

UPDATE: PRAYER FOR UNIVERSAL PEACE
JULY 23, 2014

I STANDING IN THE SHADOWS OF BISHOP
DESMOND TUTU, NOBEL PEACE WINNER,
1984; BOB SIMON, CBS 60 MINUTES COR-
RESPONDENT; SECRETARY JOHN KERRY - AND
OTHER MORAL GAINTS - SOLEMNLY PRAY!!!

"He who fights with monsters should
be careful least he thereby become a
monster. And if thou gaze long into an
abyss the abyss will also gaze into
thee."

- F. Nietzsche.

MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

- BY: DR. MARK FRANKL

When a country is so powerful, it
can silence its critics and on on.

Posing universal view. — then it only hears
ONE 'VOICE' ; i.e., IT'S OWN.

90% of Israelis support the war on
"Gaza" Now in the NEWS, BBC WORLD NEWS
AMERICA PBS.ORG AUGUST 4, 5, 6, 2014;
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY 5:30 p.m. CDT
WPT.ORG

ISRAELI LOYAL SUPPORTER, the U.S. Govern-
ment, e.g., Sen. (R.S.C.) Lindsey Graham
merely echo Israel's Leaders' pro-
clamations. ABC THE VIEW.COM AUGUST 4, 2014

The images from tiny "Gaza" of over
1600 women, children and ELDERLY
killed and utter devastating out-
come — Loss of Homes and HOPE — is
too reminiscent of THE GHETTOS!!!
AND the Merciless Bombing of DRES-
DEN during WORLD WAR II

Then over 1,600 INNOCENT civilians
lost their LIVES, Id, — However, the

CRUELEST WEAPON ... BOMB OF ALL IS
TO BLAME these helpless victims for
ISRAEL'S BOMBS RAINING FIRE DOWN
UPON their UNPROTECTED HEADS !!!

Yet the mainstream media reports
ISRAEL is NOT prepared to accept causal-
ities - though 67 soldiers - is reported
lost - is what prompted Israel's
cease fire agreement - ABC THE VIEW -
COM AUGUST 4, 2014, MONDAY, 10: A.M. CDT
GUEST CO-HOST Kayleigh MCENANY IN RE
LINDSEY GRAHAM, SEN. (R.S.C.) COMMENTS -

CBS NEWS.COM CBS EVENING NEWS
JULY 27, 2014, SUNDAY 5:00 P.M. CDT; AUGUST
4, 5, 6, 7, 2014, MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNES-
DAY, THURSDAY 5:30 P.M. CDT. ABC THIS
WEEK SUNDAY ABC.COM GUEST MR. DAVID
REMINICK, EDITOR THE NEW YORKER,
AUGUST 3, 2014 CDT, ABC NEWS.COM
EVENING NEWS JULY 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 2014
MONDAY MONDAY-THURSDAY 5:30 P.M.
NBC NEWS.COM EVENING NEWS JULY 27-

-31, 2014, MONDAY-THURSDAY 5:30 AM
CDT.

ALL WE ARE SAYING IS GIVE
PEACE A CHANCE ! ! ! ! !

— LENNON x YOKO..

HOW LONG!!

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION: MLK, JR.
NYC RIVERSIDE CHURCH SERMON;
MATT. 5:9 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO
MAKE PEACE."

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL
BY Friedrich Nietzsche, A. 101
1989 ISBN 0-879758-X

MR. TOM FRIEDMAN TYT COLUMNIST,
AUTHOR

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current Sunni insurgency is being fought out."

A Sunni militant group — the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which now calls itself the Islamic State — is battling the Shiite-dominated central government. The rebels claimed late last month to have seized control of the Baiji oil refinery, but the government said it had retaken control of it.

Benchmark West Texas crude oil closed at a 10-month high of \$107 on June 20. By Thursday, it had dipped to \$104 a barrel, a sixth-straight daily drop. Still, global markets remain jittery about what the future could hold should Iraq's sectarian and regional tensions worsen.

