

FROM OUR PASTOR

July 16, 2016

Sabbath Greetings to Everyone!

An international tribunal in The Hague issued a ruling this week that the nation of Communist China is in violation of international law. For the past decade China has been pumping huge amounts of sand and coral in a shallow part of the South China Sea--one of the busiest trading routes in the world-- in order to create new "islands" that they then claim as their territory.

Problem is, the new islands are in waters acknowledged to be owned by the Philippines for generations although Vietnam claims some of them also. The new islands are being turned into military bases for the Chinese navy and air force even though their stated purpose is to extend fishing and oil drilling rights.

If China continues occupying reefs and developing them into potential military bases — a process that has accelerated since 2014 — it will be acting outside the bounds of international law. Since the US is a legal ally of the Philippines, the next president will have to decide its next steps and how to meet this new threat.

Financialtimes.com reported the ruling this way: "In a 497-page, densely argued ruling this week, an international tribunal in The Hague blew away the legal ambiguity that has long surrounded China's claim to control the bulk of the South China Sea —Bottom of Form

Washington sees the ruling, issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, after a complaint from the Philippines, as a victory for what some US officials describe as a 21st century rules-based order over China's 19th-century plans for its own sphere of influence."

Is there really "a 21st century rules-based order?" Hardly. Words have been flying since the ruling, in Washington DC, China, and Europe. Max Baucus, US ambassador to China, said one of his messages to government officials in Beijing was that "we're in a whole new chapter here ...". Perhaps he believes it.

The Chinese reaction was, predictably, a rejection of the ruling and any authority of The Hague. Best summed up as, "Who cares? We are going to do what we want to do." It is obvious that compliance is voluntary at best.

This episode demonstrates two truths: First, the USA is no longer the policeman of the world. The power that brought a certain stability to the nations of the world since 1945 is no longer feared or dominant as it has been. Secondly, there is a growing realization that a one-world government body of some kind, with real authority, is needed. Modern technology, plus modern missiles and military abilities, have made it possible for nations around the world to affect the rest of world in a matter of minutes.

[That one world government is coming.](#) There is more discussion about it in political circles, especially in Europe. Daniel saw it in a vision as the beast with seven heads and ten horns. John described it in Revelation 13 as "a beast rising out of the Sea." **It will come quickly and only last for a few years, but conditions are ripe for this final ascent of the Roman system.**

What should we do? "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. " Revelation 18:4.

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