

# Trumpet Weekly

FEBRUARY 17, 2017



Soldiers of armored infantry battalion Panzergrenadierbataillon 122 of the Bundeswehr, the German armed forces.

## German Army Continues to Swallow Its Neighbors

Richard Palmer | February 14

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



A CZECH AND ROMANIAN BRIGADE WILL BE INTEGRATED INTO divisions of the German army. The agreement is to be signed at a meeting of NATO defense ministers tomorrow. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), which broke the story on February 2, wrote, “[The Bundeswehr is developing into the leading NATO army in Europe.](#)”

The agreement is the most dramatic of a series of arrangements that Germany is negotiating to deepen its cooperation with other countries. The *EU Observer* summarized the FAZ’s report, noting, “The longer-term strategy would turn the Bundeswehr into the leading NATO army in Europe, with small countries integrating their

military forces into the German command structures.”

Two thirds of the Dutch army’s command structure began to integrate into the German army last year.

The FAZ wrote (*Trumpet* translation throughout): “This policy means Germany strengthens its own military power and, secondly, it creates practical road marks for the goal of European armed forces.”

The revolutionary handover of sovereignty from the Netherlands is already being seen as a proof of concept that other nations can follow, providing “the closest and most varied example of how far the military cooperation between two NATO states can go” (*ibid*).

Last year, German defense minister Ursula von der Leyen set out her ambitions to create “a multinational Panzer division” by integrating soldiers from other nations into the German army.

*Die Welt* explained, “This should create a unit with up to 20,000 active soldiers, which should be operational by 2021—which would be the nucleus of a European army” (March 17).

Now von der Leyen is taking further practical steps in that direction. The Czech 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade will be integrated into the 10th German Panzer Division and the Romanian 81st Mechanized Brigade will be assigned to Germany’s Rapid Force Division.

These are not mere token forces. The Czech Republic is integrating one of its two combat brigades into the German army (this does not include combat support forces, such as the 13th Artillery Regiment).

On February 13, Reuters reported that unnamed sources with the defense ministry say that Germany also intends to lay out plans to create a joint fleet of transport aircraft with France and to join a joint fleet of tanker aircraft with the Netherlands.

At first glance, the plans seem unimpressive. The Franco-German fleet would begin with 10 transport planes. The United States operates more than 5,000. However, Europe is so short of transport planes that even an additional 10 will make a difference. This move is also a proof of concept. If successful, it will serve as a platform that more and more units can be added to. With Britain on the way out, France and Germany are the European Union’s two largest militaries. If they can prove that they can share resources and work together, there’s great potential for cooperation.

Germany will also sign a declaration of intent to join the Multinational Multi-Role Tanker Transport Fleet of aircraft led by the Netherlands. The group also includes Luxembourg; Belgium and Norway may also join. Germany said it could spend up to €1 billion on planes, which would be based in the Netherlands and in Germany.

Germany will also expand its cooperation with Norway, with plans to work together in buying submarines and missiles.

Germany has made no secret of the fact that it aims to build a European army through these deals with other nations. It is creating a network of military cooperation—with Germany at the center. In 2013 then-Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière concluded that efforts to create a European army in one sweep were simply not working. Instead, he aimed to create much deeper

cooperation within individual nations, gradually building the nucleus of a European army out of bilateral cooperation.

“If Germany can prove that integration can work with the Netherlands and Poland—and they can save a lot of money doing so—other nations will want in. Once Berlin brings a few more countries on line, this project will gain critical mass,” we wrote at the time. “The result would be an EU army, or a very closely coordinated group of armies, centered on Germany.”

U.S. President Donald Trump’s insistence that Europe must bear the burden, the cost and the responsibility of defending itself is further encouraging this effort. Von der Leyen said that German requests to do more were “fair.” They certainly encourage other nations to sign up to the initiatives that Germany began long before Mr. Trump launched his bid for the presidency.

The timing of Germany’s push is deliberate. From February 17 to 19, national defense leaders, politicians and academics will gather in Germany for the Munich Security Conference. Talk of EU military cooperation is included in the conference’s annual report, which has been published ahead of the event. The report includes an infographic illustrating how far the Dutch have gone in integrating with the Germany army. With so much uncertainty about President Trump’s plans for Europe’s defense, extra attention is being focused on the conference this year to see what America will do and how Europe will react. European military integration is definitely on the agenda.

The rise of a Europe capable of fielding a powerful military force, independent from the United States, would be one of the biggest geopolitical events in the last century and would revolutionize the balance of power around the world.

Herbert W. Armstrong warned of this exact military union for decades. In May 1953, he wrote that “10 powerful European nations will combine their forces.” In August 1978, he warned: “The Europeans are far more disturbed about their safety in relying on United States military power to protect them than Americans realize! ...

“Europeans want their own united military power! They know that a political union of Europe would produce a third major world power, as strong as either the U.S. or the USSR—possibly stronger!”

He saw that this cooperation would not come easily. But Europe is being forced in this direction. For more on how this force is coming together, read our article [“Is Europe Finally Ready for an Army?”](#)

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## MIDDLE EAST

# TrumpetDaily

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## Iran Names Alleged War Criminal as New Ambassador to Iraq

Brent Nagtegaal | February 16

### WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



IRAN OFFICIALLY NAMED BRIG. GEN. IRAJ MASJEDI AS ITS NEW ambassador to Iraq, *Al Monitor* reported on February 13. The choice of Masjedi to the post is raising concerns inside Iraq that Iran plans to strengthen its grip over the nation after the Islamic State is defeated.

Masjedi is an adviser to Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Cmdr. Qassem Soleimani, a man who reports directly to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Since Saddam Hussein's regime ended with the United States invasion of Iraq, Iran's three ambassadors to Iraq have all come from the ranks of the IRGC. Some observers say Mesejedi is the most hard-line of them all and quite possibly a war criminal. Soon after his appointment was announced, a member of Iraq's parliament reluctantly called the foreign ministry to discover the truth to the claim.

