

Eye on the World

Dec. 17, 2016

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 Dec. 17, 2016.

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 Patrick Goodenough titled "Ayatollah: Palestinians and Muslims Can End Israel Within 25 Years" was posted at cnsnews.com on Dec. 15, 2016. Following is the article.

Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday accused the United States—the "great Satan"—and its "little demons" in the region of creating crises like those in Syria and Iraq, to divert attention away from the issue of "Palestine."

Khamenei, echoing a statement made in a speech last year, also told a visiting Palestinian terrorist leader that if Muslims act, Israel will no longer exist in 25 years' time.

"As I have said before, the Zionist regime will not exist in the next 25 years on the condition of a public and unified struggle by Palestinians and Muslims," his office quoted him as telling a delegation led by Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader Ramadan Abdullah Shalah.

"Despite continued attempts by the supporters of the Zionist regime to create crises and make the Palestinian issue fade into oblivion, the holy land will be liberated thanks to the resistance and string of Palestinian groups," Khamenei said.

He stressed that Iran was at the forefront of supporters of the Palestinian cause.

“Despite being entangled in some regional issues, the Islamic Republic has always and explicitly declared that Palestine is the foremost problem of the Islamic world and continues to fulfill its obligations in this regard,” Khamenei said.

He said the only way to liberate Jerusalem from the Israelis was “through struggle and resistance,” as any other methods were futile.

A day earlier, Iran’s “moderate” President Hasan Rouhani met with Shalah and told him that “jihad and resistance” were the only options for Palestinians confronting the “Zionist regime.”

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization since 1997, is a Sunni group but enjoys strong support from Shi’ite Iran and its Lebanese Shi’ite ally, Hezbollah.

The Syrian civil war, with largely Shi’a forces arrayed against Sunni ones, has fueled sectarianism across the region, exacerbated by the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

Iran, Hezbollah, and other Shi’a militia are fighting on behalf of the Assad regime, against predominantly Sunni rebels, ranging from nationalists to radical jihadists, some of them supported by the Sunni Gulf states and Turkey.

Clerics and politicians on each side use sectarian rhetoric when condemning and inciting violent actions against other, further fanning the flames.

But Khamenei told his visitors the crisis in the region has nothing to do with differences between Sunni and Shi’a.

It was Sunnis in Aleppo and Mosul, he said, who were being massacred by “criminal takfiris.”

“Therefore, these crises have nothing to do with Shias and Sunnis.”

“Takfiri” is an epithet used by Shi’ites for radical Sunnis who regard any Muslims not sharing their religious views as infidels.

The schism dates back to a succession dispute after the death of Mohammed in the seventh century. Shi’ites believe Mohammed chose his son-in-law, Ali, as successor; Sunnis recognize four caliphs, beginning with Abu Bakr, as the rightful heirs.

Shi’ites comprise between 10 and 15 percent of the world’s 1.6 billion Muslims today.



An article by Manuel Rueda and Mariana Zuniga titled “Venezuelans Fight to Protect Their Savings As Government Pulls Bills From Circulation” was posted at fusion.net on Dec. 13, 2016. Following are excerpts of the article.

Venezuelans are rushing to the banks this week in a desperate attempt to protect their savings from the government's latest spasm of reckless financial policymaking.

On Tuesday morning thousands of people across Venezuela played hooky from work to line-up outside banks and deposit bundles of cash into their savings accounts after the government gave everyone a 72-hour countdown to turn in all their 100 bolivar notes before they're removed from circulation.

"I've been saving for so long, withdrawing money every week and for what? Nothing!" complained José Orozco, who was holding a backpack full of money as he stood in line.



An article by Ashifa Kassam and Laurence Mathieu-Leger titled "Justin Trudeau: 'Globalism Isn't Working for Ordinary People' " was posted at the-guardian.com on Dec. 15, 2016. Following is the article.

Ordinary people around the world have been failed by globalisation, Justin Trudeau has told the Guardian, as he sought to explain a turbulent year marked by the election of Donald Trump, the Brexit vote and the rise of anti-establishment, nation-first parties around the world.

"What we're facing right now—in terms of the rise of populism and divisive and fearful narratives around the world—it's based around the fact that globalisation doesn't seem to be working for the middle class, for ordinary people," the Canadian prime minister said in an interview at his oak-panelled office in the country's parliament. "And this is something that we identified years ago and built an entire platform and agenda for governing on."

Last year, at a time when Trump was being described as a long shot for president and the threat of Brexit seemed a distant possibility, Trudeau, 44, swept to a majority government on an ambitious platform that included addressing growing inequality and creating real change for the country's middle class.

One year on, what has emerged is a government that seems to go against the political tide around the world; open to trade, immigration and diversity and led by a social media star whose views on feminism, Syrian refugees and LGBT rights have provoked delight among progressives.

But as he enters his second year in power, Trudeau—a former high school teacher and snowboarding instructor—is under pressure to show the world that his government has found an alternative means of tackling the concerns of those who feel they've been left behind.

