

MILESTONES to the KINGDOM

G. PEARCE

MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

**A Review of
World Events
in the Light
of Bible Prophecy**

GRAHAM PEARCE

Further copies of this book are obtainable from:—

- **GRAHAM PEARCE (Publishing)**
Yelvertoft Road,
Crick,
Northhampton, NN6 7XS
England.
- **CHRISTADELPHIAN SCRIPTURE STUDY SERVICE**
17 Braemar Road,
Torrens Park,
South Australia, 5062
Australia.



Typeset and Printed by
Stallard & Potter
2 Jervois Street, Torrensville
South Australia, 5031
for
Scripture Study Service
Printed March, 1987

This small annual booklet will again be found of great value to its readers for it leaves one with the powerful conviction that we are living just before the Advent of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Despite the sickening moral debauchery of the present world we are nevertheless blessed abundantly to witness the assembling of the nations for “the great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14). Surely kings and prophets desired to see these things, as they did the matters of the Lord’s first coming (Luke 10:24). The early voice of the prophets of God is a source of greatest comfort for how should we be if we were in this foundationless-world and had not the knowledge of the times in which we live.

When, in the hand of God, the Truth was boldly set forth in the late 1840’s the number of people that responded was out of all proportion to either the eloquence of John Thomas or to the amount of work performed to advertise the public lectures. Christadelphia was very small, only a few members scattered in tiny groups in USA and Britain. Yet the strength of resolve was amazing. Much of Bro. Thomas’ resolution came from his basic understanding of the prophets; even the largest third of his first book “Elpis Israel” was on matters of prophecy.

So from our inception, the beginnings of the Christadelphian Brotherhood, the study of the prophets has been a prominent plank in our platform and a major stimulus to faith. Our thankfulness today for this heritage may be increased by a review of the general accuracy of the expected programme. In recent centuries there are quite a few names who have written with value on prophetic matters, but none, of our knowledge, have written with such detail or such accuracy as our own Bro. John Thomas. We are not to be self-congratulatory about this but we should be *thankful* and *joyful* in our cause for here is an historical rallying point for our unity. Certainly we can objectively discuss the unfolding details and be generous to one another in those discussions but the general picture has been proven with the passage of time. Israel has returned, partially and in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, Russia is vast, strong, Anti-Semitic and a guardian to many, the Western maritime

traders are outside Rome's and Russia's control, the Papacy after a staggering decline in prestige in the 19th Century now sits a queen and is no widow and Persia, Ethiopia and Libya are all but incorporated in the Gogian confederacy!

May this little work be a comfort to many of the beloved throughout the world and a moving force to herald the Kingdom and the Age to Come.

B.N. Luke
Secretary
C.S.S.S.

CONTENTS

5

	PREFACE	3
Chapter 1	THE GORBACHEV ERA: THE SOVIET AMERICA AND WESTERN EUROPE	7
	The Soviet's need for detente	
	Mr. Gorbachev's offers to relax tension	
	Why these Gorbachev offers?	
	Reactions to the Reykjavik failure	
	The U.S.-Iran arms deal blunder	
	Soviet detente in other directions	
	If 'peace' in the near future, what then?	
	Prophecy fulfilling?	
	Surprise: the essential in Soviet military strategy	
Chapter 2	GORBACHEV AND THE POPE	22
	Two men capable of negotiating	
	Mr. Gorbachev's visit to Poland	
	The Pope and a visit to Moscow	
	Globe-trotting Gorbachev	
	The Church of England and Rome	
Chapter 3	A STEP TOWARDS UNIFYING WESTERN EUROPE	30
	The Single European Act	
	British sovereignty and independence reduced	
	New powers for the European Parliament	
	The powers of the Commission	
	Spain and Portugal join the Common Market	
	The European flag and anthem	
Chapter 4	ISRAEL SEEKING PEACE	35
	A peace initiative that failed	
	Israel still seeking peace	
	Cautious Jordan	
	A small-scale less open approach to peace in the West bank	
	Cooperation between Israel and Jordan	
Chapter 5	MIDDLE EAST CHANGES THAT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT IN THE FUTURE	40
	A very complex situation	
	1. Mrs. Thatcher's friendship towards Israel	
	2. America's anti-Arab development	
	3. Soviet-Israel relations	
	4. Syria's threat to Israel	
	5. Iraq and the Iraq-Iran war	
	6. How the oil price drop affects the Middle East	

Chapter 6	OTHER INTERESTING SITUATIONS	53
	The Afghanistan invasion	
	Ethiopia	
	South Africa	
	The Commonwealth and South Africa	
	Britain maintains a presence in the Middle East	
Chapter 7	“WITH MANY SHIPS”	60
	Russia’s navy sails all the oceans of the world	
	The usefulness of power	
	The Soviet Arctic Ocean: the cities of U.S. threatened	
	Across to the South Pacific Ocean	
Chapter 8	AN OMINOUS INCREASE IN ANTI-SEMITISM	64
	Anti-Semitic terrorism	
	Austrian anti-Semitism	
	Anti-Semitism in Britain today	
Chapter 9	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER FORTY	71
	Forty in the Bible	
	Our number forty	
	A Disaster Organisation	
	Looking for that Blessed Hope	

Chapter 1: THE GORBACHEV ERA THE SOVIET, AMERICA, AND WESTERN EUROPE

THE SOVIET NEED FOR DETENTE

During 1985 it became fairly clear what Mr. Gorbachev's main priorities would be. 1986 has shown a fuller development of three priorities — a reform of Soviet management to give a new impetus in industry; a real intention of detente towards W. Europe; and an immediate lessening of the military burden through arms negotiations with the United States. He appears to have the support of the military and political leaders in these aims. The military are willing to accept a period of detente which could make a surprise attack possible at a later date — see the end of this chapter. All parties are anxious to stir up the economy after years of indifferent progress under the aged and often corrupt heads of the Politburo. Gorbachev has replaced these men by younger men attuned to his outlook. To accomplish his aims, Mr. Gorbachev also sees the need to provide a higher standard of living, and various incentives, if he is to get some enthusiasm from the long-suffering masses. Hence the need to lessen tension in Europe and direct some military spending into the civil sphere; and also the need to get cooperation with W. Europe to provide technology and the capital goods so urgently needed.

In addition to the near stagnation in its economy, the Soviet has come up against two unexpected problems, which make detente even more desirable.

The Soviet is the biggest oil producer in the world. Its export of oil and oil products is the source of some 60% of its hard currency earnings, which it needs to buy vital capital goods from the West for modernising industry. When the new five-year economic plan was drawn up last year, oil was around 20 pounds per barrel. It has fallen to 12 pounds. A western estimate says this will mean a loss of 8 billion dollars this year. Further, Soviet arms sales, another big foreign exchange earner, are also in decline because the lower oil price means the oil-producing Middle Eastern customers have less buying power (Daily Telegraph 19-2-86).

The other set-back is the Chernobyl disaster. In the Soviet, economic progress is dependent on nuclear energy. There are ample

energy sources in Siberia, but these are thousands of miles away from the main industrial base. They estimate that every additional 1,000 mile transport doubles the price of energy. So the new economic plan for rapid industrial development depends on a vast increase in atomic power stations — the target is an increase of 400-600% in 15 years. The Soviet crash programme is based on using a standardised design of reactor, and the Chernobyl reactor that failed is made to the standard design. At present 24 such standard design reactors are built or being built.

“So the Soviet leadership faces an ugly dilemma. Either it must do as the Americans did after Three Mile Island, and pause in its nuclear programme; . . . or proceed with a nuclear technology that has proved to be dangerous” (*Guardian Weekly*, 11-5-86).

An insight into the pressures on Mr. Gorbachev to lessen defence spending so as to be able to speed up domestic progress was given in an article just before Gorbachev arrived at the Iceland summit:

“Because of the economic hardships at home, the rumblings of discontent over his cutback on alcohol and the obstacles to reform, he very much needs an international success’, one European diplomat told me. ‘That is why so much emphasis is being laid on the Euro-missile deal’.

“With electricity rationing already in operation in four of the 15 Soviet republics, the Babuskas (old women) predicting a particularly harsh winter (Moscow has had already two unseasonal September blizzards), and the ill-tempered queues no smaller, the pressure is growing on Mr. Gorbachev to secure the kind of deal which would allow resources to be transferred from the massive Soviet defence sector.”

“These economic considerations have been reinforced since Geneva by the need to provide the long suffering Soviet public with some tangible success after the heavy psychological blows of Chernobyl, the loss of the liner, the Admiral Nakhimov, and nearly 400 lives, and most recently, the humiliating sinking of the Soviet nuclear submarine in the Western Atlantic.”

The material in this chapter will make it fairly certain that Mr. Gorbachev’s offers regarding detente are genuine in the short term, and not a confidence trick; though beyond the detente period there will be aggression. The considerable impact Mr. Gorbachev has already made in a mere 18 months, on his own country, on W. Europe, and on the United States, suggests he is a man of destiny, that is, someone prepared by God to carry out a necessary task. We who are watchers of the scene have continually to learn patience while God slowly but inexorably prepares the nations for the great day of the war of God Almighty. We should not be surprised if a further few years of comparative ‘peace’ in Europe are appointed before great events take place. We do not know at what point we

shall be called to the judgment seat, but let us be warned that we be not lulled into a sense of security along with the world. As Peter declared in his day, so now there are some who in effect say, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

MR. GORBACHEV'S OFFERS TO RELAX TENSION

Throughout the year Mr. Gorbachev has kept up pressure to turn western Europe away from America towards the Soviet; and to bargain with America over arms reduction. There have been arms offers and visits. The outline that follows may seem unnecessarily long, but its purpose is to show how effective Mr. Gorbachev has been in gaining the confidence of the people of W. Europe, especially W. Germany. Just after the failure of the Reykjavik summit, an opinion poll commissioned by the US Information Agency among their key Nato allies revealed that Europeans trust Mr. Gorbachev on arms control more than Mr. Reagan; for the Germans an astonishing 43% to 6% (G.W. 9-11-86).

This is the sequence of events:

1. The agreement at the end of November 1985 set out several agreed intentions, three of which were: to seek early progress on a 50% reduction in nuclear arms; explore an interim agreement on medium range missiles; and consider reducing troop levels in Europe.
2. 1986 began with President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev exchanging 'conciliatory New Year's messages'. Shortly afterwards Mr. Gorbachev made his first offer.
3. Eliminate nuclear weapons was the offer!

"On the eve of the resumption of the United States-Soviet arms control negotiations in Geneva, he (Mr. Gorbachev) has come out with one of those grandiose Soviet 'peace' initiatives which have been the hallmark of his hitherto brief spell in the Kremlin. His display of public pyrotechnics has at its centre a 15-year timetable for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, linked of course, to an end to the design, construction, and deployment of space weapons. This broad brush stuff is fired over the heads of United States negotiators (although it has been tabled at Geneva), and targetted at Western public opinion"

(D.T. 21-2-86).

4. Only a week later Mr. Gorbachev started putting pressure on the U.S. regarding his offer, putting western Europe on his side:

"Pravda insisted yesterday, 'There can be no delay'. The Kremlin newspaper, depicting Russians as standing together with Europeans on the issue, said the people of Europe were waiting a serious and business-like American response to the Kremlin proposals" *(D.T. 5-2-86).*

5. About another week on, Edward Kennedy, visiting the Soviet, reported a new offer which Mr. Gorbachev had made:

“In his most recent proposal, Secretary Gorbachev announced the Soviet willingness to withdraw all of its SS-20s from Europe, if the United States withdraws its Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles from Europe, and if Great Britain and France agree to freeze their nuclear missile systems”
(G.W. 23-2-86).

Gorbachev said this offer could be negotiated even if there was no progress on the U.S. Star Wars conflict.

6. There was a lack of response from the U.S. to the proposals.

“The Congress, for its part, is in no hurry to hold a brief for making concessions to Moscow at a time when it is already being accused of being soft to the adversary, because it wants to trim military expenditure”
(G.W. 20-4-86).

This attitude did not please the people of western Europe. Increasingly they saw the U.S. as the obstacle to improvement.

7. July was the month of visits, seeking to persuade western Europe of the genuineness of the Soviet proposals. Early in the month President Mitterand of France visited Moscow and reported his view that ‘Mr. Gorbachev appeared to him to be very much a man of today, placing emphasis on detente and determined to modernize Russia, though not at any price’ (D.T. 11-7-86).

Another interesting phrase from Mr. Mitterand was, ‘He (Gorbachev) placed French relations with Russia in a historical context of centuries’.

8. The following week the Soviet foreign minister, Mr. Shevardnadze, paid a three-day visit to London.

“RIDING THE ‘NEW DETENTE’ EXPRESS

“ Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze’s three-day visit to London ended, July 16, confirming and extending Mikhail Gorbachev’s big campaign to win friends and influence people in Europe which he kicked off when he received French President Mitterand in Moscow.

“ The first Soviet foreign minister to visit London for ten years, Shevardnadze has carried out his mission successfully. . . With his many peace proposals in recent months and his new approach to public relations, Gorbachev has been quite successful in putting across the image of a new kind of leader sincerely anxious to cut through the obstacles that piled up on the way to agreements, but regularly frustrated by an American administration dreaming only of confrontation and the arms race. Look how good we are compared with the wicked Reagan, is the gist of the message” (G.W. 27-7-86).

9. A visit of Mr. Gorbachev to Poland at the beginning of July was the occasion of a particularly significant speech on peacefully uniting east and western Europe. More details of the visit itself are given later.

In his main speech he is reported as follows:

"In Warsaw three days ago Mr. Gorbachev celebrated a triumph of the status quo at the tenth congress of the Polish Communist Party. Communism had not disintegrated under the weight of Solidarity's protest. The West's remonstrations had died away, the frontier lands of the Soviet remained intact. Gorbachev, with General Jaruzelski at his side, was there to prove it — and to send out once again his message to Western Europe.

"This time it was addressed to Europe in the role of Europe complacently allowing herself to be taken for a ride across the ocean by the American bull. Stay at home, Mr. Gorbachev said. Let's all be Europeans once again, 700 million of us. Things are going to be better with me in charge, so do not abandon 'the old civilisation that has been formed here' because you feel that your security depends on loyally supporting the Americans . . ."

"The summit that is taking shape for the end of the year in the United States will be more important in hard substance than its predecessor in Geneva last year. Mr. Gorbachev wants to consolidate the political status quo with arms control agreements which will enable him to set relations with the West on a new and more confident footing. He needs aid through joint ventures and technology exchanges to remedy those 'distortions of socialism' which, manifesting themselves in economic paralysis and backwardness, present such a challenge to orthodox communists like himself".

The writer of the article then reflects on the situation:

"The future of Salt 1 and Salt 2 are only the tip of the iceberg of European uncertainties about the United States. Is the administration's distrust of the Soviet Union so great that it will in the end prefer to leave the great issues unsettled in the belief it will always have a technological superiority? And is there, underlying these perplexing attitudes, a neo-isolationism which sees an America, disenchanting with its so often supine or wayward allies, secure on its own under the shield of Star Wars?

" It is doubts of this sort that give such an interesting edge to Mr. Gorbachev's statements and to talks such as those between Mr. Shervardnadze and Sir Geoffrey. The Europeans know that we are fast leaving the post-war world. There will not be 300,000 American troops in Europe for evermore. Mr. Gorbachev says that the Soviet Union has changed and if he has his way there will be no foreign troops of any sort in Central and Western Europe. It is as if Europe found herself listening to both siren songs and the boom of rocks ahead". (G.W. 13-7-86).

The enticing concept of a united Europe presented by Mr. Gorbachev reminds us of the same theme when he met President Mitterand in Paris in October of last year, on his first visit after becoming the leader of the Soviet. (See Milestones 1985, pp.21, 22).

10. The next event was the unexpected success of the 35-nation European Security Conference in Stockholm in September. The Agreement, known as the Stockholm Document, provides for the inspection and monitoring of all troop movements of any

substantial size in both East and West Europe, Canada, and the U.S. The agreement suddenly became possible by the Soviet at the beginning of the last session accepting the principle of foreign inspection of Soviet military movements:

“The Soviet Union has accepted, for the first time, the principle of land and air inspection of its territory by members of the Western Alliance. The decision, at the Stockholm conference on security in Europe, will have major implications for future disarmament negotiations, where verification of compliance is a major problem, observers believe. British observers described the development as a ‘conceptual breakthrough’ ”
(D.T. 17-9-86).

Various optimistic articles then appeared in the newspapers, expressing hope of wider arms agreement.

11. Then came the major move by Gorbachev to consolidate his peace drive: the proposal of an immediate mini-Summit with Mr. Reagan, thus cutting out all the dithering and arguing about a grand summit in New York at the end of the year. President Reagan agreed; not aware, of course, of the pressure he would be under from Mr. Gorbachev to agree immediately to a far-reaching arms agreement. The Summit was duly held at Reykjavik, Iceland, on 11th and 12th of October.

In the short two-day meeting, Mr. Gorbachev made several business-like proposals for ‘immediate’ agreement:

1. Medium range nuclear missiles (Soviet SS-20s and U.S. Pershing 2 and Cruise) should be eliminated from both sides of the East-West frontiers.
2. 50% reduction of the massive intercontinental strategic missiles.
3. An undefined reduction of troop levels on both sides.
4. Abolish all nuclear weapons at the end of a ten-year period.