According to Amir Toumaj from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies:

Masjedi's military background provides insight into Iran's designs for Iraq. During the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88), he established his credentials at the Ramezan Base, where he coordinated special operations behind enemy lines and worked with Iraqi insurgents. A number of these Iraqi insurgents have risen to key positions in the post-Saddam era. During the U.S. occupation, Masjedi was involved in directing Quds Force operations against U.S. and coalition forces—operations that killed at least 500 U.S. troops. Masjedi vowed last year that Iran would fight in Iraq and Syria until the last “takfiri” fighters are killed, and last month praised the PMF [Popular Mobilization Forces] as the “IRGC's next step.” ...

After the Iraqi army disintegrated in the wake of the Islamic State's conquests, the Quds Force and IRGC-backed militias stepped in to fill the void. The latter joined the

Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), the umbrella organization of Iraqi militias formed following the 2014 fatwa of the Iraqi-Shiite Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani to drive the Islamic State from the country. IRGC-backed militias now dominate the PMF. In November 2016, the Iraqi parliament officially incorporated the PMF into the Iraqi state, making it a legal military force separate from the national armed forces.

With close to 100,000 fighters, the PMF is the largest amalgamation of the numerous Shiite militias used in the fight against the Islamic State. While it is mainly comprised of Iraqi nationals, the PMF leadership takes orders from Iran. It follows that since the PMF is now officially part of the Iraqi security establishment, Iran has virtual control one of the largest ground forces inside Iraq.

By making Masjedi its ambassador to Iraq, Iran is looking to further solidify its control over the PMF once the Islamic State is fully defeated. Toumaj concluded:

Masjedi will work to ensure that the IRGC-backed network of politicians and entities emerges victorious in post-Islamic State Iraq. The incoming U.S. administration should prioritize supporting Iraqis who seek a brighter future over those aligned with the dictatorship next door.

However, according to Bible prophecy, the United States government will not be able to reverse Iraq's fall to Iran. In 1994, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry asked “Is Iraq About to Fall to Iran?” Now that America has largely left Iraq, and the Islamic State is almost defeated, we are very close to complete fulfillment of that prophecy. How soon will it be before we can write the headline “Iraq Has Fallen to Iran?”

 Follow Brent Nagtegaal



## Iran's Next President Will Be a Hard-liner

Callum Wood | February 17

UNDER UNITED STATES PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, IRAN BENEFITED enormously by pretending to be moderate. It was the “moderate” nature of Iran's current president, Hassan Rouhani, that Mr. Obama said provided pretext for the nuclear deal that he implemented with Iran on Jan. 16, 2016. That deal ended powerful economic sanctions and gave Iran billions of dollars in cash.

However, that moderate pretense may not be Iran's most expedient policy anymore, now that America has a new president. What worked for President Obama is unlikely to work for President Trump. Going up against Mr. Trump will probably force Iran to drop its cloak of modesty and become more overtly confrontational.

From a foreign-policy point of view, the nuclear deal has been

a huge success for Rouhani, who is up for reelection in May. Domestically though, not so much.

In November the *National Interest* wrote that Rouhani sold the deal to voters saying that it would “alleviate the threat of war against the world's greatest military power, and second, [it] would inject foreign capital into the Iranian economy and reconnect it to the global marketplace.”

However, one year on from the implementation of the deal, everyday Iranians are yet to feel any economic relief. Instead, most of the economic gains from the deal have gone directly to Iran's government and military. Added to that, over the past couple of weeks the threat of military action between Iran and the

United States has increased. Neither of Rouhani's selling points for the deal have materialized. And with the elections coming in a few months, hard-liners are looking to capitalize on this.

Politically, Rouhani needs the nuclear deal to hold up for another three months as proof that his diplomatic policy works. But he also needs it to show some economic benefit. Trump isn't going to make that easy.

The Trump administration has already introduced new sanctions in response to Iran's latest ballistic missile test. And as Mr. Trump indicated, there could be revisions made to the nuclear deal—certainly not revisions to *ease* Iran's economic burdens.

Iran's moderates have also lost their greatest supporter, former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who died in January. Rouhani is now their most visible spokesman in Iran—and his leadership is in question. Add to that Trump's new, bold approach toward Iran. This means Rouhani, along with the moderate Iranian camp, is facing an uphill battle.

Iran's hard-liners are already saying that Rouhani is too hesitant to condemn or stand up to Mr. Trump.

They want a counterbalancing president—one who talks as tough as Trump, not a "moderate." This means the current president needs to stand up to Trump, or he risks looking emasculated.

As *Time* magazine noted:

Now, he's trapped between a rock and a hard place. His foreign minister, Javad Zarif, has promised reciprocal

measures, but should Rouhani do so too harshly, he runs the risk of Trump moving to nullify his most significant achievement in office.

Hard-liners are already saying that Mr. Rouhani was "the right answer in the Obama era but the wrong one now," as the *New York Times* put it. "Many expect the next president to be a far more combative figure, in the mold of the former president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad."

The *National Interest* continues to describe Rouhani's predicament this way:

The ultimate victim of Iran's missed economic opportunity isn't the investors who had hoped for a bonanza, and might not even be Rouhani if he survives reelection, but the idea that Iran can solve its disagreements with the U.S. by compromise instead of confrontation."

It would be all the proof Iran's leadership would need to argue that force must be met with force. That means ditching the "moderate" façade that has been upheld throughout Rouhani's first term.

The *New York Times* suggested, hard-liners, and perhaps Khamenei, will look instead for a more "combative figure." Perhaps Rouhani will show his true colors and fulfill that role, perhaps not. One thing is certain though: A soft, diplomatic Iran is *not* coming anytime soon.



## Hamas Installs Yahya Sinwar as Leader in Gaza

Brent Nagtegaal | February 14

"IS WAR WITH ISRAEL ON THE HORIZON WITH HAMAS'S NEW Gaza Leader?" was the title of the *Jerusalem Post*'s report on this week's election of Yahya Sinwar to the [highest office in the Gaza Strip](#). The election inside the Hamas terrorist organization replaces Ismail Haniyeh with Sinwar as the undisputed leader of the territory. While Hamas operatives are notoriously brutal, Sinwar may be one of the most ruthless to ever rule Gaza.

