coming from seven Muslim countries known for exporting jihadists: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. And over the weekend, the radical left collectively lost its mind.

“SHOCKWAVES” blared the headline at CNN Saturday—in *all caps*. The world is stunned, we’re told. U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer

spoke melodramatically of tears running down the cheeks of Lady Liberty. *Huffington Post* turned the Statue of Liberty on her head under the headline “Discrimination Nation.”

There is not one mention of a “Muslim ban” in President Trump’s executive order, but you would never know it judging by the media coverage. And where was this hysterical reaction when President Barack Obama used a pen and phone to restrict refugee

admissions during *his* presidency? Obama banned Iraqi refugees for six months in 2011. It wasn't until his last year in office that he permitted large numbers of Syrian refugees to come to America. And one of his final acts as president was to abolish the "wet foot, dry foot" policy that ensured a safe haven for Cuban refugees fleeing Castro's prison.

President Obama could do no wrong.

President Trump, on the other hand, is Adolf Hitler—and temporarily restricting immigration flow until the screening process can be improved is worse than Nazism.

Of course, leaving aside fake news, truth seekers understand that President Trump has good reason to be concerned about jihadist infiltration into refugee camps. The terrorists *themselves* have openly bragged about sneaking into Europe and America through cracks in the immigration process! And it's not like Europe and America have escaped the gruesome acts of jihadism.

We've been hit hard. And given the "terrible recent track record of completed and attempted terror attacks by Muslim immigrants," as David French noted at the *National Review*, "it's clear that our current approach is inadequate to control the threat. Unless we want to simply accept Muslim immigrant terror as a fact of American life, a short-term ban on entry from problematic countries combined with a systematic review of our security procedures is both reasonable and prudent."

To confront this threat, Mr. Trump's executive order directs the Department of Homeland Security and other government agencies to conduct a thorough review of their screening processes for refugees. To do this, refugee entry from the above-mentioned nations has been put on hold for four months. As French correctly notes, President Trump actually "backed down dramatically from his campaign promises." Friday's executive order is nowhere close to the Muslim ban he sometimes floated out on the campaign trail.

Mr. Trump also limited the number of refugees allowed to enter the U.S. each year to 50,000—about where it stood during George W. Bush's presidency and the first few years of Mr. Obama's.

"The bottom line is that Trump is improving security screening and intends to admit refugees at close to the average rate of the 15 years before Obama's dramatic expansion in 2016," wrote French. "Obama's expansion was a departure from recent norms, not Trump's contraction." Mr. Trump also put a hold—again, not a permanent ban—on refugees entering from Syria, while the presidency makes sure the process does not let in terrorists.

This order puts the clock all the way back to ... 2014. It wasn't until 2015 that Mr. Obama began allowing in Syrian refugees in any large numbers. As French wrote:

While the Syrian Civil War was raging, ISIS was rising, and refugees were swamping Syria's neighbors and surging into Europe, the Obama administration let in less than a trickle of refugees. Only in the closing days of his administration did President Obama reverse course—in numbers insufficient to make a dent in the overall crisis, by the way

When we know our enemy is seeking to strike America and its allies through the refugee population, when we know they've succeeded in Europe, and when the administration has doubts about our ability to adequately vet the

refugees we admit into this nation, a pause is again not just prudent but arguably necessary. It is important that we provide sufficient aid and protection to keep refugees safe and healthy in place, but it is not necessary to bring Syrians to the United States to fulfill our vital moral obligations. ...

Trump's order was not signed in a vacuum. ... Trump's order isn't a betrayal of American values.

The overblown, hysterical backlash, the complete distortion by the media and the grandstanding by politicians and celebrities alike expose the deep divisions within America's society. To many on the left, despite the facts stating that it is definitely not a Muslim ban, all that matters is that people *feel* that this is a Muslim ban. Mr. Trump's team has certainly been guilty of blurring the truth with "alternative facts." But the left is at it too. That logic goes down a very slippery slope. Why do some *feel* like this is a Muslim ban? Because the media is telling them it is!

Here America's national security is at risk in a clear and direct way. Yet too many are more desperate to attack a president they despise than they are to keep America safe. That's not to say that this ban is the right thing for America to do. But you can disagree with it without thinking Donald Trump is Hitler.

With that said, President Trump and his team are not innocent here. A lot of the chaos and confusion comes from mistakes in *the way* the order was carried out. Mistakes in its application and legal errors in the document itself caused major problems because of "incompetence of the highest order," as Ben Shapiro put it. French wrote that the application of the law to green card holders "is madness."

"The plain language of the order doesn't apply to legal permanent residents of the U.S., and green card holders have been through round after round of vetting and security checks," he continued.

Those defending Mr. Trump's order have been almost universally critical of the way it was carried out. The U.S. Border and Customs services appear to have been caught by surprise and are confused by what the order meant. In this divided climate, the U.S. administration could have done much more to ensure this went into force more smoothly.

The fact is, few on either side in this divided America are interested in any kind of unity. "Many Americans are troubled by the divisions and hatreds being expressed right now," wrote *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry in the January issue of the *Trumpet* magazine. "But they need to be a lot more concerned than they are!" ("[America's Coming Civil War](#)").

When one side wants to seize any excuse and make out that the other is basically Hitler, those are some pretty concerning divisions.

Mr. Flurry has warned of the dangers of this. This division in America is a real danger. By making President Donald Trump out to be like Hitler, the media is stirring up a lot of strong emotion. This emotion and this division will cause very real damage to America.

But there is hope. God does have a solution to the division. It is a solution that will, in time, make America great again. For this solution, watch Mr. Flurry's *Key of David* program "[A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand](#)."

