

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

WATCH

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First Quarter 2017



 COMMENTARY

AMERICA AND ISRAEL

against the world

MAYBE it would have been more accurate to say the world against America and Israel. It's never been more the case in the United Nations. Until the recent UN vote condemning Israel for building settlements on the outskirts of Jerusalem, the United States has reliably used its veto power to strike down resolutions targeting Israel. When you look at the hundreds of resolutions introduced in the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations, you might conclude that the organization exists primarily for the purpose of the continual condemnation of Israel. The vast majority of the resolutions were either to forbid Israel from something it might do, condemn it for something it had done, or to assist the plight of "Palestinian" residents or refugees.

Former president Obama, having snubbed Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu at every turn, scandalously turned America's back and for the first time ever, allowed the passage of the resolution condemning Israeli settlements as "illegal." It is interesting that this hadn't happened, even

under the Obama administration, until after the election of Donald Trump. The former president interrupted his Hawaiian vacation to inform Susan Rice (who deceived the world on the Benghazi attacks), who then relayed the order to ambassador Samantha Power who raised her hand in abstention on behalf of the United States at the UN. Even the Washington Post made it clear that the abstention on the part of the United States was a decision taken in light of the fact that Obama would never again have to face the American people in a bid for office. It's obvious he also knew that neither Hillary Clinton nor his liberal allies in government would have to deal with the consequences.

Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel was furious. He flat-out accused the Obama administration of having conspired with the Palestinians to push the resolution of condemnation against Israel's settlements. Israeli spokesmen claim to have "iron-clad" intelligence proving that claim. The Israeli Prime Minister himself made the following public remark before his own cabinet, "Accord-

ing to our information, we have no doubt the Obama administration initiated it, stood behind it, coordinated the wording and demanded it be passed."

Former Secretary of State John Kerry came out to defend the action, saying it was an attempt to "force a two-state solution." Apparently the EU, the pope and the UN think that peace would break out if only Israel would pull back to pre-1967 borders, giving up the Temple Mount and all of east Jerusalem, and allow the establishment of a "Palestinian" state. Never mind the fact that the "Palestinians" have not succeeded in peacefully governing the territory of Gaza, even though many Jewish settlers were forcefully evicted by their own government in an effort to test the "land for peace" theory.

Of course there's been no peace. The record is clear. No "Palestinian" leader has been willing to sign his own death warrant by accepting Israel's right to exist, no matter what the land concessions. Not that Israel is about to cede east Jerusalem as a Palestinian capitol. It wouldn't begin to be accepted by the Israeli pop-

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Israel Urges Jews to Leave France as Benjamin Netanyahu continues to lash out after UN vote

by Raf Sanchez, reprinted with permission by the Telegraph

ISRAEL'S defence minister has urged Jews to leave France and move to the Jewish state as the Israeli government continued to lash out at the international community in the wake of a UN resolution criticising its settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Four days after the US allowed the UN Security Council to censure Israeli settlement building, Israel's government is on a heated rhetorical campaign against the

14 countries that voted against it.

It has cut aid programmes, summoned ambassadors for angry admonishing and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, has apparently decided to snub Theresa May at next month's Davos meeting in retaliation for Britain's vote.

The Israeli government is also focusing on discrediting a French-hosted summit on Israeli-Palestinian peace scheduled to be held in January in the fi-

nal days before Barack Obama leaves office.

Mr Netanyahu fears the summit will be used by the outgoing US president as a final chance to leave a mark on the Middle East peace process before Donald Trump takes over.

Avigdor Lieberman, the defence minister, said the summit was "a modern day version of the Dreyfus trial", the infamous 19th century trial that exposed widespread anti-semitism in France.



Israeli soldiers clash with Palestinians protesting against Israel's controversial separation barrier.

“This is not a peace conference but rather a tribunal against the State of Israel. This is a conference whose only role is to undermine Israel’s security,” Mr Lieberman said. “On the defendant’s bench, instead of one Jew, will be the entire State of Israel.”

He urged French Jews to migrate to Israel saying it was “the only answer that should be given to this plot”.

Mr Netanyahu irked the French government by making a similar suggestion after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in January 2015, implying that France was unable to protect its roughly 450,000 Jews from jihadist attacks.

Israel’s goal is to discourage any new international action on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict until Mr Trump takes office on January 20.

The president-elect criticised the White House for not using America’s veto power to stop the UN from censuring Israel and has signaled that he intends to robustly support Mr Netanyahu.



He kept up his criticism on Twitter on Tuesday, saying: “The United Nations has such great potential but right now it is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time. So sad!”

Israel accused the Obama administration of engineering the UN resolution as a parting shot against Israel and offered to supply the incoming Trump administration with “rather ironclad” evidence of behind the scenes US

maneuvering.

Israel also said in response to the vote that it was “temporarily limiting” its diplomatic contacts with the countries that voted against it at the UN, including Britain.

It has already recalled ambassadors from Senegal and New Zealand, who sponsored the resolution, and said it would limit diplomatic travel to Israel by foreign leaders. A trip by the prime minister of Ukraine to Israel has already been cancelled in the wake of the vote.

Mr Netanyahu’s domestic political opponents criticised his handling of the diplomatic crisis even as they voiced their own opposition to the UN resolution.

Yair Lapid, the leader of the centrist Yesh Atid party, warned of a “dangerous deterioration in Israel’s foreign relations, including with the largest world powers and some of our best friends” and said Mr Netanyahu had engaged in “hysterical behaviour”. □



Avigdor Lieberman urged French Jews to move to Israel.



Too Late For Two States?

by Michael Armstrong

THE two-state solution has been the subject of international debate for longer than most of us have been alive. Palestine, a sovereign nation for the Palestinians, is the answer, supporters claim, to Arab-Israeli hostilities that have long vexed the region and the world. Israel would shrink to its pre-1967 borders (at least), Jerusalem would be split into East and West, and peace would break out across the land.

Does anyone really believe that to be true? Can we reasonably expect the conflicts so rampant in this area's past to be resolved in the future? What does history tell us about the legitimacy and viability of this two-state solution?

The region itself has been referred to as Palestine at many points in history. Its ancient history can be found in the Bible as the majority of the events described take place in and around this area. It is part of the land promised by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Palestina is mentioned in the song of Moses

(Exodus 15) after the Israelites had crossed through the Red Sea and also by the prophet Isaiah. Joel references Palestine as well.

Both Palestina and Palestine are translated from the same Hebrew word that is rendered Philistia in Psalms 60, 87 and 108. This is the land of the Philistines, well known antagonists from the early history of the nation of Israel. Philistim, their progenitor, can be found in the genealogies listed in Genesis 10 as the son of Casluhim, who is the son of Mizraim, who is the son of Ham. Ham was also the father of Canaan whose name was more often applied to the land God gave to Israel, as it is called in Genesis 12 when God promised Abraham "unto thy seed will I give this land."

The Philistines are mentioned hundreds of times in the scriptures. They loom large in the book of Judges as well as the early kingdom period during the reigns of Saul and David. One of the most famous stories in the Bible is the fight between David and Goliath, who was called the champion of the Philistines. Goliath was from Gath, the chief

city of one of the five kings of the Philistines, all of whom were equal and sovereign in their own territory. Their five cities were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron. All five were in the coastal area west of Jerusalem, and each was independently governed.

While they would eventually be conquered and disappear from history, the name Palestine remains and has been applied to a much larger territory than the five kings ever occupied. In addition to scriptural references, versions of the name appear on Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions. The first time Palestine was used to refer to the entire region between Egypt and Phoenicia was in the fifth century BC by the Greek writer Herodotus. It was subsequently used by many well known ancient writers such as Aristotle, Ovid, Pliny the Elder and Josephus among others. Rome created the province of "Syria Palestina" in the second century AD out of what had previously been Judaea and Galilee. This was the first use of the name as an official designation.

This area of land, this crossroads of the ancient world, has been conquered, lost and reconquered so many times it passes imagination. Innumerable wars and conflicts have turned this promised land, once an earthly paradise flowing with milk and honey, into a desolate desert in desperate need of rehabilitation. Control of this land has changed hands many, many times. While convenient for those who wish to endow the push for statehood with the authority of antiquity, the modern Palestinians did not descend from the ancient Philistines. They do occupy the same land and consequently bear the same name. Their attitude towards Israel is also quite similar. That however, is where the similarities end.

As mentioned earlier, the Philistines were a Hamitic people. Those who now call themselves Palestinians are undeniably Arab and consequently Semitic. On this issue at least authorities agree and history proves the idea of a prior claim on the land to be fallacious. On the other hand, theories about when and how the modern concept of "Palestinian" as a national identity, dispossessed of land and self-government, came into being are rife with disagreement. The term Palestinian has traditionally been used in a regional rather than national connotation.

As was mentioned before Syria Palestina was a Roman province in the period following the writings of the New Testament, and after Titus destroyed Jeru-

salem. The area was briefly under the control of the Palmyrene Empire before again falling into the hands of Rome. The Samaritans in the region enjoyed small amounts of self-government as the power center moved from Rome in the West to the new capitol city of Constantinople in the East. They revolted and were put down many times as the Empire fluctuated. For a short time they were ruled by the Sasanian Empire, the last Persian dynasty before the rise of Islam, but reverted to Rome in the period historians now refer to as Byzantine.

Approaching the middle of the seventh century AD the land was conquered by Arabs who had recently converted to Islam. The Dome of the Rock was built in AD 691 on top of the Temple Mount. Control passed between various Caliphs as well as being taken and lost by several of the Crusades. The Mamluk Sultans of Egypt exercised control from 1260 until being conquered by the Ottomans. After centuries of dispute and armed conflict, the Ottoman Empire began ruling the area in 1516 and would continue to do so for the next four hundred years with relatively brief periods of unrest.

Throughout these many vacillations of power the Jewish presence in the land has been constant. They fought alongside various factions, including Muslim rulers against the Crusaders, and even exercised autonomy during several of their own revolts. Their connection to the land is ancient and very well documented in his-

tory as well as the Bible and even the Koran.

The earliest estimates place the emergence of a national Palestinian identity around 1834 in an event called the Peasants' Revolt. An Egyptian vassal of the Ottoman Empire Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha successfully broke away from the Ottomans and conquered the land from Egypt as far north as Damascus. They demanded the conscription of one out of every five Muslim males of fighting age. This, along with the loss of other traditional privileges, infuriated the population who widely considered conscription a death sentence.

The Arabs in Palestine essentially rebelled against a rebellion. Fighting broke out in many districts and the rebels took and plundered Jerusalem. They looted the shops of the Christians, Jews and eventually Muslims as well before turning to the homes of Christians and the state-owned supply warehouses and granaries. This is ironic considering they were ostensibly freeing the city from an unwanted occupying force. Muhammad Ali quickly reasserted his control over the region and the rebellion lasted only from May to August. Critics of the idea that this event served to forge any national Palestinian identity point out that the goal of the rebellion was never independence but a restoration of Ottoman control, which did occur some years later.

The Ottoman period continued all the way into the twentieth

century, when the Empire allied itself with the Central Powers in World War I which included Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. After their defeat the League of Nations concocted the Mandate System to administer different portions of land previously controlled by the now defunct Empires. These lands were not considered annexed. The nation granted the mandate was forbidden to raise an army or construct fortifications in the territory and were required to submit an annual report to the League.

These mandates were divided into three classes based on their level of development. Mandatory Palestine was granted to the United Kingdom in 1922. All Class A Mandates were considered to "... have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone."

In 1917 U.K. Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued a statement that bears his name, the Balfour Declaration, which stated, "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political

status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." With significant Jewish populations in many of their own territories and the war still under way, Germany and the Ottoman Empire were quick to respond by giving the Jews assurances of their own. This was, of course, known at the time the United Kingdom was granted the Mandate and was viewed favorably by many nations.

Persecution of the Jews has not been uncommon in history. While still controlled by the Ottomans the land received large numbers of Jews fleeing pogroms in Eastern Europe in 1881. A further 40,000 Jews arrived as a result of the Kishinev pogroms between 1904 and 1914. The British Mandate lasted from 1922 until 1948. These years encompass the rise of antisemitism, Naziism and World War II, and throughout them hundreds of thousands of Jews poured in from Europe.

