

superpower. Its late entry into both World Wars typified a reluctance in the first half of the century to get involved in conflicts beyond its shores. The Korean War and the Vietnam War in some ways signalled a change in this attitude, in response, particularly, to the perceived threat of Communism.

Although Vietnam was marked by failure and left a deep psychological scar on the US, the collapse of Communism and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s was seen as a vindication of US Cold War policy. The US has always been a strong supporter of **Israel**, and has given it significant help in the past, particularly when at war with Arab neighbours. The Iraqi attack on Kuwait in 1990 drew the US forces into war in the Middle East. The September 11 attacks in 2001 have further encouraged a reluctant US to send forces for combat to the Middle East.

Joel 3:9 would seem to have particular relevance with regard to the US in Bible prophecy: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up". As the mightiest of the world powers the US has had to "wake up" to the need to get involved in the Middle East despite its desire to do otherwise. Jeremiah 31:10 states: "Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered **Israel** will

gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock".

As one of these nations, the US, although "afar off", has played an important role in helping **Jews** to settle in the Land of **Israel**. The US has strong ties with the UK, and could be seen as one of the "young lions" (Ezek. 38:13). However, it is important to recognise that the US is not **Tarshish**, and that as such we would expect the **United Kingdom** rather than the US to be taking the diplomatic lead at the time of **Gog's** invasion.

- 1861-65 Civil War
- 1917 Enters First World War
- 1929 Depression begins
- 1941 Enters Second World War following attack on Pearl Harbour
- 1950-53 Korean War
- 1956 Involvement in Vietnam begins
- 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion
- 1962 Cuba Missile Crisis
- 1963 Assassination of President Kennedy
- 1969 First man on moon
- 1975 Vietnam War ends
- 1978 Camp David accords between **Egypt** and **Israel**
- 1979-81 Iranian hostage crisis
- 1991 Cold War Ends
- 2001 'September 11' terrorist attacks
- 2003 Iraq War.

V

Vial, sixth

In Revelation 16 a series of prophecies is given which are depicted as the wrath of God being poured out upon the earth from seven vials: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (v. 1). The vials are equated with "plagues" (15:1). The first five vials relate to the judgements of God brought upon the Holy Roman Empire through the French Revolution and Napoleon.

The sixth vial is directed further east at the River **Euphrates**: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river **Euphrates**; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the **kings of the east** might be prepared" (16:12).

Just as the other vials had brought the Holy Roman Empire to an end, so this vial triggered the demise of the Ottoman Empire. The removal of this empire was an initial step to preparing the way for Christ and the **saints** (the "**kings of the east**") to move against **Europe** once they have established the Kingdom in **Israel**. In the meantime the vacuum formed by the demise of Ottoman Empire is filled by the **dragon (Russia)**, **beast (Europe)** and **false prophet (papacy)**. This vial will terminate with the battle of **Armageddon** (v. 16). Thus the return of Christ and the resurrection will take place during the sixth vial, and hence the warning given in the middle of this prophecy: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (v. 15). ([Refs. 10, 16, 26](#))