

Greetings from Tyler,

Last week we heard nothing but “swine flu news.” And the jury is still out as to whether this is something that will develop into a serious threat to us all. But the borders with Mexico, where most cases are reported and where the strain originated, were never closed and now schools have resumed their schedules. We’ll have to wait and see if the hysteria was overblown, and whether there will be some attempt to inoculate the entire U.S. population at some point with a government mandated vaccine.

This week, the big news is that beautiful Santa Barbara, California is experiencing an out-of-control wildfire that is displacing tens of thousands of people and destroying tens of millions of dollars worth of property. California is already reeling toward bankruptcy. A state official is quoted as saying the state will be broke by July. But that will probably instigate another Federal bailout, if recent practices are any guide.

There are enough social, political and environmental controversies in play domestically to keep your head whirling as we watch our beloved United States devolve toward politically correct totalitarianism at the same time that the government is taking control of industry and finance.

Of even greater concern is the prospect of a nuclear Iran, and potentially, a nuclear Taliban. Washington is trying to diplomatically romance the Iranian leadership, and bring Syria into the fold. Traditional Arab “allies” Egypt and Saudi Arabia are less than enthusiastic. Israel appears poised to take action against Iran’s nuclear facilities, having, according to reports, already practiced dry runs. Meanwhile the U.S. administration is determined to impose its will for a Palestinian state on Israel, blaming the Iran’s push for nuclear weapons and the lack of Arab/Israeli peace on Israel.

Articles in the Jerusalem Post indicate that the U.S. administration is trying to get the Arabs, the Europeans and the UN to draw up an elaborate agreement that will include Israel withdrawing to pre-1967 borders and accepting millions of Palestinian refugees. According to a [very enlightening op-ed column in today’s Jerusalem Post](#), Israel would effectively cease to be a Jewish nation under the plan, and would be unable to defend itself against foreign attack. But even that logic is meaningless to the current framers of U.S. policy. Consider the following quote, “As far as the Obama administration is concerned, Israel is the only obstacle to peace.”

Circumstances dictate that the status quo cannot drag on much longer. You are aware that the pope is in the middle of a Middle East tour, with plans to visit Israel during the days ahead. Public statements he made in Jordan claim that the Vatican is not a political power, but intends to use its “spiritual power” to promote Middle East peace. One can only wonder what that might entail at this stage of the game. See the article on this story [here](#).

Prime Minister Netanyahu is scheduled to come to D.C. and meet with administration officials week after next. The preliminary meeting with Shimon Peres earlier this week

did not go well, and Netanyahu is expected to get a chilly reception as well. Everything to do with the traditional U.S./Israel alliance is being revamped. Israel is being treated as if it is the ugly stepchild of the Middle East, and a liability under the new strategy of trying to reason with and befriend our mutual enemies. Relations with Israel are already so strained that the author of the above noted article doubts that much further damage can be done if an attack on Iran goes forward.

It is amazing to see so many pieces of the prophetic puzzle falling into place. But there are still some open gaps, namely, a cohesive coalition of power in Europe. We'll have to watch intently to see if events in Pakistan, and the inevitable clash between Israel and Iran contribute to that eventuality.

The Garner Ted Armstrong telecast this week offered the booklet and audio sermon on The 144,000 of Bible prophecy. It brought in 472 requests with one hundred sixty six first time contacts. These are worrisome and disheartening times in which we live. This week's national prayer day came and went without much notice. But it's becoming clearer every day that that is the last hope for our nation and for the world.

Mark Armstrong

Articles mentioned in this Weekly Update:

[Obama's green light to attack Iran](#)

[Pope hopes church can play role in Mideast peace](#)