

Eye on the World

July 29, 2017

This compilation of material for "Eye on the World" is presented as a service to the Churches of God. The views stated in the material are those of the writers or sources quoted by the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Church of God Big Sandy. The following articles were posted at churchofgodbigandy.com for the weekend of July 29, 2017.

Compiled by Dave Havir

Luke 21:34-36—"But take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence, and drunkenness, or the anxieties of this life, and that day come on you suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on all dwellers on the face of the whole earth. But beware of slumbering; and every moment pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man" (Weymouth New Testament).



An article titled "Erdogan Urges All Muslims to 'Visit' and 'Protect' Jerusalem" was posted at israelnationalnews.com on July 25, 2017. Following is the article.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday urged all Muslims to "visit" and "protect" Jerusalem.

"From here I make a call to all Muslims. Anyone who has the opportunity should visit Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa mosque," Erdogan said in Ankara. "Come, let's all protect Jerusalem."

"They are attempting to take the mosque from Muslim hands on the pretext of fighting terrorism. There is no other explanation," Erdogan said in a speech to ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) lawmakers in parliament.

He said Israel's legitimacy rested on the extent of the respect it showed to Palestinian Arabs and their rights.

Erdogan also denounced attacks on synagogues in Turkey, referring to reports that Turkish extremists threw stones at a synagogue in Istanbul last week.

"It does not make sense to attack synagogues here because something has happened at Al-Aqsa mosque. This does not suit our religion and it is not allowed," he said.



A Reuters article by Luke Baker and Ali Sawafta titled “Thousands of Worshipers Surge Into Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque, 113 Injured” was posted at reuters.com on July 27, 2017. Following is the article.

Thousands of Muslim worshippers surged into Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque on Thursday and at least 113 were hurt in scuffles with police after Israel lifted security measures imposed at the sacred site in the face of days of violent protests.

Chaotic scenes unfolded as Israeli police used stun grenades to try to control crowds charging forward when the last gate Muslims use to enter Al-Aqsa was opened after a stand-off lasting several hours.

“We will sacrifice ourselves for Al-Aqsa!” chanted the throng outside Islam’s third holiest shrine. Several young men clambered onto the mosque’s roof to affix Palestinian flags, which Israeli police soon confiscated.

Israel’s removal of the security devices, including metal detectors and CCTV cameras, marked a significant climbdown by right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. While Palestinians celebrated, political opponents accused him of weakness.

Netanyahu’s decision followed days of diplomatic effort by the United Nations, the involvement of U.S. President Donald Trump’s Middle East envoy and pressure from Muslim Arab powers in the region.

One of these, Jordan, continued to fume at Netanyahu over the shooting deaths of two of its citizens by an Israeli Embassy guard in Amman on Sunday. Israel repatriated the guard to a hero’s welcome, saying he had fired in self-defense against an attack that may have been spurred by pro-Palestinian sentiment.

The Aqsa dispute erupted after Israel installed metal detectors at Muslim entrances to the compound, known to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and to Jews as Temple Mount, following the July 14 killing of two Israeli police guards by gunmen who had concealed weapons inside the walled plaza.

The unannounced move provoked days of unrest, with violent clashes on the streets of East Jerusalem. Israeli forces shot dead four Palestinians, and a Palestinian knifed three Israelis to death in a settlement home in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

For the past two weeks, most Muslims refused to enter Al-Aqsa, instead praying in streets around Jerusalem’s Old City.

Earlier on Thursday, the Waqf Muslim trust that manages the mosque declared itself satisfied that Israeli authorities had scrapped all the new security measures and reverted to the set-up before July 14. The Waqf urged Muslims to return to Al-Aqsa.

Palestinian political factions issued statements supporting the Waqf that looked likely to help defuse the unrest. Before the announcement, factions had been calling for a “day of rage” on Friday, raising concerns about another round of bloodshed.

Jordan, which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 and has been custodian of the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem since 1924, said Israel’s removal of the extra security was an “essential step to calm the situation.”