He cited the signing of Ceta—the free trade deal between the EU and Canada—and a hotly contested decision to approve two pipelines as examples of this approach.

"We were able to sign free trade agreement with Europe at a time when people tend to be closing off," he said. "We're actually able to approve pipelines at a time when everyone wants protection of the environment. We're being able to show that we get people's fears and there are constructive ways of allaying them—and not just ways to lash out and give a big kick to the system."

Canada has not remained immune to such pressures, he said—despite what the fresh wave of interest in migrating to the country in the wake of Trump's victory and the Brexit vote would suggest. "I think there's a lot of people saying 'oh well, Canada is a special place,' and we are," said Trudeau. "But we are subject to the same kinds of tensions and forces that so much of the world is facing right now."

Trudeau said he is keenly aware that the world is watching. "I think it's always been understood that Canada is not a country that's going to stand up and beat its chest on the world stage, but we can be very helpful in modelling solutions that work," he said. "Quite frankly if we can show—as we are working very hard to demonstrate—that you can have engaged global perspectives and growth that works for everyone . . . then that diffuses a lot of the uncertainty, the anger, the populism that is surfacing in different pockets of the world."

In January, Trudeau's government will face off against its greatest challenge to date: a Trump presidency. When it comes to US relations, few countries have as much at stake as Canada—last year saw nearly three-quarters of Canada's exports head to the US while some 400,000 people a day cross the shared border.

Justin Trudeau: 'We are subject to the same kinds of tensions and forces that so much of the world is facing right now.'

Trudeau's father, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Canada's prime minister during the late 1960s, '70s and '80s, once likened living next to the US to sleeping with an elephant. "No matter how friendly and even-tempered is the beast, if I can call it that, one is affected by every twitch and grunt," he told the Washington Press Club in 1969.

Nearly five decades on, his son is poised to weather what will probably be one of the toughest tests of this sentiment. The prime minister and the president-elect seem to have little in common; Trudeau is a self-described feminist who appointed his country's first gender-balanced cabinet, while Trump's campaign saw more than a dozen women come forward with allegations of sexual misconduct. Trudeau has sought to champion trade deals such as Ceta, while Trump has threatened to rip up Nafta and bury TPP.

The contrast was captured last December after Trump and Trudeau catapulted into global headlines within days of each other over their response to the Syrian refugee crisis; Trump, who had called for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the US, suggested that families fleeing war could be Isis infiltrators; Trudeau, in contrast was at the Toronto airport to greet the first wave of the tens of thousands of Syrian refugees airlifted to Canada in the past year.

Trudeau skirted past these differences, instead highlighting the links that bridge both administrations. On Syrian refugees, for example, Trudeau pointed to underlying concerns around security. "Certainly in a world where terrorism is a daily reality in the news, it's easy for people to be afraid," he said. "But the fact is that we laid out very clearly—and Canadians get—that it's actually not a choice between either immigration or security, that of course they go together."

The two governments are also keen to create policies that address those who feel that globalisation and trade have failed to benefit the middle class and those working to join it, said Trudeau. "There are differences in the policies, the solutions for it, but I know that when we talk about making sure there are good jobs for the middle class, that is a place where we are going to be able to find agreement and alignment on."

A silver lining for Trudeau may lie in Trump's pledge to resurrect plans for TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline. When the Obama administration rejected the plan last year, Trudeau said in a statement he was "disappointed" in the decision. When Trudeau called Trump to congratulate him after the election, the two briefly spoke about Keystone, said Trudeau, adding that it remains to be seen how the US will move forward with plans for the pipeline.

Any reluctance to move forward on climate change south of the border could be a boon for Canadian companies across various sectors, said Trudeau. "I know Canada is well positioned to pick up some of the slack and when people finally realise that it's a tremendous business opportunity to lead on climate change, Canada will already have a head start."

But he also cast doubt on Trump's ability to completely derail US efforts towards combatting climate change. "You know quite frankly at the subnational level in the United States, states, municipalities are already showing that they understand that climate change is real so that the potential for the federal government to ease off on actions is not total," he said.

Last week's announcement of a national carbon price is a key part of Trudeau's environmental policy—one that has been derided by environmentalists for enabling the expansion of fossil fuels, compensated by initiatives that include investments in clean tech and promises to phase out federal subsidies for oil and gas companies. The policy saw Trudeau recently approve a liquefied natural gas project in British Columbia as well as two pipelines that will offer Alberta's oil sands nearly a million barrels a day in increased capacity.

The approvals have sparked broad opposition among environmentalists, some First Nations and several of the communities affected by the planned infrastructure projects. "There is a number of people out there who've always [believed] if you stop pipeline, you stop the oil sands," said Trudeau. "Well, actually as we've seen, it doesn't work that way and what we end up with is much more oil by rail."

The discontent has chipped away at Trudeau's unprecedented political honeymoon, along with revelations of fundraisers that offered access to Trudeau and his ministers for a price, a government decision to push forward with a C\$15bn

(\$11bn) deal to sell weaponised military vehicles to Saudi Arabia amid outcry by human rights organisations as well as speculation that his government is moving away from a promise to reform the country's voting system.

