

Weekly Update by Michael Armstrong - February 21, 2025

This week has been a whirlwind, like many others we have been through recently. The world at large is scrambling to deal with the United States' new agenda on everything [from tariffs](#) to peace deals for the world's most volatile regions. The ride has been anything but boring.

Last weekend saw Hamas release more hostages as planned, despite some flexing that they might do otherwise. Threats from the US and the actual mobilization of Israeli reserves may have had something to do with everything coming off as scheduled. But there was another big surprise waiting. Four hostages that died in captivity were also returned this week. Ariel and Kfir Bibas were among them, brothers ages four and 10 months. [Their mother Shiri's remains were also supposedly returned, but Israel asserts that the body they received is not her.](#) This has caused a great deal of emotional pain as well as outrage.

The return itself was a disgusting spectacle. [Hamas used the opportunity for a propaganda pageant](#) complete with masked fighters, abundant weaponry and a billboard sized depiction of Netanyahu as some kind of demonic vampire. The horror of what happened to those innocent children and the audacity of those who celebrate such evil is almost beyond comprehension.

[Arab leaders are scrambling to come up with an alternative for Trump's Riviera proposal for the future of Gaza.](#) Regional heavyweights, like Egypt's Sisi and Jordan's King Abdullah among others, are convening with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia to begin discussing what to offer as an alternative. This is not even their main meeting, but an informal gathering to try and build consensus before their actual summit and negotiations. Is there a good solution where everyone agrees and real peace is the result? Not likely. But they are under tremendous pressure to counter Trump's idea with something concrete. The potential for a coalition of Arab nations to take direct responsibility for Gaza is worth noting, as is the likelihood of conflict with Israel should they do so.

Negotiations are also taking place between the US and Russia about ending the war in Ukraine. It has been reported that [lower level contacts have been taking](#)

place for some time. There has been more consternation among the myriad individuals who believe they have a voice in this settlement than we can reasonably cover. Europe fears they are being cut out and that Putin will keep the territory he has conquered with little repercussion. And Russia continues to make gains. Ukraine has not accepted a mineral deal with the US yet and the rhetoric surrounding it is only heating up.

It's also shaping up to be a big weekend. [Germany is heading to the polls on Sunday and the AfD has continued to make gains.](#) Merz, heir to Angela Merkel and leader of the CDU, is expected to come out on top but coming up with a stable governing coalition may prove difficult should the AfD emerge in second place as expected. Excluding the AfD from government has only fueled their support, as it has with other conservative parties across the EU. Another fragile coalition is unlikely to be able to take the kinds of actions necessary to remedy the country's underlying issues and restore confidence in the major parties that have ruled since WW2.

[Nasrallah's funeral is scheduled for Sunday as well.](#) A stadium in Lebanon is set aside for the event and Hezbollah hopes to show the world they are not as down and out as it seems. We'll see. They are probably hoping Israel won't send any "condolences," like they did to Nasrallah's short lived successor. No doubt the whole event will be a massive outpouring of rage and hatred for Israel.

Also, please pray for Mr. Robert Nunnery. He has been the minister in Fayetteville for many years as well as an Area Coordinator and a mainstay at the Feast in Myrtle Beach, SC. He is currently in the hospital with pneumonia. We would ask that you remember him and ask God to help him recover.

I'm writing this in my dad's stead today. We are up against deadlines for this month's letter as well as the next issue of 21st Century WATCH, which happened to line up this time around. Many of you may have noticed that last month's letter is just now arriving. It was mailed on time but got delayed somewhere along the way. We were beginning to think they had all been lost but they have begun showing up here in the last day or two. We are also looking forward to campaign meetings in Detroit, Michigan on the 15th and Cleveland, Ohio on the 22nd of March. Everyone is welcome! The [details are available online](#) or you are welcome to call our office for more information.

Regards,

Michael Armstrong