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First, they came for the guns ...

Human beings live in worlds of their own making. This is true of individuals as well as nations -- even entire periods. I suppose a person couldn't help being born in the Dark Ages, but it was still people who created the Dark Ages and people who ended them. They weren't cosmic events.

If we recreate the Dark Ages in the 21st century, it will be our own doing, too. Nobody is making us. None of our Evil Empires came from outer space. The red cancer of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism may have gone into remission, but the malignancy of tyranny comes in many colours. >From the mid-1920s to the mid-1940s, it came in Fascist black and Nazi brown. If it were to flare up again in green--Islamist green, environmental green, it doesn't matter --it would still be as homemade as apple pie.

What triggered this tirade? The news, needless to say. Almost any item makes one wonder about the sanity of the world, especially on or near the front page. Glancing at a photograph from Tehran. Reading a speech by Tory Environment Minister John Baird. Receiving an e-mail about a police raid in Alberta. My job is to comment on the news, but how can one comment on a nation--in this case, Iran -- choosing to live in a society where women, dressed like witches from an amateur production of Lady Macbeth, accost and berate other woman in the street for not being dressed like a witch from an amateur production of Lady Macbeth -- and they do it in 2007, in a country developing nuclear technology! It's nonsensical, unredeemed total stupidity --in short, n.u.t.s.

But for nuts we don't need to go all the way to Iran. The Green Gestapo of the environment seems ready to launch nuts right here at home. Eco-fascists share the self-righteous arrogance of Islamo-fascists, safety-Nazis and other control freaks. They're like the multicultural censors excising "Merry Christmas!" or the feminist ones neutering the word "fisherman" and substituting "fisher" as the mot juste. They're the anti-gun crusaders obliging us to register Grandpa's squirrel-plonker; they're the Victorian don't-step-on-the-grass crowd; they're our version of the Persian dress police. They're prepared to enforce a government-regulated climate in Canada, indoors and outdoors, literally and figuratively, itching to counter global warming with an economic ice age.

What will it be like? Dark and grim. Hot showers on alternate days. Cars carrying fewer than three passengers impounded. Failure to use the politically correct amount of toilet paper

bringing down the full wrath of the eco-fascist state. And harbouring an unlicensed light bulb in the home, well -- that would invite consequences similar to those described in an e-mail I received this week:

"Last Monday, April 16th, 4 a.m., near the hamlet of Craigmyle, Alberta, just southwest of Hanna, John Rew, age 50, was awakened to the sound of a SWAT smoke grenade smashing through his bedroom window," wrote my correspondent. "He was thrown face down on the floor and handcuffed instantly afterward, as a second smoke grenade exploded through his TV stand in the living room, burning a hole in the floor.

"The Drumheller RCMP, Calgary SWAT, and Red Deer SWAT had come for all his firearms, in particular his registered prohibited and restricted firearms, all legally registered to him.

"Although their search warrant did not include any residences, Rew agreed to lead them across the farmyard to his 80-year-old mother's house. Her basement contains Rew's storage facility. His mother, Betty, allowed them entry and was detained for her co-operative efforts. The masked, body-armoured, assault rifle equipped [police] got what they came for. Rew was hauled away, still in handcuffs. His alleged crime: allowing his F.A.C/P.A.L [gun permits] to expire. 2:30 that afternoon he was released, promising to appear in Drumheller court 10 am May 25th 2007.

"The authorities shut down Rew's oilfield business for the day, turning his 20 employees away at the gate. His sister was not allowed entry to tend to their 80-year-old mother who had been devastated by the events of that morning. Ironically, the next day, April 17, our government announced an extension of the long gun registry amnesty for another year."

Note to readers: I haven't edited the e-mail forwarded to me, other than to correct typos and remove some judgmental words. Preliminary research indicates that Mr. Rew, who owns and operates an oil patch located on his farm, is an ordinary gun collector who -- at worst -- may not have complied with some paperwork. Did the gun police behave as thuggishly as it appears in the e-mail? I don't know.

Note to police chiefs: Whenever it's necessary to conduct a dawn raid, invite a member of the press to come along. An independent journalist embedded with your team will make it harder for anyone to level false accusations against your officers.

Note to the Prime Minister: If we let governments continue on their regulatory binges, SWAT teams will be hurtling through our windows to confiscate our prohibited light bulbs and unregistered rolls of toilet paper. A state that doesn't stop at Mr. Rew's door will stop at nothing.