

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

Council of Europe to Denounce Trump’s Jerusalem Recognition

BY TOVAH LAZAROFF JANUARY 25, 2018

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is set on Thursday (1/25) to denounce US President Donald Trump’s declaration that Jerusalem is Israel’s capital.

“The assembly regrets the declaration of the president of the United States of America on 6 December 2017 that it was ‘time to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel’ and that preparations would start ‘to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,’” stated the latest draft of a resolution before the assembly.

Israel, which has a delegation in Strasbourg, where the council’s Parliamentary Assembly has gathered, believes the resolution’s passage is assured, but is hoping to add some amendments.

“After the Palestinians destroyed UNESCO through politicization and an obsessive persecution of Israel, and after their ridiculous boycott of the United States, they are now trying to drag the Council of Europe [onto that same platform],” said Ambassador to UNESCO Carmel Shama Hacoheh.

He and MK Aliza Lavie (Yesh Atid) are part of an Israeli delegation attending the parliamentary session.

Shama Hacoheh charged that the Palestinians are “recruiting extremist elements, some of whom border on antisemitic, to pass resolutions condemning the US and Israel.”

With 47 member states, including Turkey, the Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights body. The United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan and the Holy See have observer status at the council. Israel has observer status at the council’s Parliamentary Assembly, of which the Palestinian National Council is a democratic partner.

The resolution on Jerusalem is part of the Palestinian Authority’s push to reaffirm European support for a twostate solution at the pre-1967 lines, as the Trump administration takes a new and broader approach to the resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Such a vote also provides another forum for the international community to declare its refusal to accept any part of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital outside the context of a final-status agreement.

The resolution stated that the “international community as a whole expressed serious concerns about the consequences of this declaration on Jerusalem for the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians and the prospects for a solution to their conflict.

“The role of the United States as a serious broker in the peace process was undoubtedly undermined by the declaration of its president on Jerusalem,” the resolution said.

“Its future role should be based on a renewed attitude of neutrality in the peace process. In this context, Europe should play a major role in the sponsorship and resumption of the peace process,” it added.

The text also affirmed the council’s commitment to a “two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the 1967 borders, which, in view of the new realities on the ground, could be accompanied by limited land swaps, as has recently been accepted by the Arab countries.”

It added “that Jerusalem could well become the capital of both the State of Israel and the future Palestinian state, as a result of direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.”

The resolution called on Israel to halt settlement activity and the demolition of Palestinian homes. It also spoke of the need for a Fatah-Hamas reconciliation.

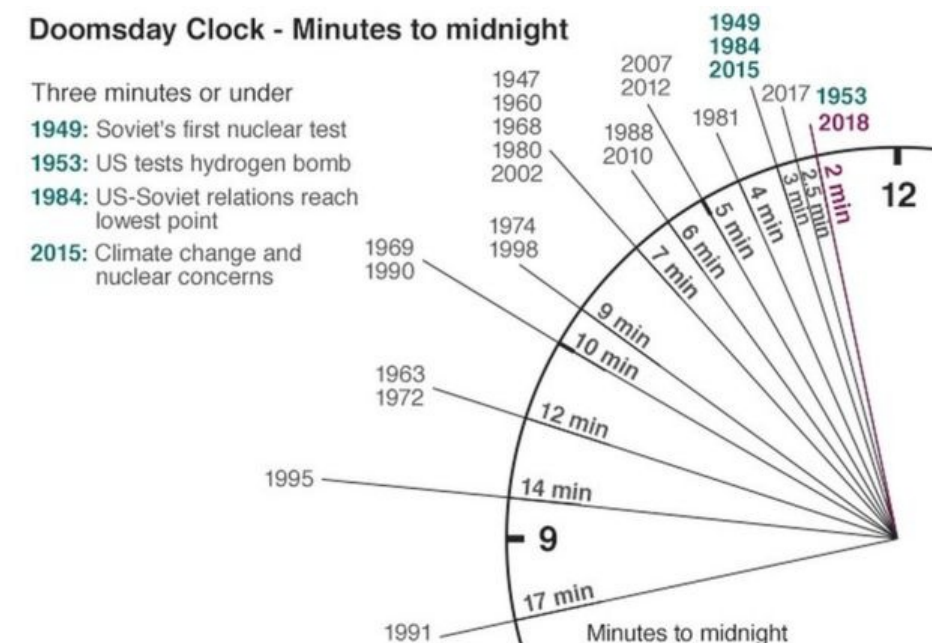
Lavie said that on Thursday morning the council’s committee on political affairs and democracy will vote on any amendments to the text, before it goes to the Parliamentary Assembly for a final vote.

