

Newsbytes

The First Watch

March 27, 2019

No. 916

Since 2001

Newzbytes is a ministry of Calvary Chapel of Appleton

www.ccapleton.org

“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

Turkey: Putin's Ally in NATO?

gatestoneinstitute.org

On September 17, 1950, more than 68 years ago, the first Turkish brigade left the port of Mersin on the Mediterranean coast, arriving, 26 days later, at Busan in Korea. Turkey was the first country, after the United States, to answer the United Nations' call for military aid to South Korea after the North attacked that year. Turkey sent four brigades (a total of 21,212 soldiers) to a country that is 7,785 km away. By the end of the Korean War, Turkey had lost 741 soldiers killed in action. The U.N. Memorial Cemetery in Busan embraces 462 Turkish soldiers.

All that Turkish effort was aimed at membership in NATO, a seat that Turkey eventually won in February 18, 1952. During the Cold War, Turkey remained a staunch U.S. and NATO ally, defending the alliance's southeastern flank. Nevertheless, events have changed dramatically since the Islamist government of Prime Minister (now President) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan first came to power in November 2002. The "Turkish retreat" did not happen overnight.

In April 2009, military teams from Turkey and its neighbor, President Bashar al-Assad's Syria, crossed the border and visited outposts during joint military drills. That was the first time a NATO army had exercised with Syria's military.

In September 2010, Turkish and Chinese air force jets conducted joint exercises in Turkish airspace. That, too, was the first time a NATO air force had military exercises with China's.

In 2011, a Transatlantic Trends survey revealed that Turkey was the NATO member with the lowest support for the alliance: just 37% (down from 53% in 2004).

In 2012, Turkey joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO, whose members are Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) as a dialogue partner.

In 2017, a senior Chinese diplomat said that Beijing was ready to discuss Turkey's membership in the SCO.

In September 2013, Turkey announced that it had selected a Chinese company (CPMIEC) for the construction of its first long-range air and anti-missile defense system under the then \$3.5 billion T-LORAMIDS program. That contract was later scrapped, but Erdoğan then turned to Russian President Vladimir Putin for a replacement: the S-400 long-range air and anti-missile defense system.

Despite increasing U.S., Western and NATO pressure, Erdoğan since that time has refused to give up the Russian air defense architecture and instead has boldly defended "Turkey's sovereign decision." Most recently, on March 7, Erdoğan said Turkey would never turn back from the S-400 missile deal. He even added that Ankara may subsequently look into buying the more advanced S-500 systems now under construction in Russia.

Washington is still warning its part-time NATO ally that the Russian deal would have its "grave consequences." According to CNN:

"If Turkey takes the S-400s there will be grave consequences," acting chief Pentagon spokesperson Charles Summers told reporters Friday [March 8], saying it would undermine America's military relationship with Ankara.

Summers said those consequences would include the US not allowing Turkey to acquire the F-35 jet and the Patriot missile defense system.

Turkey, a member of the U.S.-led, multinational consortium that builds the new generation fighter, the F-35 Lightning II, had committed to buy more than 100 of the aircraft.

Turkey's choice in favor of Russia (and against NATO) will surely have repercussions on several wavelengths. The U.S. may or may not fully retaliate by expelling Turkey from the Joint Strike Fighter group that builds the F-35. That will be a decision carrying with it economic considerations in addition to military and political ones. Turkey, if expelled, may turn further to Russia for a next-generation fighter solution, which Putin would only be too happy to offer -- and create further cracks within the NATO bloc, a move Erdoğan probably believes the U.S. administration (and NATO) cannot afford to risk. Erdoğan's gambit, however, has a more important message to NATO than just procuring military gear: Turkey's geo-strategic identity.

The S-400 is an advanced air defense architecture, especially if it is utilized against Western (NATO) aerial assets and firepower. It is an elementary military software fact that Turkey cannot use this system against Russian aggression or Russian-made weapons. With the S-400 deal, Turkey is simply telling its theoretical Western allies that it views "them," and "not Russia," as a security threat. Given that Russia is widely considered a security threat to NATO, Turkey's odd-one-out position inevitably calls for questioning its official NATO identity.

