

Globalism (Part Eight): A Force For Conflict

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With somewhat overblown rhetoric, former President Bill Clinton spoke of the Kosovo Conflict, localized as it was, as "the great battle between the forces of integration and the forces of disintegration; the forces of globalism versus tribalism; of oppression against empowerment. . . ."¹

It is easy for us to share Mr. Clinton's "great battle" concept of integration and disintegration. Like his, our minds have been fed for so many years with the Darwinian idea of *struggle* among species and the Marxist concept of *conflict* among economic classes. It is easy for us to visualize the defining movements of our time, globalism and tribalism, struggling for control over civilization. Which force will win?

There is, though, a more accurate way of understanding the interplay between these two forces. *Globalism and tribalism are closely intertwined*. Globalism per se has within it the seeds of integration *and* disintegration:

Globalization can promote integration among states. But it can *also* foster conflict and disintegration within them by exposing the limitations and ineptitude of governments, by generating traditionalist backlashes against alien values that present themselves as universal, and by creating huge disparities of wealth and power among nationalities, regions and classes.²

Combine this fact—that these two forces coexist, intermingle—with the incontrovertible fact of God's sovereignty, and the true Christian is well ahead of Mr. Clinton's simple-minded idea of "the great battle" between globalism and tribalism. *True Christians recognize that God, who controls history, is using both forces for His ultimate purposes.*

» God is using the power of Joseph to *push* the nations into an integrated, big-screen version of capitalism.

» At the same time, He is using the force of tribalism, a reactionary force, to generate a worldwide "emergency," that is, a pandemic crisis environment so broadly infused with chaos and confusion that it will require unprecedented leadership. With miracle and muscle—and not a little deception—the False Prophet and Beast will ultimately arise to answer this acute political, economic, social, and religious "emergency." To some extent at least, this emergency will be the result of tribalism, the disunifying fragmentation of the social order into any number of smaller, squabbling sectors.

Using the imaginative tool of linguistic division, confusing the language of Babel's builders, God effectively "scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:8). In doing so, God powerfully indicated His *rejection* of a single world government in the days of Nimrod. He would have none of it then. How can we say, then, that God, who does not change (Malachi 3:6), is today using Israel to build a global village?

The answer lies in the fact that, by forcing the scattering of the peoples at Babel, God accomplished His goal of developing a widely populated planet. That task is certainly done. God's objectives are different now, in a generation far removed from Nimrod's, a generation that is witnessing the incipient "emergency," the planet-consuming crisis we call broadly "the last days." What are His reasons for working to build a globalized system today? Here are three possibilities.

Globalism and God's Work

First, God may be planning to use globalism as the context in which He performs an eleventh-hour work. While a speculative thought, the idea does have historical precedence. God used the affluence of mid-20th century America as a foundation upon which He built the worldwide work in which we ourselves had a part. The thought that God may be building globalism as a context in which He will call and service, at the "last minute," a number of Gentiles (and Israelites) into His church is informed by the Parable of the Laborers (Matthew 20:1-16). In it, the householder hires idle workers as late as the eleventh hour. They go to work shortly before nightfall, "when no man can work" (John 9:4). During the "night" of the Great Tribulation, it will be difficult indeed to do a formal work because, "if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him" (John 11:10).

In this context, it is useful to remember Madelyn Albright's words: The United States has "kind of open[ed] the whole system up. America's place is at the center of this system."³ Globalism certainly does have the immediate, short-term effect of facilitating transportation and communication between nations. With the United States at the hub of this travel and communication network, any Gentiles God calls could have easy access to an American-based ministry via travel, the Internet, and so on. We already see this happening to a small degree within the church. America is at the center. Therefore, God's church, which (not by accident) has its geographic locus in America, is *also* at the center. By that token, it is in a position to serve those God may call from among the nations.

