

Greetings from Tyler,

By now you know that a war is underway in the newly independent state of [Georgia](#), a former possession of the [Soviet Union](#). Georgia is a “staunch ally” of the United States, with two hundred of their own fighters contributing to coalition efforts in Iraq. Those troops are reportedly being called home as Russian fighter jets have begun bombing Georgian air bases in South Ossetia. Georgia’s leadership is accused of igniting the hostilities by attacking the breakaway province of South Ossetia, prompting the Russians to get involved. But they were already involved, since they had “peacekeepers” stationed in the province, reputedly supporting factions working against independent Georgia. The situation has a long history, and is complicated, as you can see.

Russia has shown irritation as eastern European provinces have independently established diplomatic relations with the U.S., and lined up to come under the NATO umbrella. The U.S. and Russia have seen relations grow increasingly chilly in recent years, lining up on opposite sides of Iran, Eastern Europe, and there has even been some chatter about the possibility of Russian nuclear equipped bombers using Cuban airfields. U.S./Russian relations seem to have drifted back to a type of Cold War standoff reminiscent of the pre-1989 fall of the Berlin Wall.

Iran remains the ultimate concern at the present time, despite some presidential campaign quips to the contrary. Iran’s potential for devastating the U.S.A. with an [EMP attack](#) has gained tremendous attention over the past couple of weeks, including discussion with [John Bolton](#), former U.S. Ambassador to the UN on CNN Headline News. He gave the concern credence, as has the EMP Commission in its reports to Congress.

An Associated Press article yesterday ran with the headline, [Israel Considering Military Strike on Iranian Nuclear Sites](#). It mentions that Israel has purchased ninety F-16’s that put Iran within range, and two [Dolphin submarines](#) from Germany, capable of firing nuclear warheads.

[Other reports](#) have a “massive armada” made up of American, British and French ships heading for the Persian Gulf to join the formidable carrier groups already stationed there. Those reports are a little sketchy at this time, and only featured on some lesser-known outlets. If the reports are accurate, they’ll be confirmed by the major wire services within a couple of days. The “war fever” we’ve pointed out is building.

The short term good news is that the price of oil has fallen substantially over the past week and a half. The UK Telegraph proclaimed, [The Oil Bubble Has Burst](#). That article showed how exploration and output are on the increase worldwide, along with Middle Eastern suppliers showing a willingness to increase exports. The big question that is the subject of daily debate is whether the United States government will ever get around to addressing the subject of our need to become energy independent. At present, the issue is a political football, and will likely remain a point of argument and contention between political factions.

With a great many Americans struggling to maintain their standard of living in the face of rampant inflation, the prospect of a cold winter with out of sight heating oil prices and the financial drain at the gas station, the issue is getting more attention than ever. Congress adjourned and went on vacation without allowing consideration of the issue, with a handful remaining on Capitol Hill to keep the issue stoked up, a fact the mainstream news outlets have successfully ignored.

It appears that any opening of off-limits oil fields will be limited, and come only with massive subsidies for ineffective technologies that have so far failed to make a dent in our energy needs despite the fact that they've been under development for twenty five years or more.

God blessed this nation with an abundance of resources, not the least of which is the "can do" American spirit, but also natural resources that have helped to make our way of life the envy of the world. Now, we're dealing with the maturation of the anti-American sentiment of the '60's that has resulted in a national guilt complex of epic proportions. I rarely get to hear very much of Rush Limbaugh, but I did get to catch a segment earlier in the week that was absolutely brilliant.

If oil is "destroying the planet," his satire went, then we've got to put a halt to it! Stop drilling now, stop drilling everywhere! After all, if we're squandering the future of the planet, ruining the lives of our children and grandchildren we've got to stop it now, right? The logic needs consideration by the pious green lobby that wants to outlaw the great blessings of almighty God. It demonstrates just how ridiculous some of these notions become when you take posturing rhetoric to its ultimate conclusion.

We're compiling a fresh batch of articles, and will get out another issue of the ICN prior to the Feast.

The Garner Ted Armstrong telecast this week offered [The Bible, Fact or Fiction booklet](#) and two-part CD's, and resulted in 603 contacts with three hundred twelve first time callers. Response to the most recent letter is starting to roll in, and we are most appreciative of the interest, enthusiasm and support that keeps this work thriving. No small thanks, to those of you in the field!

Until next time,

Mark Armstrong