

# Trumpet Weekly

FEBRUARY 10, 2017

Iranian soldiers march during the annual military parade in Tehran.



## Iran Is More Powerful Than Ever

**Trumpet Staff | February 6**

WHEN IRAN TEST-FIRED BALLISTIC MISSILES LAST WEEK, United States President Donald Trump angrily tweeted that “Iran has been formally put on notice.” The era of American appeasement toward Iran that took place under the Obama administration appears to be over. But, as the *Washington Post* noted this weekend, the U.S. faces [an Iran “that is now more powerful than at any point since the creation of the Islamic republic nearly 40 years ago.”](#)

Iran now stands at the apex of an arc of influence stretching from Tehran to the Mediterranean, from the borders of NATO to the borders of Israel and along the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. It commands the loyalties of tens of thousands in allied militias and proxy armies that are fighting on the front lines in Syria, Iraq and Yemen with armored vehicles, tanks and heavy weapons. They have been joined by thousands of members of the [Islamic]

Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iran's most prestigious military wing, who have acquired meaningful battlefield experience in the process.

If the Trump administration is serious about confronting Iran, it will soon discover that, thanks to former President Barack Obama, this will be a task that is easier said than done. The *Post* wrote:

So pervasive is Iran's presence across the region that it is hard to see how any U.S. administration could easily roll it back without destabilizing allies, endangering Americans, undermining the war against the Islamic State, and upsetting the new regional balance that emerged during the Obama administration's retreat, analysts say.

Under the Obama administration, Iran enjoyed a virtually unimpeded expansion of power into Syria, Yemen and Iraq. The *Post* wrote that Iran "has developed missiles capable of hitting U.S. bases and allies across the Middle East and built a network of alliances that have turned it into the most powerful regional player."

It was welcomed back into the international community when sanctions were lifted on Jan. 16, 2016, which gave it a hefty allowance of nearly \$100 billion in unfrozen cash. Many international corporations have already signed business deals with Iran amounting to billions of dollars. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has seen a nice increase in its budget.

Iran has also entrenched itself into conflicts where it cannot be easily dislodged. In Syria, it is allied with Russia. Getting Iran to back out of that region also means the U.S. has to put up with Russia. In Iraq, U.S. troops are fighting alongside the IRGC in the battle against the Islamic State. Iraq presents the most troubling scenarios for the United States. The *Post* continued:

Iranian-backed militias are deeply embedded in the overall Iraqi effort to wrest back territory from the militants, one that is also being aided by the United States. In the Mosul offensive, hundreds of U.S. advisers are working alongside Iraqi troops advancing from the east, among about 6,000 U.S. troops currently deployed in Iraq. Thousands of Iranian-backed militia fighters are meanwhile advancing on the city from the west, among a force of tens of thousands that answers mostly, though not exclusively, to Iran.

Being so intertwined with Iran is extremely dangerous for U.S. troops. One Iranian-backed group fighting alongside American troops is called Kitaeb Hezbollah. Less than 10 years ago, this group was killing American troops with roadside bombs and mortars. A spokesman for the group said that if the United States even attempts to diminish Iran's role in Iraq, its soldiers will not hesitate to attack U.S. troops, stating, "American interests in Iraq are within our sights and our fire range. If they act foolishly, their interests will be wiped out ... and we can target their bases whenever we want."

Iran is holding a gun to American troops in Iraq. The Obama administration put the U.S. in this weak position, and undoing it

will not be easy. The *Post* wrote that the Trump administration "will be facing down a far stronger Iran, one that has taken advantage of the past six years of turmoil in the Arab world to steadily expand its reach and military capabilities."

The Institute for the Study of War wrote on February 3:

Iran is transforming its military to be able to conduct quasi-conventional warfare hundreds of miles from its borders. This capability, which very few states in the world have, will fundamentally alter the strategic calculus and balance of power within the Middle East. It is not a transitory phenomenon.

Do not expect to see Iran's power subside from this point forward. These aren't just blips of power spurting from Iran. It has become the Middle East hegemon.

In an interview with ABC shortly after his inauguration, President Trump prided himself on predicting that Iraq would fall to Iran:

And by the way, and I said something else, if we go in and do this. You have two nations, Iraq and Iran. And they were essentially the same military strength. And they'd fight for decades and decades. They'd fight forever. And they'd keep fighting, and it would go—it was just a way of life. We got in; we decapitated one of those nations, Iraq. I said, "Iran is taking over Iraq." That's essentially what happened.

Mr. Trump is correct, yet the *Trumpet* has forecast that very event since the early '90s. In 1994, *Trumpet* editor in chief [Gerald Flurry](#) wrote the headline "Is Iraq About to Fall to Iran?" (A version of this same article appeared in the June 2003 *Trumpet* newsmagazine, when Saddam Hussein's regime was invaded by U.S.-led forces. The quotes below appear in both versions.)

The world has been watching that Bible-based forecast come true for decades now.

In 1994, Mr. Flurry wrote:

The most powerful ... country in the Middle East is Iran. Can you imagine the power it would have if it gained control of Iraq, the second largest oil producing country in the world? If so, there seems to be little doubt that Iran would lead the king of the south. ...

Iran is becoming a force in the Middle East! ...

I have believed for years that Iran will be the king of the south .... It is a very aggressive force that will be stopped only by a superior force!

How true these statements have proved to be. These kinds of statements were controversial in 1994. They were still counterintuitive in 2003. In 2017, they are a fact of life you are seeing unfold in your daily news. Saddam Hussein's Iraq was a power that the world feared. Now it is largely controlled by its former arch-enemy. How could Mr. Flurry make such a dramatic and accurate forecast so far in advance? For the answer, read "[Is Iraq About to Fall to Iran?](#)" Also, for more detail on this topic, revisit the *Trumpet's* [April 2015](#) issue.