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T Donald Trump Puts Iran 'On Notice'

Brent Nagtegaal | February 2

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



JERUSALEM

ON SUNDAY, IRAN LAUNCHED A KHORRAMSHAHR MEDIUM-RANGE ballistic missile from a test site outside Semnan, east of Tehran. The next day, Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen thrust a boat laden with explosives into a Saudi frigate in the southern Red Sea. Some reports indicate that the Houthis believed their target was a United States naval vessel.

Two days after the Houthi assault and three days after Iran's missile test, [Donald Trump's White House responded by telling Iran it was "on notice."](#)

Here is part of the statement read by the new national security adviser, Mike Flynn:

Recent Iranian actions, including a provocative ballistic missile launch and an attack against a Saudi naval vessel conducted by Iran-supported Houthi militants, underscore what should have been clear to the international community all along about Iran's destabilizing behavior across the Middle East.

The recent ballistic missile launch is also in defiance of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which calls upon Iran "not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology." ...

The Obama administration failed to respond adequately to Tehran's malign actions The Trump administration condemns such actions by Iran that undermine security, prosperity and stability throughout and beyond the Middle East and place American lives at risk.

President Trump has severely criticized the various agreements reached between Iran and the Obama administration, as well as the United Nations, as being weak and ineffective.

Instead of being thankful to the United States for these

agreements, Iran is now feeling emboldened. As of today, we are officially putting Iran on notice.

The strong yet ambiguous threat from the Trump administration is somewhat of a contrast to previous responses from President Barack Obama following similar acts of aggression. Mr. Obama usually downplayed provocative actions by Iran in order to accomplish and protect his goal of reconciling with Tehran and inviting it into the international community. However, Mr. Obama's repeated compromises simply encouraged Iranian belligerence.

Right now, no one seems to know what being "on notice" means practically. The meaning will likely only become clear when Iran either tests another ballistic weapon, tests the limits of the nuclear deal, or commits another hostile act through one of its proxies. (Further provocations from Iran, of course, are as certain as tomorrow's sunrise.) It is significant that Iran conducted this ballistic missile test not just in full view of the world, but within the first days of the Trump presidency. Tehran was publicly probing America's new leader.

Given Iran's track record of hostility, it won't be long before Mr. Trump is forced to reveal what he meant by putting Iran "on notice."

One possible countermeasure would be renewing sanctions. Some have even suggested he could tear up the nuclear deal itself. But this would be difficult, as Mr. Trump would need a measure of cooperation from the international community, which remains generally positive about the deal and generally hostile toward Donald Trump. Plus, it would take time for Iran to feel the effect. Ending the deal could play into Iranian hands as well, as Tehran has long indicated that it would be the United States, not Iran, that backs out of the deal first.

Mr. Trump could opt for a direct military intervention at Iran's nuclear sites, or perhaps increase America's naval presence in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. This would be relatively cheap but probably wouldn't sting Iran as much as he hopes.

A more likely countermeasure is for the United States to increase its support of Syrian rebels in the ongoing Russian-led peace negotiations in Syria. Such action would sideline Iran. President Trump has already discussed the idea of setting up safe zones in northern Syria, something the Iranians are completely opposed to. He has also said that he is inclined to work with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Syria, which would likely mean Iran losing some influence. A loss of influence in Syria would undermine Iran's plan of controlling the land mass from Iran to the Mediterranean; it would also demoralize Iran's leadership at a very low cost. (Of course, such a plan would all depend on Putin being willing to impair Iran.)

Whether or not President Trump remains true to his word

and confronts Iran, Bible prophecy says that Iran will continue to remain a key power in the Middle East, especially around the Red Sea, and the key agitator in the region. The *Trumpet* has speculated that Iran's apparent determination to grow its presence and influence in the southern Middle East could indicate that it realizes it is losing influence in Syria and is seeking new strategic advantages by growing its presence in and around the Red Sea, a critical sea gate. Mr. Trump's notice on Iran could facilitate this trend.

Either way, expect Iran to continue to test the United States. To get a clear picture of Iran's strategy in the Middle East, read *The King of the South* by *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry.

 Follow [Brent Nagtegaal](#)

Iran Threatens the Red Sea—and Global Trade **Brent Nagtegaal | January 31**

JERUSALEM

THREE SMALL VESSELS BELONGING TO IRANIAN-BACKED HOUTHI rebels [attacked a Saudi Arabian frigate on Monday](#) off the west coast of Yemen. Footage of the event showed one vessel, laden with explosives, plowing into the rear of the Saudi warship, creating a large explosion and fire that killed two of the crewman and injured several others.

The Saudi warship was on patrol outside the Hodeidah port, located halfway up Yemen's western coast, when it was attacked, according to the Saudi state news agency SPA. The Houthis claimed responsibility for the attack. "The Saudi warship was involved in aggression against the Western coastal cities and Yemeni fisherman," a military official said to the Saba Yemeni news agency run by the Houthi movement.

Footage recorded by the Houthi rebels shows gunfire, followed by the explosion. It also records the terrorists shouting "Allah Akbar" and making several anti-U.S., anti-Israel remarks—a clear indication of the Houthis' ultimate enemy.

This narrow portion of the Red Sea, as well as the 22-mile Bab el-Mandeb Strait at the southwestern tip of Yemen, is vulnerable to terrorist attacks since the Houthis gained control of Yemen's western coast. Monday's attack marks the third attack carried out by the Houthis against ships in this area in the past six months.

On Oct. 9, 2016, the Houthis targeted the USS Mason with anti-ship missiles, an American destroyer operating just north of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. They again attacked on October 12. That happened to be the 16th anniversary of the attack on the USS Cole, which was severely damaged when a boat loaded with explosives rammed into its side, similar to Monday's attack on the Saudi vessel.