Such an outcome, a result of globalism, would certainly be a fine example of the law of unintended consequences at work. That law—that any action can have a reaction that is neither opposite nor equal—is a principle in human relationships. Certainly, if God builds a work using the open travel and communication environments created by globalism, it will certainly be a result neither foreseen nor planned by the movers and shakers of today's capitalism and democracy. Those planners for the most part are godless humanists dedicated to a cult of secularism, wherein religion is only a traditional trapping and God is dead. How ironic it will be, indeed, if our sovereign God uses the civilization these planners implement to do a last-minute work!

A Global Language

Second, God is clearly spreading about the influence of the English language. English is virtually a universal language already. In commerce, business, government—people everywhere speak it. Even German and Chinese scientific papers are written in English. Through globalism, God may be positioning English, the language of modern-day Joseph and Judah, where it can easily become a common world language in the Millennium. Illustrative of this is the spreading about of Israelite names. For instance, *McDonald's* is one such name. What is intriguing is the number of ancillary English (or English-like) names that McDonald's foreign competitors appropriate: *McDucks*, *Mcdonald's*, *Mordornal*. In addition, the tribe of Levi is now famous worldwide, if not so much for its priestly garments as for its patch-pocket dungarees—Levis.

The Increase of Knowledge

Third, God is unquestionably using globalism to set up the nations for the end-time "emergency." Globalism's two pillars, capitalism and democracy, both brainchildren of the West, are powerful tools indeed for spreading abroad the wealth, information, and technology of the Shemites, those peoples of Shem who generally populate the Occident.

» *Democracy*, whatever its faults, is clearly an efficient way of encouraging people of all social classes to develop their talents. Totalitarian governments, by virtue of their structure and (all too often) their paranoia, do not facilitate the efficient allocation and use of human resources. The king says a citizen is a serf and will plow. Thus, in spite of his engineering ability, he plows. Democracy sets in place educational and social infrastructures by which one can legitimately leave the cornfield and invent a widget.

» Market-driven *capitalism* opens to one an easy avenue to profit from his widget. That is, capitalism permits the efficient allocation of resources, human and otherwise. It is an extremely powerful tool for encouraging innovation and invention—for encouraging people to put their minds to work. As such, it is a powerful wealth-generating system.

These two pillars, working together to support globalism, are producing one notable effect: *Nations around the world, including Israel's enemies, have easy access to information and technologies that would otherwise not be as readily available to them.* As a result, globalism is permitting nations around the world to develop robust, state-of-the-art military, communication, and transportation infrastructures at an unprecedented pace.

Japheth Bulks Up

A case in point is the Orient—comprised primarily of the descendents of Japheth. Revelation 9:16 tells us that an army of 200 million men will march on the Middle East. This is an undertaking orders of magnitude greater than anything the Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan (AD 1162-1227) attempted. Yet, God's Word is clear. Someday, Japheth will be capable of major power projection, a gigantic expeditionary force moving about 4,422 miles—the distance between Beijing and Jerusalem as the crow flies. The meandering path of an army on foot will be far longer.

How long would such a trek take? Imagine how deep the column of troops would need to be to get that many men past any single point in a week! The logistics of supplying that many troops with food, water, and medical supplies is mind-boggling. Think of the number of supply trucks and repair facilities that would be needed, not to mention the earthmoving equipment necessary to clear the path and build bridges or fords. Consider the number of aircraft and anti-missile batteries it would take to provide air cover for the infantrymen on the march below.

Could Japheth mount such a campaign today? Let us look at the *current* lay of the land.

Without question, Japheth has the *potential* of generating 200 million troops, as well as the personnel to support such a colossal projection of military power. If China were to coalesce with Japan alone, she would enjoy not only an increased population base, but the fruits of Japan's military efficiency. Today, "Japan, the true great power of the region, spends more than \$40 billion annually on the most advanced military establishment in Asia (and one of the largest)—a defense budget more than three times larger than China's."⁴ A coalition with other nations of Japheth—the Koreans, Indochina, India,

Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and others—would further increase her potential. China is certainly in a military position to gain control over other Asian nations.⁵

However, let us look away from *potentials* and focus on current *realities* of China's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The PLA consists of 2.8 million men, twice the number of military personnel in the United States, and by far the largest in the world.⁶ Yet, 2.8 million is a long way from 200 million. Moreover, China's army is almost wholly dedicated to ensuring *internal* security to her restive western provinces, where there is massive unemployment (an estimated 100 million adults out of work) and a virtual pre-industrial standard of living.