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# Trumpet Daily

## RADIO SHOW

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### **T** Putin's Power Play for Libya Brent Nagtegaal | February 9

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



**M**ALTA IS TERRIFIED. THE TINY MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND NATION sitting between North Africa and mainland Europe is on the front lines of a growing wave of African migrants. Last year, a record 160,000 migrants and refugees set out for Europe, many of them reaching Malta's waters first. This number was up from 138,000 in 2015. Now Malta, fearing 2017 will be worse, is sounding the alarm.

One reason for Malta's increased concern is RUSSIA'S SUDDEN ENTRANCE INTO LIBYAN AFFAIRS.

Malta is worried that Putin's increasing support for Gen. Khalifa Haftar, the eastern Libyan warlord, could spark a civil war in Libya, causing thousands of migrants to flee, reminiscent of the situation in Syria. Since NATO ousted Muammar Qadhafi (a Russian ally) in 2011, Libya has been divided between two rival governments, one in the east and one in the west. In 2015, the United Nations (led mainly by European diplomats) brokered a deal that recognized the Tripoli-based western government as the sole representative of the Libyan people and installed Fayeze al-Sarraj as its head. The deal left the eastern government and especially General Haftar, the leader of its armed forces, out in the cold.

Instead of siding with the UN-backed government, Russia is now overtly courting Haftar and jeopardizing the Europeans' goal of how Libya should be stabilized. In January, Haftar was seen aboard Russian aircraft carrier *Kuznetsov*, docked off the Libyan coast. On February 1, the *Times of Malta* reported that around 70 wounded soldiers from Haftar's army had been sent to Russia for treatment. Russian President Vladimir Putin's support comes at the same time Haftar is slowly moving his army westward, fighting jihadists along the way.

Last month, Maltese Foreign Minister George Vella warned that "Haftar with his army is moving gradually, slowly from the east to the west ... and possibly, eventually linking up with his colleagues from the west, from Zintane, and advancing in a pincer movement on the region of Bani Walid, Misrata, and Tripoli." Haftar's advance is disastrous, warned Vella, "because it would create civil war and it would create more refugees running away from Libya."

European officials gathered in Malta last weekend agreed to pledge \$200 million to bolster the EU-backed government based in Western Libya. The hope is that a stronger western government will prevent a crisis, which will in turn prevent migrants from fleeing toward Europe. However, most European leaders realize that without Russia's support, the money is unlikely to prevent a crisis and stem the flow of migrants. And Putin will probably be unwilling to give his support, at least not until he has extracted something in return.

Leonid Bershidsky wrote for Bloomberg View last week:

At an informal summit on Malta on Friday the leaders of European Union states affirmed their support for the UN-backed government, run from Tripoli by Prime Minister Fayeze Mustafa al-Sarraj. They also backed a deal Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni signed on Thursday with Sarraj. Italy is taking the lead in funding the construction of refugee camps in Libya, and the EU as a whole recently earmarked an additional 200 million euros (USD\$215 million) for its efforts to keep potential migrants in Libya, Tunisia and Niger.

But refugees are not Putin's priority in Libya. He's far more interested in restoring Russian influence there and establishing a military presence if he can.

Even the Maltese foreign minister declared, "I'm not comfortable. We all know the Russians' dreams have always been to have bases in the Mediterranean."

While it's unlikely that Russia will have a base in Eastern Libya anytime soon, the Kremlin is quickly making itself indispensable in Libya. In the aftermath of the Malta conference, the *Times* reported on February 8 that European nations are even reaching out to Russia for help in stabilizing Libya:

Italy is turning to Russia to help combat the immigration crisis, despite warnings from European allies about

Vladimir Putin's motives. "Italy has always had close ties with Russia, and now that we want a peaceful, unified Libya, we will be happy if Russia wants it too," Mario Giro, the Italian deputy foreign minister, said.

The fact that Russia is even in the discussion regarding securing Libya's future is simply astounding. A year and a half ago, the world watched in shock as Russia sent its troops into Syria to support the regime. Some leaders predicted Russia would get stuck in the Syrian quagmire. That didn't happen. Now, with its presence in Syria secure, Russia is beginning to also focus on Libya. Clearly, the balance of power in the Middle East and Mediterranean region is shifting in favor of Russia. "That Russia is in the process of achieving day by day a role in determining the balance ... in the Middle East and now in the Mediterranean—it's a role that must be acknowledged," said Leonardo Tricarico, a retired Italian general who presides over the Intelligence Culture and Strategic Analysis Foundation, a Rome-based think tank.

It's unlikely that Putin will intervene in Libya nearly to the

extent he did in Syria. But he doesn't need to. By simply supporting the rival government, Putin gives himself the power to destabilize or stabilize Libya. Put another way, Putin has the power to slow the migrants from coming into Europe, or to send them north by the tens of thousands.

This gives Putin enormous leverage against Europe. Libya can now be added to his hand of cards, which already includes Syria, Ukraine, Cyprus and even Afghanistan. So far, Putin has not played his hand. Europe, however, recognizes that right now Putin has the upper hand.

This swift shift in the balance of power through the Middle East points to the key role Vladimir Putin is now playing, a role that was forecast centuries ago in the Bible. Prophecy also indicates that this crisis will soon result in a deal between Europe and Russia. To understand how this situation was prophesied in your own Bible, please read "A New Strategic Partnership Emerges," and request *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry's new booklet *The Prophesied 'Prince of Russia.'*

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## Islamic State in Sinai Fires Rockets at Israel

Sam Livingston | February 9

**W**ARNING SIRENS RANG OUT ACROSS EILAT, ISRAEL, ON THE night of February 8 as multiple rockets shot toward the city. Inbound from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, the rockets were intercepted and destroyed by the Israel Defense Force's missile defense system, Iron Dome. The evening of February 8 was the first time in more than two years that Israel had to use its Iron Dome system to protect the citizens of Eilat from rocket attacks. A group called Sinai Province, an Islamic State-affiliate, claimed responsibility for firing the rockets.

