

Eye on the World

Nov. 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 churchofgodbig sandy.com for the weekend of November 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 Patrick Goodenough titled "Saudis Blame Iran for Missile Attack on Airport; Could Be 'Act of War' " was posted at cnsnews.com on Nov. 6, 2017. Following is the article.

The costly civil war in Yemen took a dangerous new turn at the weekend when the Saudis said they intercepted a ballistic missile heading for the kingdom's second-busiest airport, and accused Iran of responsibility.

The Saudis, who are leading a military coalition supporting Yemen's internationally recognized government, said in a statement that Iran's alleged provision of missiles to its Shi'ite proxies in Yemen constituted military aggression that could rise to "an act of war."

They warned that the kingdom "reserves its right to respond to Iran in the appropriate time and manner, in accordance with international law and based upon the right of self-defense."

The conflict in the region's least stable country is widely seen as a proxy war between the region's leading Sunni and Shi'ite powers (who are also backing opposing forces in the civil war in Syria.)

The Saudi military said it intercepted and destroyed the missile, which it said boasts a range of more than 900 kilometers (560 miles), over the King Khaled International Airport near Riyadh on Saturday. No casualties or damages were reported.

The Saudi-led coalition said the debris of the missile, like that of one fired that targeted a Saudi oil refinery last July, “has confirmed the role of Iran’s regime in manufacturing these missiles and smuggling them to the Houthi militias in Yemen for the purpose of attacking the kingdom, its people, and vital interests.”

President Trump backed the Saudis’ take on the incident. Speaking to reporters on Air Force One en route to Japan Sunday, he said, “A shot was just taken by Iran, in my opinion, at Saudi Arabia.”

“And our system knocked it down,” he added, in reference to U.S.-supplied Patriot air defense missiles. “That’s how good we are. Nobody makes what we make, and now we’re selling it all over the world.”

Iranian Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Amir Hatami denied Iranian responsibility for the missile fired at the Saudi airport, and accused Iran’s enemies led by the U.S. of blaming it “for any event in the region.”

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari—the target last week of new U.S. Treasury sanctions—also denied Trump’s charge.

“We don’t have the means and possibility to send missiles to Yemen. These missiles have been manufactured by the Yemenis and their military industries,” he said, calling Trump’s claims the latest in a series of “baseless remarks” the president has leveled at Iran.

Saudi-led coalition spokesman Col. Turki Al-Maliki told a briefing the missiles fired by the Houthis did not originate from the Yemen Army arsenal but were supplied by Iran and smuggled to the militia—disassembled—through the port of Al-Hodeidah, west of the capital Sana’a.

He said the Houthis have now launched 78 missiles at Saudi Arabia, including one in July aimed at Makkah, since the coalition began its campaign in 2015.

Al-Maliki claimed that the Houthis are the first outlawed terrorist group to have ballistic missile capabilities.

The Saudis are now offering large rewards for information leading to the arrest of several dozen Houthi leaders.

The coalition also announced the temporary closure of all Yemeni air and sea ports and ground crossings in a bid to prevent Iran from smuggling weaponry to its Houthi allies.

“The coalition’s command considers the Iranian regime’s action in supplying the Houthi militias that it commands with these missiles to be a blatant violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions that prohibit nations from arming these militias,” it said, pointing in particular to a resolution adopted in 2015 that imposed an arms embargo on Houthi leaders. (Russia, Iran’s closest ally on the Security Council, did not veto the measure, but did abstain.)

The coalition launched a military campaign including airstrikes in March 2015, at the request of the embattled government of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi.

Iran denies arming the Houthis, while acknowledging it provides the militia with political support.



An article by Hussein Ibish titled "The Saudi Crown Prince is Gambling Everything on Three Major Experiments" was posted at theatlantic.com on Nov. 7, 2017. Following is the article.

Call it shock and awe. Call it a purge. Call it a clean sweep. However it's characterized, the mass arrest of some of Saudi Arabia's most prominent royals, administrators, and tycoons last weekend has completely upended both the structure of the Saudi elite and the country's way of doing business.

It's not exactly the Night of the Long Knives, as the luxurious Ritz-Carlton hotel in which the detainees are being held is hardly a nightmarish gulag.

But it is the latest installment in an astonishingly rapid series of upheavals whereby all power is being concentrated in the hands of elderly King Salman and his 32-year-old son and heir, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also known as MbS.

If MbS is behaving like any of his predecessors it is King Abdel Aziz ibn Saud, who founded the modern Saudi state in 1932. He is essentially positioning himself as a new Abdel Aziz who will create a new Saudi Arabia for a new era and a new economy.