Still, recent polls suggest that were Canada to hold an election today, Trudeau's team would earn an even greater proportion of votes than they did last year.

The government's environmental policy takes a long view on the transition to a carbon-free economy, said Trudeau. "It's not going to happen in a day, or in a week, but it will happen over years and perhaps a decade or two," he said. "I know there are people out there extremely passionate about the environment, who don't think I made the right decision on approving a couple of pipelines. But I think that everyone can see at least what it is we're trying to do and that we're consistent with what I've always said which is, you protect the environment and you build a strong economy at the same time."

The double-barrelled approach, said Trudeau, echoes his government's broader effort to address the tensions currently wreaking havoc on the political status quo around the world. "People get that we need jobs, we need a protected environment," he said. "On the other hand, if people have no jobs, if they have no opportunity, they're not going to worry about protection of the air and water if they can't feed their kids."



An editorial by Walter Williams titled "Please, No More Miracles" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Dec. 14, 2016. Following is the article.

President-elect Donald Trump has warned companies that they are not going to leave the United States anymore "without consequences." He has lived up to his threat by pressuring Carrier to give up its planned move to Monterrey, Mexico, in exchange for a taxpayer handout.

It is a safe bet that other U.S. companies will be descending on Washington looking for handouts in the name of "fair trade" and "leveling the playing field."

Part of Carrier's problem is the congressional miracle created for the U.S. metal industry. Import restrictions placed on steel, copper tubing and aluminum extrusions benefit American producers of those products.

Not having to worry about foreign steel, copper tubing and aluminum extrusions, American producers of those products can charge higher prices and maintain higher employment.

The real cost of import restrictions is the harm they do to steel-, copper- and aluminum-using manufacturers.

Companies can escape some of those U.S. government-imposed costs simply by moving across the border.

There are other government-imposed costs that can be avoided through relocation. The U.S. corporate income tax is the highest in the world. Slashing the U.S. corporate income tax would reduce incentives to relocate.

While we're at it, there should be an elimination of the taxation of foreign earnings when they are repatriated into the U.S. Finally, we should apply reasoning to the onerous regulations emerging from unelected bureaucracies such as the Environmental Protection Agency.

If you're looking for a good example of the effect of a nearly completed congressional miracle, it would be the U.S. candy manufacturing industry. American Sugar Alliance spends millions of dollars lobbying Congress to impose restrictions on foreign sugar, in the form of tariffs and quotas.

That means the American sugar producers can charge higher prices, create more jobs and have higher profits. But that's just stage one of the effect of the congressionally created miracle.

Chicago used to be America's candy capital. Today it's a mere shadow of its former self. Brach's used to employ about 2,300 Americans; now most of its jobs are in Mexico. Ferrara Candy Co. has also moved much of its production to Mexico.

Wages are indeed lower in Mexico, but wages are not the only factor in candy manufacturers' flight from America. Life Savers, which manufactured in America for 90 years, moved to Canada, where wages are comparable to ours. By moving to Canada, Life Savers became more competitive because it saved itself a whopping \$10 million a year in sugar costs.

Family-owned Bobs Candies Inc., which makes candy canes, moved half of its manufacturing to Mexico. Regarding the 250 jobs left in Albany, Georgia, after the company was sold to Farley's & Sathers Candy Co., which is now Ferrara, CEO Greg McCormack said, "No one cared if (the candy canes) were made in the USA. They just cared if they were cheaper."

He pointed out that he didn't want to lay off workers, "but it was the medicine you had to take to stay in business." Sugar is the primary ingredient in candy. Some candy manufacturers use 2.5 million pounds a week.

What about jobs saved through sugar import restrictions? According to a 2006 study by the U.S. Department of Commerce, for each "sugar growing and harvesting job saved through high U.S. sugar prices, nearly three confectionery manufacturing jobs are lost."

Trade barriers do not increase employment; they just shift the composition of jobs away from competitive industries and toward those favored by the government.

Some Americans support trade restrictions because they think there is a problem with having a trade deficit, i.e., buying more from foreigners than they buy from us.

Concern about a trade deficit is much ado about little. It turns out that we've had a trade deficit in all but 12 years from 1900 to 2016. In fact, our longest sustained trade surplus was during the Great Depression.



An article by J. Marsolo titled "Recounts Over, Trump Wins; and Democrats Now Claim Interference" was posted at americanthinker.com on Dec. 13, 2016. Following is the article.

On December 12, the useless Wisconsin recount confirmed what we all knew already: Trump won Wisconsin.

On December 9, the Michigan federal court dismissed Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein's suit for a recount in Michigan.

On December 12, as expected, the federal court in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania dismissed Stein's suit to order a statewide recount.

Stein had filed suit in federal court after she withdrew her Pennsylvania state court suit because the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court had ordered her to post a one-million-dollar bond. Stein did not want to spend the money on the bond for what her lawyers knew was a losing case, so she tried in federal court instead.

