

Eye on the World

March 11, 2017

This compilation of material for “Eye on the World” is presented as a service to the Churches of God. The views stated in the material are those of the writers or sources quoted by the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Church of God Big Sandy. The following articles were posted at churchofgodbigandy.com for the weekend of March 11, 2017.

Compiled by Dave Havir

Luke 21:34-36—“But take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence, and drunkenness, or the anxieties of this life, and that day come on you suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on all dwellers on the face of the whole earth. But beware of slumbering; and every moment pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man” (Weymouth New Testament).



An article by Max Fisher titled “Fearing US Withdrawal, Europe Considers Its Own Nuclear Deterrent” was posted at nytimes.com on March 6, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

An idea, once unthinkable, is gaining attention in European policy circles: a European Union nuclear weapons program.

Under such a plan, France’s arsenal would be repurposed to protect the rest of Europe and would be put under a common European command, funding plan, defense doctrine, or some combination of the three. It would be enacted only if the Continent could no longer count on American protection.

Though no new countries would join the nuclear club under this scheme, it would amount to an unprecedented escalation in Europe’s collective military power and a drastic break with American leadership.

Analysts say that the talk, even if it never translates into action, demonstrates the growing sense in Europe that drastic steps may be necessary to protect the postwar order in the era of a Trump presidency, a resurgent Russia and the possibility of an alignment between the two.

Even proponents, who remain a minority, acknowledge enormous hurdles. But discussion of a so-called “Eurodeterrent” has entered the mainstream—

particularly in Germany, a country that would be central to any plan but where antinuclear sentiment is widespread.

Jana Puglierin of the German Council on Foreign Relations said that a handful of senior European officials had “for sure triggered a public debate about this, taking place in newspapers and journals, radio interviews and TV documentaries.”

She added: “That in itself is remarkable. I am indeed very astonished that we discuss this at all.”

Jaroslaw Kaczynski, Poland’s former prime minister and now the head of its ruling party, provided the highest-level call for a European Union nuclear program in a February interview with a German newspaper.

But the most important support has come from Roderich Kiesewetter, a lawmaker and foreign policy spokesman with Germany’s ruling party, who gave the nuclear option increased credibility by raising it shortly after President Trump’s election.

In an interview in the German Bundestag, Mr. Kiesewetter, a former colonel who served in Afghanistan, calibrated his language carefully, providing just enough detail to demonstrate the option’s seriousness without offering too much and risking an outcry from German voters or encouraging the American withdrawal he is hoping to avoid.

“My idea is to build on the existing weapons in Great Britain and France,” he said, but acknowledged that Britain’s decision to leave the European Union could preclude its participation.

The United States bases dozens of nuclear warheads in Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands as both a quick-reaction force and a symbol of its guarantee to protect the Continent. Mr. Kiesewetter said his plan would provide a replacement or parallel program.

This would require, he said, four ingredients: a French pledge to commit its weapons to a common European defense, German financing to demonstrate the program’s collective nature, a joint command and a plan to place French warheads in other European countries.

The number of warheads in Europe would not increase under this plan, and could even decrease if the United States withdraws.

“It’s not a question of numbers,” Mr. Kiesewetter said. “The reassurance and deterrence comes from the existence of the weapons and their deployability.”

He envisioned a program designed to deter nuclear as well as conventional threats—a clear nod to Russia’s military superiority.

This would require a doctrine, he said, allowing Europe to introduce nuclear weapons to a non-nuclear conflict. He compared it to the Israeli program, which is believed to allow for a nuclear strike against an overwhelming conventional attack.

"These are political weapons. Their use must be unpredictable," he said. Smaller nuclear powers often maintain vague doctrines to deter more powerful adversaries.

The goal, he said, would be to maintain Europe's defense, seen as crucial for its internal unity, as well as its international diplomatic standing.

German lawmakers across the political spectrum worry that Mr. Trump could strike a grand bargain with Russia that excludes Europe, a potential first step toward Washington and Moscow dictating Europe's future. Mr. Kiesewetter believes a European nuclear program would allow Europe to preserve its autonomy.



An article by Hwang Sunghee titled "North Korea Says Missiles Were Drill for Strike on US Bases" was posted at yahoo.com on March 7, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Nuclear-armed North Korea said Tuesday its missile launches were training for a strike on US bases in Japan, as global condemnation of the regime swelled.

Three of the four missiles fired Monday came down provocatively close to US ally Japan, in waters that are part of its exclusive economic zone, representing a challenge to US President Donald Trump.

In separate phone calls, Trump—whose rhetoric on the campaign trail had raised doubts about the issue—reaffirmed Washington's "ironclad commitment" to Japan and South Korea.

The US will demonstrate to Pyongyang that there were "very dire consequences" for its actions, the White House said in a statement.

The United Nations Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting for Wednesday after a request by Washington and Tokyo to discuss additional measures following the launch.

Under UN resolutions, Pyongyang is barred from any use of ballistic missile technology, and the US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, said on Twitter that the world "won't allow" North Korea to continue on its "destructive path."

But six sets of UN sanctions since its first nuclear test in 2006 have failed to halt its drive for what it insists are defensive weapons.

Feasting his eyes

Kim Jong-Un gave the order for the drill to start, the North's official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

"Feasting his eyes on the trails of ballistic rockets," he praised the Hwasong artillery unit that carried it out, it said.

"The four ballistic rockets launched simultaneously are so accurate that they look like acrobatic flying corps in formation, he said," the agency added, referring to Kim.

The military units involved are "tasked to strike the bases of the US imperialist aggressor forces in Japan in contingency," KCNA said.

The Korean version of the KCNA report said the North's missile launch demonstrated its readiness to "wipe out" enemy forces with a "merciless nuclear strike."

A series of photographs published by the North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper showed Kim watching the missiles rise into the air and another of him smiling gleefully, clapping with other officials.

Seoul and Washington last week began annual joint military exercises that always infuriate Pyongyang.

