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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

CRISIS: Internet to Have Global Governance October 1

Better Censorship for Tyrants

by Judith Bergman

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/8807/internet-governance>

The U.S. announced its plan to pass the oversight of the agency to a global governance model on October 1, 2016. The Obama Administration says that the transition will have no practical effects on the internet's functioning or its users, and even considers the move necessary in order to maintain international support for the internet and to prevent a fracturing of its governance. Oh really?

The absence of the U.S. in overseeing the governance of the internet could spell the end of the current era of free speech on the internet, as well as free enterprise.

What guarantees are there that internet governance will not eventually end up in the hands of those very governments, seeing as they are all very eager to gain control of it? None. The Geneva Declaration of Principles makes clear that the UN, run by a majority of authoritarian governments, wants a decisive role for governments in internet governance.

Civil society groups and activists are calling on Congress to sue the Obama Administration -- perhaps at least to postpone the date until more Americans are aware of the plan. It is not too late.

Very soon, on October 1, 2016, much of the internet's governance will shift from the US National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) authority to a nonprofit multi-stakeholder entity, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, also known by its acronym ICANN.

Until now, NTIA has been responsible for key internet domain name functions, such as the coordination of the DNS (Domain Name System) root, IP addresses, and other internet protocol resources. But in March 2014, the U.S. announced its plan to let its contract with ICANN to operate key domain name functions expire in September 2015, passing the oversight of the agency to a global governance model. The expiration was subsequently delayed until October 1, 2016.

According to the NTIA's press release at the time,

"NTIA's responsibility includes the procedural role of administering changes to the authoritative root zone file – the database containing the lists of names and addresses of all top-level domains – as well as serving as the historic steward of the DNS. NTIA currently contracts with ICANN to carry out the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions and has a Cooperative Agreement with Verisign under which it performs related root zone management functions. Transitioning NTIA out of its role marks the final phase of the privatization of the DNS as outlined by the U.S. Government in 1997".

According to the NTIA, from the inception of ICANN, the U.S. government and internet stakeholders envisioned that the U.S. role in the IANA functions would be temporary. The Commerce Department's June 10, 1998

Statement of Policy stated that the U.S. government "is committed to a transition that will allow the private sector to take leadership for DNS management." The official reason, therefore, is that

"ICANN as an organization has matured and taken steps in recent years to improve its accountability and transparency and its technical competence. At the same time, international support continues to grow for the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance as evidenced by the continued success of the Internet Governance Forum and the resilient stewardship of the various Internet institutions".

The Obama Administration says that the transition will have no practical effects on the internet's functioning or its users, and even considers the move necessary in order to maintain international support for the internet and to prevent a fracturing of its governance.

Oh really?

While the transition may appear ostensibly "technical", the absence of the United States in overseeing the governance of the internet could spell the end of the current era of free speech on the internet, as well as free enterprise.

This is not merely wild speculation; it is evident in the statements that several governments, who are less than enchanted with the concept of freedom of speech, have made in recent years regarding the governance of the internet.

Some of these statements have come to light in the preparatory work of the United Nations World Summit on Information Society, known today as WSIS+10 -- a process that began in 2003 with the Geneva Declaration of Principles and that continues to this day. Purportedly, the purpose of the process is a "commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge" (section A.1), but already in section B.1 it becomes clear that the UN, run by a majority of authoritarian governments, wants a decisive role for governments in internet governance:

"Governments, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations have an important role and responsibility in the development of the Information Society and, as appropriate, in decision-making processes. Building a people-centred Information Society is a joint effort which requires cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders".

The UN, in the form of International Telecommunication Union (ITU), has already tried in vain to wrestle control of the internet from ICANN, but where the ITU failed, WSIS+10 may succeed with the new "global governance" ICANN, unshielded from the protection of the US.

The urge of various governments to control the internet is evidently there. If anything, this was clear from the submissions for the December 2015 WSIS+10 UN General Assembly High Level Meeting.

The written submission of the Group of 77 plus China -- a coalition, dating from 1964, of developing countries that now includes 134 nations -- stated that, "The management of the Internet involves both technical and public-policy issues and ... the overall authority for Internet related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States."

China's individual submission was even more interesting. It stated that,

"The multi-stakeholder governance model that brings together governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations would be respected... This model should not be lopsided, and any tendency to place sole emphasis on the role of businesses and non-governmental organizations while marginalizing governments should be avoided. The roles and responsibilities of national governments in regard to regulation and security of the network should be upheld. It is necessary to ensure that United Nations plays a facilitating role in setting up international public policies pertaining to the Internet. We should work on the internationalization of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers".

When China says that ICANN should be internationalized, it hardly has in mind an increased role for non-governmental organizations.