Clearly, he intends to do that by wiping the slate clean and beginning with an overwhelmingly strong hand that brooks no opposition. The purges are being carried out under the rubric of anti-corruption, in a populist spirit and with what appears to be a strong constituency of public support, especially among the youth.

The prince is simultaneously implementing his Vision 2030, which includes an emphasis on local tourism and entertainment, and social changes deemed necessary for both modernization and economic diversification, particularly regarding women's rights like the right to drive.

What MbS is attempting is a political high wire act, without a net, of the tallest order. He is promoting the very top, meaning himself and his father, of Saudi society, along with its bottom and center, and sweeping aside much of the existing upper echelons not under his direct control.

It's bold and ambitious; it's also an extremely risky and high-stakes gamble. Surely no other contemporary political figure better embodies Georges Danton's dictum, *de l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace* ("Audacity, more audacity, and always audacity").

However, this means that MbS is now personally associated with the success and failure of three major experiments in Saudi governments and society, the perceived collapse of any of which could lead to an extremely dangerous crisis of legitimacy.

- The first register is the consolidation of political power.

To all appearances, last weekend's arrests pretty well conclude that chapter: There are no more viable, independent power centers in the country, or at least none that are not on existential notice.

However, it's possible the crown prince and his father have overreached and that there will be a backlash because they have jettisoned decades of carefully calibrated power-sharing within the royal family and other elements of the power structure.

Moreover, it's unclear what will become of the detainees. Are they to be stripped of their wealth? Exiled? Detained indefinitely? Released with a slap on the wrist, only potentially to plot against the new regime? MbS must have a plan, but it's extremely unclear what it might be.

Finally, the breadth and scope of the crackdown could, conceivably, have been linked to intimations of a possible coup. There's no evidence of this, but the conspiratorially-minded note that this weekend the son of the ousted Prince Muqrin died in a helicopter crash near the border with Yemen. But most likely this was a coincidence, not an elimination, and the amalgamation of power in the hands of MbS will, in the short run at least, be successfully consolidated.

■ The second part of the project, economic and social reform, is a taller order, but still doable.

Saudi Arabia has the resources to manage the increasingly necessary transition away from oil-dependence, particularly if its government begins to treat its population as human capital resource rather than a group of dependents.

MbS has certainly shown a determination to lead this transition from the top down, and a due appreciation of the social changes, particularly with regard to the role of women, that will be necessary for a globally competitive post-petroleum economy.

His attempt to forge an alliance with the general public, especially the youth, so far appears relatively successful and could be a key basis for long-term success. There is evidence of an emerging new dynamism in parts of Saudi society.

■ It is the third front that is likely to be most challenging: the assertion and defense of Saudi interests throughout the Middle East, particularly with regard to an ever-more-powerful Iran.

It's instructive that last weekend also saw a Yemeni Houthi missile, possibly supplied by their Iranian backers, launched at Riyadh's international airport and the Saudi-inspired resignation of Lebanon's prime minister, Saad Hariri.

Both Yemen and Lebanon are key proxy battlegrounds between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The Yemen intervention, which has been heavily associated with MbS, who was serving as defense minister when it was launched, appears to have become a politically damaging and militarily unproductive quagmire.

There are reports that MbS is looking for a way out, but the missile attack has been characterized by Saudi officials as an Iranian "act of war" against the Kingdom.

The Hariri resignation is likely tied to significant gains made by Iran and its key ally, Lebanese Hezbollah, in securing, along with their Iraqi allies and clients, key areas in northern and western Iraq (in the aftermath of the Kurdish independence referendum and the battle against ISIS) and in eastern Syria.

Iran and its allies therefore appear to be on the brink of realizing their long-cherished goal of creating a "land bridge" leading from Tehran to Beirut and the Mediterranean.

These developments are a potential strategic game-changer in the Middle East, and the Saudi response, apparently, is to go after Iran and Hezbollah in their central and original locus of power in the Arab world: Lebanon.

With the removal of Hariri, who is perceived in Riyadh as having been too accommodating to Hezbollah, the prospect of an all-out political war to destabilize Hezbollah's dominance of the Lebanese state seems set.

Some critics regard all of Saudi Arabia's bold new foreign policy initiatives, particularly as directed by MbS, as a series of spectacular failures, including the campaign to pressure Qatar into changing its foreign policy and abandoning its support for Islamist groups.

However, while the Yemen war has not gone well, the outcome remains to be determined. The Qatar project was always discussed as a long-term one rather than with any expectation of a quick resolution and there's still every reason to suspect that, in the medium-term, Doha will find no alternative but to seek a resolution largely on Riyadh's terms.