Limits were placed on immigration which became a source of contention for Jews and Arabs alike, both of whom found themselves continually at odds with their British overseers. Even Holocaust survivors who arrived after quotas had been met were placed in internment camps, such as those in Atlit and on Cypress. Some say it is during these years that the idea of being distinctly Palestinian crystallized into the push for an independent state of Palestine, though whether or not it was simply a response to the looming creation of Israel is the subject of much contentious debate.

In 1947 the British announced their desire to withdraw from Palestine, having been unable to solve the problems of self government for the region in ways satisfying to both Jews and Arabs. The question went before the United Nations, successor of the League of Nations, which appointed a special commission on Palestine to investigate possible solutions. They placed before the general assembly a plan of partition with economic union, proposing the simultaneous creation of Israel and Palestine with Jerusalem as an internationally administered city. Resolution 181 was adopted with 72% of voting nations for and 28% against, with an additional ten nations abstaining and one absent. Most Jews rejoiced at the outcome but the majority of Arabs rejected it. Representatives from many Arab states walked out of the assembly, declaring they would not be bound by the decision. This certainly stands in stark contrast with the idea, still prevalent today, that a Palestinian state is what is necessary to achieve peace. The attempt at Palestinian statehood in 1948 proved the exact opposite.

The day after the UN resolution was announced violence erupted throughout the area. The United States withdrew its support for the partition plan and the United Kingdom began advocating for the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan, which had agreed to refrain from attacking Israel. Jewish military organizations became more organized as

the Arab League formed the Arab Liberation Army and deployed its forces around the country. The leader of the Arab League told a reporter in reference to the Jews, "We will sweep them into the sea" and the President of Syria is quoted as saying "we shall eradicate Zionism."

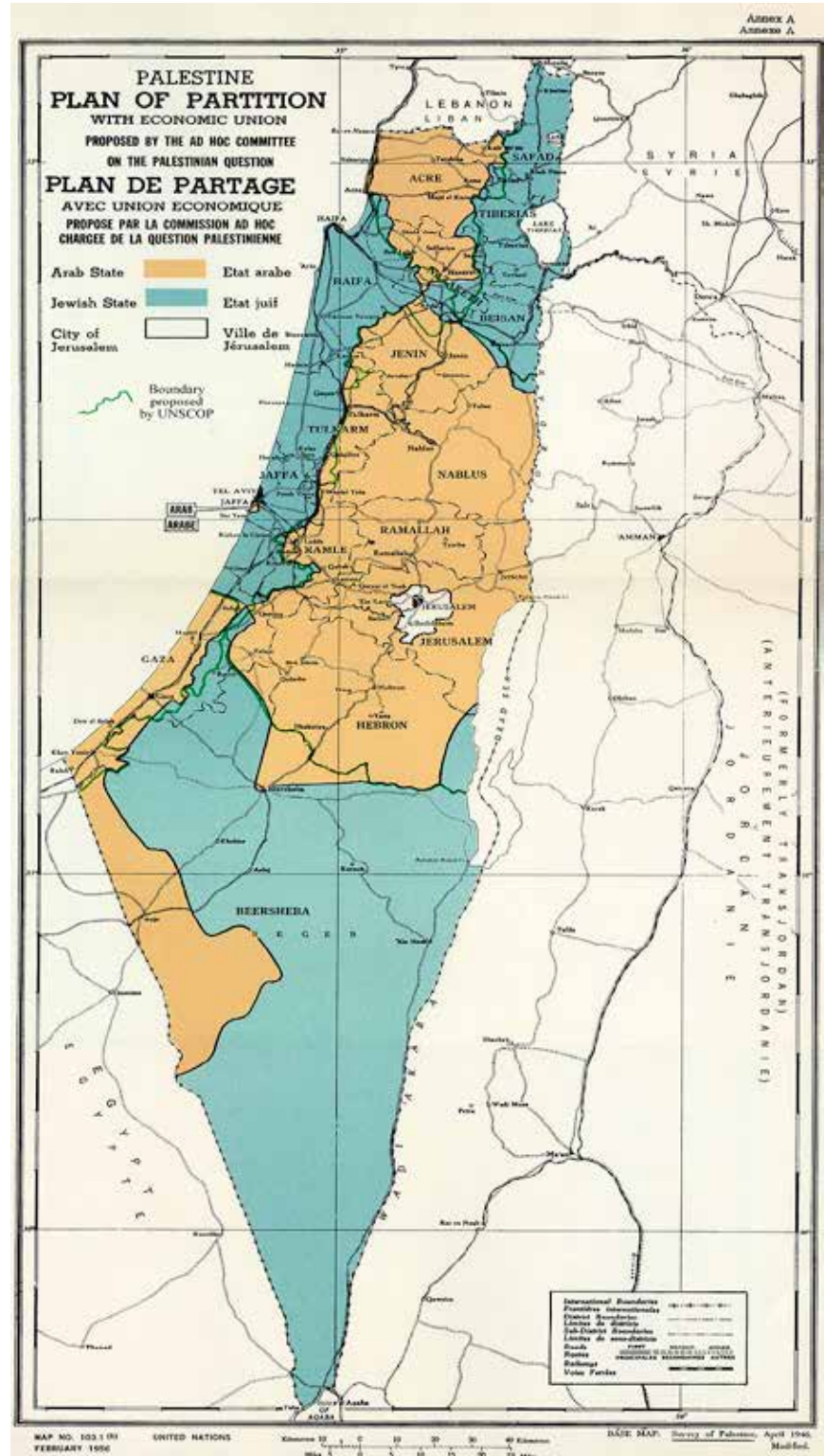
On May 14, 1948 the State of Israel was declared established and British forces withdrew at midnight. The very next day the armies of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq along with contingents from other nations attacked Israel. In addition to occupying the Arab areas they began attacking Jewish settlements, the Jews feared a repeat of the Holocaust that many of them had just survived.

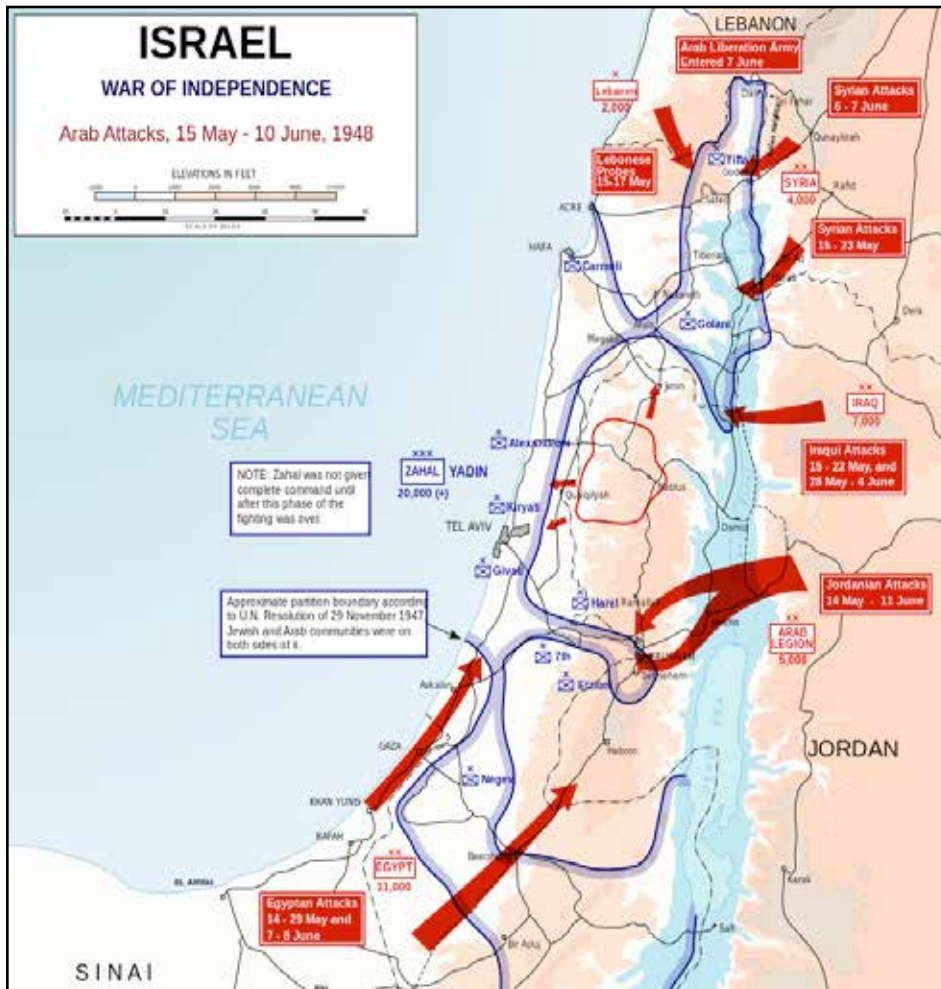
While initially on the defensive, Israeli forces quickly turned the tide against their attackers. Conscription had become obligatory for men and women and all citizens received combat training. After the British withdrawal Israel began purchasing armaments which allowed them not only to hold their ground but drive the combined Arab forces back, putting them in control of more territory including the Western half of Jerusalem. Atrocities were not lacking on either side of the conflict. Many Arabs fled during the period of unrest before the actual war began and more were displaced by combat. During the year of fighting Israel passed measures declaring land occupied during the war officially annexed. After the ceasefire was negotiated Jordan annexed the West Bank and Egypt occupied

the Gaza Strip. Those living in the West Bank became Jordanian citizens.

In May of 1949 Israel was accepted into the United Nations.

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip remained under the protection of the Egyptian military. The All-Palestine Government was formed, but was merely symbolic,





having no executive power. The Fedayeen, Arabic for “those who sacrifice themselves,” emerged from among the population of Gaza and for decades infiltrated the various borders of Israel to attack both civilian and military targets.

Considered alternately freedom fighters or terrorists, their attacks elicited responses from the Israeli military which were then used to justify further attacks. A Palestinian state, so recently offered under peaceful circumstances, would continue to be demanded and fought for in a manner making the reconciliation of Jewish and Arab viewpoints in-

creasingly unlikely.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization was founded in 1964 with its stated goal “the liberation of Palestine” through armed struggle. Its operations often targeted Israeli civilians and led to many considering it a terrorist organization. The PLO focused on Palestinian statehood, not alongside Israel but encompassing all the land of the former Mandate, as well as the extermination of Zionism and “cleansing” the land of Jews. While undoubtedly unsettling, the language used could hardly have been surprising. World War II was less than twenty years past. The meet-

ings of Adolf Hitler with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and their ideological agreement were probably part of the consciousness of all Jews of that day. The PLO continued through the following decades of conflict until it became the Palestinian National Authority still extant today.

The next major development came in 1967 with what is known as the Six-Day War. In response to the build-up of Egyptian forces along Israel's southern border, a preemptive strike was ordered against Egyptian airfields. Simultaneously, an Israeli ground attack was launched across the southern border. Both were unexpectedly successful; the Egyptian air force was almost completely destroyed and Israel took all of Sinai. In the initial confusion Egyptian President Nasser intentionally deceived leaders of both Jordan and Syria, telling them Egypt had won a crushing victory against Israel's army and convincing them to attack Israel. Even after Jordanian and Israeli forces began exchanging fire in Jerusalem, Prime Minister Eshkol contacted King Hussein of Jordan, promising not to initiate action if Jordan would stay out of the war to which he replied it was too late, “the die was cast.”

Israel was again victorious, defeating the combined forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, and taking control of

the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights (from which Israeli settlements had often received mortar fire through the years), East Jerusalem and the West Bank. This is the event most pointed to as crystallizing a Palestinian national identity. Blame for the war flew in all directions with the legitimacy of Israel's preemptive strike on what was obviously a build up for invasion the topic of fierce debate. In response to this humiliating defeat, neither the first nor the last of its kind, Jews in Arab nations were persecuted and exiled from their homes. Many sought refuge in Israel. The Arab League summit in September of 1967 issued the Khartoum Resolution after the war. It contained the "three no's": No peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiation with Israel. Limited hostilities continued for the next few years with no real change in territory controlled.