Gorbachev says Reagan agreed to these startling ‘peace’ steps, but there is some dispute about item 4 in Washington. Gorbachev then added to the package strict adherence to the ABM (Anti Ballistic Missile) Treaty signed by both sides in 1972. This would have prevented the space testing of any of Reagan’s Star Wars weapons. At this critical point Reagan drew back. The Americans felt they had been caught in a trap. But Gorbachev argued that if offensive weapons were gradually eliminated, there could be no need for a new defensive system as envisaged by Reagan.

WHY THESE GORBACHEV OFFERS?

Gorbachev's offers, in addition to gaining favour with W. Europe, sought to halt the American S.D.I. (Strategic Defence Initiative), or Star Wars. The Soviet could not afford the vast cost involved in keeping pace with likely American progress. It has been estimated that already the Soviet defence spending is some 15% of their national income, compared with 8% for the U.S. The many billions of dollars used up on SDI research would reduce the people's standard of living still further. And the Soviet military have no liking for spending vast sums on such a doubtful project.

REACTIONS TO THE REYKJAVIK FAILURE

America: After due consideration, the Americans back Reagan's decision to pull back. It is apparent that Reagan's SDI idea has already rung concessions from the Soviet, and they are content to wait for further developments. There is a wide distrust that the Soviet would carry out the steps agreed, if there was an agreement.

"Reagan's refusal to do a deal with Gorbachev is overwhelmingly endorsed in the opinion polls. More wondrous still, the poor limp vision that is Star Wars has suddenly become a major plus with American voters"

(G.W. 9-11-86).

The Soviet: Gorbachev said as his team left the Summit, they would not give up pursuing their object. Since the Summit they have eased the impasse on Star Wars by a modified definition of their limitation of 'laboratory testing only' for SDI systems, by saying they would allow prototype testing on the ground, but not in space.

Western Europe: The people of western Europe greatly welcomed Mr. Gorbachev's offers, and most were keenly disappointed with Mr. Reagan's failure to agree. The prospect of the removal of those fearsome SS-20s pointing at their countries, and the removal of the similar nuclear weapons — Pershing and Cruise — from their own soil, was surely attractive.

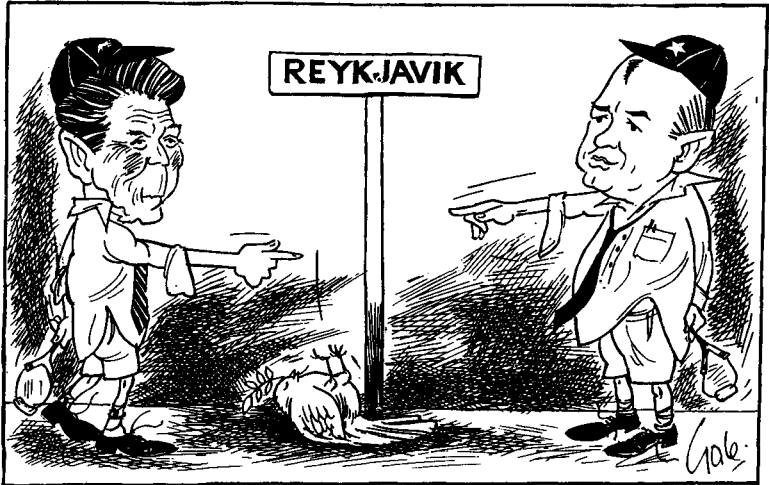
The Daily Telegraph Defence Correspondent John Keegan wrote:

"President Reagan will not be popular in Europe for his refusal to reach agreement with Mr. Gorbachev at Reykjavik. It will be said the Russians came bearing gifts and that Mr. Reagan turned them away. European complaints will sound all the louder because Mr. Reagan's sticking point was his Strategic Defense Initiative, better known as Star Wars.

"Star Wars is seen by Europeans as a purely American preoccupation: a means of defending the United States, if the technology can be mastered, against a threat from which the Europeans cannot escape

(D.T. 14-10-86).

Whereas popular opinion was so disappointed, Nato and the military were relieved that the agreement had fallen through. Removal of the medium range nuclear missiles from each side would leave W. Europe exposed to the overwhelming preponderance of the Soviet conventional weapons; and the short range tactical nuclear weapons, of which the Soviet have 650 and Nato 72. (Gorbachev had proposed 'freezing' the numbers of short range missiles.) To the military it was obvious that W. Europe would be less secure than it now is.



'HE DID IT!'

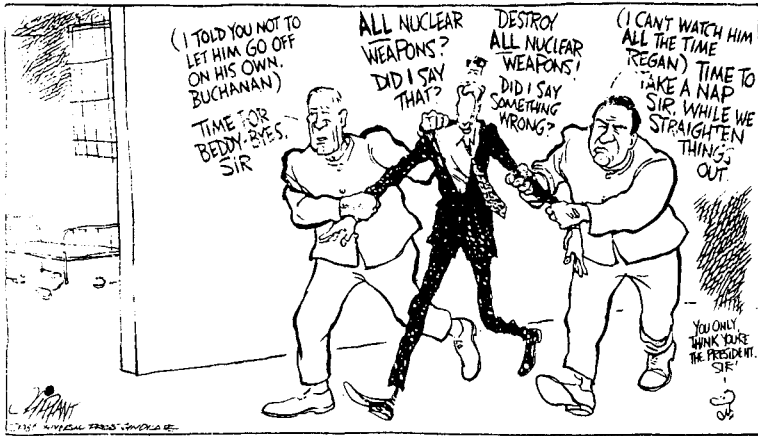
The military and political leaders of W. Europe were also alarmed that Reagan had agreed to so much before he drew back. It certainly seemed he was not very concerned with the welfare of W. Europe, and was thinking chiefly of his own country.

Although Mr. Gorbachev had failed to get the agreement he wanted, he had succeeded in pleasing the people of W. Europe, and in creating more anti-American feeling.

The corresponding dissatisfaction in America with Europe was fuelled by British Labour leader Mr. Kinnock declaring that the policy of a future Labour government would be to have all British nuclear bases dismantled, and to give Nato only conventional arms support. The mere possibility of this happening was frightening to the Pentagon. It would mean the break-up of the present Nato strategy, and probably lead to W. Europe losing American support. Even if conventional arms could be increased to match those of the Warsaw pact countries, where would the men be found to man them?; and where would the money be found for making such arms, after scrapping all the present nuclear equipment?

THE U.S.-IRAN ARMS DEAL BLUNDER

While Western Europe was still grumbling at Reagan's handling of their interests at the Reykjavik Summit, a further blow to U.S. standing in Western Europe came in December. This was the exposure of his scheme and that of his advisers to sell arms to Iran in cooperation with Israel, and in addition use the profits to aid the Contras, in defiance of a ruling by Congress that the Contras were not to be given aid. At the time of writing Reagan's detailed knowledge of events, and his authorisation of them, is not clear; but his hazy, vague, contradictory answers have created a worried feeling in Europe that this is no leader they can rely on any longer. This again turns them in the direction of Gorbachev. A somewhat similar feeling had been generated by his rash decisions in the early stages of the Reykjavik summit, and afterwards his confusion as to what had happened. Two cartoons in the Guardian Weekly hinted(!) at this.



It is too early to assess what will be the final effect of these happenings on the Reagan presidency but much damage has been done at a critical time when Gorbachev is in the lead. An article in the Guardian Weekly with the heading "ALLIES QUESTION U.S. ABILITY TO LEAD" had the following comments:

"The political turmoil in Washington, giving the impression of a rudderless Reagan administration, has raised widespread fears in Nato, as well as in the Kremlin, that US foreign policy has become hostage to a prematurely lame-duck presidency.

"But after disclosures which culminated in the resignation of Admiral John Poindexter, the sense of disbelief mingled with consternation has become so pervasive that senior officials in Europe are no longer bothering to hide their doubts about US capacity to lead Nato."

'SO I GOT UP FROM THAT TABLE WITH GORBACHEV AND WALKED OUT — AND YOU CAN IMAGINE MY SURPRISE WHEN I FOUND OUT WHAT WE HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT'



At the same time the Daily Telegraph reported:

"There is deep concern in London at the prospect of the administration drifting helplessly, its leadership divided and uncertain, while Mr. Gorbachev sustains a disarmament policy that will become increasingly attractive to Western European electorates" (D.T. 8-12-86).

DETENTE AND MORE TRADE COOPERATION

Assuming Mr. Gorbachev continues his detente policy towards W. Europe, this will bring relaxation of tension, and a continuing binding together of East

and West Europe through trade. Such trade links continue to be made. In particular there is now a movement to arrive at official recognition in matters of trade between the E.E.C. and the eastern Europe COMECOM (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance):

"EEC SET FOR PACT WITH COMECOM

"The European Commission in Brussels is set to ask the twelve EEC member states for a mandate to negotiate formal recognition, for the first time, of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance — better known as Comecom.

"This breakthrough has been achieved following delicate but ultimately successful exchange of letters between the Commission and Comecom, culminating in positive responses from all ten Comecom member countries" (Export Times July/August 1986).

A note in the Daily Telegraph said that three days of talks had taken place at Geneva on establishing official relations (23-9-86).

W. Germany has general elections in January 1987, and the present Opposition party, the Social Democrats, have made it known they would seek closer relations with the Soviet. Herr Johannes Rau, who hopes to become chancellor, says he will press for a new phase in detente, and try to 'negotiate away' both American and Soviet nuclear missiles" (D.T. 17-12-85).

SOVIET DETENTE IN OTHER DIRECTIONS

We tend to fix our attention on Europe and forget the Soviet's vast south-east frontier with China. As far as Europe goes we know fairly well the several invasions Russia has suffered, and can appreciate her security-minded attitude to the West, at the moment expressed in detente. Gorbachev is also seeking greater security on his China border by 'detente'. At present there are 1.5 million Chinese facing approximately half a million Russian troops. Gorbachev has started making concessions to China, just as he has done in W. Europe. He has made concessions over disputed islands; he has offered to withdraw troops from Mongolia. Formal border talks between the two are now to be revived after a break of nine years (D.T. 16-10-86).

For what it is worth, Gorbachev is said to want to 'withdraw' from Afghanistan: "We want to withdraw, the sooner the better" a senior official told me "This is understandable if he is able to do it on his own terms". Nearly seven years after going in, the Russians are mired in a conflict in which up to a million men have died, including thousands of their own soldiers" (D.T. 16-10-86).

IF 'PEACE' IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WHAT THEN?

How often in history have foolish people been lulled into a sense of security; and then their deceiver has come out in his true colours. The countries of eastern Europe were deceived with good words and promises after the second World War, only to have the heavy hand of Soviet totalitarianism fall upon them.

Discerning writers know that Gorbachev is wholeheartedly at one with the Communist party; in addition he is a nationalist Russian; and has a tough and ruthless side to his character. Edward Kennedy, after his talk with Gorbachev in February, concluded:

"He is a strong leader whose goal is improved efficiency of the Soviet system rather than fundamental reform. His world view is of a continuing struggle with the West, and he believes in wars of national liberation. On the issue of human rights in the Soviet Union, he adheres rigidly to the hard-line Soviet position".

An article on Mr. Gorbachev headed "From Russia with contempt", had the following two opening paragraphs:

"The new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, is solidly established in power. The enormous number of changes in personnel he has carried out at the higher levels of the party organisation, perhaps the largest aggregate since the early days of Stalin's rule, are designed to guarantee his will shall prevail.

"Yet there is no sign at all that the coming of Gorbachev brings any essential changes in the nature of the Soviet regime, now nearly 70 years

old. Quite the contrary. Despite the foolish supposition made by Western diplomats when Gorbachev took over, that he would introduce an element of modern-minded liberalism into Soviet methods, all the actions of his government confirm that the regime remains what it has always been: a self-perpetuating oligarchy of political gangsters, contemptuous of law and human life, determined to maintain their authority and privileges whatever the cost to the Russian people or anyone else. The only difference, and it is important, is that the new 'capo' of the Soviet mafia is a more active man than his three immediate predecessors and — still more significantly, perhaps — a more impatient one" (D.T. 10-5-86).

Gorbachev has the leadership behind him in what he is doing in this matter of detente.

"He (Gorbachev) began by saying that he had just come from a Politburo meeting, and he spoke with the Politburo's unanimous authority. He also said that long before Reykjavik was agreed for a summit, he had begun an unprecedented process of consultations with Soviet military, its academics and scientists and officials. He was saying that the proposals put on the table at Reykjavik were not simply the Gorbachev plan. They were the considered and agreed policy of the entire Soviet leadership" (G.W. 2-11-86).

When the bear is friendly, beware! No doubt the leadership also has an agreed long-term plan and Gorbachev will be ready to lead Russian expansion at the right time.

PROPHECY FULFILLING?

With detente toward Europe and China, and perhaps the Middle East, is it possible we shall see a period of Russian 'tactical' retreat while it gathers strength? Could this be the fulfilment of Ezekiel 38:4 — "*I will turn thee back*"? Then to be followed in due time by, "*and put hooks in thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army with thee*". Verse seven adds, "*Be thou prepared for thyself, thou, and all the company that are assembled unto thee*". Is this detente period the preparing time?

Further, is it possible there will be a broad 'peace' development, including 'peace' in the Middle East and Israel, that will allow Israel to be 'at rest' as Ezekiel 38 requires? And after this the Russian Gog will break its pledge and "think an evil thought", or as the margin gives "conceive a mischievous purpose", verse 10.

"*When they shall say Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them*" (1 Thess. 5:3). This has happened before; and will happen again. As we have written several times before, such peace developments affecting the land of Israel are probably after Christ has returned and the resurrection has taken place.

SURPRISE: THE ESSENTIAL IN SOVIET MILITARY STRATEGY

The Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies issued 'Occasional Paper no. 16' in 1985 with the title: "Heirs of Clausewitz: Change and Continuity in the Soviet War Machine".

It sets out clearly the inflexible hostility of the Soviet to the 'Capitalist' world; and also explains the Soviet military doctrine of SURPRISE as the essential ingredient in any war they initiate. While on the economic side the present policy of detente aims at allowing more rapid Soviet industrial progress, from the military point-of-view it is acceptable as a means of creating a climate in which they can achieve surprise in the final take-over of western Europe.

There follows a fairly extensive quoting from the Paper, as it seems to throw light on the phrase we have just considered, "thou shalt think an evil thought", or, "conceive a mischievous purpose".

"Soviet military doctrine leans as heavily on Lenin as it does on Marx, and emphasises the importance of Lenin's appraisal, after Clausewitz, that war is a tool of policy — war is nothing other than the continuation of policy by violent means. If the policies of war are the violent continuation of the policies of peace, then the policies of peace, for Lenin, were only the non-violent continuation of the policies of war. War and peace, to any communist leader, are only alternative tools for achieving all-important objectives of a policy, and to any communist leader the all-important policy is and remains the establishment of communism (of his own particular brand) throughout the world. No ideological or pseudo-intellectual argument, however well-meaning, must be allowed to obscure this essential point. Equally vital is to understand that, to a true communist, the triumph of communism is inevitable, and can only be hastened or delayed, not prevented.

War, then, is a tool to be used to achieve the basic aims of policy of the communist-led state when, and only when, it is the best tool for the task and its use does not risk a catastrophic setback, whether nuclear or otherwise . . . That war is not being used directly to communise Europe is because it is, in Soviet eyes, clearly not the best tool for the job in that part of the world at this moment. It can be argued, according to Lenin's thesis, however, that war *is* being used indirectly to this end, through wars in Third World countries and former colonies, which may serve to deprive the capitalist world of cheap raw materials.

"However, as far as Europe itself is concerned, the Politburo is pursuing a policy of communisation by peaceful means: subversion, espionage, political manoeuvring and pressures, economic activity — anything which falls short of direct armed hostilities. It must always be remembered that peace, to a Marxist, carried no connotations of goodwill whatsoever. Peace is merely the absence of war. "Peaceful coexistence", as defined by the Soviet Union, has no understanding of goodwill, cooperation or convergence. It is a cold coexistence without war, which will endure, communists believe, until the inevitable triumph of communism. Detente is seen as a reduction of international tension; its purpose is to make this triumph more certain, by reducing the risk of

a catastrophic war, unleashed by capitalism in its death throes. Time after time, the Soviet leaders have emphasised that detente means an increase in the class struggle, not a decrease.

“In all this, Soviet military power has a most important role to play. The stronger that power grows in relation to the power of the capitalist bloc, the more likely the world is to progress towards its ultimate communist destiny in peace. The greater the imbalance of power in Socialism’s favour — or, as Soviet ideologists put it, “the more the world correlation of forces tilts in favour of Socialism” — the less likely a final Armageddon. The first task of the Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, therefore, apart from policing the Warsaw Pact states themselves, is simply to be there, and to be seen to be so powerful that all the nations of Western Europe, starting with the smallest, are gradually intimidated into accepting an ever greater measure of Soviet influence in their affairs. In this way, the communists hold, Europe will progress towards communism “in peace”.