Furthermore, these troops are distinguished by their lack of mobility.

Only about 20 percent [or 560,000] of those ground forces are even equipped to move about *within* China. A still smaller number possess the trucks, repair facilities, construction and engineering units, and other mobile assets needed to project power aboard.⁷

The conclusion: "China's . . . [military] infrastructure cannot support large scale, joint force projection operations at any significant distance from the country's borders."⁸ To march 200 million men across Central Asia, China (with her allies) will have to develop and implement a far better logistics infrastructure than she today possesses.

Then, there is also the problem of training and equipment. "China owns considerably less top-level military equipment than medium military powers like Japan and Britain; it owns even less than smaller powers such as Italy, South Korea or the Netherlands."⁹ An alliance with the other nations of Japheth—especially Japan—would change this situation, but not enough to permit fielding a force of 200 million troops.

Even if the equipment were there, the training infrastructure is not. The bulk of the PLA is made up of semi-literate rural peasants, physically fit and patriotic, but lacking anywhere near the training to support modern logistics, communications and armament systems. "[D]efense spending per soldier is low by First World standards, indicating the dominance of quantity over quality. . . ."¹⁰

As well, China totally lacks the means to protect her troops on the march toward the Middle East. She is not able to provide air cover for the infantry.

China's air forces include only a few dozen so-called "fourth generation" combat aircraft and only a couple hundred "third generation" aircraft. The rest rely on 1960s or even older technology. By contrast, all of the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marines' 3,000-plus fighters are fourth-generation models.¹¹

Additionally, China has today no theater-missile defense system like our Aegis or THAAD systems. China recently acquired her first modern aircraft carrier—and parked her in Macao, where she serves as a recreation center.¹² Why? China has no means to protect her from missile attacks. She lacks a system functionally similar to America's Phalanx system.

God's Word says that Japheth will be headed west, toward the sphere of influence of Europe. How, does China's military compare with the current capabilities of Europe's? To be fair, we will need to build two scenarios.

Scenario One: Japheth's westward march takes place against a backdrop of Europe's *current* strategic strength. Right now, Europe, even without NATO, has plenty of defense capabilities against such an invading force.

Assuming Europe's current intelligence capabilities were still functioning when China commenced her initiative, she would have sufficient window of opportunity to respond proactively to the oncoming army of Japheth. Europe has the reconnaissance and intelligence facilities to detect its approach. If she felt threatened enough, she could respond strategically by detonating nuclear devices over the invaders while they were still well outside her territory. A few well-placed theater nuclear weapons (tactical bombs) would more than decimate that army, rendering it strategically unimportant long before it reached Eastern Europe.

According to this scenario, which assumes a strategically capable Europe, Japheth will need to develop the military assets to move *and* to defend the marching army from Europe's increasingly sophisticated missile systems. This will be a formidable task.

Scenario Two: Japheth's westward march takes place a bit later, when Europe's current strategic abilities have been badly degraded, if not destroyed, by the troubles of which we read in Revelation. Earthquakes and plagues, after all, take their toll, destroying power-generating facilities, military command and control centers, computer installations, and such. These troubles will certainly weaken Europe's ability to defend herself. Europe could come to the point where she is *unable* to exploit her advanced weapon technology against an approaching Eastern army.

Within this context, it may be worthwhile to consider Japheth's motivation to march westward. (By that time, according to prophecy, the United States will be out of the picture completely.) Japheth, noting the strategic degradation of Europe as a result of earthquakes and the like, may come to see an opening window of opportunity. By exploiting that opening, Asia could envision an end, once and for all, of the dominance of the Shemitic civilization encroaching on her shores, on her traditional culture. Perceiving a playing field rendered more level by Europe's troubles than it has been in centuries, Japheth may want to "seize the opportunity," and destroy "the tents of Shem" (Genesis 9: 27) in which she has been coerced to dwell.