Turkey has NATO's second biggest army, and its military love affair with Russia may be in its infancy now, but it undermines NATO's military deterrence against Russia. Russia, however, would doubtless like nothing better than to see the break-up of a military alliance which ensures that an "armed attack against one" NATO member "shall be considered an attack against them all".

Burak Bekdil, one of Turkey's leading journalists, was recently fired from the country's most noted newspaper after 29 years, for writing in Gatestone what is taking place in Turkey. He is a Fellow at the Middle East Forum.

EU says it will not follow Trump in recognizing Israeli sovereignty over Golan

timesofisrael.com

Syria, Russia, Iran and Turkey condemn US president's surprise announcement, warn it could destabilize region

The European Union will not recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights in the wake of US President Donald Trump's declaration that Washington would do so, a spokesperson for the EU said Friday morning.

"The European Union, in accordance with international law, does not recognize Israel's sovereignty over the territories it occupied since July 1967, including the Golan Heights, and does not consider them as part of Israeli territory," Maya Kosyanchich, a spokeswoman for EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, said in a statement carried by several news outlets.

Her comments came as Trump's move was condemned strongly by Syria and its allies Russia and Iran, as well as by the president of Turkey.

In signature fashion, Trump made the announcement in a tweet Thursday, reversing over 50 years of US policy since Israel's capture of the strategic plateau from Syria during the 1967 Six Day War.

Syria's official SANA news agency, quoting an unnamed foreign ministry official, slammed the decision as "irresponsible" and a violation of United Nations resolutions concerning the territory's status.

"Syria strongly condemns the irresponsible declaration of the American president, which again proves the US's blind tendency in favor of the Zionist entity and its unreserved support for its aggression," the official said. "The Syrian people remain committed to the liberation of the Golan Heights by all means at its disposal."

The source added that Trump's statement won't change "the fact that the Golan was and will remain Arab and Syrian."



A mock road sign for Damascus, the capital of Syria, and a cutout of a soldier, are displayed at an old outpost in the Golan Heights near the border with Syria, May 10, 2018. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

Russia, which has long been a key backer of Syria and is fighting alongside forces loyal to President Bashar Assad in the Syrian civil war, condemned Trump's declaration as a violation of UN decisions.

"Russia, as you know, takes a principled position on the issue of the Syrian Arab Republic's ownership of the Golan Heights... Our assessment of the unlawful nature of Israel's decision to extend its sovereignty to the Golan Heights remains unchanged," foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova was quoted as saying by state-sponsored Sputnik News.

"Changing the status of the Golan Heights bypassing the Security Council is in direct violation of UN decisions," Zakharova added.

Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov also responded to Trump's announcement, telling media on Friday that "such calls may considerably destabilize the already strained situation in the Middle East."

"At the moment it's just a call. May it remain so," Peskov added, according to the TASS news agency.

Iran, another key ally of the Assad regime, said the move was a violation of international law.

"This illegal and unacceptable recognition does not change the fact that it belongs to Syria," foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi said, according to Reuters.

And France added its voice, saying the Golan had been "occupied by Israel since 1967" and it did not recognize Israel's control.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned that the US announcement could throw the region into turmoil.

"Yesterday US President Trump's unfortunate statement about the Golan Heights brings the region to the edge of a new crisis," Erdogan told an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul.

"We will never allow the occupation of the Golan Heights to be made legitimate," he added.

Trump's recognition caught officials in Israel and the United States off-guard, according to the McClatchy news agency.

"We all found out by tweet," an Israeli official was quoted as saying. "We've been lobbying for this for a long time, but it was not the product of one phone call. There were hints, but we weren't given advance notice."

Another Israeli source told the news agency that Israeli leaders were informed of the decision only shortly beforehand, as with Trump's abrupt announcement in December that he would pull all US forces out of Syria.

According to the report, Trump's Middle East peace negotiators and the State Department were also surprised by the move, with US officials having expected an announcement when Trump hosts Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House next week.

Netanyahu appeared overjoyed while praising the decision in a press conference in Jerusalem Thursday alongside US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who The New York Times noted "looked caught off-guard."

While the timing of Trump's decision was unexpected, there were a number of hints at a coming US policy shift, including the State Department's defining of the Golan Heights as "Israeli-controlled" instead of "Israeli-occupied" for the first time, in a human rights report released last week.