Since its inception, Sinai Province has been preoccupied with battling Egyptian soldiers. The group has also targeted Israelis with sporadic attacks. In 2011, militants crossed over the Israeli border and opened fire on a bus, murdering eight Israelis. In 2014, the group fired antitank rounds over the border, wounding two Israeli soldiers.

The unpredictable launch from the Sinai on February 8 shows how susceptible Israel is to attacks from multiple fronts. Militants are encroaching from the Golan Heights, terror groups are occupying the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and neighboring

Arab nations, including Lebanon to the north and Egypt to the south, are openly hostile toward the Jewish state.

Israel has always been in a strategically vulnerable position. Egypt, in particular, is critical to Israel's security. Geopolitical analyst George Friedman wrote in 2007, "The single most important neighbor Israel has is Egypt."

That terrorists are able to sporadically launch rockets from the Sinai indicates that Egypt does not have control of the area. That fact alone is deeply troubling to Israeli civilians trying to go about their lives and to Israeli leaders worried about the overall security of their nation.

Instability in Egypt is a trend we watch closely at the *Trumpet*. Bible prophecy forecasts that radical Islam led by Iran will exploit this situation in a dramatic way. Egypt will fall into the radical Islamic camp—a shift that *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has been warning about for over 20 years. Militants running loose in the strategic Sinai Peninsula pose just one of many problems the nation is struggling with.

## TW IN BRIEF

### **T**urkish and Syrian forces in dangerously close proximity:

Five Turkish soldiers were killed and 15 wounded in clashes with the Islamic State in the northern Syrian town of al-Bab on Wednesday. Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım said Turkey-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) forces have surrounded al-Bab; its fall is pending. The next target will be the Islamic State stronghold of Raqqa. Turkey, however, is wary of entering into conflict with Syrian forces loyal to President Bashar Assad that

are less than 5 miles from al-Bab. Russia is said to be ensuring that Turkish and Syrian troops remain apart, at the risk of direct conflict between the two national armies.

**P**alestinian terrorist attacks Israelis: A Palestinian terrorist opened fire near a busy market in central Israel on Thursday and also stabbed shoppers with a screwdriver. At least six people were wounded, including a man and two women who were

treated for bullet wounds. A 40-year-old man was treated for stab wounds to his upper body. The 18-year-old Palestinian terrorist was arrested at the scene soon after the attack. Palestinian

terrorists have carried out numerous stabbings, shootings and other assaults since 2015, killing 41 Israelis and two visiting American citizens.

## EUROPE

# Trumpet Hour

RUSSIA ON MOVE IN SYRIA AND LIBYA, PRESSURE ON GERMANY, EUROPEAN NUCLEAR SUPERPOWER?, AND MORE | FEBRUARY 10

ARE AMERICA AND IRAN ON PATH TO WAR?, TRUMP TRADE HELPING CHINA?, BERKELEY FREE-SPEECH RIOT, AND MORE | FEBRUARY 8

## **T** The Trump Crisis Is a Huge Opportunity for Europe Richard Palmer | February 10

### WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



A QUICK GLANCE AT SPIEGEL ONLINE SHOWS THE PANIC IN Germany over United States President Donald Trump. The cover of its latest magazine shows the new president holding the severed head of Lady Liberty. “Trump and Bannon Pursue a Vision of Autocracy” reads one headline. “Trump as Nero: Europe Must Defend Itself Against a Dangerous President” is another.

But not everyone in Europe is quite so hysterical. Instead, some see [the election of Donald Trump as a major opportunity for Europe](#) and for Germany.

The European Union has a long history of taking advantage of crises. “Europe will be forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises,” said Jean Monnet, one the European Union’s founding fathers.

“[C]risis represents an opportunity,” said German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble. “I’m not saying that I enjoy being in a crisis, but I’m not worried. Europe always moved forward in times of crisis. Sometimes you need a little pressure for certain decisions to be taken.”

Mr. Trump’s policies certainly represent a crisis for Europe. But it is a crisis that Europeans can use.

The problems posed by President Trump and by Brexit are “an enormous opportunity” for Europe, former Belgian Prime Minister and chief Brexit negotiator Guy Verhofstadt told the BBC World Service on February 9, saying that it will enable Europe to “put in place what the founding fathers had already in mind—that was a political union, a defense union, an economic union, a fiscal union.”

“I think this idea of the founding fathers is returning now,” he said. “[It] is now again on the table as the only possible answer to the new world order that is shaping for the moment.”

Verhofstadt is far from the only person who thinks that way. Judy Dempsey, editor in chief of Carnegie Europe’s Strategic Europe blog, wrote:

They either allow the United States and Russia to divide the bloc—and even destabilize it—or they realize that they have to complete a project begun 60 years ago in Rome. ...

Don’t EU leaders now finally understand that [Europe faces instability](#), which in itself is so dangerous to even contemplate, if they do not rise to the challenges that Trump and [Russian President Vladimir] Putin are throwing at Europe? ...

Political and economic integration must be now pursued and quickly.

The *EU Observer* pointed out the same need last week, in an article titled “EU Leaders Forced to Unite in New Trump Reality,” writing: “[German Chancellor Angela] Merkel said that this is an opportunity for Europe to redefine itself and become more self-reliant.”

Some also see the opportunity that Europe has to replace America in world politics. Former Finnish Prime Minister Alexander Stubb wrote an article for the *Financial Times* on February 3 titled “It’s Europe’s Turn to Fill the Global Power Vacuum.”

“The U.S. and the Soviet Union dominated world politics for the better part of 40 years,” he wrote. “With the Soviet collapse, the U.S. filled the power vacuum and became the undisputed superpower of the world .... The big question in 2017 is, who will begin to fill the power vacuum left by the U.S.?”

Europe, he said, needs to take on “global leadership.”

“The U.S. is fast losing credibility as the leader of the free world, and the EU alone can take on that mantle,” Stubb wrote. He also noted that the EU needs to “take a lead in foreign and security policy.”

