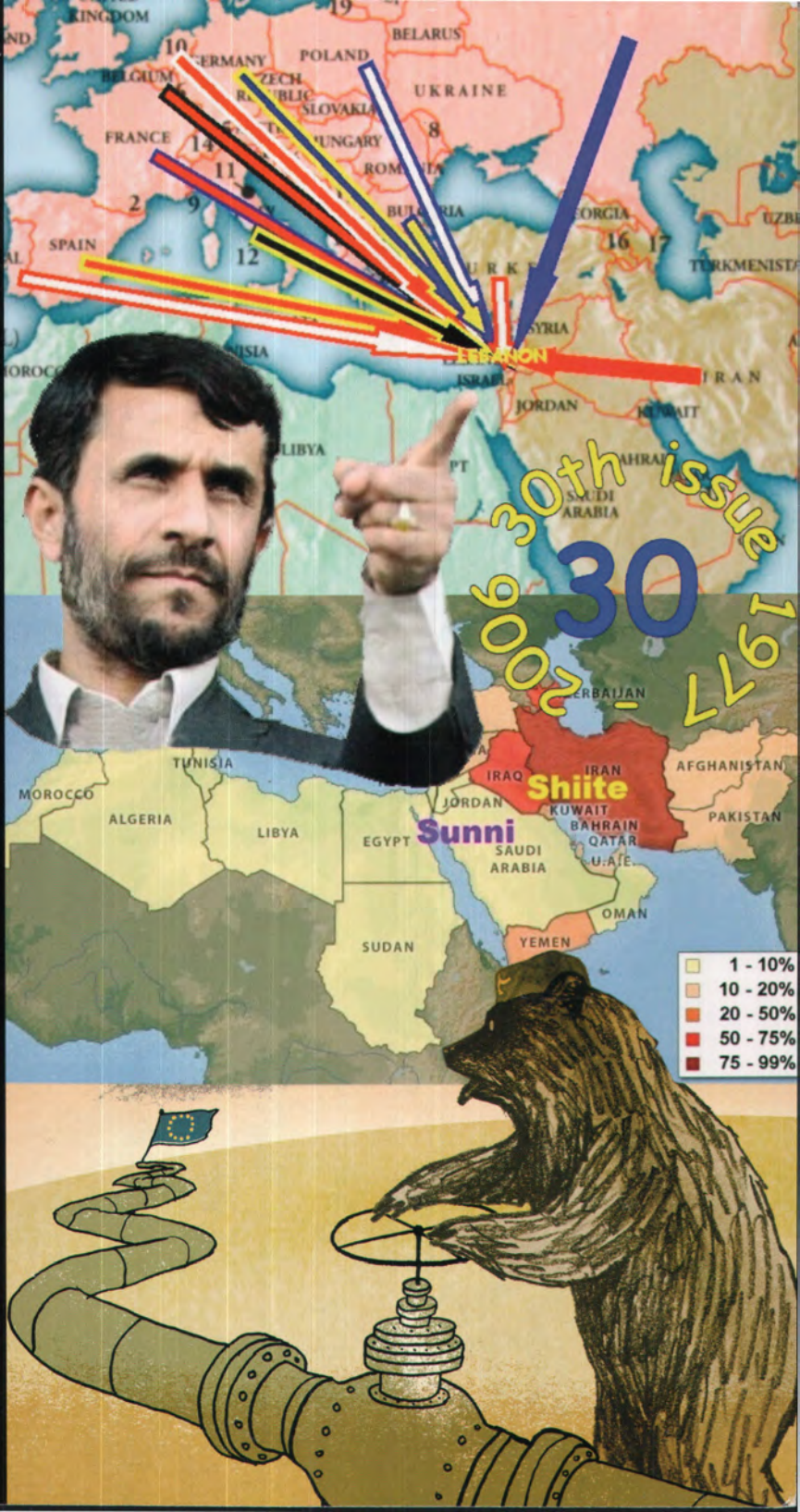
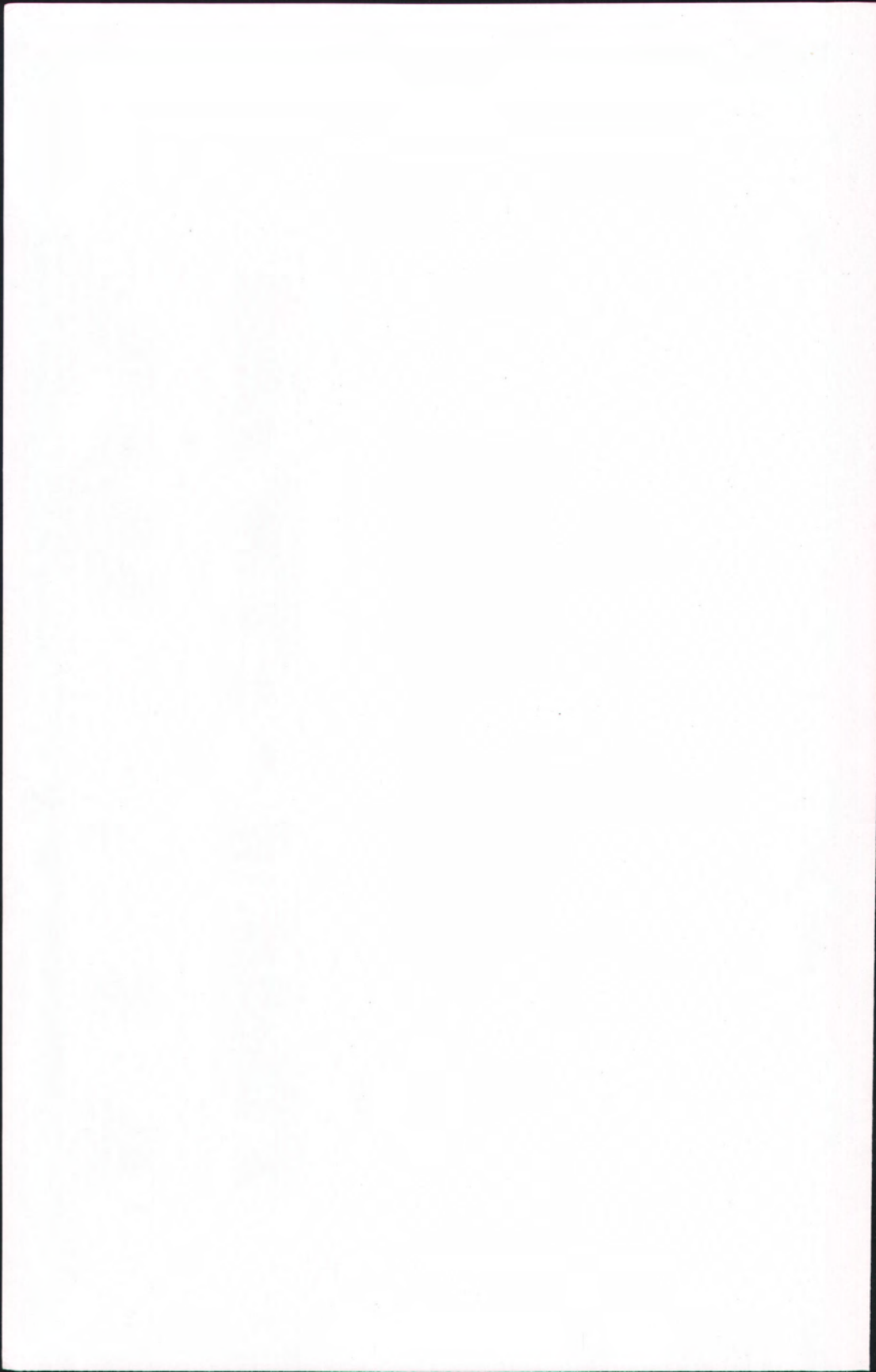


MILESTONES 2006

Don
Pearce





MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

***A Review of the
World Events of
2006 in the Light
of Bible Prophecy***

Don Pearce

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CHRISTADELPHIAN SCRIPTURE STUDY SERVICE



JANUARY 2007

Preface

Those concerned for the peace and prosperity of Israel may be perplexed by the outcomes of the Lebanon War in July 2006. When Israel declared war on the terrorist organisation Hezbollah for its bold seizure of two Israeli soldiers no-one anticipated anything other than a short, decisive and one-sided battle, with Israel routing the terrorist group from their strongholds in Southern Lebanon. Hamas subsequently joined the action.

As we now know, the outcome was very different, with a humiliated Israel pulling up short after a month of fierce yet inconclusive fighting, with world opinion from every side on their heads, condemnation from the United Nations, many of her northern cities damaged and evacuated and her people sharply divided over the ineffectual performance of the Prime Minister and the Defence Force. There were also ominous signs that rockets with an even longer range could now threaten any city in Israel.

Many prayers for Israel were offered in our congregations. It seemed that this war would give Israel the opportunity to remove Hezbollah from the southern half of Lebanon, allow a more stable and constructive government to form in that country, and lead to greater peace on Israel's borders, as we expect from Ezekiel.

Alas, the result was almost the opposite! It became increasingly clear that this war was carried out by Hezbollah, but planned, instigated, funded and overseen by Iran! The weapons technology belonged to a nation 1,600 kilometres away, and the conflict was designed and prepared by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a modern-day Haman, whose single-minded intention is to destroy Israel and lead the Muslim world in radical aggression against the western 'Christian' nations.

Those preparations were elaborate. With the cooperation of Syria vast amounts of war materials were supplied to Hezbollah. The mountains of southern Lebanon were honey-combed with reinforced concrete corridors. Mobile rocket launchers were established at critical vantage points. This enthusiastic preparation for war was the work of years, specifically intended to eradicate the State of Israel.

More ominous still was the disclosure that much of the weaponry was procured from Russia. Iran has published to the world their intention to wipe Israel off the map. Russia is a friend to Iran, and willingly supplied the weapons technology for Iran to prosecute this war against Israel. Russia has also supplied nuclear technology to enhance Iran's nuclear program, which is expected to develop nuclear weapons capability in the near future. Russia has also supplied new and very sophisticated anti-missile missiles to protect Iran's nuclear plants, which Israel and the United States have vowed to destroy if Iran continues on its path to nuclear power status.

It has been our general understanding that Russia would be a prominent leader in bringing the nations to Jerusalem to battle. 2006 has seen truly amazing growth in Russia's confidence and international involvement. The President has great personal authority—almost that of a dictator—the army is totally under his authority, and foreign policy is under his personal control. Suddenly Russia has vast amounts of spare cash, receipts from oil and gas sales at the recent high prices. She is now the world's No. 1 exporter of oil and gas, supplanting Saudi Arabia. Whoever imagined that!

This financial strength is now being exploited to build an energy hegemony over the nations of Europe and Russia's Muslim neighbours to the south. Any energy company operating in those countries is unlikely to have a future unless it cooperates with the larger intentions of Russia. All Russian oil and gas business goes through the government company Gazprom. Any country that seeks to work around Gazprom finds itself humiliated by this vast energy octopus. Poland, Ukraine, Georgia, Lithuania, Belarus and others are profoundly aware of the difficulties and risks of trying to work independently. "Be thou a guard unto them," says Ezekiel.

Added to this is the exciting rapprochement of France, Germany and Russia, about which Milestones 2006 has so much to say. In the 1960s General de Gaulle described a vision of a "united Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" in which there would be an axis of France, Germany and Russia. Well, we are witnessing that with our own eyes today!

And all this expanding, interlocking, company of nations is distinctly anti-Israel! Iran's principal trading partners are in this bloc, and Russia is her friend! Ezekiel was right again!

On the other hand, the Lebanon War created a southern alliance of Sunni Muslim nations, generally favourable to the United States–United Kingdom axis in a way that no one could have imagined. "Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish" have been compelled to a friendship of necessity — with Israel at the centre of their combined counsel! How wonderful the word of Yahweh of hosts, again through the prophet Ezekiel!

So 2006 has been an exciting year for those who watch for the coming of the Lord. We truly are a blessed people to have the vision of "the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years" of these things (Ezek 38:17). The CSSS is grateful for the hard work and vision of Bro. Don Pearce in bringing "Milestones" to the brotherhood each year.

Let us ardently press on with our labours as we await "the King of the Jews".

The Truth is the truth and is such a blessing and comfort. Let us spend time with our families and our ecclesias so that we may not be in tune with a perishing world, but in love with all that Christ will bring.

"Come, Lord Jesus."

B.N. Luke, CSSS Secretary

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Abbreviations used

EU European Union. Was the EEC, then EC, now EU

m = million; bn = billion; GDP = Gross Domestic Product

\$1 = £0.51; €0.76; A\$1.26; CA\$1.17; NZ\$1.41 at year-end rates!

\$1 million = £580,000, \$1 billion = £580,000,000 approx. \$ always US\$.

Author's notes

The writer would like to especially thank his family and Bre. Kevin Allison, Alan Clarke and the CSSS for their helpful comments on the draft. It is all put together in the last 3 weeks of the year, so please bear with its imperfections! *Milestones* quotes extensively from overseas sources, and as **the writer retains original spellings**, etc., **check whether it is a quote before blaming the proofreaders!** [] marks my comments.

Conventional religious terminology is used, sometimes put within " ", but often not. Readers will appreciate the writer's understanding on the falseness of many of these terms. Conventional names are used: e.g. West Bank. Dates are always day-month-year and are cover dates, so some items can have happened up to 10 days earlier.

The writer is very grateful for items sent in. Please include the date and source.

Acknowledgements and permissions arranged. Other items by author.

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Chapter 1

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

2006—another exciting year!

What a year! Eight out of the voted top ten *Associated Press* articles for 2006 had some connection with the Middle East! With the dramatic outbreak of the Lebanon War in July, the eyes of the world were once more focused upon Israel! It was increasingly obvious that Israel was being cast in the role of the aggressor—not the victim. As the war continued Israel became increasingly isolated in world opinion. It was a verbal “all nations gathered against Jerusalem.”

The longer-term outcome has been quite remarkable. It is too soon to be sure, but it may mark a turning point in the Middle East situation. We have long wondered how the circumstances of a period of peace and prosperity for Israel can come about. We may be at the start of such a situation.

Since 1948, Israel's battles have been with her close neighbours: Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. This time, while it was neighbouring Lebanon that she was battling with, there was world recognition that Hezbollah in Lebanon were a branch of Iran's army. Iran and Syria and even Russia were playing an important role in this conflict.

Behind it was the expansionist plans of Iran, now well on the way to becoming a nuclear power. Hezbollah was set up with the avowed aim of eliminating the ‘Zionist entity’; and Ahmadinejad's vitriolic outpourings against Israel have been well publicized. It became apparent that these were not empty words of aggression! The painstaking preparation in southern Lebanon showed the reality of this threat, recalling the situation in Hitler's Germany in the 1930s.

Israel is not the only target for Iran—other non-Shiite countries such as Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia also feel threatened by Iran's belligerency. This is where this summer's conflict differed from previous battles. Now Arab nations who in the past wished for Israel's elimination were secretly assisting Israel in her efforts to beat Hezbollah. They knew that if Israel fell they were next in line!

As this exciting year draws to a close we have the prospect of Saudi Arabia working with her neighbours in a bid to work with Israel for a solution to the Palestinian problem in order to strengthen Israel's position as a bulwark against Iran!

Another spin off from the Lebanon War was the heightened awareness in Europe of the reality of the Muslim threat. This, together with Turkey knocking ever louder at Europe's door, came just at the ‘right’ time for the

new Pope Benedict. Rooted in European history was Islam's push to the doors of Vienna, the seat of the Holy Roman Empire, in 1683. The pushing back of the invader by Christian Europe marked the turning point in the growth of the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

It gave momentum to the Pope's drive to turn Europe back to her Christian roots, a matter he had been campaigning for long before his promotion as leader. His critical speech at Regensburg sparked a wave of protest in the Muslim world, but garnered support from Europe's leaders. What better way to rally Europe behind him than to promote a common cause which the majority of Europeans want—that of halting the Muslim advance.

Germany's steady growth and desire to lead Europe and to reach out to Russia are matters that we have long been looking for and now see becoming realities. With Germany's intention to reinstate the European Constitution, we can foresee deep clashes between Britain and her neighbours, a challenge that will test the new UK Labour party's leader as he takes over from Blair in 2007. Germany is in no mood to compromise on the drive to increasing political union.

With Papal backing for the Constitution, we see the remarkable beginnings of the (Papal) Woman riding the (European) Beast. Germany is openly looking to a restoration of the type of Europe that existed under the Holy Roman Empire!

Putin's increasingly autocratic leadership of Russia and his consolidation of power bring Russia into line with the expectations of a latter-day Assyrian who will be broken on Israel's mountains! With his heaping to himself control of Russia's energy supplies he has put Russia in a commanding position—one does not mess with the one whose hand is on your power supplies!

The hanging of Saddam Hussein brings to an end a reign of tyranny in Iraq, but will it lead to further troubles for America and Britain? Time will tell.

We witnessed too the *whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together*. (Rom 8:22) War and its terrible consequences blighted many parts of the world. Even the natural world showed increasing restlessness; Britain enjoyed unseasonably mild weather, whilst terrible drought and raging forest fires gripped Australia and many other countries, causing immense damage to the lives of people and their economy. Others faced floods, famines and earthquakes. Global warming and water shortages are of growing concern, affecting many parts of the globe. Are the earth's finite resources being over exploited?

Truly 2006 has proved to be another exciting year for watchers on Zion's walls. Surely the Master is at hand and calls on us all to watch faithfully in anticipation of the nearness of that day.

Chapter 2

OUR PROPHETIC HERITAGE

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it? Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy? Amos 3:6-8

The more sure word of prophecy (2 Pet 1:19)

How thankful we are that the prophets did record the words they had heard. Through God's overreaching hand those Old Testament writings that He wanted to preserve as part of scripture were handed to the priests for preservation. God's foreknowledge was such that He knew that, unlike the Kings of Judah, there would be an unbroken chain of priests. Thus when we come to New Testament times Josephus, the first century Jewish writer, and a priest, was able to record that as far as the Jews were concerned the Scriptures were known and authoritative: -

"It is true our history hath been written since Artaxerxes, very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time.

"And how firmly we have given credit to those books of our nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them or to take anything from them or to make any change in them."

He refers to the central copy in the Temple on several occasions.

"That God hath foretold this to Moses, the Scripture laid up in the Temple shows."

"This is shown by the writings laid up in the Temple."

"Last of all the spoils [taken by Titus AD 70] was carried the Law of the Jews."

New Testament writers could not pass their writings to a highly opposed Jewish priesthood! Part of the Holy Spirit gifts was the discerning of those many writings that were to be considered as scripture. This was part of the role of the prophets.

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. 1 Cor 14:37

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 1 Cor 12:28

Peter was able to refer to writings of Paul that were considered part of scripture. (2 Pet 3:16)

The closing capstone of scripture came from the Lord Jesus and gives our Lord's assessment of history—an aspect that is virtually lacking in any modern assessment of history. How different the world appears through his eyes! We do well to give heed to its teachings for it tells us who the real enemy is. The corrupt power that is full of the blood of saints is not to be found in Islam but in the power that today appears most respectable—the Roman Catholic Church.

Continuing last year's *Milestones* layout

Last year we changed the layout somewhat, putting the prophecies concerning these days and their present day growing fulfilment, side by side, rather than dealing with all the prophecies at the start of the booklet. We continue with this layout. This time there are 4 main sections: -

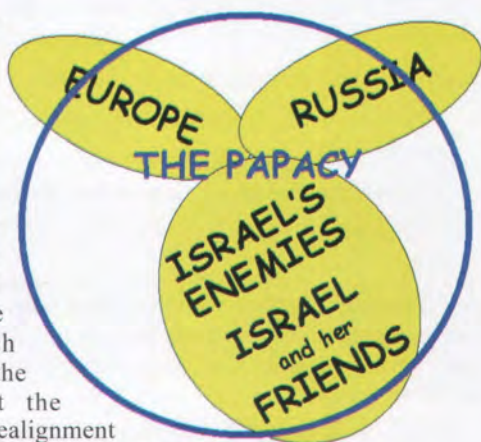
• Israel and her friends • Israel's Middle East enemies • Europe and the Papacy • Russia

We open with an aspect of fulfilling prophecy designed to encourage us on our journey to the Kingdom. This year we are looking at what scripture says about the restoration of scattered Israel after Armageddon. This is the work in which the saints will be involved!

The interlocking circles of influence

Our 4 areas do not operate in isolation. As we approach the time of the end we can see more and more their interlocking influences. Russia will be found working with Europe and with Israel's enemies in the Middle East. In the language of Daniel ch 2 they are all broken together. They have one common aim, which temporarily unites them—the elimination of Israel. At the moment there is still some realignment needed. Britain needs to be severed from Europe,

playing an independent role. Many Middle East nations who would count themselves as Israel's enemy today, are to be brought—no doubt reluctantly—to see the value of working with Israel in partnership with the



Merchants of Tarshish and young lions working in the Sheba–Dedan area. The Vatican has to grow in influence not only in Europe but also amongst the Orthodox churches. This may only develop completely after the call to the Judgement Seat.



It is interesting how Israel's conflict with the Palestinians is perceived, the writer believes incorrectly, as the reason for so much of the Middle East problems. The wars in Iraq, Lebanon and Gaza are laid at Israel's door. If Israel didn't exist then there would be peace, they claim! We shall see the falseness of this claim later. What is interesting is that it focuses the world's eyes on Jerusalem; for indeed it will be here that the final contest will be played out.

An exhortation to watch

We marvel that we have reached the end of 2006 and the Lord has not returned! We didn't think that we would be here in 2000, and now we are hanging the 2007 calendars! Yet, as we look back, we can see how much more has been fulfilled. How much sharper the picture is and how many more have embraced the Truth. Many loved ones have fallen asleep, but for them their next conscious moments will be those on the day of resurrection!

We who remain must be determined to keep aloft the banner of Truth in an age that finds the ecclesias weakened by the insidious intrusion of the world. Is there a category for 'part-time membership' of the Truth? No! Servants are expected to serve daily, not at their convenience. Surely the time is exceedingly short. 2007 is a significant year –

40 years on from the retaking of Jerusalem by the Israelis;

50 years from the Treaty of Rome;

90 years from General Allenby entering Jerusalem when the Turks were driven back from the Middle East.

If the events of the Judgement Seat and the preparatory work span a 10-year period then it could be a jubilee period from the Jewish taking of Jerusalem and a double jubilee period from the British taking of Jerusalem, to the Rightful Heir retaking it from the Gogian forces! So keep watching!!

This is part of an exhortation that Brother Roberts gave nearly 130 years ago in 1878. (*Seasons of Comfort* 'The World Asleep')

A perseverance in the course of life that is "acceptable to God" will bring great peace when pursued with a pure regard to His approbation. It will not, however, be found a path of roses. While toward God there will be peace, towards man there will be much to mortify and perturb—much

to endure in the way of present sacrifice and crucifixion of feeling. The path of probation is purposely a path of thorns. Hence the words of Paul, "Ye have *need of patience*, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:36). See also Peter: . . . "Salvation (is) ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are *in heaviness through manifold temptations*: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:5-7). The accepted of God in all past ages have exemplified this rule. "Take, my brethren, the prophets," says James, "for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."

Of the congregation of the chosen as a whole, it was said to John when he saw them glorified in vision and asked who they were, "These are they who came out of great tribulation," reminding us of Paul's words to the ecclesias among whom he went to strengthen them in a season of great trouble: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

And soon the fight will be over, and the race run; and who shall tell the consolation that awaits the victory of "him that overcometh"? Christ will confess him, the angels will rejoice with him, and a multitude of true brethren will give thanks to God for his triumph. Glory will rest upon him, honour will be poured upon him, and life granted him for length of endless days. A crown will be placed upon his head; the sceptre of righteous rule in his hands; and an exhaustless bounty of blessing placed at his command for those whom his iron rod shall rule. In the strength of immortal vigour, and the joy of the mantling spirit, and the possession of all divine excellence, he will forget the sorrows of this age of sin except as the background of his eternal joy; and will give thanks to God for evermore that he was privileged to know and do the will of God in the day of his dishonour and shame.

