

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" - Luke 21:28

E-mail: jvimi@jvim.com
 World Wide Web:
<http://www.jvim.com>

NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia gives powers to FSB to prosecute 'thought crime'

The London Daily Telegraph reports: "The Russian security service has been given extended powers to act against people for so-called 'thought crime' under a new law which opponents say marks a return to Soviet-era policing.

The bill, criticized by rights groups, would allow the Federal Security Service (FSB) to issue official warnings to individuals whose actions are deemed to be creating the conditions for crime.

Rights groups say the bill would essentially put the special service above the law and harks back to Soviet times when the much-feared FSB predecessor KGB used warnings to persecute dissidents.

The bill had already sailed through the lower and upper houses of parliament and was signed into law by the Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev.

The opposition says the FSB security service is already extremely powerful and empowering it further would contravene Mr. Medvedev's pledge to liberalize Russia..." **(Thought crime is dangerous as only God knows what humans are really thinking — Genesis 6:5; I Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 94:11; Psalm 139:23; Isaiah 55:8, 9; Matthew 9:4; 12:25; 15:29; Luke 5:22; 6:8; Romans 2:15; I Corinthians 3:20; Hebrews 4:12.)**

Russia 'Dissatisfied' With U.S. Weapons Actions

Voice of America News reports: "Russia says it is dissatisfied with the United States' fulfillment of its obligations according to their arms-reduction treaty.

RIA-Novosti reports Russia's Foreign Ministry said the U.S. has failed to provide assurances that some of its former nuclear missile launchers and bombers, now converted to accommodate conventional weapons, could not be retrofitted to again use nuclear arms.

Moscow also said U.S. authorities failed to stop leaks of radioactive materials and nuclear weapons-related information. In particular, it mentioned a 2006 case when police found that information from a nuclear research laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico, had been leaked to a criminal drug-dealing group.

The Foreign Ministry said such issues go against the terms of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, known as START..." **(The non-proliferation treaty will never work. In Ezekiel 38:11 Russia breaks the peace pact set up by the Global Dictator and all hell breaks loose as World War III begins — Ezekiel 38:1, 2, 8, 16; 39:1, 2, 12, 13.)**

Iran nuclear sanctions by EU unacceptable, says Russia

BBC News reports: "Russia has branded EU sanctions against Iran as 'unacceptable', saying they undermine international efforts to rein in Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

The European Union adopted new sanctions targeting Iran's foreign trade, banking and energy sectors.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman has condemned the 'deeply regrettable' sanctions and vowed to continue its uranium enrichment work.

The EU measures go beyond the fourth set of UN sanctions adopted on 9 June.

They include a ban on dealing with Iranian banks and insurance companies, as well as steps to prevent investment in Tehran's oil and gas sector.

Russia, one of six world powers negotiating with Iran, supported the UN sanctions, but has objected to extra unilateral measures imposed by the U.S. and EU since then.

"This not only undermines our joint efforts to seek a political and diplomatic settlement around Iran's nuclear programme, but also shows disdain for the carefully calibrated and coordinated provisions of the UN Security Council resolutions," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The use of sanctions outside of the UN Security Council framework is

‘unacceptable,’ the statement said...” **(Russia opposes the sanctions because Iran will align its armies with Russia in Ezekiel 38:5. Persia in this text is Persia which changed its name to Iran in 1935.)**

U.S. Unclear if Russia Complying with Chemical, Biological Weapons Pacts

Voice of America News reports: “A State Department report says the United

States is uncertain whether Russia has fully complied with international treaties banning chemical and biological weapons.

The department released its Compliance Report — an unclassified condensed version of a much more detailed report it sent to Congress. It says a lack of information from Russia has made it unclear if Moscow has fully complied with its obligations to get rid of all biological weapons.

The State Department also says it is still not sure if Russia has declared its stockpile of chemical weapons.

Russia has not yet replied to the report, which could have some bearing on the U.S. Senate’s decision whether to ratify the new nuclear arms treaty signed earlier this year between Russia and the United States...” **(Russia can’t be trusted to keep its signed treaties — Joel 2:3, 30.)**

TERROREST THREAT

Japan tanker was damaged in a terror attack, UAE says

BBC News reports: “A Japanese tanker damaged in the Strait of Hormuz near Oman was the target of a terrorist attack, the United Arab Emirates state-run news agency has said.