He concluded (emphasis added throughout):

The U.S. is handing over the key to world politics. We should leave the door ajar for its return, but meanwhile, I

hope the EU will seize the moment, *grab the key and start taking a more prominent role on the world stage.*

German-Foreign-Policy.com noted, “Some members of the German establishment are expecting the EU’s ascent parallel to the United States’ descent on the world stage.”

Europe is working on replacing the U.S. in practical ways. German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said, “We should now take advantage of the space that America is freeing up.” In order to do this, Gabriel said Europe “should quickly begin working on a new Asian strategy.”

If Europe is the new leader of the free world, and if Germany leads Europe, what does that make Germany? Chancellor Merkel dismissed the idea that she was now leader of the free world as “absurd.” Yet she is deliberately confronting Mr. Trump in order to boost her own standing, as well as Germany’s.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* pointed out that Merkel

“leaves nothing heard or read from the new administration unanswered”—she always responds to Trump’s latest controversial move or statement. Furthermore, Ms. Merkel never downplays her disagreements with the new administration by having a government spokesman read a statement. Instead “she does and says it personally” (ibid). The fact that the American media is holding her up as an alternative leader of the free world is a result of a deliberate policy of confronting President Trump. As German-Foreign-Policy.com said, “The concerted effort with the liberal U.S. opposition offers Berlin new possibilities for expanding influence.”

The election of Donald Trump is causing a lot of change in Europe. Those who have long wanted Europe to form a superstate and play a more prominent role are welcoming this change—even while they disagree with almost everything Mr. Trump does. For more on where this is leading in Europe, read [“Trump Tells Germany: ‘Take Control!’”](#)

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## **Germany’s Rapid Military Shift** **Richard Palmer | February 10**

**I**N EARLY 2014, GERMANY ANNOUNCED A REVOLUTION IN ITS MILITARY and world power. “Germany’s foreign policy has just been dramatically and historically transformed,” *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote at the time.

The shift was part of a new administration that pledged a new security policy. Now that the current administration is coming to an end, “it’s time to take stock,” wrote Claudia Major, a senior associate for international security at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

That is exactly what she does in an article for Carnegie Europe titled [“Germany: The \(Not So\) Timid Leader.”](#) She wrote (emphasis added throughout):

Which European country is one of four allies to lead a battalion of NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic countries and Poland, is the biggest European contributor to NATO’s deterrence measures in Eastern Europe, and has soldiers deployed in 12 operations from Mali to Iraq?

It’s Germany. The country usually portrayed as a civilian and economic power par excellence but rather allergic to military issues. *Almost silently, Germany has changed its defense policy over the last four years.*

Immediately after the new government announced the changes at the Munich Security Conference, Germany was put to the test in Ukraine. “A large part of Germany’s foreign-policy shift is a *direct result* of [Russian President] Vladimir Putin’s recent behavior, especially in Ukraine!” wrote Mr. Flurry at the time. Major noted the shift after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine:

In this context, Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the [Ukraine crisis](#) not only jolted the rule-based European security order unequivocally supported by Berlin. It

pushed Germany to put its rhetoric into action.

What followed was a remarkable political commitment by Germany, such as in the Minsk accords and Normandy format aimed at stopping the fighting in Ukraine. Berlin then substantially shaped the political and military course of NATO’s return to territorial defense, which the alliance decided at its 2014 Wales summit. In fact, Germany reestablished itself as a discreet backbone of NATO.

Over the last few decades, Germany has been cutting back military spending, and some of its equipment has been falling into disrepair. That is now being reversed. Major wrote:

Berlin is now reversing those downward trends. The number of main battle tanks and armored personnel carriers will increase. Improved maintenance will also improve readiness. After several years of decline, [Germany’s defense budget will rise in 2017](#) for the second year in a row to reach €36.6 billion. While this increase is set to continue, it still does not reach NATO’s goal of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense (Germany currently spends 1.2 percent) but does come close to the 20 percent investment line.

Change is most visible in Germany’s military missions. Berlin now participates in operations more often, in different forms, and more offensively, particularly its strong participation in NATO’s defense and deterrence activities. A new approach was the introduction of the Enable and Enhance Initiative, in which Germany trains and equips regional actors, including in Iraq and Mali, to help build capacity to provide their own security.

Another noticeable development was Germany’s quick decision to participate in the anti-[Islamic State] coalition following the November 2015 Paris attacks, which, like

the Iraq mission, [stretched the legal framework](#) for Bundeswehr deployments because the missions do not operate in collective security systems (such as the UN) but as part of an ad-hoc coalition. Within a short time frame, Berlin crossed traditional red lines, thereby moving the points of reference for military deployments.

Germany has only reluctantly increased its spending on its military. Major noted:

Overall, Germany has become most active when partners or events created the necessary pressure, such as in the Ukraine crisis, which forced Berlin to take over diplomatic and military leadership. In other cases, like the fight against the Islamic State, Germany only became active

when the crisis turned into a domestic issue (for instance, as [refugee flow to Europe](#) grew), or when it was critical for an important partner (for example, following the November 2015 Paris attacks).

However, the pressure will continue to build. Major wrote that “the rapidly changing security environment combined with the West’s current internal problems—from Trump to Turkey to populism—will not allow Germany to take a break.”

Germany has quietly made major changes to its military. For where this is leading, read Mr. Flurry’s 2014 article “[Germany’s Urgent and Dangerous Military Decision](#).” For more on the further changes Germany has made, read “[New German Paper Signals Dramatic Military Shift](#).”

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## Polish Politician Calls for ‘an EU Nuclear Superpower’ Richard Palmer | February 10

POLAND WOULD [WELCOME A EUROPEAN UNION “NUCLEAR SUPERPOWER,”](#) Jarosław Kaczyński, head of Poland’s ruling party, told the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in an interview published February 7. Kaczyński also called for the EU to “be prepared for huge expenditures” on its military.