The best part of Judge Diamond's opinion was the total rejection of Stein's "expert witness," who submitted an affidavit that the voting machines could be hacked because the emails of the DNC and John Podesta had been hacked. It is obvious that the emails are on the internet, while the Pennsylvania voting machines are not on the internet, so hacking would be impossible. Rejecting this absurd argument as "irrational,"

Judge Diamond stated:

■ Most importantly, there is no credible evidence that any 'hack' occurred, and compelling evidence that Pennsylvania's voting system was not in any way compromised[.] . . . Moreover, plaintiffs' lack of standing, the likely absence of federal jurisdiction, and plaintiffs' unexplained, highly prejudicial delay in seeking a recount are all fatal to their claims for immediate relief.

■ Dr. Stein has repeatedly stated that she has sought a Pennsylvania recount to ensure that every vote counts[.] . . . Granting her later-than-last-minute request for relief, however, could well ensure that no Pennsylvania vote counts. Such a result would be both outrageous and completely unnecessary; as I have found, suspicion of a 'hacked' Pennsylvania election borders on the irrational.

Since the Democrats knew that Trump would win the recount in Wisconsin, and the lawsuits for a recount in Michigan and Pennsylvania would fail, they have switched their attack on Trump to blame the Russians for "interference."

At best, the Russians, or whoever did the hacking of the DNC and Podesta emails, provided information to the American voters that the MSM and Hillary failed to provide: the documentation that proves that Hillary and Obama lied and that Hillary sold access to the State Department. Moreover, if Hillary and

Obama had not lied, and had Hillary not sold access to the State Department, then there would be no emails to hack and leak.

The charge that the Russians, or anyone else, interfered with the election to help Trump is as irrational as Stein's argument that the voting machines could have been hacked by the Russians because the DNC and Podesta emails were hacked.

How can there be interference with an election by providing truthful information about a candidate?

Harry Reid admittedly lied in 2012 that Romney had not paid his taxes for ten years. Hillary and Obama lied in 2012 that a video caused the Benghazi attack. All three lied to help Obama win. Is that interference?



An article by Susan Jones titled "NYT in 2012: 'Putin of Russia Sauntered Into American Presidential Politics, Praising President Obama' " was posted at cnsnews.com on Dec. 12, 2016. Following is the article.

The New York Times is now reporting that Russia tried to influence the 2016 presidential election in favor of Donald Trump by leaking hacked information that was damaging only to Democrats.

But four years ago, *The New York Times* reported on Sept. 6, 2012 that: "President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia sauntered into American presidential politics . . . praising President Barack Obama as 'a very honest man' and chastising the Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, for describing Russia as 'without question our No. 1 geopolitical foe.'"

A Sept. 27, 2012, commentary published in *The Moscow Times* opined: "This comment was widely viewed as Putin's most direct endorsement of Obama in the presidential race."

In his September 2012 interview with the Russian-controlled RT television network, Putin said if Obama were re-elected, it might be possible to reach a compromise on the U.S. missile defense system that Russia strongly opposes.

"Is it possible to find a solution to the problem, if current President Obama is re-elected for a second term? Theoretically, yes," Putin said, according to an official transcript posted on the Kremlin's Website.

"But this isn't just about president Obama. For all I know, his desire to work out a solution is quite sincere. I met him recently on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Los Cabos, Mexico where we had a chance to talk," Putin continued. "And though we talked mostly about Syria, I could still take stock of my counterpart.

"My feeling is that he is a very honest man and that he sincerely wants to make many good changes. But can he do it, will they let him do it? I mean

that there is also the military lobby, and the Department of State, which is quite conservative.” (Hillary Clinton was then the secretary of state.)

The RT interviewer told Putin, “OK. So we think you can work with Barack Obama if he gets in. What about if Mitt Romney gets in. Look, I’ve got some quotes here from just a month or two ago. This is the man that if he makes it to the White House, said: ‘Russia is without question our number one geopolitical foe. They fight every cause for the world’s worst.’ And he (Romney) went on to say, ‘Russia is not a friendly character on the world stage.’ Could you work with him, Sir?” Putin was asked.

“Yes, we can,” Putin replied. “We’ll work with whichever president gets elected by the American people. But our effort will only be as efficient as our partners will want it to be.

“As for Mr Romney’s position, we understand that this is to a certain extent motivated by the election race and election rhetoric, but I also think that he was obviously wrong . . .”



An article by Susan Jones titled “Flashback—Obama Whispers Message for Putin in 2012: ‘After My Election, I’ll Have More Flexibility’ ” was posted at cnsnews.com on Dec. 12, 2016. Following is the article.

President Obama was running for re-election in March 2012, when a live microphone picked up his whispered conversation with then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Obama told Medvedev it was important for incoming President Vladimir Putin to “give me space” on missile defense and other difficult issues and that after the 2012 presidential election he would have “more flexibility.” Medvedev said he would “transmit” the message to Putin.

