

Weekly Update by Mark Armstrong - 25 February 2022

Howdy from Texas,

My Dad is feeling a little under the weather today and asked that I write the Update in his stead. With everything that's going on in the world right now I'm not sure if it will be easier or harder than usual. The inescapable news is that Russia has invaded Ukraine. Any details of the situation on the ground would likely be irrelevant by the time this is published or makes its way onto the DVDs.

Bombs have fallen on Ukrainian cities all over the country and Russian forces have breached the border on three sides. Ultimately, the disparity in forces and military resources is such that Ukraine has no hope against a concerted and sustained Russian effort, though a determined resistance has the potential to make it extremely costly.

Many NATO countries have contributed weapons or supplies but all have unequivocally stated that they will not send troops into combat against Russia. Indeed, doing so could set off WWII but the wisdom of advertising the fact in advance is questionable at best.

The threat of sanctions proved to be no real deterrent. European countries are divided over the need to punish Russia and the fear of provoking them. Economic repercussions go both ways. The financial situation in Europe is shaky enough without current complications. It was fragile before the rampant emergency spending of the last two years. Upcoming interest rate hikes to fight inflation were already a threat to any pretense of recovery. If Europe has the appetite or can itself afford to truly hurt Russia economically remains to be seen.

The US faces many of the same economic pressures. While Russian gas doesn't power our cities, any shock to the price reverberates around the world. Ironically, this makes established Russian production even more valuable. All of this contributes to making our leadership look weak and ineffective. While families flee and soldiers fight to the death, we waffle over which financial institutions we can target without going too far? It's sickening.

If our allies don't respect us and our enemies don't fear us, then the future will be more tumultuous than the present. Prestige and credibility are in short supply. Iran has chosen this moment to announce it will continue to enrich uranium to 20% purity even if all sanctions are lifted. There are fears that China will move on Taiwan while the US is distracted in Europe. Economic turmoil and real fear can create an extremely volatile environment out of which big changes can come rapidly. Look at what the western world did when we were only worried a virus was after us.

In closing, I'd like to mention some of what has been going on with our outreach efforts. So far this year our online ads have reached 2 million people and driven nearly 50,000 to our various websites. The sermons on YouTube have received about 10,000 views. We are running a radio advertisement for 21st Century Watch Magazine and are working on creating other spots as well. A new issue of the magazine is about half finished and our DVD and CD mailings continue as usual.

We have mailed out postcard type Sabbath service invitations for some groups recently and would like to take this opportunity to make that available to any group that wants it. We are here to support you, please don't hesitate to contact us if there is any way we can help out! Most of all, thank you for making all of this possible, there's a great deal of work still to be done.

-Michael

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

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