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Europe, China, Japan and the New World Order

A stunning fulfillment of a specific Bible prophecy

- Richard Palmer
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We are witnessing a shift in the world order that happens only once in a generation. The global system of alliances is being shaken. Such turmoil usually indicates a massive shift in global power. These shifts often trigger major wars.

For most of the 19th century, Britain's top enemy was Russia. Britain's whole system of alliances was built to isolate and oppose Russian power. But at the turn of the century, other powers were rising, most notably Germany. This development triggered a complete shake-up. Russia veered from enemy to ally in 1907. World War I followed on the heels of this upheaval.

That shift in alliances did not cause World War I. But it was a symptom of some of the other long-term causes.

Grand alliances can also shift in the other direction. Rome and Carthage were allies for centuries. But once the relationship switched, it slid into an epic showdown over who would control the Mediterranean.

In ancient times, massive wars were more frequent (though less destructive) and so were these shifts in alliances. In recent times, things have been cozier. But a tectonic shift in alliances is beginning right now.

The alliance between the United States and Western Europe was the stabilizing bond of the post-World War II world order. The breakup of this alliance has been the subject of many articles, not least in this magazine. It is perhaps this development that most concerns world leaders.

This is not just a passing phase due to the presidency of Donald Trump. Tensions within the NATO alliance have been increasing for years. Even during the Cold War, France tried to steer between the two superpowers, and Germany tried to keep its options open. In spite of these tensions, the alliance held together for seven decades. Now, however, relations have plunged to an all-time low.

A new law forced on a reluctant President Trump by Congress means that America could soon impose sanctions on European energy companies that do business with Russia. European leaders are threatening to retaliate. We are now confronted with the serious possibility of Europe and the U.S. imposing sanctions on each other: a trade war within the NATO alliance.

Are the European Union and the U.S. no longer part of the same team? And if their alliance is doomed, what will replace it?

Europe Looks East

China sees these transatlantic ties weakening, and it senses an opportunity. If President Trump makes an unpopular trip to Europe, Chinese leaders follow with a visit of their own. If America makes a move that Europeans don't like, China does the opposite. President Trump denounces free trade? Chinese President Xi Jinping comes to Davos to personally denounce

protectionism. Mr. Trump pulls out of the Paris climate-change accords? The EU and China publish a document calling the accords a “historic achievement” and sign their first-ever bilateral agreement on climate change.

Despite the rhetoric, America is actually far more open to free trade than China and has done much more to appease those who fear climate change. But the fact remains, every time China has the opportunity to pose as America’s replacement, it jumps at it.

Corey Cooper, a research associate in U.S. foreign policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote, “China appears to be looking to exploit the growing rift in the transatlantic relationship to forge closer ties with Europe and to improve its own status on the world stage—a triangular strategy of diplomacy. ... If Beijing and Brussels forge a closer relationship, it would inevitably be at the expense of the United States” (Real Clear World, July 26).

The European Union is already China’s largest trading partner. Many European leaders, including German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and Eurogroup President Jeroen Dijsselbloem, have already aggressively called for the EU to turn to China in order to counter President Trump. A Pew survey published in July found that majorities in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, France and Spain all believe that China is the world’s leading economic power. The study’s only (kind of) European nation that believes America to be the leading economic power is Turkey.

The two also already have a massive trade relationship. China is the EU’s biggest source of imports and number two destination for exports. Trade between the two averages over €1 billion a day.

No wonder Andrei Lungu, president of the Romanian Institute for the Study of the Asia-Pacific, concluded that “the stars are perfectly aligned for the EU-China partnership to reach its full potential and become the world’s G-2” (*Diplomat*, August 17).

“As an economic giant without a geopolitical or military footprint in the Asia-Pacific, the EU is in a perfect position to engage with China,” he noted.

“If the world’s foremost power has decided to go on vacation, somebody needs to take over its responsibilities,” he wrote. “The EU and China, the other two world economic powers, are the only ones that can.”

Europe Looks Even Further East

China is not the only eastern power that Europe is turning to, however. The EU and Japan announced on July 6 that they have agreed to the outlines of a new trade deal. Though they are still hammering out the details, these two powers are building a massive trading bloc, and it is in its final stages of construction.

