



Two warnings, unheard

When Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed a joint session of Congress on March 3, it was the third time he had done so. The only other person to address a joint session of Congress three times was the legendary British prime minister Winston Churchill.

The parallels between the two leaders do not end there. Both warned the world of mortal dangers that others ignored, in hopes that those dangers would go away. In the years leading up to World War II, Churchill tried to warn the British, and the democratic nations in general, of what a monstrous threat Hitler was.

Despite Churchill's legendary status today, he was not merely ignored but ridiculed at the time, when he was repeatedly warning in vain. Knowing that his warnings provoked only mocking laughter in some quarters, even among some members of his own party, he said on March 14, 1938 in the House of Commons, "Laugh but listen."

Just two years later, with Hitler's planes bombing London, night after night, the laughter was gone. Many at the time thought that Britain itself would soon be gone as well, like other European nations that succumbed to the Nazi blitzkrieg in weeks (like France) or days (like Holland).

How did things get to such a desperate situation, with Britain alone continuing the fight, and struggling to survive, against the massive Nazi war machine that now controlled much of the material resources on the continent of Europe?

Things got that desperate by following policies strikingly similar to the policies



being followed by the Western democracies today, including some of the very same notions and catchwords being used today.

Just recently, a State Department official in the Obama administration said that Americans have remained safe in a nuclear age, not because of our own nuclear arsenal but because "we created an intricate and essential system of treaties, laws and agreements." If "treaties, laws and agreements" produced peace, there would never have been a Second World War. The years leading up to that monumental catastrophe were filled with international treaties and arms control agreements.

The Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War, imposed strong restrictions on Germany's military forces — on paper. The Washington Naval Agreements of 1922 imposed restrictions on all the major naval powers of the world — on paper. The Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928 created an international renunciation of war — on paper.

The Munich agreement of 1938 produced a paper with Hitler's signature on it that British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain waved to the cheering crowds when he returned to England, and said that it meant "Peace for our time." Less than a year later, World War II began.

Winston Churchill never bought any of this. He under-

stood that military deterrence was what preserved peace. With England playing a leadership role in Europe, "England's hour of weakness is Europe's hour of danger," he said in the House of Commons in 1931.

Today, with the Obama administration "leading from behind" — in practice, not leading at all — we see in Ukraine and the Middle East what that produces.

As for disarmament, Churchill said in 1932, "Alone among the nations we have disarmed while others have rearmed."

Today, the United States has that dubious and reckless distinction. Our pacifists, like those in England during the 1930s, argue that we should disarm to "induce parallel" behavior by others. In England between the two World Wars, the rhetoric was that they should disarm "as an example to others."

Whether others would follow that example was just as dubious then as it is today. While Russia and China increased the share of their national output that went to military spending in 2014, the United States reduced its share. Churchill deplored the "inexhaustible gullibility" of disarmament advocates in 1932. That gullibility is still not exhausted in 2015.

"Not one of the lessons of the past has been learned, not one of them has been applied, and the situation is incomparably more dangerous," Churchill said in 1934. And every one of those words is more urgently true today, in a nuclear age.

(Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. His website is www.tsowell.com)

Your Opinion

Throwing officials under bus is wrong

Editor:

I am completely outraged that elected officials are asking for the premature resignation of the county professionals with regard to the solar settlement. While I encourage and support the idea of asking the state comptroller to investigate the matter, until the results of that investigation are complete no one should be asked to resign. Why stop with the county counsel? Why not ask for the heads of everyone involved?

Never in all my years

involved in politics and working in government have I seen such mean-spirited and reckless behavior. You should all be embarrassed by this political witch hunt. You are nothing but opportunists looking for attention. One of you even posted your letter on Facebook. You were elected to check your ego at the door and work for the best interest of the people of Sussex County.

I will not vote or support any elected official who is taking advantage of this serious situation for their own political advantage. I just checked with my sources in the other two counties involved, and there is no such movement to

request staff to resign. In fact, one person said, "We would never stoop that low."

I agree with Ronald Reagan when he said, "It has been said that politics is the second oldest profession. I have learned that it bears a striking resemblance to the first."

In conclusion, I have no confidence in individuals who like to just stir the political pot whenever they have the opportunity rather than offer solutions. The solution is not to throw the county staff under the bus prior to the results of the investigation. This is just plain mean!

Wendy Kuser Molner
Hardyston

Our Opinion

Cheers and Jeers

Cheers ..

To the safe return of two young boys to their mother after they were missing for six weeks.

Parker and Jaxon Dohm, ages 8 and 7, were reunited with their mom, Sandra Hughes Dohm of Roxbury, over the weekend after law enforcement authorities located the boys with the father, of Hopatcong, in a New Port Richey, Fla., hotel, where he allegedly had taken them after not returning them to their mother in violation of a custody agreement.

The father, Kristopher Dohm, was taken into custody and waived extradition to return to New Jersey to face a second-degree interference of custody and other possible charges.

