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Pope Benedict XVI Has Resigned, Now What?

BY BRAD MACDONALD

AFTER ONLY eight years on the papal throne, Pope Benedict XVI resigned his post as the head of the Catholic Church earlier today.

The resignation, the first by a pope in nearly 600 years, caught the world by surprise and set off a frenzied international debate about why exactly the pope resigned, why the Vatican and even Benedict's closest aides were left in the dark about the impending resignation, and who the next pope will be.

The *Trumpet* doesn't have specific answers to these questions. We can, however—thanks to what the Apostle Peter termed the “more sure word of prophecy”—set the pope's resignation in a broader context. Here are two key expectations from the next pope and from the Vatican in the weeks and months ahead.

First, expect the next pope to be conservative, and *probably even more* conservative, than Pope Benedict XVI.

Under Benedict, the Vatican experienced a renaissance of Catholic tradition and conservatism. Benedict's Vatican, as many have noted, has a special affection for medieval doctrine and practices, and has emerged as perhaps the most notable defender of tradition, including marriage only occurring between a man and woman. Together, Benedict and the Vatican have waged war on moral relativism, compromise and secularism. Nothing will change under the next administration. In fact, the next pope may be even more conservative, and forceful in his implementation of Catholic doctrine and tradition.

How do we know? BECAUSE THE NEXT POPE WILL BE INSTALLED BY A VATICAN INFRASTRUCTURE CREATED ENTIRELY BY POPE BENEDICT XVI AND HIS PREDECESSOR, THE SIMILARLY CONSERVATIVE POPE JOHN PAUL II.

As *Trumpet* columnist Ron Fraser has explained extensively, over the last few decades Pope John Paul II and Joseph Ratzinger (now Benedict XVI) have craftily and viciously

see **RESIGNED** page 12



Pope Benedict XVI leaves after an audience with Rome's parish priests on February 14.

Why Iran Already Has the Bomb

TABLET | February 14

THE WHITE House and President Obama's supporters insist that he's making his first trip to Israel next month to assure the Jewish state that if push comes to shove with Iran, he'll have Israel's back. But North Korea's nuclear test Tuesday morning could indicate that it's already too late for that. If North Korea has the bomb, then for all practical purposes Iran does, too. If that's so, then Obama's policy of prevention has failed, and containment—a policy that the president has repeatedly said is not an option—is in fact all Washington has.

If this sounds hyperbolic, consider the history of extensive North Korean-Iranian cooperation on a host of military and defense issues, including ballistic missiles and nuclear development, that dates back to the 1980s. This cooperation includes North Korean sales of technology and arms, like the BM-25, a missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and reaching Western Europe; Iran's Shahab 3 missile is based on North Korea's Nodong-1 and is able to reach Israel. Iran has a contingent of Iranian weapons engineers and defense officials stationed in North Korea. Meantime, North Korean scientists visit Iran. And last fall, both countries signed a memorandum of understanding regarding scientific, academic and technological issues.

Given all this, there's a great deal of concern that, as one senior U.S. official told the *New York Times*, "the North Koreans are testing for two countries." ...

In January, Kim Jong-un boasted that the United States was the prime target for Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests. Earlier this month, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei rejected the idea of nuclear negotiations with the United States. So, neither North Korea nor Iran believe the White House can do much to stop their march—one that they seem to be conducting in lockstep. ...

"Some of us have been saying this is something to worry about for five or six years," said Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center in Washington, D.C. "The North Koreans have been cooperating with Iran for about a decade on nuclear and missile issues, and the Iranians have several full-time weapons engineers on site in North Korea. Neither the North Koreans or the Iranians have made a secret of this. The Iranians were reported at North Korea's last nuclear test as well. It's hard to believe they had no access to the most recent test." ...

Some experts suspect that if the bomb detonated Tuesday was using enriched uranium, this is yet another piece of evidence that Iran is likely "using North Korea as a backdoor plan for their own nuclear program." ...

If this is the case, Obama will go down in history as the American president who presided over global nuclear proliferation, including rogue regimes. After four years of restraining the Israelis, he may now be going to visit them next month for a good reason: to apologize.

Obama Unlikely to Support Cairo Opposition

JERUSALEM POST | February 13

THOUSANDS OF opposition activists protested across Egypt on Monday, the second anniversary of former president Hosni Mubarak's ouster, chanting against the Muslim Brotherhood-led government of President Mohamed Morsi. ...

As tensions rise between the Muslim Brotherhood and the opposition, U.S. President Barack Obama's policy has been to not actively support the opposition.

Instead, Obama believes he is achieving regional stability by strengthening Morsi's hold on power.

Obama approved a recent delivery of over 20 F-16 fighter jets, and has

continued the annual military and economic aid. ...

Almost every day, news reports emerge from Egypt demonstrating that Morsi continues to act against U.S. national interests. Just last week, Morsi gave Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a glorious reception and kisses on the cheek. In addition, anti-Semitic and anti-American statements that Morsi and other Brotherhood leaders have issued over the years are being pushed under the rug. ...

Obama appears to be favoring a regime at odds with American interests at the expense of supporting an opposition that has elements more closely aligned with those interests. ...

Last week, Egypt's *Al-Ahram Weekly* posted an "Open letter to President Obama," written by Bahieddin Hassan, the director of the Cairo

Institute for Human Rights Studies. His position reflected that of the anti-Islamist opposition, that Obama has abandoned Egyptians. ...

Daniel Pipes, president of the conservative Middle East Forum, tells the *Post* that Obama's tacit support for the Islamist regime in Egypt "is a horrible policy." Pipes thinks the U.S. "should always oppose Islamists and support the liberals." ...

Writes Pipes, "Is not anyone in the Department of State aware that Egypt is now run by an Islamist zealot from the bowels of the Muslim Brotherhood whose goals differ profoundly from those of Americans?" ...