The insurgency is not expected to reach Iraq's main oil producing fields in the south and in Kurdish-controlled areas in the north any time soon, but in the long term "infrastructure, as well as producing assets, will be a tempting target if the ISIS offensive moves into higher gear," wrote Raad Alkadiri, managing director at IHS Energy, a London-based consulting firm, in an analysis emailed to USA TODAY.

Any new supply outages could push global oil prices higher — perhaps towards \$120 a barrel, wrote Alkadiri.

The situation in Iraq has global leaders worried because the country — along with the USA — was expected to be one of the major growth areas for oil production, as global demand increases in an already tight market with little spare capacity, say analysts.

"If Iraq can't deliver on that then the market looks a lot tighter," said Mallinson. "If there are disruptions to Iraq in the short-term, it's Saudi Arabia that will increase its production to balance the supply and make up for the difference."

But instability, a weak government and redirected resources could block investment needed to develop Iraq's oil production in the long term, meaning it may get harder to deal with future disruptions and meet growing demand, Mallinson added. International companies are already removing staff and preparing to move everyone out at quick notice.

"That points to higher oil prices in the medium-term," said Mallinson.

Iraq's capacity to rally its troops could also affect the central government's plans to control exports from the semi-autonomous, oil-producing region of Kurdistan. The Kurdistan Regional Government has been pushing for more political autonomy and more control of oil produced in the northern region.

Despite objections from Baghdad, the Kurdish government plans to export oil directly to Turkey, the only way it believes it

can get a fair share of the country's oil wealth.

While Baghdad has said it will cooperate with Kurdistan's skilled and disciplined security force — the Peshmerga — to combat ISIS, analysts say the Kurds have been using the security crisis to extend their political and economic control.

"What's happened is the Kurds appear to be taking every opportunity they can amid the crisis to push for the autonomous sales and for greater control," said Mallinson. "Their forces have occupied the city of Kirkuk, which includes major oil fields, and they are trying to take control of that. And they've made it very clear, they still intend to export their oil without Baghdad's approval."

Japanese grapes fetch record '\$5,400 a bunch'

Bridal couples at a Japanese wedding hall will have a special treat at their banquet: a bunch of fresh, juicy grapes that cost a record \$5,400.

A wedding hall operator bought the Ruby Roman grapes at auction for 550,000 yen (\$5,400) on Saturday, the first day of the buying season in Ishikawa prefecture, central Japan, local media reported.

The bunch of around 30 grapes weighed some 800 grammes (28 ounces), Japan's public broadcaster NHK said, adding that the red-skin grape can be as big as three centimetres (1.2 inches) in diameter.

The top notch grapes -- costing around \$180 a pop -- will be served at the wedding hall in Kanazawa, central Ishikawa.

"I was surprised to see a higher price than I had originally imagined, but I would like bridal couples to savour them and have a great memory," the hall owner was quoted by NHK as saying.

Around 30 bunches of the Ruby Romans were auctioned Saturday. Some 16,000 bunches are set to be sold this season only in Ishikawa which put the grape on the market in 2008.

Then, the first bunch of Ruby Roman grapes fetched 100,000 yen.

Japanese often present top-quality fruits such as melons as gifts. The first batches of carefully grown fruit often fetch extraordinary prices, making headlines in newspapers.

Toronto mayor can't promise he'll stay sober

TORONTO (AP) — Embattled Toronto Mayor Rob Ford said Friday that he won't guarantee he will stay sober if he's re-elected, telling a radio show that people will just have to trust him.

Ford, who returned this week to City Council from two months in rehab, said in

an interview on Newstalk 1010 that he can't make promises about something over which he has "no control."

Radio host Jerry Agar said that as someone who has supported Ford in the past, the lack of guarantees that he won't drink again if re-elected makes it tough to "take another four-year shot on Rob Ford."

"That's up to you," Ford replied. "You're going to have to look at my record and compare it to the people I'm running (against) and you're basically going to have to trust me."

Ford insisted that returning to lead Canada's largest city and run for re-election Oct. 27 won't compromise his recovery.

