

A Stirring Tribute to Dr. Myles Munroe—One Year After His Passing

While many remember Dr. Myles Munroe for delivering exceptional teaching on topics such as purpose, potential, vision, praise and worship, leadership and even relationships, perhaps no revelation has attracted more attention—and thus, has been more integral to the shifting of the landscape of the church—than his message on the Kingdom of God.

This tribute represents, in part, the history-making legacy that Munroe left to a new generation of men and women, commissioned to carry God's Kingdom into the world.

For more about Munroe's life and death, [click here](#) and [here](#).

For more about his prophetic vision, [click here](#).

Is The Global Economy Following The 'Classic Crash Formula?'

After \$11 trillion in global stock market wealth was wiped out in the third quarter of this year—the end of the biblical Shemitah—the markets have rallied to new highs.

As this has happened, financial analysts and prophecy experts have asked two questions, “Are we out of the woods yet?” or “Is this the calm before the storm?”

Jay Peroni, the chief investment officer at Faith-Based Investor and author of *Blood Moons on Wall Street*, says these are important questions on the minds of many investors. Despite a strong market recovery in October, Peroni says he's seeing "very troubling signs for the global economy and stock market ahead."

Some of these signs, according to Peroni, include:

- U.S. third quarter gross domestic product rose at just 1.5 percent, far below the 3.9 percent growth rate during the second quarter.
- U.S. exports have fallen over 11 percent this year—lining up with prior recessions.
- Manufacturing activity, a good indicator of overall financial health, has steadily declined in the U.S. and China—the largest economies in the world.
- Nations throughout the world are keeping their countries propped up solely through central bank stimulus—keeping interest rates artificially low and printing more money to stimulate economic growth.
- The International Monetary Fund has warned the world economy could crash if central banks do not continue their low interest rate policies.
- Tensions with Russia and Syria could erupt into a much more global war, disrupting world stability.
- The refugee crisis in Europe could make an already fragile economic crisis much worse.

At a time when many people believe the markets have normalized and the "worst is behind us," Peroni says this couldn't be further from the truth. Normally, during a bull market rally, investors will see a spike in the number of shares traded. In October, trading volume fell. Meanwhile, the number of advancing stocks versus declining stocks dropped, and the total number of advancing stocks as a group also declined—a bearish sign for the markets ahead. Further, earning expectations are the worst on record since the Great

Recession.

Adding further stress to the U.S., President Obama is expected to sign into law a new budget on Monday that would increase the national debt to \$20 trillion by the time he leaves office in 2017—double the amount when he took the oath in 2009.

In light of these signs, Peroni says the current market looks like it could be “following the classic crash formula” of a stock market drop followed by a quick recovery and then comes the “real collapse.”

“Basically, what you tend to see whenever a crash has happened, if you go back to the last three major crashes in 1987, 2000 and 2007-08, is the market will have a pretty big drop—anywhere from 10-20 percent—and then you see a quick recovery ... followed by the third leg which is a significant drop even worse than the first drop.”

Peroni says current market conditions and the global economy seem to be following the same pattern of prior Shemitahs that marked the beginning of market crashes that took place over the course of at least several months.

“It really does because it has been following the seven-year Shemitah pattern,” Peroni says. “Even though August didn’t give us a major crash—it gave us more of a correction—all the things that are developing are pretty significant. Around the world, we’re seeing everything from China’s stock market crashing to countries being in recessions and depressions.

“The other big development is the whole crisis with refugees. You have all these developments—Syria and Russian tensions. All these things are very much lining up with what we saw in the last Shemitah cycle where the markets started to unravel. Sometimes it’s slowly and sometimes it’s quickly. This one is unraveling a little more slowly, but there is a lot of strength behind it, and it could very quickly pick up steam.”

Rabbi Jonathan Cahn, author of the *New York Times* best-selling books *The Harbinger* and *The Mystery of the Shemitah*, says America and the world “won’t be out of the woods without repentance and a change of course.”