It regularly issues threats against its enemies, and carried out two atomic tests and a series of missile launches last year, but Monday was only the second time its devices have come down in Japan's EEZ.

The launches came ahead of a trip by new US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to the region.

Choi Kang, an analyst at the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies, said the launch was a warning to Tokyo.

"North Korea is demonstrating that its target is not just limited to the Korean peninsula anymore but can extend to Japan at anytime and even the US," he said.



An article by Paula Hancocks and Joshua Berlinger titled "Missile Defense System That China Opposes Arrives in South Korea" was posted at cnn.com on March 7, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

The first pieces of a US-built missile defense system designed to mitigate the threat of North Korean missiles arrived at the Osan Air Base in South Korea Monday night, according to the US military.

The announcement comes just a day after North Korea test-fired four ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea.

China has voiced opposition to the proposed placement of the military hardware known as the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, which it sees as a threat to its own security.

"We will firmly take necessary measures to preserve our own security interest, and the US and South Korea must bear the potential consequences," Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Geng Shuang said Tuesday.

With North Korea upping the amount of missile and nuclear tests last year, the US and South Korea have publicly stressed the need to speed up the deployment of the technology.

It's designed to shoot down incoming missiles that threaten civilian populations, akin to shooting a bullet with another bullet in simple terms, experts say.

"Continued provocative actions by North Korea, to include yesterday's launch of multiple missiles, only confirm the prudence of our alliance decision last year to deploy THAAD to South Korea," Adm. Harry Harris, commander, US Pacific Command, said in a news release.

The decision to deploy THAAD in South Korea was made in July of last year, and US President Donald Trump's administration has said it's committed to following through.

US Secretary of Defense James Mattis and South Korean Defense Secretary Han Min-koo spoke over the phone last week and agreed that THAAD should be deployed "ASAP."

Chinese objections

China has long opposed the deployment of the defense system so close to its own borders and has called on the US and South Korea to stop the deployment.

One concern is that THAAD's advanced radar system could be used to spy on China's activities, rather than monitor incoming missiles from North Korea, according to Mark Tokola of the Korean Economic Institute of America.

China also worries THAAD would undermine its ability to respond to an attack on its own soil, says Tokola, a former deputy chief of mission at the US embassy in Seoul.

Beijing's displeasure has reportedly been felt by South Korean businesses, particularly Lotte, the South Korean conglomerate which signed off a land swap deal with the government to provide a site for the THAAD launch systems in late February.

In a fiercely-worded commentary published by China's official news agency, Xinhua, said the Lotte board would "hurt the Chinese people" and the "consequences could be severe" if it went ahead.

"Lotte stands to lose Chinese customers and the Chinese market. That would be a very large slice out of their business pie," said the commentary, which did not carry a byline.

The South Korean government said last week it believed Chinese authorities had told travel agencies in Beijing to stop selling trips to South Korea, intensifying fears of a trade war between the neighbors.

The Chinese government, however, denied any knowledge of such an order.

If Beijing did choose to retaliate through trade, it could make significant dent. China is South Korea's largest trading partner, with the latter exporting up to \$142 billion each year to the country.

Almost half of the 17 million people who visited South Korea last year were Chinese, according to data from the Korea Tourism Organization.

Limitations

The system isn't a panacea that would completely shield the US and its allies from the North Korean missile threat.

It's "aimed solely at defending South Korea against missiles from North Korea," according to US Forces in Korea.

The system could be overwhelmed if North Korea were to launch a series of missiles simultaneously and it's not effective against submarine-launched ballistic missiles launched from south, east or west of lower South Korea, according to a report from the North Korea monitoring group 38 North.

THAAD can detect and track targets within a range of about 1,000 kilometers, the report said, which means it may not stop a potential intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said in January that his country is in the final stages of developing an ICBM, which could reach the west coast of the United States.

But President Trump vowed that "it won't happen" in a tweet prior to his inauguration.



A Reuters article by Alex Locke titled "A Swarm of Iranian Fast-Attack Boats Forced a US Navy Ship to Change Course in the Persian Gulf" was posted at businessinsider.com on March 6, 2017. Following is the article.

Multiple fast-attack vessels from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps came close to a US Navy ship in the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday [March 4], forcing it to change direction, a US official told Reuters on Monday.

The official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the IRGCN boats came within 600 yards of the USNS *Invincible*, a tracking ship, and stopped.

The *Invincible* was being accompanied by three ships from British Royal Navy and forced the formation to change course.

The official said attempts were made to communicate over radio, but there was no response and the interaction was "unsafe and unprofessional."

Lawrence Brennan, a former US Navy captain and an expert on maritime law, said the Invincible is a scientific-research vessel and was unlikely armed except for "small arms for self defense."

The US Navy officially lists the Invincible as a "missile range instrumentation ship" that monitors missile launches and collects data, so it was likely in the region because of Iran's repeated ballistic-missile launches.

The Invincible carries out a mission similar to that of the Russian spy ship that sat outside a US submarine base in Connecticut.

"This generic type of unarmed ship has been a target a number of times," Brennan said, citing attacks on the USS Liberty and Pueblo as examples of similar harassment.

However, the Iranian navy and IRGC navy have made a habit of harassing US ships near the Strait of Hormuz, and experts contacted by Business Insider believe that Iran provided Yemeni Houthi rebels the means to carry out a suicide boat attack on a Saudi Arabian navy vessel that killed two sailors.

This attack made the US Navy acutely aware of the danger from Iran's swarming ships, which the US Navy has resorted to firing warning shots at before.

The US recently tested the efficacy of using A-10 Warthog guns and precision-guided munitions dropped from jets on Iranian fast-attack craft like the ones that harassed the Invincible on Saturday.



An article by Justin Holcomb titled "Iran Launches Two Ballistic Missiles, Sinking an Offshore Barge 150 Miles Away" was posted at townhall.com on March 6, 2017. Following is the article.

