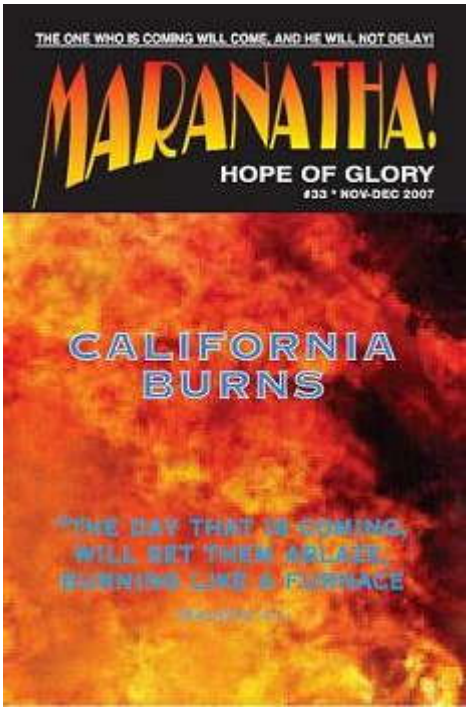
MHG 33 - NOV-DEC 2007 - CALIFORNIA BURNS



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HOLD FAST UNTIL I COME!

- Y'shua the Messiah

"I am coming quickly - *soon*!
Hold on to what you have,
so that no-one will take your crown."
"Hold fast to what you have until I come."
"Look! I am coming quickly.
Blessed is he who *lays to heart and* keeps
the words of the prophecy of this scroll."

(Revelation 3:11; 2:25; 22:7)

My dear Reader,

These words of our Master bring both comfort and a challenge to every believer in these treacherous times. The times are closing in; the Day of His coming is drawing near. The Judge is standing right at the door. (James 7:9)

Current world events are deepening and darkening. Wickedness is increasing; the nations are in an uproar; deep apprehension is building up in Iran, Israel, and the Middle East. Jerusalem is now "the heavy stone for all nations," and "the cup that causes reeling to all the peoples." The stage is being set for the prophesied endtime tribulation.

Petrol prices are reaching towards $100 a barrel; the dollar is down, the US is facing recession and its economic tremors are rippling around the globe. Apostasy is afflicting "the church"; and spiritual, moral and social conditions everywhere are in free fall. Disasters, economic and environmental, are a daily episode. The health of the world is "not good."

> "When these things begin to take place, straighten *yourselves* and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:28)

In view of the alarming world situation – the political, military, social and spiritual upheavals, and in view of our Saviour's words to us, let us hold fast to Truth, to the Faith, the Word of God, to Righteousness, Godliness, and the Commission of the Master!

"The end of all things is near" wrote the apostle Peter (1 Pet 4:7). His prophecy, no doubt, looked forward to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. But, clearly, its

import was intended, not just for the first century. It was intended also for the twenty-first century - for the endtimes which are now upon us.

In the Name of Messiah Y'shua, I implore all who love the Master, to stand firm in these days. And by "stand firm" I don't mean to stand like a huge lifeless statue chiselled out of stone. We need to stand firm in proclaiming the Gospel and the Return of the Saviour.

These are days when many Churches will not talk about the Second Coming, and when many "believers" disparage the Blessed Hope – the Rapture. Up to 90% of all church pulpits, I fear, are closed to the second coming message.

The 21st century "emerging church" is more concerned with prosperity, and how to make ourselves comfortable in this evil age. Crowds of "Christians" are seeking "signs and wonders" and "present rewards" rather than "the sign of His coming," and the reward that the Master will give to everyone according to what he has done, at His return. (Matthew 24:3, 30. Revelation 22:12)

So my appeal is to all who love His coming, to help us to herald the imminent return of Christ. You can do that by prayer, by sharing our messages, and by helping us to produce more literature, in English and other languages.

> Paul could say: "Now there is a crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Master, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also **to all who have loved His appearing**." (2 Timothy 4:8)

TO MY INDIAN READERS

I want to appeal to our dear Indian readers especially, to enthusiastically support the ministry of Gospel Trumpets and Bro Vijay in Hyderabad, like many of you supported the ministry when I was resident in India.

The Gospel Trumpets team has a burden to share the message more widely throughout your nation, through literature, and Second Coming seminars and meetings.

I am also very much aware of the persecution in many parts of the land in these days, and I encourage you not to forget the Saviour's promise:

> "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile, *insult and slander* you, *and when they* persecute you, telling all kinds of vicious lies about you because of Me. Rejoice, and be glad for your reward in heaven is great, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12)

SPREADING THE WORD WORLDWIDE

Another way you may be able to help is by introducing the MRC website to contacts around the world.

And if you have not checked out our website, let me tell you that there is a huge amount of material available there, which can be downloaded and printed. There are many of our books and magazines, some of which are no longer available in print;

plus a whole lot more. And we're adding more and more of our important past messages.

There are some of our booklets in French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Filipino, Korean, Dzongka and Tibetan.

Suggestion. Why not copy an interesting item, or even an introduction to, or title of, an item, and send to internet contacts, including the link. For example,:

THE COMING RAPTURE -
http://www.maranathamrc.com/rapture.htm

HOW TO SURVIVE IF YOU ARE LEFT BEHIND?
- http://www.maranathamrc.com/survive.htm

THE MESSIAH - http://www.maranathamrc.com/the_messiah.htm

THE MILITARY CRACKDOWN IN BURMA
http://www.maranathamrc.com/ma034.htm#BURMA

INDIANS OF MANASSEH TRIBE ARRIVE IN ISRAEL
http://www.maranathamrc.com/mrc134.htm

Suggestion**.** Maybe you would like to add an automatic "signature" to your emails, such as -

"Recommended website for Current Events and Bible prophecy
- www.maranathaMRC.com"

Well, my friend, by His grace we at MRC are standing with our Heavenly Master, and we're standing with you in these troublesome times. And thank you for your prayers, and for your faithful service for our Father, the Eternal One.

> "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast! Let nothing move you! Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Master *(our beloved Sovereign),* knowing that your labour in the Master is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Your brother in Y'shua the Messiah,

Don Stanton

WHEN THE WORLD'S ON FIRE!

"Look! The day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says YHWH of Hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." (Malachi 4:1)

Jesus is a wonderful Saviour!
He will carry you through!

Oh my precious brother, when the world's on fire,
You'll need my Jesus, to be your Saviour!
He'll guide you ever. He's the Rock of Ages
He's the Rock of Ages, just cleft for you!

"A fire consumes before them,
and behind them a flame burns." (Joel 2:3)

Oct 26, 07. The fires in southern California are being called the worst in American history, and they represent the biggest crisis since Hurricane Katrina.

There were dozens of fires in at least a dozen different areas, from around Los Angeles down to the Mexican border. They were driven by the fierce winds which Mexicans have called *vientos de Satan* (Satan's winds) which come through every few years, and significantly, usually arrive around Halloween. They can gust up to 150 km/h. and spread the inferno so quickly that they are unable to be contained.

More than one million people had to be evacuated. 1800 homes were destroyed, and the cost of rebuilding will be more than a billion dollars. The inferno has been described as "like a volcano," and "the Gates of Hell." It is amazing that only a few people lost their lives in the disaster.

IS GOD WARNING THE US?

The California fires began two days after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice completed her visit to Israel, and announced that she believed it is now time for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Some report that she also offered to blame Israel in the event that the upcoming peace conference in the US is a failure.

