

Greetings from Tyler,

Whether or not mainstream media recognize it, the Iranian nuclear issue is the most urgent conundrum facing mankind. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu made his scheduled visit to Washington D.C. this week, and the meetings went virtually unreported. What little was available on the subject simply reiterated the U.S. administration's adamant intention to follow the diplomatic route, planning to reward Iran with status in the "international community" if they'll only allow UN inspectors to supervise their nuclear facilities. You'll remember the great dividends this strategy has yielded recently, in North Korea for example.

Asked to comment on his visit to D.C., Netanyahu said simply, "We will defend ourselves." As was pointed out last week, Israel's best hope for moral and/or monetary support for any move to deprive Iran of the ability to wipe Israel off the face of the map may be in relations with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the oil producing nations of the Gulf. Our Dept. of State has already showed its hand by letting it be known that if the diplomacy tactic fails, we'll just have to get used to a nuclear Iran. How does Israel just get used to a nuclear Iran? The head of the Iranian army blustered recently that Iran would need just 11 days to obliterate the Jewish state. One of four Israelis say they'll consider moving elsewhere if Iran gets to finish its bomb.

The other great concern is the situation in Pakistan, where the Taliban has made significant strides toward the capitol, reportedly holding outposts as near as sixty miles from Islamabad. Top American observers were assuring us last year that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal was secure. Lately, they're not nearly so confident. There is the problem of elements within the Pakistani military establishment that are "sympathetic" to Islamic extremism, on top of reports that the current Pakistani government is adding to its arsenal, and at the same time refusing to disclose the locations of those weapons. Try as you might, you'll be hard pressed to find much in the way of optimism in the age old Middle East conflict. Continuing to beat the drum for a two-state solution as the pope did in Israel last week, and as the U.S. State Department and the UN will no doubt do until the end of time, is as useless as it has been for the last forty years. But who's counting?

You may have seen the AP report this week with the headline, Britain's debt outlook lowered to negative. Standard and Poor "now estimates that the government's net debt burden will rise to nearly 100% of economic output by 2013..." If you've not heard any of the statements or interviews by Daniel Hannan, a Conservative Member of the European Parliament for South East England, let me paraphrase. England's social services have broken down, our health care system is in shambles, our treasury is empty, we are the scorn of nations, and America is hurtling down the very same path.

Here at home, where to start? Americans are numb now. The largest of the banks and the insurance companies are now under federal ownership and control. Barring a long shot legal challenge, ditto Chrysler. Next, General Motors is expected to be bought by the federal government, with investors and loan guarantors virtually wiped out in favor of the unions and their healthcare funds. And they said we'd be like France? We've zoomed past France in nationalization of private enterprise, but will probably never enjoy their brand of cheap, clean and safe nuclear power generation. But I digress.

California is next in line to become a wholly owned subsidiary of the federal government. Californians have had enough of "services" financed by deficit spending, and this week voted down every spending proposal offered. It will soon become the burden of all Americans to pay for California's deficits, according to the "too big to fail" logic that's devouring the future. States in the northeast are in big trouble too, queuing up behind California, and where it stops nobody

knows. One can't help wondering how the locals here in Texas will react when they finally realize that we'll be bearing the burden for carrying the debt run up by states which have little in common, ideologically. Having already seen a hint of that first reaction I can report that it is disbelief, so far.

So far as being a dynamic force for good in the world, it is apparent that the U.S. will be on the sidelines, broke, weak, humiliated, just like (formerly great) Britain is today. It's all starting to make perfect sense.

At last I can confidently report that we will be holding the Feast of Tabernacles at Panama City Beach, at the Boardwalk Beach Resort. It has taken quite some time to nail down, and I apologize for having left so many in limbo this long, but we do have a contract now, and you can confidently secure accommodations for what will be a wonderful environment for our Feast meetings and activities.

Our meeting last Sabbath in Kansas City (Overland Park) went very well. We had 38 in attendance, with at least ten or so visitors. Everyone was most enthusiastic, and we couldn't have hoped for a more enjoyable visit.

I'm also pleased to report that we have secured television time via Sky-Channel in England and Europe. It is on the Faith TV outlet, popular with a number of other religious programs. We'll be starting on May 31, Sundays at 6:30 am. It's hard to imagine getting very many phone responses, but we are putting the overseas dialing code on the screen. Still, the program will undoubtedly direct many viewers to our website where they'll have access to a great deal of our material.

The Garner Ted Armstrong television program over the last two weeks offered material on the Trinity and the subject of Heaven. The one on the weekend of May 10 brought in 301 requests (Heaven), with one hundred twenty four first time contacts. The program on the weekend of the 17th (Trinity) brought in 325 requests with one hundred sixteen first time contacts. If you hope to have a tranquil Sabbath and Memorial weekend, you may want to avoid the news for a day or two. And say a prayer for our country.

Mark Armstrong