The moral of the story for Israel is that it will find it difficult to directly counter Obama's continued support for Morsi.

Israel's policy on this front continues to be paralyzed, and is based on

Iran Building Militias in Syria

JERUSALEM POST | February 11

IRAN IS preparing to preserve its influence in Syria in the event that its ally President Bashar Assad should be removed from power by building a network of militias in the country along with Hezbollah, the *Washington Post* reported on Sunday, citing U.S. and Middle East officials.

According to the officials, the militias are currently fighting alongside Assad's forces to keep the embattled leader in power. They believe, however, that the militias are actually in place to serve Tehran's long-term goal of maintaining operatives in the country to act in Iran's interest in Syria if

the opposition forces should succeed in unseating Assad.

The *Post* quoted a senior Obama administration official as saying that Iran was backing as many as 50,000 militiamen. "The immediate intention seems to be to support the Syrian regime. But it's important for Iran to have a force in Syria that is reliable and can be counted on," the official stated.

The *Post* quoted a senior Arab official as saying that Iran was putting the militiamen in place in order to "support Assad to the hilt," and "to set the stage for major mischief if he collapses." ...

Related: "Why Iran Is Sweating Bullets"

the hope that U.S. economic leverage will keep Morsi in line. ...

Related: "Hosni Mubarak Sealed His Fate in 1981"

Syrian Rebels Capture Oil Field

ASSOCIATED PRESS | February 14

SYRIAN REBELS captured most of an oil field in the energy-rich northeast on Thursday, the latest in a string of strategic conquests this week that also included a dam and the defenses around a major airport.

The opposition fighters trying to oust authoritarian President Bashar Assad also captured the town of Shadadah, near the Jbeysa oil field in hotly contested Hasaka province, according to Rami Abdul-Rahman, head of the Britain-based activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The oil field is in an energy-rich area along Syria's border with Iraq. Abdul-Rahman said the rebels captured about 70 percent of the oil field but there was still sporadic gunfire in the area.

Opposition fighters were also battling regime forces for the third straight day for control of the main airport in the northern city of Aleppo.

On Wednesday, the rebels knocked down army defenses and closed in on the country's second largest airport in Aleppo, Syria's main commercial hub.

The airport stopped all flights

weeks ago because of the fighting.

Earlier this week, rebels captured the nation's largest dam and a military base near Aleppo. They have also brought the fight closer to the heart of Damascus, seat of Assad's regime.

Regime forces carried out airstrikes on rebel position and shelled opposition strongholds with artillery in efforts to counter recent rebel advances in the northeast and around the capital.

The foray in Damascus marks the opposition's second significant attempt to capture the capital since July, when rebels took control of several neighborhoods before being swept out by a swift government counter-offensive.

The Observatory said regime warplanes were pounding rebel positions near Aleppo's international airport on Thursday. Opposition fighters have been attacking the airfield for weeks, and took over most of the "Brigade 80" military base protecting it on Wednesday.

Abdul-Rahman said fierce clashes were also taking place around the airport, which remained in regime hands Thursday. He said there were also reports of heavy fighting at another nearby military air base called Nairab.

The United Nations says nearly 70,000 people have been killed in 23 months of fighting in Syria. ...

Related: "The Battle for Syria"

TW IN BRIEF

■ Why Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is right

Direct talks with the United States over Iran's nuclear program will not resume, Iran's supreme leader announced on February 7. The speech came as yet another round of economic sanctions were implemented on Iranian oil. "Direct talks will not



Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

solve any problems," said Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. [The ayatollah is right](#)—direct talks will not solve this issue. Washington hopes to change Khamenei's mind by sitting down at the table to talk peace. The trouble is, it is trying to reason with a man who views global warfare as an inevitable precursor to the return of a Muslim savior. Aside from increasing Iran's power, the acquisition of a nuclear bomb helps to hasten that scenario. America continues to talk anyway: On February 8, Secretary of State John Kerry said, "We are prepared to let diplomacy be the victor in this confrontation," while warning Iran that the U.S. president "is prepared to do whatever is necessary to make certain that

Iran does not have a nuclear weapon.” No one believes him. Yet even as negotiation is failing, a war won’t bring lasting peace either. The United States and its allies may have the greatest intentions in stopping Iran. They may want peace, but they do not know how to achieve it. As Isaiah prophesied, mankind does not know the way of peace (Isaiah 59:8). But that world of peace is coming soon. To understand it, and even to learn how to have peace in your own life today, read “[What Is the Kingdom of God?](#)”

■ Iranian General assassinated near Syria-Lebanon border

A top general in Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps was reportedly assassinated this week in Syria in what is now “the strongest indication to date that senior Iranian military commanders have been dispatched to Syria” (*Los Angeles Times*, February 14). Gen. Hassan Shateri was reportedly traveling from Syria to Lebanon when he was “targeted” and killed by suspected Israeli agents, according to Iranian news media reports. If he did, in fact, die within Syria’s

borders, it will be the first time a top Iranian commander was killed in a Syrian conflict. Historically, Syria has been Iran’s most important regional ally, which is why Tehran has desperately tried to prop up President Bashar al Assad’s crumbling regime. But despite a long history of cooperation, [Syria and Iran are prophesied to soon end up on opposite sides of the divide](#) in the two power blocs currently developing in the Middle East. As Assad’s government continues to fall apart, watch for Iran’s support of Syria to wane.

EUROPE

Germany’s Indonesia Connection

HAVING RECENTLY strengthened its strategic alliance with Australia, Germany is now intent on building regional cooperation with Indonesia.

German-Foreign-Policy.com recently reported: “Jakarta offers itself as a partner for Berlin in Southeast Asia, says an analysis by the Foundation for Science and Politics [Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (swp)]; it is politically as well as economically on the rise, and in the region considered as a ‘leading power,’ and additionally, controls the ‘Strait of Malacca,’ one of the ‘world’s most important seaways,’ with great importance for China” (February 7; translation ours).