Russia did not even pay lip service to the multi-stakeholder governance model but cut straight to the point:

"We consider it necessary to consecutively increase the role of governments in the Internet governance, with strengthening the activity of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in this field, as well as with support of the UNESCO activity in the development of ethical aspects of Internet use..."

"Ethical aspects of Internet use"?

Saudi Arabia, in its submission, also emphasized, that a priority for the WSIS+10 should be, "actualization of enhanced cooperation to enable governments... to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the internet".

According to the Wall Street Journal, the Obama Administration -- as well as many in the high-tech community -- regards the long-planned move as necessary to maintain international support for the internet and prevent a fracturing of its governance -- a claim critics may find dubious. The U.S. government's role "has long been a source of irritation to foreign governments," according to the NTIA. One look at many foreign governments and it is easy to see why. The NTIA claims that, "These calls for replacing the multi-stakeholder model with a multilateral, government-run approach will only grow louder if the U.S. government fails to complete the transition". Is that a threat?

But what guarantees are there that internet governance will not eventually end up in the hands of those very governments, seeing as they are all very eager to gain control of it? None.

In fact, those who claim to care about a free and uncensored internet, unbridled by government and international state organizations, should take a close look at the proposals for the plan for ICANN that the different stakeholders, including governments, came to agree on in March 2016 in Marrakech. According to this plan, the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), a decisional participant in ICANN, will -- subject to certain limitations -- be able to participate in decision-making on budgets, board member removals, and other matters of ICANN corporate governance. This is new and represents a major shift, which should concern those who care about internet freedom. Even if this plan is discarded for some reason, it shows how eagerly governments are pushing for control in internet matters. That observation alone should serve as a warning to those who take at face value the U.S. administration's declarations that nothing will change.

The decision to transfer authority to ICANN has met with resistance in the U.S. Congress, and a coalition of more than two dozen civil society groups and activists are even calling on Congress to sue the Obama Administration -- perhaps at least to postpone the date until more Americans are aware of the plan. It is not too late.

Judith Bergman is a writer, columnist, lawyer and political analyst.

Iranian Ayatollah: The 'Hidden Imam' Will Come To Earth In A Vessel 'Like A Spaceship'

TEL AVIV – An Iranian Grand Ayatollah recently said that the Mahdi – the Shi'ite version of the messiah – will arrive in a "super-modern vessel like a spaceship" and that until that time there will be no "peace, security, or decency" on earth.

Ayatollah Naser Makarem Shirazi was answering questions about the arrival of the Mahdi, otherwise known as the Hidden Imam, who according to Islamic eschatology will conquer the world before the Day of Judgment, ridding it of evil. Shirazi's explanations, translated and published Friday by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), were based on Islamic teachings and hadiths, as well as quotes from preceding Imams.

Shirazi explained that when the Imam arrives there will no longer be sunlight in the world. Instead, the "land will be illuminated by divine light."

However, he also said daily life will be “conducted according to the ongoing laws of nature, and not according to miracles – because miracles are extraordinary and are for [times of] need and exceptional circumstances.”

Accordingly, the Mahdi’s arrival will happen in a way that is conducive to the laws of nature and the technology of the time “by means of ordinary tools that are based on scientific and industrial advances.” The Mahdi’s presence in the world will usher in an era of “unprecedented expansion of industry and technology,” Shirazi explained.

The entire world will be visible to the Mahdi “like the palm of his hand,” but since miracles are inconceivable, he will be able to do so using “a powerful apparatus, that may be difficult for us to imagine today, for transmitting images,” Shirazi said.

According to Shirazi, until then “there can be no unified global regime and no peace, security, and decency.”

Arguably the most bizarre explanation provided by Shirazi was how to interpret the hadith that describes the arrival of the Mahdi on “a cloud that is loud as thunder and fast as lightning, upon which he rides ... ascending to seven heavens and seven lands.”

Since clouds are clearly not vessels ridden in outer space, elucidates Shirazi, the hadith’s meaning is “an extraordinary and very swift vessel that looks like a dense cloud in the sky.”

When this vessel moves, it sounds like thunder and has the speed of lightening, the Ayatollah said, “slashing the heart of the sky with extraordinary force, and in this way it can advance to any point in the firmament.”

“Therefore, this is a super-modern vessel, and there is none like it today. It is like a spaceship and like other swift and amazing space vessels that are found [only] in stories today, but nobody knows how close [these vessels] come to truth and reality. Maybe it will be like [a spaceship], but in any case it is not a spaceship.”

Iran: The Return of Ahmadinejad & Co.

by Majid Rafizadeh

September 5, 2016

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/8864/iran-ahmadinejad>

Iran's Supreme Leader and the senior cadre of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have been vocally critical of the nuclear deal. They fear further diplomatic and political rapprochement between the US and Iran, now that they have already achieved their objectives of the lifting of the four major rounds of the UN Security Council's sanctions.