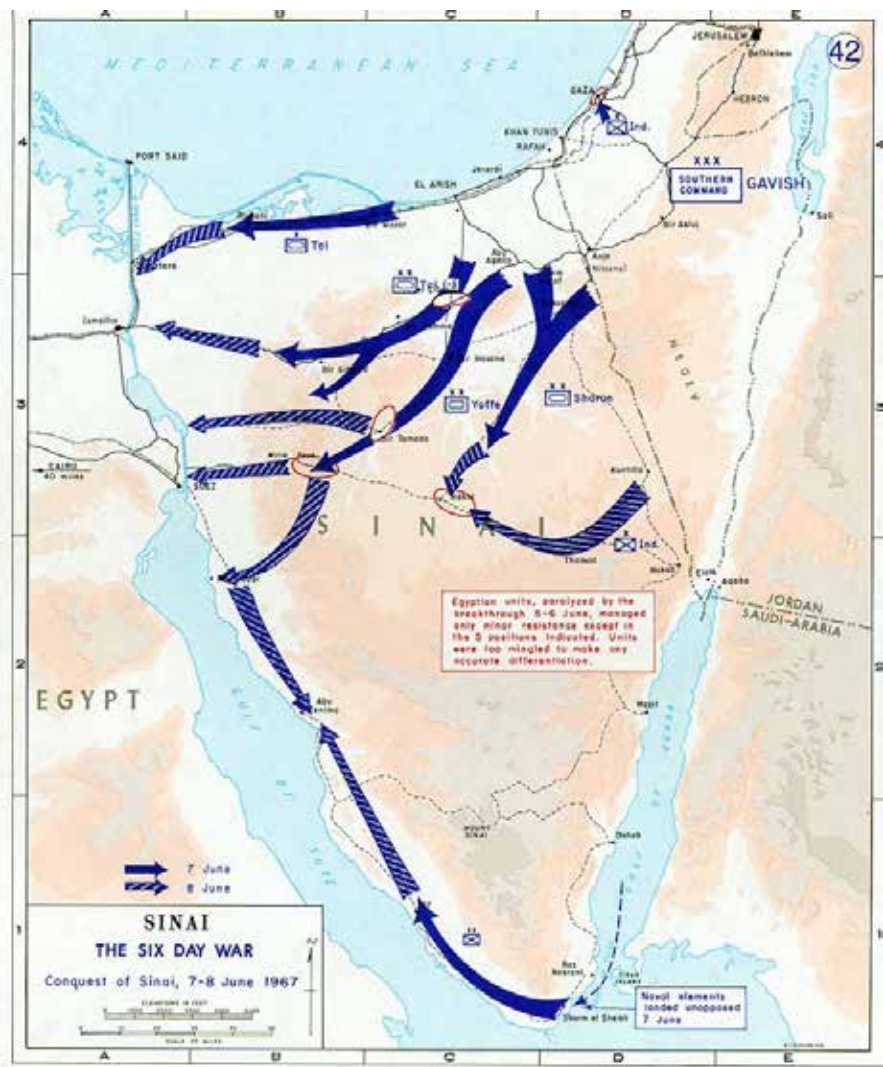
War broke out again in 1973 when Egypt and Syria coordinated attacks on Israel with the help of expeditionary forces from Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algeria and Cuba. They attacked through Sinai as well as the Golan Heights on Yom Kippur, by which name the war is known. Yom Kippur, the annual Holy Day of Atonement is a day of fasting and the Jews would have had neither food nor water since the previous sunset. Though initially pushed back, the Israeli army went on the offensive after reinforcement by reserve troops. They routed the coalition of Arab

nations, surrounded the city of Suez in Egypt and shelled Damascus before a cease fire was successfully negotiated after less than twenty days of fighting. Israel eventually made peace with Egypt following the Camp David Accords of 1978 and withdrew from Sinai in 1982. Jordan officially ceded control of the West Bank in 1988.

Also in 1988 the Palestinian Liberation Organization declared independence for Palestine with itself as government-in-exile in Algiers. This and other events sparked a new period of rebellion against Israel. Attacks and

retaliations created an extremely tense situation and hundreds of Palestinians were publicly executed by other Palestinians for allegedly conspiring with Israel. Back in 1974 the United Nations adopted Resolutions 3236 and 3237 recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence, sovereignty, acknowledging the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people to the United Nations and granting them non-state observer status.

Since that time Palestine has been considered a state de jure, meaning that while it is a nation



in the sense that it is recognized by other nations it lacks sovereignty and exists more in theory than reality. Statements of its recognition indicate the 1967 borders contrary to the PLO's original claims to all territory included in the former Mandate. The violence that raged across the area through the 1970s and 80s is well documented, the bloodshed hardening the resolve of both sides.

A notable round of negotiations began in 1993 called the Oslo Accords. The PLO recognized Israel's right to exist, a rather large concession and contrary to the position still held by many Arab nations today. They also rejected "violence and terrorism," though suicide bombings and attacks against civilians would continue to occur. Israel in return recognized the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people. The PLO reconfigured into the Palestinian Authority and began to exercise limited self government in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

While violence has never stopped, this is essentially the situation that persists today. In-



Terrorist organization, Hamas, holding a rally in Bethlehem.

ternal conflict has since divided the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, considered a terrorist organization, now governs the Gaza Strip. This division renders most negotiations meaningless as Hamas has repeatedly declared that Abbas, supposedly President of Palestine, has no right to represent the Palestinian people. Many positions held by the Palestinians are irreconcilable with those held by Israel, notably the notion that Israel would ever return to its pre-1967 borders.

Split by factions among their own ranks, Palestinians seem incapable of cohesion. Were they

united, any agreement with Israel is still a near impossibility. To this day 36 nations refuse to recognize Israel and calls for its destruction have been made continually. Each side's list of grievances is dauntingly long and a great deal of blood has been spilled, even recently.

Though upgraded to a non-member observer state by the United Nations in 2012, and in spite of its participation in recent Olympic games, Palestine still does not really exist. Were it to, can we reasonably assume peace would ensue? History certainly seems to indicate otherwise. Indeed the two-state solution is no solution at all. Those who put their faith in the Word of God know that as long as government remains in the hands of men, peace will play little part in the future of this region. This conflict, the cause of an unimaginable amount of death and destruction, has only one solution. It is one of the many reasons we need to pray "Thy Kingdom come." □



A rocket fired from Gaza into a civilian area in southern Israel.

SPRING HOLY DAYS 2017

Last Day of Unleavened Bread

Hilton Garden Inn,
Dalton, Georgia, April 15-17

Sabbath services on Saturday. Services held on Sunday with a pot-luck meal to follow. Monday is the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. Enjoy fellowship and a catered meal after Holy Day services.

Last Day of Unleavened Bread

ICG Headquarters
Tyler, TX April 14-17

Join us Friday for a group dinner. Sabbath services and Karaoke. Sunday, trip to the Zoo and Family Game Day. Holy Day services will be held Monday with potluck to follow.

Pentecost

Kentucky Dam Village
Land Between the Lakes, KY
June 3-4

Bible Study Saturday morning followed Sabbath Services. Sing-Along and Social that night. Pentecost Sunday will have workshop, Bible Study, and Pentecost Services



It is good for God's people to rejoice together. We'd like to encourage everyone to come keep the Holy Days with us! For information on attending Holy Day services with one of our groups, please call our office:

**Garner Ted Armstrong
Evangelistic Association
(903) 561-7070**

BIBLE STUDY

by Dr. James & Natalie Ricks

How are we Saved By Grace?

“For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

HOW are Christians “saved by grace through faith but not by works”? Does this passage say that works play no part in the life of a Christian?

People often think they can “work up” faith through their own emotional effort, but we must ask God for His faith. Faith clearly must first come from God. If people could generate Godly faith to be saved on their own, then they could earn their own salvation. We could claim, “You owe it to me!” Then faith would be supplied by the person and God would then “owe” them salvation.

THE GIFT OF GRACE

Ephesians 2:8-9 shows that a Christian’s faith is given as a free gift. It is not a faith “of ourselves,” as is shown in the explanations in Galatians 3:10-11 and 3:18-19. These verses help further explain Ephesians 2:8-9, but Galatians 2:16 is especially helpful; It indicates that one *cannot* be justified by the law.

Obviously, it is good to obey the law, stop sinning and behave in a Godly manner. Paul clearly states that we are justified by our faith in Christ and His grace. However, this fact should never be used as a license to sin and disobey God. Faith is not a license to sin nor a method for human efforts to save ourselves.

We are saved by grace only. The Judaizing false teachers of Christ’s day were deceiving some into a self-righteous approach toward salvation. Paul counters these “save yourself” false teachers in his letters to the churches.

Paul explains that the word grace implies “unmerited pardon” (or forgiveness). Christians neither earn nor deserve such mercy and help from God, yet they receive it anyway. It takes Godly faith to believe in this forgiveness. When truly understood, Galatians 2:16 and 3:21-22 explain a remarkable principle. Paul further explains this in Galatians 3:21 by asking, “Is the law against the promises of God? God forbid such an interpretation.”

CHRISTIAN FAITH IN ACTION

Consider that “we believe in Christ”—that He is the Messiah come to save mankind. Galatians 2:16 shows that “we are justified by the faith of Christ,” by His actual faith living in us as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). In other words, Christ even supplies the faith that allows us to believe that we will be justified (forgiven) and saved.

Protestants overlook Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10, which qualifies verses 8 and 9 and explains that “good works” (Christ’s works through the Christian) ARE still a fundamental requirement of Jesus and a

BIBLE STUDY

goal of His followers.

"v. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

These works, though, can never be the by-product of human effort alone. If so, each Christian could come before God boasting that he was owed salvation! Ephesians 2:10 completes the thought that a Christian, through humble attitude, allows Christ's Spirit to help us to do good works and Godly acts.

We develop and prove our faith by our works. In James the Second Chapter, the Apostles explain that faith is demonstrated by our actions. Abraham proved that he believed God and had complete faith in Him by his works.

If one believes that God wants us to keep His Sabbath then it should be visible to all *by our actions*. Our worshipping on the Sabbath Day proves our belief in the Sabbath Day. See James 2:14-22. Romans 12:3 states that we receive a measure of faith from God. Then we must use that faith and follow it. How can we boast if the gift of faith is from God?

THE CORE OF THE NEW COVENANT IS PUTTING GOD'S LAW INTO OUR HEARTS

God is in the process of changing our hearts. He is building in us a new person which can learn to resist the self-centered carnality that is the core of human nature. Note what Paul further explains in Hebrews 8:8-10:

"v. 8 But God found fault with the people and said: The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Isra-

el and with the people of Judah.

"v. 9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

"v. 10 This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (NIV).

WITHOUT COMPLETE BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING, IT IS EASY TO MISINTERPRET PAUL'S WORDS

II Peter 3:16 states, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

God is placing a heart like His in us via His grace and His faith as a gift. Praise God!

Some who are not called by God try to use Ephesians 2:8-9 to convince themselves that the law is done away so they can pick and choose which laws to obey. Everyone agrees with the law against stealing, but the fourth commandment, not so much. It is easy to misunderstand Paul, especially if you wish to get around obedience to God. Read II Peter 3:15-16. All must learn to *obey* God's laws.

This is not the only day of salvation. The remainder of mankind will be called in the Second Resurrection. They will then have their minds opened to understand the Bible and Paul's message. □

Important Scriptures to study on this subject:

EPHESIANS 2:8-10

GALATIANS 3:21

JAMES 2:16-18

HEBREWS 8:8-11

GALATIANS 2:10-17

GALATIANS 5:22-23

ROMANS 12:3

II PETER 3:15-16

ISLAM and DEMOCRACY

by Garner Ted Armstrong

THERE is simply no way to mix Democracy with Islam, any more than there is a way to mix the Christian religion with Islam. One need only review the history of the spread of Islam in comparison with the wars fought by the United States over the last 100 years in order to understand the vast difference between a democratic society and a militant Islamic one.

While the United States did maintain armed forces in Germany following World War II (as did France, Britain and Russia), and while it is true we still maintain a token contingent there as a contribution to NATO, this is largely a carry-over from the Cold War, and not dictated by current circumstances.