“The first danger to the West, therefore, is not war as such, but rather the threat of war, and that the West will succumb to that threat, and be gradually Sovietised, without ever a shot being fired. It is important to realise that, in Soviet eyes, the very existence of armed force is a most useful tool of policy, even though such force may never be used in combat.

No war, however, can be considered as won if it escalates into a strategic nuclear holocaust. To be won, a war in Europe must be ended — and the victor must achieve the aims of his policy — before that point is reached. That is, before the US President (and perhaps also the President of France and the Prime Minister of Britain) order the launching of their ballistic nuclear missiles. This makes it essential, in Soviet eyes, for such a war to be won quickly, and for the military and political collapse of NATO in Europe to be encompassed before sufficient time has elapsed for the United States to commit itself to a strategic nuclear war.

“However, the power of modern weaponry, both conventional and tactical-nuclear, is such, Soviet strategists maintain, that if NATO can effectively deploy its forces before a war starts (and particularly if NATO can make early and effective use of tactical nuclear weapons to halt a Soviet offensive) a rapid Soviet victory is unlikely. To be certain of a quick victory, it is essential to achieve surprise, and thus to pre-empt NATO’s mobilisation and deployment. It is the realisation of this need for speed and surprise that to a large extent determines the structure, deployment and strategy of the Soviet Armed Forces in Europe, and is at present occasioning a Soviet redeployment, and a reshaping of Soviet operational planning.

“A war in Europe must, the Soviets hold, be finished very quickly — before the United States (and France and Britain) have time to consider their strategic nuclear option. The overriding strategic requirement, therefore, facing the Soviet Armed Forces in planning for war is speed.

“In order to be won quickly, in a matter of days, a European war must, in the Soviet view, be started suddenly, and NATO surprised. Surprise will never be total, but a reasonable degree of surprise, although itself difficult, is essential.

“From the Soviet viewpoint, therefore, an attack on Nato can only be contemplated if surprise has been achieved. If NATO will not be surprised, an attack is unlikely.

“Even if a conventional high-speed offensive were ‘bogged down’, ample evidence suggests that the Soviet would see no value in resorting to nuclear weapons. These could not ensure a high rate of advance.”

The emphasis on speed of advance reminds us of the words in Daniel 11:40; *“He shall come against him like a whirlwind . . . and shall overflow and pass over”*.

Chapter 2: GORBACHEV AND THE POPE

TWO MEN CAPABLE OF NEGOTIATING

We have intentionally used the word 'Gorbachev' in the title, rather than 'the Soviet'. Gorbachev has the flexibility of action, such bargaining skill and scheming, that one could envisage him making a deal with the Pope, which earlier Soviet leaders would not manage. Harnessing 500 million Roman Catholics to an enterprise would surely be attractive. He will probably decide that if religion helps to control men and nations, then use religion.

Although the two men are rivals, each seeking with their own brand of philosophy to shackle the minds of men, they need not be antagonistic. They can agree, each to have authority in their own separate sphere, religious and civil. They no doubt already have the measure of each other. The fact is they basically have the same outlook. Both despise truth and make lies and deceit part of their weaponry. Both seek world domination. The Roman Catholic side is better equipped by long experience and technique to control the minds of men. Probably the Soviet has appreciated this. Events in Poland in 1986 show that the Soviet has learnt that the Roman Catholic power cannot be subdued. If that is so, then accommodation is the only alternative.

The process of accommodation between the Soviet and the Vatican has been going on for several decades. But the advent of Mr. Gorbachev early last year necessarily slowed down developments while Mr. Gorbachev got established and sorted out his priorities. This year his visit to Poland indicated his attitude to the Pope and the Roman hierarchy.

MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO POLAND

Mr. Gorbachev visited Poland on the occasion of the Polish Communist Party's Congress at the end of June. The Guardian report was headed: "JARUZELSKI GETS GORBACHEV SEAL OF APPROVAL".

This was the first Congress since the Solidarity Trade Union crisis of 1981, when Poland feared an armed Soviet invasion for allowing such an anti-government development to get under way. But Gorbachev did not come to censure.

"The Soviet leader kissed General Jaruzelski on the left cheek, symbolising that the prodigal had returned and been forgiven. He praised the General"
(D.T. 1-7-86).

Moreover, Mr. Gorbachev even expressed some sympathy with the Solidarity Trade Union movement. He said:

“It was a protest of workers against society, a manifestation of disagreement with the distortion of socialism in practice which pained the working class.”

In addition, an amnesty for Solidarity activists in prison was promised. (This took place two months later, when all 229 prisoners were released.)

Now we have to keep in mind that the Solidarity movement was Catholic inspired and aided; and this leniency towards Solidarity was an indirect acknowledgement by Gorbachev of the power of the Church in Poland. It also indicated that the Soviet now accepted the privileged position of the Church which Jaruzelski had reluctantly granted over the years. It indicated Gorbachev was ready to allow this cooperation of the Church and the Communist state. Regarding the amnesty of Solidarity activists (Roman Catholics) it was reported:

“Church sources said that the Church had demanded the amnesty as a condition for better relations with the Communist authorities”

(D.T. 12-9-86).

There was a reflective article on the situation in Poland in the *Guardian Weekly*, 18-9-86, headed: “COMING TO TERMS WITH POLAND”. Here are a few extracts:

“The General badly wants to gain Catholic credibility at home by a trip to Rome, and the Pope is equally keen to pay a return visit to his homeland next summer.

“The Polish Church’s decision earlier this month to drop its plan to funnel Western cash to the country’s private farmers, set against last week’s general amnesty, looks like a basis for accommodation.

“Without a historic compromise between the country’s main social and political forces, Poland is doomed to lurch from crisis to crisis. For such a compromise to work, one or two conditions need to be met. The regime has to accept the space carved out by the Church and private agriculture. And it has to bring part of the former (Catholic GP) opposition into partnership.

“Poland is already one of the freest places to live in Eastern Europe. Despite the experience of martial law, foreign travel, political debate, and unofficial publishing remain relatively uninhibited. On the other side, the opposition has to accept that the Communist party will continue to dominate the political scene and Poland will remain a member of the Warsaw Pact for as far as the eye can see.”

THE POPE AND A VISIT TO MOSCOW

The possibility of the Pope visiting Moscow was expressed in a Canadian newspaper in February 1984 (see *Milestones* '84, p.27);

and in a reporting of Mr. Gromyko's visit to the Pope in 1985 (see Milestones '85, p.68). A more positive situation was expressed in a Sunday Express article in August 1986. There was the bold headline across the page: "NOW THE PILGRIM POPE PLANS HIS MOSCOW TRIP". The first part of the article reads as follows:

"One of the most dramatic pilgrimages in modern history is being planned for Pope John Paul: his destination is Moscow.

"Secret negotiations are taking place for him to attend the celebrations marking 1,000 years of Russian christianity in 1988.

"Discreet contacts have already been made between the Kremlin and the Vatican. A top member of the Italian Communist Party — the largest in Western Europe — is said to be acting as a go-between.

"If the visit comes off, and it is still only in the early discussion stage, it would mark an incredible rapprochement between Rome and Russia. In the past the Pope has said it is one of his great ambitions to visit his flock in the Soviet Union" (17-8-86).

THE POPE'S BRAND OF 'LIBERATION THEOLOGY'

During the reign of the previous Pope, Paul VI, the Vatican pursued a leftist policy, even training some of its priests in Marxist doctrine; and priests collaborated with Communists in Central and South America. As we have reported in previous Milestones, the present Pope, John Paul II, has taken an opposite course, and has expressed strongly his disapproval of 'liberation theology' — that the priests should support the use of war and violence for the purpose of liberating the poor from the oppression of governments and landowners. Not only were the priests to withdraw from this cooperation with Communist revolutionaries, but he insisted that the field of action of the Church and its priests was on a higher plane: their task is saving men's souls and giving spiritual guidance. This places the Church and its leaders in a superior position — the spiritual authority is greater than the civil being the age-old argument. No doubt he intends to assert this in any negotiations with the Soviet.

But now it seems he sees the wisdom of not getting left behind on the purely worldly plane; otherwise he will lose out to the Communists. So the great surprise, he is preaching his own doctrine of 'liberation theology' to match that of the Marxists. It looks as if he is putting his priests back among the people along side the Marxists.

The Vatican document has been very carefully prepared, passing through seven drafts. It was approved by the Pope in April of this year. It has the title: "CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AND LIBERATION".

The title gives his liberation theology a 'christian' slant to distinguish it from Marxism. The following are extracts from the Daily Telegraph article on the document:

"VATICAN DOCUMENT APPEARS TO BACK 'FREEDOM FIGHTERS'.

"Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who is Prefect of the Vatican's watchdog on faith and morals, presented the document 'Christian Freedom and Liberation' on Saturday. He said the Catholic church 'cannot exclude in certain circumstances that violence can be the path to liberation'. But he added that passive resistance is more in keeping with Christian principles.

"The document was welcomed as 'positive' by Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian priest who was a pioneer of 'Liberation Theology'. This says that the Catholic Church should back those struggling against an oppressive regime even to the point of backing the use of weapons. He interpreted the 59-page document as 'accepting armed struggle to put an end to open and prolonged tyrannies'. Top Vatican officials also view it as backing civil disobedience against regimes 'which scoff at human rights with impunity' "

(D.T. 7-4-86).

This turn-round by the Pope is already being put into practice, as the following from the Petersburg Times (USA) shows.

"WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE POPE?

"In Mid-April John II made an astonishing concession to his own bishops — specifically to the bishops of Brazil, the biggest Catholic country in the world, who have been under constant attack from Rome ever since Karol Wojtyla became Pope in 1978.

"The Polish Pope reacted fiercely against the Marxist influences in the 'theology of liberation' which now dominates the Brazilian branch of the Church. The Sacred Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith (formerly the Holy Inquisition) condemned it, and liberation theologians like Brazil's Leonardo Boff were sentenced to 'obsequious silence' by the Vatican.

"So the Brazilian bishops who were summoned to Rome for a 'fraternal dialogue' in April arrived in some apprehension. Instead, to their amazement, the Pope sent the meeting a letter saying that the theology of liberation as practiced in Latin America 'is not only opportune, but it is useful and necessary. It must become a new stage in our theological thinking'. The delighted Brazilian bishops jumped to their feet and began singing the 'Hallelujah'.

This new stance in South America is not really new of course. In Poland the Church has been supporting the 'oppressed workers' against the State for years. The only difference is that in Brazil, the oppressive government is Catholic! But the Pope must move with the times, and keep in the running with the Communists. No doubt Jesuit casuistry will reconcile the Pope's great care for men's souls with supporting revolutionary movements in this down to earth world. His new move will make it easier to join with the Communists in a war of liberation from the 'oppressive' demands of the King of Righteousness.

Another interesting example of the growing accommodation of the Catholic Church with Marxist activities, was a Seminar in Hungary between Catholics and Marxists.

“Budapest, Hungary: Fifteen Marxists and 15 Roman Catholics from east and west on Wednesday began a three-day seminar entitled ‘society and moral values’.

“Organised by the Hungarian academy of science and the Vatican, it is the first such meeting ever held in an east bloc country of Christians and communists.

“Professor Ivan Berend, president of the academy of science, told Reuters after opening the proceedings that Marxists and Christians could agree on certain moral issues. ‘I think we can find some common points to create values which help society and the individual’ he said . . .

“In an address to the opening session he (Cardinal Paul Poupard) noted that some Christians regarded cooperation with Marxists as a ‘risky and useless game of poker’. But he said the church must engage in a dialogue with the real world, and that Marxists and Christians had a common concern in defending ethical values.

“Professor Jozef Lukacs, director of the academy’s institute of philosophy, noted that both Marxism and Christianity were supranational systems of belief which sought the universal. He himself was a convinced materialist, but, like a Christian, was concerned with peace and justice”
(Daily Times, Melawi, 10-10-86).

Probably Hungary was chosen for this Catholic-Marxist get-together because that country has had tolerably ‘good’ relations between Church and State for several years.

GLOBE-TROTTING GORBACHEV

We are very familiar with the Pope’s world perambulations — he is at the time of writing on his 32nd expedition; this time to the Far East, Australia and New Zealand. Now Mr. Gorbachev decides it will be useful to follow suit, and carry the banner of international Communism round the world. And where should he first go? To Central America, of course, where the Pope has already been three times. Here is another battleground between the two parties. And in addition, it will strengthen Communism on the doorstep of America.

“GORBACHEV TOUR TO WOO LATIN AMERICA

“Mr. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, is planning a diplomatic offensive in America’s backyard by visiting a number of Latin American countries next year.

“Top of the list is Mexico, whose political stability is of deep concern to Washington. Many American officials believe one of Moscow’s ultimate goals is to see Mexico go the way of Cuba and Nicaragua in falling into the Marxist embrace.

“Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, Argentina and Peru are also said to be on Mr. Gorbachev’s itinerary”
(D.T. 8-10-86).

This drive by Communist Gorbachev into Catholic Central and South America, perhaps explains why the Pope has seen fit to tell his priests in those countries to give support to liberation theology. As he said it “is not only opportune, but it is useful and necessary”.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND ROME

There has been much activity over the last 20 years between leaders of the Church of England and Rome, in what they call dialogue, discussing their doctrinal differences, and aiming at re-union. We last reported on the matter in *Milestones* 1981, pp. 20-24 and 1982, p.56. Altogether four ‘Agreed Statements’ have been produced.

The Report on Eucharistic Doctrine 1971

Statement on the Ministry and Ordination 1973

Statement on Authority 1977 and 1981

Final Report 1982

The General Synod of the Church of England in 1985 gave approval to these reports, and saw them as offering ‘a sufficient basis for taking the next concrete step towards the reconciliation of our churches’.

But the Pope would not approve the Final Report (which incorporated the previous Agreed Statements), saying that the Church of England had not come near enough to the Catholic position.

The Church of England has moved a good distance away from the Reformation principles expressed in the 39 Articles. The following notes are taken from *Bible League Quarterly*, Oct-Dec. 1986:

On the Eucharist (Catholic Mass) the Report has such phrases as: “through prayer and thanksgiving . . . the bread and the wine become the body and blood of Christ” (p.16 Final Report). And “The elements are not mere signs; Christ’s body and blood become really present and are really given” (p.15).

On the Ministry and Ordination, instead of ‘minister’ carrying the essential idea of a preacher, he is a sacrificing priest.

“While it acknowledges that New Testament ministers are never called ‘priests’ (hieris), it claims that ‘Christians came to see the priestly role of Christ reflected in these ministers’” (p.35). It also asserts that the ‘eucharist’ ministry (the priest sacrificing Christ afresh G.P.) is ‘the essential nature of the Christian ministry.’ (p.36). The statement makes no attempt to justify this position from Scripture, but relies wholly upon tradition.”

Regarding Authority, the ARIC reports; “again turns from Scripture to tradition and historical development to justify its

proposal that in a reunited church there should be a universal headship and that headship should properly belong to the Bishop of Rome (p.64).”

After the General synod had approved the ARIC reports in February 1985, The Times wrote the next day, “At about noon on February 14, 1985, the Church of England, through its representative body, declared its willingness to take into its system the office of universal primate, the Bishop of Rome”. That was an historical movement.

Despite these moves to accept Roman Catholic dogmas, it is doubtful whether the Church of England will come sufficiently in line with Rome for the Pope to approve reunion. One obstacle is the Church of England’s keenness for the ordination of women, already approved by the General Synod, and due for final decision in 1988. Rome stands by the Bible and will not tolerate this! — their confessor priests are their carefully trained and reliable eyes and ears of the Church!

A second obstacle is the weak attitude to the denial of basic christian doctrines on the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, and the genuineness of the miracles by Christ and the apostles the bodily resurrection of Christ. This is so out of harmony with Rome’s unchanging adherence to its religious dogmas, and its claimed authority to represent Christ.

There is an influential section of the Church of England that is indifferent to Church doctrine. It would probably accept re-union with Rome; but Rome’s attitude to them is uncertain. It is the section of the Church of England who are strongly on the left, and are supporters of liberation theology. Their influence became apparent in the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on what to do about the problems of the inner cities. Their attitude was described in a comment on the Commission’s Report.

“Traditional church structures and hierarchies are rejected and, instead, the people are encouraged to form small tight-knit groups, or ‘base communities’, which form the ‘church of the poor’ where the gospel is regarded not so much as a source of spiritual succour as a godly handbook for political action”.

The Archbishop’s report is quoted:

“to all of us, the example of liberation theology opens up the possibility that new priorities, as well as new methods, can restore to us a theology that is truly relevant to the needs and aspirations of people today . . . such a theology would start not from a conventional academic syllabus of Christian knowledge or biblical study, but from the personal experience, the modes of perception and the daily concerns of local people themselves”
(D.T. 25-2-86).

If this is the mind of the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Bible and christian doctrines put on one side, it is not surprising that the Bishop of Durham and others are free to reject the gospel realities about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The absence of any Biblical concern and strength in the Church of England is causing devout believers in old-fashioned Church teaching to turn to the 'unchanging' Roman Catholic faith. Some well-known names have moved over this year. It may be that Rome will be content with what may be a growing transfer of individuals from the Church of England to Rome.

