

Unreasonable speed limits

by BRIAN LOCKHART

If you don't remember history you are doomed to repeat it.

That old saying makes a lot of sense. In other words, learn from your mistakes.

I have never been a fan of military intervention except as a last resort and then only when it will save lives ? notably innocent civilian lives.

I have mentioned before the absurdity of the Iraq invasion that resulted in no good outcome and caused the deaths of several hundred thousand innocent people.

However, I also believe in the 'speak softly and carry a big stick' ideology, that being the exercise of intelligent forethought and decisive action prior to resorting to the worst case scenario.

The Middle East is heating up again. It's been a couple of weeks so the region has to get back into the swing of things and blow something up or destroy something so everyone knows life is back to normal.

The U.S. carried out a precision strike on a location in Baghdad this past week and killed a top Iranian general.

That's some pretty good intelligence reports backed up by some seriously accurate shooting from an airborne drone.

Obviously someone on the ground called home and gave the code word.

I would imagine someone got on the radio and said 'the fox is in the hen house, repeat, the fox is in the hen house' or some other phrase that indicated his location.

Most likely that report was called in by a local Iraqi CIA operative.

Given the ordnance delivered to kill the general, most likely several of his friends also got a chance at martyrdom at the same time.

Now to be fair, this general wasn't targeted because he said the wrong thing on a TV talk show.

He was targeted for his actions as a military commander.

The prelude to this assassination was an attack on the American embassy in Baghdad.

The embassy managed to defend itself and had soldiers posted on the roof ready to shoot.

However, it was apparent the attack on the embassy was backed by high-ranking officials in Iran ? notably the now-deceased general.

An embassy should be sacred ground. That's the whole point of having an embassy in a foreign country. It serves as a diplomatic go-between to hash out affairs between countries. In times of strife, diplomatic staff should be protected at all costs.

Here's the thing about remembering the past.

Anyone who's old enough to remember the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979 remembers what a big deal it was.

The American embassy in Tehran was attacked and occupied by Iranian 'students.'

They held 52 American diplomats and citizens for a total of 444 days. During that time the hostages were subject to abuse and torture.

I guess at that time the 'students' classes were out for the semester.

No one forgot the hostages. Every night on American it was counted down: 'Day 100 of the hostage crisis. Day 200 of the hostage crisis.'

The hostage crisis became a rallying point for American patriotism.

Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini praised the attack on the embassy and said the fate of the hostages would be 'decided by the Iranian parliament.

Unfortunately, then president Jimmy Carter's response to the crisis was weak. You can't deal with a leader like Khomeini by negotiating.

You can't and must never negotiate with terrorists, whether they operate a small group or a country.

It was an election year. Ronald Reagan, the Republican candidate was well known for his thoughts on the use of the military, and said he did not agree to 'ransom for people who have been kidnapped by barbarians.'

The hostages were released the day Reagan delivered his inaugural address.

The U.S. has not forgotten the Iran Hostage Crisis nor should they.

When terror-sponsored groups start attacking embassies or foreigners in their own country and the nation's leadership either ignores or condones it, there must be a response. From a western viewpoint that includes every member of NATO.

Iran has said they will retaliate for this incident. However, the regime does not have support of many of its own people and even less in neighboring countries.

This particular general that was eliminated is responsible for the deaths of a lot of people, including many of his fellow citizens.

Whether some kind of retaliation takes place will be noted in the coming weeks or months. However, until then, speaking softly and carrying a big stick works very well.