As is the case now with Germany’s expanding alliances with Arabian peninsula governments, the export of German weaponry to Indonesia is an important contributor to the developing relationship between the two.

“The military can be considered a sustaining pillar of cooperation: Indonesia’s armed forces acquire their weapons to a not insignificant degree from Germany. This is of special significance, since to influence the battle for influence in Southeast Asia, it is always about seeking a strategic front-line position against the People’s Republic of China” (ibid).

As the prophecy of Isaiah 23 indicates, at this particular



RON FRASER

conjunction in history, [China](#) and the German-led European Union are mutually dependent for their continuing commercial development on the sea trade that they have built up with each other over recent decades. Yet this market interdependency does not obviate the need to ensure that each is secure from the other defensively. Each has the power potential to become the world’s next superpower and is hence wary of the other’s ultimate intentions.

In fact, as the prophecies for our day declare, each, in turn, does become a singular superpower in its own right—first the German-led EU (Revelation 13 and 17), then a China-led Eastern bloc (Ezekiel 38).

Germany’s increasingly aggressive strategic moves in Australia and Indonesia are but strong indications of the fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah 23.

Our booklet [Daniel Unlocks Revelation](#) gives a detailed account of where the fulfillment of these prophecies is headed. The outcome is predicted to affect every man, woman and child on the planet in a manner that will so shock the world as to powerfully work to prepare the way for the elimination of all competition between nations—*forever!*

Only when that situation occurs will it be possible to fulfill man’s desire of the ages—a world at peace, with all humanity living in harmony with each other.

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Prosecuting the Messenger

SPiegel ONLINE | February 12

THE HOUR was late, but Andreas Georgiou was still at his office last

Friday evening. He sounded calm and poised, certain that he had done his duty. But Georgiou, 53, also sounded dumbfounded. “It strikes me as odd,” he says, “that we are being prosecuted in a European Union member state for actually following European law.”

[A]t the end of January, felony charges were filed against Georgiou and two senior ELSTAT staffers for allegedly inflating the 2009 deficit. In other words, at a time when the rest of the world was furious that Greece had artificially improved the country’s budget

U.S. and EU to Create 'Economic NATO'

RICHARD PALMER | February 14

AMERICA WILL attempt to negotiate a free trade deal with the European Union, U.S. President Barack Obama announced during his State of the Union address on February 12. The next day, EU leaders published a joint statement with Mr. Obama announcing that the two blocs “will each initiate the internal procedures necessary to launch negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.” ...

The potential economic gains from such a deal are huge. It would add 0.5 percent to the annual growth of the EU’s economy by 2027—that’s an extra €86 billion (US\$115 billion) a year—according to estimates recently referred to by the EU. For the U.S., the benefit would be 0.4 percent—or \$87 billion (€65 billion).


But the deal that America and Europe envision encompasses far more than removing tariffs on each other’s products. They want to harmonize regulations and even address differences in intellectual property and labor laws.

The end goal would be that a car, for example, produced in the U.S. would not have to undergo any significant modifications in order to conform to the EU’s safety standards, and vice versa. This would significantly lower the cost of selling goods in the other trade bloc.

The agreement would be so far reaching that it has been

referred to as “an economic NATO.” European Commission President José Manuel Barroso said that “this negotiation will set the standard—not only for our future bilateral trade and investment, including regulatory issues, *but also for the development of global trade rules*” at a press conference on February 13 (emphasis added).

If the EU and the U.S. adopt the common rules, they will be setting the standard for the whole world. With such a huge chunk of the global economy conforming to one standard, it would be hard for the rest of the world not to follow. If Europe gains the upper hand in its negotiations with the U.S., it will be setting the standard for the world. ...

But even if the two blocs fail, this renewed push toward a free trade deal demonstrates a subtle change in course in America’s foreign policy. It is investing more of its hope and trust in Europe. Both U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen have called for European nations to improve their militaries and play a more active role in the world, to take the burden off America. America is looking to Europe to solve its military problems. And now it’s looking to Europe to solve its economic problems too. **Follow Richard Palmer:**  [Twitter](#)

Related: “U.S. Vice President Dotes on Germany, Europe”

statistics, Greek prosecutors are accusing Georgiou of doing the opposite. ...

The entire bailout of Greece was based on the numbers provided by ELSTAT on the deficit figures for 2009 onwards. Any deal with the troika might unravel were the foundation of the agreement to be suddenly altered.

But what would Georgiou have to gain by deliberately making the Greek economy look to be in even worse shape than it actually was? ...

Some argue that the technocrat Georgiou was serving his former superiors at the IMF and the European statistics agency Eurostat, which is led by a German. This theory holds that Greece was to be brought to its knees by imposing harsh austerity measures based on bloated deficit figures. ...

Georgiou himself feels that, if he is guilty of anything, it is for breaking with tradition and bringing the infamously dodgy Greek public finance records in line with EU standards. ...

Georgiou has also received support from his European colleagues. ... In a statement released on January 23, the

German head of Eurostat Walter Radermacher wrote: “As we all know, the independence of a statistical office is crucial for the credibility of its statistics and, in this difficult situation, Mr. Georgiou retains my full confidence.”

The ELSTAT head is also supported by the finance ministry. According to a senior ministry staffer, the government accepts the 2009 numbers and has no intention of getting rid of Georgiou. ...

Georgiou is painted by his critics almost as a traitor. ...

Related: “Greece: Now a German Vassal State”

Looking Eastward: Turkey’s Bluffing Game

February 13

ON JANUARY 25, Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that he thought Turkey

should consider looking east for allies instead of to the Western European powers. Europe has been stringing Turkey along with the carrot of EU member status since Oct. 3, 2005, when, alongside Croatia, Turkey began accession talks.

