



## PROPHETIC STAGING? EAST ASIA TRENDS REVISITED

By Wilfred Hahn



A little more than five years ago, a 3-part series entitled “Far East Asia Trends Today” was published in this column. We discussed the prophetic implications both for and involving Asia (i.e. the collective of nations east of the Euphrates River). Already, an update is in order. Why?

Events and developments in Asia have been fast-paced. Particularly, China is in much of the news these days. Rapid changes are taking place with this country that have the potential to radically alter the post-World War II geopolitical order.

As we concluded in the previous series, there indeed are some prophetic perspectives concerning “Asian nations” that can be deduced from the Bible. We will again briefly mention these. At the very least, it is reasonable to identify the rapid developments in Asia today as being “prophetically significant” ... though likely not in the ways popularly speculated.

All of the five, tell-tale hallmarks of a last-day phenomenon can be observed

with China: 1. An acceleration trend taking place sometime after 1948 (that being the point at which God’s timepiece, Israel, again became a sovereign entity in its original land). 2. A seeming improbability and inexplicability of the occurrence of a change ... at least at first. 3. Driving factors of change marked by humanism and political amorality (including apostasy and antichrist spiritual elements). 4. A large scope for worldwide impact. 5. And, above all, suddenness and rapidity.

All of these five markers apply to a number of Asian countries, and most latterly, to China. A review of our earlier 3-part series will substantiate and convince of just how improbable and incredible the developments in Asia have been. Seen



With respect to China, Napoleon Bonaparte's prediction could not have been more discerning. Returning from a trip to that nation 200 years ago, he uttered these now famous words, "When China awakes, it will shake the world."

in perspective, the scale and rapidity is awe-striking.

With respect to China, Napoleon Bonaparte's prediction could not have been more discerning. Returning from a trip to that nation 200 years ago, he uttered these now famous words, "When China awakes, it will shake the world."

Today, hardly 40 years after China began to awake, the world is indeed shaking.

### What Is Newly Afoot in China?

Many developments in China have been progressing for some time in the background. Now, these are coming to the forefront, gaining rapid recognition. For example, China has been gradually opening its financial system for several decades. All this, while the country continued to be viewed as a "developing" country" with a small and inefficient financial system. Now, all of a sudden, moves are underway for China to penetrate the ranks of the Western nations, standing shoulder to shoulder if not higher than the Roman-based, European nations that ruled the world these past centuries.

China continues to accelerate its influence upon the world. Its current President, Xi Jinping, is its most powerful perhaps since Mao Tse-tung. He has set high goals to "rejuvenate" China—to reattain its glory experienced between the

3rd century BC and the eighteenth century. He has shown himself ruthless as demonstrated in his campaign against corruption (having netted some 100 high-ranking officials to date).

We will highlight just 6 recent developments involving China, to help readers gain a perspective of the scope and potential impact of these changes.

**1. Joining the World Stock Market.** Recently, Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) has begun the process of adding the value of China's stock market to its various regional and global stock market benchmarks. It may require a few more years to be accomplished, though it is virtually inevitable that it will happen. Readers may not understand why this is significant. The MSCI stock market indices are yet another "accounting system" that has been dominated by the high-income countries of the world. Though China's stock market is quite large today, it is not considered to be fully part of the world stock market sanctioned by MSCI. As such, institutional investors around the world (controlling in excess of \$200 trillion in assets) consider the Chinese stock market as if it did not exist (somewhat analogous to the nation of Israel not appearing on maps taught in Arab schools).



Earlier this year, China successfully launched a new transnational investment bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Fifty-seven nations signed up as founding members, including many Western countries such as Australia, Britain, Canada, Israel and others.



Once the Chinese stock market is added to the MSCI indices, there will be an overnight recognition of just how large China's stock market is (then likely representing in excess of 10% of the entire global stock market, the second largest in the world). This is remarkable. China today is still a communist nation, after all. Three decades ago its stock market was virtually non-existent. The significance of this is that China stands to gain much more economic clout in the world.

**2. Gaining Recognition in the IMF.** Western-based countries (and latterly, its institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund [IMF]), pretty much ruled the world (economically, financially, geopolitically) the past 200-300 years. Voting rights in the IMF and World Bank were highly skewed in favor of the U.S. and European countries. Though China and India may have accounted for two-fifths of the world's population, they today still only have 6.1% of the voting rights in the IMF. This is about to change, according to indications given by Christine Lagarde, head of the IMF.

