

# Election interference not a partisan issue

Reports of Russian interference in an American election should be concerning to everyone in this country, regardless of their political affiliation. A foreign government meddling in our sovereignty and independence is not a partisan issue.

And multiple nonpartisan U.S. intelligence agencies, as well as intelligence agencies of some foreign allies, have reported that Russia attempted to influence our democratic process during the 2016 presidential election.

It doesn't matter who won the election. Outside interference is an affront to our way of life. It undermines the belief that Americans have in our institutions and our government.

Almost as scary as the fact that our country has been under intense, sustained cyberattack is the fact our population has become so polarized that some are willing to see their neighbors

EDITORIAL

Voice of the Chieftain

as enemies, rather than a foreign power actively trying to manipulate our country for their benefit.

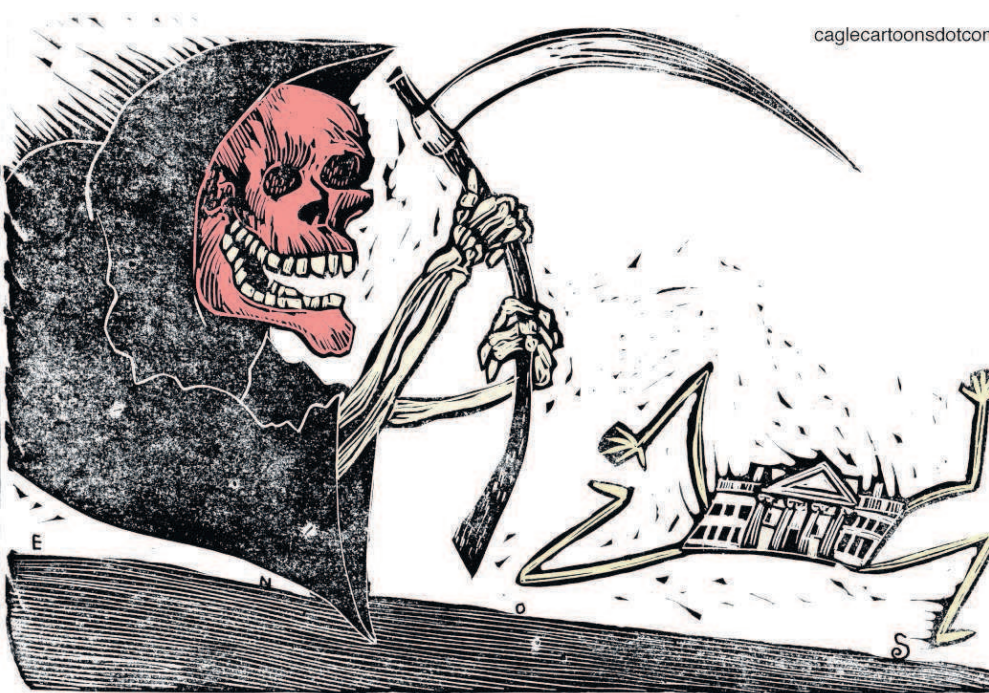
This is something that should bring us together. In the face of a real enemy, we should remember we're all on the same team, hoping to make our country as safe and prosperous as possible.

We should all want to know exactly what happened during the run up to the 2016 election. We should all demand the truth so we are better protected from interference in future elections.

Questioning and condemning a foreign country's involvement should not be conflated as an attack on our president.

Unless an investigation determines a member of Donald Trump's campaign colluded in the interference or that the president obstructed justice regarding the investigation into the matter, he should be presumed innocent. No evidence has yet been presented that either occurred.

There is ample evidence, however, that Russia attempted to influence our election and undermine our democracy.



That should be concerning to everyone, including the president, both political parties and every elected official.

During his testimony before Congress, former FBI director James Comey was clear he believes this will happen again and again. Russia and other enemies will look for any means they can to disrupt our nation's free election process, and

cyberattacks are the most efficient way to do damage covertly.