While the Houthis are believed to be incapable of closing the strait completely, the mere threat of terrorist vessels and suicide boats patrolling the area is enough to potentially disrupt world trade. As James Holmes wrote in *Foreign Policy* late last year:

If a coastal foe can menace shipping transiting this narrow seaway, it would disrupt the shortest, most convenient sea route connecting Europe with South and East Asia. Doing so would carry significant economic and military repercussions. ... Houthi antics could drive insurance rates sky-high for merchant shipping, prompting shippers to bypass the danger zone. ... In a sense, then, the Houthis could conscript insurance firm Lloyd's of London as an ally—magnifying their influence while distorting patterns of trade and military operations.

This latest attack by the Houthis shows that Iran's desire to control the Red Sea is intensifying. In November 2016, Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Mohammed Hossein Bagheri said, "One day, we may need [naval] bases on the coasts of Yemen and Syria." Clearly, Iran has designs for this waterway.

In 2015, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote that the Houthi takeover of Yemen's capital was proof that "Iran is implementing a bold strategy to control the vital sea lane from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea."

Now with the Houthis controlling virtually all of Yemen's western coast, the Iranians have shifted their focus off the land and into the Red Sea.

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TW IN BRIEF

The danger of the upcoming Palestinian municipal elections: On Tuesday, the Palestinian Authority (PA) put forward a new date to hold its long-overdue municipal elections. The elections are set for May 13, 2017, about six months after the original date. The postponement was likely due to a miscalculation

on the part of Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas, who assumed that rival Hamas would boycott the elections as it had done in the past. Instead, Hamas said it would participate, because of its rising popularity inside the territory of the West Bank. It's likely Abbas now feels that Fatah's position is more secure today than it was

last year, which is why he felt comfortable announcing the forthcoming elections. The *Trumpet* believes that Hamas will most certainly gain control over the Palestinian Authority inside the West Bank.

Iranian lawmakers back missile program: In order to send a return message to U.S. President Donald Trump, some 220 of 290 members of the Iranian parliament signed a [statement](#) this week expressing their “full-fledged support” for the country’s military. According to Press TV, “The sole way to ward off any act of aggression against Iran is to boost the country’s missile might, the MPs added, describing certain countries’ opposition to Iran’s defense might as “illogical.” In a meeting with Armenian Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said, “We will not ask permission from any country or international organization to expand

our conventional defense capabilities.”

Israel’s prime minister promises new settlements: Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised to build a new West Bank settlement “as soon as possible,” following the court-ordered demolition of an illegally built settler outpost. Netanyahu spoke as Israeli forces were completing the evacuation of the Amona outpost on Thursday. His government tried to block the evacuation but was overruled by the country’s Supreme Court, which determined that Amona was built two decades ago on private Palestinian land. Netanyahu described the uprooting of Amona as difficult and assured those attending a ceremony in the West Bank settlement of Ariel that “we will establish a new settlement on state land.” He says: “We will act so that it happens as soon as possible.” He did not say when or where the settlement would be established.

EUROPE

Trumpet Hour

[RUSSIA’S UKRAINE ASSAULT, IRAN’S ILLEGAL MISSILE TEST, AMERICA’S LAWLESS PROTESTS, AND MUCH MORE | FEBRUARY 3](#)

[GUTTENBERG VS. TRUMP, TOCQUEVILLE ON ‘RIGHTEOUS’ AMERICANS, THE WORD OF THE YEAR, AND MORE | FEBRUARY 1](#)

T Trump Exposes Germany’s Exploitation of Europe Sam Livingston | February 1

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



UNITED STATES PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP TOOK ANOTHER shot at Germany on Tuesday. Peter Navarro, the head of Mr. Trump’s newly created National Trade Council, criticized Berlin for using the euro “to exploit other countries.”

According to Mr. Navarro, “a big obstacle to viewing TTIP [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership] as a bilateral deal is Germany, which continues to exploit other countries in the [European Union] as well as the U.S. with an ‘IMPLICIT DEUTSCHE MARK’ that is grossly undervalued.” This observation, as the *Telegraph*’s Ambrose Evans-Pritchard noted, is exactly right. In his piece “Trump Is Right: Germany Is Running an Illegal Currency Racket,” Evans-Pritchard explained: “As a matter of strict objective fact, Donald Trump’s trade guru is correct. GERMANY IS THE PLANET’S ULTIMATE CURRENCY MANIPULATOR.”

As Evans-Pritchard explains, there is a massive double-standard when it comes to Germany and trade, especially with other European countries. Berlin runs a trade surplus far above what EU law permits. It’s “not even close to compliance,” he wrote. “Yet nothing is ever done about it. GERMANY FLOUTS THE LAW WITH

IMPUNITY, EVEN AS IT LECTURES OTHERS ON THE RULE OF LAW.”

Now Donald Trump has come along and exposed Germany’s exploitation of the euro and Europe’s economies. The Trump administration’s view of Germany is almost the complete opposite to that of Barack Obama.

Germany’s most influential newsmagazine, *Spiegel*, highlighted this trend in its recent article “Trump’s Attack on Germany and the Global Economy,” saying, “There is significant fear that [senior executives in Germany] might become Trump targets.”

It’s possible that Navarro’s comments are simply the first shot in an imminent trade war between America and Germany. As *Spiegel* wrote:

The consequences of this radical political shift are not limited to the United States. When the world’s largest and most influential economy makes changes, the shock waves can be felt everywhere. A new economic world order is coming into being. And it is an attack on the German model.

In his campaign speeches and tirades against globalization, Trump primarily identified China and Mexico as his enemies, but Germany, a nation of exports, is likely to be third on that list. No other large economy is more reliant on the free exchange of goods and services, on border-free trade and barrier-free exports, than the German economy.