Over the weekend, the Islamic Republic of Iran test-fired two ballistic missiles into the Gulf of Oman, with one sinking a floating barge approximately 155 miles away, according to Fox News.

The first missile was fired on Saturday [March 4], but missed the target. A day later, a second attempt was made successfully.

The two short-range ballistic missiles originated from Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps bases in Bandar-e-Jask, Iran.

"It's a concern based on the range and that one of the missiles worked," said a defense official.

Two years ago, Iran held a similar exercise destroying a large barge designed to look like an American aircraft carrier.

In February, Ali Akbar Velayati, advisor to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, made it clear that Iran has no plans of slowing down its nuclear program. The aide to

Iran's supreme leader ripped an "inexperienced" President Donald Trump and assured the world that his country would continue ballistic missile testing.

"This is not the first time that an inexperienced person has threatened Iran," Velayati said. "Iran is the strongest power in the region and has a lot of political, economic and military power . . . America should be careful about making empty threats to Iran.

"Iran will continue to test its capabilities in ballistic missiles and Iran will not ask any country for permission in defending itself," he said.



An article by Rong-Gong Lin II titled "Oklahoma's Earthquake Threat Now Equals California's Because of Man-Made Tremblors, USGS Says" was posted at latimes.com on March 1, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

The earthquake risk for Oklahoma and southern Kansas is expected to remain significant in 2017, threatening 3 million people with seismic events that can produce damaging shaking, according to a new U.S. Geological Survey forecast released Wednesday [March 1].

The seismic risk is forecast to be so high that the chance of damage in Oklahoma and southern Kansas is expected to be similar to that of earthquakes in California, USGS scientists writing in the journal *Seismological Research Letters* said Wednesday.

In 2016 alone, Oklahoma experienced several damaging earthquakes, including a magnitude 5.0 temblor in November near the central oil town of Cushing—which proclaims itself the "Pipeline Crossroads of the World"—that dislodged unreinforced bricks in chimneys and storefronts, sending them tumbling onto the sidewalks.

Oklahoma also saw the largest quake ever recorded in the state in 2016, when a magnitude 5.8 earthquake struck near Pawnee.

The earthquakes are thought to be the result of the disposal of wastewater deep underground that are a byproduct of oil extraction. Injecting the wastewater underground is not thought to trigger earthquakes everywhere it is practiced—in North Dakota, for example—but is widely believed by scientists to be a problem in Oklahoma.

According to scientists, there were only about two earthquakes a year of magnitude 2.7 or greater in Oklahoma from 1980 to 2000. But that number jumped to 2,500 in 2014 and soared to 4,000 a year later.

There has recently been a decrease in wastewater being injected deep underground, either because of regulatory actions or because oil and gas extrac-

tion has declined due to falling petroleum prices. That might be a reason for the decrease in the number of Oklahoma earthquakes last year, to 2,500.



An article by Leah Barkoukis titled "O'Reilly: 'Hypocrisy Is on Full Display' in Sessions Case" was posted at townhall.com on March 3, 2017. Following is the article.

Fox News host Bill O'Reilly said the left's hypocrisy is, once again, on full display in their calls for Attorney General Jeff Sessions to recuse himself from any investigations into Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election.

"Not one single Democrat in Congress, not one, called for then Attorney General Loretta Lynch to recuse herself from the Hillary Clinton investigation after she met with Bill Clinton at a Phoenix airport. There was absolutely no call for recusal by the Democrats. So, once again, hypocrisy is on full display," he said.

Ultimately, however, Sessions did the right thing in recusing himself from the case because "the investigation has to be above reproach," he said.

Going forward, O'Reilly argued the FBI should still continue its investigation, with FBI Director James Comey testifying before Congress.

"If, during that testimony, there is evidence that the Trump campaign colluded with the Russians in any way, then a special prosecutor should be appointed. That's what should happen."



An article by Patrick Goodenough titled "Obama's Intelligence Chief Says 'No Evidence' of Trump-Russian Collusion; Media Focuses on Wiretap Denial" was posted at cnsnews.com on March 5, 2017. Following is the article.

Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper on Sunday denied knowledge of any wire-tapping of then-nominee or president-elect Donald Trump—but in an assertion receiving considerably less press attention also stated he had no knowledge of evidence of collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign.

Clapper appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press" a day after the president alleged on Twitter that President Obama had tapped Trump Tower before the election.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer in a series of subsequent tweets said Trump wanted congressional investigations into Russian activity to be broadened to probe "whether executive branch investigative powers were abused in 2016." Spicer also said the White House would not comment further about the allegations until that happens.

Clapper made two key statements during Sunday's interview.

■ First, he said that the agencies he oversaw as DNI—which include the CIA, FBI Intelligence branch and National Security Agency—did not conduct any “wiretap activity” against Trump or his campaign and that to his knowledge no FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) court order for such surveillance was issued.

He stressed that he could only speak for the intelligence community, not for state or local agencies or for government entities authorized under Title Three of the 1968 “Wiretap Act.”

■ But Clapper then went on to say that to his knowledge there was “no evidence” of “collusion between members of the Trump campaign and the Russians.”

“We did not include any evidence in our report—and I say ‘our,’ that’s NSA, FBI and CIA, with my office, the Director of National Intelligence—that had anything, that had any reflection of collusion between members of the Trump campaign and the Russians. There was no evidence of that included in our report.”

“I understand that,” said interviewer Chuck Todd. “But does it exist?”

“Not to my knowledge.”

“If it existed, it would have been in this report?”

“This could have unfolded or become available in the time since I left the government.,” Clapper replied, “but at the time I—we had no evidence of such collusion.”

Clapper stepped down on January 20, the day Obama's term ended.

The former DNI told Todd it was in the interests of the president Republicans and Democrats alike, and the country, to get to the bottom of the Russia allegations.

“Because it’s such a distraction,” he said. “And certainly the Russians have to be chortling about the success of their efforts to sow dissension in this country.”