After the nuclear deal was implemented, polls showed that 63% of Iranians expected to see improvements in the economy and living standards within a year. But currently, in a new poll, 74% of Iranians said there had been no economic improvements in the past year.

Iran's former president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, saying he wants to "redefine revolutionary ideals" set up by the leader of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, appears to be launching a campaign to run in the upcoming Iranian presidential elections, in February, 2017.

Ahmadinejad was well-known for his incendiary and provocative speeches, which included denying the Holocaust. At the end of his presidential term, from 2005 to 2013, his approval rating was extremely low, and he managed to drive away most constituents across political spectrum, including the topmost hardline leaders. He also became the first Iranian president since 1979 to be summoned by the parliament (Majlis) to answer questions regarding his activities and policies.

After all of this, the common conception among politicians, scholars and policy analysts was that Ahmadinejad would never return to politics. It seemed that his retirement plan focused on founding a university and teaching, but his plan to open a university failed.

Despite his low popularity among people, however, the "principalists" (ultra-conservatives) were still on his side, due to his fierce anti-US, anti-Western and anti-Israel policies and rhetoric, as well as the fact that he remains a major figure in the coalition of several conservative groups, the Alliance of Builders of Islamic Iran.

After Ahmadinejad's presidency, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, appointed him to the Expediency Council, Iran's highest political arbitration body, which arbitrates between the Guardian Council (the supervisory body over the parliament and elections) and the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament). The Expediency Council is predominantly made up of Iran's hardline clerics, and functions as an advisory institution to the Supreme Leader.

Although it seems that Ahmadinejad did not have any intention of returning after being out of the international spotlight for two years, other factors show that he never really left. Domestically, Ahmadinejad remained politically active, trying to unify and lead the hardliners. Since he left office, he has continued holding meetings with former ministers in Tehran.

In the last few months, however, Ahmadinejad's desire to launch his campaign more forcefully and determinedly has become clearer as, once again, he began attracting the international spotlight, such as when he wrote an open letter to US President Barack Obama, demanding the transfer of \$2 billion to Iran.

To capitalize on the popular vote and the presidential elections of 2017, Ahmadinejad has been focusing on attracting constituents from around Iran by traveling to smaller cities and towns, giving lectures and speeches; supporters of Ahmadinejad have called for his return.

During his presidency, people enjoyed subsidies on items including petrol, natural gas and electricity, and his government distributed monthly cash handouts of about \$17 to every person. These, as well as criticism of corruption, injustice, and capitalism, were appealing to the rural population and the less affluent.

Ahmadinejad has also been vehemently criticizing Hassan Rouhani, the current Iranian president, as incompetent, and questioning his economic and foreign policies, and pointing out that, "There will be bumps and satanic obstacles in our path... One should not forget that the US is our enemy."

The latest poll by the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland revealed that "Ahmadinejad now represents the single largest threat to Rouhani's re-election, and trails the once-popular incumbent by only eight points. Suddenly, the ex-president seems once again to be a real political contender."

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad can indeed be a viable contender against incumbent President Hassan Rouhani in Iran's 2017 presidential election, and is more likely the choice of the Supreme Leader and hardliners. This is a ripe environment for him for several reasons.

First of all, the nuclear deal has become a popular issue among the hardliners. The Supreme Leader and senior cadre of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have been vocally critical of the nuclear deal. They fear further diplomatic and political rapprochement between the US and Iran, now that they have already achieved their objectives of the lifting of the four major rounds of the United Nations Security Council's sanctions.

Ayatollah Khamenei warned against any relations with the US, and he also questioned the economic benefits of the nuclear agreement: "Weren't the oppressive sanctions lifted so that the people would feel a change in their lives? Has there been a tangible effect on the people's lives in the past six months?"

Second, the popularity of the nuclear deal has been on a decline among the population as well. After the nuclear deal was implemented, polls showed that 63% of Iranians expected to see improvements in the economy and living standards within a year. But currently, in a new poll, 74% of Iranians said there had been no economic improvements in the past year.

Ahmadinejad can indeed be a viable contender against Hassan Rouhani, and is more likely the choice of the Supreme Leader and the IRGC leaders, and the candidate favored by the hardliners and principalists.

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Pope Francis and the One-World Religion

The Roman Catholic Church has led the global Ecumenical Movement since soon after its inception. By heading the largest religious organization on the planet (which consists of 1.27 billion people), the Pope has a huge advantage in winning a contest for the leader of all religions.