The campaign to roll back Iranian influence in the Arab world is much more complicated, and depends on many factors beyond Riyadh's control, not least of them the role of the United States. It is on this front that MbS appears most vulnerable to a widespread conclusion that he has consolidated power without achieving the minimum necessary results.

At the very least, a sense that Saudi Arabia is putting up a spirited defense of its interests in the face of creeping Iranian hegemony would be required to avoid the perception of failure.

By positioning himself as an all-powerful incoming monarch, albeit with a populist touch and a de-facto alliance with the youth and the middle class, MbS is gambling everything on relative success on all three registers: political power, socioeconomic reform, and foreign policy.

While most Saudis seem to understand the pressing need for radical change, and many may currently support MbS's measures, the danger is that a perceived significant failure on any of these fronts could produce a crisis of legitimacy in an environment of such personalized authority.

It could lead many to ask whether they were better off with the old system of relative decentralization, personal fiefdoms, and even corruption.

It's in almost everyone's interest that MbS's reform and modernization programs succeed, but, perhaps more than any other contemporary political

leader, he has put all his chips on the table at once. MbS—and therefore almost certainly Saudi Arabia as a whole—will either win or lose spectacularly.



An article by Tyler Durden titled “Saudi Billionaires Scramble to Move Cash Offshore, Escape Asset Freeze” was posted at zerohedge.com on Nov. 9, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Over the weekend, Saudi King Salman shocked the world by abruptly announcing the arrests of 11 senior princes and some 38 ministers, including Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal, the world’s sixty-first richest man and the largest shareholder in Citi, News Corp. and Twitter.

The purge was orchestrated by a new “supreme committee” to investigate public corruption created by King Salman but under the control of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS), who chairs the committee and is widely suspected of being the driving force behind the purge.

In addition to the arrests, two Royals have died since the purge began. Prince Mansour bin-Muqrin reportedly perished in a helicopter crash near the Yemen border earlier this week, and Prince Abdul Aziz bin Fahd—killed during a fire-fight as authorities attempted to arrest him.

For all the chaos, Saudi Arabia is benefiting from the climb in oil prices over the past week. However, signs of stress are showing up elsewhere in regional markets, as Bloomberg points out in a recent piece.

Many of the kingdom’s millionaires and billionaires—at least those who haven’t already seen their domestic and foreign accounts frozen by the government—fear that they might be next after WSJ revealed that MbS’s purge may be nothing more than a naked cash grab, as the paper reports that the kingdom is aiming to confiscate cash and assets worth as much as \$800 billion.

So, they’re doing what any reasonable rich person would do given the circumstances; they’re liquidating their assets as quickly as possible and stashing their cash offshore until things quiet down.

To be sure, SAMA (the Saudi Monetary Authority and de facto central bank) has asked lenders in the kingdom to freeze the accounts of dozens of individuals who aren’t under arrest, as well as the assets of those being detained, people familiar with the matter said.

The Saudi attorney general said in a statement released Monday that the weekend arrests were only “phase one” of the crackdown.

Saudi’s Arabia’s wealthy should have little trouble moving their wealth offshore if they’re so inclined; the real question, though, is whether they’ll be able to protect those assets from the long reach of SAMA, which has strong relationships with its global banking partners, in the event that they find themselves under arrest.



An article by Lori Ann LaRocco titled “These Are the 37 Major Deals US Firms Signed With Chinese Entities During Trump’s Visit” was posted at cnbc.com on Nov. 9, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

The Commerce Department has revealed the list of the 37 major deals signed between U.S. and Chinese companies around President Donald Trump’s trip through Asia.

The dollar value of those deals is in excess of \$250 billion. Caterpillar, Boeing, and Goldman Sachs are just some of the notable names on the list of companies that made deals with China, the full list of which is below.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said the deals were a good example of Trump helping to build bilateral trade relationships between the two nations.

“American businesses are the most innovative in the world and, when given access, can compete with anyone,” Ross said. “I believe these deals can provide a solid foundation for a stronger relationship that is more free, fair, and reciprocal between the U.S. and China.”

“It was a great honor for these [deals] to be witnessed by President Trump and President Xi today,” Ross added. “A special thank you to our CEO delegation for their hard work in support of this historic event.”

Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein, Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf, Cheniere Energy CEO Jack Fusco, Air Products CEO Seifollah Ghasemi, and division heads from Boeing and General Electric were among the more than two dozen business leaders who attended.

Trade has been one of Trump’s core priorities in his first year in office. He held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit about the multibillion-dollar U.S. trade deficit with China.