It said remains of home-made explosives had been found on the hull of the M Star, which was damaged while travelling from Qatar to Japan.

...An al-Qaeda linked group said it was responsible.

Officials previously said the ship may have been involved in a collision.

The crew of the ship reported an explosion shortly after midnight... injuring one person.

The *BBC’s* security correspondent Nick Childs says the news is likely to raise concerns about security for shipping in the Strait, a vital strategic waterway for oil supplies from the Gulf.

‘An examination carried out by specialised teams had confirmed that the tanker had been the subject of a terrorist attack,’ the news agency said, quoting an unidentified coast guard source.

‘UAE explosives experts who collected and examined samples found a dent on the starboard side above the water line and remains of home-made explosives on the hull,’ it said.

‘Probably the tanker had encountered a terrorist attack from a boat loaded with

explosives,’ the source was quoted as saying...” **(Joel 3:10 pictures a global war and Christ’s return reverses the prophecy — Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3.)**

Al Qaeda in Pakistan is U.S. ‘most formidable’ threat

YnetNews.com reports: “The United States said that despite major setbacks, Al-Qaeda’s core in Pakistan is the ‘most formidable’ terrorist group threatening the United States, along with affiliates in Yemen and Africa.

In an annual report, the State Department said it also learned that Americans were not immune to the lure of Islamist militancy, with some of them hooking up last year with radicals in Pakistan and Somalia.

‘Al-Qaeda’s core in Pakistan remained during 2009 the most formidable terrorist organization targeting the United States,’ the State Department’s counter-terrorism coordinator Daniel Benjamin told reporters.

‘It has proven to be an adaptable and resilient terrorist group whose desire to attack the United States and U.S. interests abroad remains strong,’ Benjamin said, reading from the Country Reports on Terrorism 2009.

‘We assess that Al-Qaeda was actively engaged in operational planning against the United States and continued recruiting, training and deploying operatives, including individuals from

Western Europe and North America.’

Al-Qaeda, from its safe haven in Pakistan, is helping train and fund the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan, which ‘remained resilient in the south and east and expanded its presence into the north and west,’ the report said...” **(There is no guarantee for peace as long as these barbarians control the Muslim world. God help humanity if they eventually take over Pakistan’s nuclear facilities — II Timothy 3:1. See also the next two reports.)**

Al-Qaeda Creating an Army in Yemen

Israel National News reports: “The heads of Al-Qaeda in Yemen claimed to be creating an army in the country’s south. In an audio recording posted online, terrorist commander Mohammed Sayeed al-Omda said Al-Qaeda will soon have a fighting force of 12,000 soldiers based in the cities of Aden and Abyan.

Omda issued a threat to continue attacking Yemeni troops. ‘This is a message to the Yemeni government forces and National security service: Our swords are ready and we are going to cleanse the land,’ he declared.

Al-Qaeda has claimed responsibility for two fatal attacks on government targets in Yemen since June, and is suspected of being behind an additional two attacks in the same period. The

international terrorist group accuses the Yemeni government of joining with 'crusaders' and killing Muslims in the battle against insurgent groups.

Al-Qaeda poses a real and immediate threat to the Yemeni government, according to United States Marine Corp General James Mattis, who is charged with heading US forces in the region. At his nomination hearing Mattis told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Yemen has been pushed 'to the breaking point.'..."

Al Qaida-linked militants gaining foothold in central Africa

Haaretz reports: "Faced with concrete Jihadist threats for the first time, the East African nation of Burundi is considering sending away Muslim minorities unless they give information about extremists, Burundi's defense minister has told *Haaretz*."

Lieutenant General Germain Niyoyankana said that Somali refugees staying in Burundi 'will have to return' to their land unless they help Burundi's security forces fight terrorists. He said this in response to a deadly July 11 attack in nearby Uganda which claimed 73 lives and is attributed to a fundamentalist Muslim group from Somalia. The same group has said it will carry out similar attacks in Burundi.

'We are working with our Somali population and have requested their help in preventing attacks,' Niyoyankana said in an interview, the first by a Burundi minister for Israeli media. 'If the Somali refugees don't help us protect ourselves

they will be obligated to return to where they came from. They chose to take refuge in Burundi and they should help protect us with any information possible.'