Kaczyński made his remarks to the German newspaper before a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Reuters noted that Kaczyński “wields no government posts now but is seen as the main power broker in Poland.” Reuters also noted that Mr. Kaczyński appears to be changing his views of Germany. He has in the past been “deeply distrustful of Germany” but now appears to view Germany more positively. According to the *Telegraph*, “it is thought” that Kaczyński “may have pressed [Merkel] on the issue” of nuclear weapons during the meeting.

In general, Poland wants the EU to give more power to the member states. But when it comes to the military, it wants the EU to be a superpower that can help defend Poland against Russia.

Kaczyński’s comments on nuclear weapons come as

Germans themselves [debate whether they need their own nuclear umbrella](#)—now that they can no longer trust America to defend them. Since United States President Donald Trump’s electoral victory in November 2016, articles on the subject have appeared with increasing frequency in the German press. On February 2, Germany’s ARD—a public broadcaster—called for an “open debate” on a “German nuclear bomb.”

Although “unpopular and sensitive,” this subject has “become relevant earlier than expected, in view of the new man in the White House,” it said.

Yesterday, *Bild*, Germany’s most popular newspaper, asked, “Is It Time for Germany to Become a Nuclear Power?”

The *Trumpet* has [long warned that fear of Russia would push Europe to unite](#). Now Poland is overcoming its longstanding suspicion of Germany in an effort to gain German protection. To read about where this is leading, see our article “[Who Will Defend Eastern Europe?](#)” from the March 2017 issue of the *Trumpet* magazine.

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## TW IN BRIEF

**G**ermany deepening inroads into Latin America: The leaders of Germany and Uruguay said Thursday that they hope to forge ahead with talks on a free-trade agreement between the European Union and South America’s Mercosur group. Renewed enthusiasm for the trade deal comes amid uncertainty about United States President Donald Trump’s goals in international trade. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said political shifts in Argentina and Brazil have also helped to revive enthusiasm for the free-trade agreement.

**W**anted: a leaner, meaner Union: European leaders agreed last week that a core group of European nations must move rapidly toward unity, leaving the rest of the 28-member bloc behind. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said at an EU summit

in Malta on February 3, “The history of recent years has shown that there will be a multi-speed EU, and not all members will participate in the same steps of integration.” The *Times* of London reported, “European states have taken the first step towards a looser ‘multi-speed’ alliance at an EU summit in Malta.” EU leaders have agreed that they will meet again on March 25 in Rome to map out the future of the EU. French President François Hollande said that the statement produced by EU leaders at Rome could promote a Europe traveling at “several speeds.” The leaders of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg concurred, stating that “different paths of integration and enhanced cooperation could provide for effective responses to challenges that affect member states in different ways.” For more on this, read our article “[European Leaders Ready to Shrink the EU](#).”

**Pope on Trump immigration ban:** Pope Francis has responded to United States President Donald Trump's immigration ban by urging people to "build bridges" and not "create walls." The pope made the comment at the Vatican on Wednesday. Francis has

frequently invoked the "bridge not walls" appeal in urging countries to welcome migrants, on one occasion saying anyone who wants to build a wall is "not Christian." It was a comment some regarded as odd since large walls surround most of Vatican City.

## ASIA



### Russia and China: Developing Meaner Weapons of War and More Will to Use Them

Jeremiah Jacques | February 10

#### WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



**R**USSIA AND CHINA ARE DEVELOPING MORE ADVANCED WEAPONS of war, improving existing arms systems, and possibly practicing for preemptive strikes on American targets. Several reports have emerged in recent days showing that [the military capacity and resolve of these Asian giants is on the rise](#). Taken together, these developments paint a picture of a world primed for conflict.

The editors of *Popular Mechanics* discussed some of these developments in their "[Threat Report 2017](#)" published on February 6:

In modern warfare, owning the sky is everything. And the cheapest way to own the sky is to shoot down, from the ground, anything that tries to fly in it. The Russian military is currently fielding a new mid-range surface-to-air missile system, the Buk-M3, that has the potential to change everything. And by change we mean destroy.

Stratfor senior analyst Sim Tack says the development of the Buk-M3 is already having an effect on European air forces because it drastically limits the capabilities of non-stealth aircraft. In Tack's view, the Buk-M3 will inject urgency into European plans to expand and improve their armed forces, particularly in the realm of stealth aircraft.

Russia also has "the world's most deadly" tank now very near to deployment. *Popular Mechanics* wrote: "Russia's new T-14 tank, currently in field tests, is the world's most deadly. For the first time in a turreted main battle tank, the entire crew is cocooned inside an armored capsule in the hull. The T-14 is also the first main battle tank to have a fully automated, unmanned turret."

Both Russia and China have developed a new class of stealth warplanes, which *Popular Mechanics* said are "adding new lines to the foreheads" of Department of Defense officials in Washington. Russia's PAK-FA and China's J-20 and J-31 are causing planners to worry for the first time in many years about the possibility of losing United States' jets in dogfights. There is also concern, according to *Popular Mechanics*, that these Russian and Chinese aircraft "could slip past radar to bomb air bases" and other vital targets.

Meanwhile, Russian Aerospace Force Commander in Chief Viktor Bondarev recently said that Russia's MiG-35 fighter jets are rapidly replacing older models and may soon be armed with laser weapons. The TASS news agency quoted the commander as saying: "[This plane can use all the types of the newest weaponry and laser weapons as well.](#)"

On February, War on the Rocks speculated that Chinese military forces may already be "[practicing preemptive missile strikes against U.S. bases](#)." Thomas Shugart, a Senior Military Fellow at the Center for a New American Security and a U.S. Navy officer, said that "the greatest military threat to U.S. vital interests in Asia" may be China's ability to carry out such strikes. Mr. Shugart wrote:

This is a time of increasing tension, with China's news organizations openly threatening war. U.S. leaders and policymakers should understand that a preemptive Chinese missile strike against the forward bases that underpin U.S. military power in the Western Pacific is a very real possibility, particularly if China believes its claimed core strategic interests are threatened in the course of a crisis and perceives that its attempts at deterrence have failed. Such a preemptive strike appears consistent with available information about China's missile force doctrine, and ... satellite imagery ... points to what may be real-world efforts to practice its execution. ...