As we said earlier this week, [“Germany is in panic mode.”](#) Its economy is heavily reliant on exports, and the idea of trade with the United States being hampered is a paralyzing thought. *Spiegel* summed up that fear, “If the world’s most powerful man isolates the U.S. domestic market, German economic growth, depending on the scope of Trump’s trade barriers, could shrink by up to three-quarters of a point.”

Germany is considering every option to counter what could be a huge hit to its economy. One option is for Berlin to begin to limit trade with the U.S. and develop stronger trade relations with other markets, especially in the Far East. *Spiegel* wrote:

A little under six years ago, the EU reached an initial trade deal with South Korea. Since then, German exports to

the country have risen by around 50 percent. But improved ties with China would hold even greater promise. A NEW BERLIN-BEIJING ALLIANCE COULD—IN PART, AT LEAST—SUPPLANT THE OLD TRANS-ATLANTIC ORDER. The importance of the Chinese economy has been growing for years now among its neighbors. With Trump’s election, China is now likely to attract countries that had previously been anchored in the trans-Atlantic alliance. Europe isn’t just closer to China when it comes to issues like climate change, the Middle East or the Iran nuclear program. IT MAY SOON BECOME CLOSER ON TRADE POLICY TOO.

Could China become Germany’s next big trade partner? Bible prophecy says YES! Stephen Flurry, the *Trumpet’s* executive editor, recently discussed this on his radio show [“Trump’s Immigration Order and the New Berlin-Beijing Alliance.”](#)

Watch for America’s relationship with Germany to continue to deteriorate and for Germany to continue to draw closer to China. These trends in the news right now play right into some of the most dramatic prophecies in the Bible. To read more on this topic, read [“Germany Sees Donald Trump as an Enemy”](#) and [“Trump, Germany and KT zu Guttenberg.”](#)

Eastern Europe Trembles as Russia Marches in Ukraine

Richard Palmer | February 2

LITHUANIA IS ALL BUT PANICKING. THE TINY NATION [CANNOT HOPE to defend itself against Russia](#)—and it worries that under United States President Donald Trump, America won’t defend it either. Vijai Maheshwari wrote an article titled “In the Baltics, Waiting for History to Start Up Again” for *Politico* describing the growing climate of fear (emphasis added throughout):

Many Lithuanians are fearful U.S. President Donald Trump’s ambivalence toward NATO could result in an attack by an emboldened Russia, and so they are making contingency plans for “worst-case” scenarios.

Friends in bars described how they packed an extra suitcase and filled large containers of gasoline in case they had to flee the country at the last minute. *Some even bought boats to escape via the Baltic Sea*, as many did when the Red Army came through during World War II. ...

For citizens of a prosperous European nation and an integral part of the transatlantic alliance, the statements struck me as extraordinary—and surreal. Lithuania is not Ukraine after all

The government is taking extreme measures to try and stay safe, putting the nation, literally, on war footing:

It has reintroduced mandatory military service, refurbished Soviet-era bomb shelters, and even distributed pamphlets with detailed instructions for dealing with an armed invasion. The handbook advises the population to

look out for foreign spies and to turn collaborators over to the government.

Meanwhile, voluntary paramilitary groups, like the Riflemen’s Union, have seen a sharp spike in membership since Russia’s actions in the Ukraine.

Lithuania has good reason to be scared. Russia’s threats have been growing continually. Maheshwari wrote:

Russian jets repeatedly violated Lithuanian airspace last year, and senior advisers to the president have had their accounts hacked. The country has also been spooked by Russia’s transfer of nuclear-capable Iskander missiles to its enclave of Kaliningrad, which shares a long border with Lithuania.

Putin may already be taking advantage of Mr. Trump’s presidency to push farther into Europe—with Russian troops now on the march in Ukraine.

Over the weekend, Russian-backed forces unleashed a massive artillery attack against Ukraine. The Russians are now fighting a ground assault on the town of Avdiivka, near the front lines. The Ukrainian government appears to be evacuating some from the town. Over 20,000 are without heat or water in the harsh Ukrainian winter. Temperatures in Avdiivka are as low as zero degrees Fahrenheit.

The timing of the flare-up—coming so soon after Mr. Trump’s inauguration and just days after the new president’s first official

phone call with Vladimir Putin—is certainly interesting. Russia blames Ukraine for the violence, saying it is merely responding to Ukrainian attempts to gradually ease territory away from the pro-Russian forces. But even if that is true, the Russians still chose the timing of the attack.

The offensive could be a prelude to a much larger Russian advance, Noah Rothman warned in *Commentary* magazine in an article titled “[Don’t Ignore the Fighting in Ukraine](#)”:

The “frozen conflict” in east Ukraine is thawing out. ... The often intense violence between Ukrainian troops and Russian-supported forces has, however, been met with stony silence from a distracted political class in the United States. It would be a grave mistake to ignore this slowly boiling conflict. ...

Rothman speculates that Putin may be testing the new president to see how committed he is to Europe’s defense. “If the Russian-backed offensive in Ukraine goes entirely ignored by Washington, Putin will have his answer,” he wrote. A lack of response could provoke much greater Russian action:

Moscow-backed separatists will get more aggressive, Russia will become more emboldened, and the next test may occur in a theater that Donald Trump cannot ignore. ... The war in Europe is again hot, and we ignore it at our

own peril. If this is a prelude to another provocation somewhere else, somewhere the United States is not at liberty to simply ignore, we will regret this missed opportunity.

It’s too early to say how Mr. Trump will respond. But European powers certainly see a Russia keen to push forward as soon as Putin thinks he may have an opportunity.

With fear rising, it is becoming increasingly clear to Europeans that they need to make some big changes.

Former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fisher warned that “Germany and all other European countries must now do all they can to boost their contributions to collective security within the EU and NATO.”