Vox characterized the development this way: “Japan and Europe have a pointed message for the U.S.: We’re taking your place as global leaders in free trade” (July 6).

The *Economist* wrote that “now both want to show that they can fill the vacuum left by America’s withdrawal under Mr. Trump from its role as the world’s trade leader” (July 8).

The combined economies of Japan and the EU are similar in size to those of the North American Free Trade Area (nafta). If Japan and Europe create a free-trade zone, it will be one of the largest and most powerful in the world.

“I have no doubt the final rounds were accelerated to try to conclude the deal as quickly as possible and send a message that the EU and Japan are prepared to lead on trade even without the U.S.,” said Edward Alden from the Council on Foreign Relations. “The fact that it was concluded right before Trump’s first G-20 summit is a symbolic poke in the eye to the Americans.”

But this is more than a mere symbolic gesture. It means that European and Japanese manufacturers will gain an edge over American ones in some of the world’s largest markets. And the trade bloc will be so large that whatever rule it sets will end up setting the rules for the whole world. Vox quoted Caroline Freund of the Peterson Institute for International Economics saying that “they’ll get to be the rule-setters ... setting the standard for global trade agreements.”

That is the role that the U.S. has played for decades and is about to lose.

This partnership was further enhanced on July 17, when Germany and Japan signed a defense cooperation pact. Japan is clearly trying to shift away from America. Europe is a good alternative source of high-tech weapons.

China Looks East

So which side will Europe pick: China or Japan? After all, surely the Europeans can’t partner with both of these seemingly irreconcilable enemies.

Or can they?

In recent months, Japan and China have themselves lurched toward closer cooperation. Perhaps the most notable sign of a thaw came on July 8 at the G-20 summit. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe met to discuss cooperation with President Xi for 40 minutes. After the meeting, Abe unexpectedly announced his intention to cooperate with the One Belt, One Road

initiative—China’s massive project to boost the infrastructure needed for trade between China and Europe. Abe also said he hoped Japan, China and South Korea will hold a meeting at the “earliest possible” opportunity.

“The rise of nationalism in the U.S. will cause massive shifts in global trade alliances,” wrote former Goldman Sachs managing director Nomi Prins. “One of the main beneficiaries will be Japan” (*Daily Reckoning*, July 21).

Prins also wrote, “Japan is well positioned to benefit both from existing alliances with the U.S. and growing ones in the rest of the world, particularly with China and the EU.”

Japan’s trade ties with China have also been growing. By January 2017, China had become Japan’s second-largest trade destination—its total trade with China up 8.2 percent compared to the previous year.

Besides these economic incentives, Japan is facing the same pressures as Europe. Both fear unstable neighbors. Both fear they will no longer receive the support they are used to from the United States. Both are searching for an alternative. And for both, China emerges as a leading candidate.

Long-standing enmity is no bar to this kind of change. Britain had been in cold and sometimes hot war with Russia for almost a century when it became Russia’s ally in 1907. A recent Pew survey found that about the same number of Japanese regard America as a threat (62 percent) as those that regard China (64 percent). In Germany, the differences are far greater: Thirty-five percent said they see American power and influence as a threat to their country, compared to 21 percent who fear China’s power and influence.

When it comes to public opinion, there’s little to prevent a switch from America to China.

A Grave Warning to America

History and geography should warn Americans about the dangers of this new alliance.

A trade alliance between Japan, China and the EU would essentially be everyone versus the United States. It would contain every G-7 economy except the U.S., Canada and—once it quits the EU—the United Kingdom. Patrick Watson, senior economic analyst at Mauldin Economics, warned of exactly this future.

“Many countries are unhappy with current trade arrangements,” he wrote. “They want something else—and I think they’ll get it.” He continued: “Globalization 2.0 has some important investment implications. Instead of one big, worldwide ‘sort of free’-trade zone, we will have two trading blocs. They will be: the United States, and everyone else” (August 17).

He sees the “investment implications.” But this is about far more than investments. It is a radical shake-up in the world order.