“Any nation that turns away and turns against the ways of God is in danger of judgment,” Cahn says. “America has turned away and is now turning increasingly against the ways of God and the foundation upon which it was founded.”

The Hebrew word *Shemitah* can be translated to mean “the Fall.” It was a previous year of the Shemitah—1973—that defined one of the greatest moments in America’s moral and spiritual fall from God, the year it legalized the killing of the unborn, Cahn says. During this year’s Shemitah, another milestone in America’s fall from God was crossed as the nation, in effect, struck down the biblical order of marriage ordained by God, Cahn says.

“We have now reached the point when the state is finding guilty, punishing and even throwing in jail those who will not participate in what God calls sin,” Cahn says. “To those to whom much is given, much is required. America has been given much, and much will be required. How much more America could do to invoke the judgment of God is hard to imagine. No, we are not out of the woods.

“Add to the equation the fact that at the same moment of our departure from God, we are departing from Israel, even taking action which the leaders of Israel say is putting the Jewish state in danger—(it’s) a most dangerous combination.”

Mark Biltz, founder of El Shaddai Ministries and author of *Blood Moons: Decoding Imminent Heavenly Signs*, says the world is “definitely not out of the woods, but entering the woods.”

“The first year of a new seven-year cycle is often when judgment is poured out from a prophetic point of view,” Biltz says. “We are now beyond the tipping point and will see

dramatic results by the end of next year.”

The last three market crashes, Peroni says, were preceded by initial drops of 10-15 percent, followed by sharp rebounds like the one that occurred in October. Based on history, Peroni says there are “still high odds that we could see another big crash very soon.”

“Now is the time to have a game plan for a tough market,” Peroni says. “It could be the calm before the storm. Make sure you own solid investments that can stand up through tough times.”

You Won't Hear This on the Evening News About Israel

Last Wednesday, my family's WhatsApp group was buzzing. Daughter No. 1, away at college, heard news of a terrorist attack near our home. Knowing it's where we go grocery shopping, she wrote:

“Did something just happen at the grocery store? Everyone OK?”

Daughter No. 3 wrote, *“What! Something happened at the store?”*

Daughter No. 1, *“I just heard that there was... nobody's there, right?”*

Daughter No. 4, *“No.”*

Daughter No. 2, *“Where did you hear that?”*

Daughter No. 1, *“On the Internet.”*

Daughter No. 4 posted the article from the Internet.

Indeed. Something bad had happened.

Of course Dad No. 1 was away, far away from home. In fact, several thousand miles away. Between TV interviews and a presentation to Christian business and civic leaders trying to explain the situation, my family was feeling fear, and I was feeling guilt at not being home.

Shortly afterwards, we all learned that it was our neighbor Yaelle who was not only a witness to the incident but played a heroic role. Later that day, she shared her thoughts.

"Today was a day I will never forget. Wednesday is always (shopping) day. I left at my usual time and did my usual shopping. With all that's going on, I took one of my kids with me to look around the parking lot while I packed the car. As I pulled out of the parking lot, my daughter asked if I was scared to go to the grocery store. I said, "No." A minute later, my life was changed forever.

A woman was walking in front of my car. She was carrying many bags. Suddenly, from the corner of my eye I saw a man with a brown coat running to her. He raised his hand and stabbed her in the back. I immediately honked my horn and screamed to my daughter what was happening. We both started screaming hysterically. As soon as I started honking, the terrorist ran.

I got out of the car and started screaming for help. I ran to the woman who was on the ground. I told her, "It's ok. You are going to be ok." She stood up, but I saw she was weak. I held her and all of a sudden I saw soldiers running with their guns and the shooting started. I brought her to my car and told her to sit. There was blood all over my hand. My daughter ran to the bakery and was hysterical. She was surrounded by amazing women who wanted to help. Thank God my neighbor, who is a doctor, was in the area. He heard me scream and ran to see what was going on. I needed to go and see if my daughter was OK and I asked my neighbor to stay with the woman while I go

to my daughter.