“On all these issues, but particularly missile defense, this can be solved, but it’s important for him to give me space,” Obama told Medvedev at a gathering in Seoul, South Korea.

“Yeah, I understand,” said Medvedev, who was about to be replaced by Putin as Russian president. “I understand your message about space. Space for you—”

“This is my last election,” Obama said. “After my election I have more flexibility.”

“I understand,” Medvedev said. “I will transmit this information to Vladimir.”

As expected, Putin easily won the election to replace Medvedev as president on March 4, 2012. Twenty-two days later, on March 26, 2012, Obama urged Medvedev to pass on the “flexibility” message to Putin.

U.S. relations with Russia deteriorated in Obama’s second term, after Russia annexed the Ukrainian territory of Crimea and sided with the Assad regime in Syria’s civil war.

While campaigning for Hillary Clinton in October, Obama criticized Republican Donald Trump's "continued flattery of Mr. Putin and the degree to which he appears to model many of his policies and approaches" after those of Putin.

This past Friday [Dec. 9], Obama ordered the U.S. intelligence community to investigate alleged Russian hacking in an attempt to interfere in the 2016 election.



An article by Alana Goodman titled "Exclusive: Ex-British Ambassador Who is Now a WikiLeaks Operative Claims Russia Did Not Provide Hillary Clinton Emails—They Were Handed Over to Him at a D.C. Park by An Intermediary for 'Disgusted' Democratic Insiders" was posted at dailymail.co.uk on Dec. 14, 2016. Following are excerpts of the article.

Key ideas in the article.

- Craig Murray, former British ambassador to Uzbekistan and associate of Julian Assange, told the Dailymail.com he flew to Washington, D.C. for emails.
- He claims he had a clandestine hand-off in a wooded area near American University with one of the email sources.
- The leakers' motivation was 'disgust at the corruption of the Clinton Foundation and the 'tilting of the primary election playing field against Bernie Sanders.'
- Murray says: 'The source had legal access to the information. The documents came from inside leaks, not hacks.'
- 'Regardless of whether the Russians hacked into the DNC, the documents Wikileaks published did not come from that,' Murray insists.
- Murray is a controversial figure who was relieved of his post as British ambassador amid allegations of misconduct but is close to Wikileaks.

A Wikileaks envoy today claims he personally received Clinton campaign emails in Washington, D.C., after they were leaked by 'disgusted' whistleblowers—and not hacked by Russia.

Craig Murray, former British ambassador to Uzbekistan and a close associate of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, told Dailymail.com that he flew to Washington, D.C., for a clandestine hand-off with one of the email sources in September.

'Neither of [the leaks] came from the Russians,' said Murray in an interview with Dailymail.com on Tuesday. 'The source had legal access to the information. The documents came from inside leaks, not hacks.'

His account contradicts directly the version of how thousands of Democratic emails were published before the election being advanced by U.S. intelligence.

Murray is a controversial figure who was removed from his post as a British ambassador amid allegations of misconduct. He was cleared of those but left the diplomatic service in acrimony.

His links to Wikileaks are well known and while his account is likely to be seen as both unprovable and possibly biased, it is also the first intervention by Wikileaks since reports surfaced last week that the CIA believed Russia hacked the Clinton emails to help hand the election to Donald Trump.

Murray's claims about the origins of the Clinton campaign emails comes as U.S. intelligence officials are increasingly confident that Russian hackers infiltrated both the Democratic National Committee and the email account of top Clinton aide John Podesta.

In Podesta's case, his account appeared to have been compromised through a basic 'phishing' scheme, the *New York Times* reported on Wednesday.

U.S. intelligence officials have reportedly told members of Congress during classified briefings that they believe Russians passed the documents on to Wikileaks as part of an influence operation to swing the election in favor of Donald Trump.

But Murray insisted that the DNC and Podesta emails published by Wikileaks did not come from the Russians, and were given to the whistleblowing group by Americans who had authorized access to the information.

'Neither of [the leaks] came from the Russians,' Murray said. 'The source had legal access to the information. The documents came from inside leaks, not hacks.'

He said the leakers were motivated by 'disgust at the corruption of the Clinton Foundation and the tilting of the primary election playing field against Bernie Sanders.'

His account cannot be independently verified but is in line with previous statements by Wikileaks—which was the organization that published the Podesta and DNC emails.

Wikileaks published the DNC messages in July and the Podesta messages in October. The messages revealed efforts by some DNC officials to undermine the presidential campaign of Sen. Bernie Sanders, who was running against Hillary Clinton.

Others revealed that Clinton aides were concerned about potential conflicts and mismanagement at the Clinton Foundation.

Murray declined to say where the sources worked and how they had access to the information, to shield their identities.

He suggested that Podesta's emails might be 'of legitimate interest to the security services' in the U.S., due to his communications with Saudi Arabia lobbyists and foreign officials.

Murray said he was speaking out due to claims from intelligence officials that Wikileaks was given the documents by Russian hackers as part of an effort to help Donald Trump win the U.S. presidential election.