Chapter 3: A STEP TOWARDS UNIFYING WESTERN EUROPE

THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT

In 1984 a draft Treaty of European Union was prepared by the European Assembly and lauded in a supporting speech by President Mitterand of France. Those who possess Milestones '84 will find full details of this, and of the background machinery of the EEC organisation, in the first chapter, entitled "A new initiative to bring about the unification of western Europe". Mrs. Thatcher and some other countries opposed the Bill and said it was not necessary. After some 18 months of debate, a final Act was agreed, curtailed from the original, and very disappointing to the European parliamentarians. Nevertheless, it provides for a significant increase of the sovereignty of the Europarliament and a corresponding decrease in the sovereignty of the British and other national parliaments. It is known as the Single European Act (S.E.A.) and it amends the original Treaty of Rome. The title of the Act is significant, using the word 'single'. It is aiming at a single nation; aiming to unite the various member nations. Its first objective is an "Internal Market" by 1992, which is defined as "an area without frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured". Here surely is a grouping of nations which may be given the Biblical title of 'a beast' — a symbol for a coordinated system of peoples.

The Single European Act was signed by representatives of the member countries in February of this year; and it was then passed to the national parliaments for ratification. It was placed before the British parliament in May under the title of "The European Communities Amendment Bill". By November the Bill is about through all its stages, with surprisingly little opposition, even from the Labour party.

BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE REDUCED

The two main items of the Act are, first, decisions in the future will be based on majority voting; and secondly, the European Parliament has increased powers and authority.

At present it is necessary for there to be unanimous agreement by all member state for any new important law. This provision will be swept away, and approval will be based on a system of weighed voting.

“Britain, for example, will have ten votes — as many as Ireland, Greece and Luxemburg put together; but if she is defeated by some combination of the votes of her fellow members she will have to accept the decision which will be automatically embodied in British law. Obviously the British government, and therefore the Parliament at Westminster, have lost out on that amendment.

“Then there are to be new arrangements for the relation between the council of Ministers (which represents the governments of the member States), the European Commission (the governing body of the Community’s civil service) and the European Assembly (a body directly elected by the electorates of the member States and now to be officially known as the Parliament). The significance of these arrangements, briefly, is that when the European Parliament and the Commission are agreed on the need for some new law it will be extremely hard for the Council (which, remember, represents the governments of the Community) to reject the proposal, here again, Westminster loses out”.
D.T. 1-7-86.

Various writers and speakers have high-lighted how Britain, and all the other nations are losing their national independence. We are seeing the development of centralised control of the Western European community. When the Bill was before the House of Lords, Lord Denning, the former Master of the Rolls, gave his assessment as a senior Law expert:

“The Single European Act would be interpreted solely by the European Court in Luxemburg, comprised of dedicated Europeans who were devoted to the task of giving community law supremacy over the national law of member states.

“The purpose of the Act was to ‘transform Europe into a single nation with its own Parliament and its own legislation, making its own law called community law’, claimed Lord Denning.

“In the long run Parliament would be nothing more than a subordinate body those laws would be invalid if they were in conflict with or inconsistent with community law.” (D.T. 1-7-86).

Again, Sir Edward Du Cann, a leading Conservative back-bencher, voiced his objections:

“Sir Edward, in a renewed attack on the European Communities (Amendment) Bill, told the House ‘We have a huge increase proposed in the authority of the European Assembly (parliament G.P.), and it follows there must be an equivalent decrease in the authority of United Kingdom Ministers.

“It follows, too, that there must be a decrease in the authority of Parliamentarians in the United Kingdom from whom Ministers are selected and to whom, hitherto, they have been answerable.’

“Sir Edward called the Act a new treaty at least equal in significance to the original Treaty of Rome. It was astounding that ‘this huge step towards the creation of a European super-state and towards the creation of a European political union’ had never been discussed in either House of the British Parliament” (D.T. 27-6-86).

NEW POWERS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

As has been already stated, it is the European Assembly or Parliament that specifically emerges as having more authority in the working of the rather complex EEC organisation. It now has powers to reject Bills it does not like, and send them back for reconsideration. Or where it promotes a Bill, and has the agreement of the Commission secretariat (the Civil Service) it will be difficult to stop the Bill becoming law.

Again, in future the Parliament's view on foreign policy must be taken into consideration. This is part of a further step to develop a common foreign policy for the EEC. A draft treaty on 'European Cooperation in the Sphere of Foreign Policy' has been prepared. There are to be four meetings a year by foreign ministers of the member states; "common principles and objectives" are to be gradually developed and defined. A secretariat is to be set up to assist in the coordination of Community foreign policy. Clearly this is another thread in binding together the diverse elements of the EEC.

Foreign
Law
policy

THE POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

An insight into the powers conferred by the Single Nation Act on the Commission, were expressed in a letter published in the Daily Telegraph:

"The Act takes a giant step towards the centralisation of power in Europe. It increases the powers of the E.E.C. Commission to a dangerous degree; the Commission can have delegated to it the powers of the council. The House of Lords Committee comments: 'it is difficult to conceive how national Parliamentary government can continue to exist in any real sense alongside so powerful a directive body'.

"Under the cloak of 'completing the Internal Market' the Commission in its White Paper (June 1985) outlines a host of intolerable legislative proposals which it will seek to thrust upon Member States, some by the end of this year, and the rest by 1992. The policies of the Member States will be made to converge until they speak with 'one voice'; that voice will belong to the Commission.

"A good indication of the authoritarian measures that this unaccountable body will demand is given by the White Paper; plans for 'increased surveillance by the Commission in the field of competition rules' (para 19); spot checks at the internal frontiers and unland' (para 29); 'common passports' and the 'Green Disc' to 'enable authorities to see at a glance that the individual is entitled to free passage' (para 52); 'increased use of data electronic transmission' and administrative cooperation between police authorities and the information transmission networks (paras 33 and 53).

"In short, all the apparatus of an efficient police state to be introduced on a community-wide basis. The citizens of the Community, like the denizens of Animal Farm, must patiently wear their Green Discs and submit to the yoke. "is this what our M.P.'s were elected to perpetuate?"

Carolene Neill, All Souls College, Oxford." (D.T. 6-6-86).

One supposes that a spirit of rebellion from an unnecessary yoke will eventually stir the British, but not after much tribulation. The various quotes in this chapter are not so much concerned with the position of one nation, Britain, but as a demonstration of how the re-forming of the final beast of Revelation chapter 17 proceeds slowly but surely. A common foreign policy, a supreme parliament for the whole community, the submission of the individual to the State, — these elements now under construction surely justify the label of the scriptural symbol, "a beast", peoples organised into one community under one head.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL JOIN THE COMMON MARKET

After much argument Spain and Portugal were accepted into the EEC at the beginning of 1986. Now it can be said that all the 'ten horn kingdoms' making up the original beast of the sea are participants. Spain, although under a socialist government is strongly Roman Catholic and Portugal also is mainly Catholic they will strengthen the hold of the Vatican on the Community. No doubt behind the scenes they will work on the behalf of the Pope. The concept set out in the Single Nation Act of a common foreign policy is a thing the Vatican regards as very important. She wishes to control the behaviour of Western Europe towards the rest of the world; just as she largely controls the foreign policy of the U.S.A.

America currently has some 12,000 troops in Spain, and four military bases. Spain now becomes a full member of Nato, but is pressing for a reduction of the American presence in Spain.

THE EUROPEAN FLAG AND ANTHEM

"EEC TO GIVE ITSELF TWELVE YELLOW STARS"

"The creation of a 'people's Europe' took a tiny step forward yesterday when foreign ministers of the Twelve agreed on a common flag for the EEC institutions. As to the Common Market anthem, the music is agreed, but they cannot agree on the words"! (D.T. 23-4-86).

There is debate as to whether all EEC functions should be concentrated in Brussels, or in Strasburg, where the European Parliament meets. If all were to be moved to Strasburg, the historical background of this city would add to the dignity and prestige of the whole European government.

Chapter 4:

ISRAEL SEEKING PEACE

A PEACE INITIATIVE THAT FAILED

The United States started a peace initiative in the Middle East in 1984 and this was taken up by Jordan in association with the PLO in February 1985. Hussein and Arafat called for negotiations to be held initially at an international conference at which the Soviet and the PLO were represented. Israel and the U.S.A. eventually gave agreement to there being an international conference, including the Soviet, and also the PLO, if they would agree beforehand to certain conditions. During 1985 various favorable circumstances developed, as outlined in Milestones '85. At the end of the year there was some expectancy that the PLO would succumb to various pressures and agree to the United Nation resolution 242, renouncing violence and accepting the lawful existence of Israel. But the PLO did not take this step and early in February 1986 the U.S. declared the Peace effort dead:

“The United States yesterday signalled the death of the year-long American-backed Middle East peace effort involving Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, saying the PLO leadership had failed.

“The PLO has been unable to meet King Hussein’s challenge to accept the U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 . . .”, Mr. Redman said.

“The record is clear, that the PLO leadership has failed to seize the opportunity offered to it, and all parties will now have to find another basis to move towards a negotiated peace’ ” (D.T. 2-2-86).

Thus an answer was given to our closing remarks on this topic in 1985, which read: “We do not know what God’s plans are in detail. But there has been such a remarkable development of favourable circumstances this year, that it is not unreasonable in thinking this is the work of the angels in forwarding the appointed plan. We must expect progress to continue to be slow, and perhaps in a year’s time there may be a more clear picture”.

ISRAEL STILL SEEKING PEACE

After this failure of the peace initiative, Jordan broke with the PLO. “Hussein drops Arafat as peace partner”; “Hussein gives up trying to partner PLO” were two of the headlines. From an Israeli point of view this was a possible step forward. It might allow direct negotiations with Jordan.

At the Israeli Labour party Congress in April, both Prime Minister Peres and Defence Minister Rabin held out the hand of peace to the West Bank Palestinians and to Jordan:

"Prime Minister Peres extended an unmistakably dovish hand of peace to Israel's Arab neighbours last week, affirming that Israel recognises the Palestinians 'as a nation', and offering to hold dialogue with Jordan at any level, 'openly and quietly'."

Defence Minister Yitzak Rabin also lent force to the dovish swing of the Labour Party, when he called for an active and conciliatory approach to the problem of the administered territories.

"The concept of "waiting for a phone call" must be eradicated from our lexicon', Rabin said in a rousing speech at the Convention. 'Rather we must lift up the phone and make a call'.

"Israel must be ready to make "painful territorial compromises" to advance peace and ensure the country's Jewish majority', Rabin said" (J.P. 19-4-86).

Mr. Peres regarded the matter as urgent, as he had only to the end of October as Prime Minister, when the leader of the rival party in the national coalition would take over the premiership. Peres had some success winning moderate Arab support for negotiations, but nothing substantial developed before he had to vacate the leadership. He had a moderately successful meeting with King Hussan of Morocco in August, enlisting his hesitant support. And in September he spent a day with President Mubarak of Egypt, again, with limited success. The outcome was said to be —

"The Israelis and Egyptians are currently working on a formula agreed by Mr Peres and President Mubarak to set up a preparatory committee to work toward convening of an international conference to resolve the conflict" (D.T. 16-9-86).

A rather lifeless result! Since these two meetings there has been further pressure on Arafat to support the UN Resolutions, but with no effect.

CAUTIOUS JORDAN

Jordan is the central element in negotiations over the West Bank. Jordan took the area by force in 1956 and Israel reconquered in 1967. Jordanians are Palestinian Arabs and therefore have a close affinity with the inhabitants of the West Bank. Over the years it has become clear that, although Jordan is anxious to come to a settlement with Israel, it will not risk negotiating openly with Israel without at least the support of the moderate Arab States. Her fears

also arise from her northern neighbour, hard-line Syria, who is much more powerful, militarily, than Jordan, and is hostile to Jordan because Jordan supported the PLO as the agreed representative of the West Bank Palestinians.

The break between Jordan and the PLO — all Fatah offices in Jordan were ordered to be closed — has allowed a measure of cooperation between Syria and Jordan. Assad of Syria paid a visit to Jordan in May. But this does not help any negotiations between Jordan and Israel; rather the reverse. Having established better relations with Syria, Hussein would be reluctant to raise the ire of his powerful neighbour by seeking any compromise with Israel.

A SMALL-SCALE AND LESS OPEN APPROACH TO PEACE IN THE WEST BANK

Though Jordan is not willing to step out of line from the Arab States in peace negotiations, she has for some time been cooperating with the Israelis in the daily affairs of the West Bank. This year has seen a significant development in this direction. One wonders if such development was 'agreed' at one of the secret meetings that have been reported to have taken place between Israel and Jordan.

Early in the year the Israeli government announced various steps to be taken to improve the lot of the Arabs in the West Bank.

"The Israeli government is to introduce devolution for Arabs living in the occupied West Bank in an attempt to destroy support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

"Israel's Prime Minister, Mr. Shimon Peres, wants Arab West Bank leaders to assume responsibility for a whole range of powers to curb the growing number of terrorist attacks in the area.

"Mr. Peres wants to hand over control of health, housing, commerce and tourism, among other powers, to Arab administrators with Israeli Government retaining control of law and order and security.

"The move is being interpreted as an attempt to break the PLO's power base in the occupied territories. The majority of the two million Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza see the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. But the Israeli Government believes that if local West Bank Arabs are given an opportunity to demonstrate responsible administration in the region, support for the PLO will fade.

"Government officials in Jerusalem said details of the devolution plan were being worked out with the Jordanians and any appointment of new Arab mayors would be with their approval.

"The Israeli Government wants to undermine support for the PLO to persuade King Hussein to start direct peace talks with Israel" (D.T. 18-2-86).

A month later it was reported that Israel was preparing to appoint three new Arab mayors in the West Bank, replacing Israeli military commissioners.

Parallel with this Israeli move, Jordan also adopted a new policy of taking a greater interest in the affairs of the West Bank. Having broken with the PLO, Jordan sought to present herself as the West Bank's friend, in place of their traditional friend, the PLO.

"Jordan is moving ahead with its new policy of direct involvement in West Bank affairs, following its closure of Fatah offices in Amman last week.

"Informed sources monitoring Jordanian affairs said last week that Jordan was considering a plan to abolish its Ministry of Occupied Land Affairs, and involve ministries directly in West Bank projects such as industry and education.

"Jordan's 1.3 billion dollar five-year economic development plan for the West Bank provides further evidence of Amman's deepening involvement in West Bank affairs. Jordan's planning minister, Taher Kanaan, said the programme calls for liberalizing Jordan's policies on assistance for West Bank industries, schools, public utilities and housing — and providing new low-interest loans for these sectors. But, he added, implementation of the programme would be conditional on Israel bringing its West Bank policies into line with international conventions for occupied territories.

"Kanaan said American officials had encouraged Jordan's planning" (D.T. 19-7-86).

COOPERATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN

Later in the year the cooperation of Israel and Jordan in the affairs of the West Bank became general knowledge; as also the fact that it had been mediated by the U.S.

"JOINT PLAN TO ISOLATE THE PLO TAKES PLACE

"... It was also the day (June 6, 1967 G.P.) Israeli tanks rolled into what was then the largest town in the West Bank of Jordan at the start of the Six-Day War. The Cairo-Amman bank, along with all other Jordanian financial institutions, was closed by the occupying forces, and has remained so for the past 19 years.

"But in a development that underlines the growing behind-the-scenes cooperation between Israel and Jordan to improve the living conditions of the 800,000 Palestinians living in the occupied territories, the bank is being prepared for a full resumption of business, with a formal opening later in the month.

“The announcement that the bank is to be reopened was made at the same time that Palestinian mayors were finally re-installed in all the Arab towns in the occupied territories, replacing the Israeli military administrators.

“These developments are clear evidence that Israel and Jordan, despite their continued failure to open direct peace talks to end the Middle East conflict, are able to work together to ease the tensions in the occupied territories.

“The three moderate Palestinian mayors appointed last week were all sanctioned personally by King Hussein of Jordan before Israel made the appointments. In the case of the Cairo-Amman Bank, Israeli and Jordanian officials negotiated directly in London and managed to agree upon a memorandum of understanding to establish the first jointly run commercial bank in the West Bank. The memorandum is the first written agreement between Jordan and Israel since 1949.

“The reopening of the bank has been heralded by American officials, who acted as intermediaries during the delicate discussions, as the most important development in Israel-Jordan relations for several years.

“Following the collapse of the joint PLO-Jordanian peace initiative earlier this year, Jordan has supported Israel, and initiated moves of its own, to squeeze out the PLO and encourage a more moderate Palestinian leadership that would be able to play a full role in any future peace negotiations” (D.T. 14-10-86).

Another step in cooperation was reported in December:

“In a move which underlines just how closely Israel and Jordan are now working together, a representative of a pro-Jordanian rebel PLO faction has been allowed to set up in the West Bank town of Hebron”.

“Mr. Zaim — who has the full backing of Jordan — and his supporters have declared themselves opposed to the use of violence to achieve Palestinian political objectives, in stark contrast to Mr. Arafat’s policies” (D.T. 17-12-86).

This new situation between Israel and Jordan is rather similar to that between East and West Europe: by increasing cooperation in trade and day to day living, the two sides are being drawn together. How far this will go, we shall have to wait and see.