Al-Shabaab, which is linked to Al-Qaida, claimed responsibility for twin explosions at a crowded restaurant and a rugby club in Uganda's capital Kampala during the last moments of the World Cup final on July 11. The insurgent group has threatened more attacks against Uganda and Burundi unless they withdraw their peacekeepers from Somalia, where Al-Shabaab is fighting the government and controls large sections of the chaotic country.

Niyoyankana said he did not know how many refugees from predominantly Muslim Somalia live in Burundi, 'but there aren't many.' He added that security forces have taken 'a series of measures' which 'cannot be specified' to foil plans to carry out attacks in the republic.

Burundi's population is 67 percent Christian and 23 percent traditionalist. Only 10 percent of its population of approximately nine million are Muslims. It is ranked as one of the world's 10 poorest countries..."

Hamas leaders in Syria urge West Bank operatives to kidnap Israeli settlers

Haaretz reports: "The Israel Defense Forces West Bank division commander, Brig. Gen. Nitzan Alon, has warned Israeli settlers to be on alert for possible abduction attempts across the territory.

In a letter sent to Yesha Council

leaders, Alon said that the warning is based on intelligence and interrogations of Palestinians arrested on involvement in plotting such kidnappings.

The IDF said intelligence has shown Hamas leaders in Damascus are pressuring followers in the West Bank to abduct Israeli settlers and citizens.

The IDF added that it believes such a kidnapping would be used by Hamas as a bargaining chip for short-term gains and not for major negotiations such as in the case of abducted soldier Gilad Shalit, who has been in captivity for four years and for whom Hamas wants hundreds of prisoners.

'The threat of kidnapping is significant,' Alon wrote the settler leaders. 'We must especially remind youths to take safety precautions when hitchhiking.'

In the wake of Alon's letter, settler leaders held information session with youths to reiterate to hitchhike only within their settlements and not on main routes in the West Bank or late at night.

The Shin Bet Security Service has arrested a number of Palestinians suspected of involvement in alleged plots to kidnap Israeli settlers. In some of the cases, the Shin Bet said there was more than intent and that suspects had gathered intelligence leading up to an attempt..." **(The latter days will bring great heartache on all the world but especially on Israel — Jeremiah 30:7. Jacob changed his name to Israel in II Kings 17:34. See also Matthew 24:9; and John 16:2.)**

WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

Assad warns of growing threat of Middle East war

Haaretz reports: "Syria will not negotiate with Israel over letting it keep the Golan Heights, President Bashar al-Assad said, days after Israel's prime minister expressed interest in resuming talks with Damascus.

In a statement on Syrian army day published in official media, Assad

repeated his assessment that the possibility of another Middle East war was rising in the absence of what he called Israel's willingness to make peace.

'If anyone thinks that Syria might negotiate over its occupied land then they are mistaken,' Assad said.

'The liberation of the Golan is a deeply ingrained right. Peace requires restoring all the occupied soil until the line of June

4, 1967,' he added.

The Six-Day War broke out a day after this date and Israel swiftly defeated the armies of Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

Syria lost the Golan Heights to Israel, which annexed the territory in the early 1980s but did not build settlements on it as heavily as in the West Bank. A United Nations Security Council resolution declared the annexation illegal.

Assad said that while Syria was sticking to its pursuit of peace with Israel the army had to be prepared for war.

‘The world is certain now that Israel is the one putting obstacles in front of peace and its requirements,’ Assad said.

‘The specter of real peace in the region is disappearing and the possibility of war is increasing,’ he added...’ **(This war is presently in its planning stages and Syria is one of its warmongers. Syria will be destroyed — Isaiah 17:1.)**

Iranian turned U.S. spy: Tehran will attack Israel

YnetNews.com reports: “A former fighter in Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) turned US spy offered a rare glance into one of the most complex countries in the Middle East.

During a conference held at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Reza Kahlili (pseudonym) estimated that Iran will eventually attack Israel, Europe and the Persian Gulf states. He called for a preemptive strike on the regime in Tehran, but not on the Iranian people or the country’s infrastructure.

Kahlili accused the Obama Administration of being naïve. According to him, the American overtures are viewed by the Iranian regime as a sign of weakness, while the Iranian people consider the efforts to engage the regime an act of betrayal against their struggle for freedom.