According to Chinese customs data, China’s trade surplus with the U.S. expanded by 12.2 percent in October from a year earlier to \$26.6 billion. For the first 10 months of the year, the total surplus widened to \$223 billion. China is the U.S.’s No. 3 export market, just behind Canada and Mexico.

Speaking in Beijing on Thursday, Trump laid the blame for the ballooning deficit on “past administrations for allowing this out-of-control trade deficit to take place and to grow.”

The 2017 U.S. CEO Delegation to China deals:

1. Air Products (APD) Air Products and Yankuang Group Co., Ltd.—\$3.5 billion
2. The State of Alaska, Alaska Gasline Development Corporation (AGDC), China Petrochemical Corp (Sinopec), China Investment Corporation (CIC), and Bank of China (BOC)—\$43 billion.

3. Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) and COFCO
4. Bell and Reignwood signed an agreement for 60 Bell 505s, valued at \$50 million.
5. Boeing and China Aviation Supplies Holding Company — \$38 billion.
6. Caterpillar Inc, and China Energy Investment Corp
7. Cheniere Energy and China National Petroleum
8. Dais Analytic Gouanrui (Beijing) Technology Co., Ltd
9. Delfin Midstream and China Gas Holdings—\$8 billion
10. Digit group and Gateguard—\$100 million
11. Digit group and Foton—\$310 million
12. Digit Group and HeDa Group—\$1.5 billion
13. The Dow Chemical Company
14. Dow and Mobike
15. Drylet, LLC and Nanjing Hoyo Municipal Utilities Investment and Administration Group—\$100 million
16. GE and Juneyao Airlines—\$1.4 billion
17. GE and ICBC—\$1.1 billion
18. GE and China Datang Group—\$1 billion
19. Goldman Sachs China Investment Corporation (“CIC”)—\$5 billion
20. Honeywell and Oriental Energy
21. Honeywell and Spring Airlines
22. I. M. Systems Group, Inc. (IMSG) and Civil Aviation Telecom Co., Ltd.
23. Qualcomm and Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo—\$12 billion
24. SAS and Shenzhen Zhenghong Technology Co. Ltd.—\$30 million
25. Stine Seed China and Beijing W. Seed—\$10 million
26. TEREX and Xuzhou Handler—\$250 million
27. Thermo Fisher Scientific, Beijing Municipal Commission of Science and Technology, Tsinghua University, Beijing Novogene Bioinformatics Technology Co., Ltd, and Innovent Biologics (Suzhou) Co., Ltd—\$35 million
28. U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce and Animal By-products (CFNA)—\$3.4 billion
29. Viroment and Hangzhou Iron and Steel—\$800 million
30. Viroment and Guangye Guangdong Environmental Protection Group, Co, LTD.—\$100 million

31. Westinghouse Electric Company, Nuclear Power Technology Company (SNPTC) and subsidiaries, State Nuclear Power Engineering Corporation (SNPEC) and State Nuclear Power Automation & Engineering Company (SNPAS)

Non delegation deals:

1. American Ethane and Nanshan Group—\$25 billion
2. Ford Trading Company LLC. And Ford Motor (China) Ltd.—\$10 billion
3. GM and SAIC-GM—\$2.2 billion.
4. The Montana Stockgrowers signed and Jingdong Century Trade Company (JD.com)—\$200 million. Smithfield Food Inc.
5. Smithfield Food Inc and Jingdong Century Trade Company (JD.com)—\$1 billion.
6. The state of West and Shenhua corporation—\$83 billion



An article by Warner Todd Huston titled "Target Closing a Dozen Stores in Plan to Retool With Smaller Retail Space" was posted at breitbart.com on Nov. 9, 2017. Following is the article.

Retail giant Target has been struggling for well over a year since its decision to allow transgender men to use bathrooms and changing rooms designated for women. Now, the chain is closing a dozen stores as part of an effort to retool its stores in smaller spaces.

The Minnesota-based company announced the closings this week, saying it was a difficult decision, according to the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

"It's not a decision we make lightly," said Target spokesperson Kristy Welker. "We have a really rigorous process in place in evaluating the performance of a store in deciding when to close or relocate a store. We close a store after seeing several years of decreasing profitability."

The retailer has launched a campaign to downsize its massive outlets into smaller spaces concentrated in larger urban areas. The company plans to open 32 smaller locations this year and as many as 35 next year.

Target is also focusing on creating stores to serve as pick-up points for customers who purchase merchandise online.

For those in the smaller, more rural communities who face the closings, the move is difficult both for shoppers and workers.