'I don't understand why the CIA would say the information came from Russian hackers when they must know that isn't true,' he said. 'Regardless of whether the Russians hacked into the DNC, the documents Wikileaks published did not come from that.'

Murray was a vocal critic of human rights abuses in Uzbekistan while serving as ambassador between 2002 and 2004, a stance that pitted him against the UK Foreign Office.

He describes himself as a 'close associate' of Julian Assange and has spoken out in support of the Wikileaks founder who has faced rape allegations and is currently confined to the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

Assange has similarly disputed that charges that Wikileaks received the leaked emails from Russian sources.

'The Clinton camp has been able to project a neo-McCarthyist hysteria that Russia is responsible for everything,' Assange told John Pilger during an interview in November.

'Hillary Clinton has stated multiple times, falsely, that 17 US intelligence agencies had assessed that Russia was the source of our publications. That's false—we can say that the Russian government is not the source.'

Murray suggested that John Podesta's emails might be 'of legitimate interest to the security services' in the U.S., due to his communications with Saudi Arabia lobbyists and foreign officials

The Washington Post reported last Friday that U.S. intelligence agencies had 'identified individuals with connections to the Russian government who provided WikiLeaks with thousands of hacked emails.'

The paper said U.S. senators were presented with information tying Russia to the leaks during a recent briefing by intelligence officials.

'It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia's goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected,' a senior U.S. official familiar with the briefing told the *Post*. 'That's the consensus view.'

The paper said U.S. senators were presented with information tying Russia to the leaks during a recent briefing by intelligence officials.

'It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia's goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected,' a senior U.S. official familiar with the briefing told the *Post*. 'That's the consensus view.'

The Obama administration has been examining Russia's potential role in trying to influence the presidential election. Officials said Russians hacked the Republican National Committee, but did not release that information in a deliberate effort to damage Clinton and protect Donald Trump.

Several congressional committees are also looking into the suspected Russian interference.

While there is a consensus on Capitol Hill that Russia hacked U.S. political groups and officials, some Republicans say it's not clear whether the motive was to try to swing the election or just to collect intelligence.

'Now whether they intended to interfere to the degree that they were trying to elect a certain candidate, I think that's the subject of investigation,' said Sen. John McCain on CBS Face the Nation. 'But facts are stubborn things, they did hack into this campaign.'

President elect Donald Trump raised doubts about the reports and said this was an 'excuse' by Democrats to explain Clinton's November loss.

'It's just another excuse. I don't believe it,' said Trump on Fox News Sunday.



An article by Alex Heath titled "Facebook is Going to Use Snopes And Other Fact-Checkers to Combat And Bury 'Fake News' " was posted at businessinsider.com on Dec. 15, 2016. Following are excerpts of the article.

Facebook is going to start fact-checking, labeling, and burying fake news and hoaxes in its News Feed, the company said Thursday.

The decision comes after Facebook received heated criticism for its role in spreading a deluge of political misinformation during the US presidential election, like one story that falsely said the Pope had endorsed Donald Trump.

To combat fake news, Facebook has teamed up with a shortlist of media organizations, including Snopes and ABC News, that are part of an international fact-checking network led by Poynter, a nonprofit school for journalism in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Starting as a test with a small percentage of its users in the US, Facebook will make it easier to report news stories that are fake or misleading. Once third-party fact-checkers have confirmed that the story is fake, it will be labeled as such and demoted in the News Feed.

A company representative told Business Insider that the social network will also use other signals, like algorithms that detect whether a story that appears fake is going viral, to determine if it should label the story as fake and bury it in people's feeds.

"We've focused our efforts on the worst of the worst, on the clear hoaxes spread by spammers for their own gain, and on engaging both our community and third party organizations," Facebook News Feed chief Adam Mosseri said in a company blog post on Thursday.

A team of Facebook researchers will also review website domains and send sites that appear to be fake or spoofed (like "washingtonpost.co") to third-party fact-checkers, a Facebook representative said. Of the 42 news organi-

zations that have committed to Poynter's fact-checking code of ethics, Facebook is starting out with the following four: Snopes, Factcheck.org, ABC News, and PolitiFact.

The Associated Press will also be a fact-checking partner.

Facebook has given its four initial fact-checking partners access to a tool that will let them label stories in the News Feed as fake, a Facebook spokesperson said. The person said Facebook is not paying the organizations to fact-check.

The websites that Facebook determines to be fake news organizations or spoofed domains will also not be able to sell ads on the social network. Owners of fake-news sites can make thousands of dollars per month through internet ads.

Facebook has repeatedly said that it's not a media company, but rather an open technology platform that relies on media publishers and its users to share accurate information.

"We do not think of ourselves as editors," Patrick Walker, Facebook's head of media partnerships, said during a recent journalism conference in Dublin. "We believe it's essential that Facebook stay out of the business of deciding what issues the world should read about. That's what editors do."