Israel would like to see a paragraph added denouncing Palestinian incitement, including financial support to terrorists and their families.

Doomsday Clock moved to just two minutes to 'apocalypse'

25 January 2018

Chart showing adjustments to Doomsday Clock since 1947



Growing concerns about a possible nuclear war and other global threats have pushed forward the symbolic Doomsday Clock by 30 seconds - to just two minutes before midnight.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (BAS) said it had acted because the world was becoming "more dangerous".

The clock, created by the journal in 1947, is a metaphor for how close mankind is to destroying the Earth.

It is now the closest to the apocalypse it has been since 1953.

That was the year when the US and the Soviet Union tested hydrogen bombs.

Last year, the clock was also moved forward by 30 seconds.

What was behind the decision?

Announcing the move in Washington DC on Thursday, the BAS said the decision "wasn't easy" and said it was not based on a single factor.

However, BAS President and CEO Rachel Bronson said that "in this year's discussions, nuclear issues took centre stage once again".

The team of scientists singled out a series of nuclear tests by North Korea. They dramatically escalated tensions on the Korean peninsula and led to a war of words between North Korea and the US.

The BAS also referred to a new US nuclear strategy that was expected to call for more funding to expand the role of the country's nuclear arsenal.

Rising tension between Russia and the West was also a contributing factor.

Chart showing adjustments to Doomsday Clock since 1947

The "weakening of institutions" around the world in dealing with major global threats - including climate change - was another major concern, the scientists said.

They also mentioned US President Donald Trump's "unpredictability", pointing to his often controversial tweets and statements.

The minute hand on the Doomsday Clock is a metaphor for how vulnerable to catastrophe the world is deemed to be. The symbolic device was created by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in 1947. It was founded at the University of Chicago in 1945 by a group of scientists who helped develop the first atomic weapons.

Today, the group includes physicists and environmental scientists from around the world, who decide whether to adjust the clock in consultation with the group's Board of Sponsors - which includes Nobel laureates.

How does the threat compare to previous years?

When it was created in 1947, the clock's hand stood at seven minutes to midnight. Since then it has changed more than 20 times, ranging from two minutes to midnight to 17 minutes before midnight in 1991.

But during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis - considered by many analysts to be the closest the Cold War face-off between the US and the USSR came to escalating into a nuclear war - the Doomsday Clock stood still at seven minutes to midnight.

The BAS says: "The answers to this seeming anomaly are that the Doomsday Clock captures trends and takes into account the capacity of leaders and societies to respond to crises with reasoned actions to prevent nuclear holocaust.

"The Cuban Missile Crisis, for all its potential and ultimate destruction, only lasted a few weeks; however, the lessons were quickly apparent when the United States and the Soviet Union installed the first hotline between the two capitals to improve communications, and, of course, negotiated the 1963

test ban treaty, ending all atmospheric nuclear testing."

In fact, the Doomsday Clock was moved back to 12 minutes to midnight in 1963.

Oh this is a good one:

Preparing for Tribulation

Friday, January 26, 2018

raptureready.com

Preparing for Tribulation - how do we prepare for the tribulation and Jesus' return? While we're asking questions, how do we prepare for any pre-tribulation tribulation? You know - the kind which often overtakes us in our daily lives.

Over the years I've noticed a burgeoning Tribulation Preparation Industry. I'm all for preparedness to a point. However I've always been - and still am - somewhat cynical that people can bunker down for seven years, waiting in hiding until the Lord returns. These items can be awfully costly. Most of us can't afford to prepare that way.

Besides which, don't our posttrib friends tell us that the church must be here during the tribulation in order to witness to the lost. So, are you going to share your Bibles, bunkers and food supplies (Matt 25:35)? Or just wait it out in hiding?

There are Tribulation Preparation books on the market as well. As an example, I've been following a series of blog entries by a writer plugging the preparation angle. He's not selling preparation products, though. He's selling an idea via books.

My writer friend began his advice by pointing out that we shouldn't take the Mark of the Beast, contra John MacArthur. I addressed this in the article (MacArthur's Mark of the Beast) and wrote:

Predictably, non-pretribbers saw it as confirmation of the dangers of pretribulationism. One individual recently wrote that churches are not preparing their flocks to face the Antichrist. They're allegedly setting them up to be cast into hell.

If the rapture isn't pretribulational and someone insists you take his brand on the hand or forehead and worship him on pain of death, he isn't Jesus (Rev 13:16-16; 14:9-11). There's nothing confusing about this. Just read your Bible.

