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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

US Forces will move aside as Turkey moves into Syria

Oct. 7 (UPI) -- In a highly controversial move, the White House has said it will remove U.S troops from northern Syria ahead of a Turkey military advance to expel Kurdish forces from the region.

The White House issued a statement late Sunday following a phone call between U.S. President Donald Trump and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in which it said the administration will neither support nor interfere with Turkey's mission.

"Turkey will soon be moving forward with its long-planned operation into Northern Syria," the statement read. "The United States forces, having defeated the [Islamic State] territorial 'Caliphate,' will no longer be in the immediate area."

The Trump administration's tacit approval of Turkey's military incursion represents an about-face of U.S. policy. In August, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned Turkey against conducting such an action, stating there would be "potentially devastating consequences."

Turkey, a key NATO ally, has been threatening to attack the Kurdish-led, U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces -- as it's headed by the YPG militia, the Syrian version of the Kurdistan Worker's Party, which Ankara considers a terrorist organization.

The White House decision generated sharp responses Monday.

"This impulsive decision by the president has undone all the gains we've made, thrown the region into further chaos. Iran is licking their chops," Republican South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, who's been a regular supporter of Trump's, told Fox News. "If I'm an [IS] fighter I've got a second lease on life. So to those who think [IS] has been defeated, you will soon see."

"The president has sided with authoritarian leaders of Turkey and Russia over our loyal allies and America's own interests," former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said. "His decision is a sickening betrayal both of the Kurds and his oath of office."

Brett McGurk, former U.S. envoy to the global IS-countering coalition, called it a gift to Russia, Iran and the Islamic State. "Donald Trump is not a commander in chief," he tweeted. "He makes impulsive decisions with no knowledge or deliberation. He sends military personnel into harm's way with no backing. He blusters and then leaves our allies exposed when adversaries call his bluff or confronts a hard phone call." Trump answered his critics by saying a U.S. withdrawal in Syria was long overdue.

"I held off this fight for almost 3 years, but it is time for us to get out of these ridiculous endless wars, many of them tribal, and bring our soldiers home," he said. "WE WILL FIGHT WHERE IT IS TO OUR BENEFIT, AND ONLY FIGHT TO WIN. Turkey, Europe, Syria, Iraq, Russia and the Kurds will have to figure the situation out. "We are 7,000 miles away and will crush ISIS again if they come anywhere near us!"

The SDF, which was a close partner to the United States in the fight against IS in Syria, was integral last spring to recapturing the terrorist organization's final so-called caliphate in the war-torn country. In late August, the United States and Turkey signed an agreement to install a security mechanism along the Turkey-Syria border to prevent the Islamic State from a resurgence in the area. A main part of the agreement consisted of the SDF removal of its military fortifications and combat troops to address Turkey's security concerns.

SDF said following the U.S. announcement Sunday that Erdogan has now transformed the agreement into "a mechanism of death" and "the stable & secure region into a zone of conflict and permanent war."

SDF spokesman Mustafa Bali tweeted Monday the Kurdish people are owed an explanation for why the United States failed to fulfill its commitments.

"U.S. forces on the ground showed us that this is not how they value friendship & alliance," Bali said. "However, the decision by [Trump] is about to ruin the trust and cooperation between the SDF and U.S. built during the fight against [IS]. Alliances are built on mutual trust."

In an interview with Voice of America, Bali said the SDF is taking the threat of attack "extremely" seriously. "We fear that mass killings would be committed against our people if Turkish forces invaded this part of Syria."

The United States also said Sunday Turkey assumes responsibility for potentially thousands of foreign-born IS fighters from SDF custody.

The announcement came six days after the U.S. Defense Department released its fiscal year 2020 joint strategic oversight plan, which said the Pentagon "supports the leadership of the Syrian Democratic Forces."

The Wrath To Come

By Daniel Payne 10.6.19

Those of us who draw near to God in full assurance of His salvation for us (Hebrews 10:22) are assured by Him that He will deliver us from His wrath to come:

"And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

There is a difference between the eternal wrath of hell and the hour of wrath at the beginning of the Day of the Lord. The entirety of the Day of the Lord will last one thousand years (Revelation 20:4). The beginning of the Day of the Lord will encompass the wrath of the Tribulation which will last at least seven years.