Clapper said towards the end of the interview he had little doubt he would be called upon to testify in congressional probes into the Russian activities.

A non-exhaustive review of media coverage in the hours after the NBC show aired found just a small handful of headlines that focused on Clapper's comments about no evidence having been found of Russia-Trump collusion.

In contrast, scores of news stories' headlines focused on Clapper's no-wire-tapping remarks, ranging from straight “Clapper denies” to the liberal PoliticusUSA site's breathless, “Clapper Destroys Trump's Wild Accusations Saying There Was No Such Wiretap Activity.”

Rare exceptions included a McClatchy report headlined “Obama's intel chief says he knows of no evidence of Trump-Russia collusion” and a Newsmax story headlined “Obama Intel Chief Clapper: Denies Wire Tap Claim, ‘No Evidence of Collusion’ Between Trump, Russians.”

NBCNews.com's own homepage on Sunday evening included five headlines linked to the wiretapping claim—and none to Clapper's no-Russia-Trump collusion claim.

NBC's "Meet the Press" webpage featured the headline and video "Clapper: 'I Can Deny' Wiretap of Trump Tower." Elsewhere on the page readers could click on a link to: "Full Clapper: 'No Evidence' of Collusion Between Trump and Russia."



An article by Rebecca Savransky titled "Sanders: Trump Can't Continue to Lie, Lie, Lie" was posted at thehill.com on March 6, 2017. Following is the article.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) on Monday criticized President Trump for his claims that former President Barack Obama wiretapped Trump Tower before the election.

"President Trump cannot continue to lie, lie, lie," Sanders tweeted Monday. "It diminishes the office of the president and our standing in the world."

On Saturday [March 4] morning, the president, citing no evidence, claimed Obama had his phones tapped in Trump Tower before his presidential victory.

Trump questioned whether it was legal for a sitting president to be "'wire tapping' a race for president prior to an election."

"How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process," the president tweeted Saturday. "This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!"

FBI Director James Comey asked the Justice Department to publicly reject Trump's claims, according to a New York Times report.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer on Sunday called the reports about "potentially politically motivated investigations" before the 2016 presidential election "very troubling."

In a series of tweets, he said the president is "requesting that as part of their investigation into Russian activity, the congressional intelligence committees exercise their oversight authority to determine whether executive branch investigation powers were abused in 2016."



An editorial by Pat Buchanan titled "The Beltway Conspiracy to Break Trump" was posted at townhall.com on March 7, 2017. Following is the article.

At Mar-a-Lago this weekend President Donald Trump was filled "with fury" says *The Washington Post*, "mad—steaming, raging, mad."

Early Saturday [March 4] the fuming president exploded with this tweet: "Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my 'wires tapped' in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!"

The president has reason to be enraged. For what is afoot is a loose but broad conspiracy to break and bring him down, abort his populist agenda, and overturn the results of the 2016 election.

At its heart is the "deep state"—agents of the intel community, their media collaborators, and their amen corner in a Democratic party whose control of our permanent government is all but total.

At the heart of the case against Trump is what appears to be a Big Lie.

It is that Vladimir Putin and Russian intelligence hacked the DNC and John Podesta's email account, then colluded with Trump's friends or associates to systematically sabotage Hillary Clinton's campaign. Therefore, Trump stole the election and is an illegitimate president. In this city, Trump is looked upon as a border-jumper, an illegal alien.

Yet let us consider the constituent components of the charge.

For months, we have heard that U.S. intel agencies agree that the Russians hacked the DNC and Clinton campaign, and gave the fruits of their cybertheft to WikiLeaks, because Putin wanted Trump to win.

For months, this storyline has been investigated by the FBI and the intelligence committees of both houses of Congress.

Yet where is the body of evidence that the Russians did this?

More critically, where is the evidence Trump's people played an active role in the operation? Why is it taking the FBI the better part of a year to come up with a single indictment in this Trump-Putin plot?

Is this all smoke and mirrors?

In late February, *The New York Times* reported that Trump officials had been in regular touch with Russian intelligence officers.

The smoking gun had been found!

Yet, almost immediately after that report, White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus told Fox News "the top levels of the intelligence community" had assured him that the allegations of campaign contacts with Russia were "not only grossly overstated, but also wrong."

If what Reince says is true, the real crime here is U.S. security officials enlisting their Fourth Estate collaborators, who enjoy First Amendment privileges against having to testify under oath or being prosecuted, to undermine the elected commander in chief.

Now we expect Russia to seek to steal our secrets as we steal theirs. After all, our NSA wiretapped Angela Merkel and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff.

Our National Endowment for Democracy pushes “color revolutions” to bring about regime change in the near abroad of Putin’s Russian Federation.

Our NGOs are being restricted, shut down, expelled from Russia, China, Israel and Egypt, because they have been caught interfering in the internal affairs of those countries.

There is talk that Putin use the pilfered emails as payback for Clinton’s urging demonstrators to take to the streets of Moscow to protest a narrow victory by his United Russia party in 2011.

As for the alleged wiretapping of Trump Tower, President Obama has denied ordering any such thing and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper assures us nothing of the sort was ever done.

Yet, there are other reports that intelligence officials got a warrant to surveil Trump campaign officials or the Trump Tower, and, though failing to succeed in the FISA court that authorizes such surveillance in June, they did succeed in October.

If true, this is a far more explosive matter than whether a Trump aide may have told the Russians, “You’re doing a great job!” when WikiLeaks blew DNC chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz out of her job for tilting the playing field against Bernie Sanders in the primaries.

What needs to be done now?

The White House should tell the Justice Department to tell the FBI to expedite its investigation and file a report on what was done by the Russians. And if any Trump campaign official criminally colluded with the Russians, send the recommendation to indict to Justice.

The acting attorney general should instruct Director James Comey to run down, remove and recommend for prosecution any FBI or intel agent who has leaked the fruits of their investigation, or fake news, to the media. If Comey cannot find the source of the leaks, or lies, coming out of this investigation, a housecleaning may be needed at the bureau.

