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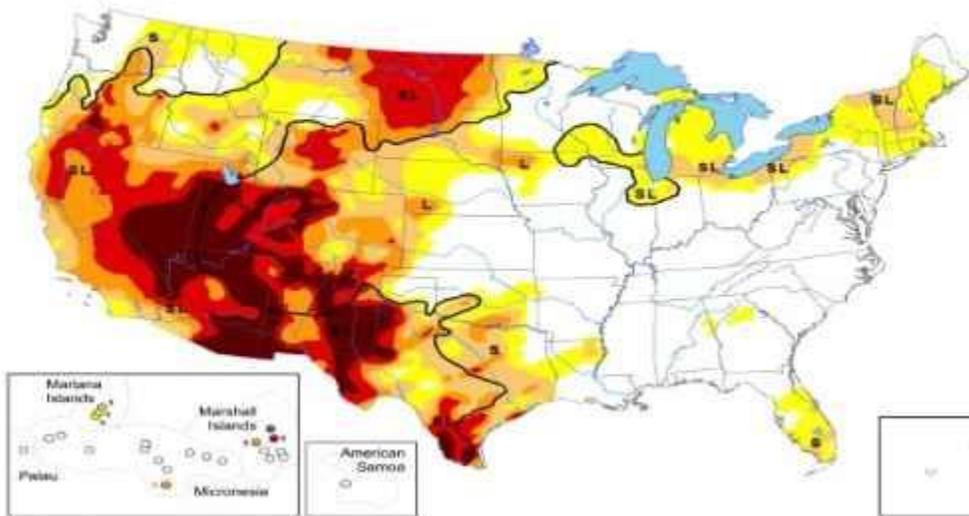
A ministry of Calvary Chapel of Appleton

“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

Farmers Warn Megadrought In Western U.S. Threatens Devastating Crop Failures

Map released: April 15, 2021

Data valid: April 13, 2021



Throughout U.S. history, there have always been droughts in the western half of the country from time to time, but what we are dealing with now is truly alarming. Scientists tell us that a multi-year "megadrought" has developed in the southwestern portion of the country, and this is the worst year of that "megadrought" so far by a wide margin. If conditions do not radically improve soon, we are going to have a major agricultural disaster on our hands. Some farmers have already decided not to plant crops at all this year, but many others have decided to plant anyway knowing that if enough rain doesn't come their crops will certainly fail.

As I have discussed previously, the epicenter of this "megadrought" is the Four Corners region in the Southwest, but this drought is so immense it is even causing immense nightmares for farmers as far

away as North Dakota. In fact, the first few months of this year were the driest that North Dakota has seen in 126 years...

The period of January to March 2021 was the driest in 126 years for North Dakota. Farmers are starting to make difficult decisions on planting and culling herds as the governor of the state declared a statewide drought disaster on April 8.

Soil moistures across the state, particularly in western portions of North Dakota, are lacking sufficient moisture to sustain normal crop development growth. The first eight days of April 2021 offered little help as hot, summer-like temperatures, gusty winds, and low humidity across the state accelerated drying conditions.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, well over half the state is now experiencing "severe drought".

Perhaps you don't care about what is happening in North Dakota, but you should, because much of the wheat that we use for pasta and flour comes from that region... Things are dry and dusty in the Upper Midwest, the Northern Plains states and the Prairie provinces of Canada.

This region, spanning states such as North Dakota and provinces such as Manitoba, is the most important one for spring wheat, the higher-gluten variety that's used for pasta or mixed with other wheat for all-purpose flour. And that crop is at significant risk, because conditions in the region are pretty dire this year.

In a previous article I discussed the dramatic rise in food prices that we have been witnessing lately, and now drought fears are pushing futures prices for spring wheat quite a bit higher... The US Drought Monitor shows around 70 percent of North Dakota in "extreme drought" conditions, with most of the rest in the slightly less scary "severe drought" rating. As a result, the futures prices of both spring wheat and canola are at their highest in years, with traders expecting a lower harvest this year.

Despite all of our advanced technology, farmers can't grow crops if it doesn't rain, and a farmer in Texas named Blake Fennell says that his farm has not had any significant rain in almost two years... The West Texas farmer says his area hasn't seen significant rain fall in nearly two years.

