

Today's News in Light of the Bible

PROPHETIC Newsletter

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DR. ED HINDSON

My dear friends,

In this month's *What the Bible Says* we explore what it means to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." An important question as to how we as believers should interact with the world.

As salt, Christians preserve society, heal emotional wounds, melt the coldness of hard hearts, and add flavor to a mistrusting world at large.

And as light, we are supposed to reflect the reality and goodness of Christ to a world that is steeped in the darkness of human depravity.

Your support of our ministry enables us to encourage and equip Christians to be salt and light, as well as provide answers to those seeking a path to redemption.

Thank you for being a vital partner to all we accomplish in the name of Jesus Christ!

Until He returns,

STALLED NUCLEAR TALKS

U.S. Plans Sanctions Against Iran's Drones and Guided Missiles



The U.S. is reportedly planning to issue sanctions targeting Iran's drone and guided missile programs, with officials citing potential threats to U.S. national security. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that U.S. officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the planned actions are aimed at disrupting the development of Iran's weapons program.

A senior U.S. official told the news outlet, "It's part of a comprehensive approach so we're dealing with all aspects of the Iranian threat." Iran's continued development of its drone program has greatly expanded in the past decade and has been used to great effect in the region and the nation has

China Increasing Nuclear Arsenal

China has begun construction of what independent experts say are more than 100 new silos for intercontinental ballistic missiles in a desert near the northwestern city of Yumen, a building spree that could signal a major expansion of Beijing's nuclear capabilities. Commercial satellite images obtained by researchers at the James Martin Center for



Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, Calif., show work underway at scores of sites across a grid covering hundreds of square miles of arid terrain in China's Gansu province. The 119 nearly identical construction sites contain features that mirror those seen at existing launch facilities for China's arsenal of nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles.

The acquisition of more than 100 new missile silos, if completed, would represent a historic shift for China, a country that is believed to possess a relatively modest stockpile of 250 to 350 nuclear weapons. The construction boom suggests a major effort to bolster the credibility of China's nuclear deterrent, said researcher Jeffrey Lewis, an expert on China's nuclear arsenal and part of a team that analyzed the suspicious sites, first spotted by colleague Decker Eveleth as he scoured photos taken by commercial satellites over northwestern China. Lewis described the scale of the building spree as "incredible."

"If the silos under construction at other sites across China are added to the count, the total comes to about 145 silos under construction," Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, part of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, said in a summary of his findings. "We believe

China is expanding its nuclear forces in part to maintain a deterrent that can survive a U.S. first strike in sufficient numbers to defeat U.S. missile defenses."

The discovery follows recent warnings by Pentagon officials about rapid advances in China's nuclear capability. Adm. Charles Richard, who commands U.S. nuclear forces, said at a congressional hearing in

April that a "breathtaking expansion" was underway in China, including an expanding arsenal of ICBMs and new mobile missile launchers that can be easily hidden from satellites. In addition, the Chinese navy has introduced new nuclear-weapons-capable submarines to its growing fleet.

John Supple, Defense Department spokesman, declined to comment on the satellite images or to discuss U.S. intelligence assessments of China's nuclear program. But he noted "Defense Department leaders have testified and publicly spoken about China's growing nuclear capabilities, which we expect to double or more over the next decade."

Missile silos are easily spotted by trained imagery analysts, and they are vulnerable to destruction by precision-guided missiles in the early hours of a nuclear war. For those reasons, Lewis sees the silo construction project as part of an expanded deterrent strategy by a country whose nuclear arsenal is dwarfed by those of the United States and Russia, which collectively possess more than 11,000 nuclear warheads.

In February, Secretary of State Antony Blinken vowed in a statement that the Biden administration would "pursue arms control to

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Violence Increases in Afghanistan, Possible Refugee Crisis Looms

Intensified violence as foreign troops exit Afghanistan is displacing hundreds of thousands of civilians, worsening an ever-evolving humanitarian crisis. Afghanistan's deadliest battle has raised fears in Pakistan that thousands of families fleeing the turmoil will try to enter the neighboring country. Pakistan already hosts around 2.8 million



registered and unregistered Afghan refugees, and efforts have been made to get some to return to their home country. As many as half a million Afghans could flee the country in the weeks leading up to the August 31 deadline for US troop withdrawal, Pakistani officials warn.