As California goes up in smoke, the US government is once again planning to strengthen Israel's enemies; this time announcing a $410 million package.

Sources in the US government stress that the aid marks an unprecedented effort aimed at saving the PA led by President Abbas. The US is thereby swerving from its traditional (careful) handovers and is handing over a sum approaching half a billion dollars.

Someone in Israel has quipped, "The Abbas-Fatah regime in the West Bank does need strengthening! When they cannot even guarantee the delivery of the morning newspaper, how can they guarantee they will deliver a peace deal that will work?"

The other enormous US disaster, Hurricane Katrina, in 2005, occurred at the time Israel, under pressure from the US, unilaterally pulled out of the Gaza.

This has been the general pattern over the past decade or more – whenever the US goes against the Abrahamic covenant, they invoke the curse, instead of blessing.

> "Now YHWH said to Abram, 'I will make you into a great nation, and *I will* bless you, and make your name great; and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'." (Genesis 12:1-3)

> "The land shall never ever be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you *are but* strangers and settlers with Me." (Leviticus 25:23)

See also article, **"THE U.S. HAS BEEN WARNED, AND WARNED, AND WARNED AGAIN,"** by the Jerusalem Watchman :

http://www.stangoodenough.com/?p=83

AMERICA CAN CHOOSE TO BE BLESSED OR CURSED!

AN AMERICAN SPELLS OUT THE ALARMING CONDITIONS IN THE US TODAY

* The Western third and the South-eastern US are under severe to extreme drought conditions.

* California is experiencing the worst fires in the history of the nation. They have caused the evacuation of nearly 1 million people, the destruction of more than 1,800 homes, and one billion dollars in damage.

* New Orleans is experiencing flooding.

* Atlanta's water supply is running out.

* National gasoline prices are averaging over $2.80.

* China and Japan have been dumping the dollar on foreign markets, causing a devaluing of the dollar against other currencies.

* Oil prices are hovering at record levels.

* A school board in Maine voted to give birth control pills to sixth graders without parental notification.

* California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed into law bills designed to teach homosexuality as normal in California's public schools.

The U.S. Congress is considering legislation to require employers to hire homosexuals by not allowing businesses to discriminate based on "sexual orientation."

* The Bush Administration's relationships with China, Russia, Iran and Turkey have been strained in recent weeks, calling some attention to those nations that are prophetically involved in end time prophecies.

The President recently said that he believes, "… in an Almighty God, and I believe that the entire world, whether they be Muslim, Christian, or any other religion, prays to the same God. That's what I believe."

* And Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is pressuring Israel to divide the city of Jerusalem in a "land for peace" deal.

* The United States through its leadership is on a fast track in turning against God. Psalm 33:12 says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD."

If the leadership of this nation reflects the nation, it is apparent that America is turning away from the LORD. In Zechariah 12:9, YHWH says, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

These are days of great prophetic significance. The prophecies contain both blessings and judgments and while people cannot stop the march of prophecy, they may determine their place in it. It is time to stand firm in the Lord. - by Bill Wilson / Oct 07

http://www.watch.org/ owart.php3?idx=97105&rtn=/index.html&showsubj=1&mcat=1

America is already in a vulnerable position, its dollar having fallen to near all-time lows against the rest of the world. And now, the economic climate for Americans themselves is getting ugly. In tough times, what will be the priority of politicians? Keeping voters happy? Lower oil prices? Or continuing to support Israel? Unfortunately, this last policy will prove to be mutually exclusive with the other objectives.

EXPERTS FEAR A 1929 ECONOMIC CRASH

OCT 16, 07. Some prominent economic experts have warned that "insiders with conflicts of interest" allied to the Fed's policy of tanking (inflating) the dollar to bail out Wall Street, could lead to a repeat of the economic crash of 1929.

DOLLAR SINKS TO 26-YEAR LOW vs POUND; RECORD LOW AGAINST EURO; NEW LOWS ON ECONOMY

OCT 30, 07. The dollar fell to a new record low against the euro and a 26-year low against the British pound after lower-than-expected consumer confidence data was released ahead of Wednesday's Federal Reserve interest rate decision.

The dollar slid against the euro throughout the afternoon, as the euro peaked at $1.4440, the latest in a string of all-time highs against the dollar, before settling at $1.4434. The pound rose to $2.0679 in New York trading on Tuesday - a level last seen in 1981. - New York / Associated Press

DOLLAR AND OIL HIT NEW RECORDS

OCT 26, 07. Oil hit a new record high of $94 a barrel and the dollar struck a new low as investors showed their growing certainty that the US Federal Reserve will cut interest rates.

The same conviction also saw gold approach $800 a troy ounce - its highest level for 28 years - while equities made gains. The move into gold reflects how investors fear rising inflation from the twin forces of higher oil prices and a weaker dollar.

> "Come now, you rich, weep and wail because of the miseries that are coming upon you." (James 5:1)

THE IMPENDING MONETARY CRISIS

Chuck Missler has written in an informative article (see link below):

We need to understand the precariousness of the U.S. dollar and its role in the international monetary markets: two-thirds of world trade is conducted in dollars; over 70% of central banks' reserves are held in the American currency; and, the U.S. dollar is the sole currency used by international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

This has conferred on the U.S. a major economic advantage: the ability to run a trade deficit year after year. It can do this because foreign countries need dollars to repay their debts to the IMF, to conduct international trade, and to build up their own currency reserves. A move away from the dollar could have a disastrous effect on the U.S. economy as the U.S. would no longer be able to spend beyond its means.

Worse still, the U.S. would become a net currency importer as foreigners would seek to spend back in the U.S. a large proportion of the estimated three trillion dollars which they currently own.

THE OIL EXPORTERS

Up until the early 1950s, the U.S. dominated world oil production, so sales of oil and natural gas on international markets had been exclusively denominated in dollars. The U.S. in those days accounted for half or more of the world's annual oil production. That, of course, has drastically changed: we are entering a period in which we need to import almost 70% of our requirements!

The tendency to price in dollars was additionally reinforced by the 1944 Bretton Woods agreement, which established the IMF and World Bank and adopted the dollar as the currency for international loans. The "gold exchange standard" was also established: the U.S. dollar was to be convertible to gold by foreign governments.

However, by the 1970s foreign dollar holdings had grown to five times the available gold. So, in August 1971, President Nixon suspended all gold payments.

Today, depreciating paper dollars are backed only by the "reputation" of the U.S. Government.

While the denomination of oil sales is not a subject that is frequently discussed in the media, its importance is certainly well understood by governments.

For example: when President Nixon took the U.S. off the gold exchange standard, OPEC considered moving away from dollar oil pricing, as dollars no longer had the guaranteed value they previously did.

The U.S. response was to have various secret deals with Saudi Arabia in the 1970s to ensure that the world's most important oil exporter would stick with the dollar. What the Saudis did, OPEC followed.

THE THINK-TANKS WARN

Countries switching to euro reserves from dollar reserves will bring down the value of the U.S. currency. Imports would start to cost Americans a lot more — As countries and businesses convert their dollar assets into euro assets, the U.S. property and stock market bubbles would, without doubt, burst. -The Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability

The dollar's position is already on the decline in many countries. - Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco

China has officially declared that it will diversify a part of its foreign exchange holdings into oil by building a strategic petroleum reserve. The construction of huge storage tanks has begun and will take several years until completion.

On January 24, 2007, Kuwait announced that it is considering abandoning pegging its dinar to the dollar for fear of an anticipated slide in the value of the dollar.