But when and where did the United States seek to establish the CHRISTIAN RELIGION in any defeated country? Troops, yes. Clerics, no. While it is true missionaries from all religions travel all over the world seeking to find converts, this is done

through patient teaching, proselytizing, example, and, often as not, the setting up of humanitarian aid as a part of that example in an effort to win the hearts and minds of people through caring acts.

authority, Mahomet had managed to deeply affect not only the Aus and the Yathribites, but was now seen, by the magnates of Mecca, as a bitter enemy." The same authority says, "Although the transactions with the people of Yath-

From the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself, Islam has been spread at the edge of the sword.

Not so with Islam.

From the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself, Islam has been spread at the edge of the sword. Muhammad (or Mahomet, as the Turks called him) was not a humble carpenter who sought to teach followers by example and reason. Instead, he gathered a force around him which from the beginning supported itself by coercion and armed robbery. *The Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition* says, "By force of personality and claims of divine

rib [Medina, where Mahomet had fled from the Meccans] had been carried on with profound secrecy, the nature of Mahomet's contract with his new adherents was somewhat divulged to the Meccan magnates, and the danger of allowing an implacable enemy to establish himself on the high-road of their northbound caravans flashed upon them. The rule which forbade bloodshed in the sacred city [of Mecca] had at last to be suspended; but elaborate precautions were to be taken

whereby every tribe [except Mahomet's own clan] should have their share of the guilt, which would thus be spread over the whole community fairly. When the committee appointed to perpetrate the crime [they intended putting him to death] reached Mahomet's house, they found that it was too late; Mahomet had already departed, leaving Ali in his bed" (ibid. Vol. 17, p. 404).

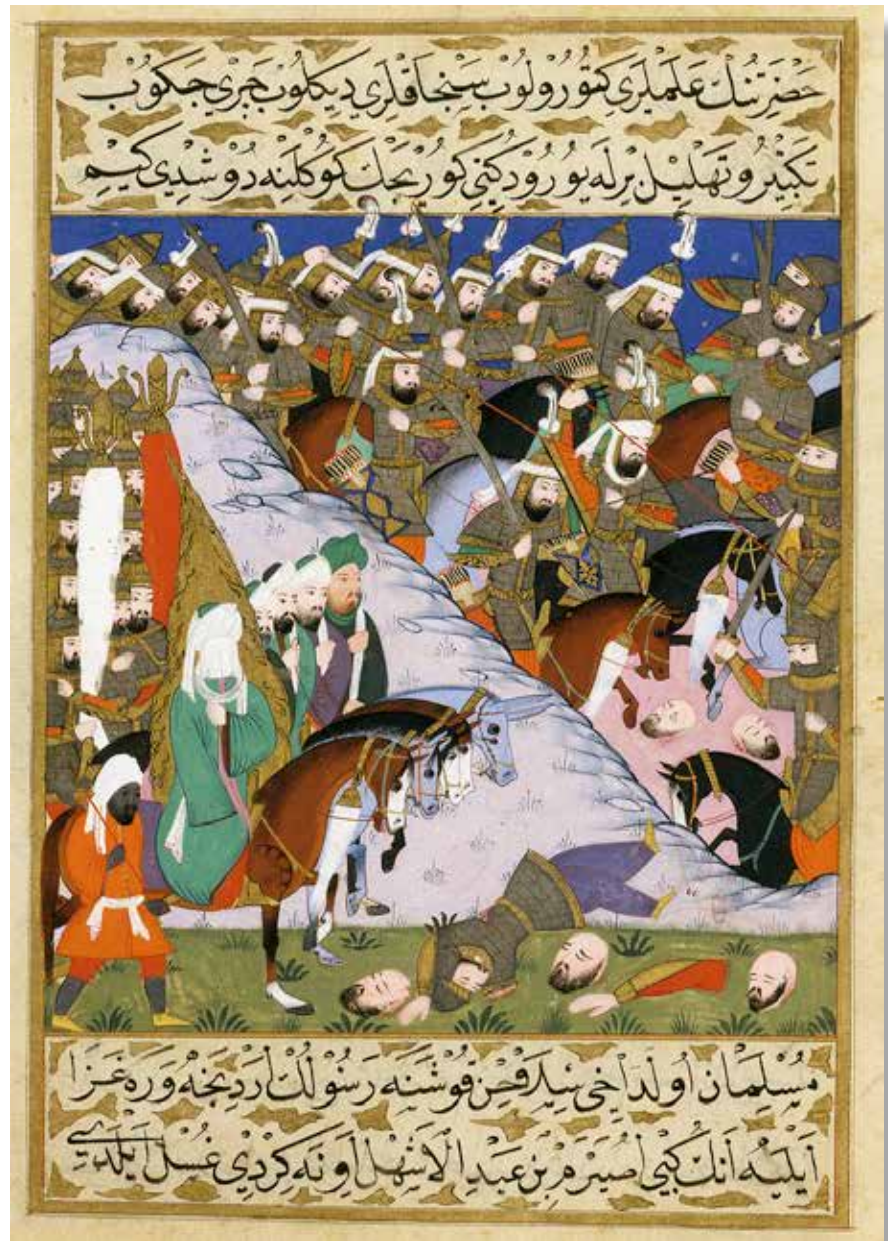
There is substantial literature available concerning Mahomet's raids on caravans, including the name of the very first person to be killed while fighting against a Moslem force. He was one Amr b. al-Hadrami, a member of a caravan attacked by the followers of Mahomet at the beginning of the sacred month of Rajab. Mahomet had decided to take advantage of his professed power to bind and to loose, and so had ordered the attack at a time when raiding was unknown, and the caravans felt safe. A few months later, Mahomet organized a raid against a caravan returning from Syria which had evaded him the previous year. A band of 300 were organized, including a large number of adherents who called themselves "Helpers." The leader of the caravan somehow learned of the impending attack, and so hurried home by forced marches.

Later, a major battle was fought between Meccans and the followers of Mahomet on March 17, 624 A.D. in which Mahomet won a decisive victory which he attributed to divine intervention. He alleged that God had dispatched a regiment of angels to fight on his side, while the devil

confused the Meccans.

The Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition says, "In the narratives which have come down and which seem to be authentic the result is amply accounted for by the excellence of the Moslem discipline and the complete absence of any on the Meccan side. Mahomet himself is said to have fainted at the first sight of blood, and to have remained during the

battle in a hut built for him to which swift camels were tied, to be used in case of a defeat; yet these accounts make him responsible for the tactics, whilst assigning the credit for the strategy to one Hobab b. al-Mondhir. Several of Mahomet's old enemies and friends of Meccans perished on this occasion; notably one Abu Jahl, his uncle...another hostile uncle, Abu Lahab, who is cursed



The Prophet Muhammad and the Muslim Army at the Battle of Uhud, from a 1595 edition of *Siyar-i Nabi*.

in the Koran, was not present but died shortly after the battle” (ibid. Vol. 17, p. 405).

This is an important date in Mohammedan tradition, called “the Day of Deliverance.” The story of supernatural aid for Mahomet soothed the feelings of the defeated Meccans; Mahom-

ca, that the prophet conceived of sending missives to all known sovereigns and potentates, promising them safety if, but only if, they embraced Islam.” Thus it was that Mahomet envisioned eventual world conquest.

The Britannica also says, “The prophet claimed throughout

“... the prophet conceived of sending missives to all known sovereigns and potentates, promising them safety if, but only if, they embraced Islam.”

et gained in popularity and was able to strike at his enemies in Medina. The same authority says, “One of the sequels to the victory was a series of assassinations whereby critics of his actions were removed” (ibid. Vol. 17, p. 405). “Assassin” was originally the name for a secret murderer, and derives from the familiar “Hashish,” an opiate made from the juice of hemp leaves. The “Hashishin” became “Assassin,” which was originally the name of a branch of the Shi’ite Sect, known as “Isma’lites,” founded by Hassan (ibn) Sabah.

Mahomet eventually subdued Mecca, and some years later the entire Arabian Peninsula. This was not done by “missionaries,” but by armed force. His horizons continually expanded. “The conquest of Persia is said to have been contemplated by the prophet as early as A.H. 5, when the famous Trench was being dug, but it was not till the year A.H. 7, on the eve of the taking of Mec-

ca that his revelation confirmed the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and this claim is on the whole reasonable, though his acquaintance with both was in the highest degree vague and inaccurate. Still he reproduced the Old Testament as faithfully as he could, and though he patriotically endeavors to shed some lustre on his supposed ancestor Ishmael, he does not appear to have questioned the Biblical theory according to which the founder of the north Arabian nations was the son of a slave girl...he even allows that Israel was the chosen people” (Ibid. p. 407).

Over the centuries, Islam spread over Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, and into Spain. It spread by force of arms, not patient missionary teaching or humanitarian means. The Islamic Arabs engaged in massive slavery; capturing countless thousands of blacks from Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and other east African regions.

A French slaver named Jean-Vincent Morice, who traded at both Zanzibar and Kilwa, which was the most important slave port on the coast, in the 1770’s gave one of the first indications of Arabs engaged in the slave trade. It was on the 14th of September, 1776, that Morice made a treaty with the Sultan of Kilwa for the annual purchase of at the least 1,000 slaves. In three trips to Zanzibar and Kilwa before signing this treaty, he had bought 2,325 slaves for export. Morice does not tell us how many slaves the Arabs were taking away from the coast each year, but he clearly considered it to be a big business by French standards. It seems reasonable to suggest that at least 2,000 slaves a year were involved in the Arab trade at this time.

Eventually, Islam had conquered the entire Middle East, portions of east Africa, much of north, central, and west Africa. In about 1040, the Seljuks took control of most of Persia, and eventually defeated the Buwayhids (Shi’ite Persians) who had dominated the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad for a century. By 1092 the death of Seljuk Sultan Malik Shah and his great vizier, Nizam al-Mulk resulted in dynastic strife which in turn resulted in the emergence of the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

The Islamic Ottomans conquered the Anatolian Peninsula (modern Turkey), crossed the Bosphorus into European Turkey, and conquered much of the Balkans, all the way to the very gates of Vienna.

To this day, Albania, one of the poorest countries in Europe, remains Islamic.

The point is that history demonstrates Islamic conquerors spread their 6th century religion by force of arms—at the edge of the sword—not by patient missionary work.

The United States has never, repeat never, attempted to force upon conquered peoples any particular religion. Though we defeated Mexico, Spain, Puerto Rico, Grenada and Panama, we did not send Baptist, Methodist, or Episcopal clerics to become involved in government! Catholic countries remained Catholic.

What do you suppose would be happening inside the U.S. if hordes of Islamic soldiers were even now occupying our coun-

try? What does history tell you?

You know as well as I that instead of a sincere attempt at installing vast institutional freedoms such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, the right of peaceful public assembly, the right to own property, freedom of the press and the like, we would be mercilessly subjected to confiscation, looting, robbery, rape, pillaging, imprisonment, torture, and death!

People would be required to proclaim, “There is no God but Allah—and Muhammad is his prophet” at the point of a gun!

Can you imagine the following headlines: “The Baptist Militia are even now present around Washington,” or “The Pentecostal troops are only awaiting orders to attack,” or “The Method-

ist armies are said to be gathering in Virginia”?

When will our government and our country WAKE UP AND REALIZE that the Islamic religion is a MILITANT religion that seeks WORLD DOMINATION?

To be fair, ALL religions see as their ultimate goal the conversion of the entire world to THEIR “faith” or way of life. But MOST seek to advance their cause through patient missionary work. Whether their doctrines are right or wrong, at least their methods are benign.

Not so when one studies the history of the spread of Islam. Never forget that the Bible is a Middle Eastern book; that the prophecies of Christ focus on Jerusalem and its immediate environs! □



A public demonstration calling for Sharia Islamic Law in Maldives, 2014.



California SCREAMING

by John Mitchell

THE Golden State with its beautiful beaches from Malibu to San Diego that gave rise to the surfing culture of “catch a wave” and the body building craze of Venice Beach in Los Angeles. The magnificent mountain ranges of the Sierras beckon people from around the world to first class snow skiing. National parks and campgrounds boast majestic lakes of all types for fishing and boating pleasure. California truly earned the nickname “The Golden State” as people migrated west to work in the fields and orchards of the “breadbasket of the world,” carving out a new life of prosperity for themselves and their families.