This, he makes clear, means more defense spending. “Thrift is undoubtedly a virtue; but other considerations should take priority *when one’s house is on fire and about to collapse*.”

Eastern Europe’s fear is leading to a major shift within Europe. Over the last decade or so, the region has vacillated between putting its trust in Germany or in the U.S. Now, Mr. Trump is leaving it little choice—Germany looks like the only option.

“[B]oth Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump are goading Europe into becoming an independent military superpower capable of standing up to both Russia and America!” wrote Andrew Müller in the latest issue of the *Trumpet* magazine (“[Who Will Defend Eastern Europe?](#)”).

 Follow [Richard Palmer](#)

Pope Francis Vanquishes the Knights of Malta **Andrew Müller | February 1**

IN AN EXTRAORDINARY DISPLAY OF PAPAL POWER, POPE FRANCIS has taken control of the Knights of Malta. To non-Catholics, this move may seem like an obscure intramural skirmish, but it has sent shock waves throughout the Roman Catholic world.

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta is recognized as a sovereign entity under international law, so the pope’s firing of Grand Master Matthew Festing amounts to a Vatican takeover of an autonomous state. This intrepid move sends a signal to Catholics around the world that Pope Francis isn’t afraid to play hardball with ultratraditionalists who oppose the way he is running the Catholic Church.

While the Knights of Malta was founded during the First Crusade to protect Christian pilgrims from Islamic persecution, it has since evolved into a global humanitarian organization with over 100,000 staff members and volunteers. Yet the tiny clique of around 50 professed “knights” who lead the order is still drawn from the aristocratic families of Europe.

The situation that led to Festing’s firing started in 2005, when the “foreign minister” of the Knights of Malta, Baron Albrecht von Boeselager, allegedly oversaw a humanitarian project in Myanmar that distributed condoms to the local population. This action violated the Catholic moral teaching against artificial contraceptives. ...

Due to Boeselager’s alleged role in the Myanmar scandal,

Festing demanded his resignation in a meeting held on Dec. 6, 2016. Also present for Boeselager’s dismissal was American Cardinal Raymond Burke, the patron of the Knights of Malta. ...

Because Boeselager has a close relationship with German Cardinal Reinhard Marx and Vatican Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, however, the German aristocrat was able to appeal his dismissal to Pope Francis. The pope decided to put together a committee to investigate whether Boeselager’s dismissal was warranted, but Festing refused to cooperate with any investigation. ... This refusal to cooperate with the Vatican prompted Pope Francis to demand Festing’s resignation on January 24.

When Festing officially resigned four days later, he became the first grand master to relinquish his position in 218 years. ...

After Festing’s resignation, Pope Francis declared all recent decisions by the group’s leadership to be “null and void.” Boeselager was reinstated as “foreign minister,” and Boeselager’s friend Ludwig Hoffmann von Rumerstein was instated as interim grand master until Festing’s official replacement is chosen.

The reaction to the sacking of Festing reveals the definite divide between ultratraditionalists who oppose Pope Francis and progressive reformers who support him. ...

Even though Cardinal Raymond Burke was absent for Grand Master Festing’s abdication, the entire legal drama between Boeselager and Festing is widely seen as a proxy war between Pope

Francis and Cardinal Burke.

In 2014, Pope Francis removed Burke as head of the Vatican's supreme court, the Apostolic Signatura, allegedly because of his opposition to Francis's proposed reforms to Catholic moral teaching on divorce and remarriage. Since then, Burke has been a prime mover behind a letter made public last November challenging the pope over the orthodoxy of his latest exhortation on the family, *Amoris Laetitia*. The attempt by Burke and Festing to remove Boeselager is seen as a power play to weaken Catholic reformist efforts within the Knights of Malta.

Pope Francis put an end to this power play with a display of papal power that few expected.

Over the course of his papacy, Francis has relaxed the rules on communion for Catholics in "irregular marriages" and indicated that he is sympathetic to calls to end the celibacy requirement for Catholic priests. ... Some in the traditionalist fringe of the Roman Catholic Church are opposing such reforms, yet such

moves remove stumbling blocks on the way to ecumenical unity between Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox denominations.

For over 40 years, until his death in 1986, *Plain Truth* editor in chief Herbert W. Armstrong predicted that the Roman Catholic Church would pull its Protestant daughters and their Eastern Orthodox sisters back into its fold as it rose up to rule over a united Europe.

While Pope Francis has exhibited some willingness to make slight modifications to Catholic dogma in an attempt to draw more people into the Roman Catholic fold, he has also shown he is willing to use an extraordinary display of papal power to enforce his decisions. For more information on what the Bible has to say about the future reunification of Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches under the pope, read "[Returning to the Fold](#)" by Stephen Flurry.

 Follow [Andrew Müller](#)

ASIA

Hong Kong Losing More Autonomy to China's Strongman Jeremiah Jacques | February 3

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS

ON JANUARY 27, ONE OF HONG KONG'S MOST POWERFUL BILLIONAIRES was abducted by Chinese security agents. The news affirms fears that Hong Kong is rapidly losing its autonomy to China's strongman ruler, Xi Jinping.

The *Financial Times* explained on February 1 [the vast influence of the billionaire victim](#):

Xiao Jianhua [is] one of China's most politically connected and wealthy men, and his abduction from the heart of Hong Kong's financial district last Friday has shaken the city to its core. ... [M]r. Xiao is worth \$6 billion and his political connections include close ties with at least three "princelings" (as the children of Communist party leaders are known). At one point, he even bought a company from the sister of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

When the United Kingdom surrendered control of its former colony to China in 1997, Beijing promised that Hong Kong would have a "high degree of autonomy" for a period of 50 years. Beijing said that it would not meddle with the territory's judicial system, free press or efficient bureaucracy for that period of time. And one of the major principles of that China-Hong Kong arrangement was that no law enforcement bodies from outside Hong Kong, including those from mainland China, would be permitted any jurisdiction in the city.