To the brave marchers and spectators at Saturday's chilly St. Patrick's Day Parade. Despite temperatures that hovered just above freezing and intermittent frozen precipitation, the annual parade, presented by the Sussex County St. Patrick's Day Committee, brought smiles to accompany the warm spirits of the crowd lining the streets.

As the committee states: When Irish eyes are smiling, there is always sunshine!

Cheers and good luck to the Lake Hopatcong Foundation which is in contention for a grant of up to \$10,000.

Today is the final day of public voting for the BoatUS Foundation grant and the local lake group is going head to head with the Lake George Association of Lake George, N.Y.

As of Monday, each organization had received more than 22,000 votes but were only 100 votes apart.

If the Lake Hopatcong Foundation receives the most votes by midnight, it intends to use the grant to create a free, water-resistant guide map for the lake that includes information on invasive species, the location of pump-out stations to keep the lake free of waste, and a listing of businesses and marinas around the lake. Grant money would also be used to update the Lake Hopatcong Guide application, which is available for iPhone, iPad and Android devices.

For more information or to vote, visit <http://www.boatus.org/grants/vote.asp>.

To the nearly 600 students who helped clean up Waterloo Village last week due to their participation in the seventh annual Clean Communities Environmental Student Exchange.

Conducting activities since the 1986 passage of the Clean Communities Act, last week's event involved litter pick up along the Musconetcong River, the Morris Canal Greenway Trail and well as in Waterloo Village itself.

To one more step toward designating Route 15 in Sussex County as the Senator Robert E. Littell Memorial Highway.

An Assembly committee voted 10-0 last week to advance to the full Assembly the bill that would name the roughly 10-mile stretch of road in honor of Littell who served 40 years in the state Legislature. The Senate approved the same measure in February on a 36-0 vote.

Jeers ..

To a weather-forced longer school year or shorter planned breaks due to extended snow days.

How each school district plans for and deals with snow days varies.

For example, Hamburg school district did not factor any snow days into its calendar and will simply add the seven days it was closed to the end of the year, changing the last day from June 15 to June 24.

In Hardyston, where five days were budgeted for inclement weather closings, the district ended up closed on seven days, which will be made up by eliminating one of its winter break days and holding half-day on Good Friday.

Though weather can't be controlled, shifting the calendar mid-year is difficult to plan for in cases of family vacations and especially when graduation dates become a moving target.

Lamenting loss of family grocery

The old grocery store in my neighborhood is closing next month. Boy, does that make me sad.

The family-owned store has been a staple in our community for more than 50 years. Its simple, spartan interior is a snapshot into the past, the way grocery stores were in the '60s and '70s — like the Del Farm grocery store I shopped at with my father every Thursday night.

Unlike today's mega-groceries, there were no lobster tanks or gourmet food displays. The daily specials were written in black marker on torn sheets of white wax paper and taped to the front windows. The tile floors were worn through to the concrete along the paths shoppers commonly followed.

Inside, everything was painted white and illuminated by the bare fluorescent bulbs that hung above. The giant cash registers were mechanical, not electronic, and the cashiers were paid quite handsomely to operate them with speed and accuracy.

The managers and butchers were mostly men — cranky old guys who never smiled and who barked at you if you asked them a question about a sale item or a cut of beef.

The selection of items was limited, compared to the incredible mix of choices mega-groceries offer consumers today. The quality of many of those items was also not nearly as good as today.

Our old grocery is similar to, but much better than, the



groceries of that era.

Unlike the mega-stores, where you have to fight traffic and a shortage of parking spots, our modest-sized grocery is convenient. I can run inside, get what I need and be back on the road in minutes.

It has an unmistakable family feel, too. The store packages pre-cut vegetables daily and prices them cheaply — which is greatly appreciated by older customers who find it difficult, even painful, to hold a knife. All you have to do is call one of the members of the family that owns the store. They'll cut up a batch of any vegetables you ask for.

They offer tremendous specials, too. The other day, I saw packages of baby back ribs, which cost \$40 at the mega-stores, for only 20 bucks.

And they make hot roasted chicken, side dishes and sandwiches every day for regular lunch and dinner patrons.

I understand that the older family-owned stores are facing increased competition from mega-stores that can purchase and resell goods for considerably less money — which benefits consumers.

Heck, when I was a kid, a typical children's bike sold for

\$95 — the equivalent of \$530 in inflation-adjusted dollars today, which was a lot of money for a middle-class family to spend then.

Today, however, middle-class families can get a typical children's bike at a mega-store for only about 80 bucks — because of lower-cost global manufacturing and economy-of-scale pricing.

Like it or hate it, this is the truth, and I understand all of that. Still, I don't want to lose our family-owned grocery.

The mega-groceries have had an impact on its business over the years.

Others speculate that the family members could not come to terms with their landlord and so, the business will close.

I am saddened by the impending loss of our fine old-style grocery store. I stopped in there three or four days a week to get fresh ingredients for delicious, healthy meals, but no more.

I know that for all of the consumer benefits made possible by mega-store efficiency — there are some downsides — such as family-owned stores, unable to compete on price, that are put out of business.

And I understand that change is often for the better — but that doesn't mean I have to like it.

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