Ford said earlier this week that he's used "every drug you can probably think of," and blamed substance abuse for the racist and homophobic language he's used. He said he's used cocaine, marijuana and hallucinogenic mushrooms, but not heroin. He acknowledged he smoked crack but denied he was a crack addict. He said he drank at City Hall, but never did drugs at work.

The mayor announced in late April that he would seek help for alcohol addiction after a video surfaced that apparently showed him smoking crack cocaine. Reports last year of a similar video led to months of denials before Ford made his statement about smoking crack in a "drunken stupor."

A small group of protesters, inspired by Joe Killoran, a shirtless jogger whose rant at Ford during a Canada Day event on July 1 touched off a social media frenzy, gathered outside the radio studios.

"We have no shirts, you have no ethics," read one sign carried by the protesters, many of whom were bare chested.

Since his return Ford has given a handful of interviews, but has refused to take questions from city hall journalists at large about the circumstances surrounding his alcohol and drug use, the company he kept and offensive remarks he has made.

Gaza Death Toll Rises Sharply as Israel Escalates Attacks

JERUSALEM—The death toll in the Gaza Strip rose sharply Thursday as Israel escalated its air and sea assault on the coastal enclave and Palestinian militants launched rockets at Tel Aviv and other Israeli cities.

At least 26 Gazans were killed and more than 500 wounded in early-morning attacks, the Ma'an News Agency reported. That brought to at least 81 the number of Palestinians killed in the latest confrontation between Israel and Hamas, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza. There have been no Israeli casualties.

Israeli air and naval forces hit 320 targets overnight, said military spokesman Lt. Col.

Both Eaton Corporation and Plexus Corporation received millions of dollars in financial awards from WEDC, only to later lay off workers whose jobs were taken by employees at the companies' foreign facilities.

WEDC spokesman Mark Maley said "even the loss of one job in Wisconsin is one too many" and WEDC routinely works closely with companies that are considering other options to ensure that those jobs stay in the state.

In 2011, WEDC awarded Eaton Corp. with up to \$1 million in tax credits if the company met job creation and retention goals at its manufacturing facility in Menomonee Falls. The company has received \$190,000 in tax credits so far, WEDC said.

In April 2013, Eaton laid off 163 employees at its Cooper Power Systems plant in Pewaukee and announced it was moving those jobs to Mexico. Less than a year later, WEDC awarded Eaton Corp. with up to \$1.36 million in additional tax credits for a proposed \$54 million expansion at that same Pewaukee plant.

Maley said Wednesday that Eaton Corp. recently notified WEDC it will not seek any tax credits for that project.

WEDC also awarded Plexus Corp. with tax credits of up to \$2 million in 2011 and up to \$15 million in 2012. Plexus has received \$4.7 million in tax credits to this point, Maley said.

In July 2012, Plexus said it was laying off 116 workers from its facility in Neenah. The U.S. Department of Labor since has ruled those employees, as well as all Plexus employees laid off since December 2011, are eligible to receive federal Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits. Those benefits are only available to employees who were laid off because their jobs were outsourced to foreign countries.

Democratic candidate for governor Mary Burke, secretary of the state Commerce Department for nearly three years under Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle, seized on the news. She issued a statement calling it "appalling" and said as governor she would insist that every WEDC award protects against outsourcing of jobs.

Walker's campaign spokeswoman Alleigh Marre called Burke's comments "the height of hypocrisy" given that she is a former executive at Trek Bicycle Corp., which also outsourced hundreds of jobs to China. Burke has said she wasn't involved in the decision to move jobs overseas at the company started by her father in the 1970s.

Germany asks top U.S. spy to leave amid flap

BERLIN — Germany has asked the CIA station chief in the country to leave the

country, an unusual action among allies that is a very public expression of anger over reported cases of U.S. spying in the country.

"The representative of the U.S. intelligence services at the Embassy of the United States of America has been requested to leave Germany," government spokesman Steffen Seibert said in a statement Thursday.