Politicians such as President Barack Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have recently expressed concern about the prevalence of misinformation on social media, with Obama calling it a "dust cloud of nonsense" and Clinton calling it "an epidemic."

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has meanwhile gone so far as to say that it's "pretty crazy" for some to suggest that fake news on Facebook could have swayed the election in favor of either candidate.



An article by Matt Vespa titled "Friendly Reminder, Democrats: Hillary Didn't 'Win' the Majority of the Popular Vote" was posted at townhall.com on Dec. 7, 2016. Following are excerpts of the article.

Democrats are still licking their wounds, their supporters are still shell shocked over President-elect Donald Trump's upset win over Clinton, and they keep peddling the myth that Clinton won the majority of the popular vote. They use this to undercut the notion that Trump has a mandate.

Enter Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore). Sen. Merkley blasted Donald Trump on Thursday, saying the president-elect doesn't have a mandate for his "politics of hate and division."

"I think most people conclude that the fact that he lost the popular vote is so disturbing to the president-elect because he wants to claim a mandate, but he cannot claim a mandate because a majority of Americans voted against him," Merkley said.

Right now, Clinton leads Trump 48/46 in the popular vote. Is that a majority? No, it's a plurality.

■ Clinton didn't win the majority of the popular vote, and the majority of Americans didn't vote for her.

The majority did think she was a liar, dishonest, and untrustworthy, which probably explains why she wasn't able to break through with voters and energize them in the same manner as the president-elect.

Moreover, the popular vote isn't how we decide who is president. As sitting lawmakers, I would've hoped they would know that it's the Electoral College, a system in which candidates must wage a national campaign to win the electors from each respective state.

If it were decided by popular vote, the snobby, insufferable bastions of progressivism on the Left Coast and the liberal Northeast would be the only places where candidates would campaign. That's not how you keep a country together.

■ Second, Trump did win a majority . . . of the states.

The GOP retained control of Congress, has over 4,100 lawmakers elected into state and local legislatures (the most in the party's history), has control of 33 governorships; and has control of 69/99 state legislatures. In 25 states, it's a unified Republican state government. Democrats are now reduced to their coastal and urban strongholds. I think we have a mandate . . . in the areas that matter when gauging who won an election.

Guy made mince meat of the other talking point, which is that a majority of Americans voted for Democrats in the Senate elections. Again, not really indicative of a national outcry a) only one-third of the seats were up; b) some of these contests were even competitive in deep-blue states; and c) there were no Republicans running in uber-progressive California, which drove up the margins for Clinton and Democrats in these Senate contests. A majority did vote for Republicans in the House elections.

The Left can learn something from Republicans after our defeat in 2012. We accepted defeat and began a long journey to winning back Congress and now the presidency. We didn't cherry-pick the results en masse to make ourselves feel better because you can't polish a turd. Romney lost. Clinton lost.

The only difference is that the GOP has healthier political apparatuses in the areas that decided the last election. Democrats do not. In fact, they've been wiped out in working class America; out of 490 counties that dot Appalachia, Clinton only won 21 of them. Maybe it's time for Democrats to say something that they've been avoiding to do: admit that Hillary Clinton was a terrible candidate.

Now that she's gone, Joe Biden seems to be the only heavyweight left who could mount a national campaign in which he'll be approaching 78 years of age. That's how you know you're in trouble. Democrats you lost. Accept it and move on. This quest to find reasons to make defeat feel better is only prolonging your anguish and it's getting pathetic.



An editorial by Larry Elder titled "Trump's Victory; Even Charlie 'Race Card' Rangel Doesn't Blame 'Whitelash' " was posted at townhall.com on Dec. 15, 2016. Following are excerpts of the article.

Donald Trump once called the Rev. Al Sharpton "a con man," meaning that Sharpton plays the race card less out of sincerity and more as a method to make demands and extract concessions.

But has there ever been a bigger legislative con man than the soon-to-be-retired Rep. Charlie Rangel, D-N.Y., currently the second-longest serving member of the House? His glossary of race-baiting is exhaustive.

Yet now as the clock winds down on his career, Rangel is free—free to tell the truth about "race." Rangel, in assessing why Hillary Clinton lost the race to Donald Trump, rejects the analysis advanced by the losing Clinton camp.

At the Harvard post-election symposium, top Clinton aides accused Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway of blatantly courting America's white racists. But Rangel argues that root cause is middle-class economic anxiety.

His takeaway? It's the economy, stupid.

In an interview with Roll Call, Rangel said, "Hard workers, for a variety of reasons, have seen economic and social advancement ceilings put on their ambitions." He continued: "The old thing, if you work hard in this country, you can get ahead. Well, the misconduct of Wall Street, the recession, globalization, inventions, science, technology, have really put a damper on middle-class people to advance as rapidly as they have in the past."

Rangel added: "It's the middle class that the jobs come from. If people don't have disposable income, if they're not able to purchase the basics, if small businesses can't hire people, then you have a problem. And we did have a problem during the election, and we still have it."