Election interference is not a party-line issue. It is a threat to all Americans. We should demand answers from our intelligence agencies, and implore Congress to get to the bottom of what happened and figure out how we can stop it from happening again.

## Debate about president’s business dealings is heating up

Black’s Law Dictionary defines Emolument as “profit arising from office or employment; that which is received as a compensation for services, or which is annexed to the possession of office as salary, fees, and perquisites; gain, public or private.”

Although the term might seem obscure and antiquated, it will soon become more familiar to Americans who pay attention to national news because of the vast economic holdings and ongoing activities of our current president and because of safeguards against corruption that are written into our Constitution.

The original Constitution uses the word “emolument” several times. Article I, Section 9 states: “No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.” Article II, Section 1 declares: “The President shall, at stated times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased (sic) nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or from any of them.”

While many of our presidents throughout history began their lives in modest economic



circumstances — and while nearly all politicians would like voters to believe that they did — most presidents had already achieved personal wealth by the time they were elected. But in order to maintain public confidence both in their own honesty and in the integrity of our government, most recent presidents have taken two simple steps: they have made their own tax returns public; and they have placed their personal investments in a blind trust to be managed during their term of office.

But one thing is clear both to his supporters and critics: Donald Trump is not like most presidents. Not only is he far more wealthy, but his business relationships are more secretive, complex and multinational.

Although it is difficult to pin down a specific number, business journalists estimate that Trump owns more than 350 corporations, many of which are designated only by initials. And while he promised during the campaign to release his tax returns, he continues to stonewall in that area, choosing instead to release finan-

cial disclosure statements, which give a more broad estimate of his wealth without providing the specific details.

Likewise, Trump’s decision to retain ownership in his investments while turning over the everyday management of his corporations to his sons hardly constitutes what government ethics experts would regard as blind trust management.

Less than six months into his presidency, examples abound of instances where Trump could be in violation of the Constitution’s emoluments prohibitions. Until recently, the First Lady resided at Trump Towers in New York, which necessitated that the Secret Service pay with out tax dollars directly into Trump’s pocket for the rental of two floors there. And on many weekends since his election, Trump has brought his entire publicly paid entourage, along with national media and international VIPs vying for his attention and favor, to stay at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

The growing appearance of the quid pro quo is also troubling. The head of China’s government visited Trump in Florida a few weeks after China had announced it had awarded Trump 38 trademarks, which was an extremely lucrative and timely advance of Trump’s business interests in that market.

The ambassador from Saudi Arabia, whose nation was not included as one of the Muslim countries listed under Trump’s travel ban (even

though most Americans bitterly recall that 15 of the 19 hijackers on 9/11 hailed from that country), paid his respects to the new president by staying at Trump’s hotel in Washington, D.C. When Trump returned the visit to their country, he announced that his son-in-law had brokered a deal with Saudi Arabia, which would include \$110 billion in arms and other economic benefits from the United States.

Skeptical Americans have a right to ask whether this arms deal will really keep our country safer, or whether it is a way of promoting relationships between the businessman Trump and wealthy Saudis who rent or buy his high-end hotel rooms and condominiums there.

Questions, conflicts and frustrations have already risen to the point where two attorneys general, representing Maryland and the District of Columbia, have filed suit against Trump, alleging that he is violating the Constitution’s emoluments clauses. Now 196 members of Congress, including five Congressmen from Oregon (but not a single Republican), have filed a similar lawsuit.

Only time will tell whether either the courts or the Congress will hold the president accountable to the words and the spirit enshrined in our Constitution.

John McColgan writes from his home in Joseph.

## History beckons: Plan to celebrate July 4

I don’t remember how old I was when I first was told that much of what I learned from history books about the founding of our nation was likely not completely true.

It was a pivotal moment in my life. If history books weren’t accurate, what other texts I had been studying for years were shading the truth?

I thought about this as we prepared to publish events and activities in the county celebrating Independence Day, which is celebrated July 4.