But, facing domestic outrage over the Israeli Embassy deaths, Jordan’s King Abdullah excoriated Netanyahu for embracing the guard involved after demanding he return without being investigated.

Netanyahu’s conduct had been “provocative on all fronts and enrages us, destabilizes security and fuels extremism,” Abdullah said in a statement, adding that bilateral relations were at risk if the guard were not brought to trial.

Multi-faceted ancient dispute

The Aqsa compounds sits on a tree-lined marble plateau in the heart of the Old City. It is also the holiest place in Judaism—the venue of two ancient temples, the last destroyed by the Romans. Jews pray under heavy security at the Western Wall at the foot of the elevated plaza.

The dispute, like many in the Holy Land, is about more than security devices, taking in issues of sovereignty, religious freedom, occupation and Palestinian nationalism.

Israel captured East Jerusalem, including the Old City and the holy compound, in the 1967 Middle East war. It annexed the area and declared it part of its “indivisible capital.”

This has never been recognized internationally, with the United Nations and others regarding East Jerusalem as occupied by Israel and maintaining that the status of the city can only be determined through negotiations between the parties.

Palestinians do not recognize Israel’s authority in East Jerusalem, which they want as the capital of a future Palestinian state, and are extremely sensitive to the presence of Israeli security forces in and around the Noble Sanctuary.

Palestinian political factions were quick to claim a rare victory over Israel after Netanyahu pulled the extra security measures. His aides declined to comment, but rivals in Israel’s fractious right-wing camp criticized Netanyahu’s decision.

“Israel is emerging weakened from this crisis, to my regret,” said Education Minister Naftali Bennett, whose national-religious Jewish Home party is in Netanyahu’s coalition and who is a potential challenger for the leadership.

“Instead of bolstering our sovereignty in Jerusalem, a message was relayed that our sovereignty can be shaken.”

In ordering the metal detectors and cameras, Netanyahu had said the extra security was needed to ensure safety at the site.



A Reuters article by Sylvia Westall titled "Saudi Arabia Says King's Contact With U.S. Helped Ease Al-Aqsa Mosque Tensions" was posted at reuters.com on July 27, 2017. Following is the article.

Saudi Arabia said on Thursday King Salman had been in contact with the United States and other world powers to try to prevent Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City being closed to Muslims and to defuse political and religious tensions.

Israel overnight removed all security infrastructure it had put in place this month at Muslim entrances to the al-Aqsa mosque compound and on Thursday Muslim elders urged worshippers to return there to pray.

"The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, has held contacts with many world leaders over the past few days," the announcement from the Saudi royal court, published by state news agency SPA, said.

Saudi Arabia is custodian of Islam's most revered places in Mecca and Medina while Jordan is the custodian of Al-Aqsa mosque, its third holiest site, which is also revered by Jews.

King Salman contacted the U.S. government and called for an end to restrictions on entry to the mosque, the statement said, saying that developments showed this push had been successful.

The king "stressed the need for the return of calm," and called for respect for the sanctity of the compound, it said.



A Reuters article titled "Saudi Arabia Should Clarify Status of Ex-Crown Prince: HRW" was posted at reuters.com on July 27, 2017.

Saudi Arabia must clarify whether they have imposed movement restrictions on former crown prince Mohammed bin Nayef, Human Rights Watch [HRW] said on Thursday, saying the kingdom should end all arbitrary travel bans and detentions of Saudi citizens.

Saudi officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the HRW statement.

Reuters reported last week that the former crown prince has been under house arrest since his overthrow in favor of the king's favorite son, Mohammed bin Salman, in June. Saudi authorities have denied the story.

"Reports that Mohammed bin Nayef is under a travel ban and home detention without due process are bitterly ironic given his role in imposing similar arbitrary restrictions on thousands of Saudis," said Sarah Leah Whitson, HRW's Middle East director.

"The Saudi government needs to call a halt to officials' arbitrary abuses of power."

HRW made the call for details about Mohammed bin Nayef's status in a letter to Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir.

"Extended detention without charge or trial or without an appearance before a judge is arbitrary, and violates both Saudi law and international human rights standards," HRW said in its statement on Thursday.