I was still hysterical at this point. Crying. Shaking. Amazing women helped me and my daughter, Someone called my husband who got a ride and was by our side in no time. I was questioned by the secret service, police and the army. I felt like I was in a movie. How could this ever happen to me? My daughter was in trauma and she was taken to the hospital. I was still being held for questioning. They told me that the woman was OK and that she was being taken to the hospital.

After going home and seeing my family briefly, I went to the hospital to check on my daughter. They were keeping her overnight for observation and counseling.

I was also able to meet the husband, son and other family members of the woman who was stabbed, Nirit. They told me she was recovering from the surgery and doing well. They asked me to tell them the story and were so thankful that I was there.

A few hours later I received a call from Nirit. She said she was doing well and kept thanking me. What could I say? 'You're welcome' doesn't get it. I just kept telling her that I was glad she was OK.

All I know is that God puts us exactly where we are supposed to be. This is where I was supposed to be, with my daughter. It played out exactly the way it was supposed to. Even though I was scared, traumatized and freaked out, my faith is as strong as ever. I still love my country and would never change it. I'm so grateful for all my family and friends that were there and offered to help.

Thank you, God, for all the greatness around me."

Traveling away from home is hard for anyone who strives to be an active parent. Traveling away from our home in Israel is even more difficult. Israel is a place that's not home by chance of birth or a career move, but rather it is a

birthright. Being away from Israel during times of distress is, ironically, even more distressing.

My saving grace is that everywhere I went and among all the people with whom I met, comfort, support and prayers were abundant. This included several formal events as well as more random or “chance” meetings. I even received a call from Pastor Wade who invited me to share an update by phone with his entire church during last Sunday’s worship.

Our website, , was particularly active with people sending financial support to provide resources to save lives throughout Israel, and with people sending prayers for Israel’s life savers who put their lives in harm’s way to help others.

Sharing “mundane” things—such as Daughter No. 4 being scared to go to the mall with a friend for her birthday, Son No. 2 having his basketball game canceled because the other team couldn’t make it because of Arab rock throwing on the road and Son No. 1 attending a preparatory army program for high school boys in his grade—added a real perspective to the limited and often superficial media reports.

While packing to come home, I heard reports of another attack involving another friend and neighbor not only witnessing, but becoming a stabbing victim. Thank God, she’ll be OK. Her husband praised the immediate EMS response as part of that.

Yet amid the violence, the terrorism and the fear, we are resolved and resilient. Life goes on. And, as Yaelle noted, we put our trust in God and are thankful for all the greatness and blessings around us.

Jonathan Feldstein *was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. He is married and the father of six. Throughout his life and career, he has been blessed by the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel.*

He writes a regular column for 's Standing With Israel. He can be reached at FirstPersonIsrael@.

Why Will Israel Survive?

America is not even referred to in the Bible. Not even as the New Babylon, although it is beginning to resemble it more each day. Sorry to upset anyone, but it's not about us.

Israel has survived for over 3,500 years because of God's covenant and favor. Yes, there has been unfaithfulness, idolatry, dispersion, persecution, diaspora and Hamas, Hezbollah and Obama. Israel will survive. Why? Because God said it would.

So, how can we rescue America and the West in general from impending and brutal domination by Mahdist forces? Syria/Iraq and Iran are fighting for supremacy in bringing about the worldwide Mahdi who will force the world of infidels to submit to their version of Islam. Don't worry, one of these competitors will prevail and the loser will link with them. All the paper, deals and negotiations in the universe won't change that.

Israel has survived the great empires of the past: Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Greece, Rome, Czars and Inquisitors and brutal Nazis and Fascists all tried in vain to eradicate Israel.

