

Arts and Ideas

We have no interest in the people of the Middle East

By JOHN SOMMER
Herald Special

The moment a war starts all predictions and forecasts will be up in the air. In the last remaining hours of peace, on Jan. 16 of this year, the Herald printed an editorial with the title "Dogs of War." I do not remember the whole piece, but I remember some sentences and one of them is this one: "If and when hostilities erupt, the world as we know it, will undergo traumatic changes."

Hostilities erupted that very day, to end, only 40 days later, with the defeat of Saddam Hussein. His enormous but old-fashioned army was no match for the modern technological might of the Americans and their allies. Iraq was bombed mercilessly, its utilities are ruined, its bridges and large cities are destroyed.

In the liberated Kuwait the oil wells Saddam Hussein's army set on fire will burn for years.

Nobody knows what the environmental damage will eventually be for Kuwait and its neighbors. But a great victory was won, and Mr. Bush, who had promised a new world order after the war, had reason to congratulate himself.

But even before the ceasefire was signed civil war broke out within Iraq. The various opposition groups against Saddam Hussein, the Kurds being only one of them, had believed, with some justification, that the Americans and their allies would now help them to oust the hated dictator.

At first they seemed to win out against Saddam Hussein, but soon it became clear that Saddam had been able to squirrel away a sufficient amount of his most loyal troops, as well as ar-



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maments, to fight against his adversaries and to defeat them.

This fight against his own people quickly grew into a bloody slaughter and the American soldiers had to stand idly by and watch the massacres, without being allowed, by their own leaders, to intervene and save lives.

In a few short weeks, Mr. Bush's new world order has turned into a horrendous stampede of fleeing people trying to get away from a bloody villain, who at the blink of an eye, has become dear to the West again, as if we never went to war against him.

The American President, such a hot warrior in January, now turned into an eager appeaser, earning the wrath of his political friends, like the columnist William Safire from the New York Times.

It seems the U.S. President isn't a man of principles after all but rather a man with double standards.

It took a massive media campaign to push him into establishing sanctuaries for the Kurds, and I find it difficult to free myself of the suspicion, that he will abandon these people again should it be convenient for him.

The terrible truth is that we

have no interest in the people of the Middle East and their problems with each other. The only reason we are there is the oil. Without oil our stupendously wasteful habits would quickly come to an end and our celebrated high living standard would collapse like a house of cards.

What can we here in Canada do to help the victims of Saddam Hussein and our appetite for oil? We should let our readers know that we are willing to live with these people here in our country and to share it with them if they want to come.

If we can welcome people from Hungary and Poland and Vietnam and China, and from many other trouble spots in the world, we can welcome these poor, persecuted wretches from Iraq. Let us organize an air lift to bring them over before the great chief in Washington changes his mind again.

Compassion! We are always talking about it but rarely act on it. This is a time to be compassionate. Canada is a huge country with a small population of under 30 million people. The waves of immigrants, that have come to Canada's shores for hundreds of years, have made us rich.

All free traders should also welcome the free movement of people. This is not a country of two founding nations anymore, if it ever was that. Canada is on the way to becoming a new type of country, a country where all the people of the world live together and work together, finding out that it is their humanity that unites them.

How small are the ethnic and religious differences once you realize that we are all related with each other if you follow your

family tree back a few thousand years.

The moment you start a war in somebody's backyard, you become responsible for these people when things go wrong.

The leaders who pushed us into this war might now want to be free from this responsibility. If we want to keep our honor we should keep them to the honorable path.

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ACTON LIONS ARE SEEKING THE



ACTON CITIZEN of the YEAR

The Acton Lions Club is again looking for the "Citizen of the Year", someone who has given unselfishly to the Community.

The Lions Club wants help from you in picking our most deserving citizen or group for 1990. Nominations are now being received for Acton's Citizen of the Year.

Please mail nominations with supporting resume, post-marked no later than April 30th, 1991, to: Acton Lions Club, Citizen of the Year, P.O. Box 28, Acton, Ontario, L7J 2M2.

The winner(s) of the award will be made known in May at a dinner to be held at the Acton Legion on Friday, May 24th, 1991. The public is invited to attend this special evening. Tickets are available from Lions Club members.

Lorne Geddes exhibition

Photographic Art Images by Lorne Geddes of Georgetown, who has concentrated on photographing the natural beauty of Ontario's Niagara Escarpment, Bruce Trail Country, will now be shown at The Cliff Swallow Fine Art Gallery.

The gallery is located at Mono Centre near the entrance to the Mono Cliffs Provincial Park where many people go to hike the Bruce Trail and enjoy the natural beauty of the Escarpment. "This makes an ideal arrangement," says Linda McLaren, the manager of the gallery.

Lorne has won ribbons in photography competitions with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and The Bruce Trail Association. In one competition he won three of six ribbons presented. His slide show titled "Competitions in Light and Color along Ontario's Niagara Escarpment, Bruce Trail Country," has been praised wherever shown. The Niagara Escarpment Commission, and the Bruce Trail Association have used his pictures in their publications.

Now he wants his Photo Art to play a part toward awareness that the natural beauty that is here now for us to enjoy, should

be protected for future generations.

The Gallery is open noon to six daily except Tuesday and Wednesday. To get there turn

east off Highway 10 at Camilla on to the 15th Sideroad which leads directly to Mono Centre. Ten minutes north of Orangeville. Telephone (519) 942-4390.



Lorne Geddes

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