According to this scenario, which assumes a strategically *degraded* Europe, Japheth will need to develop the military assets to *move* the army. Protecting the army from missile attacks will not be a major concern, because Europe will lack the ability to deploy such weapons effectively or reliably. Japheth's task, though still daunting, will be much easier.

Whichever scenario one accepts—and the difference is really just one of timing—the prophet Daniel makes one thing clear: The King of the North *is* troubled by "news from the east and from the north" (Daniel 11:44). He is troubled because, by the time Daniel's prophecy starts to play out, Japheth *will* be a menacing power to Europe, whether the King of the North is militarily strong (Scenario One) or weakened (Scenario Two). Japheth will then have the strategic and tactical capabilities needed to bring a vast army to Europe's doorstep.

It is globalism that God is using to give Japheth these capabilities. Globalism is making the acquisition of those capabilities possible—and with remarkable speed. In fact, one of the problems China-watchers have is the speed with which their information becomes dated. A few weeks, a month here and there, can make a major difference, forcing them to "reassess" conclusions published only a short time before.

Globalism and Empowerment

So great is America's desire to "push" her way of life—democracy and capitalism—on China that she has engaged her widely on a number of economic, cultural, and scientific fronts. The United States has, for example, granted China extremely favorable trading terms. As a result of globalism's "open system," China is gaining supercomputers, weapons delivery systems, and mobile assets very quickly. She is making significant changes to her officer corps, enhancing her command and control facilities, and upgrading her training infrastructure. "While most nations are reducing defense expenditures, . . . China is one of the few [nations] doing the opposite."¹³

How is she paying for all this?

» The ordinary Chinese citizen is paying big: China enjoys one of the highest savings rates in the world. She "now holds more than \$100 billion in low-yielding foreign-exchange reserves, the second largest reserves in the world."¹⁴

» The trade that is the heart and core of globalism is enriching her, giving her the capital—the buying power—to acquire technologies or to fund military research and the development, procurement, and implementation of modern weaponry.

With this domestically-generated grubstake and with the infusion of money produced by trade, China is developing a vast, educated middle class that can fund modernization and can eventually serve as the personnel in her army. China is changing fast, charged by the energy of globalization. The implications are important, since "[m]ilitary potential grows out of economic capacity."¹⁵

China's growing middle class may provide the opportunity for globalism's other pillar, democracy, to bud. Unless the worsening conditions in western China thwart the growth of a middle class in the more prosperous coastal regions, China could develop a middle class large enough, and with enough *per capita* income, to support some form of democracy.¹⁶ The form it takes may be something akin to the "soft" authoritarianism of Singapore.

However, this is surely not a given. Considering the Chinese *zeitgeist* and the powerful vested interests of government officials, America's attempt to push¹⁷ China into a market economy could cause her to collapse.¹⁸ Talk about unintended consequences! The result of such a debacle, given the lack of alternative political parties, could be military dictatorship. In this scenario, China may develop into a corporatist, rather than a democratic, state.

Thus, a number of opposing views about the shape of China's future government exists. Ironically, Taiwan, the culturally and politically legitimate China, may be the best bellwether. The Taiwanese dream of returning to the mainland under the good offices of the United States ended when America "derecognized" Taiwan in 1979. Taiwan did not give up, but *democratized*, becoming a leading "tiger" in the Asian economic and political world. She set the pace for other Asian nations, where

totalitarian governments began to fade slowly away, displaced (for now at least) by capitalism and democracy—both promising the wealth buried under "the tents of Shem" (Genesis 9:27). In China,

[t]his process of regime transition will likely reach a resolution—or possibly a crisis—in the next decade or so, as the current mixed political economies of China and [other Asian nations] come to the end of the line. Dictatorship will either be renewed, at bloody cost, or abandoned, to be succeeded perhaps by genuine liberalism, perhaps by chaos.¹⁹