‘This is a messianic regime. There should be no doubt — they are going to commit the most horrendous suicide bombing in human history. They will attack Israel, European capitals, and (the) Persian Gulf region at the same time,’ said Kahlili in one of his first public appearances to promote his new book ‘A Time To Betray: The Astonishing Double Life of a CIA Agent inside the Revolutionary Guards of Iran’.

Kahlili said he joined the Revolutionary Guard following the Islamic revolution of 1979, but volunteered to work for the CIA when he became disillusioned with the Khomeini regime after witnessing acts of rape, torture and murder...’ **(President Ahmadinejad has an unholy task. He**

must destroy Israel before his messiah Mahdi will return. Thank God the Christian Messiah is Jesus, the God of love and peace — John 13:35; Luke 6:27-29; I John 4:8; Isaiah 9:6. See also the next three reports.)

Senior Commander Warns U.S. of Iran’s Crushing Response to Aggressions

Fars News Agency reports: “A senior Iranian military commander warned the United States against any potential attack on Iran, warning that any enemy aggression will be reciprocated by a crushing response.

‘Any insane move will bring the U.S. nothing but regret and they will get our final response in the scene of action,’ Lieutenant Commander of Iran’s Ground Forces Brigadier General Mohammad Hassan Baqeri said in comments about the recent remarks of US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen.

Mullen said that the U.S. military had a plan to attack Iran, although he thought a strike was probably a bad idea.

Baqeri noted that the U.S. supported former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during the war Iraq imposed on Iran from 1980 to 1988 and the experience has shown that it will achieve nothing but defeat if it takes a military action against Iran.

‘Iran’s defense readiness, three or four decades ago, was not at the level that it is today,’ the Iranian general said.

‘Today, Iran’s Ground Forces are at a high level (of readiness), both from the training and military hardware aspects,’ Baqeri said...”

Netanyahu: Israel will Respond Forcefully to Further Attacks

Israel National News reports: “Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu instructed the IDF to respond forcefully to any further aggression from Lebanon, and laid the blame for the deadly incident on the government of Lebanon.

‘Israel views the attack on IDF soldiers with great gravity,’ Netanyahu said in a formal statement. ‘This is a grave

breach of [United Nations] Security Council Resolution 1701,’ he said. ‘I see the Lebanese government as directly responsible for this violent provocation against Israel. Israel has responded forcefully and will do so in the future as well, against any attempt to break the peace on the northern border and to harm the residents of the north and the soldiers who defend them.’

Defense Minister Ehud Barak called the incident a ‘murderous terror attack’ and warned the Lebanese government against ‘continuing to provoke the IDF as they have been doing recently.’ He demanded that the Lebanese Army investigate and find out who was responsible for the attack.

The United States said that it is ‘extremely concerned’ about the violence on the Lebanon/Israel border. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said the U.S. was in touch with both governments to try and establish what exactly happened...”

Iran official: We’ll burn down Tel Aviv in case of attack

YnetNews.com reports: “Iran’s UN Ambassador Mohammed Khazaee said that should Israel attack his country’s nuclear facilities ‘Tehran will burn down Tel Aviv.’ The ambassador, currently visiting Iran, told local press that preoccupation with an Israeli attack signifies ‘the enemies’ fear.’

Tensions surrounding Iran’s nuclear program grew in recent weeks mainly over sanctions imposed by the UN, United States, European Union and other countries following Tehran’s refusal to meet the Security Council’s demands.

According to the envoy, the West uses the nuclear issue as an excuse. ‘Should we announce we’re withdrawing the nuclear program and uranium enrichment, actions against Iran will not stop and they will find a new excuse to confront Iran every day.’

He further noted that should the Islamic Republic back out on the program, ‘enemies would only find other excuses to terrorize the Iranian regime.’...”

NEWS FROM ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Speaker Blasts U.S. Lawmakers' Support for Israel

The Fars News Agency reports: "Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani strongly criticized recent statement issued by Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives and their support for possible Israeli attack on Iran, but downplayed Tel Aviv's courage to make any move against Iran.

Speaking in Iran's northern province of Mazandaran, Larijani underlined that the statement labels Iranian government as an affront due to its nuclear weapons, announcing that the Zionist regime of Israel is entitled to using any means possible to face Iran.