Protestant denominations have more than 900 million adherents, but they are fractured into thousands of organizations. The Southern Baptist Convention is the world's largest Baptist denomination and the largest Protestant body in the United States. But it only has 15 million members.

Pope John Paul II did much to bring unity to world religions. But his efforts were limited because he believed that Catholicism is superior to other faiths. John Paul II's successor, Pope Benedict XVI was a set back the Ecumenical Movement. He started off by correctly condemning Islam for its evil traits. Benedict said in one speech:

"Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." Pope Benedict later apologized for any offense he had caused and made a point of visiting Turkey and praying in its Blue Mosque.

The surprise resignation of Pope Benedict resulted in the rise of Pope Francis. With this new pope, the ecumenical bandwagon was back on track. Pope Francis has reached out to the heads of nearly every major religion.

Just this year alone, he has met with the Patriarch Kirill of Russia for the first time since the 1054 East-West schism. He met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Archbishop of Constantinople. Also in May, Francis met with Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, the grand imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar Mosque, who is considered the head of Sunni Islam.

Pope Francis has been able to become chummy with all these other religions because he has capitulated to the spirit of the age. He is the one who said "Who am I to judge?" when asked about his view on homosexuality.

Pope Francis has also said "Even the atheists" can go to heaven. It is a total compromise for a Christian leader to go into a mosque and offer prayers to the god of Islam.

The pontiff has been so active in fitting the role of the False Prophet, rumors have been making the rounds in the conspiracy theory blogosphere. One source claims Pope Francis will soon make a UFO and alien disclosure that will end with a call for a global religion. Another site says that next month, "POPE FRANCIS to PROCLAIM LUCIFER as God of One World Religion" at an ecumenical gathering of the world's three monotheist faiths that will take place September 4-23, 2016, in Jerusalem.

I think the strongest indication that we are in the home stretch of the creation of the one-world religion is the Pope's reaction to all the terror acts in Europe. When the 86-year-old Father Jacques Hamel had his throat slit at a church altar by Muslim attackers, Pope Francis said this on a trip to Poland: "When I speak of war I speak of wars over interests, money, resources, not religion. All religions want peace, it's the others who want war.

In any other time period, all these atrocities carried out in the name of Allah would cause people to hit the pause button. Pope Francis sees dialogue as the solution to Islamic terror. It seems the more blood that is shed, the more eager he is to embrace the enemy.

I recently watched a documentary about Madame Helena Petrova Blavatsky. She was a Russian occultist who is widely seen as the grandmother of the New Age movement. Blavatsky taught that most faiths of mankind are derived from a universal religion.

She said that Islam, Catholicism, and the Eastern religions had redeemable values, but she thought that Protestant Christian faiths were too corrupted to be of any good. This is no surprise coming from someone who

received much of her doctrinal views from a demon guide. We can consider this quite a compliment when we consider the source.

It is possible that Pope Francis could be the False Prophet who will cause the world to worship the Antichrist. If the Tribulation is near, he will likely get the job. Since Putin has decided to be the perpetual leader of Russia, death is the only thing that would prevent him from being the head of the Ezekiel 38 and 39 invasion.

It is well enough to see warning signs in nature as an indication of the Rapture's close proximity. When you see actors who will be part of the Tribulation starting to assemble just off stage, you really know time is short.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

--Todd Strandberg

5.6 Magnitude Earthquake in Oklahoma, Rattles Other Midwestern States

By MORGAN WINSOR Sep 3, 2016, 10:19 AM ET

A 5.6 magnitude earthquake struck Oklahoma Saturday morning, making it one of the largest quakes on record in the Midwestern state.

The powerful quake happened at 7:02 a.m. local time in north-central Oklahoma, according to the United States Geological Survey. People in other parts of the Midwest, from Nebraska to north Texas, reported feeling the earthquake a few minutes later.

An earthquake of the same magnitude rattled the region in November 2011.

Officials in Oklahoma are still assessing the aftermath. In Pawnee, near where the quake was centered, police said windows were shattered and the facades of some brick buildings were damaged. Pawnee County Emergency Management Director Mark Randell told The Associated Press that no buildings had collapsed in the town of 2,200 and there were also no injuries.

"We've got buildings cracked," Randell said. "Most of it's brick and mortar, old buildings from the early 1900s."

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin tweeted that the state Department of Emergency Management would assess the damage in Pawnee. State officials were also checking bridges in the area for any damage. Staff from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, which regulates the energy industry, was at the office reviewing disposal wells in the vicinity of the record-tying quake, Fallin said.

Oklahoma has had an increase in earthquakes of magnitude 3.0 and greater that has been linked to underground disposal of wastewater from oil and natural gas production. A cluster of quakes struck northwest Oklahoma this year, including a 5.1 magnitude earthquake. And last fall, several 4.7 magnitude quakes were felt.