What?! Even "race card" Rangel sized up his party's election loss as one in which the middle class felt economically beleaguered?

He didn't say "whitelash," as CNN's Van Jones did. He didn't blame it on adverse reactions to "a black president" as Jones did. He didn't rant about how Trump pitched his message as an attaboy to rednecks, Klansmen and the Aryan Brotherhood.

Years ago, Rep. David Dreier, R-Calif., invited me for lunch in the House cafeteria at the U.S. Capitol. Shortly after we sat down, Rangel, with his trademark flashy pocket square, came in. Dreier leaped up and walked over to him, and the two greeted each other like fraternity brothers who had taken a blood oath.

I asked Dreier to explain the affection, given the race-card rhetoric Rangel uses against Republicans. I gave examples. Dreier rolled his eyes and said: "Oh, that's just Charlie being Charlie. Nobody takes that stuff seriously." "Yeah," I said, "nobody except the voters in his district."

As to Clinton vs. Trump, Rangel, at one time, would have whipped out the race card and, with a straight face, shouted, "White supremacy!" He would have pounced on Trump's comment that Mexicans are "rapists"; that he called an Indiana-born federal judge of Mexican descent "a Mexican"; that Trump allegedly "mocked" a handicapped reporter; and on and on. No matter that such a characterization of Trump's statements would have been either the worst possible interpretation, taken out of context or flat-out untrue. That's how Rangel rolled.

But free from the pressures of getting reelected, Rangel told the truth. The charge that Trump is racist, sexist, homophobic and Islamophobic is bogus—and the voters saw through it. Rangel knows this and said so.

His implicit message: Race is no longer a major factor in America. Now we know. Rangel, throughout his career, cynically played the race card to stoke anger to retain his Harlem seat.

It is the very definition of a con man. The real question is why it worked for so long.



An editorial by Thomas Sowell titled "Where Are We?" was posted at jewish-worldreview.com on Dec. 13, 2016. Following is the article.

We are now in a kind of political no-man's-land between an administration on its way out and a new administration taking shape. Predictions are always risky—and nowhere more so than in times like these.

What we can do, however, is assess where we are, and what some of the opportunities and dangers are.

The opportunities are many, which is to say that many things are in desperate need of changing, beginning with rebuilding our dangerously neglected and undermined military forces. The monstrosity of ObamaCare needs to be gotten rid of, not just cosmetically adjusted.

Our fundamental freedoms under the Constitution are at stake in the choice of the next nominee to become a Justice of the closely divided Supreme Court. We need someone with both the depth and the strength to resist the pressures and the temptations that have seduced too many supposedly "conservative" justices, over the years, into betraying Constitutional principles.

The current hysteria over "fake news"—including hysteria by people who have done more than their own fair share of faking news—shows the continuing

efforts of the political left to stifle free speech in the country at large, as they already have on academic campuses.

These are just some of the opportunities the incoming administration has, now that the Republicans finally have control of both Houses of Congress and the White House—which is to say, now that they no longer have any excuses for not doing what they said they were going to do, when they were running for election.

Opportunities are of course also challenges, and few of these challenges can be met without paying a price. Will the slim Republican majority in the Senate put bipartisan cooperation ahead of the Constitution, when it comes to choosing a Supreme Court Justice based on principles, rather than on avoiding a nasty fight with the Democrats?

The same question arises when it comes to repealing ObamaCare. Democrats threw bipartisanship to the winds when it came to passing ObamaCare. Republicans who wanted to have an input on this sweeping legislation were bluntly reminded of the outcome of the elections. "I won," President Obama told them.

Now that the Republicans have won—not only the presidency but also the Congress, as well as most governorships and state legislatures across the country—do they have the guts to do what they were elected to do?

Surely no one can be unaware that one of the reasons why such an unorthodox outsider as Donald Trump won the Republican nomination, and then the election, is that Republican voters were fed up with the repeated betrayals by the Republican establishment, going all the way back to President Bush 41 and his betrayal of his bold assertion: "Read my lips, no new taxes!"

What do we know, at this point, about the people being tapped as nominees for key positions in the incoming Trump administration? By and large, they are of a higher caliber than usual, especially General James N. Mattis who has been selected to become Secretary of Defense.

The love of rhetoric by both the media and Donald Trump has caused General Mattis' nickname of "Mad Dog Mattis" to become a distraction from the facts about a man of both high intellect and a great concern for the troops he commanded. He has, for example, taken it upon himself to personally visit many families of those who died fighting in the battles he led.

As a personal note, I have had the privilege of having discussions with many military people who have visited the Hoover Institution over the years, and have been impressed with officers of many ranks, including General Mattis. The young officers I have encountered are head and shoulders above so many young people of similar ages who are graduates of even our most prestigious colleges and universities.

The liberal media are already expressing worry about the number of military people being considered for key positions in the new administration. They would be worried about anyone who has not been brainwashed in the political correctness that reigns among the intelligentsia.

The key individual in any administration, however, is the President—and that remains the key mystery in the new administration.



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.”