Turkey’s turn toward Russia and China is no more than a bluff. Turkey intends to pressure the European Union into speeding the process of EU membership along. It has been seven years since talks began, after all. Croatia, which started dialogue with the EU at the same time, is now on track to become an EU member state in just a few months. Does Turkey feel a little left out? It is sending a clear message to the West by casting its eyes eastward.

As bad as Turkey has wanted in, why has it been blocked at every turn by the EU? The answer is simple: religion.

“The fundamentally Roman Catholic continent simply has no intention of incorporating 70 million Muslims in one swoop. And Turkey—with its Ottoman

A 'Strategic Opportunity' to Gain Autonomy From U.S.

COURCY'S INTELLIGENCE | February 11

ON FEBRUARY 4, we issued a Special Alert on rising tensions between China and Japan. In parallel with this, relations between China and the U.S. have also been deteriorating, not least because of outgoing Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's reiteration that the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands fall within the remit of the U.S.-Japan security pact. With this as the background, the European Union's attitude towards China is of considerable importance to Washington.

Back in March 2012 we highlighted a report from EU-funded Europe-China Research and Advice Network (Ecran) which argued that the European Union should take advantage of the U.S.'s difficulties with China. ...

More recently, in December 2012, the EU-funded European Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) issued a report on the differing approaches between the EU and the U.S. on the Asia-Pacific region. While its headline conclusions were much more diplomatic than the earlier Ecran report, with the report specifically exploring the potential for closer cooperation between the EU and the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific region, substantial differences were still apparent.

[T]his report from EUISS is honest enough to highlight the drivers that are pointing in the direction espoused by Ecran, that is to say to the conclusion that U.S. rivalry with China presents Europe with an opportunity.

For example, the EUISS report points out that some 28

percent of EU external trade in 2010 was with East Asia, "an impressive five percent more than across the Atlantic" And it adds that Germany's export-led economic growth is increasingly dependent on China. ...

And it goes on to emphasize: "China backs ... the eurozone ... while the U.S. is lukewarm [T]he result is that support for the eurozone in the last few years has mainly come from China, while speculation against the peripheral members of the euro-area has been coming mainly from Wall Street-based banks and hedge funds.

"China's support for European integration has not been confined to monetary issues. Beijing has also backed Europe's space ambitions, lending both political and financial support to Galileo, the EU-led global navigation satellite system alternative to the American GPS. ...

"For the EU—and in particular the core members of Central and Western Europe more active in promoting integration—China is not only a trade and political challenge, but also presents a *strategic opportunity to enhance Europe's role in world affairs and gain autonomy from the U.S.*" [Our emphasis added.]

This is an interesting final emphasis for a report that is ostensibly so positive about the importance of U.S.-EU collaboration on policy towards China.

Related: ["The Great Mart"](#)

history, which at one time threatened Catholicism's very existence—has particularly negative associations in European minds. As Bernard Lewis expresses it, "[T]here is still a reserve of mistrust, and even at times of hostility [toward Turks], with roots deep in the European Christian past' (*From Babel to Dragomans*)," Joel Hilliker wrote in the November/December 2007 *Philadelphia Trumpet*. Compare Turkey to Croatia—where Croatia is majority Catholic, Turkey is 99.8 percent Muslim.

What does that mean? Because it won't be accepted by the EU, will it be accepted by the SCO?

The answer: still no.

Simply put, Turkey is too Muslim to ever integrate into the EU. Christianity (read Catholicism) and Islam just don't mix. You only need to read a history book to prove that fact.

The nail in the coffin that denies Turkey's ticket to SCO membership lies in the prophecy contained in Psalm 83, where Edom (the modern-day region

of Turkey) is named among a confederacy of Middle Eastern nations that are against the king of the south (Iran and its cronies) and are tied with Assur (Assyria, or Germany).

The EU may never allow the Muslim nation to fully integrate into the European Union. It will recognize Prime Minister Erdoğan's recent statements as the bluff that they are. The EU has been successfully stringing Turkey along since 2005, and there is no reason for that to change.

Stoiber: 'Bunga Bunga' Premier Bad for EU

LA GAZETTA | February 13

THE LEGACY of the actions of the "bunga bunga (ex)-premier" Silvio Berlusconi "on the country of culture is something unbelievable," honorary Christian Social Union (CSU) president Edmund Stoiber said on Wednesday.

"If he wins in the upcoming elections, all of Europe will pay the price," the former Bavarian regional chief said at a political Ash Wednesday rally in Passau. "One can only hope that the Italian people hold up a red card in the coming election." The CSU is the Bavarian ally of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

World's Leading Exorcist Praises Pope Benedict

TELEGRAPH | February 15

POPE BENEDICT XVI, whose resignation announcement stunned the world this week, has received high praise from an unusual quarter—the leader of the world's exorcists.

Father Gabriele Amorth, the founder and head of the International Association of Exorcists, said the German pontiff had "done many things for exorcists"

Vatican Bank's German Military Links

TELEGRAPH | February 15

THE VATICAN has been drawn into a new controversy over its embattled bank after acknowledging that the institution's new president is also chairman of a shipbuilder making warships for Germany.

The Vatican announced to great fanfare on Friday that Pope Benedict XVI had signed off on one of the last major appointments of his papacy, approving Ernst von Freyberg as president of the Vatican's bank, officially known as the Institute for Religious Works (IOR).

The Vatican spokesman was caught off-guard when a journalist noted that the German shipbuilder von Freyberg chairs, Blohm + Voss, has a military component, AP reported.

The Rev. Federico Lombardi demurred and defended the selection. He later issued a statement saying the company repairs and transforms cruise ships and builds yachts—and is currently part of a consortium that is building four frigates for the German navy.