Will America and Europe survive assaults on religious freedom, family values and secular humanism that try to eradicate any mention of the Almighty? America is no longer a Christian country or so the President has decreed. Any criticism of Islam is denounced as racist while insults, ridicule and

lawsuits are considered the rightly due of Christians and now Jews. "Smiley face" sermons in many churches avoid the increasing persecution for fear of 501c3 penalties.

The cruel reality of an outright war against God's people and His Word are crowded out by the urge to not offend anyone. Denominations are dividing on real Biblical issues such as same-sex marriage. They are also voting to boycott Israel on pretend humanitarian grounds over Palestine. Yeshua said a house divided against itself cannot stand; 60,000 denominations seem to bear witness to that.

So what lessons can we draw from these issues? First, admittance must be made that a war has begun. Christians and Jews are being targeted for suits and discrimination by many sources, atheists are suing daily to remove any mention of the Almighty, statues of Satan are openly displayed, television talk shows regularly criticize believers and have their lies taken seriously. Wars have winners and losers. Where do we stand?

Joshua called the houses of Israel together. He asked about their loyalty and whom they would serve. Yeshua said we can only serve one master. In our Western culture we have divided our societies into civil and faith. Today the civil openly shows disrespect for faith.

Once more, whom will we serve? Our enemies from outside and within our borders seek to divide us even further than we have divided ourselves. We are a part of a spiritual Israel and as long as our loyalty is to the Messiah who will return to that place—on the Mount of Olives—we will survive. {eoa}

Note: The opinions of this writer are not necessarily those of Charisma Media.

Tom Brennan has worked in quite a few professions. Born in Lynn, Massachusetts, he worked as a museum curator, archivist and graphics curator, library administrator, small business

owner, animal care worker, sheriff's deputy, rancher, farmer, author, researcher and NewsBlogger. He plans to volunteer for Sar-El next year and see Israel from the ground up. When he's not digging into news, he works with Arabian horses and other breeds in Boise, Idaho.

Bible vs. Quran: Which Is Better for America?

A majority of Americans believe the country would be better off if people followed the teachings of the Bible over the Quran, the Muslim holy book.

Lifeway Research interviewed 1,000 Americans to learn their opinions about the Bible and Quran.

The results are a bit shocking.

Questioners asked interviewees if they considered the text of each book to be dangerous, and if it would be helpful, or harmful for American society to follow the teachings of each.

Twenty-four percent of Americans considered the Quran to be a dangerous book, and only 9 percent felt that way about the Bible. Eighty percent said the Bible is good for American society.

But the most shocking response came when 28 percent of respondents said they think following the Quran would be good for the country, and 25 percent said they didn't know if the Quran is dangerous, or good.

How could this be, when only slightly more than one half of one percent of the total U.S. population is Muslim?

According to the 2010 U.S. Religion Census, Americans are Muslim. That figure has grown by 1.6 million since 2000.

Are these informed and educated opinions about the Quran, or views based on feelings?

Those polled were not asked if they had read the Quran, or if they were familiar with Islamic teachings.

The Lifeway survey also found that 14 percent of respondents felt that following the Bible's teachings would be harmful to American society, while 33 percent felt the same about the Quran.

Also, Lifeway Research found significant differences of opinion based on region and age.

While 30 percent of Southerners agreed that the Quran is a dangerous book, only 17 percent of Northeasterners felt the same way. Younger people are less likely than older Americans to agree with the danger assessment of the Quran. Only 14 percent of those age 18-24 said the Quran is a dangerous book, while more than one third of those 65+ (34 percent) felt the same way.

And Southerners (7 percent) are less likely than Westerners (12 percent) to believe that the Bible is a dangerous book.

The full Lifeway Research Survey on American Views on Sacred Texts and Society can be viewed here: [Lifeway Survey](#).

Ken Ham Urges Christians to

Learn About False Religions Like Atheism

Generations of Christians indoctrinated with an atheistic worldview need to understand false religions like atheism to reach the lost with biblical truths, Answers in Genesis President Ken Ham says.

