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World issues are front and centre in journalist's memoir

by Tamara de la Vega
Jul 04, 2007



NEW BOOK: Dwight resident John Scully, who has worked for respected broadcast and news outfits such as the CBC, BBC and CTV, is the author of a new memoir *Am I Dead Yet?*

Globe trotting, award-winning journalist and Dwight resident John Scully reflects on the life-threatening dangers and obstacles war correspondents often face in their attempt to objectively shed light on stories affecting the international arena.

Scully, who has worked for respected broadcast and news outfits such as the CBC, BBC and CTV, is the author of a new memoir *Am I Dead Yet?*

The book highlights some of his journeys — which span more than 60 countries

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and every continent with the exception of Antarctica — but he also takes his narrative a step further. Scully gives himself the arduous and difficult task of defining who should in fact be referred to as a terrorist, a term which he argues is employed far too loosely in the English lexicon these days.

Scully questions whether the word terrorist is the correct noun to “imply insurgents, guerrillas, rebels, or freedom fighters” since all tend to employ some of the same tactics to defeat their opponents.

Scully points out that Nelson Mandela was once branded a terrorist and jailed for leading the National African Congress and supporting its armed struggle against apartheid. Today he is seen as a beacon of freedom and equality.

He also cites former Israeli prime minister Menachim Begin, who led violent underground tactical maneuvers in an attempt to form a Jewish homeland and drive the British and Palestinians out. Most notable was the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, which killed British, Jews and Arabs alike, 91 people in total.

“Later, as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Begin wrote, ‘The revolt sprang from the earth... A new generation grew up which turned its back on fear. It began to fight instead of to plead.’ This is a fairly classic definition of a freedom fighter. To Jews, he is a hero; to Arabs, a terrorist,” writes Scully.

He is also critical of what he refers to as U.S. foreign colonialist policies, something he also accuses Russia of using in its treatment of the Muslim Chechens.

“What I see happening now in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East drives me nuts. Doesn’t anyone read history anymore?” he questions. “Doesn’t anyone see parallels between now and the very recent past? And why are we so appalled by massacres and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans that we send in squadrons of NATO bombers but ignore the genocides of Rwanda and Darfur? Well, um, you see, how can I put it? They’re not white!” he writes.

He defines terrorism as follows: “Terrorists are driven by sheer criminality, causeless brutality, greed, bravado, ignorance, and woefully misunderstood religious teachings. They are seldom inspired by ideology, sound theology or history.”

During an interview with the Forester, Scully, who is passionate about his beliefs, said journalists have a moral responsibility to make sense of the events they cover and lend a voice to the exploited, the abused, the poor and the disadvantaged.

He argued that while there are those who may not subscribe to his views, his book brings up issues that need to be addressed.

“All I can do is raise the level of discussion. People can get angry, they can be pleased, pissed off . . . I don’t care as long as they start taking a look at a different perspective of the world we live in,” insisted Scully.

His book is both entertaining and quirky and sure to raise some eyebrows.

You can purchase the book at www.iuniverse.com. Scully also has a blog, www.amideadyet.org where you can read excerpts from his book. You can also find him on Facebook by running a John Scully search (network: Toronto, ON).

Am I Dead Yet will also be available at select Chapter locations sometime this month.

This article has been viewed 1 time.

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