

20 January 2012

Greetings from Tyler,

One of the hottest situations currently playing out is the international move to block Iran's oil exports through sanctions. Iran seemed to be issuing something of a military threat this week to other Gulf producers if they should increase exports to fill any shortage that might result from those sanctions. As you are aware, Iran just concluded war games it said were designed to practice a closure of the Straits of Hormuz, through which some twenty percent of world oil supplies are transported.

It turns out that some of Europe's worst economic basket cases may suffer further damage when the sanctions against Iran take effect. According to the *Financial Times*, "The imposition of a ban on Iranian oil will be painful for a range of southern European countries, such as Italy and Spain, which are heavily dependent on imports from Iran." But hardest hit would be Greece, the worst basket case of all, as it's refiners buy oil from Iran on favorable terms. "Adding to the complication is the dire condition of the Greek economy and the country's place at the epicenter of the continent's debt crisis." Greece is actually threatening to derail the implementation of the sanctions unless it gets some kind of an exception that might render the whole exercise meaningless.

But concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions is reaching a fever pitch. Some claim that the whole thing is a ruse designed to instigate an unnecessary war with Iran. If that's true, it must be one of the great conspiracies in modern times with Iran, Israel, the UN and the U.S. all implicated in the deception. This week former U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton said there was irrefutable evidence that Iran had manufactured a hemispherical dome whose only use is to house a nuclear device.

The European debt crisis has gone largely quiet for the time being, and may not loom large again until the next round of EU crisis meetings scheduled for March. But as a quote in a recent edition of *The Economist* reads, "Sooner or later, the euro will be beyond saving."

If you're paying attention to our domestic news, and to the campaign for the Republican nominee fore president, you might conclude that our nation is getting very close to the same predicament. It's in God's hands.

I'm pleased to report that Mr. Robert Nunnery and Mr. Clyde Crawford had a good and uplifting special meeting in Chattanooga, TN last Sabbath. There were forty two in attendance, some were members who traveled in for the occasion, and some were visitors of like mind.

Mr. Stan Roberts is scheduled to join Mr. Nunnery in Fayetteville, NC this Sabbath for church services and a social event to follow.

We're expecting Mr. Tom Griffith for the main message here in Tyler, and will distribute his sermon to everyone on the regular DVD list as a matter of course.

The next monthly letter has been completed, the offer cards already printed, and the whole thing should be ready to be posted early next week.

The annual receipts have already been mailed out to all our contributors, some have already been received. We'd like to extend our thanks to all who have supported the work here in Tyler. Watching our nation engage in such self-destructive behavior, particularly at a time of so much crisis elsewhere in the world, has been a depressing task. We greatly appreciate your participation and hope you'll have a great Sabbath.

Until next time,

Mark Armstrong