According to the *Post*:

Sinwar is the first Hamas leader to be selected for this post from the military wing. In Israeli terms, he can be compared to a former general, with a strong background and leaning toward the military, who is appointed as a political leader.

In order to effectively and quickly find, condemn and eliminate suspected collaborators with the Israeli government, Sinwar received a fatwa from Hamas's spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. The fatwa granted him the ability to execute anyone who confessed without a formal trial. During this period, Sinwar became known as "the Man of the Twelve," a reference to the 12 suspected collaborators he murdered with his own hands.

He was eventually captured and tried by an Israeli military court in 1989, which sentenced him to four life sentences.

After receiving life-saving cancer treatment while in prison, Sinwar was released back to the Gaza Strip through in a prisoner swap. He was part of the highly controversial 2011 deal, which exchanged [1,027 Palestinian prisoners for one Israeli soldier](#), Gilad Shalit. However, as an example of his no-compromise approach

toward Israel, Sinwar actually argued against the specific deal that led to his own freedom. He regarded the terms of the deal as surrendering to Israel's conditions. He said he was willing to remain in prison in order to get even more Palestinians released.

Sinwar's 22 years in prison did not moderate his views. Israel's weakness in allowing such a deal only emboldened Sinwar. Immediately following his release, he delivered a rousing speech before 200,000 Gazans, demanding a military onslaught on Israel. He espoused a new approach whereby Hamas would "take the battles into the enemy's side"—which the *Post* says was the beginning of the [terror tunnel strategy](#).

Now Sinwar has risen through the most violent contingent of Hamas to now hold the highest political position in Gaza, which also reveals how powerful the military wing of Hamas has become inside the Gaza Strip. The *Post* wrote:

It is now apparent that the military wing is cementing itself as the dominant force of the movement, which has touted itself as an alternative to the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization] and the Palestinian Authority.

There are already reports that Sinwar intends to reach out further to Iran to provide Hamas with military hardware and funding needed to begin another offensive against Israel.

The increased funding from Iran, in conjunction with Sinwar's charismatic leadership, could very well increase Hamas's popularity, not just inside the Gaza Strip, but also among Palestinians in the West Bank territory.



The *Trumpet* has forecast for the past decade that Hamas would indeed rise to prominence, not just in the Gaza Strip, but specifically in the West Bank. Continue to watch as Hamas

strengthens its power base in Gaza and entrenches itself in the larger territory of the West Bank.

 Follow [Brent Nagtegaal](#)

## **The Massacre of Northern Nigeria's Christians** **Abraham Blondeau | February 15**

THE PLIGHT OF NIGERIA'S CHRISTIANS IS A GRISLY REMINDER OF what happens when Western nations fail to stop the rise of radical Islam and protect the world's defenseless.

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the continent's greatest oil producer. The country, however, suffers from a less than ideal strategic location. While being the greatest power in west-central Africa, there has been little interest from Western nations to intervene, especially with the crises in Syria and Libya.

The main threat to Nigerian stability has been religious tumult. The nation straddles the Islamic regions of Sahara and sub-Saharan Africa and the converted Christian populations of former European colonies.

Douglas Murray investigated the horrors firsthand and wrote a piece for the *Spectator* titled "Who Will Protect Nigeria's Northern Christians?" In the article, he reported:

For the outside world, what is happening to the Christians of northern Nigeria is both beyond our imagination and beneath our interest. These tribal-led villages, each with their own "paramount

ruler," were converted by missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries. But now these Christians—from the bishop down—sense that they have become unsympathetic figures, perhaps even an embarrassment, to the West. The international community pretends that this situation is a tit-for-tat problem, rather than a one-sided slaughter. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the press fails to report or actively obscures the situation. Christians in the south of the country feel little solidarity with their co-religionists suffering from this Islamic revivalism and territorial conquest in the north. And worst of all, the plight of these people is of no interest to their own government. In fact, this ethnic and religious cleansing appears to be taking place with that government's complicity or connivance. ...

As Europe still struggles with terrorism in its own borders, Nigeria stands as a bloody monument to inaction. You can count on Europe to not stand on the sidelines much longer in the Middle East and Africa. To learn more on this emerging future, watch the *Trumpet Daily* program titled "The Coming Religious War in the Middle East."

## EUROPE

# TrumpetHour

GERMAN ARMY SWALLOWING ITS NEIGHBORS, RUSSIA TESTING MR. TRUMP, U.S. ECONOMIC FREEDOM EVAPORATING, AND MORE | FEBRUARY 17

NORTH KOREA'S MISSILE TEST, HAMAS'S NEW LEADER, CALIFORNIA'S DEADLY FLOODING, AND MORE | FEBRUARY 15

## **America Is Pushing Germany to Become 'the Leading Military Power in Europe'** **Richard Palmer | February 16**

UNITED STATES DEFENSE SECRETARY JAMES MATTIS GAVE EUROPEAN nations at a blunt ultimatum a meeting of NATO defense ministers on Wednesday: Spend more, or lose U.S. support.

"No longer can the American taxpayer carry a disproportionate share of the defense of Western values," he said. "Americans cannot care more for your children's future security than you do."

"America will meet its responsibilities, but if your nations do not want to see America moderate its commitment to this alliance, each of your capitals needs to show support for our common defense," he warned.

His statements echo warnings that U.S. President Donald Trump made throughout his campaign. But for European capitals, hearing these warnings from Mattis is significant. They had hoped that Mr. Mattis—a strong supporter of NATO—would

change Mr. Trump's mind.

These calls for NATO to do more, however, boil down to one thing: Germany stepping up. Fabrice Pothier explained this in an article published by *Politico* on Wednesday titled "NATO Survival Will Depend on Germany."