How do you prepare for such an event, in case you're wrong about the rapture? The writer failed to shed any light. We were told about the possible deception of the elect by false Messiahs and prophets. It's all there in Matthew 24. Again, I suggest that the deterrent to deception is to read your Bible.

Incidentally, my contention is that the elect mentioned in Matt 24:24, 31 refers to Israel. See The Gathering of the Elect.

The solution for preparing for "Tribulation" ended up being an anticlimax for me. The target audience was pretribulationists. Aside from asserting that the church endures the seal judgments, there was no practical advice on tribulation.

Many Christians are already experiencing varying degrees of trials. What specific advice is available to those who are being persecuted and imprisoned for their faith today? What about those presented with a life or death choice regarding their faith? Will a posttrib eschatological system come to their rescue?

This has been a very tough year for our household. I won't go into details. Moreover, I know people who've had it much, much harder. I should be the last person to complain or worry, though I too often do.

One pastor friend had to gather his family up to escape the fires in North California last year. Do you remember the "apocalyptic" videos and pictures? Not only could they have lost all their possessions, there was a real threat to their lives. I often think of him when I worry about my circumstances.

Then there were the poor people who lived through the Texas floods (Harvey). One friend was evacuated out of her apartment and practically lost everything. This sweet lady's simple faith in Christ saw her through all that. Her faith was unshakable. Now that's a clue!

There was Nabeel Qureshi, who has since gone to be with the Lord. At one point he produced a video (no longer available) while waiting to be evacuated from home due to rising floods around him. Even then, though he was obviously afraid, his faith in Christ was apparent.

The Christian Post cites him on his cancer:

"I am asking God to heal. I believe with all my heart that God has the power to heal in the blink of an eye. But, my faith in God isn't shaken by whether or not He will heal me. I will believe in God no matter what. I trust him. He is sovereign and I love him."

One isn't prepared for tribulation merely by expecting it. This makes as much sense as thinking you're prepared for a mathematics exam, just because you know it's due next week. What have you actually done to prepare?

What sustained men like Robert Bruce, John Knox, William Tyndale, George Wishart and others through persecutions and even martyrdom? It was the love of Christ and the word of God. See also Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

Give me Christ alone! That's the only sure way to endure tribulation. Nathan Busenitz's article *Only One Life* is helpful. Busenitz writes that: "To live well is to live for Christ, and to die well is to die for His glory." We must arm ourselves with an eternal perspective motivated by a desire to glorify God no matter the cost.

I'm not saying I have this tied up. I don't. How often do I need to remind myself by reading passages such as Romans 8!

Finally, one is welcome to their posttrib rapture view, if it makes them feel better prepared. I just don't see how it helps me, or anyone else for that matter. But perhaps an objective self-examination is in order if that's all someone holds onto as preparation.

Maranatha!

Khamenei Orders Transfer of Billions From Rainy Day Fund to Military

by TheTower.org Staff | 01.26.18

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered that \$2.5 billion should be transferred from the nation's reserve fund and to its military, continuing a trend that has been ongoing since the nuclear deal was implemented two years ago, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty/ (RFE/RL) reported Thursday.

The decision to increase the military budget comes in the wake of demonstrations across Iran spurred by economic concerns, especially military spending in conflicts across the Middle East. According to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, described the demonstrations as being driven “by price hikes but also word of a draft government budget that earmarked major funding for religious institutions and the clerically dominated country’s armed forces.”

Anger against the regime was heightened earlier this month when the government unveiled a golden ship engraved the Koran, prompting criticism on social media for failing to address economic problems while producing an expensive object of art.

A study in June 2016 determined that Iran's economy would grow at a rate of 4% a year over the next five years driven by the ending of sanctions as part of the nuclear deal. But rather than spending the infusion of billions of dollars into the economy on domestic needs, the money has been going to boost Iran's military spending, which increased 90% from 2016 to 2017. Last year, Iran's parliament voted to designate \$7.4 billion of Iran's defense budget to the IRGC, marking a 24% increase in spending on the powerful institution.

Former Secretary of Treasury Jack Lew had assessed in advance of the nuclear deal that Iran, constrained by domestic needs, would be limited in what it could spend on its military and terror support. “Most of the money Iran receives from sanctions relief will not be used to support those activities,” Lew said. “Iran is expected to use new revenues chiefly to address those needs, including by shoring up its budget, building infrastructure, maintaining the stability of the rial, and attracting imports,” he added.

Some of the “biggest beneficiaries of the nuclear accord” have been have been state-owned businesses, including those controlled by Khamenei, Mark Dubowitz and Saeed Ghasseminejad wrote earlier this week.