While President Obama may not have ordered any surveillance of Trump or his advisors, the real question is whether he or Attorney General Loretta Lynch were aware of or approved of any surveillance of Trump and his staff during the campaign.

Russian hacking of the DNC is a problem, not a scandal. The scandal is this: Who inside the government of the United States is trying to discredit, damage or destroy the President of the United States?

For these are the real subversives.



An article by Matt Lewis titled “Barack Obama’s Politically Active Post-Presidency Isn’t Normal or Good” (with a subhead titled “Just As His Limited Resume and

Celebrity Candidacy Helped Open the Door for President Trump's Run, His Politicking Since Leaving Office May Be Setting a Dangerous Precedent) was posted at thedailybeast.com on March 6, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

In a break from modern tradition, former President Barack Obama appears to be wading back into political waters.

"It's coming. [President Obama is] coming," former Attorney General Eric Holder told a gaggle of reporters last month. "And he's ready to roll."

We don't know the scope of involvement he has planned. The New York Times, though, reported that Obama's team rushed to preserve intelligence regarding possible contacts between Trump's presidential campaign and Russia. That since leaving office, Obama tapped Holder to chair a new group focused on helping Democrats with redistricting efforts, while his loyal hold-overs are leaking secrets about the Trump administration.

For all the talk about Trump's atypical behavior, the Obama camp's unfolding machinations feel almost equally unprecedented.

"Jimmy Carter threw himself into philanthropy," observes presidential historian David Pietrusza, "but also took up oil and canvas, as did U.S. Grant, Dwight Eisenhower, and George W. Bush, who threw himself into folk art. Theodore Roosevelt took after his successors, William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson, with hammer and tongs. It is up to Obama whether he paints or smears."

One could argue that Obama's choice is both acceptable and appropriate. He's young, just 55, and you could even say that it's his civic responsibility to do everything within his power to check Trump's authoritarian tendencies.

This is the justification—or possibly a rationalization—for what Obama appears to be doing. "If the only way to protect norms is to destroy norms," writes The Atlantic's David A. Graham, "the effect is a feedback doom-loop for norms in general."

The ends justify the means. He has to destroy the village in order to save it.

To be sure, Trump, too, has played into that destructive feedback loop throughout his campaign and now his candidacy, as when he tweeted Saturday [March 4] about Obama supposedly wiretapping him during the campaign, and—in still another example of Trump reflecting attacks aimed at him back at his enemies—said of Obama "This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!"

Trump also recently told Fox News he thinks "President Obama is behind [the disruptive protests happening at Republican town halls] because his people certainly are behind it." Is this another outlandish Trump claim?

Perhaps, but there also may be some merit. Organizing for Action, a successor to the Obama campaign, is urging progressives to attend Republican town hall meetings.

The fact that Obama has decided to remain in Washington, D.C., is both unusual and symbolic. True, a retired Woodrow Wilson also remained in Washington, but he had reasons. He had remarried a Washington widow, possessed no private home to return to and was too sick to do much more than privately fume about a presidency gone wrong.

Obama, however, will remain politically active; that break with tradition is simply another aspect of his political abnormality. The truth is that Barack Obama bears a lot of responsibility for destroying what had been acceptable standards—the destruction of which ultimately made possible Donald Trump’s ascendancy. While Obama now poses as a defender of decorum, tradition, and protocol, he (in a much subtler way) flouted convention.

This is a guy who, in not even a single term as a U.S. senator before running for the highest office in the land, accomplished little but did try to filibuster Sam Alito’s nomination to the Supreme Court, and supported a “poison pill” to kill immigration reform. He ran as a celebrity, helping pave the way for the sort of hero worship that President Trump’s fans now employ.

He won office at a time when America felt like it was already coming apart, and given the opportunity to be a true post-partisan leader who could unite the country, chose instead to run a highly partisan and ideological presidency. He began with his choice of the divisive issue of health care reform as his landmark legislation—Obamacare being Obama’s original sin—using every means necessary to pass it on a party-line vote. And he frequently resorted to unilateral decisions outside the scope of his constitutional authority. Sound familiar?

Along the way, he got us used to a lot of things that his team is now accusing Donald Trump of inventing.

Do you think Donald Trump is an undignified reality star? Yeah, remember the time that Obama gave an interview to a YouTube star who drinks cereal out of a bathtub? Cultural degradation doesn’t just happen overnight.

Do you think President Trump was the first politician to have a casual relationship with the truth? Then answer this: Who said, “If you like your doctor you can keep your doctor” and that ISIS is the “JV team”?

Don’t get me wrong—in his outward demeanor and rhetoric, Obama generally acted much more like a traditional politician than does Trump.

But while the narrative seems to be that Obama was kind and normal—and that Republicans were mean and obstructionist—it takes two to tango. Don’t forget that Obama curtly told Republicans “I won” when they were first trying to negotiate with him.

Yet, his façade masked a partisan motivation that harmed not only the nation and the Constitution but also his own party. Now, he may harm his party yet again because a too-active ex-president possesses its own risks.

Theodore Roosevelt’s post-presidential political resurrection deterred the rise of any alternative Republican progressives, such as a Robert La Follette, a

Hiram Johnson, or a William E. Borah. A still-active, Washington-based Obama may similarly retard the ascent of badly needed new Democratic leadership, much as any sitting president eclipses his own party.

By turning his term into a never-ending, eight-year campaign, Obama established a non-traditional presidency which begat an even more non-traditional president as his successor. He will open even more previously locked doors by continuing his tradition of ignoring tradition.

Hastened by those who should know better, the erosion and devolution of discourse is already finding easy footholds in an already-surreal Trump Presidency. The reverberations, sadly, could echo far beyond the four or eight years of the current administration and tinge Presidential politics for a generation or more.

Thanks, Obama.