"We've still got to give that crop every chance we think we can get, but at the same time, we also can't waste a lot of money on a crop that we don't think we're going to have going into it," he says.

What a nightmare.

Right now, nearly the entire state of Texas is in some level of drought, and we haven't even gotten to the summer months yet. To call this a "plague" would be a major understatement. On the border of Oregon and California, farmers just learned that water levels are so low that they will only get "a tiny fraction of the water they need" in 2021...

Hundreds of farmers who rely on a massive irrigation project that spans the Oregon-California border learned Wednesday they will get a tiny fraction of the water they need amid the worst drought in decades, as federal regulators attempt to balance the needs of agriculture against federally threatened and endangered fish species that are central to the heritage of several tribes.

Oregon's governor said the prolonged drought in the region has the "full attention of our offices," and she is working with congressional delegates, the White House and federal agencies to find relief for those affected.

Do you think that you could run a successful farm under such conditions?

Elsewhere in California, water allocation reductions of up to 95 percent are forcing many farmers to make some exceedingly heartbreaking decisions...

Drought conditions are already forcing Valley farmers to make difficult decisions when it comes to their crops as many are facing severe water restrictions. "There's districts throughout California that have experienced up to 95% reductions in water," says Fresno County Farm Bureau CEO Ryan Jacobsen.

U.S. food production will be down in 2021, but if sufficient rain starts falling in the western U.S. we could still see a miracle.

But if enough rain does not fall, we are going to see epic crop failures.

Meanwhile, it is being projected that the drought will cause the water level in Lake Mead to soon fall to the lowest level ever recorded... Wracked by drought, climate change and overuse, a key reservoir on the Colorado River could sink to historically low levels later this year, new US government projections show, potentially triggering significant water cutbacks in some states as early as next year.

The projections released by the US Bureau of Reclamation show that Lake Mead -- the largest reservoir in the country and a vital water supply to millions across the Southwest -- could fall later this year to its lowest levels since it was filled in the 1930s.

If you live anywhere in the western half of the country, you should brace yourself for severe water restrictions.

And all of us need to brace ourselves for much higher prices at the grocery store.

For decades, the western half of the country was blessed with unusually high levels of rainfall, but that wasn't going to last forever.

Now Dust Bowl conditions have returned, and farmers, ranchers and local authorities are starting to panic.

As this megadrought continues to intensify, life is going to dramatically change in the western half of the nation, and that is going to deeply affect all of us.

Echoes Of Ezekiel 38 - Israel/Iran Shadow War Heats Up



You won't hear the corporate media say very much about the "shadow war" that Israel and Iran are currently engaged in, because the corporate media is absolutely obsessed with covering the internal strife that is tearing the U.S. apart right now.

But if they were doing their jobs correctly, corporate media outlets would be focusing on the Middle East, because the conflict between Israel and Iran could literally spark a major global war at any moment.

As Israeli military aircraft pounded Iranian-backed forces in southern Syria on Thursday morning, there were reports coming in from central Israel of massive explosions that were so large they "shook the houses"...

Alarms sounded in Abu Qrenat near Dimona in southern Israel early Thursday morning, the IDF's Spokesperson's Unit reported.

Residents from across the country, including central Israel and Jerusalem, reported hearing "loud explosions" that "shook the houses."

According to the Jerusalem Post, an Israeli military official insists that there was just one explosion and that it was caused by a Syrian surface to air missile that just happened to land in the southern Negev...

Brig.Gen. Hidai Zilberman later told reporters that the explosion was due to the firing of an SA-5 surface to air missile that was fired towards Israel and that it exploded in the southern Negev.

The firing of the missile came during Israeli air strikes in the south of Syria. The missile was not directed towards any target, Zilberman said.

But that wouldn't seem to explain the multiple "explosions" that residents of central Israel reported on Thursday morning.

In any event, we are seeing fighting on an almost daily basis now. After hitting pro-Iranian targets inside Syria about 50 times in 2020, Israeli airstrikes have become even more frequent in 2021.

In addition, Israel has conducted a series of extremely bold attacks inside Iran itself over the last nine months. The following comes from the New York Times...

In less than nine months, an assassin on a motorbike fatally shot an Al Qaeda commander given refuge in Tehran, Iran's chief nuclear scientist was machine-gunned on a country road, and two separate, mysterious explosions rocked a key Iranian nuclear facility in the desert, striking the heart of the country's efforts to enrich uranium.