Chapter 5:

MIDDLE EAST CHANGES THAT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT IN THE FUTURE

A VERY COMPLEX SITUATION

The Middle East is politically a very complex situation and very unstable. Changes can be sudden and unexpected. Countries opposed to each other may see fit to cooperate; groupings of nations change and alter the balance of forces. Humanly speaking it is impossible to predict what will be the next major happening. Our only reasonable attitude is to watch events shaping, armed with as full a picture of the various factors that are reacting on one another. In this chapter we outline some factors that seem important, for readers to keep in mind as they watch the changing scene.

1. Mrs. Thatcher's friendship towards Israel

Mrs. Thatcher made a four-day visit to Israel at the end of May. This was the first visit of a British Prime Minister since the State of Israel was founded in 1948. Her visit had the support of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, in the hope that she might promote some 'peace' settlement over the West Bank dispute. Mrs. Thatcher made no immediate headway in this direction, but the visit proved very satisfactory from Israel's point of view.

A full page article in the Jerusalem Post, assessing the significance of the visit, had the heading "THE TURNING OF THATCHER"; which had a corresponding headline in the Guardian Weekly — "THATCHER SWITCH ON LINE ON THE PLO". The subheading in the Jerusalem Post read: "With the visit to Israel of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, there seems to be a major coming together of views on the Middle East dispute". Four days of talks and visits resulted in her breaking away from the EEC 1980 Venice Declaration, which endorsed the West Bank Palestinians becoming an independent separate State and insisted that the PLO should have a major part in negotiations. On these two matters, at the end of her visit, Mrs. Thatcher expressed her view that an alternative should be found for the 'terrorist' PLO; and that the West Bank Palestinians should be federated with the Jordanian Palestinians. These two basic points are substantially the position of the Israel Labour Alignment's plan.

Beyond these political matters, the visit was marked by great warmth towards Mrs. Thatcher by Israelis generally and also the government. The following are extracts from the Jerusalem Post article.

“The first visit of a British prime minister to Israel managed to strike a deep historic chord in the heart of Jerusalem, while incidentally bringing about something surprisingly close to an alignment of the British and Israeli views on the Middle East conflict. There was something stirring in seeing the Union Jack prominently displayed in the streets of Ramat Gan, Ashkelon, Rehovot and Jerusalem (and especially at the entrance to the King David Hotel, which served as the British Mandate Military HQ and was bombed by Irgun terrorists in 1946).

“Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, known at home (and, no doubt, in Argentina) as the Iron Lady, slayer of mighty trade unions and scourge of the South Atlantic, got off to a flying start on Sunday morning when she kneeled for 20 seconds on the cold stone floor of the Yad Vashem memorial chamber, amidst the etched names of the concentration camps in which the six million died. Only one other European leader, Israelis recalled, had done so before her — former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, two decades ago. Thatcher’s act of reverence and remembrance, rather than remorse, against the backdrop of the continuing reverberations of the Waldheim affair (the same Waldheim who had refused to wear a skullcap in the same memorial chamber), won the heart of Israel completely.

“From then on, she could practically do no wrong. She probably expected as much, but also appeared to be deeply moved. She was repeatedly to speak, during the following two days, of a photograph she saw at Yad Vashem of a German soldier shooting a mother and child.”

“As if that gesture, directed at the Jewish people, was not enough, on Day Two she flew down to Sde Boker to lay a wreath at the grave of the State’s founder and first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion — a gesture directed at the Israelis. She declared that she had long admired the ‘Old Man’, who ‘represented all that is best in leadership’.”

After dealing with the political matters which we have already outlined, the article continued:

“But perhaps it was neither of these two major shifts in British policy — Jordanian-Palestinian ‘federation’ and an ‘alternative’ to the PLO — so much as a philosophical-historical understanding of Israel evinced by Thatcher that won the hearts of policy-makers in Jerusalem. At the press conference, Thatcher, recalling her visit to Yad Vashem, expatiated at length on how Israel, unlike any other state, must be viewed and understood against the backdrop of its recent history — i.e., the holocaust. This, she stressed, underscored Israel’s insistence on a peace with ‘security’. It was an insistence she obviously sympathizes with and which she enjoined all potential negotiators to ‘understand’ and to take into account” (J.P. 2-6-86).

Mrs. Thatcher's interest and sympathy with Israel's point of view is regularly expressed in the Newsletter of the Conservative Friends of Israel. How large is the membership of this group is not stated. A general warmth towards Israel runs through the Newsletter, published occasionally. The following is typical, taken from the first paragraph of the July issue. Having referred to Mrs. Thatcher's successful visit to Israel, it continues:

"... we can all be so much happier in the knowledge that our own country and Israel are now much more in tune with each other. No longer is Israel relentlessly pilloried in the media. True, there are those who still seek to find only fault in Israel; to highlight alleged falls from grace by Israel; to picture Israel as the villain of the piece in the Middle East, the cause of unrest not only in that area but on the world scene. Those who cannot bring themselves to describe — and salute — the democratic way of life of the Israel Government and People, the rule of law there, the equity of women in all things, the high level of its educational institutions, its pursuit of technological excellence, its cultural endeavours and achievements. But for the vast majority, Israel is now seen for what it is, a miracle of achievement in the short 38 years of its existence, the only democracy in the Middle East, the only reliable ally of the West in an area seething with inter-Arab wars, surrounded by countries where human rights are disregarded, where terror flourishes, where instability is the norm rather than the exception."

Certainly a glowing picture. What proportion of Conservative M.P.s would support it we do not know. While the Labour party has generally been sympathetic to the socialist attitude of many Israelis, the Conservative party in the past has generally been pro-Arab.

2. America's anti-Arab development

In May of this year the Guardian Weekly had a full-page article with the heading:

"THE REVOLUTION IN WASHINGTON'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY"

The article makes the case that there has been a growing anti-Arab feeling in America, starting in 1980 when Iran took the U.S. airmen hostage, and these were only released after America had been humiliated. Here are some extracts:

"The roots of the revolution date back at least to the 1980 election, and to three factors that shaped the Reagan presidency: the rise of terrorism against Americans; the oil weapon; and the strong pro-Israel feelings of Ronald Reagan himself. These factors combined to produce a change in attitudes — one that is as much anti-Arab as it is pro-Israeli.

"A fourth reason for Congress's anti-Arab attitude was stated — the lack of support the U.S. has received from Saudi Arabia.

"What instead motivates the Congress is the undisguised hostility toward the Arabs in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular. The leading Senate opponent, Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), argues that the Saudis have never supported the Israel-Egypt peace treaty nor the peace initiative of King Hussein. He also appeals to the public concern about terrorism by noting that the Saudis have provided subsidies to the Syrians and the PLO, both of which are linked to terrorist activities.

"What is surprising is that this congressional rhetoric is echoed at the very highest levels of the Reagan administration. Said one senior White House official a few months ago, 'I believe in strategic cooperation with both Israel and Saudi Arabia. We get it from Israel, but not from Saudi Arabia'. And despite the administration support for the Saudi sale (of further arms, GP) so far it has been mainly pro forma. The White House has yet to give the matter top priority".

Throughout Reagan's presidency, he has been extremely pro-Israel, as so many events have shown. George Shultz, his Secretary of State, was not so committed, but in 1984 he finally swung into line with the pro-Israel, anti-Arab view:

"Somewhere between January and May 1984 Shultz underwent a complete transformation", recalls one State Department official. "In so doing Shultz became the first senior administration official to shift away from the Arabs and towards Israel and not the other way round". The revolution was complete.

"AIPAC's (American Israel Public Affairs Committee, GP) executive director, T. Dine, describes the 1986 U.S. Israel relationship this way: 'It is a deep broad-based partnership progressing day-by-day toward a full-fledged diplomatic and military alliance.' His hero is George Shultz, whom he calls the 'architect of the special relationship'. Citing Shultz's crucial role in providing 1.5 billion dollars in emergency economic aid to Israel last year, Dine says, 'George Shultz has made himself the U.S. project manager for Israel's economy'.

"Seen from the Arab perspective, Shultz is more like a villain. 'Arab ambassadors can't do a thing in Washington. Shultz doesn't want to get involved', argues one Arab diplomat. Another complains: 'The Arab moderates are scared that the U.S. is undermining their position. But they are too weak to do anything about it'.

"State Department Arabists acknowledge that the Arab interests hardly get a hearing today in Washington. 'We used to have a two-track policy', says one former State Department official. 'Now only Israel's interests are considered'" (G.W. 4-5-86).

The article we have been quoting from was written in May. The elections that took place in November changed the party majority in Congress. Both the Senate and the Congress are now controlled by the Democrats. This will make life difficult for Republican party President Reagan. But Israel appears to have so many friends in both parties that she welcomed the new political situation.

“AN EVEN FRIENDLIER CONGRESS” was the heading in the November 5th News Report in the Jerusalem Post.

“American Jewish political activists were clearly delighted by the outcome — not because of the political setback for Reagan, who is widely seen as extremely friendly toward Israel. Rather the Jews agreed that this new session of Congress will almost certainly be even more pro-Israel than the last — and the last was very pro-Israel indeed.”

As an illustration of how a new factor can change the picture, one can speculate on the effect of the U.S.-Iranian arms ‘scandal’ now being investigated on Israel’s relation to America. On the one hand the strongly pro-Israel advisers to Reagan— Shultz, Poindexter, McFarlane, etc. — are the men at the centre of the ill-conceived Iran arms supply, and they are being questioned by Congress. As a result some of these influential pro-Israel advisers may disappear from the scene and be replaced by men better disposed to the Arabs. But on the other hand, because Reagan’s action has generated a lot of hostility among the moderate Arab States, America may be forced closer to Israel as their only safe ally in this vital region. The Arab states — Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States — all genuinely fear the prospect of Iran winning the war and carrying their Islamic revolution into their countries. Hence Reagan’s selling arms to Iran was a crime and betrayal in their eyes.

3. Soviet — Israel relations

As reported last year, the Soviet took the initiative in indicating a wish to have improved relations with Israel. A first negotiating meeting was arranged and held at Helsinki in August. No headway was made, the Soviets wishing merely to discuss the welfare of their church property in Jerusalem, and the Israeli delegate insisting that the talks should cover the plight of Jews in the Soviet. This was accepted as a ‘normal’ Soviet opening gambit and did not indicate a lessening of Soviet interest.

A report from Washington a fortnight later put the current situation into perspective. The following extracts give the gist of the article:

“There is, though, a clear consensus among authoritative government specialists in Washington that the Kremlin leadership has made a major decision to improve relations with Israel. . . ‘They are slow to move’, a State Department official said. ‘But even though they are cautious, they are moving. The fact that they met with the Israelis in Helsinki before the eyes of the world was significant in and of itself’.

“Clearly, U.S. officials said, the Soviets are still very anxious to try to play a more central role in any revived Arab-Israeli diplomacy. For the Kremlin leadership, this is a matter of high prestige and statesmanship. Moscow is afraid of being left out of the scene.

“Israel’s U.N. ambassador, Binyamin Netanyahu, was last week confident that the Soviets would eventually restore relations with Israel . . . At the U.N. Netanyahu has met informally with Soviet officials . . . The Americans believe that the more formal structure of discussion — along the lines of the relatively low-level Helsinki meeting — will also occur. But no one should anticipate any rapid breakthrough.

“There are other Soviet motives in opening the door toward Israel as well. According to American Kremlinologists, the Soviet leadership has been seriously alarmed by the reports of another potential full-scale war between Israel and Syria. ‘Syria is to the Soviet what Israel is to the United States’, an American government expert said. ‘The Soviets will not allow their ally to suffer yet another humiliating defeat’. The Soviet leadership is said to recognize that Israel still has the military capability of defeating the Syrians in a one-to-one basis — impressively, decisively, and relatively quickly . . . Thus some U.S. officials believe that the Soviet decision to improve ties with Israel may be aimed at defusing the tensions along the Syrian frontier. This was, after all, a major subject on the agenda during Murphy’s recent meeting with Polyako in Stockholm.

“The Soviets are also said to be alarmed by the enhanced strategic cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem. Israel’s decision to permit the Voice of America to construct giant radio transmitters in the Negev and to undertake joint military exercises with the U.S. in the eastern Mediterranean has caught the Soviets by surprise. They apparently want to try to turn back the tide.

“‘The Soviets view Israel as important not only in the Middle East context, but in the entire U.S.-Soviet context’, an American official was quoted as saying. An improved relationship with Israel, the official added, could help to defuse large anti-Soviet protests during any upcoming summit in the U.S. between President Reagan and Soviet General-Secretary Gorbachev” (J.P. 6-9-86).

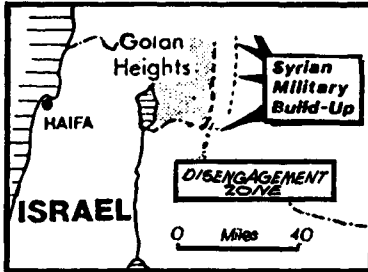
Other articles on this topic have suggested that Mr. Gorbachev’s wish to develop better relations with Israel is strongly resisted in the Soviet hierarchy, and hence the slow rate of progress.

Low-level diplomatic relations have been established between Poland and Israel, and this is seen as another pointer of Gorbachev’s attitude to Israel.

4. Syria’s threat to Israel

Syria poses the main military threat to Israel. The focal point is the Golan Heights, which Israel took from Syria in the 1967 war. Israel

regards the Heights as an important strategic element to the north. Syria has been building up its military strength for years, preparing for the day to re-take the Golan Heights. It is thought that President Assad's aim is a limited one, to wipe out past defeats and establish his status as a leader in any peace negotiations. Whether Israel would react in such a limited way, no one can tell.



There has been greater activity along the Golan Border this year. The border is not a direct one with Israel; there is a disengagement zone (see map) patrolled by U.N. troops since the 1974 Disengagement Agreement between Israel and Syria. A description of the Syrian threat was set out in an article in the Daily Telegraph in March.

"Syria is close to completing a massive build-up along its border with Israel in preparation for an attack to recover the Golan Heights, according to military sources in the area.

"The number of troops stationed between Damascus and Israel has more than doubled in the past four years while armoured columns and missile batteries have been fully replenished with the latest Soviet hardware. Substantial improvements in officer-training techniques and the assistance provided by an estimated 3,000 Soviet advisers have combined to make the Syrian military a formidable fighting force.

"Israel military advisers now believe it is only a question of time before President Assad gives the order for his troops to advance on the Golan. 'It is not a question of whether the Syrians are going to attack, it is a question of when', said a senior Israeli military adviser.

"Syria is currently spending an estimated 50 per cent of its annual budget on a systematic build-up of his military resources, a process which was started following the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, during which most of Syria's air defences were knocked out by Israeli jets.

"But President Assad has now gone far beyond the requirements of improving Syria's own defences and has set out to establish a well-trained, well-equipped force capable of taking on the might of the Israeli defence force.

"The outmoded Soviet T-54 tanks have been replaced by the sophisticated T-72 and T-72 Super, of which the Israelis say there are now 2,000 deployed between Damascus and the Golan Heights.

"Six Syrian divisions, each about 10,000 strong, are stationed in the area with another two divisions deployed in Lebanon's Bekka Valley.

“Nine batteries of SA-6 Soviet anti-aircraft batteries have recently been installed close to the demarcation zone between Syria and the Golan, a clear breach of the 1974 disengagement agreement signed by Syria and Israel following the 1973 war.

“The Israelis believe the Syrians will receive a new batch of Soviet Mig-29s within the next few months, a highly-sophisticated fighter capable of matching the American F-16s which provide the backbone of the Israeli airforce.

“President Assad, in one of his rare public speeches, recently declared he was determined to achieve parity with Israel. The Syrian leader has consistently refused to negotiate with Israel over the return of the Golan Heights seized during the six-day war. The Syrians are determined to retrieve the area by force so that they can negotiate from a position of strength at whatever peace talks would result from a Syrian offensive.” (D.T. 21-3-86).

There is, of course, a new factor that has arisen since that article was written — the breaking off of diplomatic relations by Britain, following proof of Syria’s support for European terrorism; and this followed by fairly extensive sanctions by EEC countries and the U.S.A.. Syria, with 50 percent of her national income spent on the military, and adversely affected by the drop in oil price (see a later heading), is in a desperate situation economically. The sanctions must have a significant effect. Will it cool down the spirit of military adventure? May Gorbachev bargain with Reagan and the West to restrain Syrian hostility towards Israel, in exchange for the lifting of sanctions?

One effect is fairly certain: that there will be an increasing sympathy by Britain towards Israel, and less sympathy towards the hard-line Arab states. As with all the other strands in the complex Middle East web, we do not know what will happen next. But we must be impressed with the present instability, expecting new developments at any time.

5. Iraq and the Iraq-Iran War

Here is another picture of great complexity. There is not just the war itself, but there are wider connections. Both Israel and her enemy Syria back Iran; Egypt and Jordan, the most friendly Arab states to Israel, back Iraq; Iraq is the most bitter enemy of Israel. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan back Iraq because they fear Iran winning and spreading her Moslem fundamentalism into their countries, challenging their Western connections and practices. Israel fears Iraq winning because this would release a vast amount of

modern arms to be turned against her. And in addition to all this local interaction, there is vital world interest, because this war centres on the Gulf, the source of so much oil.