Recommended books

World events and the coming of Zion's King, Graham Pearce, CSSS agents

The Revelation—Which Interpretation? Graham Pearce. CSSS agents

Elpis Israel, John Thomas, Christadelphian Office

Apocalypse and History Barker & Boulton, Christadelphian Office

Ezekiel, John Allfree, CSSS agents & Christadelphian Office

Christadelphian Expositor, H. P. Mansfield, Logos agents

More Sure Word of Prophecy, J. Burke, CSSS agents

Chapter 3

A KINGDOM PICTURE—SAVING ISRAEL

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old. Mic 7:18-20

Jerusalem to be trodden down one last time

As Micah and so many of the prophets foretold, there is to be a day of blessing and restoration for Israel. Jesus will indeed be Saviour to his nation as well as to spiritual Israel. The 2000 years of down treading will not have been in vain. Such is God's foreknowledge that, in their final calamity, when all they have trusted to save them from their enemies is taken from them, they will in their desperation seek God's help. As happened many times, it is through dire suffering for their faithlessness that Israel is brought to acknowledge that there is only one power to save them.

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth [relents NKJV] him of the evil. Joel 2:12-13

In God's compassion saviours will have been prepared against this day of Israel's cry; but not just any saviours—the Saviour and his immortal followers!

Picture the scene! Israel has been conquered by the overwhelming power of Russia, Europe and Iran, working together to eliminate Israel from being a nation. Many Jews will have perished, others will have been carried away as prisoners of war and others will have fled into Jordan to escape this terrible onslaught. For a while it would seem as if there is no God of Israel: that false Christianity has triumphed.

And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. Dan 11:45



Saviours from Sinai

The first intimation of coming troubles for a triumphant Gog comes from the south, at Bozrah. The prophet Isaiah graphically describes this encounter in terms of a great slaughter (Isa 34). The opening verses see the great destruction of Gog's armies.

Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.

For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Isa 34:1-2

This opening picture encompasses the whole period of destruction of Israel's enemies. It is the time when God avenges the shed blood of his people, both natural and spiritual.

For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. Isa 34:8

This chapter then seems to describe just the opening 'shots'.

The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. Isa 34:6

A later chapter, Isaiah 63, will cover the subsequent moves. Other prophets also indicate that the initial move of Christ and the saints is from the south, from Sinai and they travel north to save Israel in their hour of need. Habakkuk describes this in his third chapter.

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Hab 3:3

Deut 33 describes the movements of Israel's saviours as from Sinai.

And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Deut 33:2

The Psalm of David commemorating the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem, projects to that future time when the one typified by the ark will come up to Jerusalem, not as a Lamb as at his first coming, but now as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Ps 68:17

If we omit the words that are in italics in the AV and translate the word *angels* by its Hebrew meaning (this is the only occurrence of this word: it is not the usual word for angels), it becomes a very powerful statement.

The chariots of God twenty thousand, thousands of changed ones: the Lord among them, Sinai, in(to) the holy.

The sudden appearance of “hostile” forces at Bozrah and the destruction they bring on the Gogian forces will be a grievous blow to the pride of Gog. The next appearance of Christ and the saints seems to be at Jerusalem. Mortal troops would take some time to traverse this distance, but immortals can traverse space in a moment!

Dramatic events at Jerusalem

The earth shattering splitting of the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4) appears to be the next event. God has long made preparation for this day—there is an E-W fault line running through the mountain! This region is an area of tectonic activity; the Jordan valley runs down part of the meeting point of the African and Arabian plates.

The extent of the devastation caused by this earthquake is difficult to grasp. Not only does it cause the Mount of Olives to split, it opens up a valley between the two sections of the mountain, through which a fresh springing river will flow to the Dead Sea. (Ezek 47:8) This is the deepest spot on the surface of the planet, but as part of the changes brought by the earthquake it is to be elevated above sea level! The River Jordan’s flow is to be reversed—its source no longer Hermon but now Jerusalem—with a new outlet to the Mediterranean Sea. (v 10) In addition the whole of the Jerusalem area is to be restructured, so that the future temple will stand out, visible from afar. (Zec 14:10; Isa 2:2)

The deaths from such topographical changes will surely be extensive; not only in the land but its destructive reverberations will be felt around the globe. This is the day foretold by the prophets: –

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face.

For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. Ezek 38:18-20

And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Isa 30:25

There are other weapons of destruction in the Lord’s hands that will make Gog’s demise complete. Ezekiel 38:21-22 speaks of: –

Self destruction between the multi-national troops

Pestilence and blood

Rain and hailstones

Fire and brimstone.

The latter seems an allusion to volcanic activity. There is one more weapon vividly described in Zechariah:

And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

Zec 14:12

Surely this is a description of the effects of God's spirit power being targeted on the enemy. Unlike the effects of nuclear radiation, which leaves contamination, God's power will be clean—but effective!

The Saviour revealed

For the remaining Jews in the land, who by the overseeing hand of God escape these terrible judgements, (Zec 13:9) there comes the moment when Messiah is revealed to his people, having dramatically saved them using powers that unquestionably belong to God! Zechariah describes this climax of His dealings with His People:

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Zec 12:10

This incredible verse, written some 500 years before the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus has this description of one who is initially described as God (*me*), and then described as *him, an only son*. Here is a detailed description of the one who would be the Son of God and would die through being pierced, yet rise still with the marks of crucifixion in his hands, feet and side. What more powerful an evidence could there be to these Jews who on looking intently at the leader of those who have saved them, see marks of crucifixion in his hands and feet. (Ps 22:16) There can be no other person who has been crucified yet claims to have been raised! Paul likens this revealing of Messiah to Israel in the terms of a veil being lifted from the face—a sudden revealing of that which had hitherto been covered. (2 Cor 3:15-16)

Just as on the day of Pentecost when the Jews cried out to Peter upon their realization of their sin in rejecting the Messiah, so it will be in this day. Zechariah (12:12-14) describes the mourning by all strata of Israel—those of royal blood, priests, prophets, mighty men and people. Just as Peter instructed them to

repent, and be baptized every one of you in[to] the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Acts 2:38

so in this day. Ignore the chapter break—how did Zechariah continue?

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. 13:1

One of my Jewish translations renders it ‘for purging and cleansing’. The newly flowing waters going down to the Dead Sea will be a fitting place for their baptism into Christ and their entry into the New Covenant. Holy Spirit gifts will be poured out—those in the days of Peter were like the former rains, this fresh outpouring will be like the latter rains. (Zec 12:10; Joel 2:28-32)

With a nucleus of faithful Jews to whom Jesus can be King, the Kingdom is established. There is much work to be done. Gog’s dead bodies are to be removed to a valley in the south—the Valley of Hamon-Gog. (Ezek 39:11-16) This will become a memorial to later generations of the folly of those nations who sought to destroy God’s people as Haman tried so long before.

The gospel proclaimed

Now is the time when the gospel call will go to the nations.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. Rev 14:6-7

How apt a challenge to this world that refuses to acknowledge a Creator! Yet it is clear that many nations will not welcome this new King! Psalm 2 dramatically paints the picture of the Gentile rulers refusing to heed this call to submit. Indeed the next few verses in Revelation also show this.

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. Rev 14:8-10

Babylon is to fall. In chapter 13 we look at the latter-day Babylonian power—the Roman Catholic Church. Although a symbolic book, the language of Revelation 18 leads us to expect that the city of Rome will disappear like a stone thrown in the sea. It is interesting to note that much of Italy—like Israel—is on an earthquake fault line.

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. Rev 18:21

Although Rome as the centre of the church will be desolated, its branches will continue to rally against this Jewish king. Such is the structure of the Roman Church that it has a hierarchy of control in every country.

Christ or Antichrist?

Why does Europe resist so much? The language of Revelation is of two harvests—the corn and the grape that follows several months later in the agricultural calendar. The destruction of the Gogian armies in Israel is described as the threshing of the corn and the later judgements on Europe as the treading of grapes.

The seeds for ‘Christianity’ to resist have already been sown in their teaching about the coming Antichrist. Millions of books have been sold around this theme: it is a belief found among fundamentalists as well as establishment churches. The idea was put forward by the Roman Catholic Church to divert attention from the clear teaching of the scriptures concerning the coming “man of sin” (2 Thes 3) They claim that an Antichrist is going to do all the things that we know **Christ is going to do!** So when he saves Israel by defeating Gog, establishes a covenant with the Jews, sets himself up as their king, etc, Christendom is going to say, “This is Antichrist! We must resist him!” And so they will be punished. The symbol in Revelation is of a lake of fire. (19:20)

Restoring scattered Israel

What of the scattered Jews in Europe and around the world? To be a Jew, especially in Europe and Russia at this time will be a frightening thing. With the Gentiles mourning the loss of their armies on the mountains of Israel, Jews will be in odium. The picture is of them fleeing to safety to the dens and caves of the earth. History will be repeating itself. The work of Christ will be to regather them, a part of the Elijah work.

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. Jer 16:14-16

Although they are to be returned to the land of Israel, Ezekiel reveals an important element of that journey.

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:

And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.

Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land ...

And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. Ezek 20:33-38

Where is the wilderness of the people? It is the place of their instruction and entry into the New Covenant through baptism. It makes sense that it is at Sinai, where the Jews entered the Old Covenant¹. This is the spot where Elijah was shown his work of education to Israel. Not all the returning Jews will accept Christ as their Messiah. The rebels will be purged out. Those who accept him will be brought into the New Covenant. Will the water again flow from Horeb, waters to wash away their sins? Now “in Christ”, they can come to the apostles at Jerusalem to be instructed as to which tribe they belong to and to receive their inheritance in the land. One imagines a steady stream of rescued Jews arriving at Sinai, being educated and going to their tribal allotment. This period will cover many years.

Step by step Gentile nations are brought to submit and Jews are regathered until all have returned and all nations submit to Zion’s King. What a paradise the earth will then be! What glory will be reflected to the Father, the Great Creator and Sustainer of this Earth!

We commence the 1st of our 4 sections, looking at Israel and her friends.

¹ As suggested by Brother Thomas (*Eureka* vol. 3, p 190). In other places he interpreted the wilderness as being Europe (*Eureka* vol. 1, p 179). Readers are referred to his *The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained* for a comprehensive treatment of the restoration of Israel.

Chapter 4

PROPHECIES & EXPECTATIONS—ISRAEL & HER FRIENDS

A fundamental element of the One Faith is that God's purpose with Israel has not finished. The correct understanding of the Bible teaching on the Jews is the key that unlocks its teaching. Few in the Churches see any future for them; indeed they will be the foremost in coming to destroy Israel. So what are our expectations about Israel and those few nations who will be friendly to her at the time of her trouble? Let's look at a few of these prophecies.

The North-South split

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia; all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and in some cases increasing measure of control from Moscow. *Sir Winston Churchill 1946*

Most of my life has been lived in a divided Europe. It was a time of tension between the West and Soviet Russia in the East. That is no longer the situation. The curtain has gone, Germany reunited and many former Soviet states are in the EU with two more about to join. The communist Soviet Union has gone—in name, perhaps not in nature! More and more the contest is not seen in terms of Europe versus Russia, but Europe working with Russia against America and Britain. As America's friend in the Middle East, Israel too is the object of their hatred.

This N-S split is what we would expect from prophecy. Daniel clearly sees a King of the North versus a King of the South in chapter 11 at the time of the end, so there must be latter-day representatives of these two 'Kings'.

We refer readers to *Milestones 2003* for a fuller treatment of this aspect. Briefly, it is a re-forming of the situation that existed in the centuries before Christ when the Greek Empire split following the death of Alexander the Great. Israel was at the junction of the two main rival Greek powers of that time—the Seleucid to the North and the Ptolemaic to the South. We have long expected from this and other prophecies that at the time of the end, Britain and America would play the role of the King of the South, with Russia, backed by Europe, as the King of the North.

So it is greatly encouraging to see that this is indeed how the Middle East world is increasingly dividing up—a North-South split of nations as our map shows.

A time of safety—still to come

Although many of the Arab nations share Iran's fanatical dislike of Israel, Bible prophecy expects us to see a time when there is a tolerance of Israel in exchange for peace. There is still a time to come when the nations **talk** of peace, but it will lead to sudden destruction.

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 1 Thes 5:2-4



In the first instance this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, but clearly it has a latter-day application from the words in the preceding chapter of Thessalonians. This is a time of destruction not only for the Jewish nation but also the Gentiles. The return of the Lord Jesus will be first in secret to his household. (Acts 1:11) Following this will be the sudden destruction, which will come on Israel when they are talking of peace and believing they are dwelling in safety. That destruction will be brought at the hands of Gog. Then it will be the turn for swift destruction against the Gogian forces that will at this time be dwelling securely in God's land, triumphant, so they think, over the Jewish people. This destruction will be at the hand of Christ and the saints. (Dan 11:45)

Israel is still seeking that time of peace and safety. The writer believes it still lies in the future: and what is so exciting about the events of 2006 is that we can see a possible pathway to this time of security.

Ezekiel is quite specific about this time, just prior to Gog's invasion. Again we refer the reader to *Milestones 2005* for a fuller exposition. Let's string together the clear words of Ezekiel.

In the latter years thou [Gog] shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword... and they shall dwell safely all of them... And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and

having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey... say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? Ezek 38:8, 11-12, 14

What we have to remember is that God condemns their efforts to bring about peace for themselves, describing it as a time when Israel are at “trespass” in His eyes.

After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. Ezek 39:26

So the period of dwelling safely as described in Ezek 38:8, 11, 14 is a real time of peace and security for Israel, broken by the *evil thought* (v 10) of Gog’s invasion. It is brought about through Israel’s own efforts rather than a Divine reward for their faithfulness and trust in Him. It cannot refer to a time when Jesus is King as is proposed by those who would have Christ returning to Israel **before** the calling of the saints. Such a viewpoint founders on this passage. As it is a time of trespass in God’s eyes, the peace Israel attains must have been brought about through their own efforts, not because of any trust in God. Hence **God** brings Gog down against His people to punish them (38:16), to bring them to a situation when they have to call upon God for help. He will hear that cry—saviours will have been prepared as in the days of old. It will also result in God being *sanctified* (38:16, 23)—“to demonstrate and vindicate one’s holiness” (Vine).

We would expect, then, that Israel will be able from a position of strength to bring about a cooperation with her neighbours that enables her to grow in prosperity and become a desirable spoil and prey in Gog’s eyes.

In the midst of the land, on the mountains of Israel

It seems clear that Israel will be in possession of the hilly region of the land, which is relevant to the proposal to withdraw from the West Bank. The two scriptural definitions are that Israel will be dwelling *in the midst of the land* and *on the mountains of Israel* (Ezek 38:13, 8; 39:2) when Gog invades.

The merchants of Tarshish and her young lions

The latter-day situation is also coloured by the words addressed to Gog.

Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? Ezek 38:13

Again this was extensively dealt with in *Milestones 2005* ch 14. They are clearly opposed to Gog’s invasion. Israel’s friends can be found—in the main—amongst the English-speaking countries or where Britain has had a strong influence as in India. The Protestant’s view—in the past at least—that the Jews are still God’s people, has strongly influenced their attitude

towards a homeland for the Jews. This contrasts with the continental European and Russian viewpoint influenced by the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. It is significant that the majority of countries listed in Ezekiel 38 as Gog and his companions are what today would be considered Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian countries.

Lions working in the region

This prophecy leads us to expect to see Britain and America, together with countries like India and Australia, working in the Middle East region as friends of Israel and opposed to the invasion by Gog. It is clear that the Merchants and her young lions are working with Sheba and Dedan and they stand together and have a common outlook.

This WWI postcard names (look at the mane!) some of the young lions that were working with Britain then. It is interesting that with the exception of South Africa and New Zealand these same countries are working extensively in the region.



Sheba and Dedan working for Israel

This is quite remarkable because until now the countries of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf have not been friendly to Israel. The Muslim countries are divided into two groups, Shiite and Sunni, as we shall see in chapter 7. What the Sunni leaders fear is a take over by Shiite Iran. So much so that the Sunni leaders are now beginning to be prepared to work with Israel, who is seen as their best bulwark against Shiite expansion. This would be in line with the picture painted in Ezek 38:13.

Bro Thomas expected Britain to be in occupation of Egypt. Those days have long gone, but it is quite possible that Egypt, in this new spirit brought on by a fear of Iran, invites British forces to defend the Suez Canal, a vital source of income to Egypt and of strategic importance to Britain and her allies. Al Qaeda has been thwarted three times in the past few months in its attempt to damage the canal.

It would be fitting that Britain is found to be in Egypt and that Russia is in occupation of the King of the North's territory—Turkey, Syria and Iraq.

Our next chapter looks at Israel's peace and prosperity today.

Chapter 5

ISRAEL TODAY—ATTACKED YET PROSPEROUS

We look at what has happened to Israel over the past year, and see how things are moving closer to the many pictures portrayed in Scripture. It fills us with anticipation of the nearness of the Lord's return. We start with a look at why Israel is so hated; anti-Semitism is growing again and has been greatly fanned by the world's attitude to Israel over the Lebanon War.

Growing Anti-Semitism

A report presented Sunday at a conference of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in Paris indicated that anti-Semitism in Europe had increased pursuant to Israel's war in Lebanon this summer.

The report, consolidated by the European Jewish Congress, with the participation of Jewish communities from 25 nations in continental Europe, revealed that expressions of anti-Semitism have doubled since this summer.

According to the report, there is a distinct and worrying atmosphere of general anti-Semitism, more disturbing than the reports of random anti-Semitic attacks in the street. *Ynet news* 13-11-06

Why is Israel so hated?

The incredibly anti-Israel feeling in the world today has its origins in the Churches' teaching that, because the Jews put Jesus to death, they have no further purpose in God's eyes. They were and still are regarded in many countries as "Christ-killers". For the Muslim nations they are regarded as the source of all the world's evils and troubles. Witness the constant denunciations of the "Zionists"—they refuse to acknowledge the existence of Israel—by such leaders as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran. Not only do they deny the Holocaust but Israel's right to exist. Last year he organised a conference under the banner "A world without the Zionist Entity", this year it was entitled "The Holocaust—global vision". The world is waking up to the fact that these are not empty words—Hezbollah's attack on Israel demonstrates that this is the path that Iran is pursuing!

The UN is very much behind an anti-Israel feeling, especially the Human Rights section, and is getting worse.

Thirty percent of all the UN Human Rights Commission resolutions adopted over a forty-year period and critical of a specific states' human rights record were directed at Israel alone. In comparison, in five sessions since it first met in June of this year, the Council has directed one hundred percent of its human rights resolutions condemning a specific state towards Israel. www.eyeontheun.org 22-11-06

So it is not surprising that on all sides Israel is looked upon with disdain. In spite of the Pope's fine words of "forgiveness", an anti-Semitic feeling runs close to the surface in much of Europe and Russia. For Muslim countries Israel's return to what was Muslim territory and the bringing of a western democratic state into the heart of dictatorial governments, rouses their fury. Furthermore Israel is a friend of America—the 'Great Satan' to the Muslims and no friend of much of Europe and Russia. Saddam Hussein's last words as he was being hung were, "Palestine is Arab."

Here was an interesting slant put by the editor-in-chief of the Al Jazeera news organisation when being interviewed—he was asked why he thought everything would get much better if Israel did not exist.

It's because we always lose to Israel. It gnaws at the people in the Middle East that such a small country as Israel, with only about 7 million inhabitants, can defeat the Arab nation with its 350 million. That hurts our collective ego. The Palestinian problem is in the genes of every Arab. The West's problem is that it does not understand this.
www.worldpoliticswatch.com 11-12-06

Olmert the new leader

Dramatically the Israeli Prime Minister Sharon was removed from Israel's political scene. On Jan 4th 2006 in the afternoon it is said that he was agreeing the new boundaries of a Palestinian State on the West Bank, involving the dismantling of many of the West Bank settlements and giving up parts of Jerusalem. A few hours later he had a massive stroke and has remained in a coma ever since. His deputy Ehud Olmert took over when it became apparent that Sharon would not soon be back. It was a difficult time for Israel; elections were scheduled for the end of February. Sharon had broken away from the Likud party and set up a new party, Kadima. Its purpose was to obtain a mandate to push forward his plans to close down these West Bank settlements, following the withdrawal from Gaza.

A month before the elections came the shock of Hamas winning the majority of seats in the Palestinian Authority elections. Hamas were known to be dedicated to the overthrow of Israel and a terrorist organisation with links to Syria and Iran. Many Israeli voters feared that following the withdrawal of settlers and troops from Gaza, the vacuum would be filled by a government that refused to recognise Israel's existence and who were smuggling weapons across the Egyptian border.

Olmert's Kadima party won far fewer seats than the polls had originally forecast. He was able to pull together a coalition government, which carried a slim parliamentary majority. One of the characteristics of his government was that it was entirely civilian; normally Israel's military are well represented in Parliament. He pushed ahead with plans to dismantle many of the settlements. His leadership qualities were soon put to the test.

The Lebanon war

The main event in a contemplation of Israel in 2006 must be the Lebanon War. We look at the background to Hezbollah and how they came to be so well prepared when we look at Israel's enemies in chapter 9. The War followed the daring capture of an Israeli soldier in Gaza in early July. The Palestinians had tunnelled under the border and came up behind the Israeli troops guarding the border. Three days later Olmert sent Israeli tanks and soldiers into Gaza to seek the missing soldier and to try to stem the missile attacks. At the year-end the soldier is still missing.

Two weeks later on July 11th Hezbollah carried out a similarly daring attack across Israel's fragile Lebanese border. A squad of Hezbollah militia crossed into Israel and came up behind a group of soldiers guarding the border. All were killed except two soldiers who were taken across the border. There were further Israeli fatalities as Israel's rescue attempt failed, and the missing soldiers have not been heard of since.

Israel's response was swift. To everyone's surprise Olmert gave the order for reprisals the next day. Hezbollah's response was instant—salvo after salvo of rockets was launched upon Israel's northern cities. Filled with ball bearings they scattered a lethal spray of pellets wherever they landed. So began a 34-day battle as Israel tried to stem the flow of rockets. To their surprise they found Hezbollah extremely well dug in, with very sophisticated bunkers and armed with advanced weapons that proved very damaging to Israel's tanks. They were also fanatical fighters. Israel had to try many different strategies to overcome this "professional" foe. She was no longer fighting against her neighbours but against the might of Iran who had trained and armed the Hezbollah. Israel found amongst the weaponry that they captured, advanced Russian tank missiles and sophisticated night-vision equipment, courtesy of Britain! These had been supplied to Iran under a UN anti-drug scheme to stop drug smuggling from Afghanistan across Iran's borders. They evidently had been turned over instead to Hezbollah and used with great effect.

There was much damage to property in northern Israel. Extensive bomb shelters had been constructed so there was comparatively little loss of life—sirens would announce the arrival of the next wave of missiles. Lebanon experienced much more damage as Israel pounded launching sites. When Hezbollah rebuilt southern Lebanon following Israel's withdrawal in 2000, they had very cunningly built into the basements of the new schools and houses reinforced bunkers to hold their weaponry. Hezbollah knew that Israel avoided civilian casualties as much as possible. And so Israel often found their hands tied and were unable to take out the launcher sites.

Hezbollah also had learned the lesson of effective PR. They had on hand fluent English speaking guides who took photographers and journalists to where Hezbollah wanted them to go. On occasions the minder would have

a suitcase full of western toys, Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, etc that could be posed amidst the rubble to tug at the heartstrings of the Western readers and viewers. The fact that they were so clean amidst the debris didn't seem to matter—the message was powerful—look what Israel is doing. There were many well documented occurrences of photographic deception.

The destruction at Qana¹ where initially 56 were claimed to have died, though later this was downgraded to 28, caused a worldwide outcry against Israel. The strange thing is that the building didn't collapse until early in the morning, 6 or 7 hours after the last Israel bomb had struck.

By examining the times on the many photographs that were published, various blogsites were able to establish that many of the bodies being photographed being carried out of the damaged building were being recycled for subsequent escorted groups of photographers to capture the moment. The other characteristic noted, was how remarkably clean these bodies were for having been dug out of a building. The other point was they had advanced rigor mortis—they were estimated to have been dead for two days! One of the rescuers could be seen in a later shot as a victim being stretchered out, only to reappear still later in his rescuer role again!