That’s the day the founders signed the Declaration of Independence, but the Continental Congress agreed to break away from the British on July 2. The Declaration wasn’t signed by most of the delegates until Aug. 2, 1776.

So why isn’t that Independence Day?

My earliest history education suggested that the founding fathers were all stalwart men of a single bent, to sever ties with an oppressive England and be free to determine their own fate. It wasn’t until I saw the play, “1776” that it registered with me. Although they were statesmen, they were also politicians and had opinions across the board on “independency.”

The final straw came in 2005 when it was proven conclusively George Washington did not have wooden teeth. Research



performed on a set of Washington’s dentures showed they were made of gold, ivory, lead and human and animal teeth. An odd combination of ingredients, to say the least.

Myths also surround other historical dates on the calendar.

Turns out, according to many historians, Columbus didn’t discover America. Even if you were to overlook the not-so-minor fact that millions of people were already living in North America in 1492, the fact is that Columbus never set foot on our shores. Oct. 12 commemorates the day of his arrival in what is now the Bahamas.

I’ve never understood how such dubious “facts” made their way into the annals of history. I suppose part of it is the human propensity for believing what we want the truth to be.

Some have termed it revisionist history, usually defined as the legitimate scholastic re-examination of existing knowledge about an historical event or the distortion

of the historical record such that certain events appear in a more or less favorable light.

In other words, history — like beauty — is in the eye of beholder. Or so they say.

In spite of the controversies, I will celebrate this Independence Day with gusto, even knowing that there were only 12 original colonies (Delaware was initially part of Pennsylvania.) And I would encourage you to do the same.

You don’t have to leave Wallowa County to be part of the pageantry. Wallowa has what’s generally considered the largest celebration, complete with a giant parade and a community gathering in the park. Cap off the evening with the fireworks on the shores of Wallowa Lake.

If you must participate in personal fireworks, a tradition far more linked to the Chinese than the American founding fathers, please be careful. By one statistic, 9,300 people suffer serious injuries each in the U.S. from fireworks annually. More than 20,000 fires are ignited each year by fireworks.

Wahl is the editor of the Chieftain who plans to eat apple pie on the Fourth of July.

## Writer will miss Nez Perce exhibit in Joseph

This is an obituary of sorts for a building, an exhibit of Nez Perce photographs and artifacts on Main Street in Joseph. I first became aware of it when I worked in Wallowa County 2004-05.

On June 14 I became aware that it was shut, tipis not erected on the grounds as they had been for at least the last 15 years. And I was sad as I returned the key to Rob and Ary Lamb, the former owners.

Over the years I had spent many hours in tourist season and on snowy winter days under the gaze of Indian faces, pictures that told stories of anguish at the loss of their thousands of years homeland, seamed faces of strength and beauty, of character and humor. For several years, I brought in reservation newspapers from the three with resident Nimiipu.

I thought it was good for visitors to know that tribal members were alive and



well and accomplishing great things and also the not-so-great events that befall us all sometimes.

It was a place for people to wonder at the civilization that flourished here for millennia. There was a lot to learn in that small space: Reading in the guest book accounts of visitors from all over the world, many from Germany and the Netherlands where Indian and Western stories have been loved since the 1800s.

So many comments in sympathy with Indian lives and anger at the encroachment of the soyapoo (nonnatives). Some folks were not aware that Native Americans were still around. And sometimes

there was confusion over which Chief Joseph was buried at the lake.

Seeing in posters and photos the revival of Nez Perce celebration at Tamkaliks. School kids from Portland and Washington tying together what they learned in class and what they were seeing.

The maps showed the shrinking reservation from 1855-63 and the Nez Perce Trail all the way to the Bear Paws.

I often wondered at the karmic envelope surrounding that place from which, over the years, no artifacts were stolen, no vandalism evident. I know that I and past visitors to Joseph and county residents will miss this place and those coming after will not know what was here, what could have been observed and learned. R.I.P place of beautiful people.

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La Grande

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