To protect allies and project power, the U.S. maintains an arc of bases in the Asia-Pacific region, including Yokosuka, Sasebo, Osan and Kadena on Okinawa. Because of the vast distance from the continental American territory, if a war broke out in the Asia-Pacific, U.S. forces would rely heavily on these bases. The satellite imagery that War on the Rocks analyzed suggests that China's preparations to preemptively strike ships in port and aircraft bunkers at such bases are considerably more advanced than analysts previously thought.

*Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry said in a January 2014 episode of the *Key of David* that the increasing military might and determination of Russia and China is far more threatening to global stability than most analysts realize:

[T]he goal of Vladimir Putin is to restore the Soviet Union; that's his dream! ... 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! ... [A]nd 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. ... 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?

To understand the significance of the increasingly advanced

military might of Russia and China, and why it's leading to the "great world war clash" that Mr. Flurry mentioned, watch his full *Key of David* episode "[Ukraine Crisis Prophesied](#)."

 Follow [Jeremiah Jacques](#)

## **What Russia Wants in Afghanistan** **Anthony Chibarirwe | February 9**

EVER SINCE THE SOVIET UNION'S HUMILIATING RETREAT FROM Afghanistan in 1989, Russia has approached the Central Asian nation with extreme caution. That is, until recently.

On Tuesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced that Russia will host a conference on [the future of Afghanistan](#) later this month. Russian authorities expect to meet with representatives from Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, Iran and India. The United States was *not* invited, despite its enormous investment in Afghanistan politically, militarily and financially.

The conference is the latest instance of Russia hijacking the American-led operation in Afghanistan. The first two instances occurred last year, when Moscow *covertly* hosted officials from Pakistan and China to forge a solution for Afghanistan. The same three powers met again in Moscow on Dec. 27, 2016. This time—barely two months after the election of United States President Donald Trump—they were ready to publicize their meetings. It was as if they were ready to announce to the world that Russia was in the process of commandeering the Afghan peace process in a manner nearly identical to Russia's hijack of the Syrian crisis. At the very least, they seemed to be announcing to America's new, seemingly pro-Russian president that Moscow was creating a solution for a war that has drained much American blood, treasure and time.

In Tuesday's announcement, the Russian foreign minister said that he was expecting high-level representation at the conference. "[T]he Taliban must be included in a constructive dialogue," he said.

Geopolitical Futures assessed that Russia's involvement in Afghanistan provides Moscow with "the additional benefit of inserting itself in an area of interest for the U.S. in hopes that it can increase its leverage over Washington. As a result, Moscow has been moving toward enhancing relations with the Taliban" (January 18).

The U.S. has also been conducting peace talks with the Taliban, but it has been doing so with much caution and little success. Russia and its allies have been seeking sanctions relief and more international legitimacy for the Taliban as part of the peace talks.

Russia's increased cooperation with Pakistan is also significant in the context of Afghanistan, as Islamabad provides worrying levels of support to the Taliban. In a January 12 article, Stratfor noted that Pakistan "is arguably the [most important foreign actor in Afghanistan](#)," and "the United States has been working to diplomatically isolate Pakistan."

But Russia certainly isn't isolating Pakistan. In fact, it is embracing its chief allies and those players it deems essential to a lasting solution, however unsavory and/or anti-Western they might be. Just like it embraced Iran and Hezbollah in Syria.

In Afghanistan, Russia wants the status of chief broker. It is going to get it. It wants to undermine U.S. influence in the crippled nation, and it is going to accomplish that as well. And through it all, Russia is building some critical alliances.

"The Bible warns us to expect a great power rising from the east," we wrote in our free booklet [Russia and China in Prophecy](#). "It calls it 'the kings of the east' ...." Those "kings," as our booklet explains, represent some of the very nations that are embedding themselves deeper into Afghanistan: Russia, China, Pakistan and India!

As Russia and its allies increase their cooperation and their influence in Afghanistan, the greater Middle East and Eurasia, this resurgence is bound to wittingly or unwittingly frighten Europe, Russia's neighbor to the west, as *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry warned in his January 2004 article titled "[Russia Frightens Europe—and Fulfills Bible Prophecy](#)."

 Follow [Anthony Chibarirwe](#)

## **Defense Expert: It's 'Too Late' to Stop China's Military Dominance of South China Sea** **Jeremiah Jacques | February 8**

CHINA'S ILLEGAL MILITARY BUILD-UP IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA IS almost "[fully developed](#)," and it is now "too late" to stop it. That is the assessment of Sir Angus Houston, the former head of the Australian Defense Force (ADF) in a speech last week to the National Security College conference in Canberra, Australia.

After conducting a study of the latest satellite imagery of the contested region, including the islands that Beijing has built there, Houston concluded that China's military foothold in the region is now essentially permanent. "[W]hat you see is infrastructure going in, and it is not going to be too much longer before it is fully developed ..." he said. "All of this development will enable China

to dominate the South China Sea and extend its permanent military presence further south in proximity to Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore."

Dominance of the South China Sea is of global significance because some \$5.3 trillion in commerce passes through it each year, amounting to a third of the world's total trade.

Houston, who led the ADF from 2005 to 2011, said he believes the window to halt China's illegal militarization of this international territory has closed. "In my view, it is too late to stop the China program in the South China Sea," he said. "What is important now is to ensure freedom of navigation and the right of

innocent passage.”

Houston’s assessment comes amid a time of increasing uncertainty about China’s relationship with Western powers, especially as United States President Donald Trump has taken a tough stance toward Beijing that has infuriated the Chinese leadership.