But the damage was done. Israel was reviled around the world for her alleged barbaric killing of civilians. Such distortions occurred time and time again. Israel certainly lost the PR battle! She severely weakened Hezbollah but was not able to eliminate many of her bases. When the UN drew up a plan to reinforce the UNIFIL troops in southern Lebanon, supposedly to prevent Hezbollah from rebuilding their defences in the area, Israel accepted the UN resolution 1701 and Hezbollah agreed to a ceasefire.

As time moved on it became plain that the UNIFIL troops had no intention of disarming Hezbollah nor of preventing them from rearming. Instead they have allowed Hezbollah to reinforce their bunkers and restock them so that it is reported that they are now better equipped with a greater number of more advanced rockets!

Conflict with the Palestinians

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians grew throughout the year. The hoped-for peace through Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 didn't mature. For most of the year rockets were fired into Israel from



Clean toy in the rubble!

¹ Erroneously labelled by a *Catholic Herald* article as where Jesus turned water into wine!

Gaza. Many of these fell onto the Jewish settlement of Sderot, necessitating frequent dashes to shelters, and causing great misery.

The Palestinians have lurched from one crisis to another since the coming to power of Hamas in the January elections. Fatah and Hamas are constantly at loggerheads. Hamas' refusal to recognise Israel has led to aid from Europe and America drying up, leading to plummeting living standards as wages go unpaid. Many have had to sell family heirlooms to try to keep themselves fed. In spite of the millions of dollars smuggled into Gaza by the leaders, little trickles down to the man in the street. Instead, it disappears into the militants' pockets. The Gaza kidnapping led to Israeli troops re-entering Gaza and much damage was done in an effort to stop the flow of Kassam rockets into the Israeli border settlements.

In November Olmert agreed to a truce with the Palestinians; in exchange for a cessation of rocket attacks on Israel, Israel would no longer enter Gaza. The rockets still landed and Israel, after weeks of restraint, finally declared that they would strike at those firing them.

In the middle of December, Mahmoud Abbas called for the Palestinian parliament to be dissolved and fresh elections held. It is uncertain whether he has the powers to do this, and Hamas strongly oppose his move, as they are unlikely to win so many seats in the next election. Gaza was slipping into civil war before this announcement, and immediately the level of internal violence rose.

Late December there was a flurry of important talks. Blair had talks with both sides, and then Olmert visited Jordan for talks with Abdullah. Finally Olmert had talks with Abbas at Jerusalem. The Gaza situation has calmed a little as the year closes. It will be interesting to see if behind the scenes pressure from countries such as Saudi Arabia can resolve the situation.

Withdrawal plans halted

One of the consequences of the Lebanon War has been to put on hold Olmert's plans for West Bank settlement withdrawals.

At Monday's meeting, the prime minister said the situation in the country now merits a different response. Olmert told committee members, "Something has changed. The priorities I thought to be the right ones before are not relevant for now." *A7News.com* 4-9-06

The matter has not gone entirely away, but there is no mood in Israel for such plans. The thought of the West Bank becoming armed to the teeth and raining rockets upon Israel as is happening in Gaza is a step too far. Olmert's popularity ratings have slumped and many are calling for his resignation. Benjamin Netanyahu is emerging as the front-runner from a large field, if new elections were to be called. (Netanyahu 26.2%, Olmert 6.1%.) *Israel Today* 19-12-06 reporting on a Channel 10 poll.

Seeking better defences

Few think that the troubles with Lebanon are ended. Syria is building up troop and missile levels near the Golan, so a reigniting of a Syrian/Lebanese war is perceived to be fairly imminent, especially if Israel does choose to strike Iran's nuclear installations. Iran is extending her financial and military support to Hamas as she has done to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

In the longer term Israel is developing miniature weapons that can be used in her battle with Hezbollah. A \$100 million fighter plane is not very effective or efficient against small numbers of mobile terrorists, but a tiny flying machine which can fly unnoticed carrying cameras and weapons is much more practical. They have been nicknamed "the Hornet".¹ *Spiegel Online* 17-11-06

She is also developing drones—unmanned aircraft—that can carry fuel to enable her fighter planes to reach distant targets such as Iran. These can remain aloft for 24 hours and their small size makes them difficult to detect by radar. *USA Today* 11-12-06

US will double equipment stored in Israel

Ynet News reported Tuesday that the US Congress has approved a doubling of the stockpiles of American military equipment stored in Israel in case of an emergency in the Middle East. Israel is also permitted to use the stockpiles in case of emergency, and in fact, much of the American equipment was used in this summer's cross-border war with Hizb'Allah in Lebanon. Ynet reports that the value of the equipment currently in storage in Israel is valued at \$100 million and the American government approved doubling its value to \$200 million in 2007. *A7 News* 12-12-06

America has pre-positioned a huge quantity of weapons around the Middle East. It is thought that those in Israel are being stored in a vast complex of buildings that have been built in recent years at Rosh HaAyin, east of Tel Aviv.

Israeli economy sees record-breaking positive news

In spite of the great disruption caused by the Lebanon War, investor confidence in Israel seems unshaken. The strong financial measures initiated in 2003/4 when Netanyahu was Finance Minister seem to have paid off, in spite of their unpopularity at the time.

A report issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics on Tuesday showed that foreign direct investment in Israel tripled in the first nine months of 2006, reaching a record high of \$9.6 billion, with financial investment doubling to \$6.7 billion.

¹ An echo perhaps of Deut 7:20?

Export surplus reached \$1.5 billion in six months of trade in 2006. Third-quarter statistics for 2006 showed that Israel's balance of payments surplus grew to a record \$2.4 billion, a one-third increase over [the second quarter].

He also noted that Israel is second only to the US in the number of companies listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange. "International trade, immigration and improved security are the most significant factors in creating sustained growth within the Israeli economy," the Bank of Israel economists said. *A7 News* 13-12

Israel has become a favoured country for American outsourcing for more complex items.

Most of the jobs are medium- to high-end call center work, legal and paralegal, and information technology. Immigrants have become a major resource because they speak a variety of languages that can benefit a host of international companies. "Israel is in a unique position due to hundreds of thousands of immigrants from around the world," Kazhdan said. "This is where Israel has its competitive edge. We are able to cut costs without compromising on quality."

"Israelis have better English language fluency—especially since so many are US expats or have American parents—than in other countries; their customs and values are similar to those of US citizens; the infrastructure and security in Israel is much better than in other foreign countries; and Israelis have a high work ethic." *Boston Globe* 24-11-06

Israel's trade with her Arab neighbours

Israel has full diplomatic relations with Egypt and Jordan and has trade relations with Qatar. Saudi Arabia said in 2005 that she would lift her boycott of Israeli goods, but as of the summer of 2006 this had not been lifted. (*Wikipedia*) Israel never-the-less manages to trade with many Arab countries indirectly. A 19% increase in exports was reported for the first 9 months of 2006. Main areas of increase were Jordan (12.5%) and Egypt (32%) helped by the QIZ agreement. (See *Milestones 2004 ch 10*) Israel exports to Iraq, though these were down during this period. As part of a US Free Trade Agreement with Oman this year, she too has dropped her boycott of Israeli goods.

Growing population

Just before Israel's 58th Independence Day celebrations the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics "announced that the country's population stands at 7.03 million, of which 5.64 million are Jews. This is more than the estimated 5.3 million Jews living in the US, until now home to the highest number of Jews. He attributed the increase in Israel's Jewish population to higher birth rates rather than a population increase due to immigration." *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* 2-5-06

On the other hand there has been a growth in Russian Jews returning from Israel back to Russia. During the 90's 28,500 returned; just for the year 2003 that had risen to 7,500 and now for the Jewish year ending last September this has shot to 50,000. *Middle East Media Center* 14-11-06

Oil discovery

In spite of being close to productive oilfields, Israel has never discovered substantial sources of oil. The total oil extracted in Israel over the past 50 years only amounts to what Saudi Arabia produces every three days!

In October an oil drilling company struck a sizable flow near the Dead Sea. The deposits have been estimated to be worth some \$300 million.

One of the newer sources of oil is shale deposits. With higher oil prices this is now a more attractive proposition. An Israeli company has patented an extraction method which they claim to be more efficient than existing methods. Israel has around 15 billion tons of oil shale reserves, containing about 15% oil. Jordan has about 25 billion tons containing 20% oil. The Israeli company hopes to be producing oil from shale in about 4 years. Their target price is \$17 a barrel, and the method is therefore highly profitable at today's \$60-\$70 a barrel. Eventually they hope to be able to supply one third of Israel's oil needs. *www.upi.com* 11-7-06

Israel to become critical oil hub?

According to *Stratfor* (15-12-06) Israel is hoping to link with Turkey for energy supply. It is planned to build a series of pipelines from Ceyan in Turkey to Ashkelon in Israel. The two governments have agreed to pursue this multibillion-dollar scheme. The pipes will carry oil, natural gas, electricity, water and fibre optic cables. Russia had been interested in investing but now has other plans, as we shall see in chapter 15.

A new pipeline has just been completed from Baku on the Caspian to Ceyan on the Turkish coast and the first oil was pumped through in May. The new pipe to Ashkelon would link with the existing Tipline pipe that runs across Israel to the Red Sea port of Eilat. From here it is envisaged tankers will transport the oil to Asia. This linkage would not only make Israel an important and profitable oil hub, it would enable oil to be shipped to Asia bypassing Russia pipelines or Middle East oilfields.

Israeli scientists are busy finding alternative sources of energy, including the production of methanol from solar energy rather than fossil fuels.

Dead Sea-Red Sea area development

Israel has a good relationship with Jordan, trade between the two countries has been steadily increasing and at a meeting in June the leaders of the two countries pledged to move forward on some joint schemes. One was to construct a joint airport at Aqaba on the border that divides the two countries.

The planned new international airport would have two terminals, one Jordanian and one Israeli. It would serve international carriers. *A7 News* 22-6-06

Eilat is a growing tourist resort, and is also increasingly important as a transit point. Deep-water ships can come up the Gulf of Aqaba and discharge their cargos for onward transportation by road into Israel. The Jordanian port of Aqaba is less sophisticated, but is a gateway for Jordan and onwards to Iraq.

In addition to the airport issue, they also discussed plans for Israeli-Jordanian cooperation in copper mining, and a joint project to build a canal that would carry water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea. *Ibid*

There is a strong move to develop the Dead Sea-Red Sea area. For years there have been discussions on piping water across Israel from the Mediterranean Sea into the Dead Sea to raise the water level and at the same time generating electricity and bringing employment to the region. This is still rumbling on, although environmentalists are afraid that it will damage the existing eco-structure.

An alternative scheme involves working with Jordan and the Palestinians to construct a canal from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, which again would bring water, tourism and employment to the region. (See *Milestones* 1993 p 21) Jordan and Israel have applied to the World Bank to fund a \$15m feasibility study. If it goes ahead the scheme is estimated to cost \$2bn. In December this scheme moved forward another step with the three parties agreeing to proceed with the feasibility study. *A7News* 17-6-06; *Arab News* (Saudi) 11-12-06:

Jordan announced a big \$3bn development in Aqaba, its Red Sea port, "destined to transform the region into a commercial, residential and tourism powerhouse." *Al Bawaba* 6-12-06

A Jordanian company unveiled its \$500m development plans for hotels and tourism on the Jordanian banks of the Dead Sea. *Khaleej Times* 14-12-06

Earthquakes

Israel is no stranger to earthquakes; three were experienced this year, none of them strong enough to do much damage. Being one of the most active earthquake zones, these shakes remind us of the catastrophic earthquake that lies ahead, with sufficient power to split the Mount of Olives, elevate Jerusalem, and raise the Dead Sea above sea level.

We now look at Britain, America and their allies working in the M.E.

Chapter 6

MERCHANTS & LIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

We look now at the growing involvement of Britain, America and her companions in the Middle East. In the next chapter we look specifically at Saudi Arabia which is growing in power in the region under their new king.

Growing importance of the Middle East market

Since the 1970s the rising price of oil has focused attention on the growing pile of money that Middle East oil producing countries are sitting on. The living standards for many of those living in these countries have risen correspondingly, as has governmental expenditure on defence. As trading powers, Britain and America have become the favoured suppliers to Saudi Arabia and many of the Gulf States. India and Australia also view these as important markets.

Blair's Middle East efforts

At the Labour Party conference in September, Mr Blair stated his intention to stand down as party leader in May 2007. He indicated that his time would be spent in trying to solve the Middle East problems.

From now until I leave office I will dedicate myself, with the same commitment I have given to Northern Ireland, to advancing peace between Israel and Palestine. I may not succeed. But I will try because peace in the Middle East is a defeat for terrorism.

We must never again let Lebanon become the battleground for a conflict that neither Israeli nor Lebanese people wanted, though it was they who paid the price for it. Peace in Lebanon is a defeat for terrorism.

Yes it's hard sometimes to be America's strongest ally. Yes, Europe can be a political headache for a proud sovereign nation like Britain. But believe me there are no half-hearted allies of America today and no semi-detached partners in Europe. *The Guardian* 27-9-06

At the Lord Mayor's banquet at the Guildhall in London, just before the opening of a new parliamentary year, Tony Blair had this to say.

The war on "global terrorism" will be won by the West only when there is peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

In a major foreign policy address, Blair rejected calls for Britain to pull back from its "special relationship" with the United States or to distance itself from the European Union. He also laid out his government's policies of support for the fledgling Iraqi government in its battle with internal and external aggressors.

But the PM placed Israel as the axis of his government's foreign policy, stating that for a lasting peace to come to the Middle East, the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel must be addressed first.

"A major part of the answer to Iraq lies not in Iraq itself but outside of it, in the whole of the region where the same forces are at work, where the roots of this global terrorism are to be found, where the extremism flourishes with a propaganda that may be, indeed is, totally false, but is, nonetheless, attractive to much of the Arab street," the PM said.

"That is what I call a 'whole Middle East' strategy," he explained.

"There is a fundamental misunderstanding that this is about changing policy on Syria and Iran. First, those two countries do not at all share identical interests. But in any event that is not where we start."

"On the contrary, we should start with Israel/Palestine. That is the core," the prime minister said. *Jerusalem Post* 14-11-06

Britain and Egypt

In December Mr Blair toured the region once again, seeking to bring about a breakthrough in the Middle East situation. Certainly Britain is playing a major role in the region and we may well see her playing an increasingly dominant diplomatic and strategic role. He visited Egypt where Britain is the biggest investor outside the Middle East.

Egypt and the United Kingdom enjoy close bilateral ties at all levels. British companies have invested more than \$18 billion in Egypt over the years, more than those of any other country outside the region. Britain is actively engaged in support of the Egyptian government's reform efforts in a range of areas, including investment promotion, consumer protection and competition, vocational training, education, the media and the law. *britishembassy.gov.uk* 18-12-06

The Suez Canal is a valuable source of income to Egypt.

Revenue from the Suez Canal was \$3.2 billion in the first 10 months of the year—boosting Egypt's coffers by \$400 million more than in the same period in 2005

The Canal is Egypt's third largest source of foreign currency earnings, after tourism and emigrants sending money home. *AP* 13-11-06

It plays a vital role in Britain's trade with the Middle East, Asia and Australia, and it is quite possible that if threatened with an attack, Egypt would invite Britain back to help defend their mutual assets.

Australian family mining Egypt's massive gold supplies!

We know that when Gog comes against Israel, one of his first moves is to take Egypt. This makes good sense, securing the southern flank and controlling access to the canal. Dan 11:43 mentions the treasures of Egypt—gold, silver and precious things. There are many ancient gold mines in

southern Egypt, which are now being explored as potentially enormous value to Egypt—thanks to an Australian family!

A Gold Mine Worth LE 23 Billion [\$4bn] (and counting)

An Egyptian-Australian family is set to start extracting gold from an ancient Pharaonic mine—and could revolutionize Egypt's economy in the process.

"This whole area on the Red Sea coast is littered with old mines, so we know the whole thing is mineralized. Effectively, you're looking at an entire mining province being created here in Egypt," Josef El-Raghy CEO of Centamin Egypt says confidently, saying the company's tests have proven the Pharaohs hardly made a dent in the total gold deposits in the area.

Centamin does some of the drilling itself, but has contracted Capitol Drilling, another Australian company that has incorporated in Egypt, for the bulk of it. To date, they've taken more than 130 kilometers of core samples from Sukari Hill.

"Over the last year of drilling, we've gone from proven reserves of 2.9 million ounces to more than 5.75 million [179 million grams]. At today's price of roughly LE 4,000 an ounce, that makes Sukari's proven reserves worth LE 23 billion. It's been a pretty good year," Josef says. "Hopefully we'll do that again this year. We think the whole thing—all of Sukari Hill—is going to be significantly bigger.

To put things in perspective, he explains, "On the scale of goldmines, this is a truly world-class discovery. It's very, very rare that you get something that's more than a million ounces in one pit. So a single pit, multimillion-ounce deposit is unusual and pretty special."

[It could] easily place gold as the number-one contributor to the economy: The three top revenue earners are presently tourism (nearly LE 37 billion in 2004-05), the Suez Canal (almost LE 19 billion in the same year) and oil and gas (LE 17 billion). Under the legislation governing mining in Egypt, the government banks more than 50 percent of the total value of all gold brought out of the ground, and each mine creates thousands of jobs. *Egypt Today* Aug 06

We see Putin gathering control of energy supplies; Egypt is about number 23 in the oil rankings and also has good reserves of gas. Doubtless Gog will seek to absorb Egypt's supplies into his energy Empire as well as these gold supplies.

Australia in the Middle East

Australia and New Zealand troops have traditionally played an important role in working with Britain in the Middle East. Australian troops were active in the Gulf War of 2003.

For Australia, the Middle East is a large and valuable market. Beef sales have soared 59% this year and at the year-end it was announced that wheat sales to Iraq would resume following an investigation over bribery charges. America had stepped in to fill the market. It is also a large market for live sheep exports, leading to many protests by animal welfare groups.

Half of Australia's GM Holden car exports were to the Middle East.

Military power in the Gulf region

American and British bases can be found in many Middle East countries. There seem to be many secret bases too, because in Moslem countries the presence of western forces are not exactly welcomed! However the rulers of most of the countries in the Arabian Peninsula know that they are dependant upon western help in their battle against Iranian dominance of the region. The background to this struggle we examine in the next chapter. The Lebanon War increased their fears of Iran.

Gulf naval build-up—US and Britain signal to Iran

In response to Iran's displays of military power and her drive to produce nuclear weapons, America and Britain have increased their naval presence in the Persian Gulf region. They constantly patrol these waters securing the oil lanes and showing Iran their readiness to defend them, as it is such a vital passage for oil, but these are being reinforced as a warning to Iran and in preparation of an attack if this is decided on. The heading to the *New York Times* 21-12-06 article was: -

U.S. and Britain to Add Ships to Persian Gulf in Signal to Iran

Senior American officers said the increase in naval power should not be viewed as preparations for any offensive strike against Iran. But they acknowledged that the ability to hit Iran would be increased and that Iranian leaders might well call the growing presence provocative. One purpose of the deployment, they said, is to make clear that the focus on ground troops in Iraq has not made it impossible for the United States and its allies to maintain a military watch on Iran. That would also reassure Washington's allies in the region who are concerned about Iran's intentions.

Steps are already being taken to increase the number of minesweeping vessels and magnetic "sleds" carried by helicopters to improve the ability to counter Iranian mines that could block oil-shipping lanes, Pentagon and military officials said.

As part of future deployments after the first of the year, the British Navy plans to add two mine-hunting vessels to its ships that already are part of the international coalition patrolling waters in the Persian Gulf.

A Royal Navy news release said the ship movements were aimed at "maintaining familiarity with the challenges of warm water mine-

hunting conditions.” But a senior British official said: “We are increasing our presence. That is only prudent.”

Doubling the number of carriers in the region offers commanders the flexibility of either keeping both strike groups in the gulf or keeping one near Iran while placing a second carrier group outside the gulf, where it would be in position to fly combat patrols over Afghanistan or cope with growing violence in the Horn of Africa.

Adm. Mike Mullen, the chief of naval operations, has made the case that the United States should seek to create “a thousand-ship Navy.” That would be impossible for the United States alone given current budgets, so instead it would be accomplished by operating more closely with allied warships to better cover critical areas like the Persian Gulf.

At present there are about 45 warships deployed in the Persian Gulf and waters across the region from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, with a third of those supplied by allies, which this month include Australia, Bahrain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Pakistan and Britain.

Saudis & Gulf Emirates Turn back to the US Military Umbrella

This was the *Debka* headline 18-8-06 in the aftermath of the Lebanon War.

Notwithstanding the reservations entertained in Riyadh and the emirates about the Bush administration’s regional policies, they are unlikely to stray too far from the American orbit.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the rest are still dependent on their ties with America and would rather cooperate with Washington than bow to dictates from Tehran.

While ostensibly keeping their distance from America in deference to popular sentiment, these Arab rulers may unobtrusively and for lack of choice accede to an American military action to abort Iran’s drive for a nuclear weapon.

None of them sees any real alternative to the United States as a patron. The prospect of Iran becoming master of the region is viewed as a direct threat to their regimes’ survival, in contrast to the United States that stands out as a protector.

Here is another report.

Off the record, Arab diplomats admit to learning two key lessons from the Lebanon war: that Arabs are too weak and too divided to be able to force Israel or any international player to consider Arab interests; and that there are unmistakable signs of a different regional order appearing that Arabs need to play within or be from now on irrelevant. The new regional order, they say, will necessarily include an acceptance of the growing influence of the three non-Arab Middle East countries—Israel,

Iran and Turkey—each of which appears to have a bigger say in regional affairs than Arab countries do collectively. *Al Ahram* 7-9-06

We look further at Saudi Arabia in our next chapter.

The US and Jordan

The US is using Jordanian facilities to help train Iraqi policemen. Jordan is an invaluable ally with an excellent intelligence service.

US constructing special operations forces training center in Jordan

The United States has launched the construction of a special operations forces training center in Jordan.

The Bush administration has approved the start of the project to establish an SOF center that would train Jordanian and U.S. military, police and paramilitary forces. Officials said the center, in a project directed by the U.S. Army, would cost around \$500 million and be ready for operations in 2009. *Middle East Newline* 24-8-06

Jordan has been rewarded by having preferential trade agreements with America. (See *Milestones 2004 ch 10*) She also receives a high level of aid.

US aid to Jordan hits \$500m annually

The United States on Wednesday granted Jordan, a staunch ally in the Middle East, an extra \$50 million in aid to bolster its economy, bringing total assistance this year to over \$500 million, officials said. The US ambassador to Jordan told Reuters that the \$50 million cash transfer would go to finance major projects in water, tourism and schools along with easing the kingdom's \$8.4 billion foreign debt. The U.S. aid program to Jordan is among the largest in the world and the kingdom has received a total of over \$7 billion, according to US officials. *AIJAC*. 5-10-06

A change in Canada

Since the change of government in Canada in January when Stephen Harper led his Conservative party to victory, there has been a change in Canada's outlook towards Israel.

To delight of Israel supporters, Canada finally comes off the fence

Now many observers see Canada aligning itself more clearly with the anti-terror axis of the United States, Australia and Britain, while distancing itself from the multilateral approach favored by Europe and the United Nations.

"In the linear mind of Mr. Harper, Israel has been attacked from land it had ceded back to the Palestinians," Ivison wrote. "The Israelis have the right to defend themselves, as Canadians would have in similar circumstances. End of story. If this is the Harper Doctrine, it may take some getting used to after more than a decade of dithering." *JTA* 20-7-06

Why Harper backs Israel, no matter what

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's rock-solid support for Israel's actions in Lebanon should come as no surprise. It results not simply from Harper's desire to score points with Canada's traditionally Liberal Jewish voters (although that's part of it). It stems also from his firm belief, articulated well before his Conservatives won the last election, that Canadian foreign policy must be based on the morality of certitude. *Toronto Star* 26-8-06

Of the remaining "young lions", South Africa and New Zealand would not be considered openly pro-Israel, though as we have seen with Canada things can suddenly change. In the late 70's and 80's Israel was a big arms supplier to South Africa at a time when there was a general boycott. Two-way trade between Israel and South Africa stands at \$500m. *Wikipedia* did describe relations as warm; Olmert, then deputy prime minister, visited in 2004—the first such visit since the ending of apartheid. New Zealand's exports to Israel are worth in US dollars \$12m and imports \$61m. Again, *Wikipedia* describes relations as improving after a spy scandal in 2004.

