

MAKING SENSE OF THE SIGNS

Sometimes it's a little difficult to read the situation in the Middle East, - especially when circumstances are sending up contradictory signals. Consider this: Israel, - under concerted pressure from its only historically dependable friend, the US, - is getting serious about peace. Talks are going on with both the Palestinians and Syrians. At the same time preparations are being undertaken by *all* parties to prepare for war in the very near term.

Recent reports have surfaced that say that before President Bush leaves office at the beginning of next year, the Israelis and Palestinians will ink a peace agreement that will see Israel turn over the West Bank (Judea & Samaria), to the PA, along with the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem itself. As part of that agreement the US is to train up a Palestinian security army that will replace the IDF presence in the vacated areas. [And yes it's true that previous American-trained and Israeli equipped Palestinian security forces have been involved in numerous terror attacks against the Jewish state.¹ That qualifies as an example of the classic definition of insanity; - doing the very same thing and expecting a different result. Unless of course there's something more to the equation, - some angle that is not evident on the surface.] According to reports, the US is intimately involved in pushing for the division of Jerusalem, providing a plan for the phased accession of the terrorist Palestinian Authority, still dedicated to the destruction of the Israel with which it is in negotiation. [And there again is another argument for the insanity of the entire enterprise!] The first phase would see limited Palestinian sovereignty as they exercised policing functions. After a period of years, the Israelis would give up part of the Temple Mount, and the Palestinians would take over full control of East Jerusalem.² But it's not just the Palestinians that the Israelis are talking to. According to Syrian President Assad, Turkey is serving as an honest broker in informal negotiations.³ And Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni announced openly that the government is ready to consider turning over the Golan to Syria in exchange for the empty promise of peace.⁴

That's the peace side. Now with the help of the folks at Stratfor Intelligence, let's look at some of the war preparations that have made the present a very dangerous time; - even in the always volatile Middle East.

- September 2007 – The Israeli Air Force strike what is reported to be a Syrian nuclear site near the Turkish border, that had been built with the help of the North Koreans. (Turkey is not a close Syrian friend.)
- February 2008 – Either the Israelis or the Syrians assassinate Hezbollah leader Imad Mughniyah. No matter who's responsible, Hezbollah immediately starts talking of major revenge attacks against Israel. Stratfor's conclusion: [W]hoever killed Muginiyah wanted to trigger a conflict⁷.
- February 2008 - With petroleum prices rising, Washington tops off its Strategic Petroleum Reserve, possibly signaling that the US may be expecting a disruption in the flow of oil from the region.
- March 2008 – The American 6th Fleet parks itself off of Lebanon, - the home of Hezbollah.
- April 2008 – Syria forward-deploys three divisions to wall-off the Israelis from one end of the Bekaa Valley. (That's the reputed resting place of Saddam's Weapons of Mass Destruction.) Jerusalem warns Damascus that she will be held responsible for a Hezbollah attack on Jewish interests.
- April 2008 – Israel holds the largest civil defense exercise in its history, anticipating a large-scale missile attack and a three-front war.
- April 2008 – Hezbollah mobilizes its fighters. Lebanon evacuates a number of civilians from Hezbollah-controlled areas on the Israeli / Lebanon border. Israel's Defense Minister cancels a trip to Germany.⁵
- April 2008 – A Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister announces his country's readiness to face Israel in a war.⁶ One Middle East headline blares: “ Syria on Alert ‘Because Hizbullah Revenge Attack is Near’”.⁷ A London Times report reveals that satellite photography has located a site where Iran is developing long-range ballistic missiles capable of striking Europe.⁸ A former Israeli Defense Minister warns Iran that it will face destruction if she launches a missile attack on Israel.⁹ To put it all in perspective, Israeli intelligence sources revealed that it is preparing for ‘*The Next War*’. They expect that to be fought with both Syria and Hezbollah, and that the Arabs will launch massive missile salvos against Israeli cities, with some warheads “containing chemical weapons”.¹⁰

- April 8, 2008 – Then there is this. Israeli TV reported that Israel & the US will soon reveal evidence that Iraqi WMDs made their way to Syria, (with Russian help), - before the American invasion. There is to be more on this later.¹¹ True? I don't know. But significant if there is any truth in the report.

