



OPINION

GUNS or DEMOCRACY?

It is difficult to know what life was like in the pre satellite television/pre internet days when radio and newspaper was our main link to the outside world. News and information traveled much slower, and pictures of unfolding events were scarce.

As I prepare this article for the Mirror we are five days into the Iraq war. I say 'we are,' advisedly because, while we accept that the USA, UK and Allies are the prime forces in this conflict, I happen to believe that, regardless of the mixed messages coming from Canada, we are also deeply involved. This requires us to remain informed.

The Allies made huge mistakes twelve years ago, and these have returned to haunt us. Iraq and its population of approximately 25 million, more than 50% of which are illiterate, has been a humanitarian disaster area for years. The people suffered, initially under the Trade Embargo, and later under the 'Oil for Aid' program, both of which were aimed at putting Saddam Hussein out of business. Now time has moved on, and I have no way of discussing in this issue how successful or otherwise the allied campaign has been. To a large extent I believe their success will depend on whether the ordinary people of Iraq will turn against the dictatorship, under which they have labored for so many years.

Conflicts like this are nothing new in our world of balance and imbalance. The Jewish Torah and Christian Bible speak of outrageous wars that devastated large numbers of people, many in the name of righteousness and prevention, and many simply exercises in power domination. The Bible as a whole mentions war an astonishing 232 times. The Middle East has been an area in turmoil since time immemorial.

Enough of the statistics. They were mentioned be-

cause I wanted to pave the way towards establishing a true understanding of the good fortune we have in living in a country like Canada, and in a place like The County. I often wonder if we really appreciate how blessed we are to be living here, rather than in a possibly politically unstable third world country, climatically challenged (c'mon, only our winters are hard).

We want and need to protect our freedom, a freedom that has been hard won by our ancestors who often paid the highest price for the small gains they made in developing their lifestyle and community support systems. All around the County stand monuments to their industry. The century plus farms and barns, schools, places of work and worship and so on, all stand tall as Epitaphs to a people who made their prime motivation simple survival, and the advancement of their quality of life. Today it is still not perfect but we are working on it.

By developing our own abilities to excel in all aspects of life, among which are Education, Technology, Medical Sciences, Spirituality, Ethics and Freedoms, to name but a few, we enhance our ability to be able to provide effective

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