A day earlier, federal prosecutors in Germany said police had searched the office and apartment of an individual with ties to the country's military who is suspected of working for U.S. intelligence. Those raids followed the arrest of an employee of Germany's foreign intelligence services who was accused of selling secrets to the CIA.

Seibert said the request to have the CIA official leave was made "against the backdrop of the ongoing investigations of the Federal Prosecutor General as well as the questions pending for months about the activities of the US intelligence services in Germany, for which the Lower House of Parliament has also established a parliamentary inquiry committee."

German officials have also been angered by the revelations of former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden of widespread U.S. surveillance in Germany, including of Chancellor Angela Merkel's cellphone, an operation that has since been halted.

"The Federal Government takes these incidents very seriously," said Seibert. "It remains vital for Germany, in the interest of the security of its citizens and its forces abroad, to cooperate closely and trustfully with western partners, in particular with the USA. To do so, however, mutual trust and openness are necessary. The Federal Government continues to be ready for this and expects the same from its closest partners."

U.S. officials had no immediate comment on the German government's action.

"We have seen these reports and have no comment on a purported intelligence matter," said Catlin Hayden, a spokesperson for the National Security Council. "However, our security and intelligence relationship with Germany is a very important one and it keeps Germans and Americans safe. It is essential that cooperation continue in all areas and we will continue to be in touch with the German government in appropriate channels."

For years, Germany has sought to be included in a group of countries with whom the United States has a non-espionage pact. Those nations include Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The Obama administration and that of George W. Bush both resisted such entreaties, in part because many U.S. intelligence officials believe that there are

too many areas where German and U.S. security interests diverge.

"The Germans do lots and lots of stuff and don't tell us everything they do," said a former senior U.S. intelligence official who worked extensively with the BND. U.S. policymakers turn to the CIA and other agencies for deeper understanding of issues, including whether there are gaps between the two countries in their commitment to efforts to block any nuclear weapons ambitions by Iran, the former official said.

The crackdown may also reflect political dynamics in Germany, where critics of Merkel have taken advantage of the Snowden leaks to cast her as weak for failing to grasp or prevent such extensive U.S. espionage.

The arrest and raids are driven in part by "this business that they want a no-espionage agreement," said the former U.S. intelligence official. "But it's also being driven by internal politics" and the perception that the Snowden disclosures "made them look incompetent."

The arrest and raids in recent days have also generated concern that Germany may not be finished rounding up alleged U.S. spies. After the Snowden leaks, the CIA evaluated operations in Europe and put some on hold because of fears of exposure and ensuing tension with Germany and other allies, a second former U.S. intelligence official said.

The latest developments also exposed an apparent lapse by the CIA to keep the White House apprised of setbacks in Germany.

A U.S. official acknowledged that when President Obama spoke with Merkel on July 3, he had not been made aware that a CIA informant had been arrested there the day before, a situation reported by the New York Times. Merkel did not raise the issue during the call.

Iraq fighting doesn't raise oil prices, yet

BAGHDAD — Iraq is one of the world's top oil exporters, so you would think that a recent attack by militants on its largest oil refinery amid a deteriorating security situation in the country would prompt global fears of oil shortages and spark a spike in prices.

Instead, prices are about where they were a year ago, although they have been creeping up in recent months. Why no panic? Iraq's vast crude supplies are safe for the time being because the bulk of its oil production — about 2.5 million barrels a day — takes place in the south, far from the current insurgency, analysts say.

"Iraq oil production is spread throughout the country," said Richard Mallinson, a geopolitical analyst in London. "So only about 10-15% takes place in the northern part of the country, which is where the

Peter Lerner. The targets included underground tunnel networks, rocket launching sites and four alleged members of Palestinian militant groups responsible for missile volleys against Israel.

Hamas and other Palestinian militants in Gaza also showed no signs on Thursday of scaling back or stop their rocket attacks on cities and towns in central and southern Israel.

As of late afternoon, 96 rockets had fallen in Israel, and at least 17 have been intercepted by the Israeli air defense system, the military said.