With Europe's largest GDP [gross domestic product] and by far its strongest economy, Germany is the swing state in European defense. If Berlin commits to spending the recommended 2 percent of GDP on defense, it would add \$30 billion of defense spending in Europe—a large share of the \$100 billion surplus that would be generated if all European members and Canada met their targets. The move would significantly boost European defense.

Pothier explains that other nations will find it very hard to step up:

Other important European players—such as Italy, Spain and the Netherlands—are either too small or too economically weak to have much of an effect on the European defense balance. In this scenario, Germany's \$30 billion could make all the difference between a stronger Europe or a weaker one.

Thus, it all comes down to Germany—the only NATO power in Europe that could turn the Continent's military power around. However, this raises an important problem.

*"The question, however, is whether Germany can—or indeed should—become the leading military power in Europe,"* wrote Pothier (emphasis added throughout).

That is right: Germany becoming the leading military power in Europe is the automatic and inevitable consequence of a boost to European military spending.

But this means big changes for Germany. As Pothier pointed out, "The German defense ministry has secured some hard-won increases" to its budget, and both the chancellor and finance minister have agreed to the increases. But it still falls far short of what Mr. Trump wants.

Beyond simply the money, Mr. Trump is pushing Germany to transform quite radically. Pothier wrote:

Getting Germany to punch closer to its weight will not be easy. Berlin's next coalition in the Bundestag will have to break with two powerful dogmas of post-World War II Germany: a balanced budget and a pacifist mindset.

Both ideas are deeply entrenched in Germany's political culture and institutions.

But change is not impossible:

But should [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel be reelected and commit to greater military spending, it would not be the first time the pragmatic chancellor instigated a radical shift with incremental steps. Just look at her refugee policy or her firm stance against Russia, which clashes with major German industrial interests and coalition partners.

Germany's postwar doctrines are not as intractable as they seem. One of Merkel's own predecessors, Konrad Adenauer, already partly broke with one when he decided to rearm Western Germany against the advice of many in his own party in the early 1950s.

Mattis comments come as defense leaders and experts around

the world gather for the Munich Security Conference, which begins Friday. The [paper released ahead of the Munich Security Conference](#) shows European leaders are keen to do more on their defense:

Europe is faced with a wide array of threats, which most experts say can best be tackled through joint European responses. ...

If the [European Union] wants to prove to itself and to its skeptics in and outside Europe that it is capable of being a "superpower that believes in multilateralism and in cooperation," as [EU Foreign Policy Chief] Federica Mogherini recently put it, a common foreign-policy strategy backed with sufficient military power is widely seen as a strategic necessity. In many European capitals, this has already triggered a trend reversal in defense expenditures."

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said that this year will be "the third consecutive year of increased defense spending in Europe."

In the short term, working together is probably a lot easier, politically, than spending more. But America will clearly keep pushing for Europe to have a bigger military budget.

American officials seem well aware that pushing Europe to do more means making Germany "the leading military power in Europe."

"Don't hide behind your history," former President Barack Obama has exhorted Germany.

"The world today does not fear a strong Germany," *Der Tagesspiegel* recorded Mr. Obama as saying. "It is, rather, disappointed when Germany is too reserved."

America, said Herbert W. Armstrong, "can only see one enemy at a time, and I want to tell you that the United States has more than one enemy." It worries about radical Islam and Russia but is blind to the danger of encouraging a strong, united, German-led military power in Europe.

It is not just Herbert W. Armstrong who warned against a militarily powerful united Europe. Renowned geopolitical thinker Nicholas Spykman wrote that "[a] federal Europe would constitute an agglomeration of force that would completely alter our significance as an Atlantic power and greatly weaken our position in the Western Hemisphere." America's own foreign-policy experts of previous generations saw the folly in what America is doing. But both the Trump and Obama administrations have been encouraging Germany to do more and spend more.

The *Trumpet* and the *Plain Truth* before us have consistently warned about America's friendship with Germany. For a summary of these warnings, and how they are already coming to pass, read our article "[How America's Friendship With Germany Will End.](#)"

 Follow [Richard Palmer](#)

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## **Geert Wilders Predicts a 'Patriotic Spring' for Europe** Kieren Underwood | February 19

DUTCH POLITICIAN GEERT WILDERS, HAIR SLICKED BACK AND rhetoric at the ready, has said the coming March 15 election in the Netherlands is the start of a "patriotic spring" across

Europe. After the Dutch elections, in which Wilders's Party for Freedom (pvv) is predicted to pick up the largest number of seats, the French will vote in May, the Germans in September, and the

Italians whenever they get around to it.

Wilders's popularity has risen since the *Trumpet* first reported on him in 2008. At the time, his anti-Islam *Fitna* video put him on the international stage, and the subsequent death threats and assassination attempts didn't succeed in caging him.

When the PVV won a stunning 24 out of 150 seats in the June 2010 election, *Trumpet* writer Richard Palmer predicted the "[rise in the right](#) so far [was] just the beginning":

But don't expect fringe parties to come to power across all of Europe. Rather, mainstream parties will follow their voters, gradually adopting positions that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. This is just the beginning of the rise of the right.

Across Europe, to differing degrees, this is what we've seen happen. France's mainstream parties have collapsed, leaving the campaigning to former outsiders. Austria only narrowly avoided electing the previously "unthinkable." Germany's AfD is ripping votes from the grand coalition. And Geert Wilders, or "Captain Peroxide," has the incumbent government changing its tune to avoid irrelevance.

The *Economist*'s latest piece on Wilders, featuring a cartoon of incumbent Prime Minister Mark Rutte mimicking him, portrays the frontrunner as dragging Dutch politics toward nationalism:

"There's something wrong with our country," began an open letter to the Dutch people published last month. It went on to moan about those who "abuse our country's freedom to cause havoc, when they came to our country precisely for that freedom," and warned them to "act normal or leave." The author was not Geert Wilders, leader of the anti-Muslim Freedom Party (PVV), but Mark Rutte, leader of the free-thinking Liberals (VVD) and prime minister of a country that presents itself as one of the most tolerant in the world. "Act normal" (*doe normaal*) is a common injunction in Dutch; it can mean "Don't be obnoxious" or "Don't be silly." But here it had a dark, exclusionary ring.

