

Kingdom Report

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Swords into Plowshares: A Prophetic Call for a New World Economy

There is a backstory to the economic war President Trump is waging on allies and enemies. America is desperately trying to reindustrialize after wasting trillions on wars. Too late. This will not end well. God judges nations.

The real story to the seeming wild behaviour of President Trump's international tariff was is to force corporations in other nations to build factories and investments in America if they want access to the American consumer market. If they don't there will be a high tariff wall against their products.

It won't work because China is 20 years ahead of America. Which I will explain below. As God's people we have a prophetic responsibility to speak truth to power. God's plan for the nations is clearly outlined by Isaiah 2. Instead the conservative evangelical community in America has been the biggest supporters of wars in the Middle East and against Russia as part of their "stand with Israel" eschatology. America is now facing the consequences.

The Unchanging Wisdom of God's Economic Plan for Nations

In the second chapter of the book of Isaiah, the prophet paints a powerful and enduring picture of God's ultimate design for humanity. He foresees a time when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4, ESV). For centuries, this passage has been a cornerstone of Christian hope for a future of universal peace. But it is more than a beautiful, distant dream; it is a profound piece of divine wisdom about the very nature of national success and stability.

Isaiah's prophecy is not merely a call for pacifism. It is a divine economic plan. The imagery is precise: instruments of destruction—swords and spears—are not simply to be discarded. They are to be reforged, transformed into tools of creation and cultivation—plowshares and pruning hooks. The message is clear: a nation's true and lasting strength is not found in its capacity for war, but in its dedication to productive, life-sustaining enterprise. The resources, ingenuity, and human effort poured into weaponry and conflict are, in God's economy, a diversion from the real work of building a prosperous and secure society.

This ancient prophecy speaks with startling clarity to the geopolitical and economic landscape of the 21st century. As Christians, we are called to view the world through the lens of Scripture, to measure the ambitions of nations against the unchanging truth

of God's Word. When we do, we see a world that has, in many ways, chosen the sword over the plowshare, and is now beginning to reap the consequences. The theme is stark: for nations to succeed, they must re-orient their priorities from war and weapons manufacturing to productive investment. An examination of the United States, China, and Europe through this prophetic lens reveals the urgent truth of Isaiah's message.

America's Lost Decades: The High Cost of the Sword

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the United States embarked on a path heavily weighted toward the sword. The nation poured trillions of dollars into wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and into a global military expansion unprecedented in its scope and cost. The Watson Institute at Brown University estimates that the post-9/11 wars have cost the United States over \$8 trillion. It is a sum so vast it is difficult to comprehend.

Imagine if that \$8 trillion had been beaten into plowshares. Imagine if those resources had been invested in America's own infrastructure—in rebuilding crumbling bridges, modernizing the electrical grid, developing high-speed rail, and ensuring every community has access to clean water and high-speed internet. Imagine if that capital had been used to foster a new generation of manufacturing, to invest in research and development for the industries of the future, and to retrain workers for high-skilled jobs. The nation would be in a profoundly different, and stronger, position today.

Instead, while America was focused on foreign conflicts, its domestic foundation was eroding. The industrial base that had once been the envy of the world was hollowed out. Now, there is a belated and frantic effort to "reindustrialize," largely through coercive tariff policies designed to force other nations to build factories in America. This approach is a tacit admission of a generation of neglect. It is an attempt to quickly rebuild what was slowly and deliberately allowed to decay.

From a Christian perspective, this represents a profound misallocation of the stewardship with which the nation was blessed. The immense wealth and power of the United States were not gifts to be expended on endless conflict, but a trust to be used for the flourishing of its people and as a potential force for good in the world. The choice to prioritize the sword has not only been a financial one; it has been a spiritual one, reflecting a departure from the wisdom of Isaiah and an embrace of a model of security that is ultimately fleeting and built on a foundation of sand. The current struggle to reindustrialize is a direct consequence of decades spent learning war, rather than learning to cultivate our own garden.

China's Plowshares: A Different Path to Power

While the United States was investing its treasure in military campaigns, the People's Republic of China was making a different strategic choice. It was investing in plowshares, on a global scale. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a colossal infrastructure and investment project, is the most ambitious example of this strategy. China has spent over a trillion dollars building ports, railways, power plants, and telecommunications networks across Asia, Africa, and Europe.

The BRI is not an act of altruism, but a calculated and long-term economic strategy. China understands that real global influence in the 21st century flows not primarily from military bases, but from economic integration. By building the infrastructure of global trade, China has positioned itself at the center of the world economy. It has created new markets for its goods, secured access to vital resources, and fostered economic dependency among dozens of nations.

This strategy is a modern, secularized echo of Isaiah's wisdom. China has focused its national energy on building, creating, and connecting. It has prioritized the tools of production and commerce over the instruments of war. While its military has certainly grown, its primary projection of power has been economic. This focus on industrial technology and infrastructure has allowed China to achieve a level of global influence in thirty years that many nations have failed to achieve in a century.

This presents a challenging case study for Christians. While we must be clear-eyed about the Chinese government's atheistic ideology and its human rights abuses, we must also be honest in our analysis of its strategy. China's rise demonstrates the sheer power of a national focus on productive investment. It shows what can be accomplished when a nation's resources are directed toward building up rather than tearing down. The contrast with America's post-9/11 strategy is stark, and it should prompt a deep and prayerful reconsideration of what truly makes a nation strong and secure.