An article by Tom O'Connor titled "China's Military Could Leave U.S. Navy Dead in the Water With New Sea Drones" was posted at newsweek.com on July 26, 2017. Following is the article.

China is looking to guard its territorial claims in the Asia-Pacific from what it considers U.S. aggression, and Beijing's latest maritime tool could catch the Pentagon's submarines faster than ever.

China claims it released 12 unmanned drones, known as gliders, into the depths of the South China Sea to collect environmental data, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported Sunday.

The outlet described the high-tech glider, known as Haiyi (meaning "sea wings" in Mandarin Chinese), as an underwater robot that was more efficient, more durable and used less energy than its predecessors, all while instantly relaying data underwater, a feat not even the U.S. has mastered.

The scientific devices were not weaponized but could be used to instantly detect U.S. submarines traveling in waters China claims as its own.

"The data is being transmitted back to a land-based laboratory in real time," the expedition's chief scientist, Yu Jiancheng, told the Xinhua News Agency, according to an article published Wednesday by the *South China Morning Post*. The piece quoted Yin Jingwei, dean of the college of underwater acoustic engineering at Harbin Engineering University, as saying the project's success, if true, "is definitely a breakthrough."

The glider was developed by the state-run Chinese Academy of Sciences, which previously tested it in March, during which it reportedly broke a previous deep-diving record set by the U.S.

The academy said Haiyi was able to swim to a depth of over 20,764 feet, or nearly 4 miles down, beating the U.S.-held world record of over 16,964 feet, or about 3.7 miles. Using a unique battery and a special coat to protect it from over

60 tons of underwater pressure, it also broke records in 2014 by swimming over 635 miles nonstop in 30 days, China Daily reported. Chinese military media have already speculated the country's armed forces could put Haiyi to military use.

"Since there is no power propulsion, the acoustic signature is extremely low. That characteristic suggests that [this platform] can have great significance for the military domain," Chinese defense magazine *Ordnance Industry Science and Technology* wrote last year, according to *The National Interest*.

Haiyi would give China extensive eyes under the South China Sea, where the U.S. is challenging Beijing's extensive territorial claims, and the ability to anticipate enemy vessels in real time.

The marginal sea, which is considered the largest in the Western Pacific region, covers an area of about 1,423,000 square miles and has an average depth of 3,478 feet, with a maximum depth of 16,457 feet at the China Sea Basin. It's also where the U.S. and its allies accuse China of constructing artificial, militarized islands, complete with an extensive communications array and potential missile launchers.

President Donald Trump has already approved a plan submitted by Defense Secretary James Mattis that would expand the Navy's presence in the contested waters, something China's ruling Communist Party said would "aggravate the regional military situation," according to its nationalistic mouthpiece, *Global Times*. The newspaper urged China's military "to strike back firmly and take necessary measures to safeguard China's territory and maritime rights and interests."

The U.S. and China, the world's leading economies, have long differed over policy and often compete to surpass the other in military achievements. Earlier this year, *Popular Mechanics* detailed another Chinese sea drone, which was capable of skimming the ocean's surface, flying just 18 inches above water to keep it undetectable by ships due to the delicate curvature of the Earth. Avoiding less wind resistance due to its low height, the anti-ship drone can reportedly fly 600 miles per hour for 1.5 hours, giving it a range of 900 miles in the vast sea. It was also believed to be able to deliver a 2,000-pound explosive payload.

China's efforts to top the U.S. in drone technology have manifested in the air as well, with the Asian power beginning mass production of its Rainbow or Caihong-5 (CH-5) weaponized drone for foreign buyers. Its developers have boasted that the unmanned aerial vehicle can fly longer and is easier to use than its primary U.S. competitor, the General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper. CH-5, however, is believed to have a lower flight ceiling, making it vulnerable to surface-to-air fire.



An article by John Laurenson titled "Sweden is Moving Away From Cash, and Some Businesses Will No Longer Accept It" was posted at marketplace.org on July 17, 2017. Following is the article.