Back in July 2016, even before the “Trump factor” had added more uncertainty to the China-West equation, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry said China’s militarization of the South China Sea was “steering the world toward war,” writing:

Ever since Xi Jinping took over as general secretary of the Communist Party of China, his administration has been militarizing the South China Sea and working to push the United States out of East Asia. ... These militarized islands now function as forward bases for Beijing to challenge seven decades of American naval dominance in the

Pacific Rim. This should alarm the world! ...

China is intimidating the nations of Southeast Asia into submission to its will. It is forcing these countries to do what it wants. Everything is headed in the direction of war.

Around the time that was written, the Chinese leadership promised on numerous occasions that the artificial islands it was building were for civilian purposes, and that it would not militarize them. But in the months since, as is clear by the assessment of such experts as Sir Angus Houston, China’s military purpose has become undeniable. And its military footing in this vital region has become formidable.

To understand why these developments mean that “everything is headed in the direction of war,” read Mr. Flurry’s prescient article “[China Is Steering the World Toward War](#).”

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## TW IN BRIEF

**Cambodia bans Taiwan’s flag, kowtowing to China:** Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has banned the raising of the Taiwanese national flag in his country. The *Asia Correspondent* reported Tuesday that the move was an act of Cambodian submission to China’s will. China views Taiwan as a breakaway

Chinese province that is destined to come under the rule of Beijing. Hun Sen said he welcomes business from Taiwanese investors but that his respect for Beijing means Cambodia must recognize Taiwan as a province of China.

## ANGLO-AMERICA



### Herbert Armstrong’s Greatest Personal Prophecy

Gerald Flurry, *The Key of David* | February 12

Herbert W. Armstrong pinpointed a specific trigger that will SET off earthshaking events that will change Europe and the United States permanently.



### UK House of Commons: Racist Trump Not Welcome

Richard Palmer | February 7

#### WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



UNITED STATES PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP SHOULD **NOT BE** allowed to address Britain’s Parliament because of his “sexism” and “racism,” House Speaker John Bercow said on Monday. “An address by a foreign leader to both Houses of Parliament is not an automatic right,” he said. “It is an earned honor.”

Mr. Bercow made clear that he could not stop a state visit from Mr. Trump. But he said he would campaign to have America’s president barred from the Houses of Parliament. “[A]s far as this place is concerned, I feel very strongly that our opposition to racism and to sexism and our support for equality before the law and an independent judiciary are hugely important considerations in

the House of Commons.”

Mr. Bercow is not the only one who feels this way about Mr. Trump’s imminent visit. MPs from Britain’s Labour Party applauded his remarks—something that is not usually tolerated in Parliament. The BBC showed its approval on *Newsnight*, where the presenter called Mr. Bercow’s comments “magisterial”—and gave his speech patriotic background music. Nearly 2 million people have signed a petition demanding that the new president not be allowed to make a state visit. On Saturday, thousands marched on Parliament and the U.S. Embassy calling for the state visit to be called off. The protesters carried signs with slogans attacking

both Mr. Trump and British Prime Minister Theresa May.

Yet strangely, neither John Bercow, nor the British public have had problems with a whole host of more problematic leaders. Here are three other prominent statesmen who have addressed Britain's Houses of Parliament, as noted by the popular Guido Fawkes political blog:

- September 2012: Speaker Bercow said that it was a "huge pleasure" to introduce Indonesian President Susilo Yudhoyono to address Parliament. Human Rights Watch says that the president left behind "a toxic legacy of rising religious intolerance and related violence" and that his government had a "sorry record" on human rights. His police were "actively complicit in incidents of harassment, intimidation or violence against religious minorities"—and the government helped persecute these minorities.
- November 2012: On this occasion it was Speaker Bercow's "privilege to welcome" the emir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to address Parliament. Apparently Donald Trump is too sexist for Britain's Parliament, but not the emir. In Kuwait, "[w]omen continue to face discrimination in many aspects of their lives, and large legal gaps remain in protections for women," according to Human Rights Watch. "Kuwait has no laws prohibiting domestic violence, sexual harassment, or marital rape." Israelis cannot visit the country—but President Trump is the one that is racist.
- October 2015: Speaker Bercow welcomes Chinese

President Xi Jinping, a dictator who, according to Human Rights Watch, "systematically curtails a wide range of fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression, association, assembly and religion."

Mr. Bercow has also received strong criticism for his remarks. The speaker is supposed to be impartial and politically neutral. "Mr. Bercow has grossly exceeded his authority, seemingly believing himself entitled to wade deep into British foreign policy by dint of his office and his bottomless self-importance," wrote the *Telegraph* in an editorial. This extreme dislike of Mr. Trump is not universal—British society is split and polarized, just like America's.

Whether Mr. Bercow can block Donald Trump from Parliament remains to be seen. His approval is needed for speeches delivered in some parts of the building but may not be for others. Nonetheless, this hypocrisy exposes a major weakness in Britain's foreign policy.

"Ephraim, or Britain, has a 'silly dove' foreign policy!" wrote *Trumpet* editor in chief [Gerald Flurry](#), referencing a key prophecy about Britain in Hosea 7. "No *silly dove* nation can endure in a world full of hawks and tigers! This is a strong warning to a once mighty nation."

Britain's political posturing, making such a big deal about Donald Trump while turning a blind eye to much worse practices from other leaders, is certainly evidence of a "silly dove" foreign policy—a policy devoid of discernment or understanding.

 Follow [Richard Palmer](#)

## **More Than Half of U.S. Navy Aircraft Grounded** *Trumpet Staff* | February 8

**M**ORE THAN HALF OF UNITED STATES NAVY AIRCRAFT CANNOT fly, mostly "because there isn't enough money to fix them," *Defense News* reported on Monday. That means that 1,700 combat planes and support aircraft are grounded. For the F/A-18 Hornet and Super Hornet, the situation is worse—nearly two thirds are out of service. *Defense News* wrote that the F/A-18s "are the tip of the spear, embodying most of the fierce striking power of the aircraft carrier strike group."