India and American defence strategy

Although India is not part of the Middle East, its strategic position, guarding the eastern approaches to the Middle East and her non-Muslim status make her an important ally to America's efforts to contain the Muslim terrorist threat to the region. English is her second language.

US eyes new India military ties

US Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns said the US has a 'separate ambition' of a much closer military relationship with India and that it hoped to participate in the transformation of its armed forces.

"We want to build a much closer military relationship with India." "There will soon be the transfer of US naval vessels to the Indian Navy. We are very hopeful that the US can participate in the transformation of the Indian armed forces."

Clearly with an eye on the huge Indian arms market, he said, "We produce some of the best helicopters and fighter planes in the world and we are known to be reliable and good partners with many countries."

Burns said technology transfers would allow the two militaries to have a 'long-term relationship. So, we see India as a partner'. *Press Trust of India* 8-12-06

American-India trade ties have also been increasing.

India's annual growth in manufacturing output, at 9 percent and accelerating, is close to catching growth in services, at 10 percent. Exports of manufactured goods to the United States are now rising faster in percentage terms than China's, although from a much smaller base.

More than two-thirds of foreign investment in the last year has gone into manufacturing in India, not services. *New York Times* 1-9-06

India's military, Boeing in talks

The Boeing Co. is in talks on ventures with 40 Indian companies and may bid on \$15 billion of military orders there over the next 10 years.

India may become a "very big market," James Albaugh, who runs Boeing's military unit, told reporters Friday in New Delhi. The country is replacing aging Soviet planes and equipment.

Boeing, Lockheed Martin Corp. and Raytheon Co. want to break into India as the U.S. lifts a ban on nuclear exports. The embargo was imposed in 1974, at the height of the cold war. President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed on a deal, and the two countries are conducting joint military exercises.

India in February increased its defense spending for the year ending March 31 to \$11.6 billion, or about 15 percent of the country's budget. Boeing, the second-largest U.S. defense contractor, so far is bidding on orders for combat aircraft and cruise missiles.

"Given India's military requirements and given the growing relationship between India and the U.S., we see exciting opportunities here," Albaugh said. *Bloomberg News* 2-12-06

India and Israel

Israel and the "young lion" India enjoy continuing growing relations.

Israel has commissioned a study to look into a possible free trade agreement (FTA) with India, Press Trust of India reported Dec. 1. Israel believes the FTA would help the two countries' bilateral trade reach \$5 billion. *Stratfor* 1-12-06

An earlier report spoke of the **India-Israel arms trade becoming lucrative business**, reportedly worth over \$900 million annually. *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* 6-10-06

They signed their first missile deal, *dawn.com* 8-2-06 reported.

India and Israel have signed their first joint weapons development agreement under which both states will work on a new generation Barak II ship borne anti-missile-missile point defence missile system. Israel and India will share the initial \$330 million investment in the system.

According to Israeli government figures (6-12-06), trade between India and Israel stood at \$2.2 billion in 2005-06, of which India's exports to Israel were valued at \$1.2 billion and India's imports from Israel at \$1 billion. During 2004-05, India's exports to Israel crossed \$1 billion, registering a growth of nearly 39%.

We now look specifically at Saudi Arabia and her future role.

Chapter 7:

SAUDI ARABIA—HOLDING THE KEY?

We saw in chapter 4 that the Merchants of Tarshish and her young lions will be friendly with Israel and will be prepared to oppose those who were coming to destroy Israel. Sheba and Dedan will also participate in this alliance. We expect to see these Middle Eastern countries continue to align themselves more with Israel than has been the case in the past.

The Shiite-Sunni Muslim world



The Muslim world is divided into two camps, rooted in a historical dispute as to who was the rightful heir of Mohammed.

The Sunni branch believes that the first four caliphs—Mohammed's successors—rightfully took his place as the leaders of Muslims. They recognize the heirs of the four caliphs as legitimate religious leaders. These heirs ruled continuously in the Arab world until the break-up of the Ottoman Empire following the end of the First World War.

Shiites, in contrast, believe that only the heirs of the fourth caliph, Ali, are the legitimate successors of Mohammed.

Osama bin Laden is a Sunni Muslim. To him the end of the reign of the caliphs in the 1920s was catastrophic, as he made clear in a videotape made after 9-11. On the tape, broadcast by Al-Jazeera on Oct. 7, 2001, he proclaimed: "What America is tasting now is only a copy of what we have tasted... Our Islamic nation has been tasting the same for more

[than] eighty years, of humiliation and disgrace, its sons killed and their blood spilled, its sanctities desecrated.” *History News Network* 12-3-06

There is great dissension between the two groups, and the Sunnis fear Shiite Iran’s takeover of their branch of Muslim rule, although the Shiites only account for 20% of the Muslim population.

Saudi Arabia is predominantly Sunni and the Shiites account for 10-15% of the population, mainly located in the main oil producing regions. They have been heavily suppressed, few are represented in public office, but in the last few years matters have improved.

Saudi’s new ruler

Saudi Arabia is a comparatively new country, founded in 1932 by King Abdul Al-Saud. Since his death in 1953, his sons have ruled it. In 1982 King Fahd succeeded the throne on his half brother’s death, but suffered a stroke in the mid-1990s and was increasingly unable to look after the affairs of Saudi; his half brother Abdullah took over day-to-day control and on Fahd’s death in August 2005 succeeded him.

Saudi is a very rich country and King Abdullah tries to use that wealth wisely to benefit his people.

Her fear of Iran

Like Egypt and Jordan, Saudi Arabia lives in fear of a Shiite take over by Iran. Iran has made no secret of their desire to drive out Israel and to impose Shiite rule over the whole of the Middle East. We shall look at this in more detail in chapter 9.

Secret talks with Israel

During the Lebanon War in July and August, Israel is alleged to have received valuable intelligence information from Jordan and Saudi Arabia, such was their wish for Hezbollah to be defeated by Israel. The headline to this article in the *Jerusalem Post* 27-9-06 summed up this new situation, born of need, not desire!

Saudi-Israeli footsie is a sign of need, not love

The apparent willingness of a senior member of the Saudi royal family to meet with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jordan earlier this month was—more than anything else—an indication of just how threatened the Saudi monarchy feels.

Despite denials from both Olmert and the Saudi royals, diplomatic officials in Jerusalem have confirmed that a high-level meeting between senior officials from the countries did indeed take place.

“If you would have asked me three years ago, or five years ago, what country would be the last one in the region to make peace with us, I would have said Saudi Arabia,” one diplomatic official said. “So if they are meeting with us now, it shows just how worried they are.”

And what are the Saudis worried about? They are worried about a nuclear Iran, no less than Israel is. They are worried about Shi'ite extremism, no less than Israel is. And they are worried about al-Qaida, no less than Israel is. A nuclear capability would turn Iran into the neighborhood Islamic heavyweight, a status that Riyadh fears might threaten the rich Saudi oil fields somewhere down the line.

The article then explained how Saudi Arabia had been growing increasingly helpful towards Israel's position, helping push through the UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and moderating her past stance of supporting militant Palestinians. It continued: -

Now, according to these sources, the Saudis are placing the "weight of the kingdom on the side of the moderates inside the Palestinian Authority." Given this, Gaza could quickly turn into a place where Saudi Arabia and Iran vie—through the use of their considerable wealth—for the support of the population, with the Iranians supporting Hamas and Saudi Arabia backing Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas.

Such a Gaza would become a laboratory for the larger regional struggle between the two countries, pitting pro-western, "moderate" elements against extremist, radical Islamic ones.

Which is where Israel fits into the puzzle. The Saudis are looking for strong, moderate players who can be quilted together to counter Iran, al-Qaida and Hizbullah. This moderate swath would run from the Persian Gulf in the east through Iraq (possibly) to Jordan, Israel and Egypt in the west.

"They are looking for moderate elements to serve as a counterbalance to the Iranians, and we fit the description," the [Israeli] official said.

A later article in the *Globalist* 10-11-06 continued this idea of Saudi Arabia being involved in working with Israel.

The Saudi-Israeli Axis

The dramatic increase of violence in the Middle East in the past six months has given rise to the hope for a new sort of peace—between Saudi Arabia and Israel. [The author] suggests how Saudi Arabia can use the nuclear threat posed by the Iranian Shiite axis to forge an Arab-Israeli peace with the help of major powers.

Whereas the Iraq war has not achieved any of its stated objectives, it has dramatically and irreversibly changed the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East—ushering in new conflicts that may rage for decades.

The war has handed Iran a historic windfall, and it has given rise to its long-historic ambitions to dominate the region and establish Persian hegemony, all while pursuing nuclear weapons to assert these ambitions.

As a result, new (and until recently perhaps unthinkable) alliances may now be forged—especially between Israel and the leading Sunni Gulf states to confront the emerging threat that looms ominously high over the entire region.

That said, the Sunni Arab states still view Israel as a nuclear power—the ultimate balance to Iran in the region, and probably the only country that can effectively blunt or deter Iran's adventurism.

Israel, which has been threatened by Iran explicitly and repeatedly, is also looking to buttress its regional position. However, it can do so only if it dedicates itself to Arab-Israeli peace—thus embracing, at least in general terms, the Saudi initiative.

Involving major powers

Direct and indirect U.S. involvement—inside and outside the Saudi initiatives—remain pivotal to any progress. Moreover, none of the above policy initiatives would have been conceivable just six months ago.

But the Lebanon war, the raging Israeli-Palestinian violence, the galvanization of the Jihad movement regionally and globally, the intensified Shiite-Sunni conflict and Iran's nuclear threats have made them, not only conceivable, but imperative.

A further report in *A7 News* 21-12-06 confirmed that there had been a series of talks between the two countries. *Stratfor* 21-12-06 also reported a meeting between Israel, Saudi, Lebanon and Egypt.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, Saudi National Security Council Secretary-General Prince Bandar bin Sultan and Egyptian political adviser Osama el-Baz met secretly for five hours in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in October, Palestinian news agency Maan reported, citing a specialist in Israeli affairs. Leaders at the meeting, which reportedly occurred during Eid al-Adha, discussed cooperation to confront the Iran-Syria axis and their militant group proxies, such as Hamas and Hezbollah.

Saudi's drive for peace

In December, as the situation in Gaza deteriorated and a further visit by Blair to the Middle East was revealed for the middle of the month, the *Sunday Times* 3-12-06 carried this article, which continued this theme of Saudi involvement.

Saudis lead Israel peace bid

The Saudi Arabian government is emerging as a key player in talks to broker a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement. According to senior Israeli sources, Ehud Olmert, Israel's prime minister, will soon meet high-ranking Saudi officials to explore the formation of a group of

moderate Arab countries to negotiate with Tel Aviv over the future of the Middle East.

Olmert is believed to be considering a Saudi initiative, endorsed by the Arab League four years ago, as the basis for a peace settlement. This would include the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and could lead to a formal peace deal between Israel and seven Arab countries: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, the Emirates, Morocco and Tunisia.

According to Israeli officials, Saudi Arabia is gradually taking over the role of principal peace broker previously played by Egypt.

We watch this situation with interest, as it seems to indicate a movement to a situation where Israel's friends are found not just with the trading nations operating in the area, but in the countries of that region too.

Keeping out the troublemakers

Israel and the United States (on the Mexico border) are not the only fence builders. *Wikipedia* lists 22 countries that are erecting barriers of one sort or another! Saudi Arabia is about to build a fence on her border with Iraq to keep out troublemakers. Work on the 900-km (562-miles) fence is due to start in 2007 and is expected to be completed by 2012. The fence is estimated to cost \$500m and the total bill for all the associated works such as military bases and crossing points is some \$12bn.

Saudi Arabia and Iraq

The Saudi rulers are very anxious for America to remain in Iraq, to prevent an Iranian domination there. America wants their help to be part of a southern coalition of countries that are opposed to Iran and Syria. Surely this is just the picture we expect to see!

The Saudis have argued strenuously against an American pullout from Iraq, citing fears that Iraq's minority Sunni Arab population would be massacred. Those fears, United States officials said, have become more pronounced as a growing chorus in Washington has advocated a draw-down of American troops in Iraq, coupled with diplomatic outreach to Iran, which is largely Shiite.

The Bush administration is also working on a way to form a coalition of Sunni Arab nations and a moderate Shiite government in Iraq, along with the United States and Europe, to stand against "Iran, Syria and the terrorists," another senior administration official said Tuesday. *New York Times* 13-12-06

Saudi Arabia and the Merchants of Tarshish

In January, the Saudi Arabian ambassador, Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf, was in Britain with a tempting package!

Saudis offer a bonanza for UK

The kingdom has £350bn of oil money to spend and wants our help, writes Dominic O'Connell.

Nawaf was about to dangle before the saucer-eyed Scots the prospect of almost unbelievable riches—\$624 billion (£350 billion) worth of business opportunities over the next 15 years.

Awash with oil money, the Saudis had arrived to enlist British help to transform the Islamic kingdom. The Edinburgh event, and another in Manchester, heralded what could be a historic rapprochement. Now Saudi Arabia wanted the Brits back, said Nawaf. And the Arabs are prepared to back their words with actions. In December, the same month the country finally gained membership of the World Trade Organisation, Saudi Arabia signed a blockbuster deal with Britain, agreeing to buy up to £10 billion of new Eurofighter Typhoon combat aircraft and other defence equipment.

According to Nawaf, there is even more on offer. King Abdullah, who came to the Saudi throne last year, wants to push ahead with investment and reform, and has laid plans for a ground-breaking wave of privatisations in oil, gas, water, electricity and telecoms.

"We are going to invest \$624 billion. This is an enormous amount of money by any standard, and we need your help to spend it," Nawaf told his audience. "There is something for everyone. We are building the future for our children." The signs of a warming of relations are evident to Gulf watchers. Richard Thompson, managing editor of the Middle East Economic Digest, said the Typhoon deal, and the decision by BMI to pick up the BA routes, were positive signs.

"There has also been a steady series of trade delegations to Britain, and British ministers have been making an increasing number of visits to Saudi Arabia. Companies from India, China, Russia and other countries have flooded into the gap left by Britain and America, but now the Saudis realise they need them back."

Education is not the only opportunity for the British service sector. The government is seeking help from bankers, lawyers and consultants to set up the regulatory and legal framework needed for the privatisations and market reforms. *Sunday Times* 29-01-06

Last year's Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft deal nearly came to grief. The British Fraud Squad had been investigating charges of bribes associated with the previous deal, negotiated under Mrs Thatcher. In December, as investigations reached the doors of high-ranking Saudi officials, the Saudi government issued a 10-day ultimatum. "Call off the investigation or we will call off the order and place it with France!" Britain buckled and called off the enquiry.

America too is benefiting from Saudi defence orders. In November was a report of discussions with America for expenditure up to \$60bn on

modernising its military and security forces. The two countries have been in comprehensive talks about the region's stability.

Saudi Arabia and U.S. defense officials met recently for the most comprehensive talks in years. The discussion centered on the growing threat from Iran's rapidly developing offensive power, according to the Mideast Newsline. The strategists concluded that the U.S. will maintain a long-term presence in the Gulf and will cooperate with the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council. *A7 News* 21-12-06

Saudi-Indian ties

A remarkable trend this year has been the growing friendship between Saudi Arabia and India. As one of the young lions it is heartening to see India's involvement in this region, along with Britain and her companions.

Saudi-Indian Ties: Unprecedented Progress

The new intensity marking Saudi and Indian ties is likely to become even stronger in the near future. "What we are witnessing is unprecedented in the history of Saudi-Indian relations," Saudi Ambassador Saleh Al-Ghamdi told Arab News. Though India and Saudi Arabia have always had cordial diplomatic ties, recent high-level exchanges are bound to strengthen them further as well as tap new areas of cooperation.

The new chapter in Indo-Saudi ties opened with the Indian visit of King Abdullah in January. He was the chief guest at India's Republic Day parade in Delhi on Jan. 26. It was only the second visit to India by a Saudi monarch. "It is definitely his majesty's visit that has created this unprecedented environment," Al-Ghamdi said.

Both countries are eager to expand and diversify their economic ties beyond the traditional supplies of oil (Saudi Arabia is India's largest and most trusted supplier of oil and India is the Kingdom's fourth largest oil customer).

Economically, both countries are keen on mutual investments in all sectors. A sign of Saudi interest in opportunities in India is the construction of a brand new embassy in the Indian capital. But for the moment, the investment is largely Indian to Saudi Arabia. India is now the fourth largest investor in the Kingdom, ahead of Japan.

"Investment is booming," according to Al-Ghamdi. From \$250 million, three years ago, Indian investment in Saudi Arabia is now \$1.2 billion, he said.

There has also been a 28.17 percent increase in the two-way, nonoil trade between India and Saudi Arabia [reaching] \$3.44 billion in 2005-2006. *Arab News* 6-12-06

We now examine prophecies and expectations concerning Israel's enemies.

Chapter 8

PROPHECIES & EXPECTATIONS—ISRAEL'S MIDDLE EAST ENEMIES

It is clear from Bible prophecy that Israel will have few friends at the time of the end. The nations of Europe and Russia will be turned against her, as will Iran. Many of those nations around her also prove to be difficult neighbours, and in this chapter we examine what scripture says about them. We also look at prophecies about Iran or Persia.

Pricking thorns and grieving briars

We know Israel is to be invaded by a confederation of nations, headed by Gog, but Israel has had many battles with her Arab neighbours. Syria, Jordan and Egypt have all tried to wipe Israel off the map, as have the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. This year we saw the tenacity of the Shiite element in Lebanon as they sought to destroy Israel. Are there prophecies that speak of this opposition to Israel's existence by her neighbours?

There is one prophecy that links the recent Lebanon War to the general opposition to Israel's existence. It is found in Ezekiel ch. 28. As in so many of the prophecies about these last days we find a few verses that don't fit with the general context of the chapter, which were not fulfilled at the first fulfilment of the prophecy—normally shortly after the prophecy was given.

Ezekiel 28:1-19 deals with the pride of the King of Tyre and his downfall at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. For a detailed exposition the reader is referred to *Ezekiel* by John Allfree. Then verses 20-23 cover the downfall of Zidon, again fulfilled in the past. However, the closing three verses are looking at things from a future viewpoint, at a time when Israel has been regathered **and** God has been sanctified in their midst. Although we have seen Israel regathered, the time of sanctification has not yet come. We know Israel is to be scattered once more, to be regathered at the hand of Christ and the saints. In this kingdom day, v25 will be fulfilled.

Prior to that day, i.e. in our day, then the situation of v24 prevails.

And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Ezek 28:24

So we note that the nations *round about* Israel are as a *pricking brier* and a *grieving thorn* to Israel at a time **before** they have come to know Israel's God. We can't identify just which plants are being referred to; the word for 'brier' only occurs here and ch 2:6. The word for 'thorns' occurs more frequently; Gen 3:18 being the first occurrence. It is the characteristic of

briers and thorns that they are troublesome but not an insurmountable problem to a farmer. More difficult to get up than weeds, but with toil and effort they can be uprooted, although they will regrow if the roots remain. Isn't that an apt description of Israel's dealings with her enemies? She has, with a struggle, been able to root them out, but they do constantly regrow!

The other characteristic in this verse and verse 26 is that *all that are round about them despised them*. What an apt word for how Israel's neighbours treat Israel—they despise her. Type “despise” and “Israel” into Google and it comes up with over 1,000,000 hits!

The fact that there will be a time of peace for Israel, when probably she will be found working with the countries that presently despise her, should not be a difficulty. It will be a short-lived peace, which will be broken by Gog's invasion, when many will once again turn against her.

Tyre and Philistines working together

There are a few latter-day passages that indicate that Lebanon and the Palestinians are found working together against Israel. One such is in Joel ch 3, which clearly is a “latter-day” prophecy of the nations coming down into the land of Israel and there being threshed. But before that, these two peoples are working together.

Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? Will ye render me a recompence? And if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things. The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. (v 4-6)

These are the areas of the Gaza strip and the Lebanese coast and they are described as joining the invading nations, helping themselves to the spoil and aiding the expulsion of the Jews to Greece—possibly to prisoner of war camps. It is not hard to visualise such a situation, knowing their despising of Israel. The interesting point is that they are working together. This is increasingly the picture that we see. Since the Lebanon War, Hezbollah has been funded by Iran and has been very active training and arming Hamas, also funded by Iran.

Other passages that link together those in Lebanon and Palestine are Ps 83:7 and Zec 9:2-5. Ps 87:4 links them but in a different context.

Persia in prophecy

Let's now look at one of the nations in the list of Gog's companions in Ezekiel 38:5—Persia or modern day Iran. Cyrus, the Persian king, features in Isaiah's prophecies concerning the overthrow of Babylon. (Ch 45:1-3) Persia also features in Daniel's prophecies; in the silver of the image of ch 2 and the bear of ch 7. These are clear references to the Persian Empire,

which succeeded the Babylonian Empire. We know that the past fulfilment is a shadow of a future development. Although the Persian Empire disappeared in BC 330, we know from these two prophecies that there is to be a standing up of the image of chapter 2 for its first and only time, to be broken by the little stone power. All the four metals and the clay are broken during the same time period. We have to see a latter-day Babylonian/Medo-Persian/Greek/Roman power—the Kingdom of men, standing in defiance against the people of God. Chapter 7 adds an important detail. Although the Kingdom of men is destroyed and replaced by the Kingdom of God, the inhabitants of the Kingdom of men are to be educated in the things of truth (Jer 16:19) and graciously are allowed to dwell in the Kingdom of God. But not all the world's empires will be allowed to continue, as Daniel 7 tells!

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. (Dan 7:9, 11-12)

It is clear that there is a distinction made between the 4th beast compared with the first 3 beasts, or in the language of ch. 2, between the gold-silver-brass and the iron. The first three are allowed to live for *a season and a time* (the 1000 years of the Kingdom), the fourth perishes. God's judgements are much more severe upon the Roman or Latin element of the Kingdom of Men, than on the eastern elements. The beast territory of Western Europe is described as being a lake of fire. (Rev 19:20) Such will be the power of God's judgements upon a Roman Catholic Europe. Rev 17:6 explains why.

And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (Or wonder)

Western Europe has done more to persecute and slay both Jews and saints, than other lands, so their punishment will be commensurate. Also Christendom is filled with the false understanding concerning Antichrist, so that when Christ does all the things we know he will do, Christendom will say that this is the work of Antichrist! *These shall make war with the Lamb.* Led on by their priests and leaders, they will vent their fury against those who call on them to submit to Zion's King. This time those they seek to destroy will not be helpless against their onslaughts. Now immortal beings, filled with spirit power, *the Lamb shall overcome them!* Rev 17:14

The other nations that joined in the confederacy under Gog are mainly spared. The actual armies in the land under Gog's command are totally destroyed and their bodies buried in the valley of Hamon-gog to the south-

east of Jerusalem, probably not far from the site of Sodom, a memorial of the folly of those who sought to destroy God's people. (Ezek 39:11-16)

Medo-Persia also features as the ram of Dan 8, which is destroyed by the he-goat—Alexander the Great who conquered Medo-Persia very rapidly.

Persia (modern day Iran) also features as Elam in a couple of prophecies.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Isa 11:11-12

This has an interesting list of where some Jews will be at the time of the Lord's return. It is not necessarily a guide for today, for many Jews in the land will flee before the invading armies of Gog; others will be transported as prisoners of war. (Isa 16:4; Joel 3:6; Zech 14:2) In spite of the anti-Zionist rhetoric of Iran's Ahmadinejad, there is a considerable Jewish population in Persia.

The second interesting Elam prophecy is in Jeremiah.

For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, even my fierce anger, saith the LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them:

And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the LORD.

But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD Jer 49:37-39

Whatever interpretation we give to *God setting His throne in Elam*, the last verse indicates that Elam is to be restored in the last days. Nations will retain their national identity, but not their political power.