Hell is a current ongoing and eternal punishment for sin. Hell is not an appointed time of future wrath to come in the same sense as "the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world" (Revelation 3:10). The beginning of the Day of the Lord that includes the Tribulation is the appointed time of "the wrath to

come.”

“Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). The Greek word translated as “delivers” above in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 is “rhýomai.” Definition: draw (pull) to oneself; to rescue (“snatch up”); to draw or rescue a person to and for the deliverer.

Peter used the same Greek word to describe God’s rescue of Lot out of Sodom before its subsequent destruction:

“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked” (2 Peter 2:6-7).

God can very easily rescue His people out of the trial of His choosing, and at the same time “reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:9).

The bride of Christ is not appointed to the wrath of the Groom.

“But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:8-9).

The wrath that Paul says we’re not appointed for is noted in the verses just prior:

“For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3).

It’s obvious—when taken in context—that the wrath that God will rescue us from is the wrath of the Day of the Lord. The Rapture is our helmet of hope in our salvation from the intense persecutions and trials of the Tribulation.

Of course, if we are rescued from the Tribulation via the Rapture, then we are also saved from eternity in hell. Our hope of salvation encompasses both the Rapture and eternal life with God.

Jesus is our deliverer from His own wrath to come (during the Day of the Lord). That is why He closed the book of Isaiah in the specific place that He did, when reading from it in the temple:

“And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down” (Luke 4:17-20a).

Jesus purposely did not read the next phrase from Isaiah 61:2 because His bride—the church—is not appointed to His wrath during “the day of vengeance of our God.”

Here is the very next phrase in Isaiah 62 that Jesus did not read:

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God” (Isaiah 61:2a). Jesus came to this earth in the body of a Man in order to call a new group of people—made up of both

Jews and Gentiles:

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10).

The wrath to come is the time of Jacob’s trouble, not the time of the Bride’s trouble.

“And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed’” (Genesis 32:28).

“Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7).

We who are actually wanting, watching, and waiting for the return of our dear Savior are the Bride of Christ.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25-27).

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7).

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).

Don’t let those who refuse to approach the throne of God in full assurance of faith discourage you. Just because they doubt and mock does not mean that God is delaying His return.

We remnant believers can rejoice in our hope of deliverance which will occur without delay at the Rapture of the Bride of Christ!

“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

“And every man that hath this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3)

Iran prepares for cyberwar amid rising tensions, boasts thousands of cyberbattalions

By Hollie McKay | Fox News

Could Iran-US cyberwar lead to physical war? Heritage Foundation's Lt. Col James Carafano weighs in on Iran’s cyberwar with the United States

In the aftermath of last month's Saudi oil field attacks, believed to have been carried out by Iran, cybersecurity experts have detected an uptick in Iranian movement — and they contend it aims to both guard their nation against retaliation and to launch its own attacks in the shadowy arena of cyberspace. “Both the U.S. and Iran are maneuvering in this space right now, and we will see ongoing attacks from both sides. The key question is how far will they go and how much the situation escalates,” David Kennedy,

founder and CEO of TrustedSec and a former U.S. military intelligence analyst told Fox News. “Iran has been aggressive over the past several years when it comes to cyberattacks. Its back is against the wall, and it has less to lose from a cyberwar with the United States.”

President Trump has long expressed his hesitation for the Islamic Republic of Iran. The country has remained at the forefront of his foreign policy decisions, subject to both economic and military threats. Nonetheless, Trump has also advocated for getting the U.S out of the Middle East and becoming further embroiled in protracted conflicts – making cyberattacks and digital warfare effective and clean-handed methods to cripple Tehran further and demonstrate American strength.

“Iran is currently preparing for an attack and seems to be slowing their current attacks as a matter of readiness,” said Jeff Bardin, chief intelligence officer at cybersecurity firm Treadstone 71. “All critical infrastructures are moving to higher readiness levels.”

