

Weekly Update by Mark Armstrong

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Greetings from Tyler,

Believe it or not, there is some news that's not related to the media's obsession with the latest "gift" from China. Reeling from fears of the sickness and reactions to heavy-handed orders that sometimes defy common sense, nobody's talking about what may become of our relationship with China.

Maybe you saw the video of Iranian gunboats racing up close to an American Navy ship. The Iranian speedboats had manned .50 caliber machine guns on turrets in their bows, and they approached in a menacing manner. President Trump was asked about it in one of the lengthy news conferences that have been held every day. He said the U.S. Navy had been instructed to "blow them out of the water," if they harass U. S. ships at sea.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard responded with another threat, saying that U. S. ships will be "targeted" if they endanger Iranian assets. They blamed "unprofessional and dangerous behavior by the Americans in the Persian Gulf." Iran also blamed sanctions for making it difficult to purchase equipment to deal with the virus, even though medical supplies are exempt from the sanctions.

Iran also successfully launched a satellite into space, using the same technology that would allow them to guide an intercontinental ballistic missile toward a target. The French condemned the launch of the satellite saying that Iran was prohibited from... "all activity linked to the development of ballistic missiles designed to be capable of carrying nuclear weapons, including space launchers." Kind of nice to worry about Iran's ballistic capabilities for a change, isn't it?

Then there are the reports (*credited to the Pentagon*) that North Korean despot Kim Jong Un may be on his death bed. If true, he is expected to be succeeded by his sister, whose main accomplishment is touted as having avoided the deadly purges Kim carried out on other family members. She is also the one that handed a note to the South Korean president offering a meeting between the leaders. It's too early to tell, but maybe a change in what has been a very dicey relationship is in the offing.

The elephant in the room, however, is whether China allowed the Wuhan flu to infect the rest of the world intentionally. As much as we'd like to avoid virus discussion, it looks a lot like China let the illness spread to the world. If the reports are true, that China banned travel to and from Wuhan from the rest of China, but allowed international flights in and out of the city to points all over the globe, we might have a problem. President Trump has gone out of his way to be friendly and gracious to China in spite of the trade disputes. No dire predictions are being made about the prospect that China knowingly allowed this to become a worldwide pandemic, but there is a gnawing suspicion that it will be front and center once the panic has subsided if it ever does.

The news media has become unbearable. They, as if with one voice, instantly throw cold water on any hopeful suggestion. They went ballistic at the suggestion that there was a safe treatment, but then that may have just been a knee-jerk reaction to President Trump's mention of it.

If he thought it might have some merit, then obviously his tormentors in media would go on offense. No matter that doctors with respectable credentials claimed to have used the treatment with good success, and no serious side effects, the media hurried to claim that the drug, available since the 1950s was virtually a death sentence.

There seems to be a growing resistance to all the orders being placed on people and businesses in some places. It seems like what you encounter at the TSA checkpoint in airports if anyone remembers. Nothing needs make sense. They have their orders, and too bad, they need not make logical sense. You've no doubt had time to see what the Michigan governor has done, outlawing the garden centers in stores that were allowed to stay open. Or the arrests at abandoned parks from Colorado to Idaho.

It was shocking to see how quickly the public responded to the panic stoked by the mainstream media and used by local public officials to "lock-down" nearly everything. But the new has worn off the stay-at-home orders. Whether local officials had the legal and legitimate right to order the public around like we were a bunch of kindergarten kids will no doubt be the subject of dozens if not hundreds of lawsuits that will play out 'til the end of time. It seems to fly in the face of everything we stand for. But at least it will be litigated over time with our Constitution as the backdrop.

What about the other western nations that also proudly tout freedom as a value? They don't have the American Constitution. If the police prosecute on the basis of governmental order or levy fines (*which they are doing in Australia, for even the most minor of infractions*), too bad. There is no recourse.

Surely this too will pass. That is, unless this thing takes on a life of its own. There are concerns that the financial impact may reverberate well into the future. The government is promising financial aid, and it's already begun. Run out of money? No problem, just create more, like another couple of trillion dollars. Are there no longer-range consequences to pumping money, backed by nothing into a stalled economy? We used to think so. But this is an "emergency."

We all love our country. Our founding principles declare freedoms and rights that are, or were, "inalienable." But they've been alienated for reasons we may never fully understand. It's reassuring that there is a loving God in heaven who knows all about what's going on here below and is able to intervene as He sees fit. The fact that many don't believe in God is part of the problem.

Whatever all the arguments, this should serve as a warning and a wake-up call to our nation and its citizens. Neither we nor our institutions are bulletproof, not even the Constitution. Everything can fall apart, and the Bible tells us that it will eventually. Let's all take heed and redouble our efforts to make sure that time is not now.

Mark

Source: <http://www.intercontinentalcog.org/fridayupdates.php>

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