Back in 1661, Sweden was the first European country to introduce paper money as bank notes. Now that Scandinavian country has almost done away with it and is on course to be the first nation to go completely cash-free.

In Sweden, you can no longer use cash on trams or buses and many shops and cafés don't accept cash. Cash is even becoming rare in banks. Out of Sweden's 1,600 banks, 900 don't do cash— you can't deposit it or withdraw it. The number of bank robberies has declined steeply in consequence.

At Stockholm's Abba: The Museum, you can't use cash either. Its CEO, Joanna Madsen, is one of the many Swedes who now never carry any cash.

"I am totally cashless," she said. "I haven't had any cash in Sweden for at least two or three years."

For small payments, Swedes like Madsen often use a Swedish app that transfers money using people's phone numbers. Even panhandlers sometimes use it, writing their cell phone numbers on bits of cardboard.

Another Swedish invention is a card terminal that fits onto your smartphone that is popular with street vendors, allowing their customers to forgo cash.

But Bjorn Eriksson, head of the campaign group Cash Uprising, is worried about where all this is leading.

"I think you're leaving a lot of people behind," said Eriksson. Some 10 percent of the Swedish population—including many elderly people—are still highly dependent on cash.

Worse, said Eriksson, "the private big banks are doing their best to kill the possibility to use cash and the reason is very simple—they don't earn money on cash."

Cecilia Skingsley, deputy governor of Riksbank, Sweden's central bank, said she's neutral on giving up cash, but saw a drop in illegal activity—from drug trafficking to illegal employment—as a benefit of a cashless society.

"The disadvantage is, for instance, that many people like making transactions without it being traced," she said. "The upside of going cashless is that it's more difficult to do informal transactions or evade taxes."

Riksbank predicts that cash will totally disappear in Sweden by 2030. Plenty of time to get used to the idea that your banker will know how many beers you had last night.



A video and an article by Leah Barkoukis titled "Students Love Socialism, But Have No Idea What It Is" were posted at townhall.com on July 18, 2017. Following is the article.

In a man-on-the-street style interview with Campus Reform, a number of Washington, D.C., students spoke positively about socialism.

- Some students thought “people throw that word around to try and scare you, but if helping people is socialism, than I’m for it.”
- Others said “it’s a good idea” and “could really benefit our country in the future.”
- “Trying to spread the wealth is definitely a good thing in America and it’s definitely a thing that’s needed,” another responded.
- One student even declared “we should have a standard of living for all people.”
- “It definitely seems like a more feasible option and it could help more people, like, just as a broad term, it could help more people,” said another.

The problem, however, is that when pressed to define it, the students had no idea what it is.

“Um,” was a common first response, with some admitting they needed to “think about that for a second.”

Another passionate student explained that “it’s definitely more of an open form of government and it feels like a lot more accessible to a lot more people.” But when she was asked what exactly that means, she admitted, “to be quite honest, I don’t know.”

This is quite disconcerting, as millennials have now surpassed baby boomers as the largest voting bloc in the country, according to population estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2016.

In an interview with Fox News’s Jesses Watters, Campus Reform’s media director Cabot Phillips explained we have former President Obama and college professors to blame for the reason millennials love socialism without know what it is.

“President Obama for eight years made mainstream this concept of spreading the wealth and he brought class warfare back,” he explained, “and also we’ve got liberal professors that are teaching a revisionist form of history.”



An editorial by Walter Williams titled “Western Values Are Superior” was posted at jewishworldreview.com on July 26, 2017. Following is the article.

Here’s part of President Donald Trump’s speech in Poland: “The fundamental question of our time is whether the West has the will to survive. Do we have the confidence in our values to defend them at any cost? Do we have enough respect for our citizens to protect our borders? Do we have the desire and the courage to preserve our civilization in the face of those who would subvert and destroy it?”

After this speech, which was warmly received by Poles, the president encountered predictable criticism. Most of the criticism reflected gross ignorance and dishonesty.