'Had the Zionist regime had necessary facilities and been dared enough to take any military action against Iran, it would not have had any need to any prescription,' he added.

He noted that the U.S. congressmen have in their statement explicitly announced that the Zionist regime is the U.S. ally, sharing common interests and values with each other, with their ties being far from a strategic link.

'The Islamic Republic of Iran officials have time and again announced that the Zionist regime is the wayward child of the U.S. They should go and look for a nation in the Middle East not being resentful of the Zionist regime,' the Iranian parliament speaker noted...' **(God bless America and its lawmaker for standing with Israel. Our God Yahweh promises His blessing to those who love and protect Israel — Genesis 12:1-3; Psalm 115:12; Psalm 122:6.)**

Damascus: Syria-Saudi ties are none of U.S.'s business

Haaretz reports: "The Syrian government advised the United States against interfering with a visit by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah to Damascus,

saying that the two countries 'know better' how to stabilize the Middle East.

Abdullah will hold talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad in the Syrian capital before they travel together to Beirut to try to calm tension over a tribunal to try suspects in the 2005 assassination of Lebanese statesman Rafik Hariri.

U.S. State department official Philip Crowley said that Washington hoped Syria would play a constructive role in the region and would respond to the Saudi monarch's concerns about Iranian 'threats' to Middle East stability.

'Obviously, King Abdullah has played a significant leadership role in the region. So his prospective travel to Syria and to Lebanon is consistent with his search for peace,' Crowley said.

A Syrian foreign ministry statement said the United States 'has no right to define our ties with the countries of the region and interfere in the content of the talks the Saudi monarch will have in Damascus'.

'Syria and Saudi Arabia...know better than others the interests of the people of the region and how to achieve them without outside interference and they are able to define their policies to achieve peace and stability in the region,' the statement said... **(Syria is undoubtedly unaware of Saudi Arabia's position in the upcoming Mid East war. In Ezekiel 38:13 Sheba takes a stand against Israel, mentioned 18 times as being invaded. See Webster's Dictionary — Sheba is Saudi Arabia.)**

Iran's Supreme Leader Says He Represents Prophet Muhammad on Earth

Voice of America News reports: "Iran's Supreme Leader has reportedly issued a fatwah, or Islamic edict, demanding that people obey him as the earthly 'deputy'

of both the Prophet Muhammad and Shi'ism's mysterious 12th Imam. He also accused the U.S. and Britain of sowing division among Muslims and of fomenting the recent mosque bombing in Sistan-Baluchestan.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has created a stir after apparently issuing a religious edict claiming ultimate spiritual powers on Earth. Iranian media reported that he told followers that they must 'obey him' as the 'representative of the Prophet Muhammad and [Shi'ism's] 12th Imam on Earth.'

Iranian television also broadcast a communiqué by the Ayatollah claiming the United States and Britain were behind the suicide bombings at a Shi'ite mosque in Sistan-Baluchestan province. 'All Muslims,' he said, 'must combat the evil and corrupt [powers] waging war on Earth.'...

His controversial claim to represent the Prophet Muhammad and the 12th Imam on Earth, followed strong, recent criticism by several Iranian religious leaders, questioning his policies. Mohsen Kadivar, an exiled Shi'ite cleric, went so far as to demand his 'impeachment,' recently.

University of Birmingham Professor Scott Lucas, who writes the popular Iran blog '[Enduring America](#)' says Ayatollah Khamenei's controversial fatwah could be a way of lashing out at those adversaries now attacking him.

'It is the first time that Khamenei has specifically gone so far as to claim that kind of authority, and there is a theological debate as to whether this constitutes heresy, in the sense that some interpretations of Shia Islam say that no one can claim to represent the Prophet and the Imams on Earth,' he said. 'Khamenei, feeling pressure on a number of fronts, regarding his clerical and political authority, feels the need to

assert, effectively, 'You must obey me.'

But Professor Hilal Khashan of the American University of Beirut says Ayatollah Khamenei rules Iran under the Wilayat al Faqih principle, which does give him broad powers to represent Shi'ism's Hidden or 12th Imam...