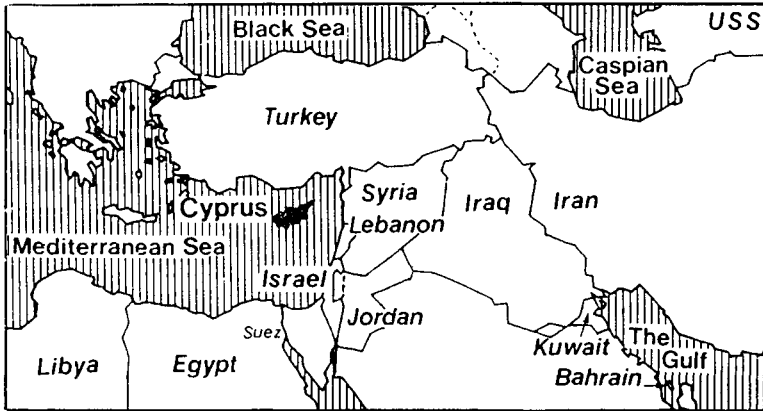
“With one million dead, the Iran-Iraq war enters its seventh year”. So begins John Keagan the Defence Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph in September. The majority of the dead are Iranians. (This figure of one million is probably exaggerated, G.P.). The disaster is not only lives, but wealth: “Iranian economic losses in the first five years of the Gulf war are estimated at more than 300 billion dollars.

Iraq was the aggressor originally, aiming to take territory from Iran. But for years there has been stalemate, with Iraq failing to exploit successfully its military superiority. Iraq is far superior to Iran in military equipment and continues to receive weapons from the Soviet, France, and other countries. Iran partially balances this by her hordes of men stirred up to give their lives for their religion. Israel, and the U.S. recently, have provided some spare parts for Iran’s crippled equipment.

In September of this year it was widely reported that Iran had massed vast numbers of men for “the final push” against Iraq, but nothing substantial has happened. No early end to the war is in sight, according to most commentators. The Ayatollah Khomeini has an intense personal hatred of Hassam of Iraq, caused by the way he was treated when in exile in Iraq in the 1970s; and it is thought Iran will not give up while he is alive. Yet both sides are in desperate straits from the effects of such a drawn-out war. Both sides have every available man — students and teachers — conscripted, so that normal life does not exist.

Such are the bare facts about a war that the media now largely ignores. But what may lie ahead in this central Middle East region which controls the oil supply of many countries? Long-term the Bible gives us the answer. But what may happen in the short term? Some writers predict the likely collapse of the Iraqi regime. It is a brutal regime in the extreme. Its people are bitter against President Hassam’s oppressions and killings of so many Iraqis. The conscripts in the army are poorly trained and of low morale, ready to surrender if they get the chance. Also there is a religious conflict in the country; Hassam its leader is a Shi-ite Moslem, whereas the majority are Sunni Moslems. The Iranians are Shi-ite Moslems.

Iraq: threat on the horizon



If on the other hand Iraq should 'win' the war, a vast amount of military weaponry would be ready for turning against Israel. This possibility is a genuine concern for Israel's military planners, long term. The following extracts are from an article in the Jerusalem Post headed: **IRAQ: THREAT ON THE HORIZON.**

"When Israel's strategic planners consider the future, they see Iraq as an integral part of the hostile constellation of forces that Israel could have to face on the eastern front. The Iraqis participated actively in every war against Israel to date.

"However, one cannot begin to compare present Iraqi military capabilities with those of 1973. In addition to having grown from six divisions with 1,000 tanks in 1973 to around 40 divisions with some 5,000 tanks of vastly improved quality, the Iraqi army is today after six years of continuous warfare, an army that knows its weaknesses and has done much to correct them.

"It is also a fighting force that, instead of having to rely exclusively on second-line Soviet equipment, now has in its arsenals some of the most sophisticated weapons the West has to offer. Since 1980, when the war with Iran started, Iraq has purchased missile boats and electronic equipment from Italy; armoured vehicles, artillery, Mirage F-1 fighters, attack helicopters, missiles and electronics from France; armoured vehicles, artillery rockets and possibly new tanks from Brazil; tanks, aircraft, missiles and rockets from the Soviet Union.

"It has acquired virtually every other conceivable conventional weapon from a long list of suppliers that includes South Africa, Austria, the U.S., Argentina, Belgium, Britain, West Germany, Greece, Egypt, China, Spain, Portugal, Chile and Switzerland" (J.P. 5-4-86).

At the conclusion of the article the comment is made that, although Syria and Iraq are at present enemies, a change in the future would be no surprise. "But given the recent history of the Middle East, with 25 fundamental coalition changes between Arab states over the past two decades alone, with friends becoming enemies overnight and vice versa, Iraqi-Iranian-Syrian enmity is not something that can be counted on for ever".

So Israel peers rather fearfully into the future. They have reason to be fearful, for they must suffer for trusting in their own strength, before they turn to the God of Israel, their Saviour.

6. How the Oil Price drop affects the Middle East

We have already referred to the serious impact of lower oil prices on the Soviet economy. In the Middle East its effect is equally serious. An extensive article in the Daily Telegraph threw light on this.

"OIL PRICE DROP STIRS MIDDLE EAST UNREST.

"As the industrialised West enjoys the luxury of cheap oil for the first time in more than a decade, alarm bells are ringing throughout the Middle East at the effect the steep downward spiral of oil prices is having on the world's most volatile region.

"The loss to hard-line Arab States of the huge oil revenues which for so long fuelled their resistance to a peaceful Middle East solution is now threatening their own political stability.

"Libya, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and, to a lesser extent, Jordan, nations which in their differing ways have a significant bearing on the Middle East conflict, all find themselves facing a variety of new economic and political problems, caused by falling oil prices, which could ultimately lead to radical changes of policy and outlook.

(1) Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States: "For Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States which traditionally allocated a high proportion of their oil revenue to supporting front-line Arab nations, it has meant a drastic reduction in the amount of money available to support nations like Syria and Jordan and the Palestinians in their struggle to reach a settlement with Israel.

"But it is the front-line States, countries with little or no oil-producing capacity of their own, whose leaders rely on direct or indirect support of the oil-producing nations, which are giving rise to the greatest concern.

(2) Syria: "Syria and Egypt, central figures in the Middle East conflict, are now experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct consequence of the fall in oil prices which is imposing a serious threat to their political stability.

“Under the terms of the 1978 Bagdad summit resolution, the Arab oil-producing countries, as part of their support for ‘confrontation States’, agreed to pay one billion dollars a year to Syria. This resolution was passed when a barrel of crude oil was fetching 34 dollars, Saudi production stood at 10.5 million barrels and the country’s hard currency reserves totalled 170 billion dollars.

“With oil prices now hovering around the 10 dollar mark and Saudi production down to 4 million barrels, the Gulf States who have experienced a similar cycle, no longer have the money to meet their Bagdad commitments and only the Saudis are continuing to pay their 570 million share to Syria, although this year’s payment is now in doubt.

“Apart from direct financial support, Syria earned an estimated one billion dollars from remittance of Syrians working in the Persian Gulf and Libya, but this revenue has dried to a trickle with most of the foreign workers having been sent home.

“The result is that President Hafez-el Assad, whose Alawite based regime is resented by the majority Sunni Moslem population, is under increased domestic pressure as Syria’s foreign currency reserves hit zero, fuel rationing is introduced and the country’s 12 million population gets accustomed to energy-saving power cuts.

“The immediate upshot of this economic hardship was for President Assad to make a series of sabre-rattling speeches threatening to recover the Israel-occupied Golan Heights, threats no doubt made as a unifying rallying cry but nevertheless creating new tensions which the Middle East could well do without.

(3) Egypt: “The situation in Egypt, where President Hosni Mubarak is under mounting pressure from Moslem fundamentalists and Left-wing activists because of his failure to tackle a rapidly deteriorating economy, is regarded as even more desperate. Egypt’s economic plight is largely due to the collapse of its oil-based sources of foreign currency earnings — the decline of Suez Canal tolls from oil tankers passing between the Gulf and the Mediterranean; tourism from oil-rich Gulf States, the decline in the value of Egypt’s own modest oil sales, and remittances from Egyptian nationals working in the Gulf.

“The recent riots by thousands of security police conscripts, which left more than 100 people dead and which arose as a direct consequence of their appalling living conditions, were a warning to Mr. Mubarak.

(4) Jordan: “Jordan, which alone among the non oil-producing Arab States has developed a more widely-based economy, has weathered the storm of falling oil revenues better than most, but the influx of an estimated 500,000 newly redundant Palestinian oil workers from the Gulf is creating a different kind of problem for King Hussein.

“Discounting the estimated two million Palestinians living in Israel, the occupied West Bank and Gaza, Palestinians constitute an estimated 55 per cent of Jordan’s population and the arrival of more Palestinians for whom there is no readily available work is creating new problems at a time when relations between the King and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation are at a low ebb.

(5) The Palestinians: The millions of stateless Palestinians who represent a tinderbox in a world of sufficiently inflamed passions are also feeling the pinch as the oil-rich Gulf States withdraw their financial support and lucrative employment opportunities. Every Arab family in the occupied territories had sons and brothers working in the Gulf, sending back enormous sums which paid for the large-scale construction projects that have taken place in towns such as Nablus, Hebron, and Gaza which have helped to keep the traditional Palestinian economy alive. The removal of this opportunity for people with few other employment openings can only lead to renewed tensions in the occupied territories at a time when all the political options have reached total stagnation” (D.T. 14-4-86).

The degree of concern expressed in the above comments may seem exaggerated, but the situation was seen by Israel as sufficiently serious — the unrest bringing war against Israel — that Prime Minister Peres made an appeal to the United Nations and to America to launch a ‘Marshall Aid’ plan for these Middle East countries.

Chapter 6:

OTHER INTERESTING SITUATIONS

THE AFGHANISTAN INVASION

A little more detail than the brief reference in chapter one about the Soviet and Afghanistan may be in place. As Bible students we are closely interested in the Soviet move southward, eventually to focus on Iran (Persia) according to the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel. As we mentioned in chapter one, Gorbachev may be shaping a more flexible policy in relation to Afghanistan.

At the end of 1985 the situation was reported as follows:

“Soviet troops are into the seventh year of occupation of Afghanistan, having suffered 9,000 dead among a total of 23,000 marching in.

“The human losses and diplomatic cost since Christmas Eve 1979 have started to show on the Soviets, say Pakistani diplomats.

“The number of Soviet losses has rapidly increased in 1985, military intelligence sources say. This is partly because the anti-Marxist Guerrillas are now better trained, better organised and better equipped. They have received a number of Sam-7 ground-to-air missiles, as well as fixed-wing aircraft. (D.T. 27-12-85).

The Soviet difficulties have arisen chiefly through American aid in arms and training to the Afghan resistance. In March 1986 the U.S. stepped up its involvement in Afghanistan, increasing Soviet difficulties:

“America is sending its latest Stinger missiles to Afghanistan and Angola, it was disclosed last night. The decision to send Stinger missiles to rebel forces in Angola and Afghanistan signals a major change in U.S. strategy. Until now the Central Intelligence Agency has been cautiously funnelling-in much less sophisticated — mainly Communist bloc — weapons to anti-government forces in the two countries. The despatch of Stinger heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles threatens to change radically the military situation in Angola and Afghanistan” (D.T. 31-3-86).

Because of this indirect confrontation with the U.S., and for other reasons, Gorbachev is indicating a wish to ‘withdraw’ Soviet troops. Such a ‘withdrawal’ would remove much of the antagonism he faces in the West. Also, following his visit to India such a step would help his friendship in that direction. Perhaps more important, the Soviet is trying to gain favour with Iran (that is its main target), and Iran is very hostile to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The Afghans

are Moslems like the Iranians. So there is plenty to explain his expressed intention of withdrawing Soviet troops.

Gorbachev, of course, has no intention of abandoning Afghanistan. His withdrawal of Soviet troops would be a slow process, allowing pro-Soviet Afghan troops to take over and a neutral government to be installed. 'Neutral' for the Soviet would mean a pro-Soviet government. Before the 1979

invasion of Afghanistan, there had been a Communist revolution in 1978 lead by Afghan intellectuals, and the king, Zahir Shah, was sent into exile. There is talk of him returning to be a figure-head, winning favour with the people. Writers on the subject conjecture that the Soviet would make Afghanistan into another Finland, or similar to 'neutral' Austria. All this, if it proceeds, would be a slow development over some two years. The U.S. and the Soviet have been negotiating on the matter since the end of 1985, as an article in the *Le Monde* newspaper revealed (G.W. 19-1-86).

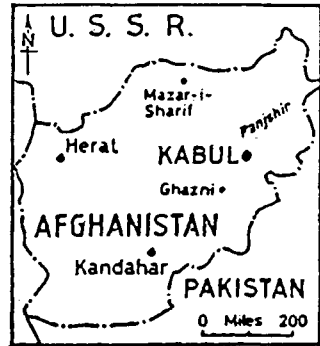
In all this we watch Gorbachev's cunning and flexibility. As we learnt at the end of chapter one, for the chess-playing Russians a tactical withdrawal has no stigma attached to it; it can be part of a larger long-term plan.

ETHIOPIA

It was in 1974 that a revolution toppled the feudal regime of Emperor Haile Selassie, and in 1977 the Soviet installed Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam as the head of the Ethiopian socialist government. In a counter move, the U.S. gave support to Somalia, the country lying between Ethiopia and the sea. War has continued in the region ever since.

The Soviet has this year consolidated its position in Ethiopia, in a new constitution for the country:

"Under it (the new constitution) Ethiopia will be re-christened a 'People's Democratic Republic' in abandoning its present nomenclature of Socialist Ethiopia.





"The constitution enshrines socialism as the driving force of the country's economy, with private ownership only being permitted under State guidance. Western diplomats say it will consolidate Marxism in Ethiopia. It establishes a parliament, or shengo, which will exercise supreme State power in which the Worker's Party, the only legitimate political party, will dominate." (D.T. 1-8-86).

This is a step in the direction required by Ezekiel 38:5 and Daniel 11:43.

SOUTH AFRICA

The situation in South Africa is too complex to make any useful forecast. The sanctions to be applied by the U.S., the E.E.C., and the Commonwealth countries are substantial. But Pretoria has made preparation for such an event over several years and is not likely to go under. "The country is believed to have recently spent two billion rand, about 500,000 million pounds, on stockpiles of strategic materials, mainly oil" (D.T. 1-8-86). Those who apply the sanctions will probably suffer just as much, because South Africa is a major source of strategic materials, as platinum, manganese, diamonds. There are other factors creating the complex picture. The ANC — African Nationalist Congress — has close ties with the South African Communist party and is about to set up a permanent mission in Moscow. The Guardian Weekly in August reported the "Communist blueprint for South Africa" given by the chairman of the South African Communist party. In time of war South Africa is the controller of the vital sea passage round the Cape. If those were in the hands of a Communist government, it would be very serious. Another major factor is the fate of the land-locked African States to the north, who are so dependent on South Africa, and would probably suffer more than South Africa. Then there is the inability of the various black communities to work together and form a sensible government.

All we can comment is that British policy seems sounder than the more emotional demands of the Commonwealth countries.

THE COMMONWEALTH AND SOUTH AFRICA

There was a Commonwealth Heads of Government Review Meeting in London in August, and they issued a communique defining eleven elements of the sanctions agreed by all but Great Britain. This was reported in the Daily Telegraph under the heading:

"SUMMIT AGREES TO DIFFER: COMMONWEALTH LEADERS SETTLE FOR UNITY

"Mrs. Thatcher and the six other Commonwealth Summit leaders were understood last night to have agreed to go their own ways on sanctions against South Africa. By so doing it was hoped to avoid further damage to the structure of the Commonwealth" (D.T. 5-8-86).

A calm appraisal of the enduring strength of the Commonwealth was given at another Commonwealth gathering later in the year. In October the 32nd meeting of Commonwealth parliamentarians took place in London. Some 1,800 delegates attended. The conference debated Apartheid and the motion, "The Commonwealth: Who Cares?", amongst other activities. A brief report in the Guardian Weekly was concerned with the strength of the Commonwealth:

"During the mini-summit in August, there was widespread concern that the Commonwealth might break up over the sanctions issue. But last week the Secretary-General, Sir Sonny Ramphal, stressed that the Commonwealth 'did not merely survive that trial (of credibility) but emerged from the mini-summit with at least some new strengths'. He added 'It is important to underline that despite the trauma of disagreement with the British Government, other Commonwealth governments have not seen this as a row with Britain'.

"The Commonwealth was not an executive body, Mrs. Thatcher had argued at the state opening of the conference. Its very strength, she asserted, stemmed from the fact that its common ideals, and its commitment to democracy, allowed free debate with diversity of policies (G.W. 12-10-86).