Last year, the central banks of Italy, Russia, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates had announced similar shifts out of the dollar and into other currencies, or gold, citing the United States' "twin deficits" (federal deficit and the trade deficit) as the reasons for the expected fall in the dollar's value. – Koinonia House - Aug 2007. http://www.khouse.org/articles/2007/730/print/

JAPAN & CHINA LEAD FLIGHT FROM DOLLAR

OCT 17, 07. Japan and China led a record withdrawal of foreign funds from the United States in August, heightening fears of a fresh slide in the dollar and a spike in US bond yields.

Data from the US Treasury showed outflows of $163 billion (£80bn) from all forms of US investments. "These numbers are absolutely stunning," said Marc Ostwald, an economist at Insinger de Beaufort.

Asian investors dumped $52bn worth of US Treasury bonds alone, led by Japan ($23bn), China ($14.2bn) and Taiwan ($5bn). It is the first time since 1998 that foreigners have, on balance, sold Treasuries.

Mr Ostwald warned that US bond yields could start to rise again unless the outflows reverse quickly: "Woe betide US Treasuries if inflation does not remain benign". - London Daily Telegraph - By Ambrose Evans-Pritchard

WEAK DOLLAR PROMPTS RECORD FOREIGN BUYOUTS OF U.S. COMPANIES

OCT 2, 07. European, Asian and Canadian companies are taking advantage of the weaker dollar to buy their U.S. counterparts at a record pace, increasing investment

in the United States but also raising fears about a potential loss of jobs and autonomy.

”We could be looking at the world’s largest tag sale if we continue to see declines in the dollar,” said Donald Klepper-Smith, chief economist at DataCore Partners. - Boston Globe

FEARS OF DOLLAR COLLAPSE AS SAUDIS TAKE FRIGHT

SEPT 21, 07. Saudi Arabia has refused to cut interest rates in lock-step with the US Federal Reserve for the first time, signalling that the oil-rich Gulf kingdom is preparing to break the dollar currency peg in a move that risks setting off a stampede out of the dollar across the Middle East.

“This is a very dangerous situation for the dollar,” said Hans Redeker, currency chief at BNP Paribas. “Saudi Arabia has $800bn (£400bn) in their future generation fund, and the entire region has $3,500bn under management. They face an inflationary threat and do not want to import an interest rate policy set for the recessionary conditions in the United States,” he said.

The Saudi central bank said today that it would take “appropriate measures” to halt huge capital inflows into the country, but analysts say this policy is unsustainable and will inevitably lead to the collapse of the dollar peg. As a close ally of the US, Riyadh has so far tried to stick to the peg, but the link is now destabilising its own economy. - London Daily Telegraph

Read full article>

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/main.jhtml?xml=/money/2007/09/19/bcnsaudi119.xml&CMP=ILC-mostviewedbox

“SAUDI PLANS TO KEEP RIYAL PEGGED TO THE DOLLAR” - FOR NOW

SEPT 20, 07. Saudi Arabia is likely to keep the riyal’s peg to the dollar and a cut in interest rates will ``not help the Saudi economy.” “It’s not necessary that there will be a de-pegging of the riyal from the U.S. dollar, not in the near future,’’ said Ihsan Bu-Hulaiga, who heads a government- appointed finance committee that advises King Abdullah.

MORTGAGE CRISIS “WILL DRAG THE US INTO RECESSION”

AUG 24: 07. The chief executive of Countrywide Financial, the mortgage lender that was handed a $2bn (£1bn) lifeline by Bank of America, said the housing market showed no signs of improvement and would push the US into a recession.

Calling the credit crunch “one of the greatest panics I’ve ever seen in 55 years of financial services,” Angelo Mozilo added that, although world stock markets appear to have stabilised, the commercial paper market was still depressed.

IMF: DOLLAR MAY SUFFER 'ABRUPT FALL

OCT 22, 07. WASHINGTON (AFP) — The head of the International Monetary Fund, Rodrigo Rato, warned of a potential "abrupt fall" in the US dollar that could impact the global economy.

"There are risks that an abrupt fall in the dollar could either be triggered by, or itself trigger, a loss of confidence in dollar assets," Rato said at the close of annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank.

The outgoing IMF managing director spoke here as the European single currency hit a new high of 1.4347 dollars and global equity markets plunged amid renewed fears a US credit crunch could pitch the world's biggest economy into recession.

GLOBAL STOCKS SEE SHARP DECLINES

OCT 22, 07. European shares have fallen sharply in morning trading, mirroring earlier falls in East Asia as worries about the US economy continue.

The UK's FTSE 100 index was down 1.4% to 6,435 just after noon in London, while Germany's Dax had lost 1.4%, and France's Cac had shed 1.3%. Tokyo's Nikkei index closed 2.2% lower. European and East Asian markets were responding to heavy US share falls on Wall Street. The Dow Jones, the main US share index, fell 367 points on Friday, the 20th anniversary of the Black Monday stock market crash.

The falls were set off by concerns that the full effects of the US housing slowdown have not yet been seen.

KEEP YOUR MINDS ON ETERNAL THINGS

Given the mix of factors at play, it is a treacherous time. We can expect some desperate actions. Dear readers, keep your minds on eternal things.

> "Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys." (Luke 12:33)

THE NORTHERN CONFEDERATION TAKING SHAPE

There is a lot happening in the Russia-Middle East sphere. And the persistent question is, "Will the US and/or Israel attack Iran's nuclear facilities?"

VLADIMIR PUTIN'S VISIT TO IRAN

Vladimir Putin's visit to Iran - the first visit by a Russian President to that country since 1943 - was very ominous, as were the recent warnings traded between the US and Russia.

George Bush warned Putin against aiding Iran's nuclear plans, saying a nuclear Iran would lead to World War 3. And Putin warned Bush to keep out of the Caspian states, while signing an agreement with those states to block outside powers from using their territory. In particular, Putin had in mind, Azerbaijan, which has been cooperating, and building links with the US.

Putin, who is now being called the "New Czar" of Russia, I believe, is seeking to create the Northern Confederation including Iran and the Caspian and other states of Beth-Togarmah. (Ezekiel 38:6)

PUTIN STANDS BY IRAN

During his visit to Iran, President Putin offered qualified support for Iran's nuclear programme. Russia would not accept military strikes against Iran, he said. He also criticized the new U.S. sanctions imposed on the Islamic republic.

ISRAEL'S STRIKE ON SYRIAN SITE

Israel is clearly worried about Syria's military buildup, and its intention of retaking the strategic Golan Heights.

Israel's strike in Syria in September, on what reports say was a "Nascent Nuclear Facility built with North Korean expertise," is still shrouded in secrecy.

OLMERT'S DASH TO RUSSIA

Ehud Olmert made an unannounced dash to Russia to "warn" or "persuade" President Putin of the Iranian nuclear danger. He discussed Russian arms exports to Iran as well as Teheran's nuclear weapons program.

Olmert's discussion with Putin also focused on Moscow's plans to sell strategic military systems to Damascus, *Middle East Newsline* reported.

Officials said Olmert urged Putin to halt Russia's plans to deliver the S-300PMU1 air defence system to Syria. "The Russians plan to deliver the S-300 over the next few weeks and this was a desperate attempt by Olmert to stop this," an official said.

Israel is pressing a last-minute diplomatic offensive to stop the Russian sale to Syria of a strategic air defence system.