But Khashan notes many Shi'ites, who are not fundamentalists, do not believe in the Ayatollah Khamenei's extraordinary powers on Earth, and that they frown on anyone claiming to represent the Imam. Lucas, says many top Iranian religious leaders are now questioning Supreme Leader Khamenei's authority, amid a growing political and religious ferment..." **(Thank God for intelligent Shia's who reject Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, If he were the Mahdi, the messiah, he would be the one Ahmadinejad awaits and who leads him to annihilate all Jews. It won't happen — the Judean — Christian God, Yahweh, states in Isaiah 56:5: I will give them [Israel] an everlasting name.)**

Ahmadinejad: 9/11 terror attacks death toll was exaggerated

Haaretz reports: "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks were exaggerated in a fresh broadside at the United States just days after U.S. President Barack Obama voiced willingness to talk to Iran.

Well-known for his anti-American and anti-Israeli rhetoric, the hardline populist Ahmadinejad also repeated his denial of the Holocaust, on which the consensus of historians is that six million Jews were exterminated by Nazi Germany.

Ahmadinejad said the Sept. 11 attacks with hijacked airliners on New York and Washington D.C. had been trumped up as an excuse for the United States to invade Afghanistan and Iraq.

Speaking at a Tehran conference, Ahmadinejad said there was no evidence that the death toll at New York's World Trade Center, destroyed in the attacks, was as high as reported and said 'Zionists' had been tipped off in advance.

'What was the story of Sept. 11? During five to six days, and with the aid of the media, they created and prepared public

opinion so that everyone considered an attack on Afghanistan and Iraq as (their) right,' he said in a televised speech.

No 'Zionists' were killed in the World Trade Center, according to Ahmadinejad, because 'one day earlier they were told not go to their workplace'.

'They announced that 3,000 people were killed in this incident, but there were no reports that reveal their names. Maybe you saw that, but I did not,' he told a gathering of the Iranian news media...

Ahmadinejad accused the U.S. government of exercising more media censorship than anywhere in the world.

He had previously said the '9-11' attacks were a 'big fabrication' and has rejected the historical record of the Holocaust. On Saturday, Ahmadinejad repeated his belief that the Holocaust had been invented to justify the creation of Israel.

'They made up an event, the so-called Holocaust which was later laid as the basis for the innocence of a group,' he said..." **(I have waited to use this text until now. This stupid report deserves such a reprimand: II Peter 2:16 – "... the dumb ass speaking with a man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet" [President].)**

Iran gains as Arabs' Obama hopes sink

The Asia Times Online reports: "United States President Barack Obama has suffered a sharp drop in popularity in the Arab world over the past year, and Iran may be reaping the benefits, according to a major new survey of public opinion in five Arab countries.

Only 20% of respondents in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) now view the U.S. president positively, compared to 45% who did so in the spring of 2009, according to the 2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll conducted by Shibley Telhami of the Brookings Institution and the Zogby International polling firm.

Moreover, negative views of Obama have skyrocketed — from 23% to 62% — since the last poll was conducted in April-May 2009. The new findings were

based on interviews with nearly 4,000 adults in the six countries between June 29 and July 20 this year.

When respondents were asked to name the world leader they admired most, Obama's standing was less than 1%. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was cited most often (20%), followed by last year's top pick, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (13%), and Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad (12%)..." **(Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall". God is opposed to pride – Proverbs 6: 16 – 18.)**

Obama leaving Iraq to wolves with US troop pullout, Tariq Aziz says

The Australian reports: "Saddam Hussein's former deputy Tariq Aziz has accused Barack Obama of 'leaving Iraq to the wolves' by pressing ahead with a withdrawal of U.S. combat troops.

In an interview with Britain's Guardian newspaper, the former Iraqi deputy prime minister said the US should stay in the country to correct the mistakes it had made since the 2003 invasion.

'We are all victims of America and Britain,' he told the paper from his prison cell in Baghdad, in his first interview since he was captured shortly after the fall of Baghdad more than seven years ago.

'They killed our country in many ways. When you make a mistake you need to correct a mistake, not leave Iraq to its death.'

His comments came after Mr. Obama confirmed that the US would end its combat mission in Iraq as scheduled on August 31, despite figures showing July had been the deadliest month in the country for more than two years.