The January 27 abduction comes just two decades into the 50 years of promised "autonomy" and represents a stark violation of the arrangement. But it is not the first such violation, as the *Times* notes:

Coming a little over a year after Chinese agents abducted five Hong Kong booksellers for publishing embarrassing books on the private lives of Chinese leaders, this latest breach of Hong Kong law is a terrible blow to the city's credibility.

Either the Hong Kong government and security services were complicit in the snatching of Mr. Xiao or they were negligent in allowing it to happen right under their noses. ...

Senior executives from numerous Western companies, including GlaxoSmithKline, Rio Tinto and Crown Casinos in Australia, have been detained in mainland China in recent years on sometimes dubious charges that were clearly aimed at pressuring their companies and setting an example to others in their industries.

These incidents add up to a major blow to Hong Kong's status as a global financial center. As the *Times* notes:

Until now, Hong Kong has been regarded as a haven from arbitrary police and judicial action, but global companies will have to reconsider this in the wake of Mr. Xiao's disappearance. In mainland China itself, his abduction will send a chilling message to the super-wealthy, who already believe Mr. Xi has launched a war against them. It will also accelerate the pace of capital flight. ...

[M]r. Xi has presented himself as a blue-collar princeling, and his war on the wealthy has gone down well with the masses. Mr. Xiao appears to have known the potential danger he was in. He was ranked last year as the 32nd richest person in China by a prominent annual rich list, which

some refer to as the “death list” because of how many people on it end up in prison. ...

It is unclear exactly why Mr. Xiao was taken from Hong Kong in such a brazen operation. It is possible he will reappear in a few days and claim it was all a misunderstanding. But there is no question that already this incident has sent the message that nobody is safe from the long arm of the Chinese state.

Some onlookers speculate that Mr. Xiao’s abduction is intended to warn a political entity in Hong Kong that he had dealings with. Others believe he may have known sensitive information about entrepreneurial activities of some high-ranking Chinese leaders. In either case, it is possible that the Communist Party could nationalize his vast holdings in various financial institutions. The *Times* quoted one individual familiar with the abduction as saying: “Most Chinese billionaires are like geese—they get fat on their political connections and close ties to party leaders, but at some point, the emperor decides he wants to eat foie gras.”

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry noted Xi Jinping’s alarming steps toward authoritarianism in his Jan. 4, 2014, *Key*

of David television program. He said:

China is expanding into airspace over certain waters in Asia and the East China Sea, in waters claimed by Japan and South Korea. Those are our allies! And they’re really, really in a furor over what’s going on, and America is doing nothing to help them, and nobody here seems to be that concerned about it. But they should be because China now is developing a leader very much like Vladimir Putin. ... So here you have a leader in China that’s really coming on the scene very much like Vladimir Putin. Do we realize where this is all leading? These are superpowers with all kinds of nuclear bombs! And all kinds of military power! Do we realize where this is all leading? Can we look at this and believe that there has to be a great world war clash? Nobody can stop it from happening—nobody!

To understand more about the significance of Xi Jinping’s march toward authoritarianism and how it coincides with a similar trend underway in Russia, please watch the entire *Key of David* episode.

 Follow [Jeremiah Jacques](#)

Russia’s Military Push Into the Arctic Approaching Soviet-era Levels

Jeremiah Jacques | February 4

RUSSIA’S MILITARY PRESENCE AROUND THE ARCTIC HAS GROWN to levels not seen since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Reuters reports, prompting speculation that Moscow will soon possess greater capability and control in the strategic and resource-rich region than the Soviets ever had.

Writing from Murmansk in Russia’s extreme northwest, Andrew Osborn wrote on January 31:

[N]early three decades after the [nuclear-powered icebreaker vessel] Lenin was taken out of service to be turned into a visitor attraction, [Russia is again on the march in the Arctic](#) and building new nuclear icebreakers.

It is part of a push to firm Moscow’s hand in the High North as it vies for dominance with traditional rivals Canada, the United States and Norway

Under President Vladimir Putin, Moscow is rushing to re-open abandoned Soviet military, air and radar bases on remote Arctic islands and to build new ones, as it pushes ahead with a claim to almost half a million square miles of the Arctic. ...

In recent years, Russia has established four new Arctic brigade command units, 16 deepwater ports, a new Arctic command and 14 operational airfields. It is either re-opening or constructing six military facilities. Moscow also has a fleet of around 40 icebreakers, with nearly a dozen more being constructed. The icebreaker fleet is significant because Russia is the only nation that possesses one. Icebreakers open channels for military and civilian ships to pass through. “The highways of the Arctic are

icebreakers,” said United States Sen. Dan Sullivan. “Russia has superhighways, and we have dirt roads with potholes.”

Back in the Soviet days, Moscow wielded more total firepower in the Arctic than it presently does. But the Soviet-era power was designed for *nuclear* warfare against America—not conventional war. The modern build-up is different in that it prioritizes what Osborn calls “a permanent and nimble conventional military presence.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. has few concrete plans to counter Russia’s increasing control of the Arctic region. Jim Townsend, the Pentagon’s former top Europe and NATO official, said the region doesn’t fit tidily into Washington’s policymaking priorities. “Within the Pentagon, the Arctic as an issue ... is a bit of an orphan,” he said.

Russia’s robust Arctic expansion has far-reaching implications, both geopolitically and financially. That is in large part because the Arctic is estimated to hold the equivalent of 412 billion barrels of natural gas and oil reserves, which amounts to 22 percent of estimated undiscovered total global hydrocarbon stocks.