This is not the only instance of Rutte stealing Wilders's words. "This is new, that a mainstream party is copying Wilders's rhetoric," said professor of Dutch history at Leiden University, Henk te Velde.

Previously Europe's modus operandi has been to brand the outsiders as "racists," or even better still, "fascists." When that

approach loses its sting, it's time to bridge the ideological gap. As Germany's Edmund Stoiber would say, you can't let another party address the concerns of your conservative citizens.

Yet even with the Netherlands' highest poll ratings, it's still unlikely that Wilders will clinch the top job. The other parties will do all they can to prevent it. The PVV is expected to get 20 percent of the popular vote, with Mark Rutte's VVD predicted at around 16 percent. The Netherlands' Constitution requires a simple majority in order to govern. Many parties have refused, in advance, to coalition with Wilders.

"Yet keeping the election's winner out of government would bode ill for democracy," continued the *Economist*, "and substantiate Mr. Wilders's accusations that elites are ignoring the will of the people. And the 'Wilders effect' on other parties is immense. Few dare mutter a positive word about Europe or refugees. Parties across the spectrum talk about national identity or 'progressive patriotism' (a catchphrase that is as empty as it sounds)."

If Wilders wins the greatest number of votes—and doesn't receive the equivalent power—you can imagine the outrage. This seems the most likely outcome—Wilders gets the most votes, is excluded from power, and therefore sees his popularity soar even higher.

There's much to like in Wilders's determined stance against radical Islam. But he is part of a wave across Europe that contains many more extreme parties. As [we wrote in 2010](#):

Many of these parties that are attracting 15 or 20 percent of the vote are violently racist. Wilders's party, which simply opposes Islam, is actually in the minority: The majority of right-wing fringe parties are anti-Semitic and would gladly bring back concentration camps.

Is that unthinkable? These parties are already coming close to being a part of national and regional governments! Their ideas are becoming mainstream. Their thoughts point to Europe's future.

The rise of Wilders and others like him points to a radical shift in politics across all of Europe. The entire political spectrum is shifting to the right. This shift certainly addresses real problems Europe faces. But the less savory elements of this movement point to the dangers here.

The foreshocks in the Netherlands are the beginnings of a political earthquake that will restructure governments across the Continent. To learn what the effect of this earthquake will be, read *Trumpet* writer Brad Macdonald's article "[Europe's Old Demons Return](#)."

## ASIA



### Russia's Putin Provoking West, Testing Mr. Trump

Jeremiah Jacques | February 16

#### WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



**P**RESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN'S RUSSIA HAD A BUSY WEEK OF PROVOCATIONS against the West, buzzing an American vessel, violating a key nuclear arms treaty, sending a spy ship near a United States military base, and doubling down on its claims to Crimea.

Taken together, these moves show an emboldened Russia that is increasingly provocative. The behavior presents a test and a

challenge to U.S. President Donald Trump.

On Tuesday, the U.S. military's European Command confirmed that four Russian fighter jets had buzzed the Navy destroyer USS *Porter* in the Black Sea on February 10. Officials said the guided missile destroyer experienced three "unsafe and unprofessional" encounters with the Russian jets.

The aircraft's transponders were switched off, and pilots did not respond when the *Porter's* crew hailed them via radio. "These incidents are always concerning, because they could result in miscalculation or accident," said Navy Capt. Danny Hernandez.

It marked the first such Russian military provocation since Mr. Trump became president.

Also, it was reported on Tuesday that Russia has deployed two battalions of its new SSC-8 ground-launched cruise missile. The deployment of the nuclear-tipped missile marked a stark violation of a milestone Cold War-era treaty that forbids the U.S. and Russia from fielding land-based, intermediate-range nuclear missile systems.

Before President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, such weapons as the Soviet SS-20 and the American Pershing II cast a dark shadow over Europe. These systems were mobile, highly accurate, and capable of being hidden and quickly redeployed.

In a deterrence environment, such systems are inherently destabilizing. So Reagan and Gorbachev agreed to dismantle them and ban future development of such systems.

But Putin does not agree with Gorbachev's decision to sign the INF any more than he agreed with the decision of his other predecessor, Nikita Khrushchev, to give the Crimean peninsula to Ukraine. So, as with the Crimean decision, Putin reversed it.

In 2014, when Russia first tested the SSC-8, the Obama administration decried the development. But rather than heed these calls from Washington, the Russians denied that they were violating the INF Treaty and forged ahead with the nuclear missile system.

Now the SSC-8 is fully operational and has been deployed.

Jeffrey Lewis, a director at the Middlebury Institute's James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies summed up the development, saying, "Old Soviet patterns are reemerging."

The next morning, the Russian spy ship *Viktor Leonov* was spotted 30 miles off the coast near Groton, Connecticut, where Naval Submarine Base New London hosts the United States Navy's attack submarine fleet. Though the missile-armed vessel remained in international waters, it was the closest it has ever traveled along the United States' eastern seaboard, and the furthest north.

Later that day, Russia defiantly affirmed that it will never return Crimea to Ukraine or discuss the issue with foreign powers. The statement came after the White House unexpectedly said President Trump expects Moscow to hand the annexed territory back over to Ukraine.

This was a position Mr. Trump had not previously taken, and the Russians responded to the statement with the scorn that Kremlin-watchers expected. "We don't give back our own territory," said a spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry. "Crimea is territory belonging to the Russian Federation."

This uptick in Russian provocations comes as President Trump's top security adviser, Michael Flynn, left his post on Monday. His ouster came after U.S. intelligence operatives internally leaked an edited version of a telephone conversation Flynn had in December 2016 with a Russian diplomat. The leak was a felony violation of federal law, and though Flynn denies any wrongdoing during the call, it resulted in him resigning after less than four

weeks on the job. Flynn's failure to accurately disclose details of the call to the Trump administration likely also contributed to his ouster.