Aziz, the face of ex-Iraqi president Saddam Hussein's regime on the world stage for many years, also said Iraq was now in a worse state than before the US-led invasion.

'For 30 years Saddam built Iraq and now it is destroyed. There are more sick than before, more hungry,' said Aziz.

'The people don't have services.

People are being killed every day in the tens, if not hundreds.

'I was encouraged when (Mr. Obama) was elected president, because I thought he was going to correct some

of the mistakes of Bush. But Obama is a hypocrite. He is leaving Iraq to the wolves.'...'' (If our President took time to promote and attend the Day of Prayer, his decisions might be wiser.

Prayer changes things – Pray without ceasing — I Thessalonians 5:17. We must pray that our President makes better decisions especially in the light of the following two reports.)

THE LAST SUPERPOWER?

Senior Cleric: U.S. Moving towards Global Isolation

Fars News Agency reports: "A senior official at the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said that the United States' consecutive failures in the Middle-East and other parts of the world show that Washington is moving towards global isolation.

Representative of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution to the IRGC Hojjatoleslam Ali Saeedi said in a meeting with members of Tehran's Voa'z (Preachers) Community that the current and future trend of the U.S. policies and moves shows that Washington is moving towards global isolation.

Saeedi recalled Washington's challenges in the region, and said, 'All the U.S. investments in Iraq for interfering in the country's elections and controlling the country have proved futile due to the vigilance shown by Iraq's Muslim people'.

As regards Iran's nuclear rights, Hojjatoleslam Saeedi said that the U.S. was seeking to deprive the Islamic Republic of peaceful nuclear energy but the resistance shown by the Iranian authorities and parliament as well as Iran's insistence on its nuclear enrichment rights have forced Washington to back off..."

Fed set to downgrade outlook for U.S.

The Financial Times reports: "The Federal Reserve is set to downgrade its assessment of US economic prospects when it meets to discuss ways to reboot the flagging recovery.

Faced with weak economic data and rising fears of a double-dip recession, the Federal Open Market Committee is likely to ensure its policy is not constraining growth and to use its statement to signal greater concern about the economy. It is, however, unlikely to agree big new steps to boost growth.

Smaller measures to help the economy could initially take the form of a decision to reinvest proceeds from maturing mortgage-backed securities held by the U.S. central bank, thereby preventing the Fed's balance sheet from shrinking naturally.

Investors will also examine closely any changes to the pledge made by the FOMC in June to 'employ its policy tools as necessary to promote economic recovery and price stability', which could be hardened if policy makers choose to signal the potential for a more aggressive move to boost the economy in the future.

But even if that happens, most economists believe that it would take several more months of poor data for the Fed to actually begin a new round of asset purchases on the scale of those carried out

during the recession.

In congressional testimony Ben Bernanke noted 'unusual uncertainty' in the economic outlook and in a speech the Fed chairman warned of a 'considerable way to go' before the U.S. achieves a full recovery.

Although Fed policy makers still believe the basic trajectory of the economy remains one of moderate expansion, there may be more attention given to heightened dangers of a sharp slowdown. 'The FOMC will have to tone down its assessment of the economy in view of recent weak indicators on real growth, real consumption spending and employment,' said Brian Bethune and Nigel Gault, economists at Global Insight.

The latest poor reading came in the monthly employment report, which showed the U.S. private sector creating only 71,000 jobs in July — not enough to keep up with population growth, let alone bring down the unemployment rate. That followed news a week earlier that growth in U.S. gross domestic product slowed from an annualized rate of 3.7 per cent in the first quarter to 2.4 per cent in the second quarter.

'Given how low inflation already is, and given the potential for the recovery to falter, we expect Fed officials will highlight downside risks and signal a bias to ease in the FOMC statement,' said Jim O'Sullivan, chief economist at MF Global..."

NEWS FROM ASIA

'Sacred site' created for youngest son of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il

The Australian reports: "North Korea is said to be creating a quasi-shrine to the son of leader Kim Jong-Il as it builds

up a personality cult around the likely successor.

There have been widespread reports that youngest son Kim Jong-Un, 27, is being groomed to take over from his ailing 68-year-old father Jong-Il, who suffered a stroke in August 2008.

The secretive communist state is transforming the proclaimed birthplace of Jong-Un into a kind of shrine, Tokyo-based activist Lee Young-Hwa told the *Chosun Ilbo* newspaper.

