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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

All eyes might be on the Temple Mount after the UAE-Israel deal

By DOUGLAS ALTABEF SEPTEMBER 26, 2020



When he dedicated the Temple he built on Mount Moriah, King Solomon prayed that God’s house would be a center of prayer for all the peoples of the world.

Now, in the wake of the recent Abraham Accords – the normalization agreement entered into by Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain – the possibility exists that Solomon’s aspiration could be recreated.

Part of the avowed rationale for the accords was to create enhanced access for all Muslims to worship at al-Aqsa Mosque. This was lofty, with humanitarian intent, and a realpolitik gesture designed to discredit both

the reflex accusation that Jews were somehow attacking al-Aqsa and were “Judaizing Jerusalem.” How might this Solomonic vision occur? Quite simply by having various Emirs and Imams from the Gulf countries come to the Temple Mount to pray. Well, a bit more than that.

It would be one thing, not terribly noteworthy, for these leaders to make a ceremonial appearance at al-Aqsa. That, of course, would be a validation and proof of the benefits accruing to Muslims for entering into the accords.

However, imagine now if those same leaders were to stand on the open spaces of the Temple Mount, alongside Jewish leaders, religious and political, to pray together.

Putting aside the exact choreography and logistics, the thought and the image are nothing short of breathtaking. Talk about beating swords into plowshares! The reality of Muslims praying alongside Jews sends an unmistakable message of reconciliation and harmony that should thrill every person who is interested in peace.

A logical question would likely be why this would happen in the first place. To answer that, we must first and foremost remember that this is the Middle East, where few things are straightforward or as they seem. In that regard, we have to see the same combination of lofty intent and hard bitten political considerations

operating here, as they do in the statements mentioned above about Muslims being free to worship at al-Aqsa.

Politically, each side gets to use the other for its purposes, and each side knows and approves that the other is doing so. As such, there are parallel motivations, but they both involve sticking a finger in the eye of the Wakf Islamic religious trust, and by extension the Jordanian rulers, the Hashemites.

The more historically interesting story concerns the Emirati motivations. Here we are dealing with “inside the Beltway” Muslim political/theological infighting that has been going on for more than 1,300 years. THE ISSUE is the relative primacy of Mecca and Jerusalem for Muslims. It is well known that Jerusalem is never mentioned in the Koran, and its significance is based on various Hadiths, commentaries, that retrospectively grant Jerusalem significance.

The historic motivation for granting Jerusalem significance came from the Umayyad Caliphate, based in Damascus, which was involved in a primacy struggle with the leadership in Mecca. Elevating Jerusalem became a way to elevate the Umayyads in their quest to be seen as the rightful inheritors of Muhammad’s mantle.

This elevation involved not only building both the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock shrine, but in accordance with the Aqsa interpretative significance as the “furthest mosque,” one on par with the mosque in Mecca.

So there has been rivalry and some bad blood all these millennia about this, and now in a deliciously ironic twist, the Emiratis – on behalf of their cousins, the Saudis – get to strike a blow against their longtime rivals, the Hashemites of Jordan.

Simply stated, by standing on the Temple Mount and praying alongside Jews, these Muslims are sending the unmistakable message to the Muslim cognoscenti of “Look. Would we EVER allow Jews to pray in the Kaaba? Or even to show up there? Of course not. Why? Because the Kaaba is of supreme holiness.” Supreme also means greater – as in greater than Jerusalem, greater than the province of the Hashemites. So interfaith prayer not only sends a great message of tolerance to the world, but also clearly orders intra-Muslim theological priorities.

For the Jews, prayer with the Muslims by definition means that Jews themselves are actually praying on the Temple Mount. This strikes an enormous blow against the Wakf-demanded and imposed status quo of no Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount.

DOES ANYONE think for a second our prime minister, a vocal defender of the status quo, would decline to worship alongside Emirati leaders on the Temple Mount? Of course not. And would the Wakf or the Jordanians dare take him to task?

For reasons of their own concern, Emirati leaders would help normalize the Jewish presence on the mount, and not only tolerate, but also participate in Jewish prayer. And with such a hecsher (the kosher stamp), the status of Jewish prayer on the mount might just be permanently altered.

The response to all of this might be that I have just spun a fanciful scenario replete with wishful thinking. Perhaps, but couldn’t the same be said two years ago about the Abraham Accords themselves?

We are living in a time of tectonic shifts, both good and bad. The shift that I envision and hope for would be profoundly positive. King Solomon would be tickled pink to look down and see it all play out.