"It's devastating news for the community," Fergus Falls Mayor Ben Schierer told the *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*.

The 12 stores being shuttered are Harper Woods, Michigan; Hutchinson, Kansas; Benton Harbor, Michigan; Macon, Georgia; Slidell, Louisiana; Lauderhill,

Florida; Matteson, Illinois; Romeoville, Illinois; Baltimore, Maryland; San Antonio, Texas; Hastings, Minnesota; and Fergus Falls, Minnesota.



An editorial by Donna Carol Voss titled “It’s Evil to Focus on Gun Control As the Solution to First Baptist Church Shooting” was posted at townhall.com on Nov. 9, 2017. Following is the article.

First, stop right now and say a prayer—or send love and light if you’re not the religious type—to the victims of the First Baptist Church massacre in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Yet again, totally innocent people got up Sunday morning like every other day and will never come home again.

I’m willing to give everyone now screeching about gun control the benefit of the doubt that their first reaction was concern for the victims and their loved ones. Now, let’s move on.

If we can’t stop terrorists from getting access to trucks, how on the good green earth are we going to stop evil people from getting access to the 300 million guns already in circulation in the U.S.? If we had done things a little differently for the last 240 years, we might have different options, but the gun horse left the barn a long time ago.

We’re already choking on gun control laws that aren’t followed (are you listening, Air Force?) or that sinister and/or disturbed parties care not one whit about: criminals, the evil who are sane, and the mentally ill who have homicidal intentions. Either they pass their background checks with flying colors, or they obtain firearms illegally. What a travesty to focus on guns.

Also a travesty is comparing America to other countries with stricter gun control laws and lower incidence of gun violence. That’s like comparing an A student who is taking one class with a B– or even C– student who is taking four classes and working full-time. No other country is as diverse, complex, and free as we are.

If someone starts with a comparison between us and Canada or us and Sweden, don’t waste your time engaging. They and their ideological blinders are the real problem.

If they really cared about the victims of mass shootings, they would tell the truth about the problem. You can’t solve a problem you don’t define it accurately. Persisting in defining mass shootings as a gun control problem is its own kind of evil because it virtually guarantees more of them.

While the self-appointed Do Gooders are patting themselves on the back that they’re not conservatives, future mass shooters are passing background checks or obtaining firearms illegally.

So what is the real problem? There are several, and they all reduce to a society in chaos.

Let's start with the rule of law or lack thereof.

- We have whole states suing the federal government to protect their right to harbor criminal illegal aliens.
- We have millions of Americans declaring that entering our country illegally is just a baby crime, i.e., not really a crime at all, and that we can't refer to people here illegally as "illegal" because it hurts their feelings.
- College administrators cancel conservative speakers because of "safety" concerns instead of arresting students (and others) who commit violence. Besides marginalizing conservative ideas—let alone facts, which don't care about your feelings by the way—they infantilize a generation of young people who will have nervous breakdowns in the real world when life happens.
- Then there's the dissolution of marriage, and I don't mean gay marriage, which is an entirely different article. I mean the strident feminism of women who declare they don't need men and the poisonous message to men that their masculinity is "toxic."
- I mean perpetual Peter Pans who don't want to take on the work required in a healthy marriage because they've been spoiled by overly permissive parents who want first and foremost to be their friends.
- I mean young women who are duped, despite all evidence to the contrary, that they are just like men, and that meaningless sex will enrich their lives and add to their self-esteem.
- Along with the hit on marriage comes the hit on having children. The irreligious see no reason for having children other than fulfillment of personal desire, which personal desire—especially among women who have focused on their careers until it is too late—often excludes wiping runny noses and being too tired for sex. Parenthood has a way of pushing selfishness to the side because that is, in fact, one of its purposes. A society without a strong commitment to the obligation of raising children, and raising them to be responsible citizens, sooner or later revolves around self-absorption. Keeping up with the Kardashians much?
- Lastly, race-baiters, trans activists, and Antifa operate with a fanatical zeal that would put any despot to shame. Slashing and burning a self-righteous, politically correct path, they systematically weaken the very institutions that are the foundation of our society: religion, law enforcement, the traditional family, civil discourse, freedom of speech and assembly (not to mention thought), and Western civilization itself with its classical European roots and values.

Let's do some stage two thinking.

If we continue destroying the foundational structures of our society, will that likely lead to less gun violence?

If we eviscerate the traditional family, and demonize it along the way, will fewer children be raised without fathers?

Will children raised without fathers be less likely to join violent gangs?