The regime resumed work to lay railway tracks between the centre of the

capital and its eastern Kangdong district, where the regime claims it discovered the ancient burial site of Tangun, the mythological founder of the first Korean kingdom.

Work began in March last year but stopped last summer, said Mr. Lee, who heads the Rescue North Korean People Urgent Action Network.

A statue of Kim Jong-Il's grandfather is also there.

'The regime is making out that Jong-Un's first home town is Kangdong and his second one Wonsan. But we don't know if he was actually born in Kangdong,' Mr Lee was quoted as saying.

Daily NK, a Seoul-based online newspaper run by defectors, reported in May that the North had moved residents out of Kangdong to transform Jong-Un's birth house into a sacred site.

Kim Jong-Il took over from his father, founding president Kim Il-Sung who died in 1994, in the communist world's only dynastic succession.

Both are the subject of intense personality cults fostered by the regime, which treats their birthplaces as sacred sites.

Some analysts say the North will probably designate Jong-Un as the leader's political heir when it convenes a rare meeting of key communist party delegates in September..." (This is blasphemy — Exodus 20:3; Psalm 135:15 — 18.)

South Korea conducts anti-missile training amid North Korean warning

SpaceDaily.com reports: "A major South Korean naval exercise went into its third day, the defence ministry said, as North Korea issued a fresh warning against what it termed 'a prelude to a war of aggression'.

The drill far south of the disputed maritime border in the Yellow Sea, was focused on defence against North Korea's guided missiles and submarines, the ministry said.

The exercise is one of a series planned in coming months in a show of force against the North, which the South blames for a deadly torpedo attack on one of its warships in March.

A total of 4,500 troops, backed by 29 ships and 50 aircraft, are being mobilized for the five-day drill.

'Some 20 Navy ships carried out anti-missile training in the Yellow Sea,' a military official was quoted as saying by Yonhap news agency.

The drill included anti-aircraft and anti-submarine battles in the Yellow Sea as batteries stationed in an island near the sea border continued live-fire training..." (It's possible that North Korea will align its military forces with China when this Eastern King invades Israel — Revelation 16:12.)

China Rejects US Concerns about Deals with Iran

Voice of America News reports: "China has defended its business ties with Iran after a United States official urged Beijing to fully implement sanctions against Tehran..."

China's state media quoted a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman saying trade with Tehran is normal business and does not harm the interests of other countries or the international community.

She was responding to comments made by the United States' special advisor for nonproliferation and arms control, Robert Einhorn.

Einhorn said China should fully cooperate with United Nations sanctions imposed against North Korea and Iran because of their nuclear programs.

The U.S. and European Union recently passed new sanctions against Iran and are encouraging Russia and China to support them. The sanctions target Iran's energy and banking sectors.

Joseph Cheng, a professor of political science at Hong Kong's City University, says Beijing has little interest in new sanctions..." (Russia and China will be the invaders during the 1st and 2nd moves against Israel — and Iran will be united with both nations in the battle of Armageddon — Ezekiel 38:1, 2, 5, 8, 16; Revelation 16:12; Revelation 9:14 — 18.)

SIGNS IN THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS

NASA's Deep Space Camera Locates Host of 'Earths'

Fox News reports: "Scientists celebrated after finding more than 700 suspected new planets — including up to 140 similar in size to Earth — in just six weeks of using a powerful new space observatory.

Early results from NASA's Kepler Mission, a small satellite observing deep space, suggested planets like Earth were far more common than previously

thought.

Past discoveries suggested most planets outside our solar system were gas giants such as Jupiter and Saturn — but the new evidence tipped the balance in favor of solid worlds.

Astronomers said the discovery meant the chances of eventually finding truly Earth-like planets capable of sustaining life rose sharply.

NASA so far formally announced only five new exoplanets — those outside

our solar system — from the mission because its scientists were still analyzing Kepler's finds to confirm they are actually planets.

'The figures suggest our galaxy, the Milky Way [which has more than 100 billion stars] will contain 100 million habitable planets, and soon we will be identifying the first of them,' said Dimitar Sasselov, professor of astronomy at Harvard University and a scientist on the Kepler Mission..." (Luke 21:25)