

INSIDE MAINE



ESSENTIAL
OBSERVATIONS
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Dangerous dog days of summer

August is just around the corner and I am worried. This may seem strange to many people, who feel the month should be stress-free; a time where work becomes secondary, and vacations the norm. Here in Maine, it is a month where a lot of people stay outside and make the most of the warm weather. Nothing seems urgent.

However, all of this relaxation is precisely why I am apprehensive. In the past, horrible events have been planned or carried out in August. Their consequences have changed history.

On August 5, 1914, the first battle of what was to become World War I was fought. Most people thought that the combat would not last long. That tragic conflict dragged on for more than four years and cost the lives of almost eight-and-a-half million soldiers.

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Although the League of Nations was created after the war, it was not a successful international peace-keeping organization. Its ineffectiveness indirectly led to World War II. That war killed almost 17 million troops and more than 34 million civilians.

On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. While it triggered the end of World War II, the bombing also unleashed the nuclear genie onto the world. On August 29, 1949, the Russians tested a nuclear weapon. In 1964, China tested their bomb. According to Greenpeace International, there are approximately 27,000 nuclear weapons in the world today. Some of these weapons are in the volatile Middle East and precarious South Asia regions. Israel is estimated to have 100 weapons, Pakistan 50 to 60 weapons and India 40 to 50 nuclear warheads.

On August 19, 1953, the government of Iran was overthrown by a military coup. At the time, the Iranian government was headed by nationalist Mohammed Mossadegh. Britain suggested the hostile takeover in order to roll back the Mossadegh-supported nationalization of the oil industry. The United States helped with the coup in order to create an anti-Soviet ally in the region. The consequences of the coup are as tragic as they are clear. Today there is a radical, anti-American government in Iran which is helping the insurgency in Iraq and is widely suspected of trying to build nuclear weapons.

On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. This blatant act of aggression was eventually reversed by Operation Desert Storm. In early 1991, Kuwait was liberated and

SEE TRAUTMAN PAGE C7

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