The steady drumbeat of attacks, which intelligence officials said were carried out by Israel, highlighted the seeming ease with which Israeli intelligence was able to reach deep inside Iran's borders and repeatedly strike its most heavily guarded targets, often with the help of turncoat Iranians.

The most dramatic incident was the attack on the Natanz nuclear facility. It turns out that attack caused far more damage than we were originally told...

The latest sabotage incident on April 11 caused a blackout at the Natanz facility and major damage. The attack, widely believed to be orchestrated by Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, took out a number of Iran's older and "least efficient" IR-1 centrifuge machines, according to Iranian foreign ministry spokesman, Saeed Khatibzadeh. Meanwhile, Alireza Zakani, head of the Parliament Research Center, has noted that "several thousands" of centrifuges were damaged or destroyed.

The Iranians vowed "revenge" after that incident, and they have attacked Israeli ships multiple times since then. Here is one example...

An Israeli-owned ship was attacked near Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, the Lebanese Al Mayadeen news channel reported on Tuesday.

Israeli defense sources confirmed that a ship partially was attacked on Tuesday, and said they were certain that Iran is behind the attack. The attack took place in international waters, likely by an unmanned drone or a missile strike, they said, noting that only minor damage was caused.

That was the third such attack on an Israeli-owned ship, and more attacks are expected in the future.

The good news is that a full-blown war between Israel and Iran has not erupted yet.

But such a war is coming. It is just a matter of time at this point.

Inevitably, someone will escalate things a little bit too much, and then thousands of missiles will start flying.

Iranian-backed Hezbollah has 150,000 missiles pointed at Israel right now, and the Iranians are fully capable of doing immense damage to major Israeli cities.

Of course the Israeli military is even more powerful. In the event of a full-blown war, Israel could literally level every single major city in Iran, Syria and Lebanon.

Our world is steamrolling toward war, and it won't be anything like the relatively minor conflicts that we started in Afghanistan and Iraq.

At this moment, the seeds of World War 3 are being planted, and eventually those seeds will blossom into a conflict that will be far more horrific than most people would dare to imagine.

China Is Extending Its Totalitarian Controls to the Rest of the World

by **Gordon G. Chang**

April 27, 2021 at 5:00 am

- In the Haidilao Hot Pot restaurant in... Vancouver, more than 60 surveillance cameras watch 30 tables and send feeds to China. The cameras, manager Ryan Pan explains, are there to "people track" and are "part of the social credit system in China."
- In 2014, China's State Council issued guidelines for the establishment of a national "social credit system" by 2020, with the feeds from about 626 million surveillance cameras and smartphone scanners and with data from a multitude of sources ... For example, criticizing Chinese ruler Xi Jinping would result in the lowering of an individual's score. There are consequences for low-scored individuals.
- Why did Beijing select Ryan Pan's restaurant for such intensive collection of information? For starters, it is near to the home rented by Huawei Technologies for staff attending to Meng Wanzhou, the firm's chief financial officer. Meng is in the middle of a multi-year struggle to avoid extradition to the U.S. for alleged bank fraud relating to sanctions evasion, and she is allowed to stay in one of her homes. Beijing, therefore, wants to know what people around her are saying and doing.
- In addition to posing a crucial national security risk, the secretive transmission of video to China is a violation of British Columbia law, specifically, the province's Personal Information Protection Act.

- Beijing will, at some point, be able to assign a social credit score to just about everyone on the planet.... it is just a matter of time before they succeed.
 - China's Communist Party wants to know everything that happens everywhere on the planet. So far, the Western democracies do not seem to be putting up much of a fight.
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China is surreptitiously collecting, for use in its domestic social credit system, video from a popular eatery in Canada.

In the Haidilao Hot Pot restaurant in the Kitsilano district of Vancouver, more than 60 surveillance cameras watch 30 tables and send feeds to China. The cameras, manager Ryan Pan explained to Scott McGregor and Ina Mitchell, are there to "people track" and are "part of the social credit system in China."

This restaurant is corporate-owned, one of two Haidilao locations in that port city in British Columbia. There are more than 935 of the chain's restaurants worldwide with over 36 million VIP members. The business started in China's Sichuan province.