Information intercepted by Treadstone 71 in recent weeks shows that Iran has summoned its critical forces and facilities at an “orange” level of preparedness urgency, issuing orders to gas refineries, petrochemical projects, and complexes, terminals, health facilities, and oilfields.

Orange level, according to experts, refers to the “high probability” hazard. The order letter was published in the days after the Saudi oil field attack by Iranian news agency Ilna, but the document was promptly deleted.

A number of petrochemical websites have been determined to be already comprised, Treadstone analysts reported, but it remains to be seen exactly how and by whom. Netblocks have also recorded, in recent weeks, several network and Internet disruptions in both Iran’s public and industrial sectors.

However, unleashing the brunt of cyberweaponry isn’t without blowback and consequences. In recent years, Iran has emerged as one of the world’s most potent global forces in cybersecurity.

“Iran may have cybercapabilities to disrupt Gulf State and Saudi facilities to further drive up the price of oil. And Iran has been working for several years to build their national Internet under the protection of their ‘Chinese firewall’ named Dezhfa,” Bardin said. “They also have been working to push their own versions of social media programs trying to prohibit or greatly limit access to Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, and Instagram, to name a few.”

Tehran is said to be pushing these apps via the IRGC-funded Café Bazaar, their version of Google Play store.

“They are looking to build their own cellphones but realize that the Android operating system will still come with vulnerabilities regardless,” Bardin said. “They have focused on the petrochemical, energy, and financial sectors but admittedly have not spent a great deal of time on other areas including biohazards, food, and water supplies.”

Moreover, for years Iran has been preparing cyberbattalions – made up of regular citizens – and now boasts thousands of them, using the same strategy used in the Iran-Iraq war of the 80s — that is, focusing in the sheer number of “soldiers” involved, Bardin highlighted. During that war, Iran used “cheaper” resources to clear minefields, that being the Basij militia. Today, they seem to be following the same methodology while protecting the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and highly trained cyber special forces for critical cyber combat roles.

And while the cyberspace may seem bloodless, experts also underscored that a cyberattack could inflict more damage immediately than military action.

“Casualty loss is definitely the largest potential for cyberwar. Shutting down critical systems can have an absolute impact on loss of life,” Kennedy observed. “Additionally, if the operators are not planning the attack correctly, there could be potential for attacking the wrong targets and not having a full understanding of the systems that they are in.”

Over the weekend, Iran’s Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh, further warned the petroleum industry – via the ministry’s news agency SHANA – to remain vigilant to cyberattacks as tensions with the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and other adversaries continue to proliferate.

The cyberattacks launched from either side typically occur through phishing or social engineering, experts noted, by finding a flaw in their target’s infrastructure and using that to gain access into sensitive systems. “You could do anything from shutting down oil production to shutting down power, disabling military capabilities, crippling the financial sector, and more,” Kennedy explained.

After Iran was accused of downing a U.S. drone in June, Trump initially sought to respond with a military strike. He called it off at the eleventh hour and instead opted for a series of cyberattacks against Iranian computer apparatuses.

Israel's legendary spy agency, the Mossad, has long been suspected of having a hand in the Stuxnet computer worm that wreaked havoc in Iran's nuclear program in 2010. (Reuters)

A decade ago, the U.S. and Israel teamed up to clandestinely impair Iran's nuclear program with the Stuxnet computer virus, bringing down the centrifuges known to be enriching uranium. While Tehran kept relatively quiet on the matter, experts have speculated over the years that they used the information gathered from that attack to create the virus “Shamoon,” which they first used in 2012 against Saudi Aramco and then in another attack wave in 2017.

Heather Heldman, a former advisor at the U.S. State Department and now managing partner at the Luminae Group, a geopolitical intelligence firm, also highlighted that if cyberattacks headed by the United States become routine, “we risk normalizing this type of activity and losing the element of restraint that has generally prevailed between nations in times of high tension to date.”

“Such a change would pose an enormous threat to U.S. businesses and infrastructure,” she added. “And depending upon how Iran perceives its own cyberdefenses, it may be preparing its proxies to respond in more conventional ways should it sense that it has been the victim of a successful cyberattack.”