

Editorial

'Dogs of War'

As the Halton Hills Herald went to press, the 'Dogs of War' had yet to be unleashed in the Middle East. The keepers of the kennels, Saddam Hussein and George Bush, still had their respective hounds baying at the moon.

If and when hostilities erupt, the world as we know it, will undergo traumatic changes of the kind not seen since the turn of the century.

U.S. President George Bush has drawn "A line in the sand" and Iraq's President Saddam Hussein has promised that his attackers will "Swim in their own blood."

These statements should not be regarded as mere rhetoric. In essence, they represent statements of intent from the presidents of Iraq and the United States. Both leaders have backed themselves into a corner, with the only exit route paved in blood.

To borrow an ill-timed and inappropriate remark from Canada's Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, the dice have been rolled and chances are, given the Middle East scenario, snake-eyes will turn up.

Arab countries distrust western power intentions and machination and rightly so. From the lies fed to them by the legendary 'Lawrence of Arabia' - courtesy of the British government - that led to the toppling of the Ottoman Empire; through the Balfour Declaration and on up to the recognition of the State of Israel, Arab nations have been treated with thinly-veiled contempt by western nations.

Saddam Hussein is using this affront to Arab culture and sensibilities - combined with the western powers in-transigent support of Israel - to paint himself as the modern-day champion of the Arab world.

Delusions of grandeur are not unusual in self-styled saviors and Saddam's posturing conveniently camouflages his megalomania - not to mention the unprovoked invasion of Kuwait and the atrocities committed therein or similar acts of barbarism committed against his own people or the people of Iran in that futile bloodletting.

George Bush, on the other hand, is treated more gently by the western media. Perceptually, he is no different from Saddam Hussein.

A former Director of the CIA, and vice-president under Ronald Reagan, Bush should not be viewed as a lily-white crusader.

One need look no further than the invasions of Granada and Panama and the hypocrisy that characterizes United States actions in Central America to realize that when American interests are threatened, the U.S. will act.

Let's not pretend that the United States-led intervention in the Middle East - through the offices of the United Nations - is predicated on the notion of saving the world from another Hitler. That is hogwash and should be treated as such.

The United States became involved to protect American oil interests in the Gulf and to beef-up George Bush's flagging popularity on the home front.

Canada is involved because Brian Mulroney wants to change his perceived wimp image to that of a warrior - it won't wash.

Should war break out in the Middle East, the young, the naive, the brave, the trusting men and women of the various armed forces will suffer the consequences. Some will die hideously, others will suffer from wounds both physical and mental for the rest of their lives.

Similarly, a line will be drawn, not in the sand, but around the globe that will irrevocably divide western christian culture and other cultures of the world.

Ironically, both sides in the Middle East standoff believe "their God" will lead them to victory in a conflict.

A war in the Middle East, if threats from both sides are to be believed, will introduce this generation and the next to the horrors of armed conflict on a scale not seen before.

Chemical and bacteriological weapons will be used by Saddam Hussein if the need arises. Israel will undoubtedly be attacked to further percolate the quagmire.

Given this projection, the Israelis will answer with tactical nuclear weapons and similarly, the U.S.-led forces will respond with either the highly destructive neutron bomb or tactical nuclear weapons.

It would be a war with no winner, only world-wide losers.

If you happen to pass a Canadian war dead cenotaph over the next few days, take time to read the names. Take time to appreciate the ultimate sacrifice that was made for Canada. Also take time to spare some thought for the male and female members of the Canadian Armed Forces serving in the Middle East.

There may be more names added to the war dead cenotaphs across Canada in the near future.