Elam also features in one of the earliest battles recorded in scripture, which became a pattern of things to come. We find the details in Genesis ch 14, where four kings from Shinar (Babylon), Ellasar (probably Larsa in lower Babylonia), Elam (Persia) and "Tidal king of nations" (*goyim—gentiles*). According to the *Companion Bible*, ancient Assyrian tablets identify Tidal with Tudghula who reigned over the barbarian tribes of the Kurdish mountains. These four kings, led by Chedorlaomer king of Elam, came and battled with the kings of Sodom and the surrounding cities. They took all the wealth of Sodom, together with Lot. Abram pursued after them and destroyed them, recovering Lot and the spoil. On his return he is met by

Melchizedek, who brings forth bread and wine and blesses Abram, who gives him a tenth of the spoils. What was being foreshadowed in these events was the coming confederation of nations who will come into the land and be defeated by those typed by Abram and his trained household servants—Christ and the saints. The confederacy will be destroyed and their spoil dedicated to the God of Israel.

Balaam's prophecy

There is an interesting prophecy of Balaam, spoken some 3,500 years ago that seems to speak of events at the time of the end. In Balaam's last prophecy in Num 24 he saw a time when Israel would have a king.

His king is higher than Agag and his kingdom shall be exalted. v7

The Septuagint translates Agag as Gog! We are awaiting this day when Jesus defeats the power of Gog and establishes God's Kingdom. Agag seems to have been the general name of the king of the Amalekites, for in Saul's day their king was also called Agag. Balaam's prophecy closes with a picture concerning Amalek.

And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.

And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!

And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he shall perish for ever. Num 24:20, 23-24

We look for a latter-day Agag/Gog, king of the Amalekites to fulfil these words. The Amalekites have long disappeared, but the Amalekite desire to rid the world of Israel lives on, and will be spearheaded by Gog. We note that the underlined items spoken of here are also elsewhere applied to Gog. He is to be for a while *first of the nations* (Ezek 38:2, 7) but is to *perish* on the mountains of Israel. (Ezek 39:4; Dan 11:45) As the King of the North he is associated with many *ships*, which attack Egypt. (Dan 11:40) *Eber* was an ancestor of Abraham, *Hebrew* means "a descendant of Eber". So here is foretold the *affliction* of *Israel* by a latter-day Agag or Gog.

What about the mention of Chittim and Asshur? When the ships of Agag-Gog come down against Egypt, it makes strategic sense to first attack the naval bases of America on Crete and the British on Cyprus—both islands are referred to as *Chittim*. *Asshur* is Assyria (modern day Iraq), so a strike against Turkey to capture Constantinople could be followed by a strike against Iraq to take control of the region of what was Babylon, where currently British and American troops are based.

We now look at Iran's threat to Israel, which has been much in the news.

Chapter 9

IRAN THREATENS ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

We now look at how Iran has been threatening not only Israel but also other Middle Eastern nations.

Iran's military might

Iran is a Muslim, but non-Arab, country with a population of 70 million, making her the second most populous in the Middle East—90% are Shi'ite and 8% Sunni. She hosts the largest (20,000) Jewish population in the Middle East outside Israel, the biggest of any Muslim country.

The Shah of Persia was overthrown in 1979 and an Islamic republic replaced his kingdom. The Supreme Leader is the Ayatollah Khamenei; he is in charge of the military. The president is elected to a four year term of office, currently Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Iran derives much of her wealth from oil. She is the second biggest OPEC producer with 10% of the known world reserves and the second largest natural gas reserves. However, a lack of investment means that her output is falling quite dramatically. Her main trading partners are China, Russia, Germany, France and Italy.

For many years Iran and Iraq battled each other, both seeking to be the dominant power in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980 and the war lasted 8 years. Iranian casualties were put at between 500,000 and 1 million.

With the fall of Saddam in 2003, Iran has sought to exploit the new situation in Iraq. Many of the troubles in Iraq can be laid at Iran's door. With the help of China, Korea and Russia she has built up a fearful arsenal of weaponry. She put on a defiant display of her military might in exercises held in November, stunning the West according to this report.

The spectacular swarm of sophisticated missiles fired in Iran's surprise military exercise stuns military planners in the US, Israel and Europe.

Our sources reveal that scores of surface missiles—a record for any war games anywhere—were tested simultaneously at a desert-testing site some two hours drive from Tehran Thursday, Nov. 2. Precisely planned,

¹ Turkey 73m Iran 70m, Iraq 29m; Saudi Arabia 25m; Yemen 22m; Syria 19m. Egypt (North Africa) 80m. This and much of the background details were obtained from *Wikipedia*.

the testing went smoothly. Input has not yet come in about the accuracy of their targeting.

A senior American missile expert told Debka that the Iranians demonstrated up-to-date missile-launching technology which the West had not known them to possess. They also displayed unfamiliar warheads. But their most startling feat was the successful first test-fire of the long-range Shehab-3 with its cluster of tens of small bomblets. The entire range bore the imprint of new purchases from China.

This Shehab-3, whose 2,000 km range brings Israel, the Middle East and Europe within reach, may be more than a match for any anti-missile missile system in American, Israeli or European arsenals—depending critically on the point of its fragmentation. Some of its features are still an enigma in the West. *Debka* 4-11-06.

Although potentially rich in oil, Iran has embarked on a path of producing electricity from nuclear power stations. In 1975 Germany won a contract to build the first two at Bushehr on the Persian Gulf. Work stopped when one was half completed and the other 85% completed, due to the 1979 Revolution and the cessation of payments. Eventually Russia agreed to complete one of the units and it is due to become operational in 2007.

There has also been a steady drive to build a nuclear weapon. This demands extremely complex equipment and in spite of embargos from America and Britain on the supply of such equipment, she is making steady progress. The spent fuel from the power station could be used to form the basis of fission material in a nuclear weapon. In spite of sanctions applied through the UN at the year's end to halt Iran's advances, there is little confidence that it will have much effect, as the sanctions were watered down. When one looks at the list of her trading partners it is not surprising that Europe is lack-lustre in promising to enforce them, as Iran is a good customer! The Iranians claim that they will be able to build a bomb within a few months—others think this is still a few years away.

Russia has supplied advanced missile systems to guard her many nuclear development sites. The system is claimed to make it virtually impossible for any nation to attack. As this *Debka* account 25-11-06 indicates.

The first of 29 Tor-M1 systems in the \$700m deal have been delivered to Iran by Moscow despite US opposition to their sale of a weapon widely regarded as the most advanced of its kind in the world. Some Iranian and Russian air defense experts say its full deployment at Iran's nuclear installations will make them virtually invulnerable to American or Israeli attack in the foreseeable future. Therefore, no more than six months remain, until the Russian Tor-M1 systems are in place, for any attempt to knock out Iran's nuclear weapons industry.

The advantages of the Tor-M1 system are principally its ability to simultaneously destroy two targets travelling at up to 700 km/h in any

weather by day or night; its powerful, jamming-resistant radar with electronic beam control, and its vertically-launched missiles' ability to maintain high speed and manoeuvrability throughout their operation.

Iran's threats against Israel

In ancient times Medo-Persia was friendly to the Jews: Cyrus' decree invited them to return to their homeland. Even in recent years the Jewish population thrived and in the 1960's under the Shah, Iran and Israel had close military links and Israel helped develop agriculture in Iran.

Both nations, wary of Arab domination of the Middle East, saw value in creating a non-Arab "outer ring," consisting of Iran, Israel, Turkey and Ethiopia. *Persian Journal* 14-12-06

The 1979 revolution brought this cooperation to an end, and increasingly since Ahmadinejad became president, she has been the centre of virulent attacks on Israel. Last year he hosted a conference entitled "A world without Zionism" and this year the conference was entitled "Review of the Holocaust: global vision" a seeming innocuous title but the aim was to provide a platform to those who would deny the historical fact of the holocaust. There was worldwide condemnation of this conference and a group of American Jews is calling for the president of Iran to be charged with inciting genocide because of his speeches advocating Israel's destruction.

The call for legal action came as Mr Ahmadinejad repeated his onslaught against Israel at an international gathering of holocaust deniers in Tehran. The president, who has dismissed the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis as a myth, told up to 70 visiting speakers that the Israeli state would soon be wiped out.

"Thanks to people's wishes and God's will, the trend for the existence of the Zionist regime is downwards and this is what God has promised and what all nations want," he said to warm applause from the assembled Holocaust doubters. "Just as the Soviet Union was wiped out and today does not exist, so will the Zionist regime soon be wiped out."

He was praised by several participants for his "bravery and democratic actions", a source who was present told the Guardian. *The Guardian* and *Spiegel* 13-12-06

The role of Holocaust denial in Iran's strategy¹

The denial of the Holocaust is an important element in Iran's three-pronged attack on Israel. The Holocaust gives legitimacy to Israel needing a homeland. Remove the Holocaust and it cuts away the point of Israel's

¹ The article with the title 'The Role of Holocaust Denial in the Ideology and Strategy of The Iranian Regime' can be downloaded at <http://memri.org/bin/latestnews.cgi?ID=IA30706>

existence as a nation. It is an important step to removing sympathy for Israel. Not surprisingly, Muslim children aren't taught about the Holocaust¹. The second strand of attack is to demonise Israel, just as Hitler did the Jews. The Iranian and Middle East press, radio and TV carry constant messages of hate, accusing Jews of all sorts of things such as murdering children in order to procure blood for Passover matzos and blaming them for many things such as bird flu! The final step is the military one, physical elimination when the world is sufficiently turned against them.

“Thumbs Down for Iran’s Hardliners”

Local elections were held in Iran in mid-December and the results showed that the ordinary people did not support the government’s policies. The above was the headline in *Spiegel* 19-12-06

The hardliners in Iran have suffered a major setback at the hands of the Iranian electorate. A combination of a high turnout and close cooperation between the reformists and moderate conservatives succeeded in giving President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a bit of a battering at the ballot box. Partial results from last Friday’s elections for local governments and the powerful Assembly of Experts indicate that the president’s supporters have been widely rejected by the voters.

The Assembly of Experts is a body of 86 clerics who monitor Iran’s supreme leader and chooses his successor, and as such it has great influence in the theocratic state. Former president Hashemi Rafsanjani, a relative moderate, polled the most votes of any Tehran candidate to secure a seat on the assembly. In contrast, the hard-line cleric, Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, who is regarded as President Ahmadinejad’s spiritual mentor, only came in sixth in the poll.

Allies of the president won less than 20% of the seats. It was a fairly clear message and things could moderate, though main elections are not due until 2009.

Arming Hezbollah

The Hezbollah terrorist group was set up in Lebanon by Iran in 1985 following Israel’s invasion of southern Lebanon. They have been trained, equipped and financed by Iran and as the events of the Lebanon War have shown, they have become a disciplined army, a forward arm of Iran. Iran has long had grand plans of becoming the major player in the Middle East, the representative of Muslim power in the region. She seeks two goals. The first is the elimination of Israel and the removal of western influences in the Middle East and the second is to bring under her control the Arab nations

¹ Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust Museum, gave a secret seminar to a dozen Jordanian educators earlier this year. *JTA* 21-12-06

of the region. Hezbollah is her planned means of eliminating Israel. Their charter is quite open—except they will not use the word Israel—so it is “the elimination of the Zionist entity”!

We must remember that Lebanon is Sunni but Hezbollah are Shiite, In other words they are a minority group that takes their orders not from the Lebanese government but from Iran.

Helping the Palestinians

We saw in the previous chapter how scripture indicates that Lebanon and the Palestinians in Gaza would be found working together. Since the Lebanon War this has certainly been the case. Hezbollah have been advising Hamas in the tactics that they used so effectively against Israel’s land forces, bogging down their progress. There were many lessons useful to Hamas.

Remembering that Iran is the supplier of money, arms and training to Hezbollah, she is also promising to help Hamas. The Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniya toured the Arab states in December and returned with generous offers of financial and military support. He indicated that, unlike Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president who relies on western aid, he would be looking to the Iran-Syria camp. Iran promised \$250m in aid, while Qatar promised \$22m.

Haniya made it clear that his party “does not recognise the exploitive Zionist entity, and its support for jihad and resistance will continue”.
Center for Special Studies 14-12-06

Opposed to America—the dollar weapon

Ahmadinejad’s vision is of a Muslim ‘Kingdom on earth’. Jews and Christians are the enemy of such a state, and therefore America is seen as the Great Satan because she is Christian **and** helps the Jews! Hence the carnage that Iranian backed terrorists are causing in Iraq. Iran is determined to drive out America and Britain from Muslim territory.

One of the subtle weapons open to her to use against America lies in the dollar. All oil transactions have traditionally been carried out using US dollars, in spite of the fact that this is not the currency of many of the oil producing countries. America has jealously guarded this aspect of oil marketing—it helps the flow of dollars. With the recent weakening of the dollar due to America’s domestic problems, this has hit the dollar reserves of many countries. True you get more dollars for your pound or euro or whatever, but it also means that for these oil countries that, with the high prices of oil, have amassed big dollar reserves, the value of these reserves has shrunk quite alarmingly!

Iran has been threatening for some time to switch her oil sales to euros. At the year-end came reports that she had done this, in fact she intends to do her budgeting in euros and is turning her stocks of dollars into euros. This

will weaken the dollar still further and strengthen the euro. Those countries in the euro zone won't be enamoured with a stronger euro—their exports are suffering as it is!

Position of Turkey

Turkey's position is interesting. In the time of the Greeks, she was firmly part of the King of the North. Later she was part of the Eastern Roman Empire and Constantinople, modern Istanbul, was at its centre. Today she has been largely "dried up" (Rev 16:12) and is awaiting the final stage of that process when Russia, in moving down to take Israel, secures her northern position by taking Turkey and as the final phase of the dragon power of Revelation, regains her seat in Constantinople. At the moment Turkey cooperates reasonably well with America and Britain allowing their air force bases on her territory. She is also friendly to Israel, and is planning to build pipeline links to Israel to ship energy and water. When she falls under Russia's domination she will no longer be of help to Israel.

We examine her relations with Europe in a later chapter.

Continuing Iraqi conflict

After 3_ years the Iraq war is still rumbling on. After maintaining high troop levels, America and Britain have sought how to disengage without leaving a bloodbath. The carnage continues, but this time is directed against the local population. Shia, Sunni and Kurd fight it out, each seeking to dominate the other. What effect the death of Saddam Hussein will have, remains to be seen. There are some bright points; living standards have risen considerably since the removal of Saddam. People are able to dress as they wish, receive Western broadcasts, and publish newspapers; yet peace eludes them. Many in America and Britain no longer support their government's handling of the Iraq situation. Yet both leaders have said that they will not walk away from the situation and are prepared to increase troop-levels for a while if it will bring some stability.

A committee set up by President Bush to look at the situation came out with a highly critical report, which if implemented would be damaging to Israel. At the moment Mr Bush does not agree with the report and shows no sign of implementing their proposals.

We now turn to our third section covering Europe and the Papacy.

Chapter 10

PROPHECIES & EXPECTATIONS—EUROPE AND THE PAPACY

We now commence our third section. Europe and its religious systems are the focus of many prophecies, because it is here that saints and Jews have struggled against terrible and consistent persecutions. At the time of the end, Europe attains to the final beast phase, before disappearing under the outpouring of God's judgements. We see a scriptural role for Britain outside her present position as part of mainland Europe. The situation seems ready for a parting of the ways. As watchers on Zion's walls we eagerly await these developments. We must remember however that we may not see this fully happen before the call to stand before our Lord. There will be time during the judgement period for the final pieces to fall into place. What does scripture say?

The dragon and the beasts

The history of Europe is a fairly complex matter from a human perspective. God however sees things differently. From His viewpoint the nations are aptly characterised as beasts.

Europe has gone through various “beastly” transformations in its long history. For centuries, spanning before the birth of Christ down to the time of Constantine, it was in the “red dragon” phase. (Rev 12) The history of the Roman Empire changed with the great “earthquake” when Constantine changed the state religion from paganism to a corrupt form of Christianity. This was the “beast of the sea” phase, (Rev 13) which took us to the 9th century AD. With the rise of the so-called Holy Roman Empire, the beast underwent a dramatic change. With Pope and Emperor joining in power, the “church” grew in power. The symbol appropriately changed to the “beast of the earth” with its two horns. The power of the Roman Church grew immensely. None could freely live under her dominion unless they had been christened and worshipped the Trinity. With her own territory in Italy there developed a parallel beast phase—“the image of the beast”.

Then winds of change blew over the Roman world. First there was a great division within the Catholic Church, leaving the Roman Catholic Church in the west and Greek Orthodox Church in the east. Invading Muslim armies from the east brought proud Constantinople to her knees in 1453. With thousands slain and great numbers fleeing the Ottoman onslaught, the power of the Eastern Church disappeared from that region, only to move northwards to be championed and nurtured by the growing power of ancient Russia.

The Ottoman power continued to push westward, reaching right up to the walls of Vienna, reaching the walls of Vienna, which they besieged in 1529 and again in 1683, both times unsuccessfully. But that was their high water mark, and exhausted, they were rolled back step-by-step by the might of Christendom.

The greatest hammer blows to the Old Europe occurred in France. With the French Revolution the affairs of Europe were turned upside down. In the language of Revelation, it was a political earthquake that shook the heavens and earth of its day. The monarchy and the Church felt the heat of the wrath of the common people, punishment for the abundant blood that had been spilled in France. As the revolution spread, Napoleon brought the Holy Roman Empire to an end with heavy judgements against Austria, the seat of the “beast of the earth” as described in the vial judgements of Revelation 16.

The Vatican did not escape; the Pope was taken prisoner and his lands confiscated, bringing to an end the “image of the beast”. The revolution rolled onwards and hit Russia in 1917 with the massacre of the Tzarist family and the church, driven underground with communism, gave way to state atheism for the next 70 or so years.

Developing the final beast stage

Amazingly—from a human perspective—with religion crushed in east and west, one could be forgiven for thinking that was that; Europe and Russia were changed forever! However the Word of God had spoken; His knowledge of the future is more certain than our knowledge of the past! Far from disappearing, the dragon and the beast are very much in evidence today in preparation for the time of the Master’s return.

Apart from losing the appellation of *red*, the dragon seems to continue as before. The area of Russia does not seem to have been a fruitful area for believers in the past and the church and state worked side-by-side without the levels of persecution as in the West. The main historical feature of the dragon is the movement of its seat from Constantinople to Moscow.

Scripture is much more concerned with the situation in Europe, for this is where the true believers and the many Protestant sects lived and flourished in times of toleration, or as was more usually the situation, living in constant persecution from a tyrannical power that would not suffer the revealing of her errors by these witnesses to the Truth.

The details of the final beast phase are revealed in Rev 17. Here is a new picture; instead of church and state being represented by two horns as in the description of the “beast of the earth” in Rev 13:11, we have a picture of a harlot woman riding upon the beast. Horns are used in scripture as a symbol of power. Under the symbol of a horn on the “beast of the earth”, the Papacy had tremendous power over the lives of all strata of civilisation. A rider on a beast conveys a slightly different picture. The woman is

described as *sitting on the beast* v3 and being *carried* by the beast v7. The implication is that the beast is the strong power that chooses to carry this woman.

Who is controlling where the beast goes? The woman rider or the carrying beast? In the natural world where one thinks of a rider on a horse, then the direction comes from the rider, as indeed is the picture in a different scenario in ch 18:11-16. However, we are told in 17:12-14 that the horns give their power to the beast, rather than to the woman, and it is the beast that makes war with the lamb. Indeed in 17:16 we are told of a time when the horns on the beast make the woman desolate. We can only make sense of this by regarding it as if in parenthesis, guiding us as to the true interpretation of these symbols. There was a time, described in chapter 16 under the vial judgements, when the powers of the European beast did in fact desolate the whore, taking away her powers and land as we have seen. This is then the remarkable thing about this vision, we are shown a great contrast—at the time of making war with the Lamb, that period is history, she is now supported, carried by the beast!

A woman rides the beast

John's readers would be quite used to the mental picture of a woman being carried by a beast—many Roman frescos and mosaics picture Princess Europa, daughter of the Baal worshipping King of Tyre, being carried by



Zeus in his form of Taurus the bull. Here certainly the rider was not controlling the beast; the beast was taking the woman! These ancient and modern coins depict the same matter. One can trace Zeus back to the Babylonian bull gods.¹ What more fitting symbol for the Europe that is rising before our eyes? Baal the god of Phoenicians is Bel the god of the Babylonians. Baal means “the Lord” or “Master”, and Bel is “confounded”.

¹ See *Symbol of Europe* by John Ramsden, Bible Magazine vol 16 No. 4 view at www.biblemagazine.com/magazine/vol-16/v16i4mag.pdf

(Jer 50:2) Hislop's *Two Babylons* traces them to Cush, who evidently helped his son Nimrod build Babel and with the subsequent confusion of tongues, Nimrod's father's title of "Bel" was linked with being "confounded". As Nimrod's father he was the "Master". So the false religion of Tyre links back to the false teachings of Babylon.

Zeus was the Roman Jupiter, the patron god of the Roman Empire!

In Roman mythology, **Jupiter** (*Iuppiter* in Latin) held the same role as Zeus in the Greek pantheon. He was called **Jupiter Optimus Maximus** (Jupiter Best, Greatest) as the patron deity of the Roman state, in charge of laws and social order. He was the chief god of the Capitoline Triad, with Juno and Minerva. *Wikipedia*

In 2005 the Italians issued a commemorative 2-euro coin when the EU leaders signed the constitution, showing Europa holding a pen and the EU constitution, with Zeus alongside!

The woman

Let's briefly see what is said in Revelation 17:4-6 of the woman rider. Her *forehead carries a name*—*MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*.

A name written on the forehead denotes her character, which is in contrast to the believers who have the Father's name on their foreheads. (Rev 14:1) This religious system is the final phase of the Babylonian kingdom.

She is the mother of many daughters—they are equally abominable in God's eyes, having become *harlots*, corrupting the purity of the truth.

Her clothing is splendid—she is *arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls*. These are the characteristic colours of her priests, bishops, cardinals and their leader and lavishly decorated. Purple is the colour of royalty. As she says of herself, *I sit a queen and am no widow*. Rev 18:7.

She also has a *golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication*. She uses gold cups in her celebration of the "mass"—transubstantiation is a mystery with Babylonian roots. (See Hislop's *Two Babylons—the sacrifice of the mass*)



Another characteristic is that she is *drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*. There is only one power that has persecuted the saints so consistently down through the ages. The Mahomedan attackers made careful distinction to vent their wrath against the shaven-headed priest of Rome rather than ordinary believers. (See *Eureka* on Rev 9:4) It is instructive in this time of peace when open persecution is not a day-to-day occurrence, that the Lord Jesus still regards the church's hands as full of blood.

The opening verses of this chapter contain further information. She sits upon *many waters*, and *the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication*. She also is found *in the wilderness*. Waters represent peoples; the wide scale attendance of so many nations at John-Paul II's funeral last year was an indication of the influence wielded by the Papacy. She has diplomatic relations with 174 sovereign states plus the EU. This map dramatically illustrates the truth of this phrase—*upon many waters*. The



wilderness where John was conveyed to see the beast represents a region, which in John's day was barbarian country, Germany, very much fits.

The beast

And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. 17:10-11

The exposition of the eighth head has been adequately expounded in many expositions of this chapter. Suffice it to say that the Roman world was in its sixth political manifestation in the days of John. It would be replaced for a short while under the barbarian invasions of Rome. When that period ended in AD 554 with the fall of the Goths, then the sixth head revived and continues as the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth. That too has gone but what is emerging as its last manifestation is described as an 8th

head—"of" the seven, in other words in the same mould as the previous ones. In other words we look for a revival of the previous manifestation—the Holy Roman Empire.

On another level the *seven heads* represent *seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth*. This links the seat of the harlot woman with the 7-hilled city of Rome.

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 17:12-13

The *one-hour* as a $1/12^{\text{th}}$ of a day (as opposed to night) would be a $1/12^{\text{th}}$ of 360 years (on the basis of a day for a year) or 30 years. This could run from the destruction of the Gogian forces to their final destruction. The cleansing of Europe will take a long time, so ingrained is wrong doctrine and its attitude against the things of truth.