Trump's tweet was not preceded by a policy review, according to McClatchy, and it was not clear if the US president would follow up the announcement with a more official recognition such as an executive order.

It was also unclear if Israel would respond with a move of its own, as it never formally annexed the Golan Heights despite having extended Israeli law to the territory in 1981, in a move never recognized internationally.

Quoting unnamed White House officials, the news agency said Trump's National Security Adviser John

Bolton was a key force behind the move following his visit to Israel in January, seeing it as a signal the US remained committed to Israel in the wake of Trump's announcement of the US troop pullout.

US Ambassador David Friedman also reportedly pushed for the recognition on the same grounds.

Israel in recent years has warned that its arch-enemy Iran is trying to establish a military presence in Syria that could threaten the Jewish state, and has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets there linked to Iran.

"It was an ask," an Israeli official told McClatchy. "Because of the timing — it suddenly became a relevant issue about Iran."

Pathway To The Beast: Cashless Society Merges With Social Credit System

prophecynewswatch.com

Some well-informed Americans may be aware of China's horrifying "Social Credit System" that was recently unveiled as a method of eradicating any dissent in the totalitarian state.

Essentially freezing out anyone who does not conform to the state's version of the ideal citizen, the SCS is perhaps the most frightening control system being rolled out today.

That is, until you consider what is coming next.

Unbeknownst to most people, there appears to be a real attempt to create a system in which all citizens are rationed their "wages" digitally each month in place of a paycheck, including the ability to gain or lose money.

This system would see any form of dissent resulting in the cut off of those credits and the ability to work, eat, or even exist in society. It would not only be the end of dissent but of any semblance of real individuality.

Here's how the Social Credit System operates in China.

First, however, for those who are unaware of the Social Credit System as it operates in China, we should briefly describe just what has taken place there. The Social Credit System in China isn't merely a punishment for criticizing the state as is the case in most totalitarian regimes, the SCS can bring the hammer down for even the slightest infraction such as smoking in a non-smoking zone.

One summary of the SCS can be found in Business Insider's article by Alexandra Ma entitled "China has started ranking citizens with a creepy 'social credit' system -- here's what you can do wrong, and the embarrassing, demeaning ways they can punish you," where Ma writes,

The Chinese state is setting up a vast ranking system that will monitor the behavior of its enormous population, and rank them all based on their "social credit."

The "social credit system," first announced in 2014, aims to reinforce the idea that "keeping trust is glorious and breaking trust is disgraceful," according to a government document.

The program is due to be fully operational nationwide by 2020, but is being piloted for millions of people

across the country already. The scheme will be mandatory.

At the moment the system is piecemeal -- some are run by city councils, others are scored by private tech platforms which hold personal data.

Like private credit scores, a person's social score can move up and down depending on their behavior. The exact methodology is a secret -- but examples of infractions include bad driving, smoking in non-smoking zones, buying too many video games and posting fake news online.

The article points out that violating the "social code," can result in being banned from flying or using the train, using the internet, decent schooling, getting a job, staying in hotels, and having your pet taken away. China is also taking advantage of the mob mentality by branding violators as "bad citizens."

Almost everyone one of these "punishments" have already taken place in China as of the writing of this article and the country has announced its plans to have the system fully in place and functioning by 2020.

The most frightening part? That system is coming HERE. SOON.

While most Americans have scarcely noticed their descent into a police state, they are quick to dismiss the idea that such a system could be implemented in the land they still perceive to be free. However, all the moving parts are in place in the United States. They only need to come together to form the Social Credit System here.

And they are coming together.

Social media is one important method of judging "social scores." This is mainly because of the willful posting of social media users on virtually every aspect of their lives. This data is extremely useful to governments who monitor and store the information acquired freely by users who give away the most personal and intimate details of their lives and do so without charge.

Whether it is political opinions, pictures of yourself and your food, or private conversations over Messenger, that data is being sent directly to the corporation and respective governments then have access to that data via a variety of means and they put that data to good use.

But despite the fact that social media acts as a giant web, snatching users information and acting as a useful tool of NGOs and governments in engineering social movements and human behavior, major social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter have become ubiquitous and common. They are nearly as essential communication tools for the 21st Century as telephones were for the 20th.

The Social Credit System goes along with the dark side of social media.