**3. Up the Ranks as a Currency.** Earlier this year, China made an application to have its currency (the yuan) become part of the currency basket that defines the Special Drawing Right (SDR). This is a global accounting unit (a form of currency) that is employed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Though China accounts for the largest portion of world merchandise trade (even exceeding the U.S.), its currency to this point has not played a significant role in these transactions. The SDR, by the way, is the ideal forerunner to a one-world currency (should this ever happen, though not certain). Founded in 1969, in a sense it has been a currency-in-waiting. As such, for a nation to have its currency as part of the SDR is an important, if mostly symbolic, development.

**4. A Chinese Parallel Universe.** Earlier this year, China successfully launched a new transnational investment bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Fifty-seven nations signed up as founding members, including many Western countries such as Australia, Britain, Canada, Israel and others. This institution is widely seen as a counter-strike to the U.S. and European-dominated IMF and World Bank (and other) institutions. It is a very significant development.

**5. Advancing in Every Avenue.** China is making new forays on many fronts. Re-

cently, the London Bullion Market Association announced that China would be joining its electronic platform that sets the world's gold price. It will join seven existing members, including Goldman Sachs, UBS, Barclays and others. This inclusion seems long overdue given that China is the world's second biggest gold consumer and also the largest producer. China's role in the gold markets bears watching.

**6. The New Silk Road and Marine Belt Initiatives.** By far, the most significant initiative of China is the New Silk Road and Great Marine Belt programs. These are both enormous infrastructure spending projects designed to benefit the entirety of Asia. The Silk Road (playing on the historic overland trading link between China and Europe) is a grand scheme to finance and build railways, trade and transportation ports across Asia. Given China's massive currency-exchange reserves (over \$3 trillion), it is in an ideal position to finance these building plans.

These investment programs could extend for decades. The end goal is to tie Asia together through mutual interest and benefit, with China at the helm. The impact could be enormous, though there are risks. China in the past has sometimes proven to be too interventionist in local politics (i.e. Sri Lanka), and has not been too discerning when cooperating with corrupt regimes.

In any case, all the above trends point to a new "parallel economic universe" that is taking form—a regional Asian bloc. It sets itself directly against the old-European, post-Westphalian world order ... also anti-Anglobalization.

Where once Asian nations ascended the economic ranks through merchandise trade (mostly consumer goods)

with the high-income world, their focus now becomes the export of investment as well as trade with each other (as opposed to with the West).

China is rising, as are other Asian nations. Crucially, China is pursuing policies that will serve to pull together the common interests of many Asian nations. It is conceivable that a group of aligned Asian nations could take form that would fulfill the emergence of the "kings of the east" that are mentioned in Revelation 16:12.

Just what is the outlook for Asia according to Bible prophecy?

### Prophecy Explaining Asian World Threats

Overall, there are not many references to "kings of the east" and/or Asian countries in Bible prophecy. However, there is at least one significant verse in the Bible that applies to some key Asian countries, where they are not mentioned at all. It is found in Revelation 17:12. It supports an important deduction about some Asian nations, and reads: "The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast." Just how does this verse connect to Asian countries today?

The verse we have quoted from Revelation specifically refers to these last-day 10 kings, and reveals a crucial clue. John, the Revelator tells us here that these 10 kings "have not yet received a kingdom." This means that neither the kings nor their kingdoms referred to in this verse had yet existed either at or by the time that Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation (approx. 90-95 AD).

As such, we can validly draw some conclusions from Revelation 17:12: Any nation today that existed at or prior to the time of John's prophecy, therefore,



While America is seen to be challenged by China (and lately, seemingly falling in world influence), it would be more balanced to view the world as separating into camps. It would not be overly speculative to identify a trend toward a coalition of “kings of the east.”

cannot qualify as one of the 10 final kings ... in other words, one of the final 10 nations. If we apply this rule, it reveals that nations such as China, India, Persia and others will not be part of the final 10-king world power coalition.