A Europe without Britain

Britain, as the power represented by the Merchants of Tarshish with her young lions (Ezek 38:13) has a role opposed to the work of the beast. In the language of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the image that stands up has eastern, Russian feet, working with western, European feet. Although Britain is part of the EU at present, she has a different role to play. As the inhabitants of the isles, her task is to work with Zion's new king when he is revealed—a work of bringing back God's people and helping in the establishing of the Kingdom and the building of the Temple. (Isa 60:9-11; Ps 72:10; 45:12)

Winston Churchill, back in 1930 commented: -

'We have our own dream and our own task. We are with Europe but not of it. We are linked but not combined. We are interested and associated but not absorbed. And should European statesmen address us in the words that were used of old, 'Shall I speak for thee to the King or the Captain of the Host?', we should reply with the Shunamite woman, 'Nay sir, for we dwell among our own people.'

As we shall see in ch. 12 there is a growing call to quit the EU: the drive to re-instate the EU Constitution will probably be a step too far for Britain!

Germany the dominant power

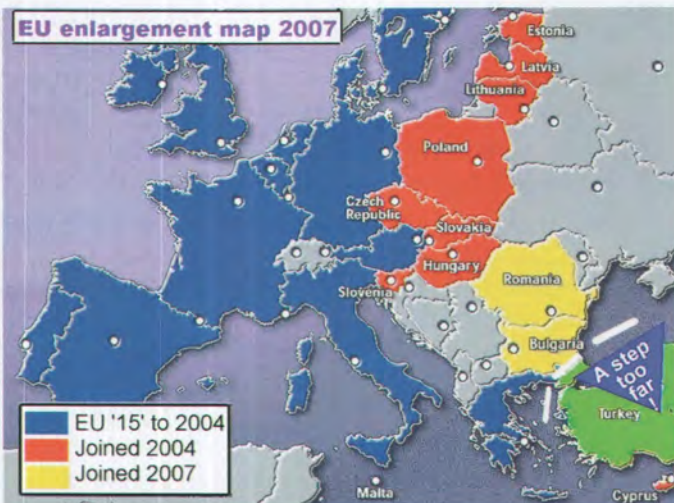
As in the past, we look for Germany to re-emerge as Europe's leader, Ms Merkel is asserting herself in a way not seen since 1945. The Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation is a matter that is growing.

Keeping out Turkey

Again, guided by history, we would not expect Muslim Turkey to join this "christian" club. She is in the final stages of her drying up. When Russia

and Europe come down against Israel, we expect Gog to have possession of Constantinople. This would involve the conquest of Turkey.

Working with Russia



Scripture would point us to cooperation between Russia and Europe. The dragon and the beast, together with the false prophet, seem to be working together against a common foe, Israel, in Rev 16:13-14. This is reinforced by Daniel ch 2—the two legs of the image are joined at the body, so we would expect to see them working together.

Ezekiel 38:2-6 paints a picture of the nations that Gog is a *guard unto*. Gog is the main military power in a spirit of cooperation, not domination.

Siding with Israel's enemies

If Europe is part of the Gogian confederacy, then she must be opposed to Israel. As we shall see, Europe, unlike Britain, often champions those who look for Israel's destruction. So whether it is UNIFIL troops or Palestinian aid or opposition to sanctions against Iran, Europe is normally not working to Israel's best interests.

Christian Europe

The other expectation we have is of Europe regaining her Christian roots. If she is carrying the harlot woman and drunk with her wine, then there must be a considerable increase in the power of the Roman Catholic Church within Europe. As we shall see, the moves to heal the millennia long rifts are progressing rapidly under the new Pope.

Germany the dominant power

As in the past, we look for Germany to re-emerge as Europe's leader. Ms Merkel is asserting herself in a way not seen since 1945. The Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation is a matter that is growing.

We look first at the way Germany is beginning to dominate Europe.

Chapter 11

EUROPE TODAY—GERMANY EMERGING

As we saw in our first chapter, the events in Lebanon have a wider impact on world events, and we begin by looking at its subtle effects on Europe.

The outworking of the Lebanon war in Europe

The Lebanon war saw the might of Iran, channelled through Hezbollah, pitched against Israel which was backed by America. The same ideological forces that Iran is supporting are working in Europe to bring about the same end—the promotion of Islam. London has been the centre of much of the training of these terrorists. Although the authorities had been warned about the dangers posed by these militants, the warnings seem to have been ignored for many years.

For Britain, the July 7th 2005 bombings in London were a wake up call; and now the Lebanon War has shown just how fanatical these groups are and what sophisticated preparations they made. What happened in Lebanon could happen in Europe. Yet Europe has many links with the Middle East; Syria and Lebanon were under a French Mandate when Palestine was under the British Mandate. So when the call came for UN troops to occupy southern Lebanon to end the war, it was mainly Europe that responded. If it was thought that they were going in to help Israel, think again! They admitted that they were going there to assist Lebanon rather than Israel!

It has been left to the Pope to issue the rallying cry to keep Europe Christian and defend her against an Islamic takeover—as we see in ch. 13.

UNIFIL forces

The UN Interim Forces in Lebanon have been positioned on the Israeli-Lebanese border since 1978, but have proved remarkably ineffective in preventing continuing clashes between Israel and Lebanon.

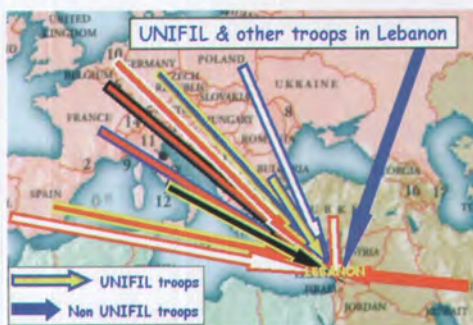
Israel's main condition for a cease-fire was a strong international force which would work together with the Lebanese army to hold Hezbollah in check in southern Lebanon. *Spiegel* 31-10-06

The UN resolution 1701 was intended to give new powers to prevent the smuggling of arms to Hezbollah forces and to enable the Lebanese government to win back control of the area. It quickly became apparent that the legislation gave no protection to Israel. German and French naval vessels don't patrol closer than about 11 km off shore, which suits the small vessels smuggling arms from Syria to southern Lebanon! Nor have the UNIFIL troops a mandate to actually do anything—they have to call in the Lebanese army, by which time it is normally too late. As we saw earlier, Hezbollah are in a stronger position now than before, thanks to the weakness of these largely pro-Arab UNIFIL troops.

During the actual war, the existing UNIFIL forces posted up-to-the-minute details of Israeli troop movements but not one detailed account of Hezbollah!

Throughout the recent war, it posted on its website for all to see precise information about the movements of Israeli Defense Forces soldiers and the nature of their weaponry and materiel, even specifying the placement of IDF safety structures within hours of their construction. New information was sometimes only 30 minutes old when it was posted, and never more than 24 hours old.

Meanwhile, UNIFIL posted not a single item of specific intelligence regarding Hezbollah forces. *The Weekly Standard* 4-9-06



The remarkable thing is the makeup of the new UNIFIL forces. The majority come from the territory of Gog and his companions of Ezekiel 38. Of the 14,000 troops, just under 9,000 come from the EU, plus another 1,000 from Turkey and Russia. Iran is not sending troops but is supplying extensive amounts of money for rebuilding. In addition France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway and Turkey have ships patrolling off the Lebanese coast, whose quantity seems over-the-top for their task.

Western Europe is clearly taking advantage of the Lebanon crisis to mass its naval strength in eastern Mediterranean waters in good position for stalking any potential American or Israeli military action against Iran. If Berlin, Paris and Rome did not believe in the high probability of some such action in the works, they would not have massed so much of their naval might in front row seats. *Debka* 1-9-06

Knowing that the king of the north comes forth with many ships, (Dan 11:40) is it not interesting that Europe is poised with ships and troops just to the north of Israel—a dry run of their future invasion?

Merkel voted most powerful woman

Angela Merkel was elected German chancellor in November 2005, and has grown in popularity. In a *Forbes* poll of leading businesswomen in August 2006, she topped the poll ahead of Condoleezza Rice. This is quite

remarkable for this lady from Eastern Germany brought up under communist rule and witnessing first hand the fall of the iron curtain in 1989 and the re-unification of Germany in 1990. This has coloured her outlook as the first Chancellor from eastern Germany and the first woman Chancellor of Germany. She is determined that Russia will not dominate Germany again; this can only be achieved by Germany becoming stronger and more assertive. Her fluent Russian is standing her in good stead. She and Putin—a fluent German speaker from his spying days in East Germany—can converse and understand the nuances of either language.

Germany prospering

In January, Angela Merkel gave the opening speech of the 2006 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. During the address, she emphasized Germany's plans for the future of its economy and for its re-emergence as a leader in Europe.

After successfully promoting Germany's renewed economic and geopolitical strength during visits to Washington, Moscow and most recently, Paris, Merkel shifted her efforts to convincing the rest of the world. Davos—temporary home to nearly 2,000 international business leaders—has served as the perfect stage for this campaign. Merkel's invitation to provide the keynote address—anticipated worldwide—not only gives her an opportunity to improve Germany's economy, but also solidifies her role as Europe's new leader.

Merkel's talk focused on information and innovation in Europe, using Germany as a model, a move intended to give investors the mental image of a fast-paced, competitive economy with a stable future.
Stratfor 25-1-06

Stratfor in their *Annual Forecast of 2006* issued 14-1-06 had some fascinating comments to make about German's role as they saw it.

During 2006, Germany will re-enter the European system as the dominant power and begin the process of reshaping the Continent.

Germany has been in a geopolitical deep-freeze since 1945. Divided and occupied until 1993, the country has had two main foreign policy themes: saying "I'm sorry," and meekly lending its financial support to the European project.

But now there has been a clean break. Angela Merkel is now in charge of Germany, and despite presiding over an unwieldy and uncomfortable coalition government, in her first few weeks on the job she already has emerged as the center-point of European affairs.

Germany is returning to its traditional role as the core European power. For more than a millennium, the single feature of the European system that has determined events has been Germany's strength. When

Germany is strong, it dominates the heart of the Continent and relegates its neighbors to powerlessness—until such time as they ally to crush it.

This pattern already has cycled three times. Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire (the first iteration of what is now "Germany") dominated Europe until it fell in Europe's religious wars. Imperial Germany played a similar dominating role from its rise in 1870 until its fall in World War I, when Weimar Germany's weakness allowed a French and Russian renaissance. And of course Nazi Germany's rise again put all eyes on Berlin, and its destruction led to the superpower standoff—and, eventually, to the rise of a "united" Europe.

The year 2006 will mark a new turning point as Germany begins to ascend for a fourth time—which raises the question: What will it do with its rising influence? Germany under Merkel will certainly not be ready to discard wholesale the foreign policy precepts of the past 60 years. Merkel undoubtedly will follow her predecessors' efforts to unite and federalize Europe—but bearing in mind what is good for Germany, as opposed to what is good for Europe.

After a generation at the helm of France, President Jacques Chirac is a spent political force.

In the United Kingdom, 2006 likely will see a transfer of power from Prime Minister Tony Blair to Gordon Brown

Italy will hold elections.

Which leaves Merkel's Germany—regardless of its position as the Continent's geographic center and the union's largest economy—as the only horse in the race.

Her army throws off its shackles

Part of this assertiveness is to raise her military profile. No longer are her troops to keep quietly at home. Merkel has initiated far-reaching reforms of the military to make it more professional and less reliant on conscription, and increased spending. The objective of the reorganization is to provide the Bundeswehr with the capability to assign 14,000 troops to five international missions simultaneously.

A fully professional German military would be a radical departure from the status quo. Apparent, though unspoken, would be the alteration of the European military balance that has enjoyed a Germany of limited capability since World War II. While France at this time might not militarily fear a rebirth of German power, it nonetheless is highly competitive with its EU partner. A strengthening of the German army would certainly exacerbate that rivalry. *American Spectator* 31-10-06

The new military was seen in Germany's response to a call for UNIFIL troops, she is second only to Italy in the number of troops supplied. When a

call came in mid-December for some of her fighter planes to help in Afghanistan, they were despatched immediately without discussion!

Looking to the Holy Roman Empire

Bearing in mind what *Stratfor* said about the 4th rising of Germany, this following article is of extreme relevance, prompted on the occasion of an exhibition in Germany dedicated to the Holy Roman Empire.

The Ordering of a Superstate

The medieval, Europe-wide German Reich is a valid model for the union of European countries today. So says the Berlin State Minister for Culture, Bernd Neumann. According to him, the memory of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation reveals “an inner historical consistency” with the founding and steady expansion of the European Union. These remarks are a preparation for the festivities in Berlin for the fiftieth anniversary of the European Economic Community (EEC), to which the Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has invited the German Pope, Joseph Ratzinger. Ratzinger is a committed supporter of the “Imperial Ideal” (*Reichsidee*) and is to speak on the “spiritual foundations” of Europe in the German capital.

The German press already reports that the religious consecration will validate the European Economic Community (EEC) and will be dedicated to “the spiritual foundations of Europe’s political unification”. The invitation legitimates the “Reich” concept of a stable co-operation of Church and State. It will be a particular affront to France, a founder member of the EEC. Paris is committed to secularism and the separation of Church and State a principle of French public life since 1789.

This government offensive to revitalise the Imperial Ideal will underline the German leadership of the EU and confirm fears in France, Great Britain and almost all the states of Eastern Europe. www.german-foreign-policy.com 29-8-06

We have been warned!

Preparations for “Europe’s” 50th birthday

As the previous item mentioned, 2007 marks the 50th anniversary of the EU. This grew out of the Iron and Steel Confederation, comprising (West) Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux countries and was established in 1951. This was fol-



The 50th anniversary logo

lowed in 1957 by the EEC or Common Market binding these countries in a full customs union, established by the Treaty of Rome. The original six members gradually grew and by 1992 had become the European Union with 12 members. As of 1 January 2007 there will be 27 members. Berlin is

to be the centre of these celebrations in 2007 and has chosen this less than thrilling logo! We shall await developments.

Reinstating the constitution

Every 6th months, the presidency of the EU is taken over by the leader of one of the member countries. On Jan 1st 2007 Finland will hand over to Germany. One of the items Angela Merkel is determined to move ahead is the matter of the EU Constitution. Because of its rejection in 2005 by France and the Netherlands it is technically dead. But that's not how the EU works! That rejection was but a temporary setback, a bit of repackaging will make it acceptable! In any case many of the items enshrined in the Constitution have been brought in without any approval.

One of the repackaging matters, which should make the Constitution more attractive, is to introduce to it the acknowledgement of Europe's Christian roots. Angela Merkel, herself a Lutheran, said this on her visit to the Pope.

German chancellor Angela Merkel has suggested Europe needs a constitution that makes reference to Christianity and God following her audience with Pope Benedict XVI on Monday (29 August). She added "I underlined my opinion that we need a European identity in the form of a constitutional treaty and I think it should be connected to Christianity and God, as Christianity has forged Europe in a decisive way."

Germany has been assigned by EU member states to come up with some kind of solution to the constitutional crisis during its presidency of the union in the first six months of 2007. *EUPolitix.com* 29-8-06

Germany's championing of this has another two aspects. It makes the constitution more acceptable to countries like Poland, and also: -

"From the point of view of Chancellor Merkel, this can be a clever way of keeping Turkey out. We knew that the Christian Democrats in Germany are quite unhappy with the prospect of Turkish membership. And in fact that could be one of the reasons why they are so keen on putting Christian values into the constitution." *Polskie radio* 7-9-06

Merkel is hoping to put forward a plan that would see the Constitution ratified by the EU leaders in 2009, rather than being put to a referendum.

Responding to the German Pope

Church attendances have been rising in Germany since "one of their own" became Pope. The Pope was well received on his visits to Germany. Interestingly the German parliament appears quite religious.

There are more theologians in the German parliament than in any other Western parliament, including the US Congress. And when the last government cabinet was sworn in, nearly every member—instead of the usual 50 percent—opted for the religious version of the inaugural oath. *Christian Monitor* 15-9-06

Recognising Europe's Christian roots

As we shall see when looking at the Papacy, an important crusade of the new Pope has been to re-instate Christianity at the heart of Europe. After several decades of godlessness, there does seem a revival in people's interest in religion. One aspect that religious and political leaders are quietly recognising is that a strongly Roman Catholic Europe sends a strong signal to Turkey that this is a Christian club to which they are not welcome. It is interesting that Britain, nominally Protestant, is quite happy for Turkey to join. Why this antipathy to Turkey in continental Europe?

Keeping Turkey at bay

To understand this we have to view history through the eyes of mainland Europe. To those in the east, they remember the disgrace of Constantinople's fall in 1453; to those in the west they remember the advance of the Byzantine Empire against the Habsburg Empire right to the gates of Vienna. The siege was eventually broken and the Muslims rolled back step by step until in 1918 they had been driven all the way back. The Battle of Vienna in 1683 nearly went to the Ottomans. Their forces greatly outnumbered those of Austria, and they chose a leisurely siege. This gave time for Polish forces to come to the aid of their Austrian comrades. Also Pope Innocent XI rallied forces into a Holy League with German, Saxon and Austrian troops. These, led by the King of Poland, effectively broke the siege and drove the Ottoman forces back, who suffered heavy losses.

The motivation was high, as this war was not as usual for the interests of kings, but for Christian faith. And, unlike the crusades, the battleground was in the heart of Europe.

Although no one realized it at the time, the battle shaped the outcome of the entire war. The Ottomans fought on for another 16 years, losing control of Hungary and Transylvania in the process, before giving up.

The Battle of Vienna is seen by many historians as marking the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire. *Wikipedia*

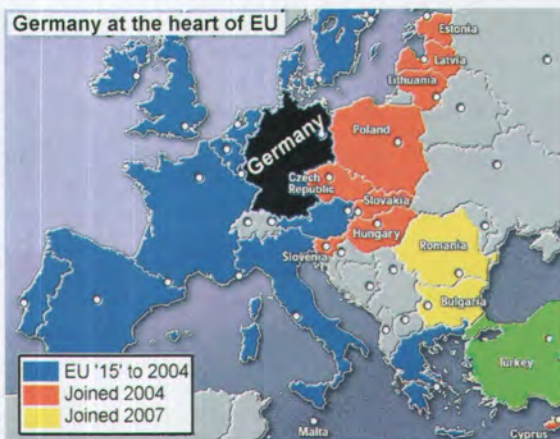
Hence the repetition of history, 350 years later, with Pope and rulers desiring to keep what is now the Turkish Republic at bay!

EU centre shifting to Germany

Brussels in Belgium has been the centre of the EU; from here the unelected bureaucrats churn out endless pages of rules and regulations. Is there a growing backlash to this? France and Holland's rejection of the Constitution reflect this. Britain certainly is tired of the endless legislation. In recent elections in Holland, anti-European parties made substantial gains. This seems the ideal time for bold moves by Germany to break the existing system and forge ahead with new alliances. Germany's plans for a revised Constitution revolve around sidelining the European Parliament.

Many EU leaders are hoping Germany will introduce reforms into how they run their meetings—27 members sitting round a table discussing matters leads to rambling meetings. Now reduce that to say 10 (horns) and things might proceed more swiftly!

With the eastward expansion of the EU, Germany seems its natural centre.



Looking east not west—growing ties with Russia

The presence of America in Europe has been scaled down considerably since the strong footprint she had there as the defender against Soviet Russia. According to the *Financial Times* 22-12-06 “US troop numbers in Europe have dropped sharply since the cold war. From 315,000 in the late 1980s, numbers have fallen to 100,000 and plans are in train to cut the numbers to roughly 70,000.” At the same time anti-American feeling has grown. Europe no longer feels the need for America’s protective hand. They resent the US’s projection as the world’s superpower, desiring their own place on the world stage! They see that achievement coming as the ally of Russia rather than her foe. With the situations in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, Europe is now aligning with Russia rather than America.

This is what prophecy guides us to—a N-S split with America and Britain and their allied powers being the south power, and Europe and Russia and their allies the north power.

Germany is leading the drive to link Europe and Russia. Angela Merkel, having lived under Communist rule most of her life, desires to see Russia anchored to Europe so she no longer poses a threat. Russia sees Europe as her ally as this quotation shows.

Dreams of “total European integration”

At a German-Russian summit in Siberia last April, Putin brimmed with friendly overtures to Merkel. In Compiègne, he stressed that gas from the Stockmann field would be useful to Berlin. “Do you know what it would mean to the German economy if deliveries from that field were guaranteed for 50 to 75 years?” he asked.

The Kremlin also made sure that Aeroflot ordered 22 planes from the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company subsidiary Airbus—even though the airline had been planning to buy only Boeings.

In return, Moscow hopes that when Germany assumes the rotating European Union presidency in 2007, it will take steps toward a European-Russian free trade zone and a stronger energy partnership. It also hopes visa requirements for Russians will be relaxed.

There are grander visions. Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov even believes “that cooperation between Russia and Germany can become a locomotive for total European integration, just as the rapprochement between Germany and France after World War II promoted integration within the European Union.” After a long period of development, “Europe” would then be a market of 700 million Europeans and Asians, with highways stretching from Berlin to Vladivostok and an economy fueled by synergy between western-European high tech and the massive oil and natural gas reserves of a re-energized Russia. If Moscow has its way, Europe could become a true rival to rising powers China and India in the geopolitical struggle of the 21st century. *Spiegel* 6-10-06

The relationship is still a bit stormy. Merkel has raised human rights issues, and Putin is irritated by Europe’s reluctance to allow Russian gas companies to buy up local energy companies; but the movement is certain to embrace each other rather than to drift apart. The 16th and 17th EU-Russian Summit meetings were held this year. The 17th was rather overshadowed by Poland using her veto in protest at Russia’s cutting of her meat imports, which will hit Poland’s economy. Poland thinks Russia’s actions were in retaliation for her move into the EU; Russia claimed it was to do with health concerns over the meat! Europe and Russia are working on a new document to replace the Framework document covering the 1997-2007 period. As we shall examine when looking at Russia the greatest tie that is binding them is energy—Russia has it, Europe needs it!

The United States of Europe

We see Europe seeking to project herself as a United States of Europe. The Constitution would have given the EU a foreign minister who would have spoken on behalf of the EU as a whole rather than through the individual nations. No doubt this will be part of the resurrected constitution. Many of the matters in the constitution are being pushed through in any case. The European Army is a case in point. Plans to unroll this are being pushed ahead without the backing of the constitution. There is not yet consensus as how this should proceed and Britain is opposed to the idea.

Kurt Beck, leader of the Social Democrats, [part of the German coalition government] called for a European army with a single command, the first time a German political party has proposed such a structure. If adopted, it could lead to the European Union pursuing a security and defense policy independent of NATO. *Int. Herald Tribune* 6-11-06

We can expect Europe to stand on its own feet, speaking with one voice.

We now look at Britain and the Commonwealth.

Chapter 12:

EUROPE TODAY—BRITAIN AND THE COMMONWEALTH

Britain has played a special role in enabling the Jews to return to their homeland. That work has not finished and we look to see a greater role on the world stage for her, especially in the Middle East as we looked at in Chapter 6. In this chapter we look at the growing strength of Britain.

Sterling's strength

The economies of the EU have strengthened this year, with mainland Europe showing some recovery after several dismal years. This has helped Britain, as Europe is an important market for her exports. The British pound continues to strengthen as a robust currency outside the euro.

Sterling is once again the queen of global currencies

Far from wobbling at the first sign of dollar trouble, it is now the ultimate safe-haven currency a Swiss franc on steroids. It has vaulted 15% against the greenback this year as the consequences of America's great unfunded shopping boom begin to catch up. It outstripped the rest of the currency pack in yesterday's dollar meltdown with a giddy surge to near \$1.97.

Now Britain is a global star, with a currency run by an independent and admired central bank. The economy has been re-rated upward, delayed fruit of Margaret Thatcher's courage.

