

Newsbytes

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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

Again, keep an eye on Bitcoin and other alternative digital monies. It's happening, the global buying and selling landscape is changing and that toothpaste will never go back into the tube.....MD

Rise of Crypto Currency Means Rejection of US Dollar

By Greg Hunter On May 24, 2017

Forensic macroeconomic analyst Rob Kirby thinks the U.S. dollar is in big trouble. He says the tip-off is skyrocketing crypto currencies such as Bitcoin. Kirby explains, “The rise of the crypto currency is an expression of the rejection of the U.S. dollar as a store of value in international markets. To back that statement up, I would only point to the four largest crypto currencies by market capitalization and what they have done in the last three months.

Bitcoin gets most of the press, and there is a good reason for that. It is the biggest crypto currency by market capitalization at around a \$34 billion market cap. That \$34 billion market cap has doubled in the last three months. The three crypto currencies behind Bitcoin in market capitalization are Ethereum. It has gone from a market cap, three months ago, of \$1.12 billion to \$15.7 billion. So, it's up 13 times in three months. The next biggest one by market cap, it's called Ripple, is currently at a \$12.9 billion market cap. Ripple had a market cap 3 months ago at \$205 million. So, Ripple has gone up 60 times in the last three months. The next crypto by market cap stands at \$2.38 billion and it's called NEM. Three months ago, NEM had a market cap of \$56.8 million.

So, it's gone up 20 times in the last three months. To anybody paying attention, I would suggest that if gold and silver were not strapped down in a straight jacket with the suppressive activities of the central banks and the Exchange Stabilization Fund (ESF) in the United States, they too would have probably ratcheted up 10 to 20 times easily in the last three months because what we are experiencing globally is the rejection of the U.S. dollar.”

Kirby says the key assets in the game for the big money players are gold and silver. Kirby contends, “The Achilles heel of this whole shooting match truly is physical precious metal. It's the one thing you cannot paper over unless you have people willing to excuse you of making a physical delivery of metal for a premium. So long as people are willing to take fiat money in lieu of physical precious metal, the game can continue. The minute someone is due a large chunk of physical metal and the seller cannot supply it.

that's when this whole thing unravels. That's when we see an uncontrollable rise in the price of precious metals like we've seen in the last three months in the crypto currencies."

Former White House Budget Director David Stockman thinks a big financial crash will happen this fall. What does Kirby think? Kirby says, "Pay attention to the rapid ascent in the crypto currencies . . . they are likely nodding their head in agreement with Mr. Stockman's prognostication that a crisis occurs sooner rather than later. If we see these crypto currencies continue to vector up, it would imply to me a market crash is very near at hand. For what is coming for the U.S. dollar, having it timed to the day, week or month, isn't the big issue. The really big issue is what comes after. I do believe there will come a point with the physical precious metals, there is going to come a point, whether you have it or you don't, and if you don't, you won't get any because it won't be available. I have long said that there will come a day that you will not be able to buy precious metals with U.S. dollars. That day is approaching."

Apparently God's down in the polls. I don't think he's worried about that one bit...MD :

Gallup: Belief God created humans at record low

By Allen Cone | May 23, 2017 at 2:33 PM

May 23 (UPI) -- A record-low percentage of U.S. adults believe that God created humans in their present form, according to a Gallup survey.

Thirty-eight percent accept the strict creationism view compared with 38 percent who believe man developed with God's guidance and 19 percent think God had no role in man's evolution, according to the Gallup poll.

It's the first time since 1982 -- when Gallup asked the question with the same wording -- that belief in God's direct creation of man is not the most-common response.

Overall, 76 percent of Americans believe God was involved in man's creation -- the creationist view based on the Bible -- or that God guided the evolutionary process theorized by scientist Charles Darwin and others. Since 1982, the "secular" viewpoint has doubled.

"Since the Scopes Monkey Trial more than 90 years ago, the inclusion of creationism -- and evolution -- as part of public school curricula has been an ongoing and contentious topic," Gallup's Art Swift said. "This push and pull with creationism will undoubtedly continue, as this debate about where humans came from rages on."

Respondents' views varied depending on their amount of education. Among those who believe in creationism, 21 percent have a postgraduate education versus 48 percent who have no more than a high school diploma. Among those who believe in evolution without God's involvement, 31 percent are postgrads versus 12 percent who have a high school education or less.

However, more adults with a college degree or postgraduate education believe God had a role in evolution than say evolution occurred without God.

More Catholics believe humans evolved but God guided the process (45 percent) than believe in the creationist viewpoint (37 percent). Fifty percent of Protestants and other Christians believe God created humans in the present form, but it is not dominant as 39 percent say humans essentially evolved with God's guidance.