Michael Brasse, spokesman for Blohm + Voss in Hamburg, said that von Freyberg is chairman of the executive board of Blohm + Voss Shipyards, a unit that concentrates on building civilian ships. ... Blohm + Voss Naval is now known as ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems GmbH ...

The revelation dominated what was supposed to have been the Vatican's triumphant appointment of a new president for the bank after its last president, Ettore Gotti Tedeschi, was fired nine months ago for incompetence.

Gotti Tedeschi's stunning ouster came just as the Vatican was submitting its finances to a review by a Council of Europe committee in a bid to join the list of financially transparent countries.

The Vatican last summer passed the test by the Council of Europe's Moneyval committee, which seeks to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing. But the IOR and the Vatican's financial watchdog agency, however, received failing grades. The new president will be tasked with bringing the IOR into compliance by Moneyval's next review.

The Vatican stressed von Freyberg's Catholic credentials, noting that he was a member of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, an ancient chivalrous military order drawn from European nobility.

The Vatican said he had been appointed by the bank's commission of cardinals and that the pope had "expressed his full consent." The appointment may well be one of the last major decisions of Benedict's papacy given his planned retirement on February 28.

While the appointment was seemingly curiously timed, Lombardi went to great lengths to stress that the selection process took its own path and was to some degree irrelevant to the running of the church.

Lombardi said von Freyberg was selected after a "meticulous and articulate" seven-month search process from an initial list of 40 candidates put forward by an international head-hunting firm.

during his eight-year papacy, which will come to an end on February 28.

He said Benedict, regarded as a staunch conservative during his time in office, had "allowed exorcists to administer the sacrament of exorcism not only to people who are suffering from demonic possession, but also those who suffer other evil disorders, such as diabolical infestations." ...

Amorth, the exorcist for the diocese of Rome, is a controversial figure whose outspoken views have embarrassed the Vatican in the past. In the past he has branded yoga as "evil," claiming that it leads to a worship of Hinduism and other Eastern religions based on "a false belief in reincarnation." ... He claimed in a book last year that Pope Benedict unwittingly performed an exorcism of two men possessed by the devil in the very heart of the Vatican, describing how he and two assistants brought

a pair of "possessed" Italian men to one of the pope's weekly audiences in St Peter's Square in May 2009.

In the book, *The Last Exorcist—My Fight Against Satan*, he said the mere presence of the pontiff cured the men of their demonic afflictions. As the pope approached them, the men, identified only as Marco and Giovanni, began to act strangely—they trembled and their teeth chattered.

When Benedict stepped down from his "popemobile" the two men flung themselves to the floor.

"They banged their heads on the ground. The Swiss Guards watched them but did nothing," he wrote. "Giovanni and Marco started to wall at the same time, they were lying on the floor, howling. They were trembling, slobbering, working themselves into a frenzy.

"The pope watched from a distance. He raised an arm and blessed the four

of them. For the possessed it was like a furious jolt—a blow to their whole bodies—to the extent that they were thrown three meters backwards. They stopped howling but they cried uncontrollably." ...

TW IN BRIEF

■ Greek youth unemployment at 62 percent

The unemployment rate in Greece hit 27 percent, according to statistics published February 14, meaning that one in four people who want to work can't find it. For young people it is even worse: Youth unemployment hit 62 percent. Most people aged 15 to 24 in Greece who want to work can't find a job. These are huge figures that cause massive social unrest. For more on where this upheaval will lead, see Ron Fraser's recent article "[A Job for Europe's Youth.](#)"

Putin Turns Black Gold to Bullion

BLOOMBERG | February 11

WHEN VLADIMIR Putin says the U.S. is endangering the global economy by abusing its dollar monopoly, he's not just talking. He's betting on it.

Not only has Putin made Russia the world's largest oil producer, he's also made it the biggest gold buyer. His central bank has added 570 metric tons of the metal in the past decade, a quarter more than runner-up China, according to IMF data compiled by Bloomberg. The added gold is also almost triple the weight of the Statue of Liberty.

"The more gold a country has, the more sovereignty it will have if there's a cataclysm with the dollar, the euro, the pound or any other reserve currency," Evgeny Fedorov, a lawmaker for Putin's United Russia party in the lower house of parliament, said in a telephone interview in Moscow. ...

Central banks around the world have printed money to escape the global financial crisis, sapping investor appetite

for dollars and euros and setting off a scramble for safety. ...

"Putin's gold strategy fits in with his resource nationalism, statist agenda," said Tim Ash, head of emerging-market research at Standard Bank Plc in London. "It's kind of a defensive play, but it worked, right?" Ash said in an interview in Moscow. "You need luck in politics and business, and clearly the guy has it."

Other world leaders haven't been as lucky. Gordon Brown, as UK finance minister, sold almost 400 tons of gold in the 30 months to March 2002, when prices were at two-decade lows. London tabloids have referred to the period as Brown's Bottom. ...

Even after Putin's binge, though, Russia's total cache of about 958 tons is only the eighth largest, the World Gold Council said in a February 8 report. ...

Related: "Time to Buy Gold?"

TW IN BRIEF

■ North Korea detonates nuke morning before State of Union speech

North Korea detonated a nuclear bomb Tuesday just hours before President Barack Obama was scheduled to discuss his plan for the next four years in his State of the Union address. The successful detonation on the heels of Pyongyang's successful December 12 missile launch confirms that the North now has offensive nuclear weapons as a strategic deterrence against the U.S., and could potentially attack mainland America with nuclear missiles. President Obama has made nuclear nonproliferation a key goal of his presidency, and Pyongyang's act of open defiance exposed how little progress there has been on this front. The test's timing—just hours before the president's speech—suggests that the North wishes to make its threat [as provocative as possible toward Washington](#). Stratfor explained that, despite appearances, China is likely behind North Korean provocations: "Prior to the latest nuclear test and rocket launch ... China publically called on North Korea to refrain, yet the North went ahead with the test

anyway. ... That could mean that the Chinese and the North Koreans carefully planned out the charade of differences, and worked together to shape the mini crises" (February 12). A rogue North Korea *erves China's ambitions* of undermining U.S. influence in region and in the global arena. China will continue to carefully steer North Korea to further Beijing's goals of regional dominance.

