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GLOBAL TREMORS SERIES

Far East Asia Trends Today – Part III: Geo-prophecy or Geopolitics?

By Wilfred Hahn

In the first two parts of this series, we documented the rapid economic and geopolitical rise of a number of Asian countries over the past half-century. In addition, we pointed out related developments that may have alignments with specific Bible prophecies. We closed Part II of this series with a jarring report on the skewed gender preferences for male children in the populous nations of both China and India today.



Could this rather sudden development align with the prophecy found in Revelation 9:14-16, which mentions an action involving troops numbering 200 million?

A number of major questions still beckon in our investigation of Asia’s possible endtime roles: Will Asian nations yet take a dominant role in world affairs? Could certain Asian nations form part of the final world order? Just what developments or events prompt the Kings of the East mentioned in Revelation 16:12 to cross over the Euphrates River? We will attempt some answers.

As we learned, two countries in Asia alone account for almost two-fifths of the world’s population—China and India. Overall, approximately three-fifths of the world’s population lives east of the Euphrates River in Asia. Yet, population trends are suddenly changing. In addition to the sudden shift to “gendercide” in Asia and India, the birth rate has been falling rapidly in Asia. It is possible that Asian populations could begin declining in the next half century. China, specifically, will face one of the steepest aging trends in the world during this period.

Twenty-five to 50 years from now, the population of China—indeed that of Asia at large—would no longer be sufficient to



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support an army of young men of eligible military age in excess of 200 million. Not only would population growth already be in decline, the average age of males would push far past the ideal military service age. If so, then we are presented with a possible time constraint. We could argue that the large army foreseen in Revelation 9, if it is to be centered in Asia, is an event that must fall in the nearer future. If Asian populations are aging, time is running out. (However, as mentioned in Part II, Scripture does not allow us to conclude with full certainty that this large army of mounted troops must come entirely from Asia, though we certainly see developments today that would align with such a conclusion.)

China and Asia Continue to Advance?

For several reasons, we have emphasized China in our investigation. Firstly, it is crucial to realize that the Chinese have an inordinately large influence on the entire Asian region. Not only is China the largest trade partner with many other Asian countries, a large percentage of major businesses in southeast Asia are owned or controlled by Chinese families. Though a minority ethnic group in Asia (outside of China), they are its main business people. The Chinese diasporas, triggered by political unrest and wars of the late 19th century and the middle 20th (the time of the Great Revolution and victory of Mao Zedong) spread a Chinese business network across the entire region from Malaysia to Indonesia. These large business empires have directed much investment to China in recent decades and have made a large contribution to the economic rise of China.

Secondly, China, either individually or in concert with other Asian countries, has the ability to challenge America and other Western countries. China itself may have less inhibitions in destabilizing the current world order, as it is much more than “a big country, inhabited by many Chinese,” as

the French premier, Charles DeGaulle once opined. Its agendas find deep motivations. China’s deportment will be influenced by the fact that it has existed as a country millenniums before the US and other high income countries of today. After all, China was the world’s largest economy for 18 of the last 20 centuries.

Finally, China is not militarily reliant upon the West as Japan was when it entered its fast-growth phase. This affords a measure of autonomy. It can choose to align itself against the West. In conclusion, China is no one’s lap dog. It is an independent player on the world scene. Foreign pressure (gaiatsu) is not likely to be effective. Can anyone stop China from pursuing its own interest?

Is a Dominant Asia Inevitable?

Though it may today appear that the economic advance of China and other Asian nations is unstoppable, this is not necessarily a valid conclusion. In fact, it is not at all likely that Far-East Asian nations will come to dominate the world any time soon, if ever. To the contrary. While competitive pressures and conflicts with the Western world (Roman world) are surely to heighten, Bible prophecy as well as other developments observable today suggest otherwise.

It is strange twist of fate that Asia as a region possesses so little resources and energy reserves in comparison to other parts of the world. The vast abundance of the world’s resources—certainly so when measured on a per capita basis—is found elsewhere. This is a structural reality of the world. It means that an awakening Asia, as it seeks to attain the prosperity levels of the U.S., Canada and Europe, is sure to test the limitations of commodity supplies. This has already been the case to date.