There is every reason to believe that we will witness startling changes in China in the next few years. God may understand that it will take entrepreneur-driven capitalism undergirded by democracy to drive China's military advancement as fast as He wants it to grow. It may well be that America's "pushing" initiatives in China will cause enough *Sturm und Drang* among China's political elites—hardliners and liberals—to destabilize the nation, even to cause systemic collapse. More than a few commentators believe that a "crisis of regime" is long overdue in China. If that happens, China's leadership might choose to seek safety in "the tents of Shem" by establishing democratic institutions and integrating more fully into global capitalism. Alternatively, if that same leadership feels threatened enough, it might opt in paranoia to reject those tents fully, reverting to autocratic rule. The worst scenario is one where China is unstable, her leaders facing loss of power and privilege. An unstable China is the most dangerous China of all.

Nothing ordains that China's march to great power status cannot be derailed. Severe economic dislocation and political *fragmentation* could throw the country into disorder. . . . The last time China was weak and disunified [sic]—in the era of warlordism and revolution in the first half of the twentieth century—it was a disaster, not only for China, but also for international peace and stability.²⁰

Next month, we will look at a fourth use to which God may put globalism—to move *people* around.

Endnotes:

1 Andrew J. Bacevich, "Policing Utopia: The Military Imperatives of Globalization," *The National Interest*, Summer 1999, p. 5. Mr. Bacevich is professor of international relations at Boston University.

2 Rajan Menon and S. Enders Wimbush, "Asia in the 21st Century: Power Politics Alive and Well," *The National Interest*, Spring 2000, p. 78 (emphasis added).

3 Bacevich, *ibid.*, p. 9.

4 William Pfaff, "The Question of Hegemony," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2001, p. 221. *Foreign Affairs* is the principal organ of the Council on Foreign Relations.

5 Richard K. Betts and Thomas J. Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," *The National Interest*, Winter 2000/01, p. 17.

6 Bates Gill and Michael O'Hanlon, "China's Hollow Military," *The National Interest*, Summer 1999, p. 55.

7 Gill and O'Hanlon, *ibid.*, p. 56 (emphasis added).

8 Gill and O'Hanlon, *ibid.*, p. 59.

9 Gill and O'Hanlon, *ibid.*, p. 62.

10 Betts and Christensen, *ibid.*, p. 17.

11 Gill and O'Hanlon, *ibid.*, p. 57.

12 Gill and O'Hanlon, *ibid.*

13 James Lilley and Carl Ford, "China's Military: A Second Opinion," *The National Interest*, Fall 1999, p. 71. Mr. Lilley served as the United States ambassador to China from 1989 to 1991. Mr. Ford is president of Ford and Associates, an international consulting firm specializing in Asian military issues.

14 Bruce R. Scott, "The Great Divide in the Global Village," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2001, p. 160. Mr. Scott is Paul W. Cherington Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School.

15 Betts and Christensen, *ibid.*, p. 20.

16 George Crane, "China's Democratic Prospects: A Dissenting View," *The National Interest*, Fall 1999, p. 94. Mr. Crane is associate professor of politics and chair of the Department of Asian Studies at Williams College.

17 It is interesting to note Zweig's use of the verb *push*. He seems to understand the power the United States has on China, for good or evil: "Does the United States want to push China onto a path that could undermine the first extended period of economic growth and development experienced by the Chinese people in over a century and a half?"

18 David Zweig, "Undemocratic Capitalism: China and the Limits of Economism," *The National Interest*, Summer 1999, p. 63. See also the views of John Fitzgerald in his article, "China and the Quest for Dignity," *The National Interest*, Spring 1999, p. 47. Mr. Zweig is associate professor, division of social science, at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

19 Arthur Waldron, "The 'Chineseness' of Taiwan," *Policy Review*, August/September 2000, p. 27. Mr. Waldron is Lauder Professor of International Relations at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of Asian Studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

20 Betts and Christensen, *ibid.*, p. 29 (emphasis added).