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What Donald Trump Means for Asia

A staggering restructuring of power is coming to this volatile region.

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On November 8, Donald Trump shocked much of the world by winning the United States presidential election. In a little over two months, a man with little-to-no political experience will take the helm of the world's mightiest nation. In the wake of this unexpected event, nations around the world are beginning to ask: *What does this mean for me?*

Characterized as a loose cannon, Donald Trump has left many nations unsure of what his foreign policy will look like. Two policies in particular caught the world's attention. Throughout his campaign, Mr. Trump repeatedly remarked that it was time for America to stop policing the world. Too much money and blood has been spent, with little gained in return, in his view. Added to that, he made it clear that he would only support America's allies if they agreed to pay their share. He feels that America should not have to foot the bill for other nations' security.

As a man who has spent his entire life in business, Mr. Trump's view of the world seems to be limited to cost and benefit. To "Make America Great Again," he intends to retreat from the world stage as a means of cutting costs, bring jobs back to America to increase profits, and keep foreign military bases open only if the return is good. However, foreign policy is more than a business transaction.

One region in particular is taking special interest in Trump now that he's the president-elect: Asia. With many smaller nations in the region depending on America as a deterrent to Chinese expansion, their security hangs on whether Mr. Trump follows through on his campaign promises. Following are just a few of the nations taking note.

Japan

The land of the rising sun has been an integral part of America's foreign policy. In a desire to curtail Japanese expansionism shown in World War ii, America introduced Article 9 into the Japanese Constitution, revoking Japan's right to a conventional military. Officially, Japan has only a self-defense force with strict limits. America promised to provide military force in the event of a foreign invasion.

Following the Communist takeover of China in 1949, Japan proved to be a strategic buffer for America. From Japan, America could limit China's expansion throughout Southeast Asia.

In the 70 years since the end of World War ii, America has slowly loosened its grip on Japan's military restrictions, but always recognized its strategic importance in projecting power to the region. With Donald Trump, that could all change.

During the first presidential debate, Mr. Trump singled out Japan as a nation that the U.S. would stop defending if it didn't pay up: "Just to go down the list, we defend Japan, we defend Germany, we defend South Korea, we defend Saudi Arabia, we defend countries. They do not pay us. But they should be paying us because we are providing tremendous service, and we're losing a fortune. ... [We can't defend Japan](#), a behemoth, selling us cars by the million[s]."

Comments like these are making many in Japan nervous. Japan is currently locked in a territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku-Diaoyu Islands. Should America abandon the region, Japan would be unable to defend itself against China.

But what is more troubling is President-elect Trump's solution to the situation. Not wanting to leave Japan high and dry, Mr. Trump believes allowing Japan access to nuclear power would be a sufficient deterrent to cover America's retreat from the nation. In a town hall meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, earlier this year, Mr. Trump commented, "You have so many countries already—China, Pakistan, ... Russia— ... right now that have [nuclear weapons]. Now, wouldn't you rather, in a certain sense, have [Japan have nuclear weapons](#) when North Korea has nuclear weapons?"

Though the Japanese government followed up Mr. Trump's remarks by affirming its commitment to never own or make nuclear weapons, these are startling statements. Rather than risk American lives and money, Mr. Trump wants to risk the security of Southeast Asia by turning it into a nuclear powder keg. It's little wonder that many in Japan are concerned about what a Trump administration will mean for their future. If Mr. Trump were to withdraw America's presence from the region, it could incite a nuclear arms race.

South Korea

In a similar vein to Japan, South Korea relies heavily on American power and influence in maintaining its security and independence. Having experienced the effects of a Communist-empowered invasion, South Korea is all too aware of what would happen should Mr. Trump decide it's no longer worth investing America's military there.

Already South Korea faces the threat of an American exit if it doesn't increase its share of the bill for the American military presence. Next year, the cost-sharing agreement on maintaining military bases is up for renegotiation. In 2014, South Korea paid \$850 million for base maintenance, according to its budget. However, according to Mr. Trump's foreign-policy adviser Pete Hoesktra, this may not be enough: "The threats that they face—[if they're not willing to pay for it](#) or if they just go into it saying, 'We don't have to worry about it, the United States is going to pay for it,' that is not a healthy relationship."

Following his election, Mr. Trump did call South Korea's president to affirm his commitment to protect the nation. However, this did not stop the president from calling an emergency meeting with her national security council to plan for what the future may be without the United States there to protect them.

If America did retreat, South Korea would have to secure its own nuclear weapons. Already, "some members of the South Korean parliament have suggested that the country has [little choice](#) but to consider nuclear armament if U.S. forces are withdrawn," according to Reuters. Arming South Korea with nuclear weapons, right next door to an already unstable and nuclear-armed North Korea, could lead the entire region into nuclear war.

Another troubling implication of an American retreat from the nation is the security concern to *America itself*. Currently America and South Korea have an agreement to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense antimissile system in the nation to counter missile threats from North Korea. While the system has not yet been deployed, it would prove an added layer of defense against North Korea. Should North Korea ever decide to launch a nuclear missile at the United States, it could be shot out of the sky long before it got near American soil. However, if the United States pulls out of South Korea, it loses a powerful defense against such attacks.