One example of that ignorance was penned in the Atlantic magazine by Peter Beinart, a contributing editor and associate professor of journalism and political science at the City University of New York. Beinart said, "Donald Trump referred 10 times to 'the West' and five times to 'our civilization.' His white nationalist supporters will understand exactly what he means."

He added, "The West is a racial and religious term. To be considered Western, a country must be largely Christian (preferably Protestant or Catholic) and largely white."

Intellectual elites argue that different cultures and their values are morally equivalent. That's ludicrous. Western culture and values are superior to all others. I have a few questions for those who'd claim that such a statement is untrue or smacks of racism and Eurocentrism.

Is forcible female genital mutilation, as practiced in nearly 30 sub-Saharan African and Middle Eastern countries, a morally equivalent cultural value? Slavery is practiced in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Sudan; is it morally equivalent?

In most of the Middle East, there are numerous limitations placed on women, such as prohibitions on driving, employment and education.

- Under Islamic law, in some countries, female adulterers face death by stoning.
- Thieves face the punishment of having their hands severed.
- Homosexuality is a crime punishable by death in some countries.

Are these cultural values morally equivalent, superior or inferior to Western values?

During his speech, Trump asked several vital questions.

- "Do we have the confidence in our values to defend them at any cost?"
- "Do we have enough respect for our citizens to protect our borders?"
- "Do we have the desire and the courage to preserve our civilization in the face of those who would subvert and destroy it?"

There's no question that the West has the military might to protect itself. The question is whether we have the intelligence to recognize the attack and the will to defend ourselves from annihilation.

Much of the Muslim world is at war with Western civilization. Islamists' use multiculturalism as a foot in the door to attack Western and Christian values from the inside. Much of that attack has its roots on college campuses among the intellectual elite who indoctrinate our youth. Multiculturalism has not yet done the damage in the U.S. that it has in Western European countries—such as England, France and Germany—but it's on its way.

My colleague Dr. Thomas Sowell reveals some of the problem. He says, "Those in the Islamic world have for centuries been taught to regard themselves as far superior to the 'infidels' of the West, while everything they see with their own eyes now tells them otherwise."

Sowell adds, "Nowhere have whole peoples seen their situation reversed more visibly or more painfully than the peoples of the Islamic world."

Few people, such as Persians and Arabs, once at the top of civilization, accept their reversals of fortune gracefully. Moreover, they don't blame themselves and their culture. They blame the West.

By the way, one need not be a Westerner to hold Western values. One just has to accept the sanctity of the individual above all else.



An article by Curis Houck titled "ABC, NBC Continue Aiding DWS in Scandal Cover Up As CBS Arrives on Scene—for 37 Seconds" was posted at newsbusters.org on July 26, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

ABC's Good Morning America and NBC's Today continued on Wednesday morning the liberal media's attempts to help Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz (Fl.) cover up the scandal involving now-fired I.T. staffer Imran Awan after his arrested Monday when he tried to flee the country.

After all three ignored the story until Wednesday, CBS This Morning arrived at the scene, albeit it with a 37-second news brief by co-host Gayle King that only scratched the surface on this scandal concerning Awan and his family.

King chose not to credit the intrepid work of *The Daily Caller* but instead *Politico*, one of the rare liberal media outlets to give this story the light of day: "Politico reports a former aide to Congresswoman Deborah Wassermann Schultz was arrested trying to leave the country. 37-year-old Imran Awan was detained at Washington Dulles International Airport on Monday."

"He is accused of attempting to defraud the Congressional Federal Credit Union by taking out a home equity loan on a rental property. He allegedly tried to have those funds transferred to Pakistan. He pleaded not guilty yesterday. The office of congresswoman Wassermann Schultz fired him after the arrest," King added.

Hysterically, King concluded with a comment from Awan's attorney to CBS News that the criminal probes and allegations swirling around Awan are because of "anti-Muslim bigotry."

As *The Daily Caller* has reported for months, Awan and his family have provided I.T. services to not just Wasserman Schultz but prominent congressional Democrats across key committees such as the House Intelligence Committee.