Life has been good for California since the gold rush of 1849 when gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill in the foothills east of Sacramento. In fact the phrase “California Dreaming” is the psychological motivation to gain fast wealth or fame in a new land. As a result of the California Gold Rush after 1849, California’s name became indelibly connected with the Gold Rush,

and fast success in a new world became known as the “California Dream.” That dream resulted in wealth generated by industries ranging from oil, seaport facilities, aircraft and defense firms, technology, to the entertainment empires that dominated California’s financial system. The state’s finances operated with resulting surplus balance sheets. California’s schools were first rate, their roads the envy of other states; It’s been a place where the ordinary man or woman could realize the “California Dream,” which reflected the American dream,

through hard work, thrift and desire.

Somewhere along the way that dream has become a nightmare! Yes, California still has its beautiful surfing beaches, mountains, parks and lakes and highways—that is when they are not polluted by an oil spill or mountains of trash along the sides of the freeways or crumbling from years of political neglect to repair the infrastructure.

Crime is an absolute nightmare with gangs dominating the cities; Gangs like Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, a transnation-



al criminal organization dubbed “the most dangerous gang in the world.” The gang was formed in the 80s and has its roots in the fertile gang soil of Los Angeles. “Kill, rape, control” is the motto of MS-13, who actively recruits elementary school students in the inner cities. And it is only one of many, many similar gangs freely operating within California’s borders. So much for safety in the Golden State!

It’s difficult to believe now, but there was a time—through the eras of flower children, bell bottoms and disco—when the Golden State was widely seen as the gold standard on education spending. Class sizes were low, schools were well maintained. Textbooks and other instructional materials were new. Back then, California ranked in the top 10 nationwide in per pupil education spending.

The abundance made an impression on Michael Kirst, now the president of the California State Board of Education, when he moved to California from Virginia in 1969. “There was free summer school for every kid that wanted it,” he said. “I’d never heard of such a thing.” A multitude of factors have caused California’s relative standing in school spending to sink like a gold coin in a swimming pool.

The state now ranks 35th in per pupil spending, according to the latest figures from the US Census Bureau. Factor in cost-of-living considerations and California’s place in the pecking order among all 50 states and the Dis-

trict of Columbia is a dismal 49. That’s ahead of only Nevada and Utah, according to a widely cited annual January report by Education Week. (Per-pupil spending figures from Education Week include state and local funds, but not federal money, or funds for capital improvements. Census

figures include federal dollars but also exclude capital outlay.) However, California’s teachers are the fifth highest paid in the nation, says the National Education Association. (*Los Angeles Daily News—California Education Spending: 49th In the Nation, July 27, 2014*)

In 2014, the Los Angeles Unified School District announced a spectacular improvement in its graduation rate: Fully 77% of students who had come in as 9th graders four years earlier were now going to graduate as seniors. But there was a bit of a trick behind the number: It included only students who attended what are called “comprehensive” high schools. Those who had been transferred to alternative programs, the students most at risk of dropping out, weren’t counted. If they had been factored in, the rate would have been 67%, still good, but not nearly as flashy a number. Here’s another example of a misleading number: In May

of this year, the California Department of Education reported a rise in the statewide graduation rate, to 82%. But one reason for that was the cancellation of the high school exit exam, which used to be required for graduation and which students could pass only if they had attained a modicum

Somewhere along the way the "California Dream" has become a nightmare!

of understanding of algebra and English skills (*Los Angeles Daily News—In the search for better graduation rates, schools are fudging the numbers, Monday, February 20, 2017*). So much for the first rate schools California once enjoyed!

One of the reasons the citizens of the Golden State are not enjoying their upward progress is the onerous tax regulations imposed on them. California has among the highest taxes in the nation. For instance, the Property tax: 0.81% average effective rate. Gas tax: 45.39 cents per gallon. Its base sales tax rate of 7.5% is higher than that of any other state, and its top marginal income tax rate of 13.3% is the highest state income tax rate in the country. California Household Income according to the Census ACS 1-year survey, the median household income for California was \$64,500 in 2015, the latest figures available. Compared to the median US household income, Califor-

nia median household income is \$8,725 higher. 2016 Census ACS data (including 2016 California household income numbers) will be released in September of 2017. Annual income needed to cover all basic household expenses in CA (before taxes) for two adults with three children is \$77,497.00

receive a benefits package worth \$30,828 per year. Using a similar measure, Cato found that benefits in Europe ranged from \$38,588 per year in Denmark to just \$1,112 in Romania. The California benefits package is higher than in well-known welfare states as France (\$17,324), Ger-

ter than work, people on welfare will be less likely to work (*The Orange County Register—California More Of A Welfare State Than Most Countries In Europe, August 29, 2015*).

On the illegal alien amnesty policy front, California gives immigrants here illegally unprecedented rights, benefits, protections like no other state.

It started with in-state tuition. Now driver's licenses have new rules designed to limit deportations and state-funded healthcare for children. Next came a new law which would erase the word "alien" from California's labor code. Together, these piecemeal measures have taken on a significance greater than their individual parts; a fundamental shift in the relationship between California and its residents who live in the country illegally.

The various benefits, rights and protections add up to something experts liken to a kind of California citizenship. The changes have occurred with relatively little political rancor as Democratic lawmakers and immigration activists, with diminishing opposition from the GOP, continue to seek new laws and protections. These measures include cracking down on employers withholding pay from low-wage workers and expanding state-subsidized healthcare to adult immigrants without papers.

What is emerging is called "the California package"—an array of policies that touch on nearly every aspect of immigrant life, from healthcare to higher ed-

People (on welfare) would see little tangible improvement in their standard of living by taking up a job, working more hours or moving up the job ladder.

(the *Living Wage Calculator* created by Amy K. Glasmeier).

That is \$77,497.00 each adult for a total of \$154,994.00 (before taxes). Factor in the tax structure of California and one sees the reason the good people of the state are not making financial progress; they are actually regressing, and they are angry for good reason. So much for the fine incomes California families once depended on!

And then there is the social welfare, and illegal alien amnesty policy of California's government in Sacramento, the state's capital. On the social welfare front, in California a mother with two children under the age of 5 who participates in these major welfare programs – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), housing assistance, home energy assistance, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children – would

many (\$23,257) and even Sweden (\$22,111). In fact, California's welfare system can be more generous than every country included, except Denmark. Moreover, this benefit package doesn't include Medicaid, which would be worth roughly \$4,459 for this household. This brings the example's total to \$35,287.00 annually.

One of the problems with these welfare systems is that they can create situations where participants have little incentive to increase work effort because they would lose most of their earnings through lower benefits or higher taxes, while also having to bear the costs, like transportation, associated with going to work. These people would see little tangible improvement in their standard of living by taking up a job, working more hours or moving up the job ladder. People in these programs are not lazy, but they also are not stupid. Like everyone else, they respond to incentives. If welfare pays bet-



ucation to protection from federal immigration enforcement agencies. All the while the crimes committed by these illegal aliens continues to soar; the government, headed by Governor Jerry “Moonbeam” Brown, looks the other way and offers the cities of California to become “Sanctuary Cities” to shield the illegals from deportation out of the country. So much for the rights of natural California citizens!

“California Dreaming” is the long ago dream that built the state, but is now fading into only a memory of what once was “The Golden State.” Now it has become “California Screaming.” Some citizens are banding into movements to actually secede from California proper and establish the “State of Jefferson” in the Northern California area; While southern California dissidents along with San Francisco and Silicon Valley liberals are push-

ing for the entire state to secede from the United States and establish “The California Republic,” a nation of its own. Each has its own reason for doing so and each is the exact opposite of the other.

When you come to a nondescript gas station in the northern California town of Redding, you notice the first sign of the break-away movement: a rack of forest-green sweatshirts bearing a yellow seal marked with a bold black double X. It’s the seal of the “State of Jefferson,” an idea that dates back more than 70 years and is currently being revived by a passionate group of separatists. They are pushing to split from the Golden State and form a new state roughly the size of North Carolina, but with one-fifth of the population. It’s a move that would require approval from both the California Legislature and the US Congress.

There have been more than 200 proposals for the secession of California over the state's history. The last instance of secession in the United States happened in 1861, when 11 states left the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. These states returned to the Union in 1865 after the Confederacy was defeated in the American Civil War.

The Supreme Court decided in *Texas v. White* in 1869 that no state had the right to unilaterally

leave the Union. Secession would thus require the approval of 38 state legislatures and two-thirds majorities in both the US House of Representatives and Senate to pass a Constitutional amendment, as the Constitution provides no mechanism for state secession. Analysts consider California's secession improbable.

The fight to create Jefferson is the longest of long shots, a Hail Mary pass made by folks who are sick of being underrepresented in the state legislature and ignored by California’s urban centers. Cut off from the seats of power by geography, alienated by the state’s left-leaning politics and tendency toward regulation, enduring stubbornly high unemployment, facing the decimation of traditional industries such as logging, and harboring few prospects for economic growth. These disaffected citizens, overwhelmingly white and mostly conservative, share many of the concerns about central state overreach as the militia members who recently took control of a wildlife refuge in Oregon. They, however, are committed to a political solution rather than an armed rebellion.

Meanwhile, on the liberal side is a group known as Yes California. Yes California is collecting the 585,407 signatures necessary to place a secessionist question on the 2018 ballot. Its goal is to





have California become its own country, separate and apart from the United States.

Their recruiting pitch goes something like this: California, the most populous state with nearly 40 million residents, subsidizes other states at a loss, is burdened by a national trade system, doesn't get a fair say in presidential elections, is diverse and disagrees with much of the rest of the country on immigration, is far ahead of other states on environmental policy and, for the most part, is diametrically opposed to newly inaugurated President Trump's positions. Therefore, the argument goes, conditions are perfect for the Golden State to secede.

In the words of one of their most staunch advocates, Sue Hirsch, 46, said she is "ashamed to be an American" in the wake of the presidential election. "I want to be no longer American, but Californian," said Hirsch, who voted for Hillary Clinton and said she has at least seven professions, including psychic, Uber

driver and hypno-transformative masseuse. "I hate what the rest of America has become."

"California is different from America," said Marcus Ruiz Evans, one of the movement's co-founders. "California is hated. It's not liked. It's seen as weird."

Threats to secede from the United States have been a part of American politics almost since the nation was founded. The most serious attempt came before and during the Civil War, when 11 Southern states left to form the Confederacy. All came back into

statehood following the war's end.

Another hurdle would be the US Constitution, which does not provide for state secession. The ardent backers and fervent—at times screaming—rhetoric of each side will continue without either getting their way. It's been over 150 years since secession was taken off the table by Uncle Sam and the only state that kept its options open was NOT California. Much to the chagrin of the supporters of "The State of Jefferson" and "The California Republic." That prize goes to Texas. So much for the secession movements in California!

As far as still being "The Golden State," Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers hit song of a few years ago put it well: "All the gold in California is in a bank in the middle of Beverly Hills in somebody else's name. So if you're dreaming about California, it don't matter at all where you've played before; California's a brand new game." □



Germany Downplayed Threat of Jihadists Posing as Migrants

by Soeren Kern, with permission by Gatestone Institute

- More than 400 migrants who entered Germany as asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 are being investigated for links to Islamic terrorism, according to the Federal Criminal Police.
- The German experience with jihadists posing as migrants serves as a case study on errors for other countries to avoid. German authorities allowed hundreds of thousands of migrants, many lacking documentation, to enter Germany without a security check. German authorities admitted they lost track of some 130,000 migrants who entered the country in 2015.
- German authorities knew in early 2015 that Walid Salihi, an 18-year-old Syrian who applied for asylum in Germany in 2014, was recruiting for the Islamic State at his asylum shelter in Recklinghausen, but they did nothing.
- Anis Amri, the Tunisian jihadist who attacked the Christmas market in Berlin, used at least 14 different identities, which he used to obtain social welfare benefits under different names in different municipalities.
- "We have probably forgotten to take into account what political opponents such as the Islamic State are capable of doing and how they think." — Rudolf van Hüllen, political scientist.

GERMAN political leaders and national security officials knew that Islamic State jihadists were entering Europe disguised as migrants but repeatedly downplayed the threat, apparently to avoid fueling anti-immigration sentiments, according to an exposé by German public television.