“[O]ur constant concern in peacetime must be to see that no nation or alliance of nations is allowed to emerge as a dominating power in either of the two regions of the Old World from which our security could be threatened,” wrote Prof. Nicholas Spykman, one of America’s greatest thinkers on international relations, in *The Geography of the Peace*. He was referring to Europe on the Atlantic side and East Asia on the Pacific. He’s warning that any alliance that includes Europe or East Asia will be able to challenge the U.S.

Now we are seeing the development of an alliance that includes Europe and East Asia.

“The United States must recognize, once again and permanently that the power constellation in Europe and Asia is of everlasting concern to her, both in time of war and in time of peace,” Spykman wrote.

This is compelling evidence that should stir concern and alarm among wary Americans and anyone who recognizes what a blessing America’s dominance has been to global stability. However, there is even more compelling evidence to consider.

The Bible has an even more specific warning, and it is close to being fulfilled.

Isaiah 23 discusses three ancient powers: Tyre, Tarshish and Chittim (verse 1). Isaiah 30:8 says that Isaiah wrote his book “for the time to come.” These are prophecies primarily for “the latter day,” which is our time now. Thus the three powers mentioned in Isaiah 23:1 must have modern significance for us today. Who do these three represent?

The answer powerfully confirms the Bible’s accuracy in foretelling world events.

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry outlines the identity of these three powers in his booklet *Isaiah’s End-Time Vision*. He notes that the spiritual heart of the modern-day European power “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.” Tyre was the great trading center of the Middle East. Many prophecies in the Bible refer to the rising European power as a commercial behemoth: Isaiah 23 compares it to Tyre.

Isaiah 23:1 goes on to discuss the “ships of Tarshish.” “Herbert W. Armstrong’s Ambassador College taught over 40 years ago that Tarshish is Japan in Bible prophecy for today,” writes Mr. Flurry. “So this verse is referring to the supertanker fleet of Japan. Even in 1980, you could see one of these tankers every 25 miles on the high seas.” The chapter goes on to talk about how the ships of Tarshish come from “the isle,” which refers to the islands of Japan.

The third power singled out here is Chittim. Mr. Flurry explains, “This biblical name refers to both the island of Cyprus and to the nation of China, whose progenitors first populated Cyprus and gave it its name.”

The three powers enumerated here refer exactly to the three powers we see working on a new trade relationship!

Isaiah 23:3 talks about these powers forming a “mart of nations.” The chapter describes “merchants” that “pass over the sea” (verse 2). It discusses “great waters,” or oceans (verse 3), as well as merchants and “traffickers” that are so rich that they are like “princes” and “the honourable of the earth.” Mr. Flurry explains: “With a German-led Europe (the king of the north) possessing great maritime power, North America will be surrounded on the east by Europe and the south by Latin America. The Bible contains many prophecies of the European power attacking America—and many other prophecies of America being *besieged*.”

“That is where China and the giants of Asia enter the picture. When the Holy Roman Empire attacks North America, there will be no help or sympathy from Asia. In fact, considering that China has come to possess most of the world’s strategic sea gates (which, ironically, at one time were held by Britain and America), we believe there may be a brief alliance between the German-led Holy Roman Empire and certain Asian powers (Russia, China, Japan—the kings of the east). 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 and enslave them.

“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 first wrote about this “mart of nations” in 2010. Back then, China’s trade with Europe was a fraction of what it is today. There was little sign of this relationship—and no sign of Japan being included. We are not reading this meaning into the prophecy after the event; Mr. Flurry forecast it all in advance.

This alliance is rising as America’s power shrinks. America is isolated and vulnerable to this alliance.

The “trend of collusion” is here. How long before this economic superpower, this “mart of nations,” locks together?

As Mr. Flurry wrote, this mart is deadly for America. The Bible is full of warnings about the immediate future, and not just for the United States. Matthew 24:22 warns that this mart will blockade the United States, which will trigger a war that will wipe out almost the entire population of the Earth.

But there is also great hope in proving the Bible’s reliability in forecasting end-time events. Matthew 24:22 tells us Christ will intervene, cutting the war short. The Bible contains great hope for everyone still alive and for those who have died. Once you have proved its reliability for yourself, you can be secure in relying on that hope. ■

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