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Blocking the U.S. Out of World Trade

The global economy is being reoriented—away from the United States.

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A colossal Eurasian supercontinent is forming. From Tokyo to Lisbon, groups of Asian and European nations are hammering out history-altering trade deals and building billions of dollars' worth of infrastructure to better bind themselves together.

With the ideological lines that divided East and West during the Cold War fading away, the links between Asia and Europe are solidifying at hypersonic speed. Latin America, too, is being drawn deeper into the Eurasian orbit.

All of these trends, deals and projects have one common denominator: The United States is excluded.

And this is all happening in fulfillment of specific end-time biblical prophecies.

Rebuilding the Ancient Silk Road

China has taken the lead in working to integrate Eurasia. It is accomplishing this largely with the Belt and Road Initiative (bri), the brainchild and foremost national priority of Chinese President Xi Jinping. The project was enshrined into the Chinese Constitution in 2017 as part of Xi's "Chinese Dream." It aims to rebuild the ancient "Silk Road" network of routes that facilitated the flow of goods and ideas across Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

Xi has been working to convince nations in those regions to cooperate with China to build roads, rail networks, bridges, ports, pipelines and Internet systems to rebuild and greatly expand those ancient routes. If the Belt and Road Initiative comes together as planned, its infrastructure will connect more than 60 percent of the global population and about 36 percent of total global gross domestic product—to China. And it is all for the purpose of reshaping the international system to place China at the center.

Many countries, especially in poorer parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, immediately signed on. They calculated that accepting Chinese loans and granting China the right to build road, rail and port infrastructure might be risky, but the benefits to their economies would be worth it.

But in Europe, most nations were skeptical. They worried about China's human rights abuses and deceitful trade practices, including its tendency to steal the intellectual property of foreign investors. Europeans also feared China's debt trap diplomacy, by which it uses loans to gain leverage over borrowing countries and force them to make concessions they would never make otherwise. They worried about how the expansion of Chinese interests globally sometimes precedes the expansion of Chinese military assets and deployments.

On top of all that, Europe's historical postwar alignment has been toward the United States. And American leaders view the bri as a dangerous drive for Chinese global hegemony, and often encourage nations in Europe and elsewhere to shun it. These factors combined to darken EU countries' view of the initiative, and to initially dissuade them from integrating more deeply with China.

But over the years, especially as Europe's anti-American sentiments grew stronger, some of the less powerful, mostly southern European nations rejected U.S. warnings and joined the Chinese project. And in March a *major* European power made the extremely significant decision to follow suit.

When in Rome

Italy normally reserves its most lavish welcomes only for close allies. But on March 21, it hosted Xi for a state visit in Rome, including an elaborate, red-carpet reception, state dinner and private concert by an opera megastar. But the highlight of the visit for Xi was Italy's signing up to the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Xi Jinping's dream," *Business Insider* wrote after the signing, "just claimed one of its biggest victories yet."

The victory was enormous, not just because Chinese ships will be able to easily unload cargo at Italy's choicest ports, but also because Italy is a member of the G-7. This group of democratically governed, advanced economies also includes Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the U.S. and the United Kingdom. The G-7 are powerful nations that help shape global policy. Now that one is on the list of Belt and Road participants, other European nations are seriously considering joining.

Quartz noted that Italy's move was partly motivated by its desire to break with traditional partners, including the U.S., which has been its ally since the founding of nato 70 years ago. "[An] endorsement for bri ... can signal the likelihood of a country breaking ranks with traditional allies to side with China over politically charged themes," it wrote (March 19).

Italy's "signal" of anti-Americanism is sobering. And European, Asian and African countries are not the only ones demonstrating that they are eager to side with China. Alarming, it is also happening with more and more countries in the U.S.'s periphery.

Crashing America's Neighborhood

The Belt and Road infrastructure development initially concentrated on Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe, the same regions that were linked by the ancient Silk Road. But in 2017, Xi said he views Latin America as a "natural extension" of the project and invited nations there to join. Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Panama, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago have already signed on. More Latin American and Caribbean nations are preparing to follow.

Chinese money has already built a port in Trinidad and Tobago, railways in Argentina, and roads in Costa Rica and Jamaica. As China persuades more Latin American and Caribbean nations to join the project, this region, which is vital to U.S. security, will become increasingly aligned with Beijing and its partners.

And the Belt and Road Initiative is just one of many ways that China and its anti-American partners are deepening their influence in Latin America.

In the case of China's closest comrade, Russia, the influence is becoming overtly militaristic. In recent months, Russia has modernized Nicaragua's military, loaned Cuba \$43 million for military gear, and said it may build a base there. In Venezuela, Russia has sent soldiers and military gear to prop up the regime of failed dictator Nicolás Maduro, and Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* has reported that Moscow may build a permanent military base there.

Given the proximity of these Latin American nations to the U.S. and to the Caribbean shipping lanes that the U.S. economy depends on, the deepening influence of Russia and China there should be red flags to U.S. policymakers.

The World Is Banking on China

On Jan. 16, 2016, while inaugurating China's new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Xi told the assembled dignitaries they were witnessing "a historical moment."