Particularly, as the populous countries of India and China raise their overall consumption levels and become integrated into





world trade, it will stress commodity supply channels, not to mention worsen pollution. Just think: Were China alone to ever attain the same per-capita automobile ownership as America, it would mean that the entire auto fleet of the world would at least double. Imagine the rise in demand for iron ore and other resources, especially hydrocarbons. Obviously, such a boom is not likely to occur without causing economic stresses for the entire world.

As such, there are a number of reasons why key Asian countries also face some challenges in the decades ahead. Another hurdle, as mentioned, stems from the fact that birth rates have fallen dramatically over the past two decades in China (and also Asia generally). At some point this will cause economic difficulties, as there will be insufficient young people entering the workforce. Moreover, in hyper-stimulating its economy to high growth, China has resorted to manipulating its currency as well as its monetary affairs. For example, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao has forced state banks over the past two years to create the largest lending surge in history. This is foolhardy. The ultimate result of these policies will be disastrous. No country has ever escaped the consequences of credit bubbles. Therefore, we can reasonably conclude that China's boom cannot continue indefinitely.

A Dried-Up Euphrates: What It Means

Two prophetic accounts we have reviewed in our study of Asia involved the Euphrates River. A key difference between these references was that it was “dried up” in the one account (Revelation 16¹), while no mention of this is made in the other (Revelation 9). Yet, it is specifically this drying up of the Euphrates that is stated as causing (or facilitating) the crossing of the “Kings of the East.”

Just what could this drying up of the Euphrates imply? It may be a symbolic indication. Consider that the imagery of “dried



up” water is found elsewhere in Scripture. It comes up in at least three contexts: describing actual natural phenomena, as imagery of divine intervention,² or military boasting. Naturally, a “dried up” river or sky would represent famine and drought. Rivers were the economic basis of agrarian societies, certainly so in Mesopotamia and Egypt. A dry river therefore implied dying livestock and failed crops—an economic depression, in other words.³

To dry up a river was also considered a military technique of conquest and boasting.⁴ The overthrowing of Babylon by Cyrus of Persia is one the most well known demonstrations of using the technique of a “dried up” river (in this case, by diverting the river) to military advantage. Sennacherib, King of Assyria, apparently boasted that he dried up the river of Egypt with the “soles of his feet” (2 Kings 19:24).

We are left speculating about the question of what a “dried up” Euphrates could signify—that the river becomes literally dried up, or that the region suffers economic depression? We embrace both interpretations. Indeed, the flow of the Euphrates is much slower today due to many hydroelectrical developments. However, a river today, whether dry or swollen, is hardly an obstacle to mechanized armies with capable engineers. Therefore, the literal drying up of the Euphrates River is not needed to allow the incursions of the Kings of the East. Rather, it is more likely that the “drying up” is meant symbolically as an economically difficult time.

China—One child policy propaganda poster

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Whatever the case, as we will next show, neither China nor Asia collectively will come to dominate the world either economically or geopolitically.

One More Key Mention of Asian Countries in Prophecy

There is one additional verse in the Bible which applies to some key Asian countries today that can easily be overlooked. It is found in Revelation 17:12, which supports an important deduction. It 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?

We must, of course, first assume that we are indeed living in the very last of the last days. As such, the world today would then be very near the time that the 10 kings are to emerge upon the world scene. The verse we have quoted from Revelation specifically refers to these 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 can therefore not 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 such nations 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 men-

tioned, 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 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 takes over global control, we can only attempt 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 power that can control much of Asia. A number of geographers and geo-strategists have long thought this to be the case. As it happens, China today has sharply increased its spending on its naval capabilities.

Scripture seems to indicate that the Kings of the East are shown to be an opposition force, certainly an aggressor. They rise up, crossing the Euphrates River against an unknown enemy. The catalysts may be economic or geopolitical.

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 kings. If so, the time may already be very short.

Prophetic Significance Cannot Be Ignored

What is clear is that certain nations east of the Euphrates—represented by the Kings of the East—will be heading west across the Euphrates at some point. As the Bible uses the word “king” as being synonymous with “kingdoms,” the meaning here is more likely to indicate the involvement of entire nations rather than just a contingent of physical kings who are to cross the river Euphrates.