Eleven percent of Catholics and 6 percent of Protestants/others say God had no role in the process. Interviews were conducted May 3-7 with a random sample of 1,011 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. The margin of error is 4 percentage points.

Those surveyed were also asked their views on the Bible. Twenty-four percent of Americans believe the Bible is "the actual word of God, and is to be taken literally, word for word" -- a record low in 40 years of surveys conducted by Gallup. Twenty-six percent believe the Bible is "a book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man." And 47 percent have a view in the middle -- the Bible is the inspired words of God but not to be taken literally -- the same percentage as in 2014.

This week's Quoteworthy:

"The same Trump so many liberals criticized for hating Muslims was given a welcome fit for a king by 50 Muslim leaders, all while knowing the US president loves the Zionist idea of the right of the Jews over their historic ancestral homeland, Zion, and their ancient capital Jerusalem.

In his own way, Trump apparently understands the Middle East more than all the Middle East analysts and political advisors. In this region, leaders respect the strong and despise a leader who weakens his allies. Arab leaders appreciate his standing with Israel because they know that by doing so he will be faithful to his promises to them as well.

They promised us after the Trump campaign that we'd see the real Trump. It'll hurt. What happened in the end? He is the friendliest president to visit Israel in decades.

Trump told Abbas, to his face, to stop paying stipends to terrorists families.

He told the Muslim leaders, to their faces, to stop being soft on terrorists, fight and kick them out of the land they call sacred.

He told the State Department liberals, to their faces, that an acting president can visit the Western Wall even though it's under their stupid definition of being "occupied territory".

He told Hamas, to their face, that they are no better than Hezbollah or ISIS. Terrorists!

He told the world, right to their face, that Jerusalem is the ancient capital of the Jews.

He told the UN and the EU, to their face, that the "two state" solution isn't the magic word and that change must come from within. And it's NOT the Israeli side that needs to change.

Will he bring peace? No!

Will he slow events the Bible predicted? No!

Is he playing a role in the plan of God for the region? Yes!

It's not a crime to like Trump!

It's not a crime to be proud of America sometimes.

It's not a crime to smile and see God in action!

Smile! We are out of here soon!

– Amir Tsarfati

May 24

An Invisible Curtain Falls Between Russia and the West

By Jon Sather May 26 Stratfor.com

Contributor Perspectives offer insight, analysis and commentary from Stratfor's Board of Contributors and guest contributors who are distinguished leaders in their fields of expertise.

The Cold War ended over 25 years ago, but the lingering Soviet specter continues to haunt the Western world. Since the election of Russian President Vladimir Putin in March 2000, a new conflict has been brewing, this time in cyberspace. And on a battlefield monopolized by the United States and Russia, the historical threats of nuclear war, ambitions of global dominance and aspirations of containing the enemy may not be the relics of the past we imagine them to be.

The Next Weapon of Mass Destruction

Nuclear war is still a very real and pressing threat. But the increasingly pervasive cyber threat is just as critical and even harder to counter. Layered onto the tensions that arose during the Cold War, cyberwarfare has added new dimensions to politically based threats, scalability of tactics, deniability of action and strategies of containment — all made possible, and performed remotely, with a new weapon: the computer. As Mr. Wabash so aptly put in "Three Days of the Condor," it's hard not to "miss that kind of clarity" the old Cold War provided.

Of course, Winston Churchill's vivid image of an Iron Curtain descending around the Soviet bloc has stuck with us to this day. But instead of a somber, morosely elegant red curtain separating East from West, it is now a digital hologram, a virtual reality of misdirection on the international stage. Behind this invisible curtain are clear antagonists, at least from the United States' perspective: Russia, China and Iran. But the lines of culpability have been blurred by the entrance of state and non-state actors, rogues and proxy groups, criminals and activists — each armed with an array of digital tools tailored to suit its ambitions. The barriers to entry in a burgeoning global conflict have never been so low: All you need are a brain, a motive and a computer.

This is what the new Cyber Cold War looks like, an era in which perceptions become the reality. And if Russia's hacking of the Democratic National Committee last year is any indication, the most powerful tools at each nation's disposal will be obfuscation, deniability and misdirection.

