

## Sniper Shot

So a Canadian military marksman has made the news with a 3450 metre sniper shot. That is almost 3.5 kilometres, or just a touch over two miles!

Reports of this event underscore the skill and technology this required, going into fairly elaborate detail regarding the factors and calculations that needed to be taken into account to accomplish this, including, believe it or not, the effect of the Earth's spin on the trajectory of the bullet. It was compared to other sniper shots at other times and other locations and is being heralded as a world record --- so, apparently, someone keeps track of such things.

Am I the only one to shudder? Are we, as a society, now sufficiently insensitive to take some kind of pride in being not only able but also willing to kill a human being, never mind the distance of the shot? In what deranged view of the world can this be perceived as a positive, praise-worthy action, something to be held up as a marvel for the rest of the world to admire?

Because, if you employ the old argument "that if some is good, more is better", you can then comfortably extrapolate this particular circumstance to argue that shooting two persons at that distance would have been an even greater accomplishment. But why stop at two? Why not four? Why not a whole platoon? You must concede that the only reason the sniper shot now in the news is newsworthy is the fact that it was successful, i.e., the target was hit and died. Had the target not died, or been only superficially wounded, it is unlikely we would ever have heard of the attempt. Recognizing that it is the success of the shot, not its distance, that gives this story its substance, it is easy to devolve to the thinking that any successful shots at any distance become laudatory accomplishments. So, based upon that ridiculous logic, we should cheer at all successful shots, the more, the better, while we wade knee deep in the corpses of the dead.

Well, that's just plain crazy! Who would do that?

Well, again, let's look in the mirror!

"What mirror?" you say.

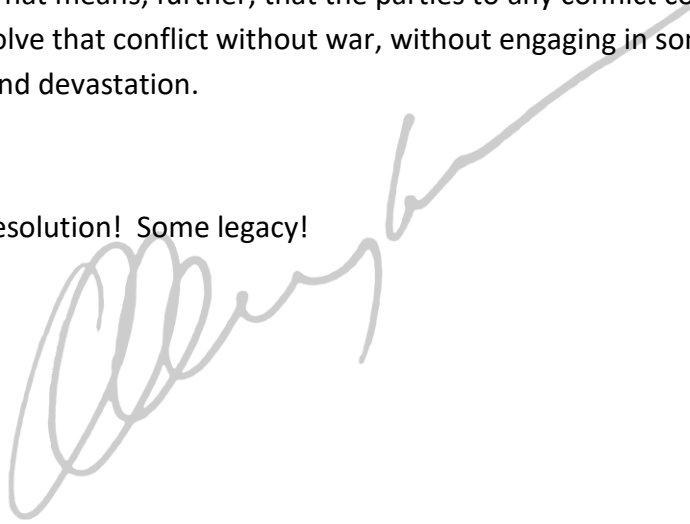
"History", I say in reply.

And especially military history, although almost any history will qualify as "military".

After all, what does history record but accounts of conflicts of peoples and societies since time immemorial, conflicts which led in the main to military action? Search far and wide if you wish in the annals of histories of any part of this world, and the verity of this concept on war stands unchallenged. Most histories go from one war to the next with but brief mention of the peace, or perhaps reduced hostilities, in between the wars. In analogy, you may recall the wag who described the sporting event he attended by quipping that “a hockey game broke out during the fight”, so I must concede that “peace broke out occasionally” in all of the geopolitical histories with which I am familiar.

So, what does that mean? By and large, it denotes the fact that conflict resolution through-out the ages was carried out by force, and usually, deadly force. That means, further, that the parties to any conflict could not or would not resolve that conflict without war, without engaging in some kind of battle, death and devastation.

Some resolution! Some legacy!



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