If we coddle spoiled and entitled young people to protect them from the free exchange of ideas, will the future leaders of America be more qualified to grapple with complex problems like mass shootings?

If we discourage good people from entering law enforcement because they don't want a target on their professional and personal backs, will our society be safer?

Unless we solve some of the above, more gun control won't make a dent in mass shootings. Cain slew Abel with a rock. It's not a gun problem.



An article by Craig Bannister titled "Actor Tells Rep. Ryan: 'If Prayers Did Anything, They'd Still Be Alive, You Worthless Sack of Sh*t' " was posted at cnsnews.com on Nov. 6, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Actor Wil Wheaton, who rose to fame as a child actor in the movie, "Stand By Me," used vulgarity to tell Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) that, "if prayers did anything," the victims of the Sunday's church shooting in Texas would "still be alive."

In a Sunday Tweet, Wheaton criticized House Speaker Ryan for saying that the residents of the Texas community where the mass murder occurred "need our prayers."

He said: "The murdered victims were in a church. If prayers did anything, they'd still be alive you worthless sack of sh*t."

After a Twitter backlash, Wheaton apologized to people of faith, saying his attack was aimed at Vice President Pence, not the religious beliefs of others. Wheaton, now a 45 year-old actor, starred in the television series, "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and currently has a recurring role on the sit-com, "The Big Bang Theory."



An editorial by Walter Williams titled "Ignorance vs. Stupidity" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Nov. 8, 2017. Following is the article.

One of the most challenging and important jobs for an economics professor is to teach students how little we know and can possibly know.

My longtime friend and colleague Dr. Thomas Sowell, still a periodic JWR contributor, says, "It takes considerable knowledge just to realize the extent of your own ignorance."

Nobel laureate Friedrich August von Hayek admonished, "The curious task of economics is to demonstrate to men how little they really know about what they imagine they can design."

The fact that we have gross ignorance about how the world operates is ignored by the know-it-all elites who seek to control our lives. Let's look at a few examples of the world's complexity.

According to some estimates, there are roughly 100 million traffic signals in the U.S. How many of us would like the U.S. Congress, in the name of public health and safety, to be in charge of their actual operation? Congress or a committee it authorizes would determine the length of time traffic lights stay red, yellow and green and what hours of the day and at what intersections lights flash red or yellow.

One can only imagine the mess Congress would create in the 40,000 cities, towns and other incorporated places in the U.S.

But managing traffic lights—and getting good results—is a far less complex task than managing the nation's health care system and getting good results, which Congress tries to do.

Here's another task I'd ask whether you would like Congress to control. The average well-stocked supermarket carries 60,000 to 65,000 different items. Walmart carries about 120,000 different items.

Let's suppose Congress puts you in total control of getting just one item to a supermarket—say apples. Let's not make it easy by having the help of apple wholesalers. Thus, you would have to figure out all of the inputs necessary to get apples to your local supermarket.

Let's look at just a few.

You need crates to ship the apples. Count all the inputs necessary to produce crates.

There's wood, but you need saws to cut down trees.

The saws are made of steel, so iron ore must be mined, and mining equipment is needed.

The workers must have shoes.

The complete list of inputs to get apples to the market comes to a very large, possibly an unknowable, number. Forgetting any one of them, such as spark plugs, would probably mean no apples at your supermarket.

The beauty of market allocation of goods and services, compared with government fiat, is no one person needs to know all that's necessary to get apples to your supermarket. Free markets, accompanied by free trade, including international free trade, make us richer by economizing on the amount of knowledge or information needed to produce things.

Think about this morning's breakfast. Let's suppose you and your spouse each had four slices of bacon and two eggs. You had coffee, and your spouse had cocoa. The breakfast might have cost you \$22.

But what might it have cost you if instead of being dependent upon others, you were independent and produced your own breakfast? What do you know about raising pigs and their subsequent slaughter? Do you know how to cure pork to make bacon?

Then there are the eggs, which require knowledge about the care of chickens.

What about getting pig and chicken feed? You'd have a big problem with the coffee and cocoa. I doubt whether you could simulate the growing conditions in Brazil and West Africa.

One thing that's guaranteed is that your breakfast would be far costlier than in the case where you depended upon the benefits of skills of others that emerge from the division of labor and trade.

The bottom line is that each of us is grossly ignorant about the world in which we live. Nothing's wrong with that ignorance, but we are stupid if we believe that a politician can produce a better life than that which is obtained through peaceable, voluntary exchange with our fellow man anywhere on earth.



An article by Michael Morris titled "Ben Shapiro: GOP Will Have 'Literally Done Nothing This Year' If They Don't Pass Tax Reform" was posted at cnsnews.com on Nov. 9, 2017. Following is the article.