The news outlet also found that Awan and his brother secretly took \$100,000 of Iraqi money, owed money to an Iraqi politician who's been linked to Hezbollah, and possibly kept their stepmother in "captivity" for better access to offshore money.

On Monday, *The Daily Caller's* Luke Rosiak reported that the FBI had "seized smashed computer hard drives" from Awan's home in addition to the Capitol Police's seizure of "computer equipment tied to [Wasserman Schultz]."

The disturbing details were also covered here at NewsBusters in a post Tuesday night and, as stated there, telling someone who knew nothing of this story would likely be disturbed and wonder where the media have been.

Then again, this shouldn't be surprising the media are aiding and abetting liberals in their nefarious behavior. To tweak a phrase that our friend Chris Plante likes to use, it's good to be a liberal.



An article by Victor Davis Hanson titled "Trump's Circular Firing Squad" was posted at townhall.com on July 27, 2017. Following is the article.

The American political system has never quite seen anything like the current opposition to President Trump and his unusual reaction to it.

We are no longer in the customary political landscapes. Usually, the out-of-power opposition—in this case, the Democratic Party—offers most of the criticism and all of the alternative policies in order to win in the next election. Instead, Trump has an entire circle of diverse critics shooting at him. But they just as often end up hitting each other—and themselves.

So far, Trump's most furious Democratic opponents have not been able to offer alternative visions to Trump's agenda that might help them win back Congress in the 2018 midterm elections. Higher taxes, more government regulations, less gas and oil production, loose immigration policies and the promotion of identity politics are not really winning issues.

Instead, the aim is either to remove Trump before his first term is up or to so delegitimize him that he is rendered powerless.

Yet obsessions with Trump often lead to boomerang excesses—mad talk and visuals, from obscene rants to decapitation art—that hurt the attackers more than Trump.

Republicans should have been delighted with control of both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court, state governorships and the legislatures, and the White House. In principle, they laud Trump's efforts to appoint strict constructionists to the federal courts, to increase oil and gas production, to reform Obamacare and the tax code, and to restore deterrence abroad.

Yet the Republican-controlled Congress is nearly paralyzed. It simply cannot unite to deliver on promised major legislation.

Some senators and representatives find Trump too uncouth to support his otherwise agreeable proposals, and they fear (or hope) that he may not finish out his term. Some worry that Trump's low approval rating might hurt

their own re-elections. Some are careerists who value getting along more than fighting for the White House agenda.

The result is that when factions of the Republican Congress are not battling each other, they are feuding with Democrats and often with the Trump White House.

One reason Trump has been slow to make major appointments is that he cannot trust the establishment of his own party, many of whom in 2016 signed petitions declaring Trump unfit for office.

At best, some anti-Trump intellectuals and pundits still cannot separate Trump's conservative agenda (which they privately support) from Trump's reality television persona (which they find boorish and beneath the dignity of the presidency). At worst, some are so invested in the idea that Trump would or should fail that their opposition threatens to become an obsessive self-fulfilling prophecy.

The anti-Trump conservative intellectual establishment also does not quite know where to aim its fire. At Democrats whose agendas they used to oppose? At Congress for supporting or not supporting Trump? At the liberal media that courts anti-Trumpers because it finds their Trump hatred useful for the time being?

The media have given up on impartial news coverage. Some journalists have announced that Trump is so beyond the pale that he deserves only unapologetic critical treatment. Research has shown that network coverage has been overwhelmingly anti-Trump.

At the center of this directed fire is the flamboyant, sometimes polarizing but usually cunning Trump. He is not a stationary target, but instead constantly ducking and weaving with a flurry of executive orders, major White House shakeups and trips throughout Europe and the Middle East, where he often gives good speeches and sometimes is warmly greeted.

The result of the circular firing squad is a crazed shootout where everyone gets hit.

Democrats as of yet have no obvious presidential candidates or even credible spokespeople to make the case against Trump. It is one thing to boast about the supposed buffoonery of Trump but quite another to offer a candidate and an agenda that would rebuild the so-called blue wall of swing states and reverse the results of 2016.