The Philippines

Since the election of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte earlier this year, relations between the U.S. and the Philippines have eroded. The newly elected president has repeatedly railed against America and openly cursed President Barack Obama.

In the past few months, the Philippine president has made repeated moves to end dependence on American power. He announced that the [joint military exercise between the Philippines and the U.S.](#) in October was the last one between the two countries; he canceled an [arms deal with the U.S.](#); and he announced that he [wants all U.S. troops out](#) of his country in two years. He has voiced his desire to instead strengthen and improve relations with China and Russia.

After Mr. Trump's election victory, President Duterte was quick to congratulate Mr. Trump. Many have said the two men are very similar, but that won't stop Duterte's pivot to China. *Bloomberg* reported last week that "at an early morning briefing in Davao, Duterte said that while the U.S. would remain a friend and ally, the Philippines' foreign policy was now [geared toward China](#) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations."

Despite Mr. Trump's victory, the Philippines is already on a trajectory away from the United States. It has already committed to strengthening its relationship with China, much to America's chagrin.

Russia

Trump's election elated Russia's parliament and President Vladimir Putin. When the election results were broadcast, the State Duma reportedly broke out into applause, and President Putin sent Mr. Trump a congratulatory telegram.

The Kremlin announced shortly after the election victory that Mr. Putin hoped “to work together for removing [Russian-American relations](#) from their crisis state.” Examining what Mr. Trump has said about Russia, makes it clear why Russia would celebrate his victory.

While campaigning for the presidency, Mr. Trump made numerous statements supporting Russian actions in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. On multiple occasions, he expressed his desire to lessen the U.S. commitment to nato. Russia has viewed nato as the restraining force that has stifled its ambitions in Eastern Europe. American cutbacks could effectively cripple nato. Trump also stated that he would consider lifting sanctions on Russia in connection to its annexation of Crimea and recognize the area as Russian territory. This would make him the first Western leader to recognize that territory and legitimize the Kremlin’s conquest of Ukraine.

All these moves would embolden and empower Russia, seriously tipping the balance of power in its favor in Europe and the Middle East. The probability of such empowerment is [making those in Europe nervous](#) and has its own serious implications for the world.

China

As a businessman, Donald Trump focused much of his attacks on China during the campaign season. In his [Seven Point Plan to Rebuild the American Economy](#),” he states his plan to “use every lawful presidential power to remedy trade disputes if China does not stop its illegal activities, including its theft of American trade secrets.” Many commentators are warning that if he does implement his trade policies toward China, it could lead to an all-out trade war.

Already this rhetoric has caught the attention of the Chinese government. President Xi Jinping told Mr. Trump in a phone call earlier this week that [cooperation was the only choice](#) for the world’s two largest economies.

China has already begun pushing back at Mr. Trump’s trade plan. As Reuters reported, a nationalist tabloid published by the ruling Communist Party called the *Global Times* said if Trump [imposed tariffs on China](#), there would be consequences: “[When the time comes](#), large orders for Boeing planes would switch to Europe, U.S. auto sales in China would face setbacks, Apple phones would essentially be crowded out, and U.S. soybeans and corn would be eradicated from China.”

While it remains to be seen what Mr. Trump will do when he takes office, the Chinese are not taking his statements lightly. A clash between the world’s two largest economies would send ripples throughout the entire global economy.

What’s Next?

Right now, the world is waiting—waiting to see how much of Mr. Trump’s campaign promises will be implemented. Any number of those policies could change the balance of power in Asia and the world. The possibilities are dire.

America’s Asian allies face abandonment. Nations like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and others rely on the U.S. for protection. Without that protection, they cannot stand up to an increasingly belligerent China. America would also lose its ability to control Chinese expansionism in the region.

America’s Asian enemies face empowerment and legitimization. Russia is poised to receive sanctions relief and international recognition for its actions in Ukraine. It also stands to gain from a weakened nato. China is preparing to take control of the entire South China Sea if America pulls out. Already it is pushing hard to gain control of this crucial region through its island-building policy. Without an American presence, China could gain a stranglehold on trillions of dollars of trade through that region.

While it does not yet appear what Mr. Trump will do, the *Trumpet* has long forecast that a major reshaping of power in Asia was coming. Bible prophecy forecasts the arrival of an Asian power bloc, referred to as the kings of the east. At the head of this alliance will be Russia and China, but there are many smaller nations in Asia that will join as well. Could Donald Trump’s policies of disengagement from the region lead to this reshaping? It is important to watch events in this crucial region of the world.

As *Trumpet* editor in chief [Gerald Flurry](#) wrote, “China is intimidating the nations of Southeast Asia into submission to its will. It is forcing these countries to do what it wants. Everything is headed in the direction of war.” If you haven’t already, read the lead article in the July *Trumpet*, “[China Is Steering the World Toward War](#).” Also, request our free booklet [Russia and China in Prophecy](#).

Events soon to happen in Asia will have a devastating effect on the entire world. The free materials offered above will give you valuable insight into what the Bible says will happen shortly. But in the end, there is great hope for America, Asia and the world. All these events are leading directly to the greatest event in the history of mankind: the return of Jesus Christ to rule in righteousness over the entire world. ■