Officials say that in the wake of the September strike by Israel, Russia and Syria have concluded that Damascus needs the S-300 to protect it against Israeli air missions.

"The deal would be financed by Iran, which also needs the S-300 against any American attack," an official said. "The deployment of the system would change the military balance in the Middle East."

Officials said Putin assured Olmert that he would consider Israeli security requirements, but did not agree to reduce Moscow's military relations with Iran. - Oct 07

IRAN DEFIANT OVER NUCLEAR ISSUE

OCT 5. 07. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has made a defiant speech defending Iran's nuclear programme against criticism from Western countries.

He said Iran was no longer willing to discuss its undeniable right to nuclear energy - and he described the nuclear programme as a great victory for Iran.

IRANIAN STUDENTS PROTEST AGAINST AHMADINEJAD

OCT 9, 07. About 100 students have staged a rare protest against President Ahmadinejad, calling him a "dictator" as he gave a speech marking the beginning of the academic year at the Tehran University.

The protest prompted scuffles between the demonstrators and hardline university students loyal to Ahmadinejad, who ignored chants of "Death to dictator" and continued his speech on the merits of science and the pitfalls of Western-style democracy.

Ahmadinejad faced a similar outburst during a speech last Dec, when students at a Technical University called him a dictator and set fire to his picture.

Students were once the main power base of Iran's reform movement but have faced intense pressure in recent years from Ahmadinejad's hard-line government, making anti-government protests rare.

In recent months, dissenters have witnessed an increasing crackdown in Iran, and hundreds have been rounded up on accusations of threatening the Iranian system. Numerous pro-reform newspapers have been shut down and those that remain have been muted in their criticism fearing closure. - The Independent / 9 Oct.07

ISRAEL SAYS: IRAN HAS CROSSED RED LINE FOR DEVELOPING NUKE "IT'S TOO LATE FOR SANCTIONS"

OCT 23, 07. This was the message Ehud Olmert carried urgently to French President Nicolas Sarkozy on Monday and to British Prime Minister Gordon Brown on Tuesday, according to DEBKAfile's military and intelligence sources. – www.debka.com.

Last week, Olmert placed the Israeli intelligence warning of an Iranian nuclear breakthrough before Russian president Vladimir Putin, while Israel's defence minister Ehud Barak presented the updated intelligence on the advances Iran has made towards its goal of a nuclear weapon to American officials in Washington, including President Bush.

Olmert will be telling Sarkozy and Brown that the moment for diplomacy or even tough sanctions has passed. Iran can only be stopped now from going all the way to its goal, by direct, military action.

CHENEY - NO NUCLEAR ARMS FOR IRAN

The US Vice-President, Dick Cheney, has warned Iran's government it will not be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon.

Mr Cheney said the United States and the international community could not stand by as a "terror-supporting state" fulfilled its grandest ambitions.

He accused Tehran of practising delay and deception to buy time to pursue nuclear technology and of being an obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

"WE CAN ATTACK IRAN," SAYS US COMMANDER

OCT 19, 07. America's top military officer said the country does have the resources to attack Iran, despite the strain of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Adm Michael Mullen, who took over as chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff three weeks ago, said diplomacy remained the priority in dealing with Iran's suspected plans to develop a nuclear weapon and its support for anti-US insurgents in Iraq. – Washington

BRITAIN 'ON BOARD' FOR US STRIKES ON IRAN

OCT. 10, 07. British defence officials have held talks with their Pentagon counterparts about how they could help out if America chose to bomb Iran. Washington sources say that America has shelved plans for an all-out assault, drawn up to destroy the Iranian nuclear facilities and take out the Islamist regime.

The Sunday Telegraph has learned that President Bush's White House national security council is discussing instead, a plan to launch pinpoint attacks on bases operated by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Quds force, blamed for training Iraqi militants.

Pentagon officials have revealed that President Bush won an understanding with Gordon Brown in July that Britain would support air strikes if they could be justified as a counter-terrorist operation. - Washington

FRANCE TAKING A STRONG STAND

Oct 29. It is reported that the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, plans a state visit to Jerusalem in a few weeks, during which he will the address the Knesset on the Iranian nuclear threat, counter-measures and his commitment to Israel's security.

ATTACK ON IRAN MAY NOT HAPPEN SO SOON

Stratfor intelligence service has analysed the pros and cons of a US attack on Iran, and concludes that the US could not neutralize Iran in the near future.

See> http://www.stratfor.com/products/premium/gir.php

Ezekiel 38 indicates that Iran will be involved in the Russian Confederation in the coming world war. So we don't expect it to be wiped out before then.

TURKEY AND THE KURDS

Events in Turkey, a main Togarmah (Turkamen) nation, are changing. Last month the US House of Representatives accused Turkey of committing genocide against Armenians early last century. This, as well as Turkey's declared intention to take action against the PKK, Turkish-Kurd fighters sheltering in northern Iraq, has led to a rift between the US and Turkey. These issues could cause Turkey to weaken or to sever ties with Israel, the US, and Europe, and to establish closer ties with Russia, Syria and Iran.

The Kurds are believed to be descendants of the ancient Medes. They inhabit territory that is currently part of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. They have been fighting for decades for an independent Kurdistan. Thousands were slaughtered by Saddam Hussein's regime, and there has been a continuous conflict in Turkey where a large population of Kurds has long been suppressed.

In North Iraq, the Kurds now have an autonomous administration within the Iraqi government.

Turkey, Syria and Iran are strongly opposed to a greater Kurdistan. (See informative article from The Australian: **"Kurds Keep their Eyes on the Main Prize,"** on our website: www.maranathaMRC.com)

MK: "NUCLEAR BOMB WON'T DESTROY ISRAEL"

Oct 23, 07. Maj.-Gen. (res.) Isaac Ben-Israel told Ynet, 'Just like earthquakes we've seen, a nuclear bomb can't destroy a state in which seven million people live.

"An atomic bomb, of the type being developed by Iran, can't destroy Israel, period. It causes death in a 500 meter radius, but it can't destroy Israel." That was the

calming message given to Ynet Tuesday by Knesset Member Prof Isaac Ben-Israel, a major general in the reserves.

"A nuclear Iran," the Kadima MK (Member of Knesset - parliament) said, "is an intolerable threat to Israel – and Israel must do everything so that Iran will never have such a bomb."

A nuclear Iran has a long line of consequences, the first of which is not necessarily a firing of a nuclear weapon at Tel Aviv. "There's no chance in the world that if Iran will have a bomb the Arab Sunni states won't follow suit," Ben-Israel said. "Already, all Arab states termed 'moderate' have announced that they are commencing their own peaceful nuclear programs, out of fear from the Shiite revolution.

"That's because Iran, in addition to its aim to destroy Israel, publicly declares its wish to export the Shiite revolution. Therefore, it is only a matter of time before they have a bomb," He said. On the other hand, if Iran abandons the project, "it's fair to assume that Arab states will sit quietly, as they have done until today."

The next implication is the end of the Israeli ambiguity: "If the day comes in which Iran has a nuclear bomb, and other Arab states in the area follow it – Israel will have to end its ambiguity on the issue. From this point, not much time will pass until the Middle East will not only be unstable, but it will also be saturated with nuclear weapons," the MK said.

"In such a state, where a war breaks out here every two days due to lack of understandings – one can only guess who will be the first to fire this weapon," he said. "Similar response will come down on their heads."

