

15 January 2010

Greetings from Tyler,

We are scarcely equipped to process the heartbreaking news of destruction and anarchy coming out of Haiti as a result of the devastating 7.0 earthquake and the after effects. So far as I know, no one can even hazard a guess as to the extent of the loss of life. As is customary for our nation in circumstances of catastrophe most anywhere in the world, it appears that the U.S. is moving all the manpower and supplies that can be mustered to try to bring aid to a people that already lived in unsafe, unsanitary, uncivilized circumstances even before the recent earthquake turned most structures into complete rubble, killing and crushing untold thousands.

Sadly, as we've seen amid so many other disasters, reports are beginning to emerge of criminal predators taking unconscionable advantage of the helpless and turning the disaster into an occasion to loot and rob. According to ABC News, cyber predators have already gone so far as to set up "fake charities" in an attempt to defraud people who want to contribute to Haiti's relief. How sick is that?

Many Americans pressed into relief efforts place themselves in grave danger as they attempt to do everything humanly possible to alleviate some of the suffering. Our hearts and prayers go out to the countless victims and to those who are trying to assist there on the ground.

Responding to media reports that Iran's nuclear program is well protected deep underground in fortified facilities, General David Petraeus said, "Well, they certainly can be bombed." Iran's pending nuclear capabilities are of great concern to the entire western world, and critical to Israel. Attempts at diplomacy have been a complete bust. Both Russia and China have dashed all hopes of successful UN sanctions. U.S. deadlines for diplomatic cooperation have been met with defiance, so the deadlines have been routinely extended. And, in defiance of all experience and logic, hope is still alive for a diplomatic breakthrough. Go figure.

Yet there is still a popular revolt brewing in Iran, and though it may have only the slimmest of chances for success, it may represent the best if not only hope of an outcome that does not involve a dangerous military conflict.

And if we thought the 40-plus year old "land for peace" formula was finally dead, we were wrong. Israel is still being pressured to give up half of Jerusalem and all the West Bank for the creation of a Palestinian state, with PM Netanyahu purportedly agreeing to cede quite a lot, maybe even part of Jerusalem. But that is in dispute as various public statements are parsed and their intent argued. But that might just be by design if reports of implied threats by Middle East envoy George Mitchell to cut off Israel's American aid are true.

There are no direct negotiations at this stage, but there are reportedly proxy negotiations

involving Jordan, Egypt and the U.S. But two factions, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, are vying for control of a non-existent Palestinian government, and have not managed to come to terms despite involvement of nearly the entire Arab world. Maybe Israel won't be able to turn Jerusalem and the West Bank over even if it wants too! According to an article on WorldNet Daily, there is "serious" discussion of international troops being brought in to secure the border between Israel and the West Bank. From our perspective, that would be another monumental development.

The Garner Ted Armstrong telecast this week brought 387 requests (for material on the false Trinity doctrine) with two hundred twenty one first time contacts. That's pretty amazing, given the mainstream's intractable, almost militant defence of the concept. God is still blessing His work, and His people despite everything.

Thanks to everybody, and have a great Sabbath.