The Swiss central bank has switched 10% of its reserves into sterling and the Russians are following suit. Italy has trumped with 20%. Bankers, petrodollar sheikhs and pension funds the world over love our government Gilts. In part, this is because sterling trades in near lockstep with the euro, so it serves as a proxy euro with a higher yield of 1% or so. *Sunday Telegraph* 1-12-06.

The world's financial capital!

The "big-bang" liberalisation of Britain's financial markets is seeing rich dividends. City bonuses have been hitting record levels this year.

Twenty years ago London embarked on a remarkable transformation to become a global financial centre. It now has to keep its lead.

Shipping services have made a recent comeback; overseas earnings rose by a quarter between 2002 and 2004. London's 400 shipbroking firms match ships and cargoes in 50% of tanker chartering. And there has been a spectacular growth in legal services, which are vital in backing the work of a global financial centre. Over 200 foreign law firms have offices in London, which is also headquarters for three of the four largest

firms in the world. Exports from Britain generated by international law firms are now three times higher than they were in 1995.

Centre court

London is a textbook example of an economic cluster, in which businesses locate close to one another because they gain from proximity. "The big warehouse of markets is in London," says Pascal Boris, chief executive of BNP Paribas's British operation. The distinctive feature of the City cluster is the pre-eminence of foreign financial firms, a place where the best international players come to compete.

The City's vibrancy shows that it offers compelling advantages that outweigh these drawbacks [of high office costs and transport problems]. Financial firms cluster in London because they derive external economies of scale. By thronging together, they create large, liquid markets that drive down trading costs and reduce risks by allowing large deals to be handled.

There are further benefits. Firms, large and small, can call upon all the external services needed to put together a complex financial deal, such as advice from lawyers and accountants, or the use of specialist markets. This in turn creates a fertile environment for innovation to flourish—a vital attraction for a global financial centre. *The Economist* 19-10-06

The cost of Europe

The cost of Britain's EU membership continues to climb. The *Bruges Group*, a euro-sceptic think-tank, estimated that it will cost over £52bn in 2007—up £2bn on this year and amounting to £873 for every man, woman and child, or £100,000 a minute! It claims that Britain has contributed £200bn since joining in 1973. (*Daily Telegraph* 1-9-06) Another report estimated that the extra cost imposed by EU tariffs on food imports for an average family of four amounts to some £1,500 a year.

Ségolène urges Britain to choose between Europe and America

Many and constant are the calls for Britain to withdraw from the EU, from Euro-sceptics, business people and even Europeans who feel Britain is a brake on their expansionist plans. The pressure will increase if Germany succeeds in re-introducing the Constitution. As this *Daily Telegraph* 20-11-06 article with the above headline bluntly put it: -

Ségolène Royal, the Socialist candidate for the French presidency, wants Britain to choose between being a "vassal" of the United States, and embracing a French-led drive for European integration, her adviser on Europe has revealed.

Gilles Savary, a French MEP and her spokesman and foreign affairs adviser... set out a vision of an ambitious new EU treaty, replacing the EU constitution which has been in limbo since French and Dutch voters voted against it last summer.

Britain would be asked to sign up to the new treaty, but if it rejected calls for increased protectionism, an EU foreign minister, convergence on tax rates and moves to create a European army, then France and her allies would agree a treaty among themselves, he said.

Although Miss Royal “does not want a two-speed Europe,” Mr Savary said, he admitted her plans could lead to a “quartet” of nations leading the way, with others scrambling to catch up. He complained that Britain currently led an “ultra-Atlanticist” bloc within the EU.

The question the English have to answer is—do the English consider the English Channel to be wider than the Atlantic? We on the continent have the right to deplore the fact that Great Britain appears to consider the Channel is wider,” he said.

Miss Royal was confident that “Europe can be relaunched with Germany, Italy and Spain. It is perfectly possible to have treaties within the treaty, among four nations,” he said. “If other nations want to sign up, that’s good. But we cannot have a Europe where one part goes to war in Iraq, another part does not, and we all end up paying the bill.”

Britain had clashed earlier when she blocked putting more money in the 2009 budget for the European Defence Agency, arousing the wrath of the French defence minister who launched a “fierce broadside” against Britain.

Britain also said it would not be signing up to a first major joint research project involving the EDA and 19 European governments, looking into ways to protect troops in urban combat. France has put in £8 million, while Germany and Poland have each given about £7 million.

British officials said the UK had invested considerable sums in similar research and was not inclined to spend more on European-based research covering the same ground. *Daily Telegraph* 14/11/06

Blair promises to step down

After years of speculation, Tony Blair told the Labour Party conference in September that he would step down as leader next May and hand over the reins to Gordon Brown, the present Chancellor. It does not lie within his powers to dictate who leads—the party will choose, but at the moment, few believe that he won’t get the job. This would open up a difficult period of transition, especially as the French elections will have taken place and Germany will be pushing for decisions on a timetable for the constitution. Mr Brown is no friend of the EU; it was his perseverance that prevented Blair from agreeing to join the euro. Nor does he have enthusiasm for European ways. He is keen to support Britain’s economic prosperity, and that can be more clearly seen outside Europe than within.

What would Brown’s premiership mean for Britain’s Jews?

He is a member of the Church of Scotland; he is friendly to Israel and last year, as Chancellor, was working with the Palestinians to improve their

economy, plans which came to nothing with the continuing intifada. The *Jewish Chronicle* 14-9-06, under the above headline, assured its readers: -

Should Gordon Brown replace Tony Blair as Prime Minister, British Jewry will have another sympathetic ear . . . The Chief Rabbi and Mr Brown are friends . . . Mr Brown has long cultivated ties to the community, often referring to the influence of his late father, a Church of Scotland minister, who visited Israel regularly.

The Chancellor's high-profile 2005 visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories—during which he convened the first meeting for five years between the Israeli and Palestinian finance ministers—focused on how prosperity could help peace efforts.

“What characterises the Brown approach in general is that it is very solution-orientated and functional. What you can anticipate in the Middle East in general, and in Israel in particular, is that he will look for a practical solution in the realm of economics.”

Lord Janner said that he had known Mr Brown's father, who was “very pro-Israel and pro-Jewish. I believe Gordon to be the same. That does not make the pro-Israel approach of the present Prime Minister any less, but I don't think our community or Israel needs to worry.”

He is also kindly disposed to America and is a frequent visitor there, and the special US-UK relationship, is said to be safe in his hands.

Why the Commonwealth is set to bowl over the world



This august institution is still flourishing, quietly building relationships around the world. This part of an article published under this heading in the *Daily Telegraph* 13-3-06 to mark Commonwealth Day.

Sadly, the Commonwealth is usually neglected by the British media and hardly figures in the political life of this country. And the Commonwealth itself is frequently seen as something of an anachronism—a curious relic of the British Empire that is well past its sell-buy date.

This perception is, I believe, totally mistaken because, rather than being trapped in the past the Commonwealth is acquiring a new significance in the modern world by virtue of its unique network qualities. It embraces nations across the globe, rich and poor, large and small. And its members are linked by countless linguistic, cultural, sporting, family and business ties.

The Commonwealth is representative of the world at large. It can use, therefore, its unique connections to influence developments in key international policy areas including trade and investment, economic

development, governance and poverty and deprivation. In the words of Mr Wolfensohn [former World Bank President] the leaders are “able to be united on the basis of common background, common history and trust”.

And the Commonwealth is big. The world’s population is six billion. Two billion are Commonwealth citizens, with half living in the emerging economic colossus, India. It contains 53 countries and, accounts for around 15% of global GDP.

Israel joining the Commonwealth?

There has been talk of this for some years. Although Israel has not formally applied to join the matter has been discussed.

The Commonwealth is planning to increase its membership for the first time in more than a decade, with Israel and the Palestinian territories among those that could join. The Queen, the formal head of the Commonwealth, is said to be enthusiastic.

The Commonwealth is an association of 53 independent states. Its 1.8 billion citizens—about 30 per cent of the world’s population—are drawn from a broad range of faiths, races and cultures.

Traditionally, it has consisted of states once ruled by Britain and that were willing to accept the Queen as their figurehead. But over the past decade or so, the rules have been gradually relaxed

Andrew Roberts, the author of *A History Of The English-Speaking Peoples Since 1900*, said: “We should think carefully about what the Commonwealth means before we allow just anyone to join. It should mean a connection with the British Crown however historical, and an appreciation of the political culture of the English-speaking peoples. And that seems to be lacking in every country [that would like to join] apart from Israel.” *Sunday Telegraph* 17-12-06

350th Anniversary of the Resettlement of Jews in England

The Jews were officially banned in Britain by Edward I in 1290 until the time of Oliver Cromwell who lifted the restrictions allowing Jews to live again in Britain. The 350th anniversary of Cromwell’s decree was celebrated by Jewish communities in London and around the country. Life has not been easy for them during this time, but gradually they found life free from the persecutions they had experienced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In 1219 the Archbishop of Canterbury forced Jews to wear identifying badges, and there were many other humiliations.

Sadly today there has been a rise in anti-Semitic incidents in the UK—one in 400 Jews, as compared to one in 1,700 Muslims, is likely to be the victim of a hate crime. *Sunday Telegraph* 13-12-06

We now turn to the rising influence of the Papacy on Europe and the world.

Chapter 13

THE GROWING POWER OF THE PAPACY

Our final chapter on Europe looks at the working of the Papacy. It is a most important chapter. The final clash that reveals the might of God will be the defeat of the Gogian invasion of Israel at the hands of Christ. That invasion is lead militarily by Russia, but it will also be a religious crusade—led by the Vatican.

Benedict moves ahead

Benedict has deftly moved to consolidate power in the Vatican, replacing the 'old guard' with his own appointees. He has resisted calls to modernise and water down the message: he is determined to bring authority back and traditional ways. Gone are the sops to modernists.

His standing in the world has grown. Following his lecture at Regensburg where he quoted a 14th century Byzantine emperor, there was an eruption of fury from the Muslims, but European leaders stood behind his words. He has been invited to speak at the EU's 50th birthday celebrations—to set his seal of approval on the European project.

His aim—he sees it as his destiny, is to make Europe Christian again. His other aim is to reunite Rome's 'daughters' behind the Papal banner. From what we have seen in the chapter 10, we know both these objectives are to be achieved. He is extremely astute—he must represent the cream of Catholic minds—and it cannot be a coincidence that at just this time when we see Germany rising, we also have a German Pope and a German Patriarch in Moscow. This must be the hand of the angels!

Campaign to retake Europe—back to Rome

This was the perceptive headline in *The Trumpet* 12-4-06 (emphasis in original).

As he surveys Europe's ailing landscape today, the Pope surely ponders the greatness of the Continent's history, when it was heavily influenced and even dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. As the pontiff contrasts today's Europe with the Europe of yesteryear, a solution to the Continent's ailing condition must ring clear in his mind: *Europe needs a dominant Vatican.*

The restoration of Europe to its Catholic roots lies at the top of the Pope's to-do list. No issue is more important. Read his books; read the lines and between the lines of his speeches; watch where he travels, look who he talks to—Pope Benedict XVI is on a quest to restore Europe to its Christian roots.

This isn't something he is trying to play down or hide: Pope Benedict XVI has clearly and publicly delineated that he wants the restoration of Europe to its Christian roots to be the *defining theme* of his Papacy.

On March 30, the Pope addressed the EU's largest and most influential conservative group, the European People's Party, comprised of 38 political parties from all over Europe, including several Christian Democrat parties. Benedict's speech was more than a message to a group of Christian supporters; it was a message to the entire leadership of the EU.

And the media were there to make sure it was reported. The *Financial Times* (30-3-06) reported that the Pope had joined forces with leading European Union conservatives "to call for a restoration of Christian values at the heart of the EU". The conference clearly furthered the courtship presently occurring between Europe's conservative parties and the Vatican.

"It was a day on which European conservatism over future EU enlargement *mixed* with the Christian Democratic movement's *religious roots*, symbolized by Pope Benedict XVI granting an audience to its members". (ibid.; emphasis added)

With such European heavyweights as German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso in attendance, the summit in Rome was not only a "reminder that the center-right dominates the EU agenda," but that it also has the support of the Vatican.

Church attendances in Germany have been rising since their fellow countryman became Pope. His visits to his homeland and Poland have been well received, pulling as big crowds as his predecessor.

Bishops want God in EU birthday declaration

In addition to working towards an EU Constitution that acknowledges God and Roman Catholicism at its roots, there has been a similar desire to get such a mention in the document being drawn up for the 50th birthday celebrations of the EU on 25th March, 'Lady Day'. (The 'Lady' refers to Mary; this is the Catholic Feast of the Annunciation. Mary has been elevated to become the 'Patron Saint of Europe'! Hence the choice of this day for the original signing of the Treaty.) This article had the above heading.

In a document released last week, the Commission of the Bishops Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) promotes its views on the content of the so-called Berlin Declaration—to be signed by EU leaders in March next year—marking the 50th birthday of the 1957 Treaty of Rome which laid the basis for the current EU.

The bishops' text states that "for a majority of EU citizens their Christian faith is the living source for their support of our common values and ambitions. The Berlin Declaration, therefore, should be inclusive enough not only to list the values and ambitions of the

European Union but to reflect the religious and humanistic motivation of EU citizenship.”

The Roman Catholic leaders also note that “for many of [the EU’s] founders, the Christian imprint on the European project has been an indisputable fact.” *EUObserver.com* 19-12-06

Keeping out Islam

In September, he paid a visit to his home state of Bavaria in Germany. His aims were 4 fold—to boost the power of the Roman Church, to strengthen political alliances, to reach out to the Protestants and to raise the rallying cry against the Muslim penetration of Europe. The EU has been steadily expanding eastwards, taking in mainly Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox countries. The EU border, as from Jan 1st 2007 reaches up to Turkey’s border. Beyond that is a step too far. The Vatican and Germany along with others do not want Turkey as a member. They remember the Ottoman Battle of Vienna! (See ch 11)

The Pope’s strategy is simple. Rally Europe around her Christian roots and this will mark the EU out as a ‘Christian club’. Hence the Pope’s remarks at the University of Regensburg where he had taught many years ago. It was here that his quotation from a 14th century Byzantine emperor’s debate with a Persian Muslim sparked a frenzy of fury throughout the Muslim world. It neatly illustrated the Pope’s point that faiths should not be imposed by force. Of course this is blatant hypocrisy from an organisation of which it is said in Scripture that “in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” (Rev 18:24) The Pope is too astute to use words carelessly. Any reaching out to the Moslem world must be on his terms. As this article remarked (emphasis in the original): -

Why would this Pope, this *German Pope*, choose *this moment*—in this, his own home state of *Bavaria*, the very *heartland of Catholicism* in Middle Europe—to draw his verbal sword against Islam?

Think. Consider. Reflect. Reflect on *history*. Reflect on the *nature* of the Germanic peoples. They hate disorder. They are *expert at creating a crisis then initiating a solution*, as that inveterate watcher of Germany Rodney Atkinson has observed.

The Pope knows that if Rome is to return to its former glory, given the present disordered state of the world, he needs *urgently* to unite his over 1 billion faithful who have suffered for decades from the impact of divisive secular thinking on their religion. He knows the best way to do this is to unite Catholics at their historic cultural base, the European continent! He knows that Islam poses the greatest threat to Catholicism in Europe. He sees this as his greatest cause—that he has been chosen for this moment.

What better way to unite Europe and return it to its former imperial days of glory than to provide people with a *single common cause* that overrides all else and counteracts all tendencies for division? So, in his own very Germanic way, Benedict, this Bavarian Pope, has simply lit the touch tape to an already smoldering issue of concern to all Europeans, *the threat of Islamic jihad*. *The Trumpet* 18-9-09

Trip to Turkey

In November, the Pope made an historic trip to Turkey, amid tight security following his remarks at Regensburg. The purpose of his visit was to reach out to the Greek Orthodox leader, Patriarch Bartholomew. The Pope was very diplomatic and made encouraging noises about Turkey joining the EU, though he was probably aware that the next day the EU would issue a damning report on Turkey's reforms and indicate that negotiations would be downgraded. The day following the EU report, the Pope was emphasising the Christian roots of Europe!

But while the Pope has gone out of his way throughout his visit to emphasize the common roots between Christians and Muslims, he may have gone a step too far in his zeal to unify the Christian world. He said that Christians should "renew Europe's awareness of its Christian roots, traditions and values, giving them new vitality." *Spiegel* 30-11-06

The talks with Bartholomew went well and an initiative was hinted at, but as yet has not been revealed.

Yet at the same time, Benedict also repeatedly returned to a more familiar theme—the defense of Europe's Christian traditions and values. This became most explicit in the Common Declaration that Pope Benedict and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, signed on Nov. 30.

"In Europe, while remaining open to other religions and their cultural contributions, we must unite our efforts to preserve Christian roots, traditions and values, to ensure respect for history, and thus to contribute to the European culture of the future and to the quality of human relations at every level," the two Christian leaders said.

When the two men appeared together on the balcony of the Phanar, linking arms and offering a sort of victory salute to the crowd, one could forgive a casual observer for perceiving a pan-Christian alliance designed, at least in part, to preserve Europe as a "Christians first" zone. *National Catholic Reporter* 1-12-06

Reaching out to the Greek Orthodox

The Tablet 1-12-06 made this comment.

Towards a united Christendom

Masked by the drama of a controversial and tense papal visit to a leading Muslim nation, an unexpected thaw seems to be taking place in relations

between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox world, which were broken apart by the Great Schism of 1054. Pope Benedict's visit to Turkey was originally in response to an invitation from the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. The invitation was a distinctly positive move so soon after Benedict's election, and is further evidence that the Orthodox regards this Pope more warmly than his predecessor. Encouraging noises are even coming out of Moscow, which Pope John Paul II failed to be invited to visit despite his eagerness to do so.

Two factors count in the present Pope's favour when dealing with the Orthodox, where Russians still dominate: that he is German, not Polish, and that he has expressed theological opinions that the Orthodox were glad to hear.

Repairing the Schism would alter the geopolitical balance between Christianity and the Muslim world rather more fundamentally than any papal visit to a Muslim state, however successful. Unity of witness in a combined Church of 1.5 billion souls would be a source of authority and confidence, despite some scaling down of the power of the Vatican in order to bring it about.

The Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Athens also visited the Pope on December 14th and "the two signed a joint statement affirming their commitment to Christian unity." What was interesting was the comment the *Catholic World News* editor made when reporting this visit.

Among all the Eastern churches, the Greek Orthodox Church was for generations the most hostile to Rome. So today's visit by Archbishop Christodoulos is an especially significant sign of ecumenical progress. There's really just one remaining holdout in the Orthodox world: Patriarch Alexei of Moscow. *CWN* 14-12-06

Reaching out to the Russian Orthodox

Running parallel is the Pope's efforts to bring some healing to the millennia-long rift between Rome and Moscow. They both face common threats from Islam and both are concerned about religion in Europe as many of the former Soviet states are now members of the EU. In April and May two meetings were organised.

Alexei II: our ties will change "for the better" with Benedict XVI

With Benedict XVI, relations between the Orthodox Church and the Vatican will change "for the better". The Orthodox patriarch of Moscow and all the Russias, Alexei II, has once again reiterated his great confidence in, and esteem for, this Pope who, he is certain, "will become famous and will be remembered". However, Alexei II persisted in underlining "existing difficulties between the two Churches", repeating that a solution called for "concrete facts". Yesterday, in an interview with the Italian press agency ANSA, the patriarch talked about the

common challenges facing Catholics and Orthodox in Europe, to which the two Churches must respond with “closer” collaboration.

The statements of Alexei II came at the end of important meetings between the highest-ranking Catholic and Orthodox religious leaders, who reflected on the shared commitment in defence of Christian values in Europe. At the end of April, in Rome, the annual Forum of Italy-Russia dialogue, desired by the Russian President Putin and the then Italian Premier, Silvio Berlusconi, chose as a theme: “The Church and secularism in today’s society: the position of the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church.” From 3 to 5 May in Vienna, a conference organized by the Pontifical Council for Culture and the External Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate was held. The title was: “Giving Europe a soul. The mission and responsibility of churches.” It was the first time the Holy See had organised such an event in collaboration with the Orthodox Patriarchate in Moscow.

In September after a 6-year break, theological talks were held between the two Churches. Thirty members from both Churches met for a week. Although nothing startling was announced at the end of it, the communiqué reported, “The meeting of the Joint Commission was marked by a spirit of friendship and trustful collaboration.” They are due to meet in a year’s time.

At an “inter-religious meeting held in Moscow in July, both sides reported favourable progress

Metropolitan Kiril I said that both Pope Benedict XVI and Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II are committed to collaborative efforts to increase the influence of Christian churches in modern society. “They think that both churches should do anything in their power to meet the real hopes of people,” the Orthodox prelate said.

This week’s inter-religious conference in Moscow provided an illustration of how the churches can work together, Metropolitan Kirill observed. The conference was organized and hosted by the Moscow patriarchate, but enthusiastically embraced by the Holy See.

The Orthodox official said that there is a clear need for an effective means by which religious officials can influence the discussions of the world’s political leaders. “There is a need for a platform,” he told Interfax, “but no platform as yet.” The Moscow “summit” was a step toward creation of that platform, he said. *Catholic World News* 5-7-06

Bringing back her other daughters

Martin Luther launched the Reformation in Germany in the 16th century, and Lutherans are still strong there. However, the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation, aimed at undoing the damage done by Luther, has had considerable success, and the voice of protest is much muted.

In 1999 far-reaching ecumenical relations were established between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church when they jointly issued a statement, the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, that declared commonality of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran doctrines on Justification. *Wikipedia*

Joint discussion meetings are held regularly. Angela Merkel is a Lutheran; she visited the Pope in August and reinforced the Pope's desire to have a mention of God in the European Constitution.

Weakening Church of England

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, visited the Pope in October where expressions of ecumenical friendship were given. He was the first Anglican Archbishop to attend a Pope's funeral where he called the Pope "one of the very greatest" Christian leaders of the 20th century. (*Daily Telegraph* 4-4-05) He also indicated "the rift between Anglicans and Catholics stemming from the Reformation could finally be healed". (*Australian* 12-4-05) His visit commemorated the first Anglican-Catholic meeting 40 years earlier when Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Pope Paul VI met at Rome. At home Church of England attendances are steadily falling. The Roman Catholic's church attendance also had been falling, but with the influx of Poles and other eastern European immigrants it has recently soared. Divisions over women priests and recognition of deviant lifestyles are splitting the Anglican community; some have already defected to the Roman Catholic Church in protest. The Pope is considering ways of encouraging others to make the move.

Disputes with Israel

In January, the Israeli President, Moshe Katsav, paid the first official visit by an Israeli head of state to the Vatican. This was followed by Ehud Olmert who visited in December. Talks between Israel and the Vatican over property rights and exemptions from taxes have been rumbling on for many years. Talks were resumed in December after an unexpected visit to Rome by Israel's foreign minister. Progress is likely to be slow. What the Vatican dearly wants is control over the Cenacle on Mount Zion, the alleged place of the Last Supper.

Throughout the year there were condemnations of Israel's actions against the Palestinians and especially in Lebanon.

Pontificating Against Israel

As Israel began its latest campaign of self-defense, the Vatican's leading government official rushed to join his peers on the speeding bandwagon of international disapproval.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican's secretary of state and effectively its prime minister, condemned Israel's attack against Hezbollah's positions in Lebanon and the resources the terrorist group could exploit.

"In particular, the Holy See deplores right now the attack on Lebanon, a free and sovereign nation, and assures its closeness to those people who already have suffered so much to defend their independence," he told Vatican Radio on July 14.

Sandro Magister, for Italy's *L'Espresso*, pointedly described on July 19 the hypocrisy concerning Israel—especially considering Pope Benedict XVI's warm outreach to Jews: "...it is striking that Benedict XVI is not defending the existence of Israel—which its enemies want to annihilate as the final aim of the conflict underway—with the same explicit, strong determination with which he repeatedly raises his voice in defense of the 'non-negotiable' principles concerning human life."

That silence reflects a position toward Israel revolving around support for civilian Arab populations—especially Palestinians and Arab Christian—as a counterweight to Israeli power. Vittorio Parsi, professor of international relations at the Catholic University of Milan, described that policy in 2003 for the Italian magazine *Diritto e Libertà*.