Ben-Israel said the Iranian threat of firing "11,000 rockets in a minute" was unrealistic. "No state in the world can do that, not the US, so let's not give them that kind of credit. They don't even have hundreds of missiles that can reach here, maybe only dozens. And even if they launch dozens of bombs, most of them will be taken down by the Arrow (anti-missile shield)."

"Therefore, no more than a few dozen bombs will penetrate the defensive system. And beyond that, after the first or second are fired – and it will take them around ten minutes to arrive – a similar response will come down on their heads."

Asked what the damage of a nuclear attack would be, Ben-Israel said, "Does a bomb destroy a country? Of course not. An atomic bomb of this type – a 10 to 20 kiloton bomb, such as the type that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causes death in the 500 to 1000 meter radius around the fall zone. That may sound like a big relief, but it isn't.

"In Tel Aviv, 20 to 30,000 people live in a 500 meter radius, a number equivalent to the total count of casualties in all of Israel's wars until today. That many could be killed by one atom bomb. In any case, just like earthquakes we've seen, it doesn't destroy a state in which seven million people live. A hydrogen bomb, for example, has a more explosive force, but Iran hasn't even begun to go in that direction. - www.ynetnews.com

THE SAMSON OPTION

Israel has in place, a plan known as the Samson Option. Within moments of a nuclear warhead being launched against them, Israel will unleash nuclear missiles to devastate the capital cities of all enemy states.

THE SUMMIT

& THE BATTLE FOR JERUSALEM

This year, Israel celebrated the 40th anniversary of the re-unification of Jerusalem.

The battle 40 years ago during the 1967 Six Day War reunited a divided city between Jordan and Israel. And for the first time in more than 2,000 years, Israel controlled the city of Jerusalem.

Some fear that what Israel won on the battlefield could be lost at the negotiating table.

The Palestinians and Israelis are scheduled to meet at the "peace summit" Annapolis, USA, this month (Nov) or early December.

President Bush and Condoleezza Rice, in the meantime, are pressurising the Olmert govt, and the Palestinian Fatah leadership, to agree on a substantial declaration of intent, that would make the Annapolis Summit a success (if it actually takes place).

Abbas has begun threatening both Israel and America of dire consequences unless the Palestinians' demands are met, including the surrender of East Jerusalem.

Most of the world – especially the Arabs – seems very doubtful about the summit's prospects for success. But the United States appears determined to force some sort of "peace" upon that part of the Middle East.

Both the Palestinians and Israelis have "redlines" - points they cannot concede, boundaries they will not cross, and demands that must be accepted.

The Palestinians want the declaration to outline specifically a Palestinian state including the Gaza Strip, West Bank and essentially all of east Jerusalem, which

includes not only the Muslim holy places, but those of the Jews and Christians as well.

Israel will not accept that demand, but wants a compromise that will satisfy their own national needs, provide security, and be a viable solution. And it will never give up all of east Jerusalem.

Rice has told Abbas to lower his expectations, but at the same time, she is pressuring Israel to drop all of its "redline demands."

The Palestinians are pressuring Secretary Rice to guarantee that Israel will relinquish sovereignty over the Temple Mount. Their demand is that Israel must surrender the very heart and soul of Judaism as the price of admission to even start discussing peace.

Rice reportedly has told Palestinian negotiators that she would publicly blame Israel for the failure of the summit if the Jewish state didn't agree to evacuate east Jerusalem neighborhoods.

Since 1967, Israel has steadfastly claimed a united Jerusalem as "its eternal capital, never to be divided again." But under PM Olmert, the division of Jerusalem somehow, is on the table. He is willing to give some areas to the Palestinians, but he knows that any attempt to hand over the old city would bring down his Kadima-led government.

In fact his coalition could collapse at any time, as his right wing partners are unwilling to support a give away of Jerusalem.

The collapse of the Kadima coalition is expected to lead to a Likud government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, who says Israel must keep Jerusalem.

The collapse of the summit, before, during or after the event, could lead to a collapse of the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority. Mahmoud Abbas has threatened to resign if the summit fails. (But, of course, you can never take Abbas' word as being definite. He has a constant record of going back on his declarations and agreements.)

The likely result of a failed Summit would be, before long, a Hamas takeover of the West Bank – similar to what happened in Gaza.

As Likud and Hamas take extreme positions, a major war would be ahead. But war is ahead whichever way it goes. The possibility of two states living peacefully together is a remote hope.

If the summit succeeds, and Olmert facilitates a Palestinian state, say within a year, (or before the Bush administration comes to an end), and pulls its army out, the Fatah will seek an accommodation with Hamas, and before long the West Bank will become a radical terrorist state.

Israel would then face attacks from all sides – West Bank, Gaza, Syria, Lebanon, and al-Qaida. Israel would be compelled to use extreme force in retaliation, and to counter increasing heavy attacks. And this would continue until the Antichrist appeared and arbitrated the seven year treaty of the Great Tribulation.

These are the alternatives, with or without a Palestinian state. But lasting peace will not happen. The Bush plan will be yet another disaster. And even the Antichrist's "peace" will break down within a few months, and world war will break out.

Prophecy writer Hal Lindsey makes this comment:

"You know, I fear for both President Bush and Secretary Rice. I also fear for my beloved country. They must be ignorant of a prophecy God made 2,500 years ago through the Hebrew prophet Zechariah. It applies to this precise time and situation in history. God said, 'Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples. …'

"The people surrounding Jerusalem are all the current Muslim nations. As predicted, they have become intoxicated over possessing Jerusalem. Like drunken people, their emotions, inflamed with religious zeal, are causing them to do unwise, reckless and violent things.

"The truth is that hardly any Muslims travelled to visit Jerusalem before the Jews returned to it. Now you would think there is no other holy place on earth as important to them.

"These are the exact conditions Zechariah predicted would be part of the last stages of this age. The prophet continues:

> "It shall happen in that day that I WILL make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for ALL PEOPLES. …"

– meaning the entire world. Now here's the punch line:

> "ALL who would seek to heave it away will surely be cut in pieces."

The original Hebrew makes the meaning of this even clearer. It reveals that everyone who tries to remove the heavy burden of the Jerusalem crisis will be utterly destroyed for getting involved with it. Isaac and Ishmael's fight over possession of Jerusalem has drawn the whole world into it – just as the prophets predicted. It is the culmination of Ishmael's 4,000-year-old hatred of his half-brother Isaac, the forefather of the Israelites.

"I pray that somehow this message will get through to President Bush and Secretary Rice. This prophecy applies to this very moment in which we live. And in light of what they are forcing on Israel, it applies to them personally.

"While Bush and Rice strive to create legacies for themselves – just as most presidents have tried to do with the Middle East conflict for the last 40 years – they not only endanger themselves, but also endanger this nation with the divine curse promised above. Mr. President, there is nothing on this earth worth what you are doing.

"In the power of God's Spirit, I warn them both, **"Stop, before it's too late!"** - http://hallindsey.org/

NETANYAHU: ISRAEL MUST KEEP JERUSALEM

Benjamin Netanyahu, according to current poll numbers, is Israel's most popular politician. "Jerusalem has been the pulsating heart of the Jewish people," he said. "Now there are those who come and say, 'let's divide this heart'."

Netanyahu warned that Islamic militants will take control of any part of the city evacuated by Israel — as they did in the Gaza Strip after Israel withdrew from that territory in 2005. "The first thing that will happen is that when we leave, Hamas comes in," he said.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said: "I think Mr. Netanyahu should focus on peacemaking, rather than trying to undermine the fledgling peace process. They (Israelis) all know at the end of the day that Jerusalem must be the capital of the two states."