As the US-led foreign troops leave, violence has increased across several provinces including in Kandahar, where Taliban fighters are carrying out widespread attacks. “The fighting has displaced 22,000 families in the past month in

Kandahar,” Dost Mohammad Daryab, head of the provincial refugee department stated. “They have all moved from the volatile districts of the city to the safer areas.” Kandahar city, the capital of the province of the same name, is the second-largest city in Afghanistan after Kabul. It has 650,000 inhabitants and was a stronghold of the Taliban when they ruled Afghanistan.

Pakistani National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf said, “Pakistan is not in a position to let in more refugees from Afghanistan.” He said his “country is willing but is not in a position to accept more asylum seekers from Afghanistan.”

Yusuf recommended that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) set up camps for refugees on the Afghan side

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reduce the dangers from China’s modern and growing nuclear arsenal.” He did not explain how that goal would be accomplished but said the administration would seek “effective arms control that enhances stability, transparency and predictability while reducing the risks of costly, dangerous arms races.”

Since the end of the Cold War, many have

pushed to deescalate the nuclear arms race. However, with China expanding its arsenal, a new nuclear arms race could be on the horizon. Many have identified some of the judgments in the Book of Revelation sounding like nuclear fallout, so we could see how a rise in nuclear capabilities as moving closer to the Rapture and Great Tribulation.— *PNL*

PRAY: Pray God will continue to keep the various nations with nuclear capabilities away from entering a nuclear war.

been known to supply missiles to its various allies in the region.

While the U.S. has previously levied sanctions against some of Iran's missile programs, the upcoming sanctions would specifically target groups that provide parts used to build drones and missiles and other weapons supply networks. The officials said that the sanctions would be separate from the Biden administration's ongoing efforts to pressure Iran to return to compliance with the 2015 nuclear agreement and to engage in talks on negotiating a new deal.

The WSJ reported that the Biden administration was eyeing new sanctions on Iran's oil sales to China if talks to revive the Iran nuclear deal fail. The potential oil sanctions would specifically target the shipping network that includes 1 million barrels of oil a day, a significant revenue source for Iran, according to U.S. officials. Without the sale of this oil, Iran's already weakened economy would quickly collapse.

Talks on a recommitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which the U.S. withdrew from under former President Trump, have largely stalled since the presidential election of Iranian hard-line cleric Ebrahim Raisi, who has said that he will not engage in a new nuclear deal unless the U.S. first removes its sanctions against its nuclear program. This, along with US desires to interact with the new Israeli administration, has caused a standstill in negotiations.

Raisi promised to lift the "tyrannical sanctions imposed by America" and improve the living conditions of Iranians.

The U.S. has repeatedly refused to do so until Iran draws back on its uranium enrichment and other developments in

violation of the 2015 deal.

Secretary of State Blinken recently stated, "We are committed to diplomacy, but this process cannot go on indefinitely. At some point the gains achieved by the JCPOA cannot be fully recovered by a return to the JCPOA if Iran continues the activities that it's undertaken with regard to its nuclear program. We have clearly demonstrated our good faith and desire to return to mutual compliance with the nuclear agreement ... The ball remains in Iran's court and we will see if they're prepared to make the decisions necessary to come back into compliance."

A sixth round of nuclear discussions ended in June without a new agreement, shortly before Raisi's election. Iran's outgoing president, Hassan Rouhani, stated that while his country was committed to negotiating the fractured 2015 agreement, Iran had the capability to reach the 90 percent uranium enrichment level needed to manufacture nuclear weapons.

The Obama-era original nuclear deal limited Tehran's program to enriching uranium only up to 3.67 percent, but since Trump left the agreement in 2018, the country raised its level of enrichment to 60 percent. Rouhani at the time also criticized top officials in his own government, whom he accused of "not allowing" a reinstatement of the deal. "They took away the opportunity to reach an agreement from this government," he said in a Cabinet meeting. "We deeply regret missing this opportunity."

Reuters reported that Iran's top nuclear negotiator said barriers to the revival of the deal are complicated but not insurmountable. However all sides agree it will not be a quick or easy process.— *PNL*

PRAY: Pray these new sanctions will be effective and will limit the drone and missile damage in the region.

World Hunger Dramatically Worse in Pandemic Year

The United Nations lamented what it called a “dramatic worsening” of world hunger last year, saying much of that is likely connected to the pandemic. A report issued jointly by five U.N. agencies said hunger outpaced population growth in 2020, with nearly 10 percent of all people are estimated to be undernourished. It said the sharpest rise in hunger came in Africa, where 21 percent of the people are estimated to be undernourished.