Study: Average American Filmed By Estimated 238 Security Cameras A Week

SEPTEMBER 28

According to a new study, the average American is filmed by an estimated 238 security cameras each week.



The study was authored by the Safety.com security team which found that the average American is filmed by security cameras more than 238 times a week, a number that has increased rapidly and is only expected to continue as facial recognition is pushed throughout society.

CNBC reports that there will be an estimated one billion security cameras filming around the world by 2021, with somewhere between 10-18% of those being in the United States alone. This may be attributed to the fact Ring operates in the U.S. which is used for monitoring neighborhoods. However, we don't know for sure about that assumption. But Safety expands on that belief writing,

The advent of doorbell cameras becoming the norm for many people thinking about home security means an exponential increase in the number of times they might end up on camera, both on their own home security system but also while walking through the neighborhood where other homeowners might have their own system set up.

When calculated on a per-person basis, this is the second-highest ratio of security cameras to the population in the world. CBS News reported in 2019 that second to China, the U.S. has at least one security camera filming for every 4.6 people, compared to one camera for every 4.1 people in China.

The research is based on IPUMS Time Use data and spread out over the course of an average week. What was revealed is staggering -- an estimated 238 times a week each person is recorded according to the study. The research included many aspects of a person's daily life including driving, and walking around your own neighborhood while working and while shopping at retail stores.

The authors of the study concluded that the average person would be filmed 14 times while walking around their own neighborhood, 160 times while driving, 40 times while working, and 24 times while shopping in just a single week. However, these are rough estimates and shouldn't be taken verbatim. The authors note while they found an average, "we are comfortable reporting on, the swings both directions can be drastic.

There are people, as an example those who frequently travel by air, or work in high-security environments, who might be on camera easily over 1,000 times a week, while there are plenty of jobs and careers that might make it so someone entirely avoids being recorded during their average week."

This comes as Amazon has announced its Ring service will now sell in-home drones pitched as the "Always Home Cam." If that wasn't enough, it's an autonomous drone flying camera that zooms around inside your home to give you a perspective of any room you want when you're not home.

The drone can also be commanded to fly on-demand or programmed to fly when a disturbance is detected

by its linked Ring Alarm system. Once it's done flying, the Always Home Cam returns to its dock to charge its battery like a good robot.

Being on video is being more and more normalized as time goes on and it has been shifting for a while now to include facial recognition technology.

While the estimated number of times per person being on camera weekly is 238, that number could surely increase drastically as facial recognition technology becomes more widespread.

Especially with controversial facial recognition company Clearview AI -- which has built a database of more than 3 billion images taken from Facebook, Instagram and other sites, being funded for \$8.6 million dollars.

Our privacy is a thing of the past.

The Dangerous New Iran-Qatar-Turkey-Hamas Alliance

by Khaled Abu Toameh September 28 Gatestone Institute

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's continued rapprochement with the Iran-backed Hamas is jeopardizing the Palestinians' relations with Egypt. Abbas, however, seems determined to ignore the Egyptian warnings and is marching forward with full speed toward forming an alliance with Hamas and its masters in Iran, Qatar and Turkey. (Photo by Mohamad Torokman/Pool/AFP via Getty Images)

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's continued rapprochement with the Iran-backed Hamas is jeopardizing the Palestinians' relations with Egypt. Egyptian media outlets have resumed their scathing attacks on the Palestinian leadership in general, and the Islamist movement that has been ruling the Gaza Strip since 2007 in particular.

The Egyptian attacks came on the eve of a meeting in Turkey between leaders of Abbas's Fatah faction and Hamas. At the meeting, held under the auspices of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Hamas and Fatah leaders discussed ways of ending their dispute and holding long overdue Palestinian presidential and parliamentary elections.

The Fatah-Hamas meeting in Turkey took place in the context of Abbas's initiative to achieve Palestinian "national unity to confront Israeli and American schemes against the Palestinians." The reconciliation efforts are also designed to thwart normalization agreements between Israel and some Arab states.

The Egyptian attacks, focusing mostly on Hamas, are aimed at sending a warning to Abbas against joining the extremist camp led by Iran, Qatar and Turkey. In addition, the attacks are aimed at reminding Abbas and the rest of the world that Hamas, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, continues to pose a real threat to Egypt's national security.

Abbas, however, seems determined to ignore the Egyptian warnings and is marching forward with full speed toward forming an alliance with Hamas and its masters in Iran, Qatar and Turkey.

Abbas has already damaged the Palestinians' relations with some Arab countries by condemning the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain for signing peace treaties with Israel. Abbas and his senior officials have accused both Gulf countries of "stabbing the Palestinians in the back" and betraying the Palestinian cause, Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque by signing normalization accords with Israel.