German officials knew as early as March 2015 — some six months before Chancellor Angela Merkel opened German borders to more than a million migrants from the Muslim world — that jihadists were posing as refugees, according to the Munich Report (Report München), an investigative journalism program broad-

cast by ARD public television on January 17.

More than 400 migrants who entered Germany as asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 are now being investigated for links to Islamic terrorism, according to the Federal Criminal Police (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA).

The revelations come amid

criticism of U.S. President Donald J. Trump's plans to suspend immigration from select countries until mechanisms are in place to properly vet migrants entering the United States. The German experience with jihadists posing as migrants serves as a case study on errors for other countries to avoid.

Based on leaked documents and interviews with informants, the Munich Report revealed that German authorities knew in early 2015 that Walid Salihi, an 18-year-old Syrian who applied for asylum in Germany in 2014, was recruiting for the Islamic State at his asylum shelter in Recklinghausen, but they did nothing. Some six months later, a search of Salihi's accommodation produced a shotgun. Salihi

was not deported.

It later emerged that between 2011 and 2015, Salihi had used seven aliases to apply for asylum not only in Germany, but also in Austria, Italy, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland. He had also been charged in several countries with a laundry list of crimes, including physical assault, robbery and weapons offenses.

In February 2014, for example, Salihi was arrested for sexually assaulting women at a discotheque in Cologne. That same month, he physically assaulted a homeless man, attacked a random passerby and attempted to strangle a fellow resident at his asylum shelter. Police later traced his cellphone to downtown Cologne on December 31, 2015, when hundreds of German

women were sexually assaulted by mobs of Muslim migrants.

On January 7, 2016, Salihi stormed a police station in the 18th district of Paris while shouting "Allahu Akbar." He was carrying a butcher knife, an Islamic State flag and was wearing what appeared to be an explosive belt. Police opened fire and shot him dead.

A former roommate described Salihi: "He was very aggressive, especially when it came to religion. To him, all unbelievers were worthless and had to die."

Salihi was not an isolated case. According to the Munich Report, in early 2015 American intelligence agencies warned German authorities that Islamic State jihadists posing as migrants were making their way through



On July 19, 2016, a 17-year-old Afghan asylum seeker seriously injured five people on a train in Germany, while shouting "Allahu Akbar." He is shown at left in an Islamic State video saying, "In the name of Allah, I am a soldier of the Caliphate and am launching a martyrdom operation in Germany... I will slaughter you in your own homes and in the streets." Right: The attacker's body is removed from the place where police shot him, after he charged at them with the axe.

southern Europe with the aim of reaching Germany.

The warnings, however, were ignored, and in the summer of 2015, German authorities allowed hundreds of thousands of migrants, many lacking documentation, to enter Germany without a security check.

At the time, leading German security experts insisted that the Islamic State would not send jihadists to Europe. In October 2015, for example, Holger Münch, President of the Federal Criminal Police (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA), said: "We do not have a single case yet in which it has been confirmed that members of a terrorist group from Syria or Iraq have come here to Germany specifically to commit attacks."

Münch also said: "If you look at the risks you face by coming to Germany via the Mediterranean Sea, I think there are simpler ways to get here if you plan to do so, and you do not need a stream of refugees."

Gerhard Schindler, President of the Federal Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst) said: "It is unlikely that terrorists will use the dangerous boat route across the Mediterranean to get to Europe."

German political scientist Peter Neumann, who is Director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence at King's College in London, said:

"There is not a single shred of evidence, proven evidence, that an Islamic State sympathizer has been smuggled to Europe. There

is even less evidence that this has been an active strategy of the Islamic State. It is important that politicians do not express their own opinions and strengthen the public's fears."

Neumann also said:

"In recent weeks there have been a series of Islamic State videos in which it was quite clearly stated that supporters of the Is-

edly received military training from the Islamic State.

▪February 5. Hans-Georg Maassen, the head of Germany's BfV domestic intelligence agency, revealed that more than 100 Islamic State fighters may be living in Germany as refugees, some of whom are known to have entered the country with fake or stolen passports.

Islamic State jihadists, the majority of whom entered Europe by posing as migrants, carried out the coordinated Paris attacks in which 137 people died and nearly 400 were injured.

lamic State should remain in the Islamic State and that they should not try to emigrate, and that this active infiltration strategy, about which is sometimes reported, is non-existent."

Less than a month later, on November 13, 2015, Islamic State jihadists, the majority of whom entered Europe by posing as migrants, carried out the coordinated Paris attacks in which 137 people died and nearly 400 were injured.

In 2016, the true scale of the German problem of jihadists posing as migrants began to come into focus:

▪February 4. German police arrested four members of a cell allegedly planning jihadist attacks in Berlin. The ringleader — a 35-year-old Algerian who was staying at a refugee shelter in Attendorn with his wife and two children — posed as an asylum seeker from Syria. He had report-

▪February 8. German police arrested an alleged Islamic State commander, living at a refugee shelter in Sankt Johann. The 32-year-old jihadist, posing as a Syrian asylum seeker, entered Germany in the fall of 2015.

▪February 29. German authorities admitted they lost track of some 130,000 migrants who entered the country in 2015. The revelation raised concerns that unaccounted migrants could include jihadists who entered the country posing as refugees.

▪June 2. German police arrested three suspected Islamic State members from Syria on suspicion of preparing an attack in Düsseldorf.

▪June 3. The head of the German police union, Rainer Wendt, said that budget cuts in the public sector made it impossible to vet all of the migrants coming into Germany. He was responding to demands that all

migrants undergo immediate security checks.

▪July 19. A 17-year-old Afghan asylum seeker brandishing an axe and shouting "Allahu Akbar" seriously injured five people on a train in Würzburg. The assailant was shot dead by police after he charged at them with the axe. The teenager had been placed with a foster family just two weeks before the attack as a reward for being "well integrated."

▪July 24. Mohammed Daleel, a 27-year-old migrant from Syria whose asylum application was rejected, injured 15 people when he blew himself up at a concert in Ansbach. The suicide bombing was the first in Germany attributed to the Islamic State.

▪July 25. The Federal Criminal Police revealed that more than 400 migrants who entered Germany as asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 were being investigated for links to the Islamic State.

▪September 13. German police arrested three Syrian jihadists in Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony. Prosecutors said the three came to Germany

in November 2015 posing as migrants and with the intention of "carrying out a previously determined order from Islamic State or to await further instructions."

▪September 17. Bavarian Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann accused the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) of failing to root out potentially tens of thousands of fake passports. Many migrants who entered Europe as Syrians are, in fact, from another country of origin. Almost 40% of all Moroccans who entered Greece falsely represented themselves as Syrians, according to one study.

▪October 10. The BAMF knowingly allowed more than 2,000 asylum seekers with fake passports to enter Germany.

▪October 27. Public prosecutors charged Shaas Al-M, a 19-year-old Syrian jihadist who arrived in Germany posing as a refugee, with plotting to bomb popular tourist sites in Berlin, including the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag, for the Islamic State.

▪December 19. At least 12 people were killed and dozens injured after a truck rammed into a Christmas market in Berlin. The

main suspect in the attack was Anis Amri, a 23-year-old migrant from Tunisia who arrived in Germany in July 2015 and applied for asylum in April 2016. Although Amri's application for asylum was rejected in June 2016, he was not deported because he did not have a valid passport.

On January 5, 2017, it emerged that Amri used at least 14 different identities, which he used to obtain social welfare benefits under different names in different municipalities.

German political scientist Rudolf van Hüllen concluded:

"We have probably forgotten to take into account what political opponents such as the Islamic State are capable of doing and how they think. We have not tried to understand their mentality, and therefore we have overlooked the fact that for the Islamic State it was an obvious option to use the safe refugee routes. This is a quite logical matter."

Soeren Kern is a Senior Fellow at the New York-based Gatestone Institute. He is also Senior Fellow for European Politics at the Madrid-based Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos / Strategic Studies Group. Follow him on Facebook and on Twitter.

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RELIGIOUS LIBERTY REDEFINED

by Mark Armstrong

RELIGIOUS liberty in the United States used to mean that the government couldn't interfere in the beliefs or actions of people's conduct of their own lives, providing that they weren't violating established laws or the rights of other citizens. There was certainly no thought that the state could compel citizens to activity in violation of Biblical tenets, period. That was then, before every agency of government was the arbiter of fairness and equality, applied to foreigners as well as citizens.

It was also prior to the time that the State required us to pay for "health insurance" policies that include sex change operations, abortions and a host of services inapplicable to pretty much everybody with any traditional belief system considered religious.

As every American knows, it is a mandate, required of every citizen. As for the hordes of foreigners thrust into our midst, they needn't worry too much about the government's mandate. They're all on the receiving end of it anyway. But, as all we American citizens know, the fine—or is it a tax—extracted from those of us who refuse to participate, also pays for all manner of elective nonsense, including various psy-

chological therapies so much in demand post election.

Now, according to some of the lawsuits raining down on the new administration from organizations funded by George Soros, "religious liberty" now means that people wanting to enter the country, even from nations that have transformed into sprawling terrorist training centers, have a Constitutional "right" to come into the United States at the expense of citizens who've been robbed of their own rights and liberties by the government. It doesn't matter if their form of religion demands our transformation to the tenets of Islam, or the necessity that they give their lives to wipe out as many infidels as possible. It doesn't even matter if they hold Sharia (Muslim

religious law) to be a higher authority than the Constitution that has been convoluted by activist judges to force them upon us.

Holding Sharia dear means they may very well practice brutal female mutilation and believe fervently in their right to carry out "honor killings." Some of the most western-oriented, civilized Muslims living in the west do, in fact, hold open the possibility of "honor killing" for any female that "dishonors" the family. And it doesn't take much, by American standards, for that possibility to be triggered. If, for example, a girl or woman dares go out of the home escorted by someone other than a mother, father or brother, that could do it. If she's escorted by a male, not from her own family, or seen to be flirtatious in



Continued next page

public, chances are she's as good as dead.

A recent documentary showing the relatively mild circumstances under which Muslim men serve time in Israeli prisons, pointed out that the majority were incarcerated for having carried out honor killings, whether on a sister or daughter. There's literal-

if not by violence, which is why anti-American George Soros is financing legal battles against the Trump administration.

Incredibly, U. S. policy over recent years has not only given them the "right" to stay in the United States at the expense of others who work for a living, but to bring in their extended fam-

they start planning to come to the United States? That's what we're dealing with now, and there may be enough Federal judges subsumed in the "sanctuary" policies of places like Seattle or San Francisco to saddle the entire nation with their lunacy and whatever mayhem it causes.

President Trump has promised that religious liberty, of the variety guaranteed Constitutionally, will be restored to the American citizenry. Presumably, we won't have to pay for elective surgeries for the mentally deranged at some point in the future. For now, however, we do.

But our "religious liberty" has been, at least for the time being, transferred to those who would see us all convert to Islam or die. The unelected judges of the Ninth Circuit Court have spoken. We were told we'd be winning so often we'd tire of it. But Americans aren't winning. The election is over, the transition has taken place, and the nation is still hostage to unjust judges determined to force their own version of righteousness, along with untold thousands of hateful practitioners of a heathen religion, upon us all.

It's beginning to look as though the courts will not stand for a return to anything approaching American tradition. Religious liberty? Thanks to some very evil forces, it now belongs to those who don't even believe in the concept. If this doesn't represent a Constitutional crisis, we're going to hate to see what does. □

Where did the idea originate that every foreigner on Earth has American Constitutional protections the minute they arrive in the United States?

ly no cultural shame attached to such an act. In fact it is respected by other family members and the community at large. The way they look at it, the girl had it coming and the family had no choice.

Amazing as it may seem, those who despise the United States, its founders and Constitution are able, with the cooperation of unjust judges, to contort our own laws to the point that the most virulent enemies from around the world must be admitted and supported by citizens the Constitution was designed to protect.

The activist judges, relying on their own twisted logic, expect that the new arrivals will be voting eventually, and it is well-known that refugees and immigrants vote for government handouts and open borders. The heathen zealots being forced upon middle America contribute to the destruction of the United States, socially and economically

ilies. Once the brothers, sisters and cousins are in the United States, they can begin bringing in their extended families. Domestic policies are actually assisting them in their goal to eventually overwhelm the indigenous population. One look at the fearful, crime-ridden situation in Europe will show you exactly where this is headed.