“One religion that has grown in numbers and cultural significance is atheism,” Ham posted on his Facebook page. “Now, why would we even call atheism a religion? (Answers in Genesis) points out that as a non-theistic religion, atheism is a belief system that attempts to explain everything in our world, including how the universe came to be and how one should relate to his fellow humans.

“As such, it’s a naturalistic, comprehensive worldview (as opposed to a supernatural one) often referred to as secular humanism. Generations of our young people, including many in our churches, have been educated in government-run schools in the religious view of naturalism, which in reality is atheism.”

At a time when the number of religiously unaffiliated Americans is on the rise, Ham says it’s more important than ever for Christians to understand false religions, including non-theistic ones like atheism, because many have “grown in such significance that they have helped the culture lurch into increased secularization.”

“And then armed with this helpful background, Christians can better reach secularized people with biblical truths, especially the saving gospel message,” Ham says.

A study released this week by the Pew Research Center found the percentage of Americans who say they believe in God has dropped from 92 percent in 2007 to 89 percent now. More than

62 percent of Americans say humans evolved over time, while 34 percent say people have always existed in their present form, the study found.

In an article posted on the Answers in Genesis website, "Understanding a World of Beliefs," Ham and Mark Looy wrote that many Western nations, once very Christianized, are now secularized.

"For Christians, it is instructive to understand the paradox that occurred in this shift: the key role that various religions played in the secularization of Western cultures," Ham and Looy wrote. "All Christians should make it a point to understand the other faiths and learn how to witness to their adherents."

Learn more about how to reach out to people with different belief systems in this video.

Women of Faith Concludes With Farewell Tour

The nondenominational Women of Faith (WoF) live events soon will come to an end, but fans have other experiences to look forward to—including new tours and a WoF movie. The events conclude with the Loved: The Farewell Tour, which ends in Buffalo, New York, in February 2016.

Started in 1996 by Stephen Arterburn, Women of Faith events now bring connection, humor, inspiration, teaching and worship to thousands in arenas in more than 20 cities a year. The tour features WoF speakers who have become known as "porch pals" and include Sheila Walsh, Luci Swindoll, Marilyn Meberg,

Thelma Wells, Patsy Clairmont and Nicole Johnson. New speakers such as HGTV's Jen Hatmaker have joined the tour, and special guests like author Sarah Jakes Roberts, *FOX News'* Gretchen Carlson and *Duck Dynasty's* Korie Robertson make appearances in certain cities.

Employed as an evangelistic tool for fostering fellowship among church groups, Women of Faith saw its 5 millionth tour attendee in 2013. Through the years, WoF also has launched a magazine and hosted webcasts/simulcasts. Partnerships with publishers and other vendors have led to the sale of many thousands of books, Bibles and gifts in arenas, online and through retail stores.

WoF attributes the brand's longevity and success to "the overwhelming support and stories we've heard from our attendees of how Women of Faith has helped them in their time of need or led them to salvation," WOF Spokesperson Kayla Swisher says.

The tour filled a market need when it started two decades ago.

"Women of Faith has been a success because there was no such event when we started 20 years ago, and it became a place where women could gather together and share in stories of laughter, hope and strength," Swisher says.

Speaker Luci Swindoll may have summed it up best in a recent 45-minute "Live From the Porch" webcast: "God done it!"

Several of the major personalities on the tour—Swindoll, Marilyn Meberg and Thelma Wells—are choosing to end their time on the road, although at their Orlando, Florida, stop, Meberg noted that she and Swindoll had already come out of retirement once to be part of the tour. Known for her humor, Clairmont is continuing with a new tour, *Belong*, with Hatmaker, Sarah Jakes Roberts, Shauna Niequist and Nichole Nordeman. WoF is also promoting a night of comedy, *Get Ur Happy On*, with Anita Renfroe, *Braveheart Sisterhood* with Sheila Walsh and *Together*,

a tour with Brené Brown and Glennon Doyle Melton.