A sign of the growing rift between the Palestinians and the Arab world surfaced on September 22, when

Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riyad Malki announced that the Palestinians decided to "relinquish" their right to preside over the Council of the Arab League at its current session, in protest of the decision of the UAE and Bahrain to normalize relations with Israel. "Since the decision to rush after [normalization] was taken in Washington, it does not serve any purpose to exert any more effort to sway [the Arabs] against normalization, particularly since they are not the decision-makers, regretfully," Malki explained.

The decision marks the beginning of a divorce process between the Palestinians and the Arab world. The Palestinian leadership has been boycotting the US administration since December 2017, when President Donald Trump announced his decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The Palestinians have also suspended their ties with Israel, including security coordination.

The Palestinians have, in addition, lost the support of several Arab countries because of their recurring condemnations of Arab governments and leaders who want to make peace with Israel.

Now it appears that the Palestinians are also headed toward ruining their relations with Egypt because of Abbas's decision to make peace with Hamas and appease Iran, Turkey and Qatar.

Egyptian journalists and writers have joined the chorus of critics in the Arab world who are accusing the Palestinian leadership of lacking a clear strategy that would serve the interests of the Palestinians. The journalists and writers have also launched a scathing attack on Hamas for its involvement in terrorism and for throwing itself into the open arms of Iran, Turkey and Qatar. According to Egyptian writer Farouk Jweideh:

"The Palestinian issue is no longer at the forefront of Arab issues, and it has retreated in international forums and behind the scenes of the United Nations, and even in the Arab League... The Palestine issue was the first Arab issue in all situations. Nobody now knows Mahmoud Abbas's future, because everyone has abandoned him."

Jweideh held Palestinian leaders responsible for the "decline" of the Palestinian issue, and in particular the conflict between Fatah and Hamas.

"No one knows how Mahmoud Abbas thinks and what the considerations of Fatah, Hamas and the rest of the Palestinian factions are... The state of confusion and disintegration that afflicted the Arab world put the leaders of Palestine in a historic deadlock. No one is standing with the Palestinian issue and people now."

Egyptian writer Abdel Mun'em Said accused Turkey, Iran, Qatar and Hamas of "using history profusely, selectively and tragically to impose appropriate political and strategic choices to maintain a state of tension, hostility and conflict in the region." According to Said, the goal of the four parties is to infiltrate the Arab countries and obtain material and political gains in the region.

Egyptian broadcaster Basma Wahba noted that Hamas has a history of igniting strife in the region, with the help of Qatar and Turkey. "We lived in a great illusion that Hamas aims to fight Israel to liberate Jerusalem," Wahba said.

"It is time for people to know the truth about this movement and its sabotage goals in this region. With the backing of Qatar and Turkey, Hamas has armed militias and plays a destructive role in the region. Hamas is present and involved in every Arab country. Erdogan has used the Hamas leaders to achieve his goals in the region, and many Hamas members have acquired Turkish citizenship."

Commenting on Hamas's hypocrisy and corruption, Egyptian writer Hashem al-Fahkrani remarked:

"Those who believe that Hamas's first goal is to resist Israel are mistaken. Its first and only goal is to receive money. Hamas's slogan is: Loyalty to anyone who pays the most."

Al-Fakhrani was referring to the Qatari cash grants that have been delivered to Hamas in the past year. Noting that Hamas operates under the guidance of the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organization, he added:

"Hamas, founded on December 15, 1987 under the name of the Islamic Resistance Movement, is one of the wings of the international organization of the Brotherhood. Hamas aims to achieve the goals of the organization without taking into account other considerations."

Al-Fakhrani pointed out that Hamas has condemned some Arab countries for normalizing their relations with Israel, while ignoring that the Qatari cash grants it receives were being delivered to the Gaza Strip with Israeli permission. "Qatar has provided Hamas with more than a billion dollars since 2012," he said.

"Qatar did not provide these funds out of a humanitarian standpoint and to help the residents of the Gaza Strip. The Qataris did so to help Hamas and its leaders and to enable Qatar to establish a foothold in the region."

Egyptian writer Mustafa Anbar denounced Hamas as a "satanic movement with a misleading history and constant support for terrorism." He accused Hamas of serving the Turkish-Qatari agenda in the region.

While You Were Sleeping, China On Track For Global Superpower Status

PNW STAFF SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

China has long been accused of economic aggression in order to expand its influence worldwide, but it is now seeking a powerful military force to support its goals.