Children paid a high price, with 149 million of those younger than 5 estimated to have stunted growth since they are too short for their age. More than 45 million children are too thin for their height. “A full 3 billion adults and children remain locked out of healthy diets, largely due to excessive costs,” the U.N. agencies said. “In many parts of the world, the pandemic has triggered brutal recessions and jeopardized access to food,” the United Nations said in a summary of its findings. “Yet even before the pandemic, hunger was spreading; progress on malnutrition lagged.”

“Disturbingly, in 2020 hunger shot up in both absolute and proportional terms, outpacing population growth,” the report’s authors concluded. The report found that some 9.9 percent of the world’s population was estimated to have been undernourished last year, compared to 8.4 percent in 2019. The United Nations said that the pandemic further undercut a U.N. goal of zero hunger by 2030. Based on current trends, it estimates that the goal will be “missed by a margin of

nearly 660 million people,” and that some 30 million of that figure “may be linked to the pandemic’s lasting effects.”

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report was prepared by U.N. agencies including the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Program and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The other two agencies were the United Nations Children’s Fund, commonly

known as UNICEF, which is based in New York, and the World Health Organization, or WHO, headquartered in Geneva. The report was described by the agencies as the “first global assessment of its kind in the pandemic era.” Among the U.N.’s recommendations was one calling for strengthening “the resilience of the most vulnerable to economic adversity,” such as through programs to lessen the impact of “pandemic-style shocks” or steep food price increases.

While the Covid Pandemic is not the same as the Great Tribulation of the Book of Revelation, it does give us a glimpse of the types of things that will occur. The Third Horseman of the Apocalypse, the black horse, represents pandemic, plague and devastation. Revelation 6: 5-6 states, “And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in

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of the border, “There are fears that members of the banned terror outfits like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (the Pakistani Taliban) might enter Pakistan from Afghanistan in the guise of refugees and create unrest in the country.”

The UNHCR has been active in Pakistan since the first Afghan refugees arrived more than 40 years ago after the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Qaisar Khan Afridi, a UNHCR spokesperson in Pakistan “is concerned about the current violence in Afghanistan.”

“Once again, Afghanistan is on the brink of a major humanitarian and displacement crisis,” Afridi warned. “Increasing violence and insecurity have prompted the displacement of some 270,000 people within Afghanistan this year, making the total reach 3.5 million IDPs [internally displaced persons] in Afghanistan. While no large-scale international displacement from Afghanistan has been observed yet, any major influx would clearly require the international community to step up immediate and sustained support to both Afghanistan and its neighbors, in a spirit of responsibility and burden-sharing,” Afridi stated.

Brig.-Gen. Haris Nawaz, a war veteran and a Karachi-based leading defense and security analyst, recently said, “The fast-deteriorating situation in Afghanistan is a cause of great concern for all its neighbors in general and Pakistan in particular, which is already hosting at least 3 million Afghan refugees. We in Pakistan feel that the US was unfair to hastily withdraw from Afghanistan without finding a political solution that at a minimum provides a broad-based, ethnically balanced interim government.”

“The US is almost gone, leaving behind unmotivated, unprofessional [Afghan government] troops to the mercy of the Taliban who day by day are gaining control over more than half of Afghan districts. Would they [the Americans] listen to any country, including Pakistan, asking them to hold on and go for a political solution? The answer is a big no! If the United States had resolved all issues before withdrawing from Afghanistan, the situation would not be as it is today,” he said. Afghanistan in turmoil only increases the tension in the region during a time when Israel and Iran already have a tense relationship.— *PNL*

PRAY: Pray for the refugee crisis in Afghanistan and that these refugees will be protected and possible even reached with the Gospel during this situation.

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the midst of the four beasts say, “A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”

What the black horse represents is the massive famine and plagues that will occur in the future, presumably after the war that the

red horse brings. We also see John describe the inflation of prices on goods that will occur, just as we are seeing with the Covid Pandemic. Thus, the Covid Pandemic, even as bad as it has been, is only a small glimpse of the type of famine, devastation and inflation that will occur during the Great Tribulation.— *PNL*

PRAY: Pray for those who are being impacted by the pandemic and that food will be able to reach those in desperate need.