

God's News In The News

Week One Hundred Thirty-Two

The Rise Of The Machines?

Deadly Toasters?

A common joke I have whenever Artificial Intelligence or AI is brought up is that I can handle a scale that talks to me or a refrigerator that inventories the food in it and advises me on what to buy is ok, but when my toaster tells me what to do for my day, I draw the line. Images of Arnold Schwarzenegger saying, "I'll be back," are conjured up in our heads and the battle for survival against the machines plays out when I see a talking robot that is very realistic to the point, I won't tell you what it can do in mixed company. And yet, scientists push forward trying to replace us with robotic machines that are controlled by humans except when they're not, creating strange bedfellows with conservatives fighting beside the American Civil Liberties Union when said machines have the potential to be used for evil and not good or just decide to go off on their own. Am I making this up? No, I'm not.

Police Robots

According to a *New York Post* article by Isabel Keane on November 30th of this year, such a police force is a reality:

City supervisors in San Francisco on Tuesday voted to give police the ability to deploy potentially lethal, remote-controlled robots in emergency situations.

The move would allow officers to use ground-based robots to carry out deadly force "when risk of loss of life to members of the public or officers is imminent and officers cannot subdue the threat after using alternative force options or de-escalation tactics."

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted 8 to 3 in favor of the highly-debated policy.

None of the police robots in San Francisco will have firearms attached, but they could be able to carry out deadly force in extreme situations, according to Supervisor Rafael Mandelman.

"Under this policy, SFPD is authorized to use these robots to carry out deadly force in extremely limited situations when risk to loss of life to members of the public or officers is imminent and outweighs any other force option available," he wrote on Twitter.

Of course, not everyone was on board for this move as attested to by the three dissenting votes:

Beyond disappointed that the Board seems poised to allow SFPD to use weaponized robots to use force against human beings. Only 4 of us clearly against. Shortsighted, dangerous, sad. The spirit of the SF I have always admired is weeping today," Supervisor Hillary Ronen said.

Board President Shamann Walton opposed the measures on the basis of racial discrimination while Supervisor Connie Chan bemoaned the fact that by state law they have to comply.

What, Me Worry?

The article went on to say that there are limits:

The proposal was amended Tuesday to specify that officers could only utilize the robots after trying alternative force or de-escalation tactics. The department will also limit how many high-ranking officers will have the authorization to use the robots as a deadly force option.

San Francisco's police department currently has a dozen ground robots that are used to assess bombs or provide eyes in low visibility situations. The department acquired the robots between 2010 and 2017 and have never been used to deliver an explosive device, according to officials.

A state law that went into effect this year now requires police departments to inventory military-grade equipment, like the robots, and seek approval for their use.

Limits, yes, concerns, there are many. Right now these robot police machines are controlled by high-ranking officers which may assuage some, but the judgment factors could get blurred over time as law enforcement numbers continue to decline and even unions demand safe work environments.

Here's Looking At You

On another technology front, facial recognition scanners when using mass transit is already in place around the world, and may be coming to an airport near you as an op-ed article by *Bonnie Kristian* of *Reason*:

That kind of slippery language from officials on the verge of acquiring new power should always be a red flag, one on the scale car dealerships are wont to wave. It also popped up this week from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), which is in the process of rolling out facial recognition software as an alternative to a human checking your face against your photo ID at the airport.

"The scanning and match is made and immediately overwritten at the Travel Document Checker podium," TSA program analyst Jason Lim told The Washington Post. "We keep neither the live photo nor the photo of the ID." But the agency admitted to the Post for this same report that it does, in fact, keep some photos for up to two years—which means Lim's account is likewise a mere status update (and arguably a dishonest one at that).

We don't keep your data is not We won't keep your data, and it is certainly not We are by law not permitted to keep your data. In the long run, only the last means anything at all.

If you read that correctly, *Kristian* is more than sounding the alarm on the loss of privacy which seems to not ever going to stop under the guise of security. While this technology is used and administered by people, it could eventually be installed in the robot law enforcement machines to search for anyone deemed a person of interest or worse.

Sounding The Alarm

Our good friend *Elon Musk* has been shouting from the roof tops that this looming AI takeover is something we need to anticipate long before we use regulations to control it as we see in San Francisco. In a September 27, 2017, *Fox News* article he talked about his concerns:

Elon Musk has sounded warning bells on artificial intelligence for quite some time, as he believes it could be a huge threat to society. Now, he's told the government it could be our biggest risk.