Though some of Russia's provocations came before the Flynn ouster, they intensified considerably after it. This intensification was likely intentional. Flynn was far and away the most pro-Russian member of Trump's advisers. Some view his ouster as a worrying indication of the anti-Russian U.S. intelligence community's political power.

Robert Parry of Consortiumnews.com wrote:

Flynn's real "offense" appears to be that he favors détente with Russia rather than escalation of a new and dangerous Cold War. Trump's idea of a rapprochement with Moscow—and a search for areas of cooperation and compromise—has been driving Official Washington's foreign policy establishment crazy for months and the neocons, in particular, have been determined to block it. ...

The so-called permanent government of Washington and its complicit mainstream media—what some call the Deep State—have taught Trump a lesson and have learned a lesson, too.

Writing for Bloomberg View, Eli Lake noted:

Normally intercepts of U.S. officials and citizens are some of the most tightly held government secrets. This is for good reason. Selectively disclosing details of private conversations monitored by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] or NSA [National Security Agency] gives the permanent state the power to destroy reputations from the cloak of anonymity. This is what police states do. ...

In the end, it was Trump's decision to cut Flynn loose. In doing this, he caved in to his political and bureaucratic opposition.

It is possible that after Flynn's departure, Moscow determined that, despite what Mr. Trump's personal views toward Russia may be, his administration is not capable of overpowering the anti-Russian Deep State in order to broker a détente with Moscow. So the Flynn ouster may have prompted the Russians to essentially give up on the prospect of improving their ties with America.

Whether or not that entered into Russia's calculus, the increasingly provocative behavior presents a formidable test to Mr. Trump. Will he let these provocations go unchecked as the Obama Administration generally did? Or will he scrap his previously stated hopes of a U.S.-Russian détente and take some measure of action against them? If so, what might that action be?

In any case, the future for U.S.-Russia relations looks uncertain, and the provocative behavior from Russia appears ready to further increase.

To understand why such behavior from Vladimir Putin's Russia is profoundly significant and to see where it will lead, watch *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry's recent *Key of David* episode "[The Prophesied Prince of Russia](#)."

 Follow [Jeremiah Jacques](#)





## North Korea Ups the Stakes With Game-changing Missile Launch

Christopher Eames | February 15

**N**ORTH KOREA SUCCESSFULLY TEST FIRED A PUKGUKSONG-2 medium-range, nuclear-capable missile on Sunday, which the *Telegraph* said was a “game-changer” development.

Unlike North Korea’s previous land-launched missiles, the Sunday launch used solid fuel, rather than liquid. This technology slashes preparation time and allows missiles to be launched on far shorter notice. The use of solid fuel also cuts the number of support vehicles necessary for launching the missile.

The Pukguksong-2 was also cold ejected from a mobile vehicle. Different from a “hot” launch, in which rocket engines ignite at the beginning of the launch, cold ejection propels the missile away from its launch vehicle using compressed gas, before the rocket engines fire up. This limits potential damage to the launch vehicle, allowing more immediate reuse and reliability.

The launch vehicle that was used on Sunday is North Korean-made. Typically, the nation has depended on imported vehicles. The vehicle used caterpillar tracks instead of wheels,

meaning it can travel over more types of terrain, making it more difficult to track and target.

Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the *Trumpet*’s predecessor, boldly proclaimed just after World War II that *the United States had won its last war*. That prediction held true during the Korean War, through Vietnam, the Cold War, Iran, Libya and many other conflicts. It certainly rings true today as North Korea continues to become more and more dangerous.

The U.S. has the unquestioned power to utterly crush any form of North Korean aggression. Yet in an age of “limited” warfare, the *will* to properly deal with such a problem is absent. As such, alongside already deteriorating relations between China and the U.S., we can expect the North Korean problem to only intensify, likely to the point of some catastrophe. That’s the result of letting a *nuclear* problem fester—that’s the problem of a *broken will*. Read *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry’s article “[A Nation of Cowards?](#)” to learn *why* that will has failed and what it means for the future.



## Nuclear Submarines and Hypersonic Missiles: China Is Making Game-Changing Weapons Advances

Jeremiah Jacques | February 15

**T**HE UNITED STATES MILITARY COULD BE IN “SERIOUS TROUBLE” IN a face-off against Chinese forces in the South China Sea, according to analyses published this week. On February 13, the *National Interest* discussed the advances the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is making in nuclear submarines, writing:

Is China’s new Type 093B nuclear-powered attack submarine on par with the U.S. Navy’s Improved *Los Angeles*-class boats? At least some U.S. naval analysts believe so and contend that the introduction of the new People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) submarines is an indication of just [how quickly Beijing is catching up to the West](#).

Former U.S. Navy Capt. Jerry Hendrix, now a director at the Center for a New American Security, is among such analysts. “The 93B is analogous to our LA improved in quietness and their appearance demonstrates that China is learning quickly about how to build a modern fast attack boat,” he said.

The U.S. Navy has attack submarines that are more advanced than the *Los Angeles* class. But budget constraints mean the LA will remain the mainstay of America’s submarine fleet for several more years. Quantity is also relevant, as China’s submarine technology advances come at a time when the U.S. Navy has 52 attack submarines, with plans to reduce the number to 41 over the next decade. Meanwhile, China has at least 70 attack submarines, with programs in place to steadily expand the fleet. It is at the confluence of these factors that the possibility of Chinese parity enters the equation.

Also on February 13, the *Scout Warrior* asked if China is already “[in front of the U.S. in developing hypersonic weapons](#).”

The article discusses China’s recent claims of having successfully tested a hypersonic weapon, saying the development “caused concern among Pentagon leaders and threat analysts.”