Netanyahu called the Old City "the most explosive square kilometre in human history" kept calm only by Israel's presence. Islamic militants "will do here things that we cannot even imagine," he said.

It was only under Jewish control that the city has been open to all religions. Israel captured east Jerusalem, including the walled Old City, in the 1967 Six-day war.

"SAVE JERUSALEM" EMERGENCY COALITION FORMS

An unprecedented coalition of American Jewish groups has formed on short notice to ensure that united Jerusalem remains Jewish.

Among the member organizations are the National Council of Young Israel, the Orthodox Union, the Rabbinical Council of America, Emunah Women of America, AFSI, Hineni, AJOP (Outreach), NCSY, Poalei Agudath Israel of America, ZOA, and more. More organizations are set to join in the coming days.

The formation of the coalition marks the first time since the establishment of the State of Israel that a significant group of American Jewish organizations has united in opposition to Israeli government policy; many of the member organizations are among Israel's most loyal and active supporters. - Arutz Sheva / Oct 23, 07

E.U. TO ATTEND PEACE SUMMIT

The EU has announced that Javier Solana, the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, will be in attendance at the meeting in Maryland, along with his counterpart Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commissioner for External Relations.

The EU fully endorsed the Saudi Initiative when it was proposed by the Arab League earlier this year. The initiative offers Israel normalised relations and recognition of its right to exist from most Arab states, but only in exchange for a full withdrawal from all land captured in the Six Day War and a right of return for Palestinian refugees.

Arab nations have demanded that Israel accept the initiative without any preconditions. Some threatened war if Israel refused to accept the plan.

PM Olmert had said the plan was interesting, but he could not commit to the right of return, as this would be the equivalent of state-suicide for the Jewish nation.

The EU spokesperson stated that the issue of the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees must be discussed at the conference. The EU plans to continue applying pressure on both parties in order to reach an agreement.

"ANNAPOLIS MAY NOT HAPPEN"

OCT 25, 07. Doubts have surfaced at the highest levels over whether or not next month's conference aimed at pushing forward the creation of a Palestinian state on Israel's land will convene after all.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice revealed that the conference could be in jeopardy. "Our concern is growing that without a serious political prospect for the Palestinians ... we will lose the window for a two-state solution," said Rice, who has invested heavily in trying to get the conference off the ground.

Her fears were echoed by Ehud Olmert, who yesterday played down expectations for the conference, saying it would not produce a binding peace agreement with the "Palestinians" and may not even take place.

RIVAL PEACE CONFERENCE

Islamic Jihad said it would organize a conference on Nov 7 in Damascus, to rival the U.S.-sponsored peace conference which is expected to take place in Annapolis, Maryland. Hamas says its political supremo, Khaled Meshaal, will participate in this conference.

OCT 30. Abdel Rahman, a Fatah official who also serves as an adviser to Abbas, said a PA delegation was expected to visit Damascus soon in a bid to persuade the Syrians to ban a meeting organized by radical Palestinian groups to protest against the upcoming US-sponsored peace conference.

ABBAS REJECTS TALKS WITH HAMAS

President Abbas ruled out talks with Hamas as Israel warned that Fatah's dialogue with the Islamists could torpedo a peace deal with the Jewish state.

Palestinian sources familiar with the matter said members of Hamas and Fatah had discussed holding peace talks, but Abbas said he did not support a meeting and rejected dialogue with Hamas unless it gave up control of the Gaza Strip. Until the Hamas Islamists "rectify their mistakes ... we will not accept any dialogue," he said.

Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas leader in Gaza said a day earlier that his group was ready to hold talks with Fatah and hinted it might be ready to give up control of the enclave.

Fatah leaders rejected Haniyeh's calls for talks and said Hamas, struggling with the effects of an international boycott and an Israeli blockade of Gaza, was lying about wanting peace.

BUT HE WILL TALK IF …

Not long after expressing the above, Abbas also expressed readiness to resume talks with Hamas after the Islamist movement relinquishes control over the Gaza Strip.

"Hamas is an integral part of the Palestinian people and we are prepared to talk to them if they cede control over the Gaza Strip," Abbas said. "But we know that Hamas can't make decisions on its own because of political and economic pressure from outside forces."

HAMAS PLANNING W. BANK TAKEOVER

OCT 28, 07. Hamas is planning to overthrow the PA government in the West Bank with the help of external forces. "We have information that Hamas is planning to copy the Gaza coup in the West Bank," President Abbas said.

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum denied that his movement was planning to stage a coup against Abbas' government. He said the charges were aimed at covering up for the "crimes" committed by Abbas' "militias" against Hamas supporters and figures in the West Bank.

BUSH WANTS ANOTHER $400 MILLION FOR PALESTINIANS

OCT 3, 07. The top American diplomat in Jerusalem said that the Bush administration is seeking $400 million in new aid for the Palestinian Authority.

Since 1993, when Israeli-Palestinian interim peace accord was signed, the U.S. has given $1.7 billion in aid to the Palestinians, according to the USAid Web site.

ABBAS CONFIDENT SOLUTION WILL BE FOUND BY END OF 2008

OCT 22, 07. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas expressed confidence Monday a solution would be found to the Middle East crisis before the end of 2008. He also stressed the importance of **reconciliation with Hamas**.

MUFTI: "NO JEWISH PRAYERS IN PALESTINIAN JERUSALEM"

OCT 25, 07. If Jerusalem is divided, and it's eastern part made the capital of "Palestine" - world Jewry will be forever cut off from the hope it has held onto for 2000 years, and be once and for all prohibited from ascending the Temple Mount and even from praying at the Western Wall.

This warning was clearly sounded in an interview the former PLO-appointed mufti of Jerusalem gave to *The Jerusalem Post* this week, excerpts of which were published Thursday.

Ikrema Sabri emphatically told the *Post,* no Israelite temple had ever stood on the Temple Mount.

What's more, the cleric insisted, the Western Wall - whose massive stones the entire world knows to have been laid by Herod the Great during the Roman occupation of the Land of Israel - had nothing to do with any temple either.

"The wall is not part of the Jewish temple. It is just the western wall of the mosque. There is not a single stone with any relation at all to the history of the Hebrews.

"It was always only a mosque - all 144 dunams, the entire area," Sabri said. "No Jews have the right to pray there ... No Jewish prayer. If the Jews want real peace, they must not do anything to try to pray on Al-Aqsa. Everyone knows that."

The Mufti's ranting underscored how the Muslim Arab effort to wrest Israel's holiest site from the Jewish people and entrench it under irreversible Islamic control is intensifying in the run-up to the US-sponsored Middle East Summit.

Washington is pushing for this conference, fully aware that the Arab side's intent is to steal great chunks of Israel's historic homeland for the creation of a Palestinian state that will never tolerate Jewish and Christian worship on or near the Temple Mount – or at any other site deemed sacred to Islam.

- By Stan Goodenough. Jerusalem Newswire.

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ECUMENISM

WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS MEET FOR PEACE SUMMIT

OCT 22, 07. Leaders of the world's main religions kicked off an annual interfaith peace summit in Naples today with calls for a global organisation uniting their faiths.

Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Israel's chief rabbi Yona Metzger and the imam of the United Arab Emirates, Ibrahim Ezzeddin, were among those attending the gathering.

"Civilisations don't dialogue directly, but through those who carry their traditions and cultural values. So we should not speak of a dialogue of civilisations, but a culture of dialogue," Bartholomew told the opening.