The media is increasingly discredited and polls more poorly than Trump.

The Republican-majority Congress is likewise even less popular than an unpopular Trump. Conservative voters may remember that Trump beat the unfavorable odds to deliver the White House to Republicans, while those in Congress blew favorable odds by not passing legislation when they enjoyed clear majorities in the House and Senate.

So the circular shooting goes on until someone is left standing—or all are too wounded to continue.

Forgotten in the hail of 360-degree suicide gunfire is the only story that counts: the welfare of the United States.

If Trump grows the economy, creates more jobs and national wealth, achieves energy independence and restores deterrence abroad, all the wild firing will cease. If not, he and his attackers will finish each other off.



An article titled "The Disaster That Could Follow From a Flash in the Sky" was posted at economist.com on July 13, 2017. Following is the article.

On March 13th 1989 a surge of energy from the sun, from a "coronal mass ejection," had a startling impact on Canada. Within 92 seconds, the resulting geomagnetic storm took down Quebec's electricity grid for nine hours. It could have been worse.

On July 23, 2012, particles from a much larger solar ejection blew across the orbital path of Earth, missing it by days. Had it hit America, the resulting geomagnetic storm would have destroyed perhaps a quarter of high-voltage transformers, according to Storm Analysis Consultants in Duluth, Minnesota. Future geomagnetic storms are inevitable.

And that is not the only threat to the grid. A transformer-wrecking electromagnetic pulse (EMP) would be produced by a nuclear bomb, designed to maximise its yield of gamma rays, if detonated high up, be it tethered to a big cluster of weather balloons or carried on a satellite or missile. A midrange missile tested by North Korea on April 29, 2017, exploded 71 kilometres (44 miles) up, well above the 40km or so needed to generate an EMP.

Imagine a nuclear blast occurring somewhere above eastern Nebraska. Radiating outwards, the EMP fries electronics in southern Canada and almost all of the United States save Alaska and Hawaii, both safe below the horizon. It permanently damages the grid's multimillion-dollar high-voltage transformers. Many are old (their average age is about 40). Some burst into flame, further damaging substations.

America runs on roughly 2,500 large transformers, most with unique designs. But only 500 or so can be built per year around the world. It typically takes a year or more to receive an ordered transformer, and that is when cranes work and lorries and locomotives can be fuelled up. Some transformers exceed 400 tonnes.

After the surge, telecom switches and internet routers are dead. Air-traffic control is down. Within a day, some shoppers in supermarkets turn to looting (many, unable to use credit and debit cards, cannot pay even if they wanted to).

After two days, market shelves are bare. On the third day, backup diesel generators begin to sputter out. Though fuel cannot be pumped, siphoning from vehicles, authorised by martial law, keeps most prisons, police stations and hospitals running for another week.

With many troops overseas or tasked with deterring land grabs from opportunist foreign powers, there is only one American “peacekeeper” soldier for every 360 or so civilians. Pillaging accelerates. This leads many with needed skills to stay home to protect their families.

Many of the rock climbers who help overwhelmed fire departments free tens of thousands from lifts begin to give up on day four despite the heart-wrenching banging that continues to echo through some elevator shafts.

Utilities can neither treat nor pump water or sewage. Raids on homes thought to have water become frequent and often bloody. Militias soon form to defend or seize control of swimming pools and other water sources. Streams and shovelled-out pits provide water in some areas, but sooner or later rain sweeps in faeces-ridden mud. Deaths from cholera and other diseases multiply.

As relief ships arrive, food, water filters and fuel are offloaded by hand amid chaos, but demand cannot be met even in port cities, much less inland. Where food can be grown without pumped irrigation, rural militias cluster into “aggie alliances” not keen to share with the hordes streaming out of cities. Some aggie alliances hole up in newly abandoned prisons, the better to defend scavenged crops and farm animals. The value of cash collapses along with faith in government.

The death rate picks up. Eventually, months later, about three quarters of the benighted area has power for at least ten hours a day. It would have been worse had 41 countries not dismantled transformers for reassembly in North America. (The most generous donors have to accept rolling blackouts.)