Israel Radio quoted Brig. Gen. Moti Amoz, the chief military spokesman, as cautioning the Israeli public to be prepared for a long operation. He also said thousands of targets had been approved.

As in the two previous major clashes between Israel and Hamas in 2008 and 2012, the rising civilian death toll in Gaza was a controversy.

The Israeli military said that eight members of a family in the city of Khan Younis, all noncombatants, were killed the when they returned to their home prematurely on Tuesday after being warned that it would be targeted. The Israel air force said the killings weren't intentional.

The Israeli government says Hamas is firing rockets from houses and streets in neighborhoods populated by civilians, thus exposing them to retaliation.

The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem condemned the military's policy of targeting the homes of suspected militants.

"Even if uninvolved civilians are not injured, these houses are not legitimate military targets, and attacking them is a grave violation of international humanitarian law," the group said Thursday.

Fears that the latest round of fighting between Hamas and Israel would trigger further violence in the West Bank were given some credence on Thursday, as Israeli police arrested two Palestinians with explosive devices near the settlement of Ariel.

"We have confirmed it was related to a planned terrorist attack," police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said.

EU top court rejects German language test for Turks

The EU's top court says it is wrong for Germany to impose a basic language requirement on Turks who want to join their spouses in Germany.

The German language test makes family reunification more difficult and is not compatible with an EU-Turkey agreement reached in 1970, the judges said.

Germany brought in the rule to boost integration and stop forced marriages.

About three million ethnic Turks live in Germany, and half of them are German citizens. Turkey is not yet in the EU.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling is specific to Turkish migrants to the EU.

However, it could influence court cases affecting similar language requirements in the EU. ECJ rulings are binding EU-wide.

Non-EU nationals applying to stay permanently in the UK have to demonstrate intermediate English language skills and pass a "Life in the UK" test.

EU nationals enjoy visa-free travel throughout the 28-nation EU and the residence rules are less strict for them.

Germany's ruling Christian Democrats (CDU) said the ECJ ruling only applied to Turks, and the language test would still be a requirement for immigrants' spouses from other countries.

Right to family life

The ruling concerns Naime Dogan, a Turkish national wishing to join her husband - also Turkish - who has lived in Germany since 1998.

In January 2012 the Germany embassy in Ankara refused to grant her a visa for family reunification purposes, on the grounds that she was not proficient in German.

The judges said the German language requirement failed to take account of individual circumstances. They argued that the right to family life outweighed the justification for the measure.

A centre-left Social Democrat (SPD) politician in Germany's ruling coalition, Aydan Ozoguz, welcomed the ruling. She said dropping the test would not make it harder to integrate immigrants. Existing German language courses in Germany were well designed to help immigrants integrate, she said.

Talks on Turkey's EU membership bid reopened last November, but Ankara is still a long way from meeting all the stringent EU criteria.

Since they began in 2005 the talks have stalled over issues such as freedom of speech and democracy, treatment of religious minorities, judicial reform and ongoing tensions with Cyprus, an existing EU member.

Raytheon's \$70,000 magic bullet

Smart bombs. Laser-guided missiles. Actual laser guns.

The weapons that America's defense contractors churn out often seem like the stuff of science fiction. The platforms that

deploy them, too, sound unfailingly high-tech: "fifth-generation" fighter jets, "drone" aircraft, and "stealth" warships. But did you know that one of the military-industrial complex's most important inventions comes out of the barrel of a howitzer?

King Arthur, eat your heart out

It's called the "Excalibur," and it's a 155-millimeter howitzer round that creator Raytheon (ticker: RTN) says can target an object 30 miles away and consistently hit within two meters of that target. To put that in perspective, say you set up a Paladin self-propelled howitzer in San Jose, Calif., and stood William Tell's son somewhere in the suburbs of San Francisco with an apple on his head. Say you then told the Paladin to hit the apple with an Excalibur round. Excalibur might miss the apple -- but nine times out of 10, it'll nail the younger Tell somewhere between socks and eyebrows.