The U.S. Air Force expects to have usable hypersonic weapons by “sometime in the 2020s,” the article noted. The *Scout Warrior* explained the specific reasons why this apparent lag is such a cause of concern:

[S]hould China possess long-range, high-speed hypersonic weapons, it could dramatically impact circumstances known in Pentagon circles and anti-access/area denial. This phenomenon, referred to as A2/AD, involves instances wherein potential adversaries use long-range sensors and precision weaponry to deny the U.S. any ability to operate in the vicinity of some strategically significant areas such as closer to an enemy coastline. Hypersonic weapons could hold slower-moving Navy aircraft carriers at much greater risk, for example.

In July 2016, before China’s recent advances in nuclear submarines, hypersonic missile and other avenues were nearly as apparent, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry said China’s increasingly militaristic direction, especially in the South China Sea, is “steering the world toward war,” writing:

Now that U.S. military presence in the area has been drastically reduced, China is claiming the entire South China Sea as its own! ... Everything is headed in the direction of war.

China's military advancements are of great geostrategic significance, with implications for people of all nations. To understand why these developments mean "everything is headed in the

direction of war," read Mr. Flurry's article "[China Is Steering the World Toward War](#)."

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## TW IN BRIEF

**I**ndia smashes world record, launching 104 satellites in a single rocket: The Indian Space Research Organization made history on Wednesday by successfully launching 104 satellites into space on a single rocket. The event marked the largest number of satellites ever launched in a single mission. The

agency's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C37 launched from Sriharikota space center with the satellites, 101 of which are owned by international customers. After seeing that all 104 units successfully entered into orbit, the scientists at the Mission Control station erupted into cheers.

## ANGLO-AMERICA

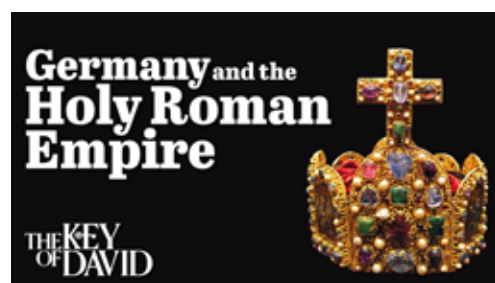


### Germany and the Holy Roman Empire

Gerald Flurry,

The Key of David | February 19

Germany has been a close friend of America for decades. With the surge in German nationalism, that friendship is about to change.



### **T** U.S. Economic Freedom Hits Historic Low

Andrew Miiller | February 17

#### WE TALKED ABOUT THIS



**T**HE UNITED STATES IS NO LONGER AMONG THE WORLD'S TOP 15 freest economies. In fact, according to an [annual index](#) released by the Heritage Foundation on Wednesday, the U.S. fell from being the sixth freest economy in the world when President Barack Obama took office in 2009 to being the 17th freest economy in the world today.

The U.S. economic freedom score for 2017 was 75.1 out of 100. This means economic freedom in the U.S. has fallen to its lowest level since the Heritage Foundation started keeping track in 1995. America now ranks behind such nations as Chile, Estonia, Hong Kong, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates. Since the Heritage Foundation ranks countries with scores above 80 as economically "free," it has only ranked the U.S. as "mostly free" since 2009.

The Heritage economic freedom index is calculated based on 12 factors of economic freedom, including property rights, government spending, freedom from corruption, fiscal freedom, monetary freedom, business freedom, labor freedom, trade freedom, investment freedom and financial freedom. The 2017 report lists large budget deficits, an enormous national debt, a substantial expansion of government bureaucracy and an increased tax

burden as contributing factors to the decline in America's economic freedom.

Another index of [economic freedom](#), published by the Fraser Institute, shows that the U.S. fell from being second freest economy in 1980 to being the 16th freest economy in 2014. According to this assessment, U.S. economic freedom actually rose from 1980 to 2000 but has been in steady decline since the turn of the millennium.

The Fraser Institute reports that the U.S. economic freedom index fell from 8.07 to 7.75 between 1980 and 2014, while China's economic freedom index rose from 3.64 to 6.45 during the same time period. As the U.S. turns its back on Adam Smith-style capitalism and China turns its back on Mao Zedong-style communism, both nations are adopting a mixed socialist market economy where property is privately owned but micromanaged by government bureaucrats.

For the past two centuries, the form of government championed by Britain and America—a form of government that has at its heart some important biblical principles—has spread throughout the Western world. Yet, in recent years, nations around the globe have been turning their back on the Anglo-American methods of economic management.

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## Oroville Dam Crisis: More Proof That California Is Cursed

Sam Livingston | February 14

**L**AST WEEK, MASSIVE RAINSTORMS HIT PARTS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. The rain brought much-needed relief to the drought-stricken state but also another crisis. Water levels in Lake Oroville, a reservoir held back by the nation's tallest dam, rose more than 50 feet in just a few days.

As water levels rose, engineers had to open the dam's main spillway, a concrete channel that diverts water away from the dam and into the Feather River below. Prior to the storms, the primary spillway channel was suffering from lack of attention and poor maintenance and marked with craters. As the water rushed down, cracks started to emerge, and the spillway began to break apart, then eroded away as water continued to spill out uncontrollably.

To alleviate the flow on the primary spillway, engineers relied on the emergency spillway, an earthen channel with a holding basin, which had never been used in the dam's history.

The emergency basin functioned until Sunday, when it too began to erode away, sending an uncontrollable volume of water into the river below.

The overwhelmed dam prompted state authorities to quickly call for the evacuation of over 180,000 residents living in the flood plain below the dam. The rain has since stopped, however, and water levels are receding. Now workers are rushing to make repairs before the next series of storms hits.

Blame for the potential catastrophe is being passed around. The state ignored warnings in 2005 from three environmental groups that called for the dam's emergency spillway to be reinforced with concrete. Yet last week's rain produced water flows well below the maximum amount officials believed the basin could hold, and it was still enough to erode the channel. Ailing infrastructure and government oversight is partially to blame. But, explaining why California went from extreme drought to crisis-level flooding is the question many people cannot answer.

Are California's problems just a matter of happenstance?