In a similar vein, Rabbi Metzger proposed a "United Nations of Religions" that would "embrace the heads of religious communities that have a profound influence on their congregations."

"If we sit down together around one table ... surely we could arrive at effective solutions," he said.

Ibrahim Ezzedin, too, advocated a formal structure linking world religions, saying: "This important grouping of God-fearing people cannot and should not limit itself to processions, conferences and seminars."

"We need to form a permanent and authorised executive machinery for ... executing any decisions we may make," he added.

The Muslim leader however spoke harshly of "unjustified provocations in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan and ... unfair dealings in Palestine" that have prompted "some Muslim individuals and groups (to go) astray and wrong themselves by violent actions."

He added: "We are dismayed by the behaviour of some great powers who continue to act aggressively against other countries, by means of military occupation under fabricated pretexts ... forced regime changes and blunt interference in other countries' affairs."

The Sant'Egidio summits are meant to carry on the "spirit of Assisi" and were launched 21 years ago by John Paul II in the birthplace of Saint Francis.

The first summit, dubbed a World Day of Prayer for Peace, was attended by the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa and other religious leaders.

The present Pope, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, stayed away, reportedly out of concern that it put all religions on an equal footing. This time the Pope timed his pastoral visit to Naples to coincide with the Religious summit.

The theme of this year's peace summit is "A World Without Violence: Faiths and Cultures in Dialogue", with topics to include AIDS, immigration, the plight of Africa and the quest for peace in the Middle East.

The Sant'Egidio community is the "bridge in this search for common points and continues to work for dialogue in all parts of the world to build peace," said the Reverend Gijun Sugitani, the supreme adviser of Tendai Buddhism in Japan. - Oct 22, 07 / Agence France-Presse

GEORGE BUSH:

"ALL RELIGIONS PRAY TO SAME GOD"

In early October, President George Bush repeated his belief that all religions, "whether they be Muslim, Christian, or any other religion, pray to the same God" – an assertion that caused outrage among evangelical leaders when he first said it in November 2003.

Bush said: "I believe in an Almighty God, and I believe that all the world, whether they be Muslim, Christian, or any other religion, pray to the same God. That's what I believe. I believe that Islam is a great religion that preaches peace.

"And I believe people who murder the innocent to achieve political objectives aren't religious people, whether they be a Christian who does that – we had a person blow up a federal building in Oklahoma City who professed to be a Christian, but that's not a Christian act to kill innocent people.

"And I just simply don't subscribe to the idea that murdering innocent men, women and children – particularly Muslim men, women and children in the Middle East – is an act of somebody who is a religious person."

In the recent interview which he had with an *Al Arabiya* reporter at the White House, Mr Bush expressed the same ecumenical sentiments.

- Oct 7, 07 / WorldNetDaily.com

THE DALAI LAMA HONORED BY U S CONGRESS

OCT 17, 07. The Dalai Lama has had a warm reception in Washington, when President Bush and the leaders of Congress bestowed the nation's highest civilian honour, the Congressional Gold Medal, upon him.

Congressional leaders heaped praises on the exiled Tibetan religious leader, calling him a "warrior for peace," and declared that "the Tibetan people have a right to their heritage and their freedom."

The Buddhist leader who has been fighting for Tibetan autonomy from the Chinese government for decades, told the

crowd gathered in the Capitol Rotunda, "I believe that this (honour) sends a powerful message to those many individuals who are dedicated toward promoting peace, understanding and harmony."

"I am deeply touched that this great honor has been given to me, for this monk, born of a simple family from a remote mountain region of Tibet. This ... will bring tremendous joy and encouragement to the Tibetan people, for whom I have a special responsibility," the Dalai Lama said.

The Congressional Gold Medal ceremony was held under the U.S. Capitol dome, and a celebration followed on the West Lawn which is free and open to the public. It is believed to be the first time in the 200-year history of the honor that the Lawn was used in this way. The Congress also allowed the use of the Capitol grounds by "The International Campaign for Tibet" after the ceremony.

A great crowd of Tibetans gathered at the Capitol in Washington, to mark one of the most significant international tributes to the exiled Tibetan leader since the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him.

The Dalai Lama's special envoy, Lodi Gyari, said images of the US president standing beside the Tibetan leader at the congressional ceremony, will send a clear message that "people do care about Tibet. We have not been forgotten." "I have no doubt this will give tremendous encouragement and hope to the Tibetan people," he told reporters ahead of the visit. It also "sends a powerful message to China that the Dalai Lama is not going to go away."

The Dalai Lama is the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet, a country which China has ruled with a heavy hand since its communist-led forces invaded in 1951.

During a failed uprising against Communist Chinese rule in 1959, the Dalai Lama fled with a group of Tibetans, crossing the Himalayas into India where he has been based, in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, ever since.

The Dalai Lama began campaigning for the independence of Tibet which had been annexed by China. Later, in an attempt to make things more tolerable for the Tibetans, he changed policy and called for political and religious autonomy for Tibet.

Envoys of the Dalai Lama have held several rounds of dialogue with China, but they have yet to make any progress on the issue of how Tibet should be governed, and whether the Dalai Lama will be allowed to return.

While he is immensely popular in Tibet, being considered a "god-king," any show of allegiance to the Dalai Lama in the tightly controlled region risks harsh repression.

Around much of the world he is lauded as a "universal symbol of peace and tolerance," but Beijing reviles him, claiming he seeks to destroy China's sovereignty by pushing for independence for Tibet.

The Dalai Lama says he wants "real autonomy," not independence, for Tibet. But China demonizes the spiritual leader and believes the United States is honoring a separatist.

THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS

Since the American Revolution, Congress has commissioned gold medals for distinguished achievements and contributions by individuals or institutions. Earlier winners have included civil rights icon Rosa Parks; former President Reagan and his wife, Nancy; cartoonist Charles M. Schulz; Gen. Henry Shelton, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Tony Blair, Winston Churchill and Pope John Paul II.

It was originally awarded to soldiers for achievement in battle; it was first awarded in 1776 to General George Washington. It became the top US civilian award as the Medal of Honor.

A two-third majority in Congress is required to approve each candidate. Each medal uniquely designed and created by the US Mint. Over 100 medals have been awarded.

Congress has long championed the Dalai Lama; lawmakers also regularly criticize Beijing for human rights abuses and a massive military build-up and claims that China ignores abuse by unsavoury foreign regimes in its pursuit of energy deals.

US politicians regularly accuse Beijing of turning a blind eye to rights abuses in Burma and Sudan in its pursuit of energy and business deals.

The Bush administration also finds fault with China, but it is usually more measured as the US seeks to manage a booming trade relationship and a desire to enlist Chinese cooperation on nuclear standoffs with North Korea and Iran.

CHINA ANGERED BY US ACTION

President Bush had a private Oval Office meeting with the Dalai Lama, the day before the Congressional awarding.

In the past, President Bush has met several times, privately, with the Dalai Lama, but Mr Bush's decision to attend the public congressional ceremony this time, analysts say, reflects the President's concern over the situation in Tibet.

While supporting the Dalai Lama's visit, Bush tried to allay Chinese anger before the Tibetan priest's arrival. He had personally spoken with Chinese President Hu Jintao to say he would be attending the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony for the Dalai Lama, and advised the Chinese that they would be better off having diplomatic relations with the Tibetan leader.