The Irony of the Sword: A Nation Dependent on its Rival

The ultimate irony of America's focus on military supremacy is its deep and dangerous dependence on its primary strategic rival, China, for the very components needed to build its advanced weaponry. The pursuit of the sword has led not to self-sufficiency, but to a critical vulnerability.

Modern military technology is impossible to produce without a group of 17 elements known as rare earth elements (REEs). These minerals are essential for everything from the guidance systems of missiles to the stealth coating on F-35 fighter jets. An F-35, for example, requires over 900 pounds of REEs. A Virginia-class submarine needs nearly 10,000 pounds.

And where does the world get these vital materials? Overwhelmingly, from China. China controls roughly 90% of the global processing and refining of REEs. Even the ore from the only operational rare earth mine in the United States, Mountain Pass in California, has historically been sent to China for processing because the expertise and infrastructure no longer exist domestically.

In a report titled "***From rock to rocket: critical minerals and the trade war for national security***" (a short 11-page document readily available online), Govini identified 80,000 weapons parts that were made using antimony, gallium, germanium, tungsten or tellurium – the global supply of which are all dominated by China – "meaning nearly 78 per cent of all [Pentagon] weapon systems are potentially affected".

“China’s recent export bans and restrictions on critical minerals have exposed an open secret: despite political rhetoric, the US is fundamentally dependent on China for essential components of its weapon systems.”

These materials are critical in manufacturing military equipment across all services – from 61.7 per cent of the Marine Corps’ weapons to 91.6 per cent of the Navy’s. In the past 15 years, the use of the five minerals in US weapons has increased by an average of 23.2 per cent per year, according to the report.

Some of the key components named in the report included the use of antimony in the infrared focal plane arrays of the F-35’s missile warning system; gallium in advanced AN/SPY-6 radars; germanium in nuclear detection systems and the Javelin missile’s infrared optics; tungsten in armour-piercing tank shells and tellurium in the thermoelectric generators on RQ-21 Blackjack drones.

The report examined the whole production process of 1,900 weapons systems and found China was involved in the bulk of the supply chains, ranging from 82.4 per cent in the case of germanium to 91.2 per cent for tellurium.

It said only 19 per cent of the antimony needed for US weapon systems was available outside China.

This is a strategic vulnerability of staggering proportions. The United States cannot build many of its most advanced weapons without materials sourced from the very nation it considers its main adversary. The document notes the absurdity of this situation, quoting a CSIS report that likens it to "buying bullets from your enemy to fight the same enemy."

And this report does not even touch on the other critical industrial essential component: High temperature magnets for electrical production. If it spins it needs a magnet and when you are making high tech power equipment you need the kind of magnets made with critical rare earths controlled by China.

This situation is a direct result of prioritizing the finished product (the sword) over the entire process of its creation (the plowshare and the forge). The difficult, less glamorous work of mining, refining, and building industrial supply chains was outsourced, deemed less important than maintaining a massive military footprint. Now, the bill for that short-sightedness is coming due. China has already begun to use this dependence as a political weapon, restricting exports of certain minerals and the technology needed to process them. This is the bitter fruit of a national policy that ignores the foundational wisdom of Isaiah. A nation that does not control its own plowshares will eventually find it cannot forge its own swords.

Europe’s Self-Inflicted Wound and the Path Forward

The recent conflict in Ukraine has provided another painful illustration of the consequences of choosing the sword over the plowshare. In a commendable show of solidarity with Ukraine, European nations have supplied vast quantities of weapons and imposed sweeping sanctions on Russia. While the moral impetus for these actions

is understandable, the economic fallout has been a stark reminder of the interconnectedness of the modern world and the high cost of conflict.

For decades, Europe, particularly Germany, built its industrial might on a foundation of cheap and plentiful energy from Russia. This affordable natural gas powered its factories and heated its homes. Russia was also a significant market for European goods. By choosing to engage in a proxy war and sever these economic ties, Europe has willingly cut itself off from this vital source of energy and a key export destination.

The result has been a severe economic shock. Energy prices have skyrocketed, leading to inflation and deindustrialization. Factories have been forced to close or relocate. Citizens are facing a cost-of-living crisis. In essence, by supplying the swords for the conflict, Europe has broken its own plowshare. It is a painful lesson in the reality that in a globalized world, economic peace is often a prerequisite for economic prosperity. The disruption of trade and energy flows has inflicted a wound on the European economy that will take years, if not decades, to heal.

The path forward for the West, and indeed for all nations, is the path Isaiah laid out thousands of years ago. It is a path of repentance—a turning away from the belief that military might is the ultimate guarantor of security. It requires a fundamental re-orientation of national priorities and resources. It means choosing the long, difficult work of rebuilding domestic industries, educating a skilled workforce, and investing in the infrastructure that supports a productive economy. It means seeing the trillions spent on war not as a necessary expense, but as a tragic misdirection of God-given resources.

As Christians, our hope is not in the strength of armies or the sophistication of weapons. Our hope is in the Prince of Peace. But that hope does not absolve us of the responsibility to advocate for wisdom and prudence in the affairs of our nations. The message of Isaiah 2 is not a relic of a bygone era. It is a prophetic roadmap to a more stable, prosperous, and just world. It is time for our nations to put down the sword and pick up the plowshare, not just as a hope for the eschatological future, but as a wise and necessary strategy for the here and now.