"Regarding the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Vatican's political stance has been and remains directed by a cornerstone and long-held principle within Church tradition: that is, attention must be given to peoples and not their governments," Parsi wrote. Given that cornerstone and the lack of a Palestinian state, which the Vatican supports establishing, "it is by the side of (the Palestinian) populace that the Vatican has decided to stand firm, without its choice implying any anti-Israeli discrimination." *FrontPageMagazine.com* 25-7-06

Reinstating Latin Mass

The Pope's latest weapon in this battle to restore Catholicism to the heart of Europe is the desire to reinstate the use of the traditional Tridentine Mass, which was in Latin and regarded as part of the Church's heritage. Although this was greatly restricted following the Vatican Council II, many hanker after its use. Unlike his predecessor, Benedict approves of this move. After all this is the "Latin Kingdom" that they are rebuilding—*Lateinos* which numerically has the value of 666!

Rome's strategy for dominating Europe again

Rome has long known the value of influence through education. One of the tools is the brand new, strictly fundamentalist, blatantly Marian, Roman Catholic European University built on a vast tract of land west of Rome—the Athenaeum Pontificum Regina Apostolorum (Pontifical University of the Queen of the Apostles). Its logo is the "Virgin with a dove upon her head bearing up the Triple Tiara and crossed keys". Its objective stated in Latin is "European centre for the Christian roots in society".

We now come to our fourth and final section—a consideration of Russia.

Chapter 14

PROPHECIES & EXPECTATIONS—RUSSIA

*The Russian Autocrat—that is how Brother Thomas frequently referred to the Russian leader of his day—Russia was indeed an autocratic kingdom and this was the title used of her own people for their leadership. “An **autocracy** is a form of government in which the political power is held by a single person.” Wikipedia We see today its frequent use as a description of President Putin. The scriptural basis for this title lies in a latter-day application of the description of Sennacherib the Assyrian.*

The latter-day Assyrian

Micah has a wonderful prophecy regarding the first coming of Messiah, followed by his latter-day work in destroying the Assyrian who comes into Israel.

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.

And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. Mic 5:2, 5-6

It is clear that there is a latter-day Assyrian. This is none other than Daniel's King of the North and Ezekiel's Gog.

Isaiah also, in seeing the Assyrians coming against Israel, uses language in 10:16-27 which make it clear there is a latter-day application, when at the hands of the Holy One of Israel (v20) there will be salvation for the remnant of Israel, who will dwell in safety when the Assyrian is no more. (v 20-25)

Isaiah 14, having spoken of Babylon in a way that has a latter-day application, turns to *the Assyrian* with some remarkable verses, showing that his defeat brings to a climax the purpose of God.

The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? Isa 14:24-27

This is the day that Isaiah spoke of as the time of reckoning: -

For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. Isa 34:8

The great Assyrian of Isaiah's day was Sennacherib whose army was spectacularly wiped out by God's angel in the land of Israel. A fitting type for the latter-day Gog whose army will likewise perish in Israel!

The details of Sennacherib's invasion are found in 2 Kings 18-19 and 2 Chron 32. Isaiah supplements this with details in chapters 8, 10, 14, 30, 36-37. We present the parallels in the following table.

Sennacherib	Reference	Gog	Reference
"King of Hosts, King of Assyria" "The great King"	Assyrian inscriptions 2 Kgs 18:19	Head of Confederacy	Ezek 38:2-7
Mighty army	2 Kgs 18:35; 19:35	Mighty army	Ezek 38:9, 15; Dan 11:40
"Typical Assyrian – fierce, vindictive, relentless" Ruthless tyrant	W.H.Boulton's <i>Assyria</i> Is 10:7; 2 Kgs 19:11, 23-26	Mighty, destructive, great fury	Dan 8:23, 24; 11:40, 44
Proud	Is 10:7-14; Dan 7:4	Evil thought	Ezek 38:10
Defeated king of Egypt	2 Kg 19:9 (Tirhakah)	Takes Egypt	Dan 11:42
Defied the God of Israel	2 Kgs 19:23, 28	Year of recompenses for controversy of Zion	Is 34:8; Dan 11:45
Hooks & bridle	2 Kgs 19:28	Hooks	Ezek 38:4
Initially came down Israel's coast	2 Ch 32:1	Passes through land	Dan 11:41
Secured flanks before attacking Jerusalem	Is 8:8	Takes coast & Egypt 1st	Dan 11:44-45
Army miraculously defeated in Israel.	2 Kgs 19:35	Army miraculously defeated in Israel.	Ezek 38:19-22; Dan 11:45

We refer readers to *Milestones 2005* ch 10 for further exposition.

We now look at events in Russia over the past year.

Chapter 15:

RUSSIA TODAY—THE ENERGY BEAR

Russia has certainly been living up to her reputation as the Bear this year. Putin is now showing a ruthless streak as power is amassed under his control. Countries and companies have had to buckle to Russia's demand and several individuals have been killed in mysterious circumstances. We trace some of the more relevant items in 2006 that point to the growing power of Russia, in preparation for her being the guard to many nations when she brings them against the nation of Israel. (Ezek 38:7)

Autocratic Putin

Front Page magazine ran an issue 23-6-06 entitled *When an Evil Empire Returns*. Its opening words were:

The Cold War is back.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, a former KGB agent, is leading his country back into the dark ages of Soviet totalitarianism and instigating a global confrontation between Russia and the United States—as well as between Russia and the West as a whole.

The Russian President has consistently rolled back democratic freedoms. And he is proving that the genie *can* be placed back into the bottle: he has centralized authority and suffocated dissent in the media and in the nation at large. Reformers making efforts to build democracy have been intimidated and silenced.

The magazine then recorded this interesting reply by Lt. Gen. Pacepa, former acting chief of Communist Romania's espionage service and the highest-ranking official ever to have defected from the Soviet bloc, to the question, "Is the Evil Empire back?" (Emphasis in original).

I do not concur with [the] view that *Soviet* Communism was an ideological system that irreversibly collapsed. I was at the top of that system and I know for a fact that Soviet Communism had devolved into a *samoderzhaviye*, the Russian form of autocracy traceable to the 14th century's Ivan the Terrible, in which a feudal lord ruled the country with his political police. Stalin exterminated the leadership of Lenin's Communist Party together with some seven million of its members and then, behind a facade of Marxism, gave his political police precedence over the original tools of ideology and the Communist Party. *Gulag*, the badge of *Soviet* Communism, was rooted not in Marx's doctrine but in the tsarist 1845 Criminal Code stipulating draconian penalties for persons arousing "disrespect for Sovereign Authority."

Historically Russian political police remained in place with new nameplates at the door. KGB chief Yuri Andropov, a Russian to the

bone, used to tell me that “our *gosbezopasnost*” (state security service) had kept Russia alive for the past five hundred years and would guide her helm for the next five hundred years ... Vladimir Putin was the very chief of the *gosbezopasnost* before being appointed president.

So communism was but a passing phase, the reality was the continuance of the autocratic rule of the Tsars, the power that really held Russia together in the past and present. Putin is skilled in holding and using that power, winning back the control that slipped away during the 1990s.

The *Economist* cover 14-12-06 said it all, “Don’t mess with Russia”.



Plotting Europe’s cutaway from the US

Putin should step down in 2008 after eight years in office and is already planning for that period by training an heir-apparent—Sergei Ivanov, 53, Russia’s defence minister.

Debka’s intelligence sources report indications that the two men are already working in tandem on cardinal foreign affairs and defense issues in readiness for a smooth transition.

Putin’s preparations for life after the presidency entail time spent in building up a strategic Russian-German energy partnership as his power-cum-financial base to be run on lines of capitalist ruthlessness and political muscle. Russia already provides a quarter of Europe’s oil and gas and is resisting the European Union’s demand for energy security.

Russia’s powerful state monopoly Gazprom, which is developing the huge Shtokman gas field, will put a new Baltic pipeline to Germany into service in 2010, boosting German imports of 40 billion cubic meters of Russian gas a year to 50-55 billion cubic meters. Germany will become the European hub for Russian gas exports from the Barents Sea.

Putin as Russian president and future European power player is working overtime to displace the US and American oil interests in Europe. At one time, Russia considered the US to be the principal buyer of gas exports from the huge Shtokman gas field. Now, it is Germany; the moving force of the enterprise alongside Putin is the German ex-chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who heads the Russian gas monopoly Gazprom’s subsidiary for running the company’s business in Europe and planning the new Baltic pipeline to Germany.

Just as Putin gave Schroeder the Gazprom job, so has Ivanov agreed to delegate Putin as future overseer of Russian relations in Europe, a step approved by Russian intelligence chiefs. Thus even after vacating the Kremlin in two years time, Putin has been promised a fat wedge of delegated authority as the arbiter of Moscow's European relations.

By common consent with his successor, Putin and Schroeder plan to cut Europe away from the US and American influence by expanding Europe's dependence on Russian gas and oil. They also intend bidding for more Russian-German investments and takeovers in the continent.

The German and Russian economies are already intertwined. Germany gets most of its oil and natural gas from Russia and exports to Russia 17.3 billion euros worth of goods. About 4,500 German companies are doing business in Russia and Germany provides more bonds for secure exports to Russia than to any other country. *Debka* 20-10-06

Military might

Abundant income for oil has enabled Russia to go on a military spending spree. According to *RIA Novosti* 11-5-06 a senior defence minister promised substantial increases in military spending, "State defence orders have risen. Spending on development and purchases of armaments and military equipment will be increased 27% in 2007 compared to this year." Two strategic nuclear submarines were due to be commissioned in 2006.

Her air force can now afford training exercises!

The Russian military launched a massive exercise that will involve dozens of long-range bombers test-firing cruise missiles, the Associated Press news agency reported quoting the nation's air force chief.

The maneuvers will involve over 50 Tu-160, Tu-95 and Tu-22M aircraft flying missions over the Arctic, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and the Black and Caspian Seas, Gen. Vladimir Mikhailov said, according to the Interfax and ITAR-Tass news agencies. He said it will be the largest exercise involving Russian long-range bombers in years, the agencies reported. *MosNews* 29-9-06

Arms exports were at record levels in 2005 and in 2006 were expected to show a further considerable increase.

Energy key

Russian newly acquired wealth has come about by rising world oil prices rather than hard work. Russia rivals Saudi Arabia for being the largest oil producer in the world. So bulging were her coffers that she repaid a \$22bn debt that she owed to the Paris Club, early and in one go.

Putin has seen the effectiveness of controlling the world's energy supplies, or as much of them as he can. With the collapse of the Soviet, the government lost control of much of these valuable assets, but step by

ruthless step, they are now firmly under the control of Putin's appointees. Even foreign firms are not free from Putin's manipulations. Serious allegations against Shell over environmental matters in the Far East Sakhalin-2 oil field look as if they are going to be dropped in return for Shell's "co-operation" in handing over a large stake of their holding to Gazprom, thus losing control of the project. Gazprom has had a busy year!

From Portugal in the west to Ukraine in the east Gazprom is expanding its presence in the European market.

For the European Union, this rapid development represents both an opportunity and an economic and political challenge. While Gazprom insists its motives are purely commercial, its critics say the state-controlled gas group often acts as a political instrument of the Kremlin.

In the latest move, Gazprom this week struck a deal with Gaz de France securing direct presence in the French market and access to industrial customers. A Financial Times study reveals Gazprom has this year struck deals or engaged in serious talks on improving its access to local markets or on investing in local assets in more than a dozen European countries. They include deals in Ukraine, Italy, the UK, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Spain, Serbia, Bulgaria, Hungary and France. The countries in which deals are under negotiation include Belgium, the Netherlands, and Portugal. *Financial times* 21-12-06

In November the two oil giants Roskoff and Gazprom signed an alliance deal and will in future work jointly; this appears now to complete the first stage of Putin's energy consolidation, he can now more easily squeeze out foreign competitors.

The alignment of all of Russia's energy resources streamlines Russia's major asset. Consolidating all of the resources within Russian borders under state-owned companies makes it easier for Moscow to wield its most powerful weapon. The most sought-after resources on Earth are the very ones Russia is gaining a firm grip on. Russia will likely use energy domination as a weapon against Western nations and as a tie to its fuel-hungry Asian neighbors. *The Trumpet* 26-12-06

Europe is step-by-step becoming dependent upon Russia for her energy supplies. At the start of the year Russia showed what a powerful weapon energy is when she cut off supplies to the Ukraine. At the year-end she had threatened to do the same to Belarus, in a bid to pull her back to Moscow.

The Middle East and Russia's new game

This was a *Stratfor* headline 15-2-06 at a time when the new Hamas government had been elected.

Russia has, and has always had, strategic interests in the Middle East. Given the decay of Russia's strategic position in the formerly Soviet region, these interests—which today include ties to Syria and a potential

partnership with Iran on nuclear enrichment—have become more important rather than less. It is only by challenging the US in the Middle East that Moscow can divert American attention from areas of great interest to the Russians. It is not just a matter of bandwidth—meaning that the more trouble the United States has in the Middle East, the less time it has for the former Soviet Union. It is also the case that if Russia is to contain the American presence along its southern frontier, having influence and a presence to the rear of this region—in the Middle East—gives it leverage over some of the former Soviet republics.

Russia also sees a major diplomatic opening. The United States does not have the means for negotiating with Hamas, given the rules of the game that Washington has defined. In some ways, Israel has expressed a less rigid view of Hamas than the United States has. The Russians, however, have no problem talking to Hamas, nor do they have a problem talking to the Israelis. The Israelis do not want the United States to change its position on Hamas; but they do recognize the need to deal with Hamas on some level. The Russians represent a useful intermediary. Thus, Russia could emerge as a critical mediator, at least for a time.

Russia has been busy in the region. She has been helping Iran in supplying her needs in defence weapons to guard her nuclear facilities, as well as looking after Iran's interests in the UN debates on her nuclear programme. She succeeded in getting the December UN sanctions resolution so watered down as to be virtually useless. Her backing of Hezbollah via Syria enabled a fairly effective campaign against Israel's military in the Lebanon War; the Russian anti-tank missiles were particularly effective.

There has been a steady stream of Middle East leaders flowing to Moscow. One of these was the pro-Western Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora. This was in mid December at a time when Hezbollah were threatening to overthrow the Lebanese government. President Assad of Syria followed him two days later.

Debka's Moscow sources disclose that their visits found Russian president Vladimir Putin prepared to stitch both into his latest strategy for re-establishing Russia in the Middle East.

Putin and his defense minister Sergei Lavrov propose to make Lebanon the new Russian center of influence in the region after dislodging Washington and Paris.

According to our Middle East sources, neither President Bush's strategic advisers nor even the intelligence experts in the region—Israel's included—had any forewarning of the scheme brewing in the Kremlin. Lebanon was the last place they imagined Putin would designate as his first stepping stone on the way to Middle East penetration.

The Kremlin appears to have deduced that, whatever Bush decides, the Iraq war will end as an American write-off and the danger point for US

positions in the region has already shifted west from Iraq to the eastern Mediterranean.

The power that dominates Lebanon will sit astride the main junction of Iran-Syrian-Palestinian collaboration. The Kremlin has already settled on a policy of rapprochement with radical Islam. It now seeks the role of connecting link with the West. Lebanon is seen as the ideal venue to pursue this objective.

Russian leaders are fully aware that Lebanon has become the forward position not only of Iran—via Syria, Hizballah and the Palestinian extremists—but that al Qaeda's cells and bases are also proliferating.

Moscow is eyeing a new-old Middle East route for pumping Russian oil and gas to the Far East to slash costs and shorten the time for getting the products to destination. The resurrection of the old Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company—Tapline—is now contemplated in Moscow. When Tapline first began operating in 1950, transporting Saudi Arabian oil through Jordan and over the Golan Heights to the Lebanese Mediterranean port of Sidon, it was the largest oil pipeline of its day. The project was shut down in 1976 and sections of the crude oil line and installations at Sidon handed over to the Lebanese government.

Today, Moscow is considering replacing the rusted sections and reversing the flow to run from Sidon through Syria, on to Kirkuk in northern Iraq, down to the Shatt al Arab waterway and out to the Persian Gulf and the sea lanes to the Far East. *Debka* 22-12-06

The Syrian leader was in Moscow contemplating the reinforcing of his arsenal.

Sources said Syrian President Bashar Assad was briefed on the S-300PMU2 during his visit to Moscow... Bashar has agreed in principle to procuring the S-300 and focused on price and other details with his Russian interlocutors. "Syria wants a strategic air defense system that would present a major threat to Israeli warplanes," a source said. "I think Assad will buy and deploy the S-300 over the next few months."

The S-300PMU2 has been priced at more than \$600 million per unit. The sources said Russia has agreed to reduce the price of the long-range air defense systems in exchange for Russian Navy basing rights at the Syrian ports of Latakia and Tartous. *MENL* 20-12-06

New naval ports

Most of the Russian fleet is based in the Black Sea at Sevastopol, which now belongs to Ukraine. The present agreement is due to expire in 2017 and with the uncertainties over relations with the Ukraine, Russia is making preparations to reduce that dependence. A new facility is being constructed on Russian soil at Novorossiysk on the Black Sea. She is also enlarging and deepening the port at Tartous in Syria and upgrading her naval facilities.

This will enable her biggest ships to berth there and will accommodate a greater number of Russian ships. The Russian paper *Kommersant* commented: -

“For the first time since the Soviet Union’s collapse, Russia will create its own military base outside former Soviet borders, which will allow Moscow to conduct its own political game in the Middle East” *Ynet News* 2-6-06

Another Syrian port at Latakia is also being upgraded to accommodate Russian ships. Russia is also heavily involved in the Syrian military.

About 10,000 Syrian officers have received top-rate training at both Soviet and Russian military academies, with a fresh crop of pilots and air defense specialists currently attending Russia’s air force academy.

Western experts estimate that up to 2,000 Russian military advisors, under the command of Lt. General Vassily Jakushev, 60, the former commander-in-chief of the country’s Far East military district, are currently serving in the Syrian military. Russian officers hold teaching positions at Syria’s military officer training academy. *Spiegel* 22-6-06

America maintains part of her navy on Crete and Britain on Cyprus. Russia seems to be trumping them by getting a step closer to Israel! Things certainly seem to be moving forward! She is preparing for the time when she shall come forth with many ships. (Dan 11:40)

Churches reaching out

Putin has made no secret of his acceptance of the Russian Orthodox Church as a powerful ally in binding Russia together. He himself attends services frequently and supports the growth of the Russian Orthodox Church; he paid seven visits this year to Patriarch Alexy II. After decades of repression, religion has flourished again in Russia. A poll in December indicated that 84% of Russia’s citizens believe in God; 63% call themselves Russian Orthodox, and only 16% of the country’s population listed themselves as staunch atheists. (*Izvestia* 23-12-06) This year the teaching about the basis of the Orthodox religion was made compulsory in 4 of Russia’s regions and an optional subject in a further 11 regions.

What we have been waiting to see is the drawing together of Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches, and this year such a move became apparent as we saw in chapter 13.

Update on reinstating the Tsar

Matters of re-instating the Tsar had seemed to have disappeared from the Russian news in the last few years. This year it resurfaced!

So why the sudden revival of interest in a restoration of the old tsarist monarchy, and the interest in last month’s opinion poll by the All-Russia

Center for the Study of Public Opinion that found 20 percent of Russians wanting to restore the monarchy?

The poll coincided with an event of grand Russian pomp and circumstance. With TV cameras relaying each moment of the grand and solemn pageantry, the remains of the last tsar's mother, the Empress Dagmar, known as Maria Fyodorovna, were brought back from her native Denmark. She lay in state for two days in the Alexander Nevsky church of the old tsarist palace of Peterhof. From there the ornate coffin was taken to St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg where Patriarch Alexis II, head of the Orthodox Church of Russia, conducted the funeral service. She was finally buried alongside her husband Tsar Alexander III in the vault of the Romanov family in the Fortress of Saints Peter and Paul on the Neva River.

This is the intriguing context within which an anonymous new 380-page book, privately but expensively printed and circulated, is attracting attention. Called "Project Russia," it is a long critique of democracy as inherently unstable, and urges that for historic and cultural reasons, Russia needs continuity, preferably under an autocratic and religious monarchy.

"There is no greater authority than the power from God," it concludes. "Whether or not we believe in God, such a conclusion is absolute."

The Russian media have traced the book's origins to lecturers at the academies of the Federal Security Service (known as the FSB, and the nearest institution to a successor of the old KGB) and military intelligence academies. The journal *Novaya Gazeta* (editorial home of the liberal journalist Anna Politovskaya, who was found shot dead at her Moscow home Saturday) claims the lectures were then circulated in printed form for Russia's political, military, religious and commercial elites. *UPI* 9-10-06

In November, the Russian judiciary was ordered to re-open the investigation into the death of the last tsar in 1917, with the aim of pronouncing his death a "political crime", a move that "paves the way for the rehabilitation of Nicholas II". It would also open the way for the mother of Georgy Romanov—the heir favoured by many—to return from exile in Spain. As her spokesman said: -

Maria Vladimirovna would love to return to Russia to play a part in public life and she said it would be a nice gesture if the government gave her a building in Moscow "as a sign of respect for a dynasty that ruled Russia for 300 years". *The Independent* 16-11-06

With this our Milestones 2006 reviews has come to a close, apart from our final exhortation. What an incredibly busy year the angels must have had, preparing the way for our Lord's return. May 2007 be the year so keenly anticipated.

Chapter 16:

A NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

With these majestic words God opens His revelation to mankind. In seven days that initial work was finished. God had created an incredibly complex paradise, stunningly beautiful, teaming with life and at its head an unblemished Adam, with Eve at his side.

Soon after that first Sabbath of rest, sin entered the world and pain, sorrow toil and death followed in its wake. But thanks be to God, there was the merciful provision of a covering for our first parents' nakedness and the pointer to the coming Saviour, by whose covering there would be a reversal of the mortality that Adam and Eve had brought to mankind.

Man's innate evil expressed itself in many ways, wickedness flourished and often the righteous perished. Nevertheless the Purpose of God shone through. A chosen man led to a chosen nation and eventually to a chosen king—the forefather of the coming Messiah.

Ah! The Messiah, *the beginning of the Creation of the God*; (Rev. 3:14) the *foundation stone*, the *precious corner stone*; (Is 28:16) the centre of God's new heavens to come:

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. Mal 4:2

These that fear God's Name have keenly anticipated the day when that Sun will shine amidst a multitude of changed ones. (Ps 68:17)

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Pet 3:13

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who wonderfully manifested his Father in truth and righteousness; his are the coming heavens with his companions.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Dan 12:3

Commanded by wise rulers, the sea of nations will be calmed and the earth blessed in Abraham and his seed. This is the time we long for and the political heavens abound with signs that our Lord's return is so near.

At the end of the Millennium, with sin and death abolished, God will have restored and enhanced an incredibly complex paradise, stunningly beautiful, teaming with life and at its head an unblemished Christ, with the Bride and the angels at his side, ready to be handed back to the Father that He might be all in all! (1 Cor 15:28)

Come quickly Lord Jesus, may this be the year of your return!

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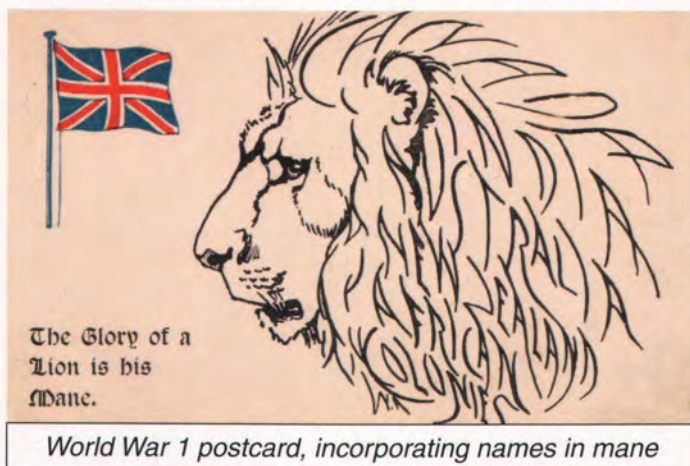
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