The bank was established mainly to support Belt and Road projects and to advance China's broader goal of asserting leadership on the world stage. The bank offers nations an alternative to the post-World War II U.S.-dominated institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is another economic weapon for China to openly challenge American leadership.

Despite U.S. pressure, several of America's Asian allies and partners joined China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, including the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore. Several of America's closest allies outside of Asia—Britain, Germany, Italy, Australia, New Zealand and France—also joined.

Former U.S. Treasury Secretary Larry Summers wrote in the lead-up to the Bank's inauguration: "[T]his ... may be remembered as the moment the United States lost its role as the underwriter of the global economic system." Summers also stated that America's failure to persuade allies to stay out of the Chinese initiative is a "wake-up call."

Luxembourg's finance minister said in 2016 that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is "further proof of the rebalancing of the world economy."

Trade Blocs Blocking Out the U.S.

“[G]overnments have proven eager to move forward with trade negotiations as a way to counter some of the uncertainty in the global trading system today,” John Murphy, senior vice president for international policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, told *usa Today* last November.

As a result of this push, major new trade blocs are emerging around the globe.

The European Union has been especially aggressive. In recent years, it has signed new agreements with Canada, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Ukraine and South Korea. In December, Europe announced two deals with Japan: the EU-Japan Strategic Partnership Agreement and EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement. The latter integrates 635 million people and one third of the world’s gdp, making it *the largest trade bloc on the planet*. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said the deal brings EU-Japan trade and political ties “to a whole new level.”

On April 9, the EU hailed a “breakthrough” in its push for a trade agreement with China. The two sides agreed to dramatically boost their trade volumes, broaden market access, work together on World Trade Organization reform, and for China not to force EU companies operating there into divulging sensitive knowledge. “It is a breakthrough,” said European Council President Donald Tusk. “For the first time, China has agreed to engage with Europe on this key priority for wto reform.”

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said of the deals: “Not only will this be conducive to China’s reform and opening up, but also Europe’s unity and prosperity.”

China also recently signed a free-trade agreement with the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union. This group includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Russian President Vladimir Putin said in April that the bloc’s goal—facilitating the free movement of goods, labor and capital in the region—perfectly aligns with the aims of the Belt and Road Initiative. Putin said the Eurasian Economic Union member countries “unanimously supported the idea of linking the construction of the Eurasian Economic Community” and the Belt and Road.

Meanwhile, in December, the Japan-led Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership came into effect. This deal includes Australia, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam, Brunei, Chile, Peru and Malaysia. The 500 million people living in these nations, constituting 13.4 percent of the global economy, can now trade nearly tariff-free.

And all the while, the EU has been frantically working toward a landmark free-trade deal with the Latin American trade bloc mercosur, which includes Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. “This trade agreement will impact the whole world!” *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote of the EU-mercotur deal in our March issue.

These agreements are fundamentally altering the world economy. And they all have one thing in common: They exclude the U.S.

In the case of some of the agreements, America chose not to participate. Nevertheless, the trend is undeniable: More and more nations are forging massive economic alliances—and America is out.

Many of these history-altering trade deals have been under negotiation for years. And now they are suddenly becoming reality. “Analysts attribute that to the Trump administration’s policies,” (*usa Today*, op cit). In reality, the anti-American sentiments that helped shape these trade deals predate the Trump administration, but his leadership has intensified such feelings and made more world leaders feel urgent about acting on them.

The Belt and Road Initiative, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the multiplying number of U.S.-excluding trade blocs are reorienting the world economy—to the detriment of the United States. These trends take on extraordinary significance when viewed through the lens of Bible prophecy.

‘The Times of the Gentiles’

During His ministry on Earth, Jesus Christ prophesied of a global era that would begin shortly before His return. He called this era “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).

In the July 2014 *Trumpet*, Mr. Flurry wrote, “These ‘times of the Gentiles’ are yet to be fully realized. However, we are in the outer edges of this catastrophic storm.”

He explained that the term *Gentile* refers to “non-Israelite peoples.” The Israelite peoples make up “a lot more than the little nation in the Middle East,” he wrote, explaining that in end-time prophecy, *Israel* means mainly modern-day America and Britain. (For a complete, enlightening explanation, order your free copy of [The United States and Britain in Prophecy](#), by Herbert W. Armstrong.)

Mr. Flurry continued: “Once you understand who Israel is, then you can understand how the Gentiles—the non-Israelite peoples—have started to take charge of the world *right now*.”

For decades, American and British leadership stabilized much of the world and advanced civilization. But during “the times of the Gentiles,” the reins of world power will be taken up by two groups of non-Israelite nations. “While there are many Gentile nations around today, when this prophecy is completely fulfilled there will be two *major* powers,” Mr. Flurry wrote. One of these will be led by Germany, and the other by Russia and China.

China’s rising power and the increasing number of trade blocs that exclude the U.S. are shifting global power away from “Israel” and toward these non-Israelite nations. Prophecy shows that as this shift continues, cooperation between China, Europe and several other Gentile nations will be consolidated and take a *sharply* anti-American turn.