"I have consistently told the Chinese that religious freedom is in their nation's interest. I've also told them that I think it's in their interest to meet with the Dalai Lama," Bush said. "If they were to sit down with the Dalai Lama they would find him to be a man of peace and reconciliation. And I think it's in the country's interest to allow him to come to China and to meet with him," he added.

CHINA SUMMONS U.S. ENVOY OVER DALAI LAMA AWARD

The timing of the Congressional award, at the same time as China was holding its five-yearly Communist Party Congress where it announces its agenda for the future and chooses new senior leaders, was particularly sensitive.

China slammed the US for awarding the Lama one of its highest honors, and summoned the US ambassador in Beijing to complain, saying its actions had "gravely undermined" relations.

A Chinese official said that before the Communists took control of Tibet, the Dalai Lama was responsible for a "dark and cruel" system of serfdom. After he fled, "he never ceased conniving and manipulating Tibetans abroad with actions aimed at splitting China."

The Dalai Lama told a packed audience in the US Capitol he had "no hidden agenda" in seeking greater autonomy rather than independence for his homeland. And he said Beijing's depiction of his motives was "unfounded and untrue" and asked US supporters to convince China he was sincere.

President Bush said "the stubborn endurance of religious oppression" over the past century, and the fact that religious diversity is a "source of strength" has led him to call on Beijing to accept the Dalai Lama. "That is why I will continue to urge the

leaders of China to welcome the Dalai Lama to China. They will find this good man to be a man of peace and reconciliation."

Recently, world leaders have grown more vocal in their concern for human rights in Tibet.

The US is the latest country to incur the wrath of Beijing over visits this year by the Dalai Lama. In September, he met German Chancellor Angela Merkel; also Austrian Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Australian Prime Minister John Howard; and he was due to meet Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper late October. China was outraged when Canada granted the Dalai Lama honorary citizenship last year.

A professor at American University says the Dalai Lama's visit is "not going to profoundly affect ties in either direction. China needs the U.S., the U.S. needs China, and issues like Tibet are a bit of a sideshow to the basic relationship."

MORE ABOUT THE DALAI LAMA

BY DON STANTON

Looking from a more spiritual perspective, I would like to share some comments, as Tibet has been on my heart since I was a teenager. I have prayed for, and encouraged many others to pray for the Dalai Lama for nearly 50 years.

In 1959, I watched the news so attentively every day, and prayed for this young man, (who was less than two years older than myself), during the 18 days it took for him to escape from Tibet and to reach India.

About six years later, while I was working amongst Tibetans in India, I had the opportunity to briefly meet the Dalai Lama, and gave him a copy of my first book in Tibetan.

Later on I was able to visit Lhasa, three times, and saw the city, and the palaces from which he had fled.

I have sincere respect and concern for the Dalai Lama, as he is the endeared leader of the people I love. But I never address him as "His Holiness," even as I refuse to call anyone else, "Your Holiness", "Holy Father," or any other title that belongs only to Yahweh, Almighty God.

From the standpoint of the Gospel the Dalai Lama is not yet "an ally," (Romans 11:28), but, brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to Yahweh for the Tibetans, including the Dalai Lama, is that they might be saved. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for *religion*, but not in accordance with true knowledge. For not knowing about the righteousness of Y'shua, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of Yahweh. (Compare, Romans 10:1-3)

And I pray that our Father may lay it on the hearts of many of my readers, to pray for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people, that we might see a great harvest amongst these dear people before this dispensation of grace comes to a close. Known Tibetan believers are still few – a few hundred worldwide. It has been a very

difficult field, due, no doubt, to the occultic nature of the Bon-Buddhist practices, as well as their isolation.

When I was in Lhasa a few years ago, I was sitting on the patio of a restaurant overlooking the most important temple in Tibet - the Jokkang, (or Cherkang). As I prayed for this city and the people, a very definite impression came to my mind – one day the name of this city will be changed from Hla-sa (god place), to Yahwe-sa (the place of Yahweh). I expect this will happen in the Millennial Kingdom, when the whole world becomes the kingdom of the Messiah.

There will be a remnant of Tibetan believers saved during the Tribulation and who survive – this rem-nant will form the beginning of a new Tibetan nation in the Millennial kingdom.

A "NEW AGE" ADVOCATE

The Dalai Lama, over the past 25 years, has become a keen participant in the New Age Ecumenical Movement. He has attended major functions such as The World Parliament of Religions, the World Day of Prayer for Peace launched 21 years ago by John Paul II, and other multi-faith forums.

The Tibetan Buddhists believe that the 5th Buddha the ascended Master - Maitreya, is to come. This slots in with the New Age movement which believes the coming "master" is the god of all religions.

The Dalai Lama has more recently accommodated Christianity by telling his people that they can refer to Yeshu, the Christian God, as *Jikden Gerbapo* - the Creator of the World.

The Dalai Lama has some knowledge of the Gospel. Christianity, he once said, is good, but it is not as deep as Buddhism. He is not opposed to Tibetans believing in Jesus if they want to. And although his Tibetan title is *gyamgern rimpoche* (precious saviour), he like the Gautama Buddha, does not profess to be able to directly save anyone. Buddha said, "there is no 'God' – Be your own light, and follow the 8-fold noble path."

Although the Dalai Lama is called a "god-king," he himself has said he is not God. He is believed by Tibetans to be a high *trulgu* (an incarnate lama – a lama is an enlighted and ascended master.) Ordinary monks are not *trulgu;* they are devotees on the way to ultimate *trulgu* status. The Dalai is believed to be the current reincarnation of the ascended master "god," Chenrezi.

All *trulgu* lamas become part of what is called *Kunchok*, a word which some Christians use to translate the English word God. But *Kunchok* does not in any way describe the God of the Bible – El Shaddai, the Almighty, and Heavenly Father.

Kunchok is, in fact, a triune composition made up of the Buddha, the *trulgu* (lamas), and the Buddhist scriptures. *Kunchok* is not an unchanging supreme Being. It is evolving continuously; and the Dalai Lama is merely a part of *Kunchok.*

If someone asks me, "How can we translate the word God into Tibetan?", I say, "Use Scriptural terms that are synonyms for God; terms that describe Him: "the

Most High", "The Almighty," "The Heavenly Father," "the Holy One," "the Eternal One," "the Creator," the Lord (*Tsowo*); and teach the Name of Yahweh, and link His Name to these terms.

The way of salvation for the Buddhist is the release from the cycle of reincarnation, which is attained through one's meritorious actions over many lives.

The way of salvation according to the Bible is …

> **"Y'shua, for He will save His people from their sins."** (Matthew 1:21)
>
> "God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling - not because of our works, but because of His own purpose and grace. *This grace* was given to us in the Messiah, Y'shua, before the beginning of time, but now it has been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Y'shua the Messiah, who abolished death, and through the Gospel, *revealed and* brought to light, *eternal* life…" (2 Timothy 1:8-10)
>
> "Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of the Messiah, Y'shua from Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead - by this Name this man stands here before you healed …. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:10, 12)
>
> "But to one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted as righteousness." (Romans 4:5)
>
> "For when we were still weak, the Messiah at the right time died for the ungodly. Now very rarely will someone die *even* for a righteous man, though possibly for a good man someone might even have the courage to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, the Messiah died for us." (Romans 5:6-8)
>
> "For *YHWH, the Almighty* God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal *(everlasting)* life." (John 3:16)
>
> "After he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Master, Y'shua the Messiah, and you will be saved." (Acts 16:30-31)

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