

# Weekly Update by Mark Armstrong - 30 April 2021

Greetings from Tyler,

In the age of bad news and nothing but, comes this sad story out of Israel. Orthodox Jews held an annual celebration at a stadium in northern Israel at a site where a famous rabbi is buried. Music was playing and videos of the event show that people were dancing up a storm. Police had erected barriers to prevent the crowd from growing to over-capacity, (*some say due to COVID concerns*) and that apparently created a bottleneck in a stairway exit that was the only way in or out.

Why a “stampede” erupted is a mystery. Why did so many panic and run for the exit? Maybe we’ll find out. Photos and videos of the event show a huge crowd that was described as being at the “height of ecstasy” just before the music stopped playing and a mad rush for the exit began. The death toll has risen to 45 (*including five children*) and will probably rise higher as many were transported to hospitals in critical condition.

Reaction seen in the comments to the story say that these ultra-orthodox Jews weren’t taking the COVID warnings seriously and shouldn’t have been there in such numbers. Maybe the barriers shouldn’t have been blocking alternative entries and exits. It will likely be covered domestically with COVID 19 as the backdrop (*what isn’t?*), and the celebrants will take the blame for being there in the first place.

It has been some time since Americans worried much about al Qaeda. Most apparently think COVID is more dangerous. But they’re threatening to reignite their war against the United States in every way imaginable. Not that we didn’t expect that every bad actor on earth would take advantage of poor old Joe, and by extension all the rest of us. If there was ever a time for compassion for an aged man being used and abused, this might be it.

Much is being made of the plan to pull American forces out of Afghanistan. We’ve only had the American military there for TWENTY YEARS after all. But now a date has been announced for the extraction to be complete, and for some reason it is Sept. 11. Don’t you love when an announcement like this is made? It gives

the enemy the information they need to use against our troops. Let's hope it's not by design.

We're all aware of the power that has been acquired by the "social media" companies. They've used it to ban "disinformation" which is sometimes truth the tech titans can't abide. As you know, people who run afoul of their "policies" which can change or be invented at the drop of a hat, can expect to be banned or "de-platformed" for violating company policy. Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida is expected to sign into law a measure that prevents that, and the media is calling it a "nod" to Donald Trump who has been censored or banned for saying things the social media companies don't like. True or otherwise, it "violates their policies" as private companies. Are they really "private" companies, or are they in partnership with government as some suspect? Lawsuits over Florida's legislation are expected, and given the recent record of rulings by the Supreme Court, there's little room for optimism.

Who knows what is or isn't "true" anymore? Everyone is entitled to their own opinion about everything, unless that is, it runs afoul of the social media companies that determine what's disinformation or not. But they've been wrong about nearly everything, and it's doubtful they've changed anybody's mind about anything.

The rebels of the sixties are now in charge of everything, and they're trying to ban rebellion as they lower the authoritarian boom on anybody who doesn't toe the company line. We used to say, "It's a free country." But saying that might get you banned. Besides, it's no longer true!

Mark

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