Tour attendees applaud with gusto when watching the fun video clips WoF personalities make. The fun, no doubt, will continue with an upcoming film about the WoF movement, which is expected in theaters Feb. 18 and Feb. 21.

This Religious Group Set to Adopt Sweeping Transgender Rights Policy

Temples and synagogues affiliated with the nation's largest Jewish movement could adopt gender-neutral bathrooms and their rabbis would be encouraged to give sermons on transgender topics, under a groundbreaking resolution expected to pass at a conference of Reform Jews on Thursday.

The proposal features some of the most far-reaching policies for transgendered men and women seen among any of the nation's mainstream religious organizations, according to advocates for gay and transgendered rights.

It also has generated little discord within the movement of 1.5 million North America Jews affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism, the organization that will vote on the measure as part of its biennial conference in Orlando.

"It's a big deal but at the same time it's not controversial for them at all," said Michael Toumayan of the national Human Rights Campaign, which advocates for gay rights.

The Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ also have adopted positions in support of transgender issues but the

Reform Jewish movement's policy would go further by listing specific actions to promote inclusion, said Toumayan, manager for the civil rights group's religion and faith program.

The resolution is Reform Judaism's first anti-discrimination policy on transgendered issues, said Barbara Weinstein, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, a public policy advocacy center in Washington, D.C.

Some of those steps include cultural training for religious school staff, sermons on transgender issues and gender-neutral restrooms where feasible, according to the resolution.

The Reform movement in 2003 admitted its first openly transgendered person to rabbinical school and in 2015 required congregations to consider all candidates for rabbinical jobs, regardless of gender identity, according to the resolution.

It calls for public policy changes to make it easier for transgendered persons to update passports, voter registrations and birth certificates, and to be identified with pronouns and have access to public restrooms according to their gender identity.

Many of the 900 affiliated Reform congregations already are welcoming to transgendered persons but others will be addressing the issue for the first time, Weinstein said.

Some smaller religious institutions, such as the Unitarian Universalist Church and the Metropolitan Community Church, which organized as a Christian center for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, also have strong anti-discrimination policies, Toumayan said. {eoa}

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Britain: ISIS Likely Brought Down Russian Plane

Britain said on Thursday there was a significant possibility that Islamic State's Egyptian affiliate was behind a suspected bomb attack on a Russian airliner that killed 224 people in the Sinai Peninsula.

Russia said such theories were speculation at this stage and only the official investigation can determine what happened. Egypt said there was no indication so far that a bomb was to blame.

The topic is sensitive for Russia, whose warplanes have launched raids against Islamic State in Syria, and for Egypt, which depends heavily on revenues from tourism.

Asked if he thought Islamic State was responsible for the disaster, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said: "ISIL-Sinai have claimed responsibility for bringing down the Russian aircraft, they did that straight away after the crash.

"We've looked at the whole information picture, including that claim, but of course lots of other bits of information as well, and concluded that there is a significant possibility," he said on Sky television.

U.S. and European security sources say evidence now suggests that a bomb planted by Islamic State's Egypt affiliate—Sinai Province—was the likely cause of the crash. The sources stressed they had reached no final conclusions about the crash.

Dmitry Peskov, a spokesman for President Vladimir Putin, said Russian planes were still flying to and from Sharm al-Sheikh airport, where the doomed flight originated, despite bans by Britain and Ireland.

“We have said this before and we will repeat it again: theories about what happened and the causes of the incident can only be pronounced by the investigation,” Peskov said in response to Hammond’s comments.

“So far, we have heard nothing (like this) from the investigation. Any kind of similar assumptions like this are based on information that has not been checked or are speculation.”

Egypt’s civil aviation minister, Hossam Kamal, said in a statement: “The investigation team does not have yet any evidence or data confirming this hypothesis.”

AIR RAIDS

Islamic State, which wants to create a caliphate across the Muslim world, is also called ISIS and ISIL. Russia, an ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, launched air raids against opposition groups in Syria including Islamic State on Sept. 30.