A ‘Mart of Nations’

Around 2,700 years ago, God inspired the Prophet Isaiah to write about a massive trade bloc that would emerge shortly before Christ’s return. He described it as “a mart of nations” (Isaiah 23:3).

Verse 1 shows that “Chittim” will be a head country in this trade bloc. Chittim, or Kittim, is an ancient name for the Han people that constitute the majority of modern China’s population. Mr. Flurry explains in his booklet [Isaiah’s End-Time Vision](#) that they descended from Noah’s son Japheth: “Genesis 10:4 lists the sons of Japheth’s fourth-born son: ‘The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, *Kittim*, and Dodanim’ (New King James Version). *Kittim* is synonymous with the *Chittim* of Isaiah’s prophecy. ... After their migration through Central Asia, the Kittim made their appearance in modern-day northeastern China and Mongolia under the name of *Khitan* in the fourth century a.d.”

Isaiah 23 names “Tyre” as the other primary power in this mart of nations. Mr. Flurry writes that this city represents “the *commercial center*” of modern Europe. He writes: “The *spiritual center* of the [modern European] Holy Roman Empire is called *Babylon* in your Bible (Revelation 17:5; 18:1-3). But here in Isaiah, the Bible refers to Tyre (and its allies Zidon, etc) as the *commercial center* of this European power. By understanding the spiritual and the commercial powers, you can understand what a colossus is rising in Europe.”

Verse 1 also mentions “Tarshish,” which in this context is an ancient name for modern Japan, showing that Japan will play a major role in this anti-U.S. bloc despite its current alignment with America. A companion passage in Ezekiel 27 mentions ancient names for modern Russia (Tubal and Meshech), showing that it will also be a part of this future “mart.”

To see China, Europe and these other powers linked in end-time Bible prophecies—and then to see the Belt and Road Initiative, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and numerous trade blocs linking them economically today—is astonishing. In today’s newspaper headlines, we are seeing the groundwork being laid for this history-altering “mart of nations,” prophesied thousands of years ago, becoming reality!

Even more astonishing is what the Bible shows that this mart of nations will do in the very near future.

The U.S. Under Siege

“The Bible contains many prophecies of that European power attacking America—and many other prophecies of America being *besieged*,” Mr. Flurry writes (*ibid*). He explains that the besiegement will be accomplished by the mart of nations. Europe will wage this attack with the help of the other countries that make up the mart of nations of Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 27, including China, Russia and Japan. “All of them are going to besiege America, Britain and the Jewish nation,” he writes.

“China and the giants of Asia,” he writes, will form a “brief alliance” with the European bloc. “Should Europe, the resurrected Holy Roman Empire, find a way to take advantage—even for a moment—of key resources and strategic holdings of China, Russia and Japan, it would have more than enough power to besiege the Anglo-Saxon nations ...

“This is why Isaiah’s prophecy of an end-time ‘mart of nations’ that includes both European and Asian powers is so intriguing. And why the trend of collusion between these two great economic blocs is worth watching.”

Mr. Flurry also draws particular attention to Latin America, highlighting prophecies by the late Herbert W. Armstrong about this region’s key role in these end-time events. “Herbert Armstrong long prophesied, and we expect, the alliance between Europe and South America to grow extremely strong,” Mr. Flurry writes. Europe already has considerable influence in parts of Latin America. And once China and Russia enter into this “brief alliance” with Europe, the influence that Beijing and Moscow are now building there will translate into even greater European control over the region. The finalization of the mercosur deal will also greatly boost EU power in Latin America.

Mr. Flurry says the situation will morph into a European subjugation of Latin America, “The Latin American countries will become vassal states to Europe!”

With this level of control in Latin America, the European and Asian powers will be geographically situated to lay siege to the United States. “With a German-led Europe ... possessing great maritime power, North America will be surrounded on the east by Europe and the south by Latin America” (*ibid*).

More details about the besiegement of the United States and United Kingdom by the “mart of nations” conglomerate are laid out in Deuteronomy 28:52: “And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein

thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee." When God was actively blessing the U.S. and the UK, He gave them control over numerous sea "gates," including Panama, Singapore, Malta, Cyprus and Hong Kong (Genesis 22:17; 24:60). Now these strategic locations are under the control of the "mart of nations" powers or are rapidly headed that way.

The importance of China's growing dominance of world trade, and its strengthening links to Europe, Russia, Japan and Latin America, is revealed in these Bible prophecies.

The world has already entered into the outer edges of "the times of the Gentiles." And these developments are setting the scene for the prophesied siege against America.

These are unsettling prophecies, showing that the U.S. and some of its allies will soon suffer severe catastrophe. But Bible prophecy shows that the mart of nations and the besiegement and conflict associated with it are intended as correction from God, and that it will be immediately followed by an era of unprecedented worldwide peace. "[T]hat trading partnership won't last long," Mr. Flurry writes. "Soon they will clash, just before Jesus Christ returns and destroys both of them" (ibid).

Jesus Christ will return, put a swift end to mankind's self-destruction, and usher in an age of stability, peace and prosperity!

"Thank God," Mr. Flurry writes, "there is great news beyond the bad news." ■

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