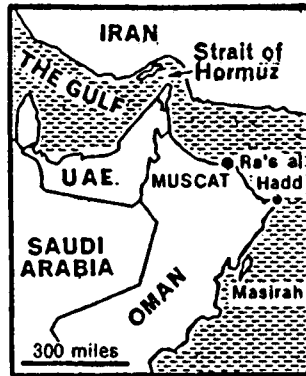
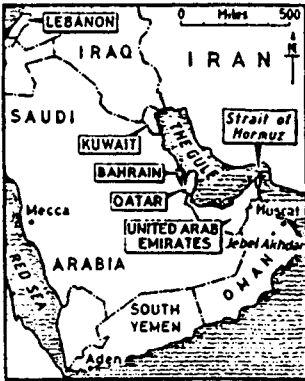
BRITAIN MAINTAINS A PRESENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

When the Conservative party came to power in 1979, there was a change of attitude towards the Middle East, after its neglect by Labour. In 1980 the Queen toured the south Arab States and in 1981 the Prime Minister made a similar trip. The Defence minister also made a visit in the same year. Prince Philip, and later Prince Charles and his bride, visited Egypt. This year the foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, toured the Gulf States, followed by Prince Charles and his wife in the summer. These good-will missions are, of course, aimed at better trade, but they also maintain the respected status of Britain with the Heads of the various countries.

British firms have many contracts in these rapidly developing countries. Also the government has won big contracts. With Saudi Arabia there is a 5 billion pound contract to supply 132 military aircraft; and with Jordan a 270 million pound contract for defence equipment (D.T. 20-9-85, 6-5-86).

Close cooperation continues with **Oman**, that small but strategically placed state controlling the entrance to the Persian Gulf.

This year there was a remarkable expression of Britain's presence in the region. A military operation was carried out in cooperation with Oman that involved flying troops from Britain:



"OMAN TEST FOR BRITISH 'RAPID AID' FORCES

"Britain's ability to provide 'fire brigade' rapid reinforcement forces outside the Nato area will be tested in November in the biggest show of the nation's military strength seen in the Middle East for almost 20 years.

"Up to 6,000 men of all three services will take part in the Oman exercise, code-named 'Saif Sareaa' (swift sword), along with the Sultan's own forces.

"The Joint Forces Headquarters, responsible for planning such operations outside Nato, is to be brought up to full strength and flown to Oman in RAF Hercules, VC-10 and Tristar transports.

"Royal Marines of 40 Commando will be landed in Oman by helicopters and landing craft from the assault ship Intrepid (12,120 tons), again the first time one of the Navy's two remaining large amphibious ships has operated East of Suez since the early 1970s. Air cover for the landing will be provided by Sea Harrier fighters from the 19,500 ton carrier

Illustrious; which will be spearheading the largest force of Royal Navy ships seen in the Middle East since the 1967 Aden withdrawal.

"The exercise is likely to have a considerable impact on the Americans, as Washington has long been critical of what is seen as a failure of Nato allies to help shoulder the peace-keeping burden outside the Alliance's geographical area" (D.T. 8-7-86).

So the "Old Lion" will be there when the crisis comes!

Britain's links with Oman are not limited to the military field. British companies have had a big part in the rapid economic development of the country.

"Traditionally, Oman has been an excellent trading partner with Britain and a most loyal friend. In 1985, it was the UK's fourth largest market in the Middle East.

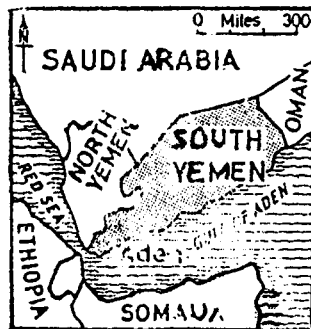
"Last year . . . Britain did especially well in the construction field, as it has done in the past five years. Taylor Woodrow won the contract for the Bausher stadium; the Royal Hospital project was awarded to Wimpey's; Cementation was chosen for the new university; and Laing built the new military hospital" (Export Times, Sept. 1986).

The close friendship is expressed in a growing situation of joint ventures by British and Omani firms:

"Great opportunities have opened up in Oman for British companies to enter into light manufacturing joint ventures to help the sultanate diversify its oil-based economy.

"Britain's trading relationship with Oman should be symbolised by something more permanent, says Ahmed bin Abdul Nabi Macki, Under Secretary of Commerce and Industry at the Ministry of Commerce. He said 'When talking to Paul Channon, your Secretary for Trade, I said I would like to see more joint ventures. Trade is always up and down. What is more permanent is the transfer of technology, and we would like to see a number of small to medium-sized companies established jointly between Britons and Omanis. The field is open for any ideas that the private sector can identify for themselves . . . Our trading relationship with Britain is excellent'" (Export Times, Sept. 1986).

That other little south Arabia country which was traditionally tied to Britain — South Yemen and the port of Aden — is moving back into some association with Britain. Under a Labour government Britain withdrew from Aden, and Russia took over the



port and its naval base. Although Russia established a socialist government there, she has not been very successfully in controlling the tribal factions.

Following the discovery of oil in 1984, Yemen has suddenly come to life and is rushing into the 20th century:

“With oil revenues set to flow by 1988, the 1987-92 development plan will exploit the potential of this under-developed country. Emphasis will be placed on agriculture, mineral resources, industrialisation, education, vocational training and use of oil and gas in local industry.

“The Department of Trade has identified electricity, water, health and education, airport development and industrial machinery as areas of particular opportunity for British business.

“British exports to Yemen increased dramatically last year, recording an 80 per cent increase over 1984 (Export Times, Nov. 1986).

A week-long exhibition of British goods is being organised for July 1987. So we see for Britain, if the pendulum swings one way, it in due time swings back.

Saudi Arabia is the most fully developed country. It is now in its third 5-year development plan. Each year it holds an agricultural exhibition on quite a grand scale:

“At the Saudi Agriculture '85 there were 714 exhibiting companies from 26 countries, with some 14,000 trade visitors. Agricultural investment in the 1985-1990 development plan is set at over 15 billion dollars” (Taken from the 1986 brochure).

One is continually surprised at the way in which these south Arab countries are becoming as modern as western countries, in industry, in agriculture, in building cities, universities, schools, airports, etc. It must all be a background in preparation for the Kingdom; though one cannot suppose western civilisation will be the style of the Kingdom Age!

Chapter 7: “WITH MANY SHIPS”

RUSSIA’S NAVY SAILS ALL THE OCEANS OF THE WORLD

We return to this exciting topic of fulfilling prophecy (Dan. 11:40). which we last dealt with in depth in the 1979 Milestones. The man who created Soviet naval power retired at the end of 1985, after 30 years. The occasion was marked by a review of his amazing accomplishment:

“Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, who has just stepped down after 30 years as commander-in-chief, was not just the father of the modern Soviet Navy. He was father, mother, and creator.

“His career as commander-in-chief began under Krushchev, when his fleet was about to go down almost literally for the third time under the indifferent weight of a military establishment dominated by soldiers who could not conceive what a navy might do for a great land power like the USSR.

“His first move was to sidestep Krushchev’s orders to scrap the navy’s ‘enormously expensive’ cruisers and concentrate instead on a vast fleet of submarines equipped with what the Soviet leader called ‘flying torpedoes’ — forerunners of today’s cruise missiles. Over the next three decades he continued to work the system and build the ships, until he had transformed a defensive, demoralised coastal force into a truly ocean-going navy whose fighting power and influence compared with that of the US navy.

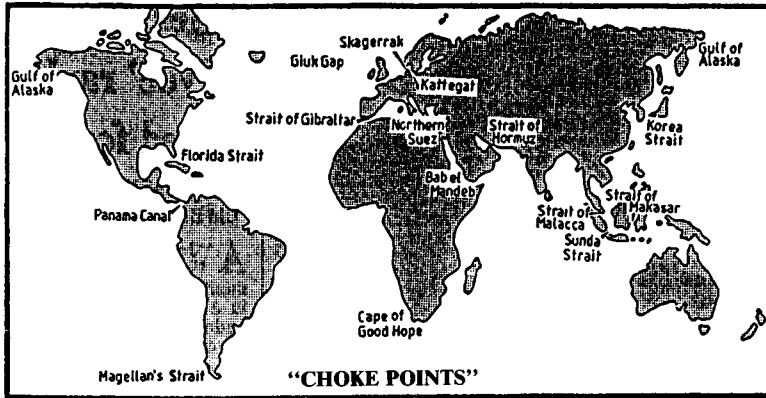
“Such a transformation in such a short time, backed by a coordinated expansion of merchant shipping, fisheries, and oceanography, represents one of the few big strategic shifts since the Second World War, dwarfed only by the impact of nuclear weapons.

“The navy Gorshkov inherited scarcely poked its nose outside the Baltic. Before he retired, he was controlling naval exercises that stretched simultaneously across several oceans” (G.W. 29-12-85).

The greatness of this development brings to mind a quotation in the 1979 Milestones: “. . . in this perspective the dramatic rise of the soviet naval and maritime forces in the past decade is a unique and unprecedented development in the whole of naval history”.

THE USEFULNESS OF POWER

How does the Soviet hope to use this tremendous new power? Not necessarily by direct confrontation, but probably by the black-mailing effect of threat of action in the first place. In a report from Washington in February, President Reagan said that he “believes Russia’s navy is now able to block 16 ‘choke points’ in order to



deprive the West of vital raw materials in the event of war" (D.T. 13-2-86). The report was accompanied by a world map showing these "choke points". To show the seriousness of this we quote further from the 1979 Milestones:

"This threat has become so alarming that Conflict Studies produced in September 1979 an assessment by the Admiral of the Fleet with the title "World Shipping at Risk: the Looming Threat to the Lifelines". For Britain and Western Europe the sea is absolutely vital to continued economic life. The inflow of food and raw materials, the export of manufactured goods, are taken for granted, but depend entirely on the freedom of the seas. To demonstrate the vastness of traffic along the world's 'sealanes' this book presents figures of the ships being used. World shipping is largely along four highways. Trade with Arabian oil area results in 1,000 loaded ships at sea on any day; trade from the Far East 1,300 ships; trade from South America 900 ships; and trade across the Atlantic from America 5,000 ships. **Well over 8,000 fully-loaded ships at sea every day, all the year round: and nearly as many again in ballast going to pick up exports or imports!**

"In as far as the Soviet attains supremacy on the seas, the vast flow of the nation's life-blood is under threat. This can have a profound effect on the thinking of European leaders. They are afraid of a confrontation with the Soviet. Acquiescence to the pressure from the Soviet becomes an accepted condition of mind, and the will to resist aggression gets less".

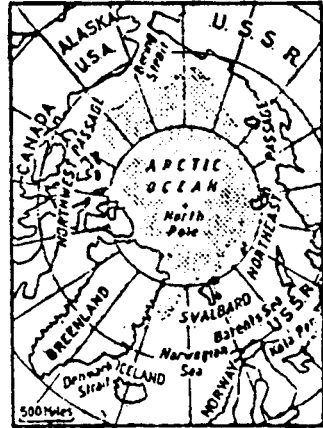
In the ever expanding Soviet naval influence two sea areas have been in the news during 1986; the Arctic, and the opposite side of the world, the Philippine Islands and the South Pacific and Indian oceans.

THE SOVIET ARCTIC OCEAN: THE CITIES OF U.S. THREATENED

The Arctic development was reported under the heading:

"HOW THE RUSSIAN BEAR HAS FOUND A NATURAL HOME IN THE ARCTIC

"In November and December the Russians brought off a remarkable feat which went far towards confirming what many believed (or feared): that the Arctic is fast becoming a Soviet lake. They brought grain by ship from Vancouver to Archangel via the Bering Strait and Siberia's coastal waters, a route previously considered feasible only from late June to early October. Along the Arctic coast, a fleet of icebreakers, five of them nuclear powered, struggles to keep open the sea routes . . ."



The article then describes the industrial activity and the many new towns in 'Soviet North' as it is called, bordering on the Arctic shore. It continues:

"But more important than this economic activity is, from the West's point of view, the Soviet Union's military power in the Arctic, where it controls about half the littoral. Concentrated in the Kola Peninsular and the Barents Sea next to Nato's northern flank in Norway is a formidable array of nuclear and conventional strength. Half the Soviet fleet is based there, including more than half the submarine missile fleet. The latter's main bastion is the Barents Sea, a floating missile base.

"The latest and largest submarines, such as the 25,000 ton Typhoon, specially designed with their size and reinforcement structures for Arctic conditions, are capable of heaving their way upwards through the thinner patches of the icecap covering the deep waters close to the Pole to fire their missiles. The depth, the ice cover and the noise made by the constantly moving ice make them virtually impossible to detect. The 5,000 mile range of the latest submarine-launched missiles means they can hit targets in the United States without leaving the Barents Sea" (D.T. 16-1-86).

ACROSS TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

And so to the other side of the world, where the Soviet naval threat develops. The South Pacific-Indian Ocean region is vital to the

U.S.A. The route to India, Australia and the Middle East is through the group of Straits marked on the "choke points" map as Makasar, Sunda, and Malaca. In the past, with two naval bases in the Phillipine Islands, the Cam Ranh base on the Vietnam mainland; and supported by the Anzus Treaty that provided naval support from Australia and New Zealand, the U.S. felt fairly satisfied that it could hold in check Russian advance. But the scene has changed. After losing the Vietnam war the Cam Ranh base was evacuated and the Russians took it over. Now the Anzus Treaty is falling to pieces, with New Zealand's anti-nuclear stance, followed by Australia's Labour Government declaring it intends only to defend its own territory. In the Phillipine Islands, communist penetration has made the two American bases less secure. The Marcos-Aquino episode this year showed the desperate U.S. concern to keep a hold there. After backing Marcos as president, they about-turned and backed Mrs. Aquino as the better ally.

Both the U.S. and the Soviet continue to woo the inhabitants of the many islands in the South Pacific. Thus two similar headlines a month or so apart:

"FISH DEALS EXTEND RUSSIA'S FOOTHOLD IN SOUTH PACIFIC" (D.T. 2-9-86).

"50 MILLION DOLLAR AID BOOSTS U.S. INFLUENCE IN PACIFIC ISLANDS" (D.T. 29-10-86).

The Russian Pacific Fleet has grown from about 200 ships in 1960 to about 400 ships and 130 submarines today.

Russia is believed to be ahead of the U.S. in submarine design. An article describes their latest design with quieter running, strengthened double hulls, higher speed, higher reserve buoyancy, and deeper operations. These vast nuclear-powered submarines, 25,000 tons, roam the oceans, and can send missiles up to 8,300 miles (D.T. 7-2-86). The new Russian commander-in-chief of the navy is a submarine expert.

Chapter 8:

AN OMINOUS INCREASE IN ANTI-SEMITISM

The terrible murder of six million Jews during the second World War quelled the spirit of anti-Semitism for a while. The pendulum is now swinging back again, as it has done many times through European history. For the future, we know anti-semitism will become the dominant spirit of the world when Christ returns as King of the Jews.

ANTI-SEMITIC TERRORISM

This is one of several aspects of the hatred of the Jews. It is a fairly straight-forward matter of Arab terrorists turning their hatred of Israel against non-Israeli Jews in various parts of the world. This aspect of anti-Semitism might be expected today, and need not surprise us.

The latest major event was in September in Turkey:

“Two Arab gunmen burst into Turkey’s main synagogue, atop Galata hill, and massacred a congregation as it prayed, killing 21 people before blowing up themselves with hand-grenades at the weekend.

“Standing about 10ft apart, the two gunmen pulled out Polish-made sub-machine guns and began methodically firing at members of the Neve Shalom congregation which was holding its first Sabbath service since closing down for renovation two months ago.

“According to some accounts they barred the doors to prevent any escape.”

“The synagogue clock stopped at 9.17 a.m., the time officials said the first of the hand-grenades exploded during the lightning raid. The blood-letting lasted between five and seven minutes, they added. The gunmen, blown up beyond recognition, apparently saved the last one for themselves. Their dismembered bodies were found among the victims, among whom were eight or nine survivors, officials said” (D.T. 4-9-86).

Well known to most readers was the attempted blowing up of the El Al airliner flying from London and carrying mostly Jewish passengers. Some happenings in earlier years have been:

★ In Paris on March 27, 1979, a bomb exploded in a Jewish-owned restaurant injuring 26.

★ On October 4, 1980, a bomb in the synagogue in Copernic Street, Paris, killed three and injured twenty.

★ Terrorists attacked a synagogue in Vienna with grenades and machine guns, killing two and wounding nineteen including two children on August 29, 1981.

★ A car bomb exploded outside a synagogue in the Jewish Centre in Antwerp on October, 20, 1981, killing two and wounding ninety.

★ On October 9, 1982, two terrorists with grenades and light arms attacked worshippers at prayer in Rome's central synagogue killing an infant and wounding thirty four others.

As this article adds, "Terrorist attacks do not just happen. They are planned, funded, directed and coordinated by organisations with the support of national leaders" (BIPAC briefing, Sept. 1986).

AUSTRIAN ANTI-SEMITISM

Austria is traditionally an anti-Semitic country. Adolf Hitler was an Austrian. One may suppose there is an underlying seam of Catholic-inspired hatred built up over centuries and always near to the surface. This year the majority vote of the people, making Herr Waldheim President of Austria, has drawn out their anti-Jewishness. Various Jewish authorities worked hard to expose his Nazi past.