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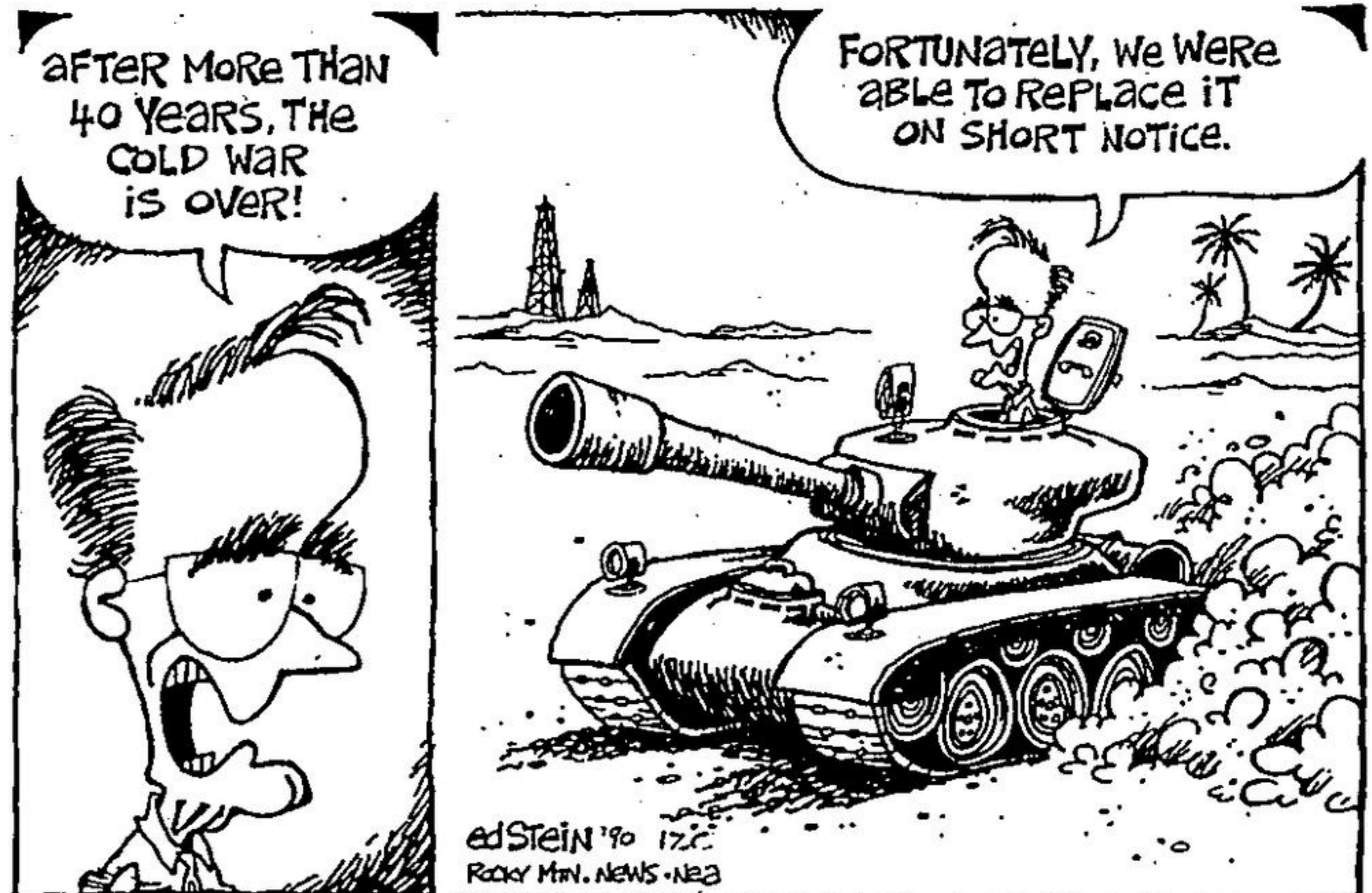
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People's Forum

Letter of The Week

False images of a police state

Dear Editor;
I am writing in response to the letter of the week entitled "Police Propaganda" in the January 9th issue of The Herald. The letter by an anonymous author falsely conjures images of a police state where police officers have ultimate control over a persons guilt or innocence and one answerable to no one. With my letter I hope to shed a little light on the daily dangers an officer faces.

I am a resident of Acton and I am proud to say I am a dispatcher for the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force. As a dispatcher, I can have control of 30 or more marked cars per shift. Each and every minute of my shift I worry about my officers safety. I know that each and every call I dispatch an officer or officers to, has the potential to escalate into a violent situation.

For example, one night not long ago, one of my officers stopped at the ever popular coffee shop after working non-stop for five hours. His escort (partner) remained in the car while he went inside. While he was inside, another customer approached him and pulled a knife on him. He had 10 more officers there for assistance within sixty seconds. Unfortunately, in Halton Region, assistance can be 5-10 minutes away.

Over the last year, I have seen an "alarming" increase in the number of gun-related incidents. You are aware of the number of gun store break-ins in York Region, well most of those guns wind up on the streets of Metro Toronto. Even school age youths can purchase them with a little effort.

We, dispatchers, won't hesitate to keep a high priority call from being dispatched if there isn't a

sufficient number of officers to respond. Some people may think this is because we don't trust the officers ability. Not so, I want to make sure all of my men and women in blue go home at the end of the day.

Now, a little technical knowledge. A pellet gun fired at someone's eye can blind them. A pellet gun fired at extremely close range can kill. Look at the unfortunate demise of the actor John Eric Hexum who was killed when he fired a blank at his temple. All that came out of that "weapon" was compressed air.

Had that youth pointed his "air pistol" at the officer before the officer had time to investigate him, it could have been tragic. The officer would have had probable cause to fear for his life. The officer, not knowing the youth had an air pistol, may have shot him. In that case the youth

could have become quite dead as a result of "playing."

How would Mr. Name Withheld react if he was walking a street of Acton and a person stepped out of a doorway and pointed a gun at him? Would he stop to theorize this might be a youth and that he might only have an air pistol?

Chances today are good that it is a real gun with real bullets being pointed at his head.

I only hope that the people who read his letter realize it is the uninformed ramblings of a person who has probably come against the wrong side of the law.

Please, when you see a police officer, stop and thank him/her for the dangerous work they do. Let's all work together for a safer society.

Proudly,
James Melanson,
Acton, Ont.

A new year's gift

The Editor:

There once lived on planet Toronto a great defender of the over-taxed peasants of that domain. Garth Turner was very eloquent, in protesting tax increases, abuse of the system by Ottawa.

In fact he was known to get up with the Sun, an early bird in his defense of the lowly peasants.

He sold the good people of Halton on the idea that he could defend them against government overspending, and more taxation. Of course he was elected.

Some time after his election the lowly peasants noticed that things had now changed. Tax increases like never before in the history of Halton were not only passed into law, but now the defender no longer defended the

peasants. In fact he told them that it was for their own good.

Even his stipend from the government increased dramatically, since all of the Ottawa lords felt they now had so much money to spend as a result of all the new taxes, so instead of paying off some of the debt the lords had incurred, they decided to make themselves a new years gift of an 11% pay increase.

Even this would not have been such a bad thing if the good people of Halton felt the country was no longer in a mess. It was, and is.

Oh, a question - when is 11% not 11%?

When it is TAX FREE.

John Shadbolt,
Libertarian Party,
Acton.