Ben Shapiro, host of "The Ben Shapiro Show" and Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Wire blasted Republicans on his daily Facebook Live podcast Thursday, saying that the GOP will have "literally done nothing this year" if they don't pass tax reform.

"Republicans do need to pass tax reform, but not because it's going to win them any great credit from the American people," stated Ben Shapiro. "They have to pass it because otherwise, they've literally done nothing this year."

Below is a transcript of Shapiro's comments from his show on Thursday:

■ "As far as tax reform goes, the Republicans do need to pass tax reform, but not because it's going to win them any great credit from the American people. They have to pass it because otherwise, they've literally done nothing this year.

■ "And there are a bunch of problems with the current tax plan that's being tried out by the senate. Senate Republicans are already watering this thing down. They're 'revisiting key revisions in the GOP House proposal, including . . . eliminating property tax deductions as well as state income tax deductions'—everybody in California just gets jacked—'increasing the size of child-care credits, offering more help to small businesses,' this is according to the *LA Times*, 'and having corporate tax cuts phase in or expire, according to those familiar with the negotiations.'

- “In other words, this will not be a massive tax cut. It will be a temporary tax cut with some tax increases all so that they can say that they passed something. I would rather they pass nothing than they pass a bad bill.
- “I haven’t seen the final senate bill, but it’s not great.
- “Okay, they’re now talking about increasing individual tax brackets. This is not what I voted for the Republican Party for.
- “You know, this is not what I voted for the Republican Party for, but unfortunately, it’s all become a game of which leader do you follow as opposed to which policy do you espouse. I don’t see Trump really espousing low tax policies in a coherent way. I don’t see Ryan doing it. I don’t see any of the Republicans doing it, and that’s incredibly frustrating to me—somebody who actually cares about the policy much more than I care about the personal infighting.”



An article by Donna Brazille titled “Inside Hillary Clinton’s Secret Takeover of the DNC” was posted at politico.com on Nov. 2, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Before I called Bernie Sanders, I lit a candle in my living room and put on some gospel music. I wanted to center myself for what I knew would be an emotional phone call.

I had promised Bernie when I took the helm of the Democratic National Committee after the convention that I would get to the bottom of whether Hillary Clinton’s team had rigged the nomination process, as a cache of emails stolen by Russian hackers and posted online had suggested. I’d had my suspicions from the moment I walked in the door of the DNC a month or so earlier, based on the leaked emails.

But who knew if some of them might have been forged? I needed to have solid proof, and so did Bernie.

So I followed the money. My predecessor, Florida Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, had not been the most active chair in fundraising at a time when President Barack Obama’s neglect had left the party in significant debt.

As Hillary’s campaign gained momentum, she resolved the party’s debt and put it on a starvation diet. It had become dependent on her campaign for survival, for which she expected to wield control of its operations.

Debbie was not a good manager. She hadn’t been very interested in controlling the party—she let Clinton’s headquarters in Brooklyn do as it desired so she didn’t have to inform the party officers how bad the situation was. How much control Brooklyn had and for how long was still something I had been trying to uncover for the last few weeks.

By September 7, the day I called Bernie, I had found my proof and it broke my heart.

The Saturday morning after the convention in July, I called Gary Gensler, the chief financial officer of Hillary's campaign. He wasted no words. He told me the Democratic Party was broke and \$2 million in debt.

"What?" I screamed. "I am an officer of the party and they've been telling us everything is fine and they were raising money with no problems."

That wasn't true, he said. Officials from Hillary's campaign had taken a look at the DNC's books.

■ Obama left the party \$24 million in debt—\$15 million in bank debt and more than \$8 million owed to vendors after the 2012 campaign—and had been paying that off very slowly.

■ Obama's campaign was not scheduled to pay it off until 2016. Hillary for America (the campaign) and the Hillary Victory Fund (its joint fundraising vehicle with the DNC) had taken care of 80 percent of the remaining debt in 2016, about \$10 million, and had placed the party on an allowance.

If I didn't know about this, I assumed that none of the other officers knew about it, either. That was just Debbie's way. In my experience she didn't come to the officers of the DNC for advice and counsel. She seemed to make decisions on her own and let us know at the last minute what she had decided, as she had done when she told us about the hacking only minutes before the Washington Post broke the news.

On the phone Gary told me the DNC had needed a \$2 million loan, which the campaign had arranged.

"No! That can't be true!" I said. "The party cannot take out a loan without the unanimous agreement of all of the officers."

"Gary, how did they do this without me knowing?" I asked. "I don't know how Debbie relates to the officers," Gary said.