Austria's anti-Semitic streak was the subject of an article in November, which made the following points:

"Dr. Franz Vranitsky, 48, Chancellor and newly-elected head of the socialist party, admitted that he is terrified that the Jewish question could become a (general) election issue that would rend the nation by tapping into the rich seam of anti-Semitism, as familiar to Austrians as their packaged charm and Alpine beauty cliches are to foreigners.

"Austrians are uncertain about whether Dr. Waldheim was elected because of, or in spite of, his Nazi past; as they are over whether they were liberated or defeated at the end of the war.

"Epitomising Austria's fresh national spirit is Herr Jorg Haider, 36, the newly-elected leader of the Freedom party . . . Herr Haider now runs a party that was led for more than 20 years by Friedrich Peter, a former officer in a Nazi SS unit accused of murdering Jews and other civilians in the Soviet Union in 1942. His aggressive nationalism, his admiration for the concept of pan-Germanism and his arrogant leadership of a party that once boasted nearly 500,000 former Nazis as supporters, makes no apologies to anguished memories or present embarrassment.

"A survey published in August 1985 revealed that one in four Austrians harboured anti-semitic views.

"At the start of this year a survey in West Germany, France, the United States and Austria asked respondents whether the prospect of a Jew as

a next-door-neighbour was thought 'good' or 'not so good'. In West Germany 52 per cent opted for 'good'; in France 85 percent; and in America 91 per cent. Austria scraped in with 37 per cent for 'good' and 30 per cent for 'not so good'.

"The anti-semitic tradition is deeply ingrained in the Austrian psyche. Hitler remarked in *Mein Kampf*: 'I left Vienna a convinced anti-semitic'.

"In the early 1970s Austria's Socialist government decided to halt the trials of war criminals. One of the major reasons was that it was unable to find jurors willing to convict" (D.T. 21-11-86).

Neutral Austria in the middle of Europe is important to the Soviet. Waldheim apparently is a collaborator with the Soviet. The Daily Telegraph editorial headed "Waldheim Victory" makes this point:

"In foreign affairs, Waldheim's position is interesting. He clearly has the confidence of the Soviet Union — which has been very muted in its handling of 'the Waldheim affair'. Waldheim got his United Nations position (Secretary General, GP) through the Russians . . . and he as Foreign Minister of Austria was notably unhelpful to their Czechoslovak victims in 1968. Will he now go along clean-nosed with the Russians as he once went clean-nosedly with the Nazis?" (D.T. 9-6-86).

Perhaps in thinking of West Germany's Catholic and Soviet relations relative to the future we have overlooked Austria. It may become an important link in the joining up of East and West Europe in a Catholic crusade against the Jews and the disturbing events taking place south of Israel, when Christ has returned.

Even after Waldheim had been elected President of Austria, the Jewish authorities continued to bring out their evidence that he was a Nazi murderer of the Jews.

"On the eve of Dr. Kurt Waldheim's inauguration as Austria's President the World Jewish Congress produced evidence which it said proved that his German Army unit was linked to deporting Jews to Auschwitz.

"In the document which is dated Sept. 22, 1944 and refers to events in the final weeks of that July, one paragraph reads: 'Deportation of Jews not holding Turkish citizenship in the entire command territory upon the instruction of the High Command of Army Group E IC/AON. This is the one to which Dr. Waldheim has admitted being third-in-command. As a direct result of the order 2,500 Jews were shipped to Auschwitz where nearly all were killed in August.'" (D.T. 8-7-86).

ANTI-SEMITISM IN BRITAIN TODAY

It may surprise many readers that there is active anti-Semitism in Britain today. The Sunday Telegraph carried an article in August with the heading: "ANTI-SEMITISM FINDS NEW STRENGTH"

Here is a fairly full quotation from the article:

“The last wave of anti-Semitism came in the Thirties and culminated in pitched battles in London’s East End between Sir Oswald Mosley’s Blackshirts and their opponents. Since then, outside London, there has been a shift of the Jews from the old manufacturing centres and coalfields and now, although they are predominantly settled in urban areas, only Manchester has maintained a really sizeable Jewish population.

“Between March and May there were three attacks on Jewish cemeteries in Manchester and Liverpool, including one incident in which 50 headstones were sprayed with swastikas and SS insignia. In the first six months of the year, synagogues in Liverpool, Coventry, and London were daubed with slogans, including ‘The best Jew is a dead Jew’ and ‘We are watching’. Over a similar period there were three attacks on buildings in London.

“On January 7 the offices of the Association of Jewish Youth were covered with slogans. Two months later the Holocaust memorial was daubed with SS insignia, and the following month the building housing the Anne Frank exhibition was sprayed with the slogan ‘6 million lies’.

“While deeply offensive, these attacks have caused no one any physical harm, but there have been instances, monitored by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which is composed of elected representatives of the Jewish community from all over Britain, of more serious, personal assaults.

“The Jewish Free School in London’s Camden Town suffered a number of attacks on pupils last term by gangs of anything up to 200 children. Girls were threatened with knives and pieces of wood, sometimes with nails in it. ‘I now know that the attacks were racist because some of the youths used National Front language’ said Mrs. Jo Wagerman the school’s head teacher . . . It caused panic in the Jewish community, as a lot of children were threatened and were very frightened’.

“At first local police were reluctant to believe that there was a racial motive, but certain incidents convinced them that the attacks, which were launched by **youths from a Catholic school** (my emphasis, G.P.), went far beyond inter-school rivalry.

“‘What really worries me is that now it also operates on a much higher level of education; it is pursuing children into the universities under the umbrella of anti-Zionism in a way that would not have happened a generation ago’.

“There have been a series of attempts by left-wingers to ban Jewish societies within universities and polytechnics on the basis of Anti-Zionism . . . Buildings at Nottingham University have been sprayed with swastikas and individual students have been physically intimidated” (Sunday Telegraph 3-8-86).

INCREASED ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE SOVIET

The ill-treatment of Jews in the Soviet is of long standing. In the 1980s their treatment has been harsher than before. In July the Jerusalem Post gave a special report on its correspondent's visit to the Soviet Union. The following is taken from that report.

"But a terrible sadness underscored the celebrations (of Anatoly Scharansky's release from the Soviet, GP) of the many thousands of Jews who wish to emigrate from the U.S.S.R. For it is a different era: it is much tougher in the much more Stalinistic USSR of the mid-1980s than it was in the 1970s. That at least is the view of many refusniks (people who have applied to emigrate and have been refused), several of whom I visited recently on a 15-day trip to Moscow, Leningrad, and Kishinev.

"In 1979, a year after the trials (on fabricated charges) of Scharansky, Ida Nudel, and Vladimir Slepak, the Kremlin was still allowing a significant number of Jews to emigrate — about 51,000 in that peak year. In March 1986, a month after Scharansky's release, a total of 42 Jews were allowed to leave the vast empire that stretches across nine time zones. Those figures, basically tell the story . . .

"Soviet authorities today are much quicker to use repressive measures than was the case during the Brezhnev era, and the country's laws have been toughened, allowing prison authorities to act as judges who can double or triple sentences according to whim. Scharansky, though he was under constant surveillance for three years before his arrest in 1977, was, compared to today's standard, 'free'. The KGB stopped some activities, such as a planned seminar on Jewish life in the USSR, but did not break up meetings. Today it is impossible for 70 Jews to gather in an apartment for a lecture on Jewish history or any other subject.

"It is a different generation, too. In the two decades since the emigration movement started, sparked by the consciousness-raising advent of the Six-Day War, children have grown up 'in refusal' . . . Many members of the younger generation have intensified their Jewish identity, and have become observant Jews. They speak Hebrew in their apartments, on the subway, in the streets. They regard themselves as Israelis, held captive in a strange land, where Jews have lived in exile for 2,000 years. The Soviet Union is a prison of nations, where anti-Semitism is endemic and remains virulent.

"When the Chernobyl disaster was made known to the Russians, rumours began among some of the common people — a Jewish engineer was responsible, it was said, probably a refusnik on his way to Israel. Officially, no such libel was even hinted at; but the atmosphere created by the constant anti-Jewish and anti-Israel campaign in the official media creates a climate where such slander can flourish. Posters sold in ordinary shops depict Zionists as tools of the CIA. The drawings are straight out of Der Stuermer, the Nazi hate newspaper.

"'We are losing hope', said Lev Blitshtein, who has been a refusnik for 12 years. He lives alone in a dark run-down Moscow apartment. His wife and

children are in America. 'This is an iron country', he says, shaking his head. 'We see no change with Gorbachev' " (G.P. 5-7-86).

The following table taken from *Israel Scene*, January 1986, shows graphically the change that has taken place in the Soviet during the past few years:

Year	Soviet Jews granted exit visas	Number Coming to Israel	"Dropping out"
1968	231	231	—
1969	3,033	3,033	—
1970	999	999	—
1971	12,897	12,839	58
1972	31,903	31,652	251
1973	34,733	33,277	1,456
1974	20,767	16,888	3,879
1975	13,363	8,435	4,928
1976	14,254	7,250	7,004
1977	16,833	8,350	8,483
1978	28,956	12,090	16,866
1979	51,331	17,278	34,053
1980	21,648	7,570	14,078
1981	9,448	1,762	7,686
1982	2,692	731	1,961
1983	1,314	861	453
1984	896	340	556
1985	921	306	615

Total number of Soviet Jews who have arrived in Israel since 1967: 180,000.

Total number of Soviet Jews in Israel today: 163,892.

Estimated number of Jews still in the Soviet Union: 2.5 million.

Estimated number of "refusniks" still in the Soviet Union: 400,000.

W.E.

The table gives the estimated number of Jews left in the Soviet as 2.5 million. But in the previous report on the refusniks in the Soviet, it says activists say the number may be as high as 4 million. Many prefer to give their nationality as Russian, to avoid difficulties. In addition there are assimilated Jews who identify with Russia and the Communist party. Many are in the professional class, and are satisfied with their lot. So when Elijah starts his task of bringing captive Israel out of the northern exile, and all of Jewish blood will have to respond, it may indeed be a great army, ready to subdue their enemies, strengthened to fight in the name of the God of Israel.

It will be noticed in the table that seven out of ten Jews emigrating from the Soviet choose to settle out of Israel. Although they declare themselves Jews, they are not interested in the land of Israel. They may well be atheists, whose families have been subject to Marxist doctrine for some 70 years. All they wish to do is to escape from the humiliation of being a Jew in the Soviet.

On the other hand there has been a growing number who have become observant Jews:

“More than 2,000 young Jews — engineers, scientists and other professionals — walk openly through the streets of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa, and Riga today wearing ‘Kipot’ (skullicaps). There are groups of Jews in all these cities who meet to study the Bible on a level as high as in any good yeshiva in the free world” (Israel Scene, Jan. 1986).

The Soviet have trained a big proportion of those who make up the professional class in Israel today.

“Half of the 164,000 Soviet Jews who have arrived in the country since 1968 are university graduates. They form the backbone of Israel’s aviation industry, and are at the forefront in the fields of mathematics and physics. At Israel Aircraft Industries and in Tel Aviv University’s institutes of mathematics and physics, the lingua franca is Russian.

“Every other engineer in Israel today is from the Soviet Union, as is every third physician. Over 70 per cent of music teachers come from the USSR. The director of Tel Aviv’s Rubin Academy of Music is Russian-born, and the language is spoken as widely as Hebrew among players in the nation’s orchestras.

“‘Many Soviet immigrants hold key positions in the economy today’ says Lea Slovin of the Jewish Agency’s Russian desk. ‘They have initiative and they are effective, because of the attitudes they brought with them from the Soviet Union’ ” (Israel Scene, Jan. 1986).

Chapter 9: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER FORTY

FORTY IN THE BIBLE

Forty is one of several numbers — including two, seven, ten — which carry a distinct meaning in scripture. It is associated with the completion of a task or purpose connected with probation, punishment, testing, chastisement and the like. This will be apparent if we examine the more important occasions of its use.

Genesis 7:4 The flood involved forty days and forty nights of rain, etc; a punishment bringing complete destruction.

Deuteronomy 9:18, 25 Moses fell down before the LORD pleading God's forbearance towards Israel's sin for forty days and forty nights.

Numbers 14:33 Israel experienced forty years punishment wandering in the wilderness for their faithlessness, until all died; it was also forty years probation for their children preparing them to enter the land.

Moses span of life divides into three forties — forty years preparation in the court of Egypt; forty years further preparation in the Midian wilderness; and forty years guiding the nation and preparing the children to enter the promised land.

Deuteronomy 25:3 Forty stripes was the maximum punishment allowed under the Law.

1 Samuel 17:3 Goliath presented himself before the army of Israel, morning and evening, for forty days, testing the faith of Israel whether they believed Yahweh would deliver them.

Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus, after receiving the Spirit, was subjected to temptation and testing for forty days and nights.

Acts 1:3 The final preparation of the twelve to set forth the completed gospel to Israel involved a period of forty days; Jesus speaking to them "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God".

The Jewish Commonwealth had a forty-year opportunity (AD 30-70) to respond to the gospel, before final destruction came upon them.

OUR NUMBER FORTY

Clearly the number forty carries the idea of a completion of a period of testing, probation, or punishment. What bearing has all this on us today? Are we related to a forty-year period? Is Israel related to a forty-year period?

For ourselves, those who have been called out to prepare for the day of Christ's kingdom, there has been a forty year respite after the trial and testing of the last war. We have had forty years comparative ease and peace in which to make our calling and election sure, by forsaking the attractions of the world and developing those qualities called the fruits of the Spirit. Has this been happening, or have we been negligent, busying ourselves with "cares and riches and pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14)? The forty years of opportunity given to us is complete. Probably the Master is about to come.

And what of the people of Israel? The nation too has had nearly forty years as the State of Israel, with the opportunity for people to develop a nation giving heed to the righteous laws given by Moses (Deut. 4). In this they have failed and, as in AD 70, a day of judgment awaits them, out of which a remnant will be humbled and turn to Yahweh the God of Israel, the only Saviour. Their forty years will be complete in 1988.

But our day of judgment comes before theirs. "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). So the pointer is that the Master will return very soon.

In the world the forty year period has been a time of marked progress for the majority. It is a material age, getting and having — 'rich and increased in goods'. If an onlooker could assess our community as a whole, he might conclude that we too are rich and increased in goods. Jesus may say this is so. Which reminds us of what Jesus said about the ecclesia at Laodicea; their riches and goods had brought them into a spiritual state of blind and naked. Surely a warning to us.

But we shall not be judged as a community, but as individuals. To each, Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me."

If we resent the comparison of our community with the ecclesia at Laodicea, let us remember that both Pergamos and Thyatira were charged with worldliness. There were influences in these ecclesias

leading to 'fornication' — friendship and association with the world (Rev 2:14, 20). And Sardis had only a few names whose garments were not defiled. We should be foolish if we assume our standing is better than the first century ecclesias.

There are many ways in which we can become entangled with the world as it is today, and the problem is that we so easily deceive ourselves into assuming that what we are doing is all right. Or we are not alert enough spiritually to discern where the path is leading us. If we are to be made holy for use in the Kingdom, we must accept that our path is a narrow one, a path of separation. Paul writes to the Corinthians:

“What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 5:14-18).

A DISASTER ORGANISATION

This is a suitable place to draw attention to what can become a snare to some brethren and sisters in Britain.

This year an Act of Parliament has made all Civil Defence functions available for peace-time disasters. Local Authorities will have to become active in the matter, with planning and training. Civil-Defence services — rescue, fire, ambulance, hospital services, etc., are to be activated. Volunteers will be called for. There may be many brethren and sisters who will regard this as a good work in which to be engaged. But they will be entering a path that will take them away from our separateness in Christ. Calamities, whether man-made or God-arranged, will increase. The vials of the wrath of God in Revelation 16 show God's attitude to the present world. As we see calamities increasing, instead of rushing in to help, let us see more clearly our task of being faithful witnesses for God. We are 'organised' through the Word of God to set forth God's view, God's truth, and we should have no time for other organisations. Of course, we can and should all be individual good Samaritans as occasion arises in our daily life.

LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE

Let us pass the time of our sojourning with diligence and courage. There is so much to do. A world of great evil awaits the judgments of Almighty God; but there are still some prepared to step outside its broad path and enter the narrow way to life. In some of the third world countries, such as Korea and Philippines, the number of new brothers and sisters is a modern phenomenon. Our Sunday Schools require enthusiasm, confidence and diligent instruction. Our children need to be taught, and to *see* in us, both our separation from an evil world and our loving and unified service for Christ. Our ecclesias need strengthening, binding together and in this there should be a willingness to serve. Compromise with worldly attitudes on the unfaithful teaching of modern evangelical movements need to be exposed and avoided and this done with courage yet tempered with the knowledge that we all fail in many ways. The right attitude of a god-fearing man ensures that the faithful voice is heard as widely as possible and the greater good achieved. We all need time with our Bibles, sitting quietly in our families and with our God, to truly appreciate the living Word as we meditate upon its vital impact upon us.

Paul's words to Titus so beautifully express the dual nature of our calling.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Titus 2:11-14

“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God”

So Peter exhorts us!

The days are so swift and eventful that it is difficult for us to evaluate realistically the enormous significance of the days in which we live.

This new edition of “Milestones” will help us in this assessment; may we be encouraged to deny ungodliness and look for that blessed Hope, the appearance of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

“Even so, come Lord Jesus”!