Why do we care? Beijing is evidently extending its totalitarian controls to the rest of the world.

In 2014, China's State Council issued guidelines for the establishment of a national "social credit system" by 2020, with the feeds from about 626 million surveillance cameras and smartphone scanners and with data from a multitude of sources.

That system was designed to assign to every person in China a constantly updated score based on observed behaviors. For example, criticizing Chinese ruler Xi Jinping in a social media posting would result in the lowering of an individual's score.

There are consequences for low-scored individuals. As officials say, the purpose of the system is to "allow the trustworthy to roam everywhere under heaven while making it hard for the discredited to take a single step." People with low scores have been denied social services, mortgages, and even the right to board trains and planes. There are also "interconnecting repercussions for family, friends, associates, and businesses both in and outside China," Mitchell, an investigative journalist and co-author with McGregor of the upcoming *The Mosaic Effect*, tells Gatestone.

At the moment, there are various local social credit systems in place throughout China, but they have yet to be linked together in a single, integrated one. "Today, the social credit system still remains a disjointed mix of ambitious national level targets and guidance, varying regional pilot programs, and scattered mass data collection mechanisms," write Jessica Reilly, Muyao Lyu, and Megan Robertson on the Diplomat site.

The Communist Party's Central Committee in January appears to have established 2025 as the new target for the implementation of the nationwide system. In the meantime, as Reilly, Lyu, and Robertson write, "there is a lot of information being collected."

Why did Beijing select Ryan Pan's restaurant for such intensive collection of information? For starters, it is in British Columbia's most important city for China. "Vancouver," says Mitchell, "is a gateway for the Chinese Communist Party into North America where they engage in pervasive foreign interference activity, mobilizing overseas United Front units to strategically lure political and business leaders using financial inducements and other incentives to promote the Party's agenda."

Moreover, that particular restaurant is near the house rented by Huawei Technologies for staff attending to Meng Wanzhou, the firm's chief financial officer. Meng is in the middle of a multi-year struggle to avoid extradition to the U.S. for alleged bank fraud relating to sanctions evasion, and she is allowed to stay in one of her homes. Beijing, therefore, wants to know what people around her are saying and doing.

China's officials, however, also want to keep tabs on the rest of the world. From 2012 to 2017, for instance, they secretly downloaded data from the computers housed in the Beijing-donated and Chinese-built headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia through ... Huawei servers.

Beijing's ambition does not stop there. It has provided tens of billions of dollars of subsidies to Huawei so that the Shenzhen-based giant, the world's largest maker of telecom networking gear, can provide equipment for the world's 5G networks. 5G — the fifth generation of wireless communications — makes possible the Internet of Things, which will connect virtually all the world's devices, from cars to toasters to pacemakers.

China can take data from those devices and feed it into its artificial intelligence (AI) systems, thereby making those systems robust. AI lives off data.

In addition to posing a crucial national security risk, the secretive transmission of video to China is a violation of British Columbia law, specifically, the province's Personal Information Protection Act.

You might think that Canada would care about the filching of data from hot pot devotees. You would be wrong.

So far, the Haidilao Hot Pot restaurant — and China — have gotten off scot-free. "Fewer than 15% of Canadians agree with Ottawa's passive approach to the malign behavior of the People's Republic of China, including espionage," Charles Burton of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute's Centre for Advancing Canada's Interests Abroad said to Gatestone in the wake of the Vancouver disclosures. "One wonders how far the PRC's violations of Canadian sovereignty and security have to go before we see any response from Canada's political elite, which has been deeply co-opted by Chinese Communist Party agents of influence."

Beijing will, at some point, be able to assign a social credit score to just about everyone on the planet. Yes, it is true that its officials have yet to overcome the obstacles — mainly bureaucratic — in knitting together a China-wide social credit system for individuals, but it is just a matter of time before they succeed.

China's Communist Party wants to know everything that happens everywhere. So far, the Western democracies do not seem to be putting up much of a fight.

The Communist Party, in hundreds of millions of locations across China and in one hot pot restaurant in Vancouver, is creating what the *Economist* called "the world's first digital totalitarian state."

This dystopian system is, unfortunately, coming to us.

Gordon G. Chang is the author of The Coming Collapse of China, a Gatestone Institute distinguished senior fellow, and a member of its Advisory Board.