Oddly enough, the liberal judge from Seattle who issued the emergency stay on immigration orders banning travelers from terrorist regions is himself involved in "refugee resettlement," and spouts bogus Black Lives Matter rhetoric in his court. How is it that Federal judges with all the reasoning ability of a protest mob, have the unilateral power to imperil the nation's security?

Where did the idea originate that every foreigner on earth has American Constitutional protections the minute they arrive, or for that matter, from the time

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

FAVORS NATIONALISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM

The Kairos Palestine Document and Alternative Tourism

by Petra Heldt, reprinted with permission by Gatestone Institute

- The immediate two aims of the Kairos Document are: 1) to boycott Israel and the Jewish historical connection to the Land of Israel; 2) to neutralize the support of Christian Zionists and any other Christians for Israel.
- The World Council of Churches (WCC) Secretariat targets Israel's tourist industry and aspires to re-direct pilgrims from Israel to the Palestinian area, and to guide pilgrims from having a positive outlook on Israel to having negative reactions to the Jewish State.
- Many faithful Christians, including a good portion of the fine Lutheran Church of Hannover, are hardly aware of the degree of deception employed by the WCC Secretariat. They would be scandalized to know that they were being used for the Secretariat's scheme of nationalism and anti-Semitism.

THE Christian faith is known for holding aspects of the divine commitment to the Jewish people by seven biblical covenants: six unconditional ones with Abraham (Gen 12, 1-3), the Land (Gen 12, 1), the Levites (Num 25, 10-13), David (2 Sam 7, 10-16), Israel and Judah (Jer 31, 31-34), Jerusalem (Ez 16), and one conditional one at Sinai (Ex 19, 5). Those commitments are preceded by the universal covenant with the whole creation (Gen 9, 12-17). Many attempts which try to re-draw that celestial union of universality-cum-Israel-particularity fall, unswervingly, into the trap of nationalism and anti-Semitism.

Two recent divine-restructuring efforts of that kind count the Christians in Nazi-Germany and some Palestinian Christians.

The former attempt ended in the Holocaust; the latter is now sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC) through two major engines, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme to Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), and the Kairos Palestine Document with its spin-off, "Alternative Tourism." These two programs are of interest here.

1. THE KAIROS PALESTINE DOCUMENT

In December 2009, a Bethlehem panel chaired by the retired former Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah, launched the Kairos Document. The WCC Secretariat swiftly spread the paper among Protestant churches worldwide, calling for a program of boycotts, divestment and delegitimization directed at the State

of Israel.

In April 2010, Malcolm Lowe wrote the seminal article "The Palestinian Kairos Document: A Behind-the-Scenes Analysis," published by the New English Review. Lowe's careful study exposes a number of deceptions behind the Kairos Document. Seven of those pretenses are mentioned here.

Deception 1: Israel is an Apartheid-State.

The Case: The document's name alludes to the name of a statement issued in South Africa in 1985.[1] That allusion is meant to deliberately compare Israel with the regime of apartheid.

The Fact: Israel is no apartheid state. Israel is a thriving democracy, with huge numbers of non-Jews fully integrated at all levels of Israeli society.

Deception 2: The Jerusalem heads of Churches support Kairos.

The Case: Of the sixteen signatories, only one acting Church head signed the paper, namely Munib Younan, Bishop of a tiny Arab Lutheran Church. The other signatories are Palestinian activists, like Lutheran parish priest Mitri Raheb and retired Anglican clergy Naim Ateek; low level officials; and laypeople. Younan, fearing the loss of Israeli privileges, withdrew his signature. For pastoral reasons, the Jerusalem Church heads released a brief statement upholding the Christian faith. Deceitfully, this communiqué was prefaced to the Kairos Document.

The Fact: The Jerusalem heads of Churches do not endorse Kairos. Jerusalem Church

leaders, save one, uphold the Christian faith.

Deception 3: 'Without occupation - no resistance' (Kairos 1:4).

The Case: The Kairos authors and the WCC Secretariat know that Sabbah's claim, "no occupation - no resistance," is wrong. They are familiar with the fact that organizations like Hamas, which have mass support among the Palestinian population, continue the "resistance" as long as the State of Israel exists. The same false message is repeated later in the document (4:3), where terrorism is placed in quotation marks, that is, when it is named as such at all.

The Fact: For Kairos, terror against the State of Israel goes on as long as there is a State of Israel.

Deception 4: Christian sympathy for Israel is a sign of Christian fundamentalism (Kairos 2:2.2).

The Case: Kairos represents Ateek's heresy as if God, being only "good and just," sides with the oppressed, namely the Palestinian people (Kairos 2:2.2). It opposes the biblical Christian belief in God's faithfulness to His people Israel and delegitimizes faithful theology as biblical fundamentalism.

The Fact: Christians on the side of Israel are theologically sound and lawful.

Deception 5: The State of Israel is a biblically-fueled holy-war-monger (Kairos 2:5).

The Case: Kairos endorses Ateek's ideology and asserts that "the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a sin against God



Rifat Odeh Kassis, co-author and general coordinator of the Kairos Palestine initiative, is pictured above giving an interview to Al-Manar TV, the official TV channel of Lebanon's Hezbollah terrorist organization. (Photo source: Kairos Palestine)

and humanity," and concludes that Israel's politics are based on biblical concepts (Kairos 2:5). The authors know that Israel does not subscribe to such a theology, but that the political theology of Hamas indeed calls for violence and holy war in the name of their god.

The Fact: Israel's policy is based on patterns of political thought.

Deception 6: Kairos supports the two-state-solution.

The Case: Ateek's organization Sabeel and Kairos promote worldwide the view that the "two-state solution" is not viable, that "justice" will be achieved only when the State of Israel disappears into a single bi-national state with an Arab majority. Nowhere in the document does the term "two states" occur. The authors want to see a single state embracing Muslims, Jews and Christians alike (Kairos 9:3).

The Fact: Kairos supports the elimination of the Jewish State of Israel.

Deception 7: Kairos facilitates a boycott of merely products from Judea and Samaria.

The Case: The document's Section 7 is "A Word to the International Community," which calls for a "boycott of everything produced by the occupation" (cf. section 2).

The Fact: Kairos promotes a boycott of the State of Israel.

Conclusion: The immediate two aims of the Kairos Document are: 1) to boycott Israel and the Jewish historical connection to the Land of Israel; 2) to neutral-

ize the support of Christian Zionists and any other Christians for Israel.

2. ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

Following the two aims of Kairos, the WCC Secretariat targets Israel's tourist industry and aspires to re-direct pilgrims from Israel to the Palestinian area, and to guide pilgrims from having a positive outlook on Israel to hav-

For Kairos, terror against the State of Israel goes on as long as there is a State of Israel.

ing negative reactions to the Jewish State. Since 2010, three stages of "Alternative Tourism" are developing.

(1) In 2010, the WCC Secretariat published tourist guidelines under the title, "Come and See: A Call from Palestinian Christians - A Journey for Peace with Justice. Guidelines for Christians Contemplating a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land."

Pretending to be the voice of Palestinian Christians, a group of hand-picked 27 theologians from 14 countries, including Palestinian activists, called on Christian pilgrims "to live their faith when visiting the Holy Land by showing concern for the Palestinian people whose lives are severely constricted by the Israeli occupation of their land." The meeting was organized by the Palestinian NGO Alternative Tourism Group (ATG), in cooperation with three

WCC bodies: Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), the Kairos Document, and the Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF).

The Guidelines' "Code of Conduct for Travelers to the Holy Land" derives directly from the Palestinian Initiative for Responsible Tourism, which had asked for Pontifical endorsement on 6 May 2009. The Guidelines pres-

ent a full description of pilgrimages, including lists of sites, hotels, guides, buses, books, shops, restaurants, all Palestinian-only, ending with a code of conduct in that Moslem society.

(2) In 2013, the WCC Assembly in Busan, South Korea, launched the program Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP). In July 2014, the WCC Central Committee recommended PJP to 347 churches in 110 countries. At the fifth anniversary of Kairos, in Bethlehem December 2014, the WCC affirmed its Kairos policy and its connection with PJP:

"We [the pilgrims] commit ourselves to accompanying Palestinian Christians in fellowship of the World Council of Churches in the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace."

Despite its verbose 2013 portrayal, loaded with WCC theological verbiage, PJP's polit-

ical intent is clear: to foster the two immediate aims of Kairos, namely to annihilate Israel's connection to its historic land and to obliterate Christian relations to Israel. The Lutheran Church in Jerusalem employs PJP as a means to introduce pilgrims and volunteers to the "Holy Land."

(3) In time for the fifth Kairos anniversary in December 2014, the German Evangelical "Bread for the World" (BFW) and the German Catholic organization "Misereor" jointly issued a German rendition of the 2010 WCC pilgrim guidelines "Come and See" (as Kommt und Seht). The German brochure follows, for the most part line by line the English template, but fails to credit the original source. The German text also carefully obfuscates any reference to Kairos. Kommt und Seht is prefaced, deceitfully, as a brochure worked out by Tourism Watch, in cooperation with the

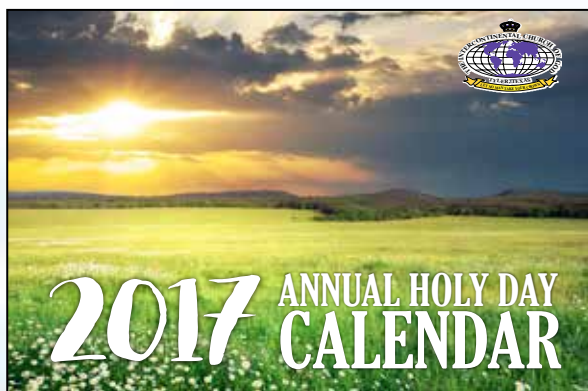
Joint Initiative Humanitarian Human Rights Near East, by Misereor and Bread for the World. Two editors are mentioned: Bread for the World and Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.

Both organizations have been major WCC funders. According to NGO Monitor, BFW in 2013 transferred 2,248,975 Swiss Francs; in 2014: 5,509,859 SF. EED in 2013 transferred 3,604,134 SF.

While Kairos and its tourist spin-offs work toward boycott, divestment and sanctions against both the State of Israel and the biblical Christian faith, kind bishops emeriti provide well-intended pious lectures on the importance of devout pilgrimages, with reference to PJP, as announced by the WCC website. The same website refers to the synod of the Lutheran Church of Hannover,

Germany, when in November 2016, under the leadership of a former bishop, the Church synod will discuss the endorsement of the PJP program. In tandem with PJP comes the endorsement of Kairos. That scheme looks like another attempt connected to the Kairos Palestine Solidarity Network (KPSN), Germany, which in December 2014 still complained about the poor response Kairos had received from the Evangelical German Church. For sure, many faithful Christians, including a good portion of the fine Lutheran Church of Hannover, are hardly aware of the degree of deception employed by the WCC Secretariat. They would be scandalized to know that they were being used for the Secretariat's scheme of nationalism and anti-Semitism. □

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SABBATH
						1
2 ^o	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 ^o	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 ^o	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 ^o	26	27	28	29
30						

HANANIAH

THE LYING PROPHET

by Jim Josephsen

Not unlike what occurred in the ancient nation of Judah some 2,600 years ago, so it is happening in the United States today. A type of Hananiah, the lying prophet, is alive and well, dispersing deceit throughout a beleaguered and apprehensive, seemingly dystopian nation.

THE Word of God, which we call the Christian Bible, contains many profound lessons and enduring principles, which if heeded and regarded as inspired revelation from God, are lifesaving. Not just lifesaving from the perspective of salvation and eternal life but lifesaving in that these lessons will preserve us as we live life in the flesh. In every respect, lessons that could very well keep us safe during the tribulation soon to come.

Over a third of the Bible is prophecy, written about events that are yet to occur. Many of the prophets' utterances written back then became reality at the time or shortly after to the generation, nations, and peoples at whom they were directed. However, the majority of Biblical prophecy was written for the "end time,"

or as the Scriptures call it, the "time of the end," the "latter days" or "last days"; the time revealed as occurring just before the return of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God. Most of the prophecies in the Bible will be fulfilled and are a record of events that will occur in the years just ahead.