Let's look at all of this in the light of the testimony before Congress this week of the commanding general in Iraq, General David Petraeus. He told the country that Iran has "fueled the recent violence in a particularly damaging way through its lethal support of the special groups." He went on to assert that through support and training provided by the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Tehran is directly responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans and thousands of its' Iraqi allies. Therein would lay the justification for an American strike at the Iranian bases that support that terror: - And should Iran respond, a strike at the Iranian nuclear facilities. World Net Daily columnist Pat Buchanan points out that Iran has already gained much by the American incursion into Iraq. The Taliban, al-Qaeda and the Sunni Iraqi regime have all been severely degraded by US military action.¹² A strike at the destabilizing Iranian presence could be the next logical manipulation of the strategic equation. As is the case with Israel; - so too, with the United States. It is nearly impossible to address the situation by confronting the terror / insurgent forces hidden within the civilian populations. Modern sensibilities, colored as they are by the ever-present media, make such a brutal campaign nearly impossible. Instead, the effective strategy is to strike at the states that sponsor these ersatz-combatants. It is Iran that is the problem in Iraq. And it is Syria that sponsors Hamas and Hezbollah, - the Israeli problem.¹³

So despite the very serious consequences, there is a debate in the administration and in Jerusalem to prepare for war. Many at the Pentagon believe that it is essential for the War on Terror for the US to win in Iraq. To these, the logic may indeed lead to the conclusion that a short, smart war is a better alternative than allowing de-facto Iranian dominance in the region.¹⁴ Israel is already openly preparing for a one month-war against the likes of Syrian and Hezbollah. At the same time they are readying their population for bombardment by Iranian missiles. The gamble is that limited strikes against Iran would see that Islamic-power refrain from all out war. [That would be my guess, in that it fits the prophetic scenario best. Iran must survive and strike an Israel that is "**a land of unwallled villages...dwelling safely**". (Ezekiel 38:11)] Still it is a risky military gamble when dealing with the messianic-Islamic mindset. Yet there is an ominous sign that war may perhaps be in the offing. On Tuesday it was reported that in light of the threat of Iranian missile attack, Israel has been connected to the US Ballistic Missile Early Warning System. This has happened only two times before, and both instances preceded major military action; - in 1991 before the Gulf War I and again in 2003, prior to the US invasion of Iraq.¹⁵ Read the signs!

THE EVOLUTION MYTH – PART II

[A series by guest contributor Pastor Lynn Zankl]

Hi folks, Pastor Lynn here again. In today's installment let's begin by looking at the "science" behind both creation and evolution. Let's start with a quote from Dr. Scott Todd from Kansas State University, Nature 401, Sept. 30, 1999, "*Even if all the data point to an intelligent designer, such an hypothesis is excluded from science because it is not naturalistic*". Christians are constantly told to keep their bias out of science, and yet it appears that our scientists are biased themselves. So comes the question: What is science?¹⁶ In its simplest form, science means "knowledge". To gain knowledge and understanding of the world around us, but in the world of secular scientific study that definition has been altered to gaining knowledge and understanding of our world limited through naturalistic and materialistic explanations and causes. This interpretation automatically eliminates God and any possibility that He created the universe. A secular scientist will tell you that creation could not have happened because it is not testable, repeatable, observable, nor falsifiable. I submit to you that neither is evolution, and yet, it is taught to us as absolute fact.

Naturalistic causes are a "belief" denying that an event or object has a supernatural significance: specifically, the doctrine that scientific laws are adequate to account for all phenomena.

Materialistic causes is a "belief" claiming that physical matter is the only or fundamental reality and that all organisms, processes and phenomena can be explained as a manifestation or interaction with matter. This bias is

taught as fact in our school textbooks, at least two of the textbooks teach that Biblical creation is religion, and evolution is science.