With such reserves at stake, the build-up is viewed with concern by many global powers. In light of Russia’s expansionistic behavior into its periphery, including armed incursions into Georgia and the Ukraine, such concerns about the Arctic build-up are well-founded. Besides potentially giving Russia exclusive access to capacious quantities of energy reserves in international waters, the Arctic build-up also grants Moscow multiple potential entry points into international waters. *Foreign Policy*’s Robbie Gramer said: “[I]f [U.S. President Donald] Trump’s would-be rapprochement with Russia goes south, things might first start getting hot up north.”

In October 2008, *Trumpet* editor in chief [Gerald Flurry](#) wrote about the implications of Russia's military rise:

Russia's attack on Georgia in August marks the beginning of a dangerous new era in history. This was the first military strike of a rising Asian superpower—and there will be more! ... Russia is *determined* to be an energy superpower in an age when the whole modern world is hungry for energy. If Russia sees its primary source of oil being threatened, it is going to fight! ... We have witnessed the beginning of a new era! We saw an extraordinary military strike

by one of the kings of the east! And don't forget China, another of those "kings." It is making inroads all over the world. What power those kings of the east are amassing—and so quickly! Europe can see it! And it is formulating a counterstrategy. The whole world should see this developing and realize: This will inevitably end in nuclear war!

To understand more about this sobering trend and to know where it is leading, read Mr. Flurry's article "[Russia's Attack Signals Dangerous New Era](#)."

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TW IN BRIEF

Duterte will use military in drug war: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said Thursday that he would use the Armed Forces of the Philippines in his anti-drug war. Duterte said the military will take the leading role in the crusade and vowed to kill more traffickers and addicts. Amnesty International has

reported that, in the seven months since Duterte has been in power, the number of killings in the drug war may have exceeded 6,500 people. Duterte said the police force, which previously had the leading role, was "corrupt to the core" and would no longer be allowed to take part.

ANGLO-AMERICA



Who Is the Modern-Day Jeroboam?

Gerald Flurry,
The Key of David | February 5

King Jeroboam led ancient Israel into idolatry and godlessness. Your Bible forecasts a modern-day Jeroboam will lead one of the nations descended from Israel in this end time.



Will Justice Neil Gorsuch Make a Difference?

Andrew Miiller | February 2

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



UNITED STATES PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP [NOMINATED JUDGE Neil M. Gorsuch](#) to fill an 11-month-old vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday night. Like the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, Judge Gorsuch is known as a textualist and originalist, someone who will interpret the U.S. Constitution as the Founding Fathers intended.

During his speech introducing Judge Gorsuch, President Trump said:

When Justice Scalia passed away suddenly last February, I made a promise to the American people: If I were elected president, I would find the very best judge in the country for the Supreme Court. I promised to select someone who respects our laws and is representative of our Constitution and who loves our Constitution and someone who

will interpret them as written.

Shortly after Justice Scalia's death, Judge Gorsuch praised Scalia's legacy in a speech highlighting Scalia's understanding of the distinction between judge and legislator:

[T]he great project of Justice Scalia's career was to remind us of the differences between judges and legislators. To remind us that legislators may appeal to their own moral convictions and to claims about social utility to reshape the law as they think it should be in the future. But that judges should do none of these things in a democratic society. That judges should instead strive (if humanly and so imperfectly) to apply the law as it is, focusing backward, not forward, and looking to text,

structure and history to decide what a reasonable reader at the time of the events in question would have understood the law to be—not to decide cases based on their own moral convictions or the policy consequences they believe might serve society best.

To President Trump's credit, Judge Gorsuch is probably the best person he could have picked to fill the vacant seat on the Supreme Court. Few constitutional originalists remain in America, so it is rare to find a man willing to put the rule of law above his personal desires. For the past eight years, there has been widespread concern that President Obama would turn the nine-member Supreme Court into a transformative institution by appointing activist judges dedicated to legislating from the bench. If the Senate confirms Judge Gorsuch, it looks like he will be able to restore the status quo that existed before Justice Scalia's death.

Yet, even Justice Scalia mostly fought a losing battle over the past three decades to rein in a Supreme Court that had *already* descended into judicial activism. Scalia wrote judicial dissents against the constitutionality of federally mandated health care, federally mandated legalization of homosexual "marriage," and federally mandated legalization of abortion. Yet progressive justices overruled him in each case. Even if Gorsuch is an ideological

clone of Scalia, his appointment alone will not halt the direction of the court.

Thus, the real test for the future of the Supreme Court will likely come after Justice Anthony Kennedy or Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg retires.

If President Trump and a Republican Senate are able to appoint yet another constitutional originalist to the bench, the court would be in a position to at least start trying to repair much of the damage done to America's legal system over the past half century.

For this effort to succeed, however, it will take more than just one or two more law-abiding justices. It would require nothing less than the American people rallying around principles of morality and the rule of law.

Today, even as the Trump administration is trying to appoint an originalist to the Supreme Court, society is growing more immoral. According to a 2015 Gallup survey, 45 percent of Americans support abortion, and 63 percent of Americans support homosexual relationships. Imagine, the full-throated outcry in America's cities if a group of constitutionally originalist Supreme Court justices made a ruling based on the undeniable fact that the federal government doesn't have the constitutional authority to require states to legalize abortion or homosexual "marriage."

 Follow [Andrew Müller](#)



President Trump's Wall, a Mexican Standoff and World War III

Robert Morley | February 1

IF UNITED STATES PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S INAUGURATION speech on January 20 was [a pistol shot heard around the world](#), then the diplomatic spat with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto may foreshadow the first of many shootouts.

"We assembled here today are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital, and in every hall of power," America's new president told his citizens during his first presidential speech. "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land.