The hardline group has called for war against both Russia and the United States in response to their air strikes in Syria. Britain has decided to stop flights from Egypt’s Sharm al-Sheikh resort to gain more time to assess security in the town, where the Russian plane started its ill-fated journey.

Islamic State, which also has a presence in Egypt’s neighbor Libya, is waging a campaign of suicide bombings and shootings in Egypt designed to topple the government of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

The Egyptian leader is currently on a state visit to Britain, which like other Western powers sees Cairo as critical to efforts to counter militancy.

A senior Russian lawmaker said Britain’s decision to stop flights from Sharm was motivated by London’s opposition to

Russia's actions in Syria, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

"There is geopolitical opposition to the actions of Russia in Syria," said Konstantin Kosachev, a senior member of Russia's upper house of parliament, when asked about Britain's decision.

If a bomb killed the 224 passengers and crew aboard the Airbus A321 <>, that would almost certainly undermine Egypt's tourism industry, which is still recovering from years of political turmoil.

A Russian aviation official said the investigation was looking into the possibility of an object stowed on board causing the disaster.

At Sharm airport, security appeared to have been tightened on Thursday with security forces patrolling the terminals and not allowing drivers, tour agents or others to loiter whilst awaiting tourists arrivals, a witness said.

The airport chief there was promoted to take on additional duties.

Islamic State, which controls swathes of Iraq and Syria and is battling the Egyptian army in the Sinai Peninsula, said again on Wednesday that it brought down the airplane, adding it would eventually tell the world how it carried out the attack.

Egypt dismissed a similar claim of responsibility for the crash by Islamic State on Saturday.

TOURISM WORRIES

Caution among Egyptian officials in assessing the cause of the crash has not eased anxiety among tourism companies that handle visitors to Egypt's ancient sites and Red Sea resorts.

Shares in Thomas Cook <TCG.L> opened down 2.1 percent after Britain canceled flights to Sharm, dealing a blow to the tourism industry on which Egypt relies to earn hard currency.

Sisi has described Islamist militancy as an existential threat to the Arab world and the West and has repeatedly called for greater international efforts to combat the militants.

Britain said it was working with airlines and Egyptian authorities to put in place additional security and screening measures to allow Britons in Sharm to get home, but that would take time and there would be no flights returning from the resort on Thursday.

The Irish Aviation Authority directed Irish airlines on Wednesday not to fly to or from the Sinai Peninsula until further notice. The Russian-operated plane was registered in Ireland, which is taking part in the crash investigation.

Security experts and investigators have said the plane is unlikely to have been struck from the outside and Sinai-based militants are not believed to possess the technology to shootdown a jet from a cruising altitude above 30,000 feet.

Sinai Province has killed hundreds of Egyptian soldiers and police since Sisi, as army chief, toppled Islamist President Mohamed Mursi in 2013 after mass protests against his rule.

Sisi was elected president last year on promises he would stabilise Egypt and rebuild its shattered economy. Critics say his tough crackdown on Islamists will only create more radicals in Egypt, which has fought militants for decades.

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Is Russia's 'Nightmare' Alliance With Iran Prophetic?

It's a nightmare scenario: A military powerhouse with a massive nuclear arsenal, openly aligning itself with Islamic terrorists who are hostile to America and Israel.

That's exactly the situation today in Syria, as the Russian military coordinates with the world's number one state sponsor of terror—Iran—and its proxy, Hezbollah.

The Russian/Iranian alliance is helping to prop up the regime of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. He'd been on the ropes, threatened on all sides by ISIS, al Qaeda and Syrian rebel groups. Then the "Russian Bear" stepped in.

Meet the Mideast's 'Most Powerful Operative'

Russia began air strikes in Syria on behalf of the Assad regime in late September, after a steady military buildup. The buildup began shortly after an Iranian general named Qassam Soleimani paid a visit to Moscow in July.