In recent decades, America's Golden State has experienced record wildfires, extreme drought, massive earthquakes and flooding. Even an excellent human government could not

withstand such a barrage of environmental disasters.

Lake Oroville was one of many reservoirs in California that was well below average capacity. It took only a few days of rain in 2017 for that image to change from a dried-out reservoir to a torrent of raging water ripping apart the dam's spillways and causing the evacuation of almost 200,000 people.

In 2003, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry asked, "[Is California Under a Curse?](#)" In his article, he wrote, "God does punish us with 'natural' disasters."

The solutions to California's problems are far beyond climate change, infrastructure choices or politics. In his article, Mr. Flurry refers back to a piece he wrote in 1993, saying, "One disaster after another is striking California. These deadly disasters are repeatedly labeled the 'worst ever'! ... With all the disasters that have struck California the past few years, it's as if the state is under a curse."

That article is as timely today as ever. These weather disasters are warnings from God designed to get people's attention. Here is what we wrote in our free booklet [Why 'Natural' Disasters?](#):

**The God of the Bible is not impotent. He wields the punitive sword of flood and mildew—and also that of drought (Deuteronomy 28:22; 11:17). Sometimes He uses both at the same time in order to heighten their corrective power: "And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered" (Amos 4:7). Notice—this is God talking through His Prophet Amos. God causes these weather disasters! In one region God sends a drought—in another region, floods—and it all happens right before harvest time. And why? God causes it because we haven't returned to Him (verse 8). Amos is trying to help us see the connection between extreme weather upsets and human sin.**



## NZ Relationship With Israel on Shaky Ground

Christopher Eames | February 13

**N**EW ZEALAND HAS NOT BEEN IN ISRAEL'S GOOD BOOKS LATELY. Together with Senegal, Malaysia and Venezuela, New Zealand played a key role in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 on Dec. 23, 2016. This was the infamous resolution that *condemns*, *reaffirms* and *reiterates* that Israeli homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are illegal—including Israeli dwellings in and around the Jewish Quarter and Western Wall, a section

of Jerusalem that has been inhabited by Jews for the last several centuries (let alone considering the ancient biblical history). As the only Western nation of the four—and a nation, at that, which has enjoyed relatively good relations with Israel—New Zealand has gained a mixture of praise and scorn worldwide for its actions.

In response, Israel withdrew ambassadors to both New Zealand and Senegal (the only two of the four with which Israel has

diplomatic relations). And according to a recent *Times of Israel* article, Israel is now “permanently downgrading its diplomatic ties with New Zealand and Senegal, punishing these countries for cosponsoring an anti-settlement resolution in the United Nations Security Council.” According to the article, last week Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided *against* returning Israel’s ambassadors to New Zealand and Senegal.

Yet New Zealand’s part in 2334 isn’t an entirely good representation of the general outlook of the population. Actually, when it comes to support for Israel, New Zealand is a divided country. There is a large chunk of society that does vehemently support the Israeli nation. Months before Resolution 2334 passed, and in response to a growing fear of the New Zealand government’s position on the status of Israel, a petition circled around New Zealand

titled “For the Protection of Zion.” This petition was an attempt to stop the New Zealand government from pressuring Israel to give up territory and to support Israel’s claim to the entire Holy Land, including the West Bank. It has currently gained nearly 12,000 signatures—that may not sound like much, but it is not a bad showing for a lower-profile petition in a nation of less than 4.5 million.

The Bible in fact *forecasts* a time when the relationship between the Jewish nation, the U.S. and Britain (including the British Commonwealth) will be *broken*. In many ways—especially with what has been displayed at the UN by the U.S., UK and New Zealand—we are already seeing that “brotherhood” (see Zechariah 11:14) falling apart. The nation of Israel is unfortunately becoming very ostracized and alone in a world of wolves.

## **T Murders Up in U.S. Cities** **Andrew Müller | February 15**

**A**MERICA’S MURDER RATE IS RISING FASTER THAN ANY TIME IN the past 45 years. According to data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 15,696 murders were committed in the United States during 2015. This means the nationwide homicide count rose by 10.8 percent, the biggest year-to-year percentage jump since 1971.

While official government crime statistics for 2016 won’t be available until September, the *Economist* gathered data for 50 of America’s most violent cities and found that homicides rose in 34 of them. These 50 metropolitan areas contain 15 percent of the country’s population, yet account for 36 percent of the country’s murder victims. The Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) estimated that the homicide count increased by double-digit percentages in 61 American cities last year. Since the lion’s share of murders in the United States takes place in big cities, this indicates that the nationwide murder rate almost certainly increased substantially in 2016.

“We’ve had at least two years running now where there’s been an increase in 35 to 45 major cities,” said MCCA executive director Darrel Stephens in an interview with *Time* magazine. “It’s a major issue and should be in the cities where it’s taking place.”

Stephens cites gang violence, drug-related violence, and the easy availability of firearms as root causes behind this spike in homicides. Meanwhile, American political commentator Heather Mac Donald, author of *The War on Cops*, argues that this recent surge of murders is a result of the “the Ferguson effect”—the concept that public hostility toward law enforcement in the wake of the Michael Brown shooting in August 2014 has caused police officers in minority neighborhoods to back off from interacting with residents when not absolutely necessary.

Milwaukee Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. digs deeper and blames government entitlement programs for making his fellow black Americans in America’s inner cities dependent on the state, fueling a breakdown of nuclear families that exacerbates criminal behavior. While 1 in 3 American children are raised without a father, this figure goes up to approximately 1 in 2 or more in some big cities. Approximately 85 percent of youths in prison come from such fatherless homes.

The foundation of any stable society—the family—is under attack in America. As long as this is true, American society will continue to produce criminals at a record rate.

 Follow [Andrew Müller](#)

## **Russia Worries Europe— and Fulfills Bible Prophecy** **Stephen Flurry,** **Trumpet Daily | February 17**

How will a clash between Europe and a Russian-led superpower play out?

 Follow [Stephen Flurry](#)

