

# Still time to change the ending to a lesson that keeps repeating

According to some astute political observers, if World War III comes, it will prove to be unique because it will never be mentioned in the history books.

History may have been hogwash to auto pioneer Henry Ford, but we would do well to learn a few lessons that would help us recognize that history does indeed repeat itself, especially in matters that shouldn't have happened in the first place.

Critics of the subject – and there are too many to count – believe that history amounts to little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind, which undoubtedly explains why there is an endless supply of material to whet our reading appetite.

When historians survey the first 23 years of the new Millennium, they likely won't be very kind to the key political figures in world society, particularly those who failed to “connect the dots” and were oblivious to the “gathering storm” that threatens civilization on a host of fronts.

Take the hot-button issue of gun control, for example. Just the mere mention of it automatically sends proponents and opponents into their separate corners where any attempt at compromise proves futile.

Instead, we are content to sit back in a political straitjacket awaiting word of the next mass shooting, powerless to take any meaningful steps to prevent the horror perpetrated by a lone gunman who randomly killed six people, including three children, at a Christian elementary school in Nashville last week.

The senseless killings stirred unpleasant memories of when such sickness began in April 1999 at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. There, in

the suburb of Denver, was the scene of a shooting spree carried out by two teens who originally planned to bomb the school facility.

When two would-be bombs failed to detonate, the teens began gunning down students outside the school before continuing their rampage inside, eventually killing 12 students, a teacher, and then themselves.

At the time, it was the worst school shooting in the nation's history, a dubious distinction that years later would be surpassed by mass killings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Conn. and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.

The tragedies, of course, reignited the national debate on gun control and school safety. It also has prompted many political leaders to trot out the shopworn phrase of “my thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families” as we consider the ramifications of yet another deadly example of gun violence.

One thing remains certain, however: nothing will change in terms of limiting the easy availability of weaponry. Those who believe in the “right to bear arms” will be emboldened even more in the wake of the latest shooting, somehow believing that the only way to counter such killings is to be armed to an even greater degree.

Once more, we as a society have failed to “connect the dots,” to see that one tragedy invariably begets another . . . and another.

Now, as we grow numb to news of another senseless slaughter, it's time for Congress to reevaluate its all-too-cozy relationship with the National Rifle Association, whose idea of gun control



is “using two hands” on whatever the weapon. Such political sway by the gun lobby only serves to place us all in the crosshairs of the next hell-bent killer.

Regrettably, a growing number of those killers have been bred by the extremism of the far-right movement, which lives in a world filled with hate, bigotry, and wanton violence.

Historians will trace many of the far-right's origins to Adolf Hitler, the maniacal architect of the Third Reich who orchestrated the extermination of more than 6 million Jews during World War II.

His deadly handiwork is now being carried out by Russia's Vladimir Putin, whose avowed mission is to put a chokehold on Ukraine until it succumbs to a dictator's indiscriminate killing.

Russian aggression, like that of the Nazi military machine in the run-up to World War II, will cost the world dearly, spilling innocent blood everywhere unless there is a concerted effort to stop its

## Still time to change the ending to a lesson that keeps repeating

brand of evil from spreading.

It begins by defending democracy at home – in places like Israel, Brazil, India, and the U.S., where far-right extremists have made continuing attempts to stir unrest and to erode faith in our most basic governmental principles.

Of particular concern is the effort by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to revamp the country's judiciary and to run roughshod over constitutionally protected individual rights, all in an attempt to cement his political power.

It is all too reminiscent of another disgraced political leader's attempt to undermine the results of the 2020 presidential election, going so far as to plot an ill-fated coup to prevent the peaceful transfer of power.

Unfortunately, his attempts to provoke political tumult continue, as he pleads with his far-right supporters to take to the streets in protest as he does his best to avoid indictment and accountability for a whole host of alleged crimes.

Such moral turpitude, like that displayed by other would-be autocrats, is one of the reasons why we have created the Primerus™ Foundation, which we hope will serve as an instrument to promote positive change in the quality of our political leadership. Otherwise, we will be left to wonder how we missed all the warning signs of yet another devastating political storm.

Best regards,

**Jack Buchanan, President**