It was no coincidence. Although he largely avoids the limelight, Soleimani has been called "the most powerful operative in the Middle East today."

"In general terms, he's a uniformed Osama bin Laden," Middle East analyst Michael Pregent told CBN News.

"He's anti-U.S. He is able to travel the Middle East and North Africa, basically funding and directing Iranian proxy groups like Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis. Those are just the ones that start with an "H," he said.

Pregent is executive director of Veterans Against the Iran Deal. He served as an intelligence adviser to Gen. David Petraeus in Iraq, where he saw Soleimani's handiwork up close:

including Iranian-backed attacks against U.S. troops.

“There were the explosively formed penetrators,” Pregent explained. “Those were munitions that the Iranians helped the Shia militias build. They brought them to Iran, trained them on how to use it, and actually set them up in Iraq and directed their attacks against U.S. forces.”

“It wasn’t only the explosively formed penetrators: the Iranian IEDs,” Pregent continued. “They also had something called improvised rocket assisted mortars, where they would drive a truck up to a base and launch mortars right over the wall—and basically blanket or carpet bomb that area of the forward operating base.”

U.S. officials believe those Iranian-supplied weapons led to the deaths of at least 500 American soldiers in Iraq.

As leader of the elite “Qods Force” wing of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Corps, Soleimani played a central role.

“Soleimani is responsible for the Qods Force external operations,” Pregent told CBN News. “He has the Iraq portfolio; he has the Syria portfolio—he’s responsible for keeping Assad in power for four years. He has a hand in the death of 200,000 Syrians.”

Iran’s Ultimate Target

Soleimani’s ultimate target, however, is Israel.

“The Qods Force—‘Qods’ means Jerusalem—the Qods Force is an external force hell-bent on taking Jerusalem back,” said Pregent. “That’s their ultimate, long-term goal.”

In pursuit of that goal, Iran is attempting to establish a foothold in Syria’s Golan Heights, along Israel’s border.

In January 2015, an Israeli helicopter strike killed a group of top Hezbollah operatives near the Golan border, along with

an Iranian brigadier general.

That setback didn't deter Iran's long-term plans. Last month, Soleimani personally visited the Golan to rally Syrian and Hezbollah troops there.

"Qassam Soleimani has become much more public in his profile," said terrorism analyst Matthew Levitt. "Lots of pictures of him standing alongside Iraqi Shia militants in Iraq, in Syria—taking a very public role."

Likewise, Iran is stepping up its role in Syria's civil war. Some 2,000 Iranian and Iranian-backed fighters are now in Syria, battling to prop up the Assad regime.

They're joined by thousands of Hezbollah fighters and supported by a daily barrage of Russian air strikes against anti-Assad targets.

In addition, Russia, Iran, the Assad regime and Iraq are now all reportedly sharing intelligence.

An emergency visit by Soleimani to Moscow in July reportedly sealed the deal for Russian involvement in Syria. It was a visit made in direct violations of U.N. sanctions against the Qods Force leader.

"When we say that sanctions are still on Soleimani, they're not," said Pregent. "Because the Supreme Leader {of Iran} will give Soleimani as much money as he needs to continue Iran's export of terrorism. He answers directly to the Supreme Leader—Qassem Soleimani answers directly to Khamenei. And that's the problem—we don't understand that."

Iran Deal Fallout

Former FBI and Treasury Department analyst Matthew Levitt says the nuclear deal struck between Western powers and Iran will likely only make Soleimani and the Iranians more bold.

“Everybody is concerned that the money that is being released is going to enable Iran in a large part, or even a small part, to give more money to Houthi rebels in Yemen, the Assad regime in Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, etc.,” Levitt told CBN News.

As for Russia, its growing presence in the Middle East and alliance with Iran raises serious questions for Israel—such as, how will Russia react to a potential war between Israel and Hezbollah? Or an Israeli strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities?

The answers remain unclear.