An article by Christine Rousselle titled "Media Hits Ivanka Trump for Possibly Not Keeping Kosher; Is Fine With Catholic Nancy Pelosi Promoting Abortion" was posted at townhall.com on March 4, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

First Daughter Ivanka Trump and her family are quite possibly the highest-profile Modern Orthodox Jews in American history. Ivanka, who converted in 2009, has spoken about how her family observes the Sabbath, keeps kosher, and celebrates various Jewish holidays together. And now, for some reason, the media has taken it upon itself to become the "kosher police."

Take, for instance, this gem from the Washingtonian, where the writer took the mind-boggling step of phoning a chef to inquire about what Ivanka and her husband ordered for dinner.

■ But given that Trump and Kushner are orthodox Jews, their dining choices have some murmuring: Wait, don't they keep kosher?? Based on their dining destinations, it's safe to say that the couple isn't strictly observant.

Golly. And then there have been pieces criticizing Ivanka for her clothing choices, saying that they're counter to modesty standards, plus criticism for riding in a car on the Sabbath during the inauguration. (I never thought I'd see the day that TMZ covered Jewish law, but here we are.)

Of course, all of this is absurd when compared to the treatment that another high-profile religious woman in politics received: I'm talking about Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). Pelosi, who served as Speaker of the House, was, along with Vice President Joe Biden, one of the most powerful Catholics in the United States at one point.

Pelosi is an unapologetic and enthusiastic supporter of abortion rights and other family planning measures, which are violations of central tenets of the

Catholic faith. While the conservative and Catholic press was quite willing to criticize Pelosi for going against fairly basic practices of the faith, these were relatively absent in the mainstream press. In fact, the New York Times published a rather fawning profile of the representative and her views on abortion and how they conflict with those of the Church.

■ For Ms. Pelosi, the notion of disagreeing with other Catholics about abortion has not weighed on her sense of faith. "I think everyone grants everyone their position," she said. "The church has their position, and we have ours, which is that a woman has free will given to her by God. My family is very pro-life," she added, noting that she has lived with the conflict all her life."

What's at least slightly more troubling is how Pelosi has attempted to twist the Church's teachings in order to justify her stance on abortion. She's also referred to late-term abortion as "sacred ground," and said that Catholic hospitals invoking conscience rights will result in women being harmed. Additionally, she attempted to claim that the Church has only been opposed to abortion for about half a century. For all of this, she's been given a pass by the mainstream media, and is still regarded as a "good Catholic."

Granted, the media really shouldn't be playing religion police—for anyone, regardless of practice or political affiliation. It is, however, rather hypocritical to take the step of calling a restaurant to nosy into someone's eating habits and to let someone else literally committing heresy to go off scot-free.



An editorial by Michelle Malkin titled "A Lesson for Planned Parenthood Pin-Up Girls" was posted at michellemalkin.com on March 1, 2017. Following is the article.

Glam American actresses Emma Stone and Dakota Johnson adorned their pricy Oscars ceremony gowns and handbags with golden Planned Parenthood pins in the shape of the group's logo.

I believe there should be truth in virtue signaling. But bloodied miniature for-cepts would have clashed with the Givenchy and Gucci outfits worn by the abortion giant's pinup gals.

Since President Trump's reinstatement of the so-called "Mexico City policy" barring taxpayer funding of international nongovernmental organizations that perform and promote abortions, Hollywood progressives have turned up the volume on their abortion radicalism—and opened their wallets.

Golden Globes winner Tracee Ellis-Ross plans to hock 10 massive, red-carpet rings and donate the proceeds to Planned Parenthood. Pop songstress Katy Perry chipped in \$10,000. The author of the "Lemony Snicket" children's book series, Daniel Handler, and his wife showered the peddler of harvested fetal organs with \$1 million.

"We've been very fortunate," Handler explained, "and good fortune should be shared with noble causes."

"Noble?"

That's not how outspoken health professional Obianuju Ekeocha, an African-born biomedical scientist who grew up in Nigeria and now lives and works in England, sees it.

"The Africans are grateful for the Mexico policy!" she wrote me. Are you listening, Tinseltown?

In response to a campaign by Western feminists and liberal European governments called #SheDecides to raise global funding for abortions, Ekeocha published a bold and informative YouTube video excoriating elitists hellbent on funding and terminating unborn children in Africa—in defiance of how Africans actually feel about abortion.

Ekeocha noted that a recent Pew Research Center survey on global attitudes about abortion found that the vast majority of those polled in Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, and Nigeria believe the practice to be "morally unacceptable."

Ekeocha actually traveled to African neighborhoods and interviewed women about the "noble cause" of elitist abortionists.

Catholic nuns, Muslim schoolgirls, millennial-age young women and elderly grandmothers all made their position clear:

"No to abortion!"

"We love babies, so we do not support abortion."

"We don't need any safe abortion as not[h]ing is safe in killing."

Beneath their costumery of progressive benevolence, liberal Hollywood "helpers" and global do-gooders exhibit a cold indifference toward the actual wants and needs of their supposed beneficiaries in the Third World. They're raising hundreds of millions for abortions, not for food, water and education.

This, Ekeocha accurately diagnoses, is "cultural imperialism."

And, remember, it's marinated in racist eugenics: Margaret Sanger founded Planned Parenthood in 1916 "to stop the multiplication of the unfit." It would be "the most important and greatest step towards race betterment." In an essay included in her writing collection held by the Library of Congress, Sanger urged her abortion clinic colleagues to "breed a race of thoroughbreds." Nationwide "birth control bureaus" would propagate the proper "science of breeding" to stop impoverished, nonwhite women from "breeding like weeds."

Planned Parenthood activists blanketed the Third World with population-control propaganda preaching "the fewer, the merrier" and "Why carry more burdens?"

Outside of the privileged Hollywood bubble, Obianuju Ekeocha speaks for millions in condemning the butchers, predators and enablers of Planned Parenthood.