Martial law ends six months after the original energy surge. Roughly 350,000 Canadians and 7m Americans have died.

A similar nightmare could happen in any rich country—grids outside America are vulnerable too. Such scenarios necessarily dip into “uncharted territory for an industrialised society,” as Thomas Popik, head of the Foundation for Resilient Societies, a think-tank in New Hampshire, puts it.

But shorter blackouts suggest that things can get bad fast. Just three hours after Chile’s grid-collapsing earthquake on February 27th 2010, even relatively wealthy people began looting stuff they did not need. With electricity gone, normal rules had suddenly vanished and “out of control” emotions took over, says Roberto Machiavello, then rear-admiral and top martial-law official in Chile’s Concepción area.

Without soldiers at hospitals, Admiral Machiavello says, doctors would have stayed at home. Less than a week after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, many police officers opted to protect their families rather than work.

Chris Ipsen, spokesman for the Emergency Management Department of Los Angeles, estimates that, with the grid down, Angelenos would be foodless in less than ten days. In poor areas, he reckons, groups would quickly form and say, “Hey, let’s go over to the mansions in Bel Air.”

Insurance, anyone?

In the aftermath of Haiti's earthquake in January 2010, cholera alone killed at least 10,000. Jacques Boncy, head of Haiti's National Laboratory of Public Health, reckons that, in three months of blackout in America, faecal contamination of water would kill several million. That might be optimistic. The EMP Commission, an expert group set up by America's Congress to study the threat, reckoned in 2008 that the first year of societal breakdown could finish off two-thirds of Americans.

A country's electricity grid can be knocked out in other ways. One is cyber-attack. Hackers cut power to 230,000 Ukrainians in December 2015—but only for hours. Long-term damage from cyber-assaults is unlikely, says Kenneth Geers, a security expert who studied the attack.

What about terrorism? Shooting up transformers at just nine critical substations could bring down America's grid for months, according to an analysis performed in 2013 by the Department of Energy's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), says its then-chairman, Jon Wellinghoff.

Others think more transformers would need to be taken out. At any rate, information on which substations are critical is secret. In 2013 gunmen knocked out 17 of 21 transformers at a substation in San Jose. It was not a critical one.

The sun probably poses a greater risk of a sustained outage than hackers or saboteurs. That is one reason the EMP Commission reconvened in January 2017. Kit that protects transformers from EMP also saves them from geomagnetic storms, though the reverse is not true.

George Baker, a staffer on the commission and a former boss of EMP research at the Pentagon's Defence Threat Reduction Agency, says that critical military systems have been EMP-proofed. But other agencies, he says, have done "precious little" to safeguard civilian infrastructure. The commission will issue an updated report in September. It will be as grim as the assessment in 2008, he says.

The expense of installing surge-blockers and other EMP-proofing kit on America's big transformers is debated. The EMP Commission's report in 2008 reckoned \$3.95bn or less would do it. Others advance higher figures. But a complete collapse of the grid could probably be prevented by protecting several hundred critical transformers for perhaps \$1m each.

Yet not much is being done. Barack Obama ordered EMP protection for White House systems, but FERC, the utilities regulator, has not required EMP-proofing. Nor has the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) pushed for a solution or even included EMP in official planning scenarios. (The Pentagon should handle that, DHS officials say; the Pentagon notes that civilian infrastructure is the DHS's responsibility.)

As for exactly what safeguards are or are not needed, the utilities themselves are best equipped to decide, says Brandon Wales, the DHS's head of infrastructure analysis.

But the utilities' industry group, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), argues that, because EMP is a matter of national security, it is the government's job. NERC may anyway be in no rush.

It took a decade to devise a vegetation-management plan after, in 2003, an Ohio power line sagged into branches and cut power to 50m north-easterners at a cost of roughly \$6bn.

NERC has repeatedly and successfully lobbied Congress to prevent legislation that would require EMP-proofing. That is something America, and the world, could one day regret.



Isaiah 55:6-11—"Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."