The blunting of this spear has major ramifications. America's Navy is built around its air power. Since the Battle of Midway during World War II, the U.S. Navy has relied on warplanes as the decisive element in naval engagements. The whole force is structured around carrier strike groups—made up of America's colossal nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and their escorts.

But it's not just the planes that are suffering. *Defense News* noted:

With training and flying hour funds cut, the Navy's aircrews are struggling to maintain even minimum flying requirements, the senior Navy source said. Retention is becoming a problem, too. In 2013, 17 percent of flying officers declined department head tours after being selected. The percentage grew to 29 percent in 2016.

Funding shortfalls mean many service members are unable to relocate to take on new assignments. So far in

2017, the Navy said, there have been 15,250 fewer moves compared with 2016.

The ships are suffering as well. Each year, the Navy has to postpone the overhauls that its aging fleet need in hope that additional funding will be available in the future. According to a senior Navy official, overhauls to another 14 ships will be deferred in 2018. *Defense News* also warned:

One submarine, the *Boise*, has lost its diving certification and can't operate pending shipyard work.

Leaders claim that if more money doesn't become available, five more submarines will be in the same state by the end of this year.

Fifteen percent of the facilities onshore, which the Navy uses to repair and maintain its fleet, are themselves in need of repair, replacement or demolition, *Defense News* reported.

This indeed is a bleak picture for the U.S. Navy's future. It would take billions of additional dollars just to solve the current issues facing the force. But the problems with the U.S. military go beyond money. The American defense budget is already the largest in the world, and yet the Navy—along with the other branches of the U.S. military—is still plagued with funding issues.

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## President Trump Puts America on a Moral Par With Vladimir Putin's Russia

Stephen Flurry | February 5

**I**N AN INTERVIEW THAT AIRED JUST BEFORE THE SUPER BOWL LAST Sunday, [President Trump](#) told [Bill O'Reilly](#) that he respects Russian President Vladimir Putin and hopes Russia will help the United States crush the Islamic State.

"I say it's better to get along with Russia than not," the president told O'Reilly, who responded by pointing out that Putin is a *killer*.

"We've got a lot of killers," he said. "*You think our country's so innocent?*" (emphasis added).

Vladimir Putin is a ruthless authoritarian who murders political opponents and journalists in cold blood. His goal is to rebuild the Soviet empire so he can rule the world. To that end, he's forging strong alliances in the East in order to bring down the West—*particularly the United States*. Even now, he's the Middle East kingpin, joining forces with the likes of Syrian President Bashar Assad and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. And as the escalating violence in Ukraine over the last week demonstrates, this is a man

who has no respect for the territorial integrity of Russia's neighbors. Russia has seized Crimea and currently occupies eastern Ukraine.

Just last week, 33 people were killed—many of them civilians—and thousands more are now trapped due to the latest escalation in violence triggered by Russia-backed separatist rebels. It's the bloodiest violence in eastern Ukraine since 2015.

*But America has a lot of killers too.* That was President Trump's message for Americans on Super Bowl Sunday. *Our country's not so innocent either.*

In a television program we aired [two weeks ago](#), my father showed what happens to America when it "gets along" with someone like Vladimir Putin.

Much of the material in that program has been converted into an article that will appear in the March issue of the *Trumpet* magazine. You can read that [here](#).

Follow [Stephen Flurry](#)



## Raids on California Human Trafficking: 474 Arrested, 55 Slaves Rescued

Jeremiah Jacques | February 6

**A** STATEWIDE CALIFORNIA OPERATION TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING culminated in the arrest of 474 people and the rescue of 28 sexually exploited children and 27 adult victims.

The sweep took place from January 26 to January 28, and combined the efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and task forces, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said in a news release.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Jim McDonnell said [70 percent of trafficked children are taken from foster care situations](#). "They're looking for love," McDonnell said. "They're looking for someone that cares about them. The pimp says that they're going to give them this, then leads them down a path of destruction."

Human trafficking and enslavement are not limited to California. Across the United States, 7,572 cases were reported in 2016—up from 5,526 the year before.

The scourge also expands beyond the United States, and into all corners of the globe. The Global Slavery Index estimates that 45.8 million people around the world are now slaves. That's more than the populations of Australia and Chile combined. It's three times the *total number* of Africans who were enslaved and sent to the Americas throughout the entire three-and-a-half-century history of the New World slave trade.

In the February 2014 issue, the *Trumpet* wrote about the diabolical modern slave trade and the [soon-coming solution to the problem](#):

[T]his evil won't be cured by anything short of a global revolution. Mercifully, exactly such a revolution is just on the horizon.

During Jesus Christ's earthly ministry, He witnessed some extremes of human suffering. He relieved that suffering among those He healed and preached to personally, but He also made clear that He wasn't on Earth at that time to use His power to overthrow the existing world order (e.g. Matthew 26:51-54; John 18:36).

However, He did promise to return in power and glory, and that at that time He would obliterate injustice! Psalm 12:5 records Him saying, "I have seen violence done to the helpless and I have heard the groans of the poor. Now I will rise up to rescue them, as they have longed for me to do" (New Living Translation).

Based on this and other Bible prophecies, author Herbert W. Armstrong painted a most inspiring picture of the age of peace and freedom that Christ will bring about very soon:

All crime and organized rebellion will be put down by force—divine supernatural force. ...See, now, a glimpse into a world of no illiteracy, no poverty, no famine and starvation, into a world where crime decreases rapidly, people learn honesty, chastity, human kindness, and happiness—a world of peace, prosperity, abundant well-being.

Mr. Armstrong wrote those hope-saturated words in his booklet *The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What It Will Be Like*, which you can receive a copy of at no charge.

Follow [Jeremiah Jacques](#)