Certainly, the world is witnessing developments today that for the first time allow some of the literal interpretations of the prophecies concerning the Euphrates that we have reviewed. These emerging conditions east of the Euphrates can be seen to be in alignment with the events described in Revelation 9 and 16. The emergence of the Kings of the East as is being witnessed today in no way obviates other Bible prophecies.

Although we cannot know how God will allow various specific events to play a part, we have certainly pointed to some possibilities. Could a world or regional depression (perhaps represented figuratively or literally by the drying up of the Euphrates) play a role in triggering the prophesied events involving the Kings of the East? Is it plausible that a coalition of Asian nations will initiate an aggression, perhaps for economic, geopolitical, or other reasons such as resource deprivation ...etc.? The Kings of the East then breach the Euphrates, storming into the lands originally covenanted to Israel. We can only speculate. But one thing is true: Events are accelerating on the world



An Edo Period depiction of a god at the famous, 17th Century Toshogu Shinto shrine in Nikko, Japan.

stage, and for the first time in history, events described in Revelation could indeed see literal fulfillment.

Points to Ponder

The speed of change and the nature of the developments underway in Asia today are simply astounding. Finally, following the lead of other Asian countries, we see that a sleeping giant has been awakened in the past half-century.

While it surely is factual and significant that economic and geopolitical power has begun to be more widely distributed around the world away from the Roman-type nations (this potentially an important alignment with endtime prophecy), consensus predictions that the Asian nations will dominate the world are not likely to be correct. Popular beliefs rarely are.

In the meantime, Western nations (most certainly American countries) have forged relationships with these exporting, consumer-pleasing countries from the Asian continent. However, it is a thin one. It is on a materialistic level only, and in that sense, somewhat of Faustian bargain.

In every other way, the nations across this divide remain worlds apart with radically different heritages, both religious and social. Though in our modern-day technological world we may own Panasonic televisions and drive Toyotas, the Japanese still bow to the Shinto gods (some still considering their emperor as divinity!).

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nantly influenced by Judeo-Christian philosophies (what are today called “family values”), and therefore are really not friends at heart with Asian nations. Nations today are conducting nothing more than tactical association in pursuit of their own mutual vested interests ... for now. But, all of this can change quickly.

It is critical to recognize that Asia, as diverse as it may be, broadly represents a philosophical and religious disposition that is radically different than what is found in other major regions of the world. Hinduism, Buddhism and a host of other pantheistic, spiritist and atheistic religions that are found in Asia, contrast with the broad branches of Judeo-Christian and Islamic streams that mark much of the rest of the world. As such, religious and cosmic perspectives are radically different. This likely plays an important part in the conflicts that are developing between the major countries of Asia and other nations.

With Israel historically, the false-god religions of the “children of the east” proved to be deadly snares for the Israelites. Israel was often chastised for chasing after the “eastern” gods. Today, a similar influx of eastern influences is being witnessed in the West. Nations that were historically influenced by the Christian gospel, are willing to fraternize with any and all gods for secular and material gain. As a result, they have become ensnared by foreign gods.

Speaking to Israel, Isaiah prophesies specifically with our day in mind. “You have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and clasp hands with pagans” (Isaiah 2:6). This indeed is the condition of Israel today. The majority of its citizens are secular Jews wanting nothing to do with the Jehovah of the Torah. Eastern religious influences are epidemic. According to Isaiah, it is for this reason that God forsakes them to the Great Tribulation in the last days.

Yet, Jehovah will be faithful to promises made to the patriarchs:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD (Isaiah 2:2-5, KJV).

The emergence of the 10 kings could be very, very near. As our study of Asia shows, not only is the age ripe eschatologically, the timeline may be short. (MC)

ENDNOTES

- 1 The drying up of the Euphrates is also corroborated by Isaiah 11:15: “The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River. He will break it up into seven streams so that men can cross over in sandals.”
- 2 “Drying up” was both an action of blessing and a curse: The divine interventions include the parting of the Red Sea, drying up the world after the deluge, and the parting of the Jordan to allow the Israeli armies to cross over.
- 3 Joel 1:20; Amos 4:7, 7:4
- 4 The army of Cyrus dried up the Euphrates river bed by diverting it, in order to gain entry into the city of Babylon.

Correction: In Part 2 of this series, it was incorrectly stated that Israel's reemergence as a nation occurred after 5,000 years. It should be approximately 3,300 years.