"America first."

The president continued: "Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs will be made to benefit American workers and American families. We must *protect* our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. *Protection will lead to great prosperity* and strength. *I will fight for you* with every breath in my body, and I will never ever let you down" (emphasis added throughout).

In his speech, President Trump passionately identified problems: single mothers and children trapped in crime-ridden inner city poverty; an education system stuffed with money yet failing to educate; a broken economy that has left rusted out factories scattered like tombstones across America.

But what about President Trump's solutions?

"The U.S. has a 60 billion dollar trade deficit with Mexico. It has been a one-sided deal from the beginning of NAFTA with massive numbers ...," tweeted America's president just days after his

speech. "If Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting," he said.

It didn't take long for President Nieto to respond.

Cancel it then.

"Mexico does not believe in walls. I've said time again; Mexico will not pay for any wall."

So what are we left with?

A good-old-fashioned Mexican standoff. Trump has promised a wall—paid for by Mexico. And Mexico's president has said there is absolutely no way that is going to happen.

Thus the current impasse.

At a news conference on January 27, President Trump said Mexico "has outnegotiated us and beat us to a pulp through our past leaders. I'm not going to let that happen." The wall is going up whether Mexico likes it or not. And Mexico will pay one way or the other. Options include prohibiting Mexicans living in the U.S. from sending money home (remittances are Mexico's most important source of foreign income), or taxing it, or increasing tariffs on imports from Mexico, or canceling trade agreements altogether.

President Trump isn't just bluffing either. Just three days after taking office, he cancelled America's participation in the 12-nation Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement. "President Trump is committed to renegotiating NAFTA" too, says the White House website. "If our partners refuse a renegotiation that gives American workers a fair deal, then the president will give notice of the United States' intent to withdraw from NAFTA."

President Trump has correctly identified many of the problems plaguing America. Working to keep jobs in America is a good thing. Fixing the problem requires addressing why so many companies want to move out of America in the first place. President Trump's plan to reduce burdensome government and simplify regulations is a positive step in that direction. That will reduce the cost of doing business in America and create more jobs.

But the reality is that there are a whole host of other factors making U.S. businesses less competitive. And unless those *causes* are addressed, American workers will continue to suffer.

This is something Herbert W. Armstrong was warning about as far back as the 1970s. In a 1971 *Plain Truth* magazine, he wrote about how American workers were the richest in the world but were shooting themselves in the foot.

When American workers are trying to get all they can get—and at the same time giving as little as they can get away with—even to giving NOTHING ... and Japanese and German workers, in THEIR national interest, are working for half the wages or less, and working with the fervor of loyalty and

patriotism, it means we are headed one of two ways:

Either we start raising high tariff barriers against other countries, starting a TRADE WAR which in time will trigger the nuclear war that will DESTROY us—or, American workers are going to have to MEET the competition of the workers in other countries, by lowering living standards. Obviously American workers are not going to choose to do the latter.

And if they don't—well, THE HANDWRITING IS ON THE WALL.

President Trump's America is moving toward trade confrontation instead of trade cooperation—and that is a huge step in the wrong direction.

No one wins a trade war. Some lose less than others, but everyone still loses. It is kind of like a Mexican standoff gone bad. After the gun smoke clears, even if you are the last man standing, a lot of the blood on the floor is still yours.

In a world with nuclear weapons, no one will be left standing.

 Follow [Robert Morley](#)

Barack Obama Endorses Anti-Trump Protests

Andrew Müller | February 1

FORMER UNITED STATES PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA ISSUED A [statement](#) through his spokesman on Monday encouraging Americans to publicly protest President Donald Trump's executive order temporarily restricting the immigration of refugees coming from seven Muslim-majority countries known for exporting jihadists.

According to the statement issued by Mr. Obama's spokesman Kevin Lewis:

President Obama is heartened by the level of engagement taking place in communities around the country. In his final official speech as president, he spoke about the important role of citizen and how all Americans have a responsibility to be the guardians of our democracy—not just during an election but every day. Citizens exercising their constitutional right to assemble, organize, and have their voices heard by their elected officials is exactly what we expect to see when American values are at stake.

Two days after President Trump signed his executive order, thousands of demonstrators rallied in more than 30 cities across the nation. Instead of calmly presenting their viewpoint, however, protesters in California blocked traffic in Los Angeles and shut down the international terminal of the San Francisco airport. With influential Democratic Party politicians like Barack Obama and Bernie Sanders supporting such protests, it seems increasingly likely that they will develop into a permanent fixture in American society.

Trumpet contributing editor Brad Macdonald wrote in “[Barack](#)

Obama's Eternal Legacy”:

The most fundamental transformation President Obama accomplished can be seen in each of his actions: lawlessness. For eight years, the most important office in the U.S. government was occupied by a man who, rather than upholding the law of the land, chose to uphold the law of Barack Obama. Since its creation, the Constitution has been America's ultimate authority, more powerful than even the president. Today, the U.S. Constitution remains influential, but less influential than the individual who sits behind the desk in the Oval Office.

America today is a much different organism than it was on inauguration day Jan. 20, 2009, and it's not going to be easy to transform it back to the way it was, much less to make it great. The easiest path to take will be to reverse some of Mr. Obama's policies and laws, but to ignore the profound cultural and social transformations that have occurred. The truth is, the Obama years *appealed* to an ugly, destructive and powerful force: our lawless human nature. Ultimately, the only way to truly roll back the Obama years is to transform the hearts and attitudes of the American people.

The last six presidents—including President Obama—have used executive powers to temporarily ban certain immigrants, but these actions didn't elicit the same hysterical response because the culture of America hadn't yet gone through the “fundamental transformation” of the Obama years.

 Follow [Andrew Müller](#)