

Pacifists deeply misguided

April 19, 1999

Some are opposed to war period, and specifically today to NATO's acts of aggression in the former Yugoslavia. They're pacifists, they argue it's wrong for the rest of us to intervene in the affairs of a sovereign country, and they couldn't be more wrong.

In the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, the free world lent arms and aid to the "White Russians" who were resisting the reds. Under the auspices of encouraging "self-determination," the League of Nations (the precursor of today's United Nations) withdrew said support. Of course the Kulaks and bourgeoisie were no more determining their fate than fly to the moon. It was being violently forced on them by the ascendant communists and their so-called police force, the Cheka, that had the authority to investigate sedition and execute on the spot. I bet those victims would have appreciated a little more outside intervention (rather than the cessation thereof) so sometimes intervention is precisely the right thing.

"But people will be killed," the pacifists argue. People are being killed with or without military intervention, and those who argue against it frankly argue against history. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused inestimable damage and suffering, for instance, but so did the war which those bombs brought to an end, and if you were a civilian or a military POW being worked to death in a Japanese slave labour camp they couldn't come soon enough, and for many didn't.

Pacifists believe that one can negotiate with devils. Again they argue with history, Hitler having entered into pacts of nonaggression with just about every country he shortly thereafter invaded.

And why did he invade them? Because he knew that he could beat the tar out of them after the relative success of that era's peaceniks in disarming the western democracies. Do you not see then that the peaceniks themselves were in part responsible for the carnage of the Second World War?

Pacifists are almost invariably from the left of the political spectrum. Those on the right seem more acutely aware of the depths to which the human heart can plumb, and that as a result of which war is sometimes simply unavoidable. I suggest that those who believe otherwise clearly do not well understand human nature.

UPDATE: While on the subject of peaceniks, Margaret Atwood, Naomi Klein, self-described "former" Marxist Judy Rebick and then socialist MP Svend Robinson issued a letter in 2002 declaring that war with Iraq would be immoral because it was "unprovoked."

Unprovoked. Saddam Hussein bombed several neighbouring countries, gassed tens of thousands of his own countrymen and was before his ouster both a financier and provocateur of terrorism. According to a physicist formerly in his employ, he was also actively investing in nuclear and biological weaponry development. That's what was known in 2002.

Foreign policy is not an exact science. It's based on other countries' leaders' histories and capabilities, neither of Hussein's having done anything to endear him to anyone. He was a terrorist and a thug, and there was the very real possibility that he had some hardware with which to deliver his spite.

What we now know thanks to one General Georges Sada, Vice Marshall of the Iraqi Air Force and trusted Hussein advisor, is that it took fifty-six sorties of jumbo jet flights to hide the country's stockpile of chemical, biological and nuclear materials in Syria in advance of the first Gulf War.¹¹ Then sanctioned by Oil for Food which was none too effective, he thereafter continued to invest millions in advancing his

nuclear ambitions. In light of all this I think it would have been irresponsible for Dubya to have not invaded the country, with or without WMDs being physically present.

While on the subject of foreign policy, what does Canada's experience in Afghanistan, America's in Iraq and Israel's ongoing conflict with its neighbours all have in common? Only that we were/are fighting what appear to be deeply misguided zealots with no regard for human life and Hitleresque ambitions of world dominion.

Civilians, of course, have been killed in each of these theatres. It is a fact that no army has yet devised a method of warfare that completely avoids civilian casualties, though minimizing the scale of such is the objective of at least the remotely civilized ones. This objective becomes increasingly difficult when one side in a conflict intentionally targets civilian populations, while using yet others as human shields, both in direct violation of the Geneva Convention. I'm referring now, of course, to Hezbollah and Hamas, and both their own commanders and the local Al-Jazeera news channel have confirmed their tactics.

In 2006, Hezbollah killed eight and kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, again in direct contravention of Geneva. In the following three years Hamas fired no less than 7,000 rockets on the Jewish homeland. In 2012 alone, over a six-day period, they launched a thousand more, killing five. In each of these cases Israel provided a very measured response (measured, as evidenced by the fact that Gaza and Lebanon weren't reduced to smoldering ruins) but anyone who questions what precipitated these actions is guilty of willful blindness.

In Gaza, Lebanon, and on the high seas Israel's actions have been entirely defensible – as they will be again when they get around to addressing the threat posed by the murderous Iranian regime's nuclear program, assuming they haven't done so by the time you read this.

Defensible and entirely justified – just like America when it went into Afghanistan to root out the perpetrators of 9/11

(assuming it wasn't an inside job) and as were we in our efforts to keep it from falling back into the hands of the terrorists. Girls are going to school and their mothers are providing for their own through businesses started up with micro-loans. The Taliban, alternatively, would murder the girls for trying to get an education and sell their mothers into slavery to pay their debts. The left, marching in the streets with their tiresome "Troops Out Now" nonsense, as usual, knew not what they called for.

Nor, though, did anyone outside the military industrial-complex want Afghanistan to become another twenty-five plus year engagement like Cypress. At some point the country had to be turned over to the locals. As did Iraq. Or did they? The rise of ISIS in 2014, and that group's unspeakable atrocities committed against both Christians and their fellow Muslims, leads one to question whether we can ever entirely leave that part of the world. But on the question of the timing of a nation's withdrawal from the field of battle, there's one group that no government should ever listen to.

In June a Gallup poll revealed that 25% of Americans wanted their troops brought home from theatre. That was five months before Germany unconditionally surrendered to the Allies! The year was 1945. I'm referring to peaceniks, of course, and all one can say is thank God for the politicians who ignore them, both past and present.