In a July 15 speech at the National Governors Association Summer Meeting in Rhode Island, Musk said the government needs to proactively regulate artificial intelligence before there is no turning back, describing it as the "biggest risk we face as a civilization."

"Until people see robots going down the street killing people, they don't know how to react because it seems so ethereal," he said in comments obtained by tech website Recode. "AI is a rare case

where I think we need to be proactive in regulation instead of reactive. Because I think by the time we are reactive in AI regulation, it's too late."

For us as Christians and students of Bible Prophecy, where does this all fit in? If we are to believe Musk, the next world conflict will be the cause of it as a comment from Russian President Vladimir Putin from a 2017 online article from *The Verge* attests:

Artificial intelligence is the future, not only for Russia, but for all humankind," said Putin, reports RT. "It comes with colossal opportunities, but also threats that are difficult to predict. Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world."

Russia will be a major player in the Gog and Magog war predicted in **Ezekiel 38** so anytime we read about them, we need to pay attention.

Transhumanism On The Rise

In the "if you can't beat them, join them" philosophy, those who are pursuing putting chips in the brains of people say that only when we merge man and machine will we get the edge on AI. Musk and those behind the Great Reset seem to agree that creating a new kind of human is the future of man. While it has been the domain of science fiction to propose such a hybrid existence, we are literally on the precipice of seeing that happen. I used to mock such talk, but I now see how it is a threat to humanity while it is proposed as a benefit to humanity. So, does God have anything to say about this? As they say in Minnesota, you betcha. You see, this isn't the first time man has tried to play God as it were. And God ended that little endeavor pretty quickly. The account is found in

Genesis 11:

At that time all mankind spoke a single language. 2 As the population grew and spread eastward, a plain was discovered in the land of Babylon and was soon thickly populated. 3-4 The people who lived there began to talk about building a great city, with a temple-tower reaching to the skies—a proud, eternal monument to themselves.

"This will weld us together," they said, "and keep us from scattering all over the world." So they made great piles of hard-burned brick, and collected bitumen to use as mortar.

5 But when God came down to see the city and the tower mankind was making, 6 he said, "Look! If they are able to accomplish all this when they have just begun to exploit their linguistic and political unity, just think of what they will do later! Nothing will be unattainable for them! 7 Come, let us go down and give them different languages, so that they won't understand each other's words!" (Gen 11:1-7, TLB)

God Will Intervene, But How?

While we don't know exactly what God inferred when He said that there would be nothing that they could accomplish, the need to break up the proverbial party was pretty clear. Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has poked and prodded mankind to be like God. It was his lead lie to Eve, and it continues to not only be his modus operandi, but one he won't stop using because it works every time. In context, it wasn't that God was denying His creation to advance in discovering and using technology, it was that they desired to rise to the level of God that was at the heart of the issue.

According to historians, the tower of Babel was meant to be God at the top. Here is how an article from answersingenesis.org frames the issue:

This was not an innocent, scientifically naive, primitive effort to reach the highest heavens! It was, instead, a brilliant but blasphemous effort to dismiss forever the God who had commanded Noah and his three sons after the Flood to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1). Instead of honouring His name (i.e. His character and attributes), they said, “Let us build for ourselves a city ... and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4).

The entire enterprise simply reeked with human pride and arrogance. Satan almost succeeded in completely dominating mankind again, as he had done at the fall of Adam and Eve, and as he had done before the Flood (with the exception of one family [Genesis 6:5; Hebrews 11:7]).

How Close Are We To Another Intervention?

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Pet 3:9, NIV)

Very close in my estimation. There are secular leaders who may laud the advances in science and technology and offer seemingly benign logic for how they will improve mankind, but such knowledge and expertise rarely stays benevolent in its usage. Rulers almost always have teams looking for the next great weapon and without God’s mercy intervening, we will ultimately destroy ourselves. God doesn’t want anyone to perish let alone perish without knowing God as their savior. He will come down again and break up plans for world domination if it will give man and women the opportunity to give their hearts to Him. You see, it was grace and mercy that was behind confusing the languages not some cruel dictator responding to a threat to his power as some suppose was the inspiration for it. Lives will be saved not only in this life, but the one to come when God shows up. And show up He will.