“They have not helped or furthered the cause and well-being of women in any way at all both in the developed countries and also in the developing countries,” she told me. “Yet, they continue to get enormous funding from many western governments and also most unfortunately they get the support of celebrities like Emma Stone and Dakota Johnson who choose to be blinded by extremist (liberal) views that portray the killing of unborn babies as a women’s right, progressive, health care, reproductive justice.”

Take off your glittering abortion pins and open your minds.

“The truth is that abortion in all its forms is an abhorrent practice. Most people in Africa understand this very well,” Ekeocha passionately explains.

“Whether a pre-born baby is killed in a back alley clinic or in an air-conditioned PP clinic, the killing of an unborn child is always barbaric. This is the one lesson we can teach Emma Stone, Dakota Johnson and all the other celebrities who are falling over themselves to support an abortion giant whose only legacy is that of death.”



An article by Cortney O’Brien titled “Trump Says Planned Parenthood Can Keep Funding If They Stop Doing Abortions” was posted at townhall.com on March 6, 2017. Following is the article.

President Trump has offered an ultimatum to Planned Parenthood. In a new statement to The New York Times, Trump informed the organization that they can keep their taxpayer funding—if they cease to do abortions.

Donald Trump: “As I said throughout the campaign, I am pro-life and I am deeply committed to investing in women’s health and plan to significantly increase federal funding in support of nonabortion services such as cancer screenings,” he said. “Polling shows the majority of Americans oppose public funding for abortion, even those who identify as pro-choice. There is an opportunity for organizations to continue the important work they do in support of women’s health, while not providing abortion services.”

Trump made similar statements during his presidential campaign last year. While he was uncomfortable with Planned Parenthood’s obsession with abortion, Trump frustrated conservatives when he noted Planned Parenthood does “very good work” for millions of women.

Congressional conservatives have urged the defunding of Planned Parenthood after a series of scandals exposed the organization as a greedy, inhumane organization. For instance, the Center for Medical Progress conducted an undercover investigation in which they discovered employees negotiating the sale of fetal body parts. Meanwhile, the pro-life group Live Action learned that employees

were sometimes provided abortions quotas to fill. Actual health care be damned. In case you were wondering, Planned Parenthood did not accept Trump's offer. Donations, not federal funds, pay for abortions, according to Dawn Laguens, the executive vice president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.



An editorial by Dennis Prager titled "Why Do American Jews Want Thousands of Jew Haters in America?" was posted at townhall.com on March 7, 2017. Following is the article.

Last week, the *Jerusalem Post* and other news agencies reported that in a Paris suburb, two Jewish brothers wearing kippot (Jewish skullcaps) were attacked while driving their car by Middle Easterners driving another car.

According to a case report: "While the vehicle was in motion, the driver and a passenger shouted anti-Semitic slogans at the brothers that included 'Dirty Jews, You're going to die!' . . . The vehicle forced the brothers to stop their car, and they were surrounded by several men . . . The men came out of a hookah cafe on to the side street . . . The alleged attackers surrounded the brothers, then kicked and punched them repeatedly while threatening that they would be murdered if they moved. One of the alleged attackers then sawed off the finger of one of the brothers."

Attacks on Jews in France and elsewhere in Europe by Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa, or MENA, are so common that for the first time since World War II, Jews in France fear wearing a kippah or a Star of David in public. So many French Jews are leaving France that two years ago, then-Prime Minister Manuel Valls gave an impassioned speech pleading with French Jews to stay in France.

It has gotten so bad for Jews in Europe that *The Atlantic*, a liberal magazine, recently featured an article titled "Is It Time for the Jews to Leave Europe?"

In Sweden, attacks on Jews in Malmo, the country's third largest city, are so common that Jews are leaving the city and the country.

Last year, the *Jerusalem Post* published an article about a Jewish couple that had lived in Sweden since the middle of World War II. Dan and Karla (not their real names) are Danish Jews who were smuggled into Sweden as children. Their gratitude for Sweden has been immense.

But they have now left their homeland, the country that saved their lives, to live in Spain. They lived in Malmo. In Dan's words, the immense saturation of Jew hatred in the city was caused by "the adverse effects of accepting half-a-million immigrants from the Middle East, who plainly weren't interesting in adopting Sweden's values and Swedish culture. . . . The politicians, the media,

the intellectuals . . . they all played their parts in pandering to this dangerous ideology and, sadly, it's changing the fabric of Swedish society irreversibly."

The Post continued, saying, "Karla, who'd sat passively, occasionally nodding in agreement at Dan's analysis, then interrupted, saying, 'If you disagree with the establishment, you're immediately called a racist or fascist.' " (Sound familiar?)

The British newspaper The Telegraph recently reported: "Jewish people in Malmo have long complained of growing harassment in the city, where 43 per cent of the population have a non-Swedish background, with Iraqis, Lebanese and stateless Palestinians some of the largest groups. The Jewish community centre in the city is heavily fortified, with security doors and bollards on the outside pavement to prevent car bombs."

An article in the left-wing HuffingtonPost reached a now-familiar conclusion, saying: "Migrants streaming into Europe from the Middle East are bringing with them virulent anti-Semitism which is erupting from Scandinavia to France to Germany . . . While all of the incoming refugees and migrants, fleeing Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other Muslim lands, may not hold anti-Jewish views, an extremely large number do—simply as a result to being raised in places where anti-Jewish vitriol is poured out in TV, newspapers, schools and mosques . . . 'There is no future for Jews in Europe' said the chief Rabbi of Brussels."

Yet, despite all this Muslim-immigrant Jew hatred, more than a thousand rabbis have signed a petition to bring large numbers of MENA Muslims into America, and virtually all Jewish organizations outside of orthodoxy and the Zionist Organization of America have condemned President Trump's administration for enacting even a temporary travel ban (one due entirely to security concerns) on immigrants and refugees from seven (of the world's more than 50) Muslim-majority countries.

How is one to explain the widespread American Jewish support for bringing in a massive number of people, many of whom will bring in anti-Jew, anti-Israel and anti-West values?