China already existed in New Testament times. According to historians, the Han Dynasty, a predecessor to modern-day China, was in power at the time of John's prophecies. The same may be concluded for the nation of Japan today. As already mentioned, the nation of “Hodu” (India) had already existed, as the book of Esther confirms. Crucially, therefore, we discover here that none of these large and influential Asian nations will be part of the last-day rulership represented by the 7th head of the beasts shown in Revelation 12, 13 and 17 ... the 10 kings.

What light could this information possibly shed upon our times today? Without a doubt, there indeed will be “kings of the east” that fulfill their action as described in Revelation 16:12, confirming their existence at that time. However, these nations will in the end be dominated by the 10 kings, as the 7th head that they represent is the final power that then has dominance over the entire world with the Antichrist (See Daniel 7).

Beyond the certainty that these nations will not be part of the world ruling order at the time that the Antichrist achieves global control, we can only at-

tempt a few additional speculative conclusions.

A scenario that appears plausible is that the formation of the final 10 kings may very well be a counter strategy to the perceived threats or non-aligned perspectives of other global players, these very possibly being the “kings of the east” who are growing in power. There is no doubt that China is strategically placed geographically, allowing it to become a naval and economic power that can control and coordinate much of Asia. A number of geographers and geostrategists have long thought this to be the case. As it happens, China today has sharply increased its naval capabilities.

### Thoughts to Ponder

Today, China is often mentioned in the same breath as America. It is now popularly perceived that these are the two biggest powers in the world. These two nations are seen to be adversaries by many international relations (IR) scholars. George Soros, the multi-billionaire philanthropist (and ex-hedge fund manager) recently struck an urgent warning that these two nations are on course for a world war if they do not first reach an “understanding.”

China is clearly striking its own course, choosing to build relations with “non-aligned” nations such as Russia and others, while building a cooperative of economically-linked Asian nations. China's military budget has risen at double-digit rates for well over 20 years. Ac-

According to estimates of some experts, China's military budget is more than 40% that of the U.S. (Others argue that China's effective military spending is the 2nd biggest in the world, soon to exceed U.S. expenditures.)

Interestingly, the "Chinese diaspora" that occurred over the course of the past century, as a result of various revolutions and persecutions in China, has (by happenstance?) contributed enormously to China's sudden economic flowering over the past three decades. This writer has long-wondered about the significance of this development (in appearance, similar to the plight of the Jews). Though the ethnic Chinese are minority populations in Asian nations (other than China, Taiwan and Hong Kong), they represent the majority of the business class and wealth in these nations. These "family" business networks of dispersed Chinese have proven indispensable in the sudden development of trade with China and Asia overall.

While America is seen to be challenged by China (and lately, seemingly falling in world influence), it would be more balanced to view the world as separating into camps. It would not be overly speculative to identify a trend toward a coalition of "kings of the east." These nations at one point do rise up, charging west across the Euphrates. Scripture seems to indicate that the Kings of the East are shown to be an opposition force. The catalysts may be economic or geopolitical. The Bible is silent on these matters.

The 10 kings, on the other hand, come together to collect power, to then give it to the Antichrist. The Bible tells us that, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (Revelation 17:13). It is possible that the specter we see developing in

Asia today could very well be the world power dynamic that hastens the formation of the 10-king coalition. If so, the time may already be very short.

What we can know is that these geopolitical upheavals occur inside the 7-year Tribulation period. The forerunners of such great geopolitical events will surely already be visible before that time period. Therefore, the generation living during this time will certainly witness these developments. Could that already be our generation? It is highly possible (though, obviously, not certain.)

Finally, we again recall that China will not be part of the 10-king coalition that rules the world briefly during the last rule of the 7th head (shown on the image of the beast in Revelation 17) just prior to the Tribulation period. It therefore has been the conjecture of this writer that a rivalry will form between the collective of these 10 Roman-derived nations and another rising power in the world (the Kings of the East?), which spurs them to pool their powers together. Time will tell. However, one aspect that can be validly concluded is this: The Kings of the East will not be in alignment with the rule of the 7th head—this being the 10-king Roman-derived collective.

As such, that era could very well already be upon us today. We most certainly do not want to "[...] go beyond what is written" (1 Corinthians 4:6). Yet, without a doubt, we live during interesting times, marked by many phenomenal and unprecedented developments. Jesus Christ charged us to "watch." We can discern the season (though not the timing and detail) of the last days and say Maranatha, Lord come! (MC)