

Out of Europe into Africa?

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Bible prophecy shows that Britain will have influence in Africa at the time of the end. By contrast, it has a separate role from Europe. The trend towards Africa is seen by considering the recent G8 Summit. The tensions with Europe are illustrated by the challenges facing Britain as it takes on the European Union (EU) presidency. The downgrading of British diplomatic representation to the Vatican is also considered.

IN ISAIAH 18 it is written: "Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!" (vv. 1,2). These verses speak of how the Jews, the people "scattered and peeled", will be brought back to Israel when Christ is King in Jerusalem.

Tarshish will play a major role in this: "Surely the isles shall wait for Me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far" (60:9). Britain, the Tarshish power at the time of the end, will have influence "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia [Sudan]", into the continent of Africa, as "the land shadowing with wings". We can therefore expect Britain to continue to develop ties with the African continent.¹

The G8 Summit

The G8 (Group of Eight) consists of eight of the world's leading nations. It started as a group of six nations in the 1970s, set up to deal with the oil crisis and economic recession. The group meets annually. It has no formal authority, and compliance with policies and objectives is voluntary. This year it was the turn of Britain to hold the presidency of the group and to host the summit, held in Scotland in July. Prime Minister Tony Blair set two main objectives for the summit. He stated: "I really want to focus on the challenges of Africa and climate change during our presidency".²

As preparation for the G8's discussions on Africa, Britain established in February 2004 the Commission for Africa. The role of this commis-

sion was to define the problems which Africa faces and to come up with a list of recommendations. The findings of the commission provided a basis for discussions in the G8 Summit. The lead that Britain is taking in relation to Africa is significant in relation to Bible prophecy.

The G8 Summit pledged an unprecedented \$50 billion for aid in Africa. However, the famine in Niger, which came to the forefront of world attention after the G8 summit had ended, is a grim reminder of the magnitude of the problems in Africa. In the lead-up to the summit there was a campaign to 'Make Poverty History', led by men such as Bob Geldof.

However, their approach is an ungodly approach. Poverty will only be done away once the Kingdom of God is established in the earth with Christ as King. In the meantime there will always be poor people. As God said to Israel: "For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land" (Deut. 15:11); and as Christ said: "For ye have the poor always with you" (Mt. 26:11). We should give to the poor, but to embark on a humanistic campaign to make poverty history is to ignore the priority of Scripture, which is to "seek . . . first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (6:33).

The EU Presidency

Whilst we expect Britain to develop ties with Africa, as the Tarshish power Britain has a role distinct from the "kings of the earth" which make up the European beast as portrayed in Revelation 17. Whereas Tarshish will submit at an early stage to Christ and the saints, the "kings of the earth" will say, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2:3). The tensions between Britain and Europe are not difficult to see.

On 1 July 2005 Britain took over the presidency of the Council of the EU. The budget rebate which Britain currently enjoys is a source of discontent amongst other EU members. Britain has sought to link any discussion about this with reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. The continuing importance of agriculture, even in the developed world, illustrates the principle laid down in

Ecclesiastes that “the king himself is served by the field” (5:9). Britain’s stance on the rebate will hinder its role as honest broker as it seeks to find agreement on the budget for 2007–2013, which the Brussels Summit in June could not resolve. In addition to the budgetary issues, Britain has also placed aid to Africa on the presidency agenda.

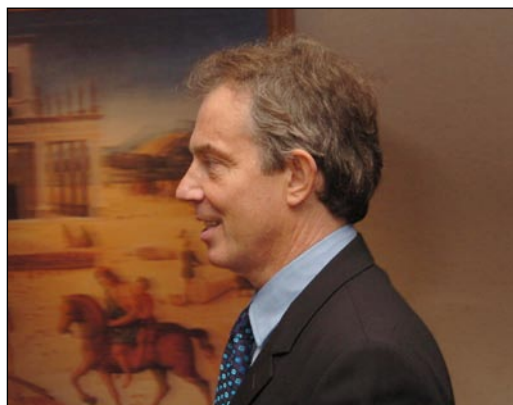
The rejection of the EU constitution by the people of France and the Netherlands, against the wishes of their governments, illustrates the tension between the “clay” of the people and the “iron” of the rulers (Dan. 2:43). One of the factors that appeared to lie behind this rejection was the concern that people had with regard to the possible entry of Turkey into the EU. Britain is keen for accession negotiations to begin with Turkey, but the rejection of the constitution has not helped Turkey’s cause. We expect Turkey as the Euphrates power (Rev. 16:12) to be dried up as the Russian dragon establishes itself in the Middle East. As is the case with Britain, Turkey will not be part of the European beast when Armageddon takes place.

Relocation

“All nations” (Rev. 18:23) will be deceived by Babylon the Great. However, although deceived, Britain is separate from the Catholic European beast. We should be looking for any sign that there is a tension between Britain and the papal false prophet. In June 2005 such a sign occurred. Writing in *The Times*, the reporter Richard Owen stated:

“Britain is to risk a diplomatic dispute with the Vatican by closing the offices and residence of the British Ambassador to the Holy See and relocating them within the premises of the British Embassy in Italy”.³

The ostensible reason for the move is that the ambassador will be better protected in the British Embassy. It is also, however, a cost-cutting exercise. British sources reported by *The Times* said that it was “not downgrading but down



Picture: European Commission

Tony Blair, currently president of the EC and the G8

sizing”. However, Vatican sources claim the timing is “bizarre” given that Benedict XVI is seeking to build on the links made with Britain by John Paul II.

In addition to the closing of the offices, it is also intended that the next ambassador will not necessarily be a career diplomat. The Vatican is unhappy about this because it will weaken its influence on Britain. As *The Times* stated: “Vatican officials fear that a non-diplomat will have diminished clout in London”. In response to this, the following month three former British ambassadors to the Holy See wrote to *The Times* to express their concern at what they saw as a “downgrading of Britain’s diplomatic representation to the Holy See”.⁴ It is perhaps a small sign, but it shows that there is a hint of clear water between Tarshish and Babylon.

1. For more detail see Bernard, N., “[Britain beyond the rivers in Africa](#)”, Mar. 2001, pp. 87-8.
2. <http://www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1078995902703>.
3. Owen, R. (2005), “Vatican’s faith is put to the test as diplomacy downgraded”, *The Times*, Jun. 11, p. 51.
4. Pellew, M., Palmer, A. and Broadley J. (2005), “Value of Vatican diplomats”, *The Times*, Jul. 16, p. 22.

Anti-Israel attacks in London

London Mayor Ken Livingstone recently lashed out at Israel, comparing the Likud party to Hamas and accusing Israel of “crimes against humanity”. At a London press conference, Livingstone, who has a long record of anti-Israel diatribes, drew a connection between the London blasts and the Middle East, saying Israel had “done horrendous things which border on crimes against humanity”. Livingstone expressed understanding for the motivations of Palestinian suicide bombers. Meanwhile, a recent hard-left rally in London called for destruction of the Jewish state. “It’s about time that the British Government made some reparations for the Balfour Declaration”, said hard-left MP George Galloway at the pro-Palestinian rally.—*Joan Brooks*