

Entertainment Outlook

A military coup could happen in Canada

It's chilling the way two apparently unrelated events can form a conjunction which has the gravest imaginable implications for the future of the nation.

Event number one: Public opinion polls show a massive surge in NDP support, raising the possibility that the next federal election could result in a three-way deadlock.

Event number two: After a close and contentious election result in Fiji, that Commonwealth nation's third-ranking military leader staged a coup which toppled the precarious government.



Weir's View

By Ian Weir

Now, I don't wish to provoke public hysteria, and I would plead with you to remain calm. All the same, the question must be addressed: If a military coup can take place in one Commonwealth nation, could the same fate befall Canada?

Since none of Canada's legitimate journalists seem concerned enough to investigate this dire possibility, I have had to launch the investigation myself. I began by phoning the bartender at the Legion and posing the question point-blank: If the next election ends in a deadlock, are the Armed Forces contemplating a coup?

He laughed good-naturedly, told me not to worry and asked if I would like to buy a Sea Cadets raffle ticket.

But you expect this sort of secrecy from the military. And after further investigation I have reached a dark conclusion: The highest echelons of the Canadian Armed Forces have already begun formulating plans in the event that the next election produces no clear-cut winner.

If the election ends in a three-way tie, the military envisions several possible scenarios, the most dangerous being a violent argument between the party leaders after Brian Mulrooney agrees to share power but categorically refuses to share closet-space at 24 Sussex Drive.

In the turmoil that would ensue — Brian fending off the others with a broom while John and Ed demand bitterly to know how many pairs of Guccis one man has a right to store — the military believes it would have no option but to step in, in a Fiji-style coup led by a less-than-senior officer.

Insiders speculate that this would be Maj. Walter Ablewhite, a communications officer now stationed at CFS Gander.

Although little-known to the general public, Ablewhite is widely respected by his peers as a brilliant military tactician — it was Ablewhite, for instance, who successfully argued against a proposed series of recruitment commercials based on the theme, "Join up and see how much fun basic training is".

He also made many friends during his years at National Defence headquarters in Ottawa, where he was the popular organizer of the office hockey pools.

Although details remain shadowy, it is believed that the coup itself would reflect Ablewhite's relaxed and low-key style. (As one colleague put it, "This is a guy who makes Fred Davis look controversial.")

In order not to alarm the public with a show of military force, Ablewhite and a dozen hand-picked men would take the bus to 24 Sussex Drive. Upon arrival, Ablewhite's men would engage the RCMP security personnel in a friendly discussion about the Blue Jays' chances of winning the pennant, while the major himself would knock politely at the front door on the pretext of asking for a glass of water.

Once inside the halls of power, Ablewhite would quickly neutralize the three party leaders — perhaps by locking them temporarily in the closet — and pre-empt Fraggle Rock with a televised announcement that Canada was under a state of martial law.

This, of course, is where things would get nasty.

Under martial law, Canadians would lose the right to congregate in numbers larger than the Alberta Liberal Party.

The military would assume strict control of the media — Knowlton Nash would be required to conclude each newscast with a reminder to young Canadians that the Armed Forces are a great place to start, and The Journal would often be pre-

empted by videotapes of the Snowbirds.

And, of course, a strict curfew would be imposed — any citizen found on the streets after midnight would be confronted by disapproving soldiers, who would encourage him to go home

and get a good night's rest, and warn him that no one likes a sleepy-head.

It's chilling, all right. But it has already happened in Fiji and we must not let ourselves pretend it could never happen here.

In other words, it's up to us to

unite behind one political party and make sure that the next election ends in a decisive, undisputed victory.

The message to Canadians has never been so clear. In '88, vote Rhino.

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Dixie Carter

Won't sugarcoat truth

HOLLYWOOD (NEA) — The way Dixie Carter figures it, if her tonsils weren't taken out when she was a "little bitty girl," today she'd be belting out "La Traviata" at the Met instead of belting out jokes on "Designing Women."

"Half of one side of my throat was cut out. With all that scar tissue, I've never been able to sing the way I probably might have. But I still love to sing," she says. During hiatus from her critically acclaimed CBS series, Carter performs a well-received cabaret act in Los Angeles clubs.

"Designing Women" was almost canceled this season after the network, in search of higher ratings, moved it from one time slot to another. The comedy about four Atlanta interior designers finally settled back into its original and enviable position after the powerhouse "Newhart" on Monday nights.

While the critics lavishly praised the show for its depiction of strong-minded, sharp-tongued, independent career women, a minority felt there was an uncomfortable anti-male bias to the show.

Carter insists the show provides equal opportunity loathing of everybody and everything. Carter says that creator and executive producer Linda

Bloodworth-Thomason, "picks on everybody. Everybody gets his fair share of grief. We pick on each other as freely as everybody else. My husband says that the only men who are going to find this show offensive are insecure in their own masculinity. Anybody who thinks this show is picking on him is just supersensitive."

Her husband is the respected actor Hal Holbrook. They met while shooting a TV movie in 1980 and married four years later.

As Carter recalls, it was not love at first sight. "He obviously noticed I was a woman... and that annoyed him. 'I liked him, but I was intimidated by him."



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