■ China eclipses U.S. in world trade

China overtook the United States last year to become the world's biggest trading nation as measured in exports and imports of goods, ending America's postwar trade dominance, according to the latest official annual data released by the two countries. The U.S.'s total imports and exports for 2012 stood at \$3.82 trillion, according to the U.S. Commerce Department's report released February 8. China's total trade for the same year hit \$3.87 trillion. This is not China's first significant economic victory. In 2009, Beijing overtook Berlin to become the world's largest exporter. In 2010, China surpassed the U.S. to become the world's thirstiest energy consumer,

a milestone that reflected both China's extraordinary economic growth and its multiplying clout as an industrial giant. China's commerce ministry came out on Wednesday saying the earlier reports were wrong due to use of differing systems of measurement, and that the U.S. is still slightly ahead of China in international trade. Nevertheless, [China's economic might is rapidly growing](#). Its mushrooming influence threatens to unsettle regional trading blocs as it becomes the most important commercial partner for many nations around the world. As China's economic power grows, and as global dissatisfaction with the U.S. economy/debt/dollar increases, the influence of the yuan will multiply. But it actually will be the European currency—not the yuan—that will depose the U.S. ailing dollar.

"China's dramatic growth should be a wake-up call for Washington. America's days as the world's sole superpower are nearing an end—and much more quickly than anticipated by most."

—theTrumpet.com, July 21, 2010

AFRICA/LATIN AMERICA

Chávez Risks Backlash

BLOOMBERG | February 9

VENEZUELA DEVALUED its currency for the fifth time in nine years, a move that may undermine support for ailing President Hugo Chávez and his allies ahead of possible elections later this year.

South America's biggest oil producer may have to call elections if Chávez, who hasn't been seen for two months after undergoing cancer surgery in Cuba, dies or steps down. He ordered his government to weaken the exchange rate by 32 percent to 6.3 bolivars per dollar starting February 13, Finance Minister Jorge Giordani told reporters yesterday in Caracas.

A spending spree that almost tripled the fiscal deficit last year helped

Chávez, 58, win a third six-year term. The devaluation can help narrow the budget deficit by increasing the amount of bolivars the government receives from oil exports. Yet the move also threatens to accelerate annual inflation that reached 22 percent in January.

"There is surely going to be a political cost, which may weigh against the Chavistas and hence be viewed favorably from the markets if it shifts protest votes to the opposition," Siobhan Morden, the head of Latin America fixed income strategy at Jefferies Group Inc. in New York, said in a note to clients.

Former opposition presidential candidate Henrique Capriles Radonski said the measure "mocked Venezuelans," and he criticized the government for attempting to hide the impact of the devaluation by

announcing it the day before the annual carnival holidays.

TW IN BRIEF

Latin America remains a bastion of anti-abortion laws

Even as the practice of abortion gains acceptance in the U.S., the termination of a pregnancy is still almost universally regarded as a criminal act in Latin America. Chile, Nicaragua and El Salvador ban abortion completely, while most other Latin American countries have only a few legal loopholes permitting the practice. This regional opposition to abortion is primarily due to the fact that 71 percent of Latin Americans self-identify as Roman Catholics. As a new pope is elected, expect masses of people across both Europe and Latin America to look increasingly to the Vatican for moral guidance.

ANGLO-AMERICA

Want a Happy Child? Do This

WHAT MAKES children happy? *Stuff*. That's what most parents think, it seems. Xbox 360, Furby, Lil Swanky clothing, M&M's and licorice ropes, Lego sets, expensive birthday parties—whatever little Madison and Brayden desire.

If Mom and Dad took a break from indulging their kids' whims and thought about it, they might admit that it's not working. You don't have to peek down too many aisles in the toy store to see children who already have everything—and are miserable brats.

Now, science is supplying some evidence to teach us what was once common knowledge: that it actually *is* more blessed to give than to receive.

In a recent study "Giving Leads to Happiness in Young Children," psychologists found that *giving* puts smiles on young children more than *getting*. "[B]efore the age of 2, toddlers exhibit greater happiness when giving treats to others than receiving treats themselves," the study's authors wrote. "Further, children are happier after engaging in *costly giving*—forfeiting their own resources—than when giving the same treat at no cost."



JOEL HILLIKER

CNN sums up the findings: "These studies confirm some age-old wisdom about happiness: If the goal really is to make our children happy, perhaps what we ought to be doing is not overindulging them, but giving them the opportunity to give" (Sept. 17, 2012).

The study's lead author, Lara Aknin, insists that children receiving pleasure from giving away their goldfish crackers shows the emotional rewards we can *all* enjoy from acts of personal sacrifice. "You can construe that pro-social behavior broadly to include giving time volunteering, giving money to causes or giving other resources," she told CNN. "All of these correlate to happiness."

Other studies have confirmed that this life law doesn't just apply to kiddos with crackers. "Adolescents who identify their primary motive as helping others are three times happier than those who lack such altruistic motivation," says Christine Carter, a sociologist at the University of California. Teens who are givers are not only happier, but are more excited about life, and more involved at school and in their families.

And it doesn't change when we become adults. Whether a person donates money to charity, volunteers time, or commits random acts of kindness, reports show he or she will be happier and suffer less anxiety and depression.

Ergo, a surefire way to lead your child to a happier life, both now and on into adulthood, is to *teach him to give*.