There are two scientific disciplines that both evolutionist and creationist use. They are Operational (observable) Science, and Historical (origins) Science. In the operational science view, is a systematic approach to understanding that uses observable, testable, repeatable, and falsifiable experimentation to understand how nature commonly behaves. From this we get things like understanding DNA, cure diseases, and how to build things useful to man. Creationist believes that God created the universe and uses a set of natural laws that operate consistently in the universe. Understanding of those laws gives us the basis of our scientific thinking.

From the historical (origins) view, we interpret evidence from past events based on a presupposed philosophical point of view. The past is not directly observable, testable, repeatable, or falsifiable, so historical science presents much greater challenges in interpretations than observable science does. This is true for both creationist and evolutionists, the creationist did not see creation as it happened, and evolutionists have never seen evolution. The big difference is this, evolutionists have no witness to the processes of evolution over the supposed billions of years, creationist according to the Bible have an eyewitness, the Lord God who did the creating.^{17 18}

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BIG BROTHER: MAKING PROGRESS

Here's a sampling of some of the ways in which a system of total control is developing across the world.

- Internet service providers are expanding their use of a technology that monitors "every click and keystroke", selling that information to companies who wish to 'target' their advertising. Right now about 100,000 consumers are subjects of the tracking, but the number is growing quickly.¹⁹ [This is similar to the tracking that supermarkets are doing through the use of 'bonus cards'.]
- The University of Washington is conducting a study looking at the world of the future where radio frequency identification (RFID) will trace the movements and habits of consumers in numerous ways. RFID, which can be read from a distance, is already being used in passports, clothing, drivers licenses and credit & debit cards. It will soon be a part of the REAL ID, or National ID. Cross referencing data from the various sources will allow the government to create a detailed profile of personal behavior.²⁰

- In Washington DC, police will soon be operating a security system of 5,000 closed circuit TVs for the “public health and safety”.²¹
- Cernium Corp has developed a fully automated video surveillance system that uses algorithms to analyze streaming video to “detect suspicious activity”. As long ago as 2002, NASA was working on brain monitoring devices to be used in airports. The sensors were to scan airport passengers unawares.²²
- OK, this is the big one. Every member of London’s 31,000-strong police force will be microchipped with RFID tracking devices that will be able to locate them to within feet of their location.²³

And so the technology is in place. We come closer to the day when the prophecy of Revelation 13:16-17 will be fulfilled. **“He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.”**

OF FOOD & FAMINE

“When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!”” (Revelation 6:5-6)

Here’s the short of it. World food prices rose 40% in 2007, 9% in 2006. The most needy countries are paying 25% more to import food, - and there are still critical shortages. The rising cost of petroleum, grains being converted to ethanol production, - [About one-fifth of American grains will be dedicated to that purpose in 2008²⁴], - and commodities markets speculation have all contributed to the rise in prices. Another overlooked factor has been the ability of a few multi-national agribusiness giants, - (Monsanto & Archer Daniels Midland being examples), - to “manipulate the supply for greater profits”. 850 million people suffer from chronic hunger and are in danger of starvation. These live in 20 African countries, - 37 in all throughout the developing world; - and most in regions that have been the target of the ‘*miracles*’ of the ‘Green Revolution’, sponsored by the Agribusiness giants. Through the forced sale of Genetically Modified Organisms, GMOs, (genetically altered grain), they have cornered the market on world wide food production. Food has become a tool of economic and political control in the creation of the new international order.²⁵

What we’ve begun to see in the last several months is the beginning of mass disruption that attends a starving world. Since the beginning of the month there have been food riots in many countries, including Egypt, Viet Nam, Ivory Coast and Haiti. Staples have gone up over 50% in that Caribbean nation in the last 12 months. Rising food costs have been a bigger blow in Third World countries than in developed countries like the US, as food spending there makes up a higher proportion of the family budget.²⁶

This is not The Tribulation...yet! But historical forces are converging as powers and principalities manipulate world conditions to achieve their ends. And so we stand aware of Christ’s warning: **“there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows”**. (Mark 13:8)

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