He described the party as fully under the control of Hillary's campaign, which seemed to confirm the suspicions of the Bernie camp. The campaign had the DNC on life support, giving it money every month to meet its basic expenses, while the campaign was using the party as a fund-raising clearinghouse.

Under FEC law, an individual can contribute a maximum of \$2,700 directly to a presidential campaign. But the limits are much higher for contributions to state parties and a party's national committee.

Individuals who had maxed out their \$2,700 contribution limit to the campaign could write an additional check for \$353,400 to the Hillary Victory Fund—that figure represented \$10,000 to each of the 32 states' parties who were part of the Victory Fund agreement—\$320,000—and \$33,400 to the DNC.

The money would be deposited in the states first, and transferred to the DNC shortly after that. Money in the battleground states usually stayed in that

state, but all the other states funneled that money directly to the DNC, which quickly transferred the money to Brooklyn.

“Wait,” I said. “That victory fund was supposed to be for whoever was the nominee, and the state party races. You’re telling me that Hillary has been controlling it since before she got the nomination?”

Gary said the campaign had to do it or the party would collapse.

“That was the deal that Robby struck with Debbie,” he explained, referring to campaign manager Robby Mook. “It was to sustain the DNC. We sent the party nearly \$20 million from September until the convention, and more to prepare for the election.”

Right around the time of the convention, the leaked emails revealed Hillary’s campaign was grabbing money from the state parties for its own purposes, leaving the states with very little to support down-ballot races. A Politico story published on May 2, 2016, described the big fund-raising vehicle she had launched through the states the summer before, quoting a vow she had made to rebuild “the party from the ground up . . . when our state parties are strong, we win. That’s what will happen.”

Yet the states kept less than half of 1 percent of the \$82 million they had amassed from the extravagant fund-raisers Hillary’s campaign was holding, just as Gary had described to me when he and I talked in August. When the Politico story described this arrangement as “essentially . . . money laundering” for the Clinton campaign, Hillary’s people were outraged at being accused of doing something shady. Bernie’s people were angry for their own reasons, saying this was part of a calculated strategy to throw the nomination to Hillary.

I wanted to believe Hillary, who made campaign finance reform part of her platform, but I had made this pledge to Bernie and did not want to disappoint him. I kept asking the party lawyers and the DNC staff to show me the agreements that the party had made for sharing the money they raised, but there was a lot of shuffling of feet and looking the other way.

When I got back from a vacation in Martha’s Vineyard, I at last found the document that described it all: the Joint Fund-Raising Agreement between the DNC, the Hillary Victory Fund, and Hillary for America.

The agreement—signed by Amy Dacey, the former CEO of the DNC, and Robby Mook with a copy to Marc Elias—specified that in exchange for raising money and investing in the DNC, Hillary would control the party’s finances, strategy, and all the money raised. Her campaign had the right of refusal of who would be the party communications director, and it would make final decisions on all the other staff. The DNC also was required to consult with the campaign about all other staffing, budgeting, data, analytics, and mailings.

I had to keep my promise to Bernie. I was in agony as I dialed him. Keeping this secret was against everything that I stood for, all that I valued as a woman and as a public servant.

"Hello, senator. I've completed my review of the DNC and I did find the cancer," I said. "But I will not kill the patient."

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I discussed the fundraising agreement that each of the candidates had signed. Bernie was familiar with it, but he and his staff ignored it. They had their own way of raising money through small donations. I described how Hillary's campaign had taken it another step.

I told Bernie I had found Hillary's Joint Fundraising Agreement. I explained that the cancer was that she had exerted this control of the party long before she became its nominee. Had I known this, I never would have accepted the interim chair position, but here we were with only weeks before the election.

Bernie took this stoically. He did not yell or express outrage. Instead he asked me what I thought Hillary's chances were. The polls were unanimous in her winning but what, he wanted to know, was my own assessment?

I had to be frank with him. I did not trust the polls, I said. I told him I had visited states around the country and I found a lack of enthusiasm for her everywhere. I was concerned about the Obama coalition and about millennials.

I urged Bernie to work as hard as he could to bring his supporters into the fold with Hillary, and to campaign with all the heart and hope he could muster. He might find some of her positions too centrist, and her coziness with the financial elites distasteful, but he knew and I knew that the alternative was a person who would put the very future of the country in peril. I knew he heard me. I knew he agreed with me, but I never in my life had felt so tiny and powerless as I did making that call.

When I hung up the call to Bernie, I started to cry, not out of guilt, but out of anger. We would go forward. We had to.



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."