Follow Joel Hilliker: [Twitter](#)

The Decline of America

Victor Davis Hanson, NATIONAL REVIEW | February 14

WHY DO once-successful societies ossify and decline? Hundreds of reasons have been adduced ...

One recurring theme seems consistent in Athenian literature on the eve of the city's takeover by Macedon: social squabbling over slicing up a shrinking pie. Athenian speeches from that era make frequent reference to lawsuits over property and inheritance, evading taxes, and fudging eligibility for the dole. After the end of the Roman Republic, reactionary Latin literature—from the likes of Juvenal, Petronius, Suetonius, and Tacitus—pointed to “bread and circuses,” as well as excessive wealth, corruption and top-heavy government.

For Gibbon and later French scholars, “Byzantine” became a pejorative description of a top-heavy Greek bureaucracy that could not tax enough vanishing producers to sustain a growing number of bureaucrats. In antiquity, inflating the currency by turning out cheap bronze coins was often the favored way to pay off public debts, while the law became fluid to address popular demands rather than to protect time-honored justice. ...

The gradual decline of a society is often a self-induced process of trying to meet ever-expanding appetites rather than a physical inability to produce past levels of food and fuel or to maintain adequate defense. Americans have never had safer workplaces or more sophisticated medical care—and never have so many been on disability. ...

Given our unsustainable national debt—nearly \$17

trillion and climbing—America is said to be in decline, although we face no devastating plague, nuclear holocaust or shortage of oil or food.

Americans have never led such affluent material lives—at least as measured by access to cell phones, big-screen TVs, cheap jet travel and fast food. Obesity rather than malnutrition is the greater threat to national health. Flash mobs go after electronics stores, not food markets. Americans spend more money on Botox, facelifts and tummy tucks than on the age-old scourges of polio, smallpox and malaria. ...

Yet we don't talk confidently about capitalizing and expanding on our natural and inherited wealth. Instead, Americans bicker over entitlement spoils as the nation continues to pile up trillion-dollar-plus deficits. Enforced equality, rather than liberty, is the new national creed. The medicine of cutting back on government goodies seems far worse than the disease of borrowing trillions from the unborn to pay for them.

In August 1945, Hiroshima was in shambles, while Detroit was among the most innovative and wealthiest cities in the world. Contemporary Hiroshima now resembles a prosperous Detroit of 1945; parts of Detroit look like they were bombed decades ago.

History has shown that a government's redistribution of shrinking wealth, in preference to a private sector's creation of new sources of it, can prove more destructive than even the most deadly enemy.

Related: “The Detroitification of America”

New Deadly SARS-Like Virus

RUSSIA TODAY | February 13

BBRITISH HEALTH officials warn a new deadly virus, similar to SARS, could spread from person to person. WHO officials are encouraging countries to be on the lookout for the new illness, as its origins remain unclear.

A new coronavirus is causing concern for the World Health Organization and medics everywhere over its ability to spread from person to person, as an eleventh case of the disease seems to prove. Out of these cases, five have resulted in death.

The virus has been registered in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and initially was thought to spread from animals, such as bats, to humans.

But the latest patient with no history of traveling in the Middle East has been diagnosed with the virus.

The patient is a relative of another registered case, who has recently been in the Middle East and Pakistan. ...

The first case of the illness, resulting in fatality, was registered in September of last year.

Yet, say WHO officials, if the virus was easily transferrable, there would have been a lot more than 11 cases.

The virus, yet unnamed, causes pneumonia and sometimes kidney failure, say UK health officials. ...

The outbreak of SARS in 2002 resulted in the deaths of more than 800 people and spread to more than 30 countries around the world.

Obama Claims: No New Debt

THE DAILY CALLER | February 13

REPUBLICAN ACTIVISTS laughed at President Barack Obama's claim

that his new laundry list of spending programs won't add 10 cents to the deficit.

“Nothing I'm proposing tonight should increase our deficit by a single dime,” Mr. Obama told the nation during his 2013 State of the Union speech.

His list of proposed programs include a national pre-school program, government aid in getting low-interest mortgages to millions of homeowners, a project to repair houses, more job-training programs and an increase in the minimum wage. ...

“FYI, Obama is right, he hasn't added a single dime to the debt, he's added 58.6 trillion dimes,” said ... Joe Pounder, the research chief at the Republican National Committee.

The committee quickly released a video showing Mr. Obama's repeated claims that his policies would not cost a dime, and contrasting those claims with the \$5.8 trillion in new debt created during Mr. Obama's first four years.

However, Mr. Obama suggested that his extra spending will be offset by increased taxes, and should not increase the government's near-\$1 trillion annual deficit. ...

Food Stamp Rolls Surpass Spain

CNS NEWS | February 11

SINCE TAKING office in 2009, food stamp rolls under President Barack Obama have risen to more than 47 million people in America, exceeding the population of Spain.

"Now is the time to act boldly and wisely—to not only revive this economy, but to build a new foundation for lasting prosperity," said Obama during his first joint session address to Congress on Feb. 24, 2009. ...

When Obama entered office in January 2009 there were 31,939,110 Americans receiving food stamps. As of November 2012, ... there were 47,692,896 Americans enrolled, an increase of 49.3 percent.

According to the 2011 census, Spain had a population of 46,815,916.

Furthermore, between January 2009 and November 2012, the food stamp program added approximately an average 11,269 recipients per day.

TW IN BRIEF

■ President calls for minimum wage increase

During his State of the Union address, President Barack Obama proposed hiking the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9 by 2015. Though many Americans were pleased with this proposal, business leaders warn that government-mandated pay increases may lead to a surge in layoffs. Studies from the Employment Policies Institute show that minimum wage hikes, "including the one called for by the president, lead to job loss, not job creation, as well as fail to reduce poverty or stimulate the economy." Bible prophecy shows that a time of epidemic unemployment and economic depression are on the horizon. Government intervention against free-market forces is hastening this condition.