In fact, Excalibur is usually even more accurate than that. In a test firing last year, several Excalibur rounds fired at a distance of 30 miles landed within one meter of their targets, on average. (It achieves this extraordinary range by gliding on wings at the apex of its firing arc, while the extraordinary accuracy comes via GPS guidance.)

Excalibur and the Paladin

Now, you'll notice that this article specifically cited Excalibur rounds fired from a Paladin self-propelled howitzer. This was not unintentional. BAE Systems' (BAESY) M109A6 Paladin is key to the argument for why Excalibur is important to Raytheon.

Raytheon, in partnership with BAE, designed Excalibur to be fired from the Paladin (among other weapons systems). The Paladin's ammunition magazine holds 39 rounds. And at last report, the U.S. Army and National Guard had bought a total of 975 Paladins for their arsenals.

Judging from recent contract announcements by the Pentagon, the Army is paying about \$70,000 per Paladin round. So filling up each Paladin magazine with Excaliburs works out to 39 x 975 x 70,000, which equals a \$2.66 billion revenue opportunity for Raytheon. (And the opportunity could be even bigger. This is because in addition to the Paladin, Excalibur can also be fired from 155mm guns including the American M198 and M777 howitzers, Germany's Panzerhaubitze 2000, the U.K.'s AS-90, and Sweden's Archer Artillery System. So the sales potential for this munition could be multiple times \$2.66 billion.)

What's so great about Excalibur?

But for now let's focus just on the potential of the Paladin. Excalibur is an extraordinarily accurate and long-ranged weapon. That's certainly one argument in its

BY: LEON I R BY

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DATED: AUGUST 7, 2014

favor. But it costs \$70,000 a pop -- a good deal for Raytheon, but a less obvious argument in favor of the Army buying it. Here's why the math works, regardless:

Paladins today ordinarily carry 39 unguided howitzer rounds, which are produced by arms makers including General Dynamics (NYSE: GD) and Esterline (NYSE: ESL) and cost about \$1,000 each. But because such rounds are "dumb," Army experts estimate it can take anywhere from 10 to 50 unguided rounds to destroy a target that Excalibur can take out in a single shot. So on average, a Paladin firing unguided rounds might have to nearly empty its magazine to destroy a target that -- if armed with Excaliburs -- it could destroy with just one shot.

Replacing dumb rounds with Excaliburs would hurt revenues at General Dynamics and Esterline. But it should permit a Paladin to destroy targets faster and destroy more targets, and to cause less collateral damage in the process. And because the Paladin won't go through its ammunition as quickly, the Army won't need to load, ship, unload, and reload as much ammunition -- saving vast amounts of money up and down the supply chain.

When you consider the efficiencies Excalibur permits on the supply chain "tail," the Army may very well end up saving money by buying Excaliburs -- even at 70 times the cost of a conventional howitzer round.

What all this means for investors

The superiority of the Excalibur over conventional howitzer rounds -- in range, in accuracy, in efficiency of operation of the Paladin, and in cost to transport -- will make this product incredibly attractive to the military. Even at \$70,000 a pop, the Pentagon is going to buy a lot of them. Indeed, they're already buying a lot of them.

In recent months, we've highlighted two big purchases of Excaliburs -- one in August last year, for 765 rounds, and a second just last week, for 757 more. Each one of these purchases was for more rounds than all the Excaliburs fired in anger... ever. It's easy to see how the humble howitzer could become a multibillion-dollar business for Raytheon. And even on a business as big as Raytheon's (\$23.3 billion in sales last year), it's going to be big enough move the needle.

Raytheon stock is down today. But don't be surprised when it starts moving back up.

Jeep may make Wrangler lighter, less powerful

There are some cars that are difficult to mess with without risking alienating those who make up their core group of buyers and biggest fans. Now Jeep looks ready to touch the third rail when it comes to the vehicle

that represents the purest form of the brand, Wrangler.

Wrangler remains one of the toughest and smallest rock-crawling SUVs on the market. But it burns a lot of gas.