A new report released by the Department of Defense on China's military and its role in China's broader foreign policy shows the US has been sleeping while China has been growing.

The Pentagon assessment of Chinese military power states it has outstripped the US in numbers of warships, land-based missiles and air defense systems.

Not only is this a major blow to US pride, it could ultimately be a dangerous mistake.

Americans do not understand the severity of China's military threats, particularly its ability to strike the U.S. mainland with a nuclear weapon, a senior U.S. commander said Monday.

"I get apprehensive that we are not fully conscious as a nation of the threats that we face. China now has the capability ... to directly threaten our homeland from a ballistic missile submarine. That's a pretty watershed moment," said Adm. Charles Richard, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, which has a mission to protect the country by deterring such attacks and, if that fails, prepare to respond.

China is busy building a world-class military, and is expected to pose a direct challenge to US military power in the coming decades.

With most expecting China's economy to be considerably larger than America's by mid-century, and with China now having the second-largest research and development budget in the world for science and technology, it certainly is a plausible scenario.

Gordan Chang, an expert analyst on China, has warned the United States shouldn't be enriching "a hostile regime" that is "configuring its military to kill Americans".

China has already overtaken the U.S. Navy in number of warships and now boasts the largest navy in the world with 350 warships (with 360 expected by the end of this decade). The U.S. Navy has a battle force of 293 ships.

China is also on track to double the size of its nuclear warhead stockpile while expanding foreign military bases capable of attacking the United States — worrying signs that Beijing is seeking global superpower status, the Pentagon warned.

Chinese nuclear forces currently include large numbers of silo-based and road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles, along with an array of high-tech weapons including multiple-warhead missiles and ultra-high-speed hypersonic glide vehicles.

The PLA has rapidly built up numbers of 4,000-mile-range DF-26 missiles — one of two "aircraft-carrier-killing" weapons with enough precision to strike ships at sea. The PLA now has 200 DF-26 missiles capable of firing either conventional or nuclear warheads against Navy ships in the Pacific.

There are also rumors of China experimenting with the use of drone swarms to take out US ships if the precision missiles don't do the job.

Other new systems include theater-range precision strike nuclear weapons designed to counter American ballistic missile defenses, advanced intelligence systems and space based weapons.

In keeping with its ambition to have a modernized military, China is seeking to dominate space, as evidenced by the quantities of space launches it has conducted over the years.

It has even its own satellite killer, the Shiyan, which is equipped with grab arms. The Shiyan satellite has performed at least one successful capture using its grappling arm, capable of throwing other satellites out of orbit or disabling them while stripping them of their useful parts.

Other weapons pulled from the pages of science fiction include lasers and magnets.

China is even planning a permanent base on the Moon as part of its dual military and commercial program.

Rick Fisher, senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center, warns that the biggest key to thwarting Chinese dominance in space will be denying Beijing control over the Moon and the region of space between it and the Earth.

"If America fails to beat China back to the moon to secure commanding positions that can help deter conflict, we are then condemning our country and military forces to many future wars with China," Mr. Fisher said.

He further warned "China is pursuing many threats to our space capabilities, including reversible jamming, directed energy weapons, cyber threats, orbital threats, and kinetic energy threats from ground-based missiles.

The Chinese believe that future wars will revolve around joint operations involving not only land, air, and naval forces, but also space and the field of electronic warfare necessary for dominance in information technology. China, therefore, wants to deny an adversary like the US the use of space, and must give the Chinese military all of the advantages it needs.

As a result, China has developed the ability to target enemy space-based facilities (from the ground or from space) and their all-important data links. Jamming and electronic warfare complement anti-satellite weapons (which China has already tested), each of which can achieve effective mission assassinations against US and allied satellites.

Determined to replace the US as the dominant power in space, China already jumped ahead of the US with its own space force branch in 2015, years ahead of the new Space Force that President Trump has recently launched.

For decades, China analysts in Washington have been downplaying or denying the possibility that China could become a global challenge to the United States, this year's China Military Report now acknowledges it is being built in plain sight.

China, in a recent defense white paper, said the United States was the "main instigator" of global instability and the cause of international strategic competition.

Chad Sbragia, deputy assistant defense secretary for China, warned that "Within the context of China's national strategy ... It is likely that China will aim to develop a military by mid century equal to, and in many cases superior to, the United States' military, or any other great power that the Chinese view as a threat".

Things are changing rapidly in China's drive for great power status and some analysts warn that potential conflict with China could come sooner than expected as it pursues aggressive policies with its neighbors that include the unification of Taiwan, Macao and Hong Kong which are essential" to Xi's vision of a greater China.