This is also despite the fact that social media has been proven to make its users depressed, angry, and less social. Much like any other drug, however, social media is addictive, causing real-world loss of quality of life while the user simply cannot tear himself away even when he knows it is best for him to do so. For that reason, it appears social media, whatever platform it may take, is here to stay. It's also an important part of the structure of the coming technological control grid.

But beyond the negative effects social media has on the mind of the individual or in the creation of top-down social movements, the "internet mob mentality" has now become a fact of American life.

Any celebrity, business owner, or just a regular person can be subject to digital flash mobbing simply as a result of a 2-second picture (see the MAGA hat kids or the Chipotle girl, for instance) where a person's

reputation is destroyed, their job/business is lost, or their career is over as a result of virtue signaling and "outrage" by masses of people on the internet who are simply following what they believe the rest of the herd is doing.

We are in the age of digital lynchings. It doesn't matter whether the victim was truly wrong. What matters is that he/she is punished as harshly as possible.

The Social Credit System goes along with the move to a cashless society.

And then we must address the coming cashless society. Indeed, we already live in a world that is replacing cash with digital currency. In some cases, the move to become cashless is made by social engineering and predatory marketing to convenience. In others, such as India, the cashless society has been brought forward by law.

As I have written in many articles in the past, cashless programs are almost always first introduced under the guise of convenience. Then, as more and more people take the bait, the older methods of payment are seen as cumbersome and, eventually, are phased out completely. Mandates then replace what was once a personal choice.

Yet, what is so ironic about these programs is that, while the program is touted as providing so much more convenience, even when putting privacy and Cashless Society issues aside and, with the program running at its optimum, they aren't often really much more convenient.

But that doesn't stop the rollouts and it certainly doesn't stop the mandates. It's as if people believe that masses of scientists, corporations, and DARPA are putting their noses to the grindstone for their convenience and not some other purpose. Do we really believe that those organizations have, as their top priority, our health, freedom, convenience, or happiness? Do we really believe this or do we just not think about it at all?

Regardless, with the disappearance of cash also goes the ability to live outside the mandates of the State which has always been the goal of moving toward a cashless system. The United States is rapidly approaching the phase out of cash as a means of exchange. Don't believe it? Just go to your local convenience store with a \$100 dollar bill.

Enter the Universal Basic Income scheme.

Then there's Universal Basic Income. The UBI has been tossed around as a legitimate solution to poverty and violation of workers' rights for some time. It's an old idea and even establishment philosophers/activists like Bertrand Russell espoused it in the early 20th Century.

But while economists debate the idea's success in regards to those two issues, no one seems to notice how the UBI, taken in concert with cashless society and social media addiction, will coalesce to produce just the world mentioned at the beginning of this article.

Without getting into the details of why a UBI is a bad idea in terms of society and economics, it is still useful to point out that the building blocks of the technological control grid are already in place and, with a UBI, those building blocks form a rather solid foundation.

Here's how the Social Credit System is already being used in America.

With the ubiquitous presence of social media and the current culture of social media outrage, the social credit scheme is already in place. The State only needs to implement a coherent strategy that is no doubt

itself already in place and merely waiting to be rolled out. Already, employers are able to check prospective employees' credit scores on a condition of hiring and many now require social media passwords for the same reason. The SCS is right around the corner.

Pair the SCS with the UBI, however, and you can easily see how the SCS can be the litmus test for whether or not you receive your "benefits." This means that, in the very near future, we will see someone who dares say something politically incorrect or makes a bad financial decision, literally frozen out of society.

If the government (or some private corporation) is in charge of doling out your "benefits" and the government/corporation is in charge of rating your social credit, what do we think is going to happen to violators?

Already, governments are cutting social safety net payments to individuals who do not meet what those governments deem to be "acceptable" healthcare decisions. Similar schemes are in place where recipients are drug tested as part of the requirement for receiving "benefits."

This is how society progresses into totalitarianism, by the way.

Now a younger generation is being used for the same purposes, manipulated by social engineers and reinforced by the generation before them, of bringing in the technological control grid, one giant leap at a time.

Of course, many people who read dire predictions such as these may be tempted to laugh at the idea that such a system could be implemented in the United States, one thing is for sure - the Chinese aren't laughing. And we shouldn't be either.