To improve gas mileage when the new one hits in 2017, Jeep is considering a lighter body, more transmission gears or a smaller engine, according to *Automotive News*.

The current Wrangler is rated at 17 miles per gallon in the city, 21 mpg on the highway, for either the automatic transmission or the manual. The four-door version gets slightly less.

Wrangler is running into the problem that has bedeviled other models. On one hand, it has to be true to its heritage. On the other, it has to fend off imitators that may win hearts of buyers even if they aren't as capable where it counts. In this case, it's on the trail.

Ford has also tried to handle the same issue with its new Mustang. It broke some of the traditions that have defined the brand in the name of progress and better fuel economy for the 2015 version, which is yet to hit the streets. (The new one will offer independent rear suspension and a turbocharged EcoBoost engine option, for instance.)

Wrangler also to contend with tougher fuel-economy standards. The *News* says it could get an eight-speed automatic transmission, instead of the current five speeds. It also could get a smaller engine than its current 3.6-liter V-6, which is a lot of power for a relatively small vehicle.

Aluminum body? Fiat Chrysler Automobiles CEO Sergio Marchionne has hinted at the possibility, but it's not a sure bet.

Restaurants hungry for workers

Well, no one is asking that -- yet. But at the rate restaurant jobs are growing, investors have to at least start to believe that the \$683 billion restaurant industry is on the mend.

The industry added a net 32,800 jobs in June and more than 173,000 jobs during the first six months of the year, says Bruce Grindy, chief economist at the National Restaurant Association. Overall, restaurant employment was up 3.1% on a year-to-date basis through June 2014, nearly double the 1.7% gain in total U.S. employment.

Job growth within the restaurant industry has been broad-based in 2014, just as it has been throughout the post-recession period. On a year-to-date basis through May 2014 (segment-level figures are lagged by one month), fast-food restaurants added jobs at a strong 4.0% rate. This puts fast food on pace to post job growth of at least 4% for the third consecutive year.

But the fancier restaurants didn't do quite as well. The full-service segment added jobs at

a 2.9% rate through the first five months of 2014. While this is down somewhat from the consecutive 3.4% gains registered in 2012 and 2013, full-service employment gains remain well above job growth in the overall economy.

Meanwhile, those restaurants that cater to snackers are hiring like crazy. The snack and non-alcoholic beverage bar segment -- which includes concepts such as coffee, doughnut and ice cream shops -- added jobs at a robust 6.1% rate on a year-to-date basis through May 2014. If this trend continues, it would represent this segment's strongest growth since 2007, as well as the third consecutive year with employment gains above 5%.

That's something for investors to chew on.

Push Button for Pizza: A New Era for Vending Machines

It happens every day: Around 3pm, I start fumbling for quarters and trying to decide which unsatisfying, wastefully packaged, nutritionally vapid nugget to get from vending machine around the corner.

But what if instead of candy, chips, and soda, a vending machine could dispense hot pizza and cupcakes? That'd make them more like an automat, and a heck of a lot more enticing.

Good news: There are a growing number of companies working to create vending machines that dispense your favorite treats. It's a new dawn for speedy snacking.

Pizza

According to Pizza Marketplace, Americans consume 350 slices of pizza a second (collectively, not per person). With five *billion* pizzas eaten worldwide each year, it's no wonder Dutch company A1 Concepts has created a pizza vending machine.

The coolest thing about this contraption is that it actually constructs and bakes your pizza on request, rather than reheating a frozen pie. The mechanical wonder starts with all the base ingredients like flour, water, and tomato sauce. It only requires 2.5 minutes to prepare and serve a personal size pizza, and each one costs €3.

Just imagine the profits from putting one of these in a college dormitory.

French Fries

Made by a Chinese company and apparently in use all over Europe, these french fry-making marvels actually deep-fry your frites in 90 seconds, and spit 'em out along with ketchup, salt, and a napkin. In the video above, you can see one in use at a Romanian gas station. Could there be a better place?

Cupcakes