First, they are staggeringly naive believing, for example, that marching at airports with signs that read "We love Muslims" will change those Muslims who hate Jews into Muslims who love Jews.

Second, never underestimate the power of feeling good about yourself that exists on the left (the self-esteem movement originated on the left). And it feels very good for these Jews to say: "Look, world. You abandoned us in the 1930s, but we're better than you."

And third, when American Jews abandoned traditional liberal and traditional Jewish values for leftist values, they became less Jewish, less American and more foolish.

Just ask the Jews of Europe.



An article by Holly Bailey titled "As Immigration Crackdown Intensifies, Churches Embrace Refugees" was posted at yahoo.com on March 6, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Hilda Ramirez and her son, Ivan, illegally crossed the border two and a half years ago in a small inflatable raft that began to take on water almost as soon as it hit the Rio Grande. They had come hundreds of miles, fleeing an unimaginable life of violence in their native Guatemala, where Ramirez—who had given birth after being raped—was escaping death threats from her assailant's father, a man she said had murdered his own wife and now wanted custody of her child.

The two nearly drowned on their way across the river, but risking death to escape near-certain death was worth it to Ramirez, who saw the United States as their only chance at salvation. Eventually plucked from the water by the Border Patrol, she and Ivan were sent to a South Texas detention center along with hundreds of other Central American women who had crossed into the U.S. illegally to escape intolerable violence—and who, like her, were seeking asylum. (Ramirez's account, like those told by many who cross into the U.S., could not be independently verified.)

Ramirez was released from the immigration facility after nearly a year with an ankle monitor on her right leg. But a few months later, while living in a safe house in Austin, she and her son lost their bids for asylum. Under the threat of being deported back to Guatemala, they took shelter here last spring at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on the city's north side, where the congregation had installed bunk beds in the Sunday school teacher's tiny office and offered them sanctuary.

It is here that Ramirez, 29, and Ivan, who is now 10, spend most of their days. Though the mother and son received a stay in their cases last November, erasing the imminent threat of deportation, they are scared to venture far, worried that Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers—who know exactly where Ramirez is because of her ankle monitor—could still take them away. Ivan's only time outside of the church is when he goes to school, which is considered a safe place. He is not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities or hang out with friends because of fears he could be detained.

Ramirez's situation is not directly affected by the administration's temporary ban on travel to the U.S. from some majority-Muslim countries—originally imposed in January, stayed by a federal court, and reinstated in a new form Monday. But Trump's hard line on immigration has mobilized many church groups that oppose it—opposition that also takes the form of offering sanctuary to refugees like Ramirez and her son.

"Hilda and her son aren't even 5 feet tall, yet President Trump has made people afraid of them, calling them criminals when they are just trying to escape violence," said Jim Rigby, the longtime pastor of St. Andrew's. "And when you are helping someone who is considered a criminal, giving them shelter, you can

be charged . . . There's a risk here, but we won't turn them away. To me, you can't call yourself a church if you don't open your doors when there is a need."

Rigby and his church staff have taken greater precautions in recent weeks to keep Ramirez and her son safe. Members of the church, which sits at a major intersection just off Interstate 35, have covered its back fence with a tarp to prevent people from seeing into the back windows of the sanctuary where the mother and her son live.

Under the Obama administration, churches were considered a safe place for undocumented immigrants because official policy said immigration agents would not arrest people there. But it's unclear whether that directive is still in place under the more aggressive policy pursued by the agency under Trump.

Local police cars are often parked in the church's parking lot, with officers watching for speeding motorists. But now Rigby eyes them with suspicion, worried they could be there for other reasons. He has trained his staff what to do if ICE agents were to show up, including how to form a human chain to try to stop agents if they attempt to take Ramirez or her son away.

St. Andrew's is one of a growing number of churches in Austin and around the country that are forming so-called sanctuary networks to shelter undocumented immigrants as the administration prepares to deliver on Trump's campaign pledge to deport people who are in the country illegally. As many as a dozen churches here are now exploring ways to give refuge to undocumented immigrants—especially those like Ramirez, who fled their countries to escape violence.

The churches are part of a national movement that began in response to immigration enforcement under President Barack Obama, who deported more undocumented immigrants than any of his predecessors. But the enforcement has intensified under Trump. According to the Church World Service—a religious ministry that helps refugees and immigrants—before last year's election, about 400 churches around the country had indicated their members were willing to offer sanctuary. After November, that number doubled to 800 and is still growing.

That includes New Season Christian Worship Center in Sacramento, Calif., headed by Pastor Sam Rodriguez Jr., who met with Trump several times during the campaign as part of an evangelical advisory group and who delivered an invocation at his inauguration ceremony in January. Rodriguez, who is also head of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, said Trump had told him he would pursue a compassionate approach to immigration enforcement, including not separating families. "What has taken place in the past two weeks does not respect the president's promise," Rodriguez told Time magazine last week as his church set up cots to protect undocumented immigrants who are scared of being detained.

On Monday, Trump signed a new executive order designed to withstand legal scrutiny—this one exempting people from Iraq and removing the ban on Syrian refugees, but still temporarily slowing the flow of arrivals from six Muslim-majority countries—which is likely to spur controversy.

Unlike the previous order, this one exempts current green card holders and those who have already been granted asylum or refugee status.

Other parts of the order remain firmly intact, including Trump's decision to reduce the number of resettlements this year from the originally planned 110,000 to 50,000—a detail that has sparked shock and anger among churches and religious groups that work to resettle refugees in the U.S.

Last Friday, the Church World Service and National Council of Churches, which represent nearly 40 Protestant and Orthodox Christian denominations, launched a campaign to mobilize its collective 30 million American congregants to lobby Trump and members of Congress against the travel ban. Hundreds of evangelical pastors have signed letters opposing the ban, including one that ran as a full-page ad in the *Washington Post*.



Isaiah 55:6-11—"Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."