Jeremiah 28 reveals an event that we should deeply consider. There are certain attitudes of the heart that are constant, unless one becomes converted. As God sees it, "The heart is the most deceitful thing there is and desperately wicked. No one can really know how bad it is. Only God knows! He searches all hearts and examines the deepest motives so He can give each person his right reward, according to his deeds—how he has lived" (Jere-

miah 17:9-10, *The Living Bible*). Jesus Christ revealed more when He taught, "But evil words come from an evil heart and defile the man who says them. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, lying, slander" (Matthew 15:18-19).

When God said, "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21), He knew what He was talking about. When the Apostle Paul stated, "The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the laws of God" (Romans 8:7), that was and is a statement of fact.

Those who oppose God's truth, who are not subject to His will, do not want God interfering in their lives. They give witness to the fact they believe themselves to be smarter than

Continued next page

God or they simply do not trust God. That is if they even believe in God. From their hearts, their motives are revealed. Whether articulated from ignorance of the truth or in conscious resistance to the truth, they reveal their heart's intent.

Opposition to the truth of God and His true prophecies has long existed and has always bur-

of God's true servants. Displaying opposition to the truth of God was clearly evident in the actions of Hananiah, the lying prophet. The lessons provided from this historical event, preserved for us today, bears circumspection and careful consideration.

Jeremiah, a called, certified and faithful, true prophet of the Living God of Israel, prophesied

ject lesson, visible to the leadership at that time, Jeremiah used a wooden yoke, much like what you would see placed around the neck of oxen plowing in a field, placing it around his neck. Jeremiah warned the leaders and the people that God would cause this yoke of bondage to be placed around their necks and God would cause them to go into captivity because of their sins and disobedience toward God.

Jeremiah continued to explain that it was God's will for Nebuchadnezzar to conquer Judah and take them captive. It would be under King Nebuchadnezzar that Judah would obtain protection and be kept secure. However, as their fit and just punishment, Judah would go into captivity. It had to be that way; because Judah's sins were so egregious, God had no choice but to punish them. Later, through Jeremiah, God told the Children of Judah that after seventy years of captivity, they would return to their country, that God would be merciful to them. God was and they did return.

Even though God was merciful, God did punish His nation—His people. Why? Because of their sins and evil behavior and lifestyle. Even though they claimed to be godly, faithful, a God-fearing nation, the truth revealed differently. They were disobedient, treacherous, disrespectful and irreverent to God and His covenant. They broke God's Sabbath day and His laws. They treated their fellow-citizens poorly. Their leadership and



Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem by Rembrandt.

dened the prophets of old as well as the true Church of God today. Those resisting and opposing the true and faithful words of God are constant thorns in the sides

to the Children of Judah of their sins and rejection by God. Complete captivity in the land of Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar was inevitable. To provide an ob-

government officials were corrupt, contrary to the commands of God with respect to governing the people. Their priests and ministers were just as corrupt, self-serving and liars, rejecting the veracity and honor of God's Laws and the righteous words of God and His judgments. In place of God's truth, they preached paganism, sun worship, idol worship and infidelity toward God. Judah was a perverted nation in God's sight, deserving of rejection and punishment; deserving of captivity.

Jeremiah further told the leaders and the people that they were not to listen to the lying prophets who told them that the future was going to look up, becoming bright and better. The lying prophets told the people that their wealth (as symbolized by the treasures of the Temple) would come back to them and their land.

The lying prophets, those in opposition to the truth of God and rejecting His prophesies which God said must happen (i.e., rejecting God's righteous judgment), lied to the people, in effect saying, "The nation of Judah will not go into captivity; they would not go to Babylon." The lying prophets in effect said, "God would not punish us for our sins; the will of God and His righteousness shall not prevail."

Notice Jeremiah's characterization of these lying prophets. "Do not listen to your false prophets, fortune-tellers, dreamers, mediums and magicians ... they are all liars" (Jeremiah 27:9-10; 14-15). The lying prophets, de-

ceiving the people, were effectively saying, "God will save us; after all, we are God's people. We are too good to have bad things happen to us. Jeremiah is really the one you should not listen to." However, God's word, His truth, and His will won out. As

thee, in hunger, in thirst and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee."

God will not be mocked. If His covenant people whom He has blessed are disobedient to

If His covenant people whom He has blessed are disobedient to Him and His laws, then curses and punishment will follow.

shocking as it was to the people, to the leaders and to the religious folk of that day, and to the lying prophets, the Children of Judah went into captivity.

Jeremiah warned the people. Now to Jeremiah 28 and Hananiah. Hananiah mocked Jeremiah. Hananiah, in essence said, "God will not do what you say. God will bring back the wealth of the Temple. God will bring those already captive back to this land. God will break off this yoke of wood from our necks. God will make us great again. This will all occur within two years." Hananiah lied. God did not send him. Hananiah was a lying prophet.

Jeremiah's response to Hananiah and all the leaders of the people was simple and reinforced the truth of God. Because you mock God and reject His judgments, because you took off this yoke of wood, God will now put a yoke of iron on the nation. Notice Deuteronomy 28:48. "Therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies which the Eternal shall send against

Him and His laws, then curses and punishment will follow. And punishment followed. Not only did God's word, His truth become a reality for the Children of Judah some 2600 years ago, it also has an "end time" fulfillment. The cause and effect, as well as interventional blessings and curses from God, written in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 have meaning for and will occur to the modern-day Children of Israel. Specifically in this modern era, Great Britain and the United States of America are the two nations which have clearly prospered, being great, as a result of God's promises and His direct blessings.

Hananiah, the lying prophet met a disastrous fate. "Hear now Hananiah, The Lord hath not sent thee, but thou makest the people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold I will cast thee from off the face of the earth, this year thou shalt die because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the proph-

et died the same year in the seventh month” (Jeremiah 28:15-17).

For over 80 years now, almost two times longer than Jeremiah’s tenure, the truth of God, as revealed in the Christian Bible and corroborated by history concerning the United States of America (along with Great Britain, Canada and Australia) has been preached, both the good and

truly in obedience to God.

Isaiah 1 is a chapter well known and oft repeated by faithful ministers of God’s Church. It is understood that unless God leaves the United States a very small remnant (Isaiah 1:9; Romans 9:27-29, 11:5), the modern-day Children of Israel, specifically the United States would simply be eliminated instead of

in the fulfillment of Biblical “end time” prophecy; given the growing irreverence and disobedience toward the truth and laws of God, those who understand prophecy know what is in store for this nation!

God’s prophecies are His revelations, which He has provided to His servants. God has given His secrets to His servants (Psalm 25:14; Proverbs 3:32; Amos 3:7), availing them an understanding of what the future holds, which is not of any private or personal interpretation (2 Peter 1:21).

Just as Jeremiah brought the truth, warning the Children of Judah, likewise the truth of God—the prophecies of God—must and will be preached, directly to and directly for the modern-day descendants of Israel, those peoples within God’s promised and blessed nation, the United States of America.

Opposition will come when the truth of God is preached. Just as occurred some 2600 years ago, so today in 2017, modern-day Hananiahs are rising up, religious and non-religious, evangelical Christian ministers and those with no ministerial credentials. All are giddy, bubbling in excitement, with predictions that happy days are here again; America will be great again. Nothing can be further from the truth. What they envision is not at all what God has prophesied; not at all what will befall the United States of America unless we collectively repent of our sins and turn to Him! □

Given the growing irreverence and disobedience toward the truth and laws of God, those who understand prophecy know what is in store for this nation.

bad. The realities of the United States of America have been well explained. The Blessings came.

However, obedience to God and His Laws has been shaky since the nation’s inception and continually diminishes. Over the past 241 years, God has been merciful and patient with the United States. Yet, as His word clearly expresses, He waits only so long.

Where have we gone wrong? Those who are honest with the Bible and with the truth of God, looking from God’s perspective, can only conclude, everywhere. From head to toe, heart and soul; from White House Executive and Cabinet, Congressional Leaders, businessmen and women, to rural middle-class families in Kansas, Texas or Iowa. From New York to San Francisco, Chicago to Seattle, very few are truly subject to the laws and will of God. Few are

just being punished, just being sent into their soon coming captivity.

Why did God communicate a lesson like that of Hananiah? The answer is obvious. Anyone who circumvents God’s truth or preaches rebellion against God by teaching that His people will not get the punishment due them, will they themselves suffer a punishment from God. What a hard lesson to learn.

Given the realities the United States now faces and the character of its 45th President, given the divisions, the civil unrest, the challenges to free speech, the distrust of media, of the White House, of the bigotry and hatred ramping up within the country, along with the growing distrust of its allies, not to mention the increased hatred of its enemies; given the rapidly evolving shape of nations soon to play their role

America & Israel

Continued from page 2

ulation, though their politics are as varied and contentious as any place on earth.

The prospect that terrorist and military attacks could be taken against Israel from within the city of Jerusalem itself is utterly unthinkable and unacceptable to the vast majority of Israelis, whatever their political leanings. Recent reports indicate that the group Hamas, which runs the territory that “Palestinians” occupy in Gaza, has teamed up with ISIS. February 9, 2017 saw reports of four rockets fired from Egyptian territory in the Sinai at the Israeli resort town of Eilat. (Eilat has for many years been a popular destination for European tourists, particularly those from Norway and Sweden.) Israel announced that they’d shot down three of the incoming rockets, while a fourth fell short of the resort town. Egypt has been battling terror activities in the Sinai for years.

We’ve been led to believe that the advent of a Trump presidency means that Israel once again has a staunch and reliable ally in the United States. News reports recently appeared to convey that the new American president was scolding Israel for announcing the construction of additional settlements, saying that they were detrimental to the prospects for peace. However, we’ve learned to wait for clarification before believing any slant put forth by media, mainstream or otherwise.

Prime Minister Netanyahu was an early invitee to visit the White House. President Trump has signaled that he wants to do the impossible, that is to bring the Israelis and Palestinians to conclude a lasting peace arrangement. So it is possible that there may be some disagreements with Israel’s policies or actions that run contrary to that theme. It is however a safe bet that the relationship will be far more congenial than existed under the Obama administration, where every effort was made, even using American taxpayer money to see Prime Minister Netanyahu defeated in the Israeli election last year.

The EU has tried to split hairs in response to most controversies involving Israel and the Palestinians. The EU has upheld, and encouraged boycotts of Israeli products produced in the “west bank” territory that the “Palestinians” claim for their future state. From a legal and trade standpoint, Israel is covered by the European Neighborhood Policy, which means that there is an open trading relationship. But the EU has been consistently critical of Israel in every dispute, condemning every Israeli military response to the onslaught of rocket attacks from Lebanon and from Gaza.

The EU Parliament accused Israel of “excessive force,” “disproportionate” military responses, against terrorist forces in Lebanon, and “collective punishment” for its blockade of Gaza. Relations between the EU and Israel are “frozen” according to the incoming president of the EU

Parliament, and will remain so until “progress” is made on the peace process.

EU leaders are terrified at the prospects a Trump administration will bring. First they watched in disbelief as Britons voted to leave. No doubt the onslaught of Muslim immigration has led to social mayhem in and around London, which is recognized as the driving force behind the Brexit referendum. Muslim immigration has destroyed the carefree atmosphere in neighborhoods all over Europe and is responsible for the terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels and Nice in addition to creating roving immigrant gangs and large immigrant “ghettos” where neither police nor emergency services dare venture. European leaders see the rise of populist parties around the continent, and worry that other nations will follow suit.

If the European Union should break apart, due to, say France electing Marine Le Pen, or because of the impossible debt load of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, it is a safe bet that those individual nations will still unilaterally, or collectively oppose Israel. They can be expected to join any two-state solution called for by the Vatican and the UN.

Whether the revived closeness of the U.S.– Israel relationship lasts may well depend on how badly the Trump administration wants to be credited with having achieved the ultimate “deal;” Israel and the Palestinian Arabs living side by side in peace. It’s just not possible. □

Did God Command His people to keep His feasts, only to later decide to do away with them? Did Christ's atoning death "do away" with the annual Sabbaths? Did Christ come to ABOLISH these so-called "Jewish" Feasts?

If so, then WHY will He COMMAND all nations to keep the Feast of Tabernacles when HE returns? You will be astonished at the TRUTH about God's Seasonal Holy Days!

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