Fanning the Flames Within

These tools fall within the realm of Covert Action Information Operations (CA/IO), a perceptual construct that will define how the Cyber Cold War plays out. A field with a rich and storied history, CA/IO tactics tap into existing popular sentiments to offer the world's intelligence agencies a variety of ways and means, stealth, invisibility and a measurable (if often delayed) impact. For instance, in World War II the British conceived of and executed Operation Mincemeat, which shortened the war considerably by using misdirection to hide the Allies' planned attack routes through the Mediterranean from the Nazis. Then, during the Cold War, the CIA helped to encourage the mass consumption of Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago* within the Soviet Union, subtly spurring opposition to the government over time.

The effects of CA/IO can be tough to measure, but they are often clear nonetheless. The same is true of such operations conducted in cyberspace, as a cursory glance at Russia's recent meddling in Western elections shows. In the years ahead, cyber tools will become the new "active measures" — the Soviet term for acts of political warfare intended to shape global events — as perpetrators use them to hide in plain sight, create subterfuge, maintain plausible deniability and shift blame to convenient scapegoats.

Of course, Winston Churchill's vivid image of an Iron Curtain descending around the Soviet bloc has stuck with us to this day. But instead of a somber, morosely elegant red curtain separating East from West, it is now a digital hologram, a virtual reality of misdirection on the international stage.

Perhaps no one has proved more adept at this over the past few years than the Russians. In hopes of achieving political and territorial dominance, driving Europe's disintegration and undermining the United States' image worldwide, the Kremlin's intelligence services have begun to skillfully combine overt military action with largely covert cyber CA/IO attacks — to great effect. In Syria, Russia has targeted the rebels attempting to overthrow President Bashar al Assad with airstrikes and misdirection campaigns alike. Closer to home, it softened the battlefield in Crimea and Ukraine with CA/IO attacks before launching an invasion on the ground. Putin has even publicly left the door to further military action open, claiming it would only be used as a "last resort." First soft power, second hard power, third occupation — as simple as 1, 2, 3. (To add insult to injury, Putin was nominated for the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize the day after he moved troops into Crimea.)

Last year Moscow took advantage of similar conditions in America to make inroads into U.S. politics. The Kremlin, aware of the public's simmering frustration with politicians in Washington, hacked into the Democratic National Committee and leaked information in a manner designed to confound and poison the electoral atmosphere. Not only that, it used proxies to do its dirty work, sowing doubt and driving the wedge between right and left even deeper. All Putin had to do was set the wheels in motion and watch the ensuing drama's own momentum carry it forward, wreaking havoc along the way.

A War by Any Other Name

So is the Cold War really over, or has the front line simply moved from the open, physical landscape to a hidden, virtual one? After all, CA/IO doesn't happen on a whim; it is used with intention, which Russia certainly still has when it comes to dividing and weakening its enemies. That much, at least, has not changed, even if the tactics it uses to achieve that goal have.

Russia's newfound reliance on cyber CA/IO warfare has also changed the face of geopolitics, shrinking the world as we know it into a collection of zeros and ones that knows none of the constraints imposed by distance or terrain. Meanwhile, adversaries conceal their hands not by the cover of darkness but by hiding in plain sight. Armed with attack software that cannot be traced back to them, these enemies use the genius of misdirection and misinformation to target systems left unprotected, creating both the perceptions they desire and the deniability they need to achieve their ends.

It's no wonder that Western leaders and institutions have been flummoxed by this new Cyber Cold War. Rather than addressing it head-on, many have chosen to commit fratricide by pointing the finger at anyone but the true culprit. All the while, U.S. intelligence chiefs have urged President Donald Trump to take action against state-sponsored cyber activity emanating from Russia. An easy place to start is to candidly call it what it is.

Perhaps it is time for the world's greatest powers to acknowledge that the Cold War is far from over. That the events unfolding before our eyes are a virtual reality created by disinformation, misinformation and manipulation, driven by motives we have not paid proper attention to. Putin's cyber operations have undermined America's institutions, but they have not weakened its resolve. The U.S. system of governance is resilient, fortified by a robust democracy and the rule of law. Russia's, however, is more fragile, a fact Putin knows well.

Putin's Potemkin

Russia's landscape is vast and verdant, and its people are dedicated to a culture of arts, science and music. But energy and weapons exports are no longer enough to sustain the country's weakening

economy. Atop this tenuous house of cards sits Putin, who is hoping that misdirection will buy him time with his own people. What happens when Russians grow tired of Putin's mantra that the world, led by the United States, is out to get them? The master tactician has used Moscow's ventures in Ukraine and Syria to distract his people from the problems they face at home, but can he sustain that strategy for much longer?

Putin is living in a glass house at the center of a modern Potemkin village. The Russia of today has the stacked-deck, hollow feel of the late 1980s and early 1990s — an era his people certainly don't want to return to, because they haven't forgotten how it ended.