■ Rampant cheating exposed at Harvard

Harvard University officials came forward in early February to announce 60 students would be withdrawn from school classes due to cheating. The announcement was the culmination of months of investigations into tests and records after an instructor had noticed signs of cheating on a take-home exam. Of the 279 students enrolled in a 2012 class called Introduction to Congress, as many as 125 were found to be involved in cheating to some degree. The scandal is stunning not only in scope, but also because of the institution where it took place. National University Rankings consistently names Harvard as the most prestigious university in the United States. Widespread cheating at a university of such renown calls into question how severe the problem is in less exalted educational facilities across the nation. A precipitous moral decline is under way in America's youth. If half of a class is willing to break the rules in a course on government, it's a good indication that the generation's moral foundation is broken.

OTHER NEWS AND NOTES

The Meat Industry Consumes Four-Fifths of All Antibiotics

MOTHER JONES | February 8

IN AN e-mail, a Pew spokesperson added that while the American Meat Institute reported a 0.2 percent increase in total meat and poultry production in 2011 compared to the previous year, the FDA data show that antibiotic consumption jumped 2 percent over the same time period. That suggests that meat production might be getting more antibiotic-intensive.

Not surprisingly, when you cram animals together by the thousands and dose them daily with antibiotics, the bacteria that live on and in the animals adapt and develop resistance to those bacteria killers. Pew crunched another new set of data, the FDA's latest release of results from its National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System, or NARMS, which buys samples of meat products and subjects them to testing for bacterial pathogens. Again, the results are sobering.

Here are a few highlights pointed to by Pew in an e-mail:

- Of the Salmonella on ground turkey, about 78 percent

were resistant to at least one antibiotic and half of the bacteria were resistant to three or more. These figures are up compared to 2010.

- Nearly three quarters of the Salmonella found on retail chicken breast were resistant to at least one antibiotic. About 12 percent of retail chicken breast and ground turkey samples were contaminated with Salmonella.
- Resistance to tetracycline [an antibiotic] is up among Campylobacter on retail chicken. About 95 percent of chicken products were contaminated with Campylobacter, and nearly half of those bacteria were resistant to tetracyclines. This reflects an increase over last year and 2002.

Takeaway: While the FDA dithers with voluntary approaches to regulation, the meat industry is feasting on antibiotics and sending out product tainted with antibiotic-resistant bugs.

RESIGNED from page 1

rooted out liberalism of the Vatican. Together, these men have banished numerous liberal cardinals and officials and replaced them with conservatives cut from the same cloth as John Paul and Benedict. John Paul and Benedict have ensured that the leadership of the Catholic Church—especially those in key positions inside the Vatican—share their own staunch affection for conservative Catholic dogma.



BRAD MACDONALD

You've probably heard that a college of cardinals will be responsible for electing the next pope, apparently before the end of March. Get this: EVERY LAST CARDINAL IN THIS SELECT GROUP WAS INSTALLED BY EITHER POPE JOHN PAUL II OR POPE BENEDICT XVI.

BENEDICT XVI ALONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INSTALLING MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE CARDINALS THAT WILL VOTE FOR THE NEXT POPE!

It's also interesting that the latest batch of cardinals, hand-picked by Pope Benedict, takes office next week—just days before Pope Benedict XVI resigns.

Did Pope Benedict make this last-minute tweak to secure control and thereby ensure the speedy installment of a specific individual as his replacement? Someone, *no doubt*, who will continue Benedict's campaign to create a conservative, traditional Vatican?

Second, expect the next pope to be a staunch advocate of a world-dominating, Catholic united states of Europe. This means he will more than likely be European, and most likely Italian or German.

The financial crisis has left Europe in disarray. Germany leads, but is not loved. Europe knows it needs to unite, but there just isn't the glue to bring it together. Only the Vatican, as Herbert W. Armstrong explained for years, has the power to weld this divided, cantankerous group together. It's exactly as Mr. Armstrong described in the March 1978 *Good News* (emphasis his): "Europeans want their own united military power! ... They have made a real effort

toward union in the Common Market. ... But they well know there is but ONE POSSIBILITY of union in Europe—AND THAT IS THROUGH THE VATICAN."

Two years later, Mr. Armstrong delivered a similar prophecy in the June 1980 *Worldwide News*, one that describes Europe's current condition perfectly: "World conditions [like a global financial crisis] may force European nations ... to unite, bringing to pass the revived 'Holy Roman Empire' [European nations] have wanted to unite politically, with a common currency and common military force, for some time—but have been unable. IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED ONLY THROUGH THE VATICAN."

Pope Benedict XVI was a devoted Europhile and did his part in laying the groundwork for the Vatican to intervene in European affairs. We should expect the next pope to be a much more ardent and energetic advocate of European unification behind Germany! He will also more than likely be a close friend of Germany, and almost assuredly have healthy relationships with German leaders and officials.

Consider one last quote from Mr. Armstrong: "Bible prophecy says this European unification will be also a union of church and state (Revelation 17). Many European political leaders do not want religious domination, or even participation. BUT THEY ARE COMING TO REALIZE THEY CANNOT BE WELDED TOGETHER INTO ONE GREAT EUROPEAN SUPERNATION WITHOUT THE UNIFYING POWER OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH" (Nov. 22, 1982). Again, whoever the next pope is, EXPECT HIM TO EMERGE AS A VOCAL AND POWERFUL FORCE IN EUROPEAN POLITICS!

In the coming days and weeks, speculation will abound about who the next pope will be and what the Vatican will look like under his stewardship. Although we don't yet know who this man will be, we do know that HE WILL BE CONSERVATIVE and that he will be a POWERFUL ADVOCATE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. We also know, thanks to Bible prophecy, that this